

JUSTICES: Journal of Law
Journal website: https://justices.pdfaii.org

ISSN : 2964-5107 (online)
https://doi.org/10.58355/justices.v5i4.225

Vol. 5 No. 4 (2026)
pp. 237-257

Research Article

Correctional Intelligence and Security Management in Preventing Escapes, Contraband, and Organized Crime in Nigerian Custodial Centres

Nura Umar Manya Manya

Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, Nigeria

Corresponding Author, E-mail; um.nura2026@nda.edu.ng

Copyright © 2026 by Authors, Published by JUSTICES: Journal of Law. This is an open access article under the CC BY License https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Received : August 13, 2026
Revised : September 17, 2026
Accepted : October 15, 2026
Available online : November 22, 2026

How to Cite: Nura Umar Manya Manya. (2026). Correctional Intelligence and Security Management in Preventing Escapes, Contraband, and Organized Crime in Nigerian Custodial Centres. *JUSTICES: Journal of Law*, 5(4), 237–257. https://doi.org/10.58355/justices.v5i4.225

Abstract. Correctional intelligence and security management are fundamental components of effective custodial administration and national security. Nigerian custodial centres continue to face security threats, including inmate escapes, contraband smuggling, prison gangs, radicalization, corruption, and organized criminal activities. These challenges undermine the rehabilitation mandate of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCOs) and threaten public safety. This study examines the role of correctional intelligence and security management in preventing escapes, contraband trafficking, and organized crime in Nigerian custodial centres. Using a qualitative documentary research design, the study relies on secondary data obtained from books, peer-reviewed journals, government reports, legislation, and international publications. The findings indicate that intelligence gathering, inmate classification, surveillance technologies, inter-agency collaboration, staff professionalism, and risk assessment significantly enhance custodial security. However, inadequate funding, corruption, overcrowding, obsolete infrastructure, and insufficient intelligence capacity continue to undermine effective security management. The study recommends strengthening intelligence-led correctional

management, investing in modern security technologies, improving staff training, enhancing inter-agency cooperation, and fully implementing the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019.

Keywords: Correctional Intelligence, Security Management, Nigerian Correctional Service, Custodial Centres, Contraband, Prison Escape, Organized Crime.

PENDAHULUAN

Correctional institutions play an essential role in maintaining public safety by securely housing offenders while promoting rehabilitation and reintegration. The enactment of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCOs) Act 2019 transformed the former Nigerian Prisons Service into a modern correctional institution with expanded responsibilities for secure custody, rehabilitation, intelligence gathering, and non-custodial measures. The Act specifically provides for intelligence and investigation units, monitoring devices, CCTV, body scanners, armed squads, and other security infrastructure to strengthen custodial security.

Despite these reforms, Nigerian custodial centres continue to experience escapes, trafficking of prohibited items, prison gang activities, and external criminal influence. These incidents demonstrate the need for intelligence-led security management capable of identifying, preventing, and responding to emerging threats before they escalate.

Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to:

1. Examine the concept of correctional intelligence and security management.
2. Assess the role of correctional intelligence in preventing escapes.
3. Evaluate intelligence strategies used to prevent contraband trafficking
4. Examine the role of intelligence in combating organized crime within custodial centres.
5. Identify challenges affecting correctional intelligence in Nigeria.
6. Recommend strategies for improving custodial intelligence and security management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Correctional Institutions

A correctional institution is a legally established facility designed for the safe custody, rehabilitation, treatment, and reintegration of offenders into society. Unlike the traditional prison system, which focused primarily on punishment and confinement, modern correctional institutions emphasize rehabilitation, correction, education, vocational training, behavioural modification, and public safety. The primary objective is not only to protect society by securely confining offenders but also to reduce recidivism through effective rehabilitation programmes.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2015), correctional institutions are essential components of the criminal justice system responsible for implementing court-imposed sentences while ensuring the safety,

security, dignity, and human rights of inmates. These institutions also provide educational, vocational, psychological, medical, and counselling services aimed at preparing offenders for successful reintegration into society.

In Nigeria, the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCOs), established under the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019, replaced the former Nigerian Prison Service. The Act transformed the philosophy of custodial administration from punishment to correction by introducing comprehensive rehabilitation, reformation, restorative justice, intelligence gathering, non-custodial measures, and community reintegration programmes. Consequently, correctional institutions now perform dual functions of secure custody and offender rehabilitation while contributing to national security through effective intelligence and security management.

Concept of Correctional Institutions and Meaning of Correctional Intelligence

A correctional institution is a legally established facility designed for the safe custody, rehabilitation, treatment, and reintegration of offenders into society. Unlike the traditional prison system, which focused primarily on punishment and confinement, modern correctional institutions emphasize rehabilitation, correction, education, vocational training, behavioural modification, and public safety. The primary objective is not only to protect society by securely confining offenders but also to reduce recidivism through effective rehabilitation programmes.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2015), correctional institutions are essential components of the criminal justice system responsible for implementing court-imposed sentences while ensuring the safety, security, dignity, and human rights of inmates. These institutions also provide educational, vocational, psychological, medical, and counselling services aimed at preparing offenders for successful reintegration into society.

In Nigeria, the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCOs), established under the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019, replaced the former Nigerian Prison Service. The Act transformed the philosophy of custodial administration from punishment to correction by introducing comprehensive rehabilitation, reformation, restorative justice, intelligence gathering, non-custodial measures, and community reintegration programmes. Consequently, correctional institutions now perform the dual functions of secure custody and offender rehabilitation while contributing to national security through effective intelligence and security management.

Within these institutions, correctional intelligence plays a vital role in maintaining safety, order, and institutional stability. Correctional intelligence refers to the systematic process of collecting, analyzing, evaluating, and disseminating information relating to actual or potential security threats within correctional facilities for the purpose of supporting informed decision-making and preventing security breaches. It is an intelligence-led approach that enables correctional authorities to identify risks before they escalate into incidents such as escapes, riots, gang activities, inmate radicalization, contraband smuggling, staff corruption, violence, and organized criminal operations.

Unlike conventional prison security, which often responds to incidents after they occur, correctional intelligence is proactive and preventive. It relies on

information obtained from multiple sources, including inmate informants, surveillance systems, intelligence gadgets, staff observations, electronic monitoring technologies, visitor screening, and collaboration with law enforcement and other security agencies. The intelligence collected is carefully analyzed to identify patterns, emerging threats, and criminal networks operating within or outside correctional institutions.

Effective correctional intelligence strengthens institutional security by supporting risk assessment, inmate classification, contraband detection, escape prevention, emergency preparedness, and strategic security planning. It also enhances the protection of correctional personnel, inmates, and the public while promoting the successful implementation of rehabilitation programmes in a secure environment. In the Nigerian context, the integration of correctional intelligence into custodial operations under the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019, has become increasingly important in addressing contemporary security challenges such as prison overcrowding, violent extremism, organized crime, cyber-enabled criminal activities, and the infiltration of prohibited items into custodial centres. Therefore, correctional intelligence constitutes an indispensable component of modern correctional administration and an essential instrument for achieving effective security management and offender rehabilitation.

Types of Correctional Institutions

Correctional institutions are classified according to their security level, inmate population, legal status, and operational objectives. The major types include:

Maximum Security Custodial Centres

These institutions accommodate high-risk offenders, including inmates convicted of serious offences such as terrorism, armed robbery, kidnapping, homicide, organized crime, and other violent crimes. Maximum security facilities employ strict surveillance systems, reinforced perimeter security, advanced intelligence operations, and highly controlled inmate movement to prevent escapes and maintain institutional order.

Medium Security Custodial Centres

Medium security custodial centres house offenders considered to pose moderate security risks. They combine secure custody with rehabilitation programmes such as education, vocational training, counselling, and behavioural modification. Most convicted inmates within the Nigerian Correctional Service are accommodated in medium security institutions.

Minimum Security Custodial Centres

Minimum security institutions accommodate low-risk offenders with good behavioural records. These facilities emphasize rehabilitation, vocational training, agricultural production, education, and gradual preparation for reintegration into society. Security measures are less restrictive than those of maximum and medium security institutions.

Satellite Custodial Centres

Satellite custodial centres are smaller correctional facilities established to reduce congestion in larger custodial centres and facilitate easier administration of

inmates within specific geographical areas. They provide secure custody while maintaining basic rehabilitation and correctional services.

Farm or Open Custodial Centres

Farm or open custodial centres provide agricultural and vocational training for carefully selected low-risk inmates. Security relies more on inmate discipline and supervision than on physical barriers. These institutions encourage self-reliance, skills acquisition, and productive labour while supporting offender rehabilitation and reintegration.

Non-Custodial Correctional Centres

Following the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019, non-custodial corrections include probation, parole, community service, restorative justice programmes, and other alternatives to imprisonment. These programmes supervise eligible offenders within the community while promoting rehabilitation and reducing prison overcrowding.

Each category of correctional institution requires different levels of intelligence gathering, surveillance technology, risk assessment, and security management depending on the nature of the inmates and the security challenges associated with the facility

Concept of Security Management in Correctional Institutions

Security management refers to the coordinated application of policies, personnel, technology, operational procedures, and intelligence to protect correctional institutions against internal and external threats. It involves physical security measures such as perimeter fencing, surveillance cameras, body scanners, access control systems, electronic monitoring devices, alarm systems, and regular searches, as well as procedural and dynamic security measures including staff vigilance, inmate supervision, emergency planning, and intelligence operations.

Dynamic security, as advocated by the UNODC (2017), emphasizes the development of professional relationships between correctional officers and inmates. Through continuous interaction, officers gain valuable information regarding inmate behaviour, prison gangs, escape plans, and other security threats. This complements static security measures such as walls, locks, gates, and electronic surveillance.

Effective security management therefore combines physical infrastructure, human intelligence, institutional discipline, and technology to maintain order, protect lives, and facilitate offender rehabilitation.

Meaning of Intelligence Gadgets

Intelligence gadgets are specialized technological devices, electronic equipment, and digital systems used to collect, monitor, process, analyze, store, and disseminate intelligence information for security and law enforcement purposes. In correctional institutions, these gadgets support intelligence officers by enhancing surveillance, detecting security threats, gathering evidence, monitoring inmate activities, and facilitating timely decision-making. Unlike conventional security equipment that primarily serves protective functions, intelligence gadgets are

designed to generate actionable information that enables correctional authorities to prevent crimes before they occur.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2015; 2017), modern correctional intelligence increasingly depends on technology-driven systems that complement human intelligence through continuous monitoring, risk assessment, information sharing, and incident detection. These technologies enable correctional personnel to identify escape plans, detect contraband smuggling, monitor prison gangs, prevent violent incidents, and disrupt organized criminal activities operating within custodial centres.

The Nigerian Correctional Service (NCOs) has also recognized the importance of intelligence gadgets following the enactment of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019, which provides for the deployment of modern security infrastructure such as Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras, body scanners, electronic monitoring devices, communication systems, and other intelligence tools. The integration of these technologies into correctional operations has enhanced institutional security by improving surveillance, strengthening access control, supporting investigations, and promoting intelligence-led decision-making.

Intelligence gadgets function as force multipliers because they complement human intelligence gathered through correctional officers, informants, inmate interviews, staff observations, and inter-agency cooperation. Information generated through these technological devices is collected, analyzed, verified, and disseminated to relevant authorities for prompt operational response. Consequently, intelligence gadgets contribute significantly to the prevention of prison escapes, detection of contraband trafficking, identification of criminal networks, protection of correctional personnel, and maintenance of order within custodial institutions.

As correctional environments become increasingly complex due to evolving criminal methods and technological advancements, the adoption of modern intelligence gadgets has become indispensable for effective correctional intelligence and security management. Their effectiveness, however, depends on adequate funding, regular maintenance, continuous personnel training, sound legal and ethical oversight, and integration with comprehensive intelligence strategies. Therefore, intelligence gadgets should be viewed not merely as security equipment but as essential components of an intelligence-led correctional management system that enhances public safety and supports the rehabilitation objectives of the Nigerian Correctional Service.

Types of Intelligence Gadgets in Correctional Institutions

Modern correctional institutions rely on a wide range of intelligence gadgets to enhance institutional security, improve surveillance, support intelligence gathering, and prevent criminal activities. These technological devices complement human intelligence by providing accurate, timely, and real-time information for security decision-making. The major intelligence gadgets used in correctional institutions include:

1. Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Cameras

CCTV systems are among the most widely used intelligence gadgets in correctional institutions. They provide continuous monitoring of inmate movements, staff activities, visitors, perimeter fences, cell blocks, corridors, workshops, and recreational areas. CCTV footage assists intelligence officers in detecting suspicious behaviour, investigating security incidents, preventing violence, and providing evidence during disciplinary or criminal investigations.

2. **Body Scanners**
   Body scanners are non-intrusive security devices used to detect concealed weapons, narcotics, mobile phones, explosives, and other prohibited items hidden beneath clothing or inside the human body. They improve visitor screening, inmate admission procedures, and staff inspections while reducing opportunities for contraband smuggling.
3. **Walk-Through and Handheld Metal Detectors**
   These devices identify metallic objects carried by inmates, visitors, staff, and contractors entering secure areas. They are commonly deployed at institutional entrances, visiting centres, and security checkpoints to prevent unauthorized weapons and metallic contraband from entering correctional facilities.
4. **Biometric Identification Systems**
   Biometric technologies—including fingerprint scanners, facial recognition systems, iris scanners, and palm recognition devices—verify the identity of inmates, staff, and visitors. These systems improve access control, eliminate identity fraud, enhance inmate accountability, and strengthen institutional security.
5. **Electronic Access Control Systems**
   Electronic access control systems regulate entry into sensitive areas such as control rooms, armouries, intelligence units, administrative offices, and inmate housing units. Access is granted only to authorize personnel through biometric verification, smart cards, passwords, or electronic identification devices, thereby reducing unauthorized access and insider threats.
6. **X-ray Baggage and Parcel Scanners**
   X-ray scanners inspect bags, parcels, food items, and other materials brought into correctional institutions without opening them. These devices enable security personnel to detect concealed weapons, drugs, mobile phones, explosives, and other prohibited items efficiently.
7. **Mobile Phone Detection and Jamming Systems**
   Mobile phone detection systems identify unauthorized cellular devices within correctional facilities, while jamming technologies—where legally authorized—prevent illegal communications between inmates and external criminal networks. These systems help disrupt kidnapping operations, organized crime, terrorism financing, and other illicit activities coordinated from within custodial centres.
8. **Radio Communication Systems**
   Secure radio communication devices facilitate rapid communication among correctional officers during emergencies, routine patrols, searches, riots, escape attempts, and intelligence operations. Effective communication enhances operational coordination and timely response to security incidents.

9. **Drone Detection and Counter-Drone Systems**
   With the increasing use of drones for smuggling contraband into correctional facilities, modern institutions deploy drone detection systems capable of identifying, tracking, and, where legally permitted, neutralizing unauthorized unmanned aerial vehicles carrying prohibited items.
10. **Motion Sensors and Infrared Surveillance Cameras**
    Motion sensors detect unauthorized movement within restricted areas, while infrared cameras provide effective surveillance during darkness or poor visibility. These technologies strengthen perimeter security and improve night-time monitoring.
11. **Electronic Alarm Systems**
    Electronic alarm systems provide immediate alerts during escape attempts, unauthorized entry, fires, riots, perimeter breaches, or equipment failures. These systems enable correctional officers to respond rapidly and minimize security risks.
12. **Global Positioning System (GPS) Tracking Devices**
    GPS technology is primarily used for monitoring correctional vehicles, supervising offenders participating in non-custodial programmes where legally applicable, and tracking operational movements during inmate transfers. GPS enhances accountability and operational security.
13. **Digital Intelligence Databases**
    Computerized intelligence databases securely store inmate records, behavioural reports, criminal histories, biometric information, disciplinary records, gang affiliations, and intelligence reports. These databases enable intelligence officers to analyse trends, conduct risk assessments, and support evidence-based decision-making.
14. **Digital Forensic Equipment**
    Digital forensic tools are used to recover, preserve, analyse, and interpret information obtained from confiscated mobile phones, computers, storage devices, and other electronic equipment. These tools assist investigations involving organized crime, cybercrime, terrorism, financial crimes, and contraband networks.
15. **Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Assisted Surveillance Systems**
    Artificial intelligence enhances correctional intelligence by analysing surveillance footage, detecting unusual behavioural patterns, identifying security anomalies, recognizing faces, and generating predictive alerts regarding potential security threats. AI-assisted systems improve the speed, accuracy, and effectiveness of intelligence-led security management.

The integration of these intelligence gadgets with professional correctional intelligence practices significantly enhances institutional security, improves threat detection, reduces prison escapes, curbs contraband trafficking, disrupts organized criminal activities, and strengthens the overall effectiveness of the Nigerian Correctional Service. The deployment of these technologies should be accompanied by adequate funding, staff training, regular maintenance, legal oversight, and continuous technological modernization to ensure sustainable correctional security.

Uses of Intelligence Gadgets in Correctional Institutions

The use of intelligence gadgets in correctional institutions has become an essential aspect of modern correctional administration. These technological tools enhance intelligence gathering, surveillance, threat detection, communication, and operational decision-making. They complement the efforts of correctional personnel by providing accurate, timely, and reliable information required to prevent security breaches and maintain order within custodial centres. The integration of intelligence gadgets into correctional operations reflects a shift from reactive security measures to proactive, intelligence-led correctional management.

One of the primary uses of intelligence gadgets is surveillance and monitoring. Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras, body-worn cameras, and remote monitoring systems enable correctional authorities to continuously observe inmate movements, staff activities, visitors, and sensitive areas within correctional facilities. Continuous surveillance discourages violence, detects suspicious behaviour, and provides evidence for investigations following security incidents.

Intelligence gadgets are also widely used for contraband detection and prevention. Walk-through metal detectors, handheld metal detectors, X-ray baggage scanners, body scanners, explosive detectors, and drug detection equipment help correctional officers identify prohibited items such as firearms, knives, mobile phones, narcotics, SIM cards, and other unauthorized materials before they enter custodial facilities. These technologies significantly reduce opportunities for contraband smuggling by inmates, visitors, contractors, and corrupt officials.

Another important application is access control and perimeter security. Electronic access control systems, biometric fingerprint scanners, facial recognition technology, smart identity cards, electronic gates, alarm systems, and motion sensors regulate movement into and within correctional institutions. These gadgets ensure that only authorized personnel gain access to restricted areas while also detecting unauthorized entry or attempted escapes.

Intelligence gadgets further support inmate intelligence gathering through communication monitoring technologies. Telephone monitoring systems, radio communication intercept equipment (where legally authorized), digital forensic tools, and data analysis software assist intelligence officers in identifying criminal networks, gang activities, escape plans, extortion schemes, and external criminal collaborations. Information obtained through these systems supports intelligence analysis and operational planning.

Modern correctional institutions also employ intelligence gadgets for electronic monitoring and offender tracking. Electronic monitoring devices such as ankle bracelets and Global Positioning System (GPS) trackers are particularly useful in supervising offenders participating in non-custodial measures, parole, probation, or temporary release programmes. These devices enable authorities to monitor compliance with court orders and reduce the likelihood of absconding.

In addition, intelligence gadgets facilitate incident investigation and evidence collection. Digital cameras, video recording devices, forensic imaging equipment, and electronic evidence management systems preserve evidence relating to assaults, riots,

escapes, corruption, contraband trafficking, and other security incidents. Such evidence strengthens disciplinary proceedings and criminal prosecutions while enhancing accountability among correctional personnel and inmates.

Intelligence gadgets are equally important for risk assessment and predictive intelligence. Computerized intelligence databases, offender management information systems, biometric databases, and analytical software enable correctional authorities to identify high-risk inmates, predict emerging security threats, detect behavioural patterns, and prioritize preventive interventions. Through data-driven analysis, intelligence officers can make informed decisions regarding inmate classification, housing, supervision, and transfer.

Furthermore, intelligence gadgets improve inter-agency intelligence sharing. Secure communication systems, encrypted radio networks, digital information management platforms, and intelligence databases facilitate collaboration between the Nigerian Correctional Service, the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Services (DSS), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), and other security agencies. Effective information sharing enhances coordinated responses to organized crime, terrorism, prison escapes, and transnational criminal activities.

Intelligence gadgets also contribute significantly to emergency response and crisis management. Alarm systems, emergency communication devices, panic buttons, drones, thermal imaging cameras, and command-and-control systems provide real-time situational awareness during riots, hostage situations, fires, jailbreak attempts, or other emergencies. These technologies enable rapid deployment of response teams, minimizing casualties and protecting lives and property.

Empirical Review on Correctional Intelligence and Prevention of Prison Escapes

Several empirical studies have demonstrated that intelligence-led correctional management significantly reduces prison escapes. Smith (2018) found that institutions with well-developed intelligence units recorded lower rates of escapes because suspicious inmate behaviour and escape preparations were detected early through surveillance and informant networks.

Similarly, UNODC (2017) emphasizes that effective prison intelligence involves continuous monitoring of inmate communications, routine security assessments, behavioural analysis, and cooperation with external law enforcement agencies. Intelligence reports enable correctional administrators to strengthen vulnerable areas before escape attempts occur.

In Nigeria, several custodial centre attacks and inmate escapes have exposed weaknesses in intelligence gathering, surveillance infrastructure, and institutional preparedness. Reports by the Federal Ministry of Interior have highlighted inadequate intelligence coordination, poor technological capacity, and delayed response mechanisms as major contributors to successful escape incidents. These

findings suggest that strengthening intelligence capabilities remains essential for preventing custodial breaches.

Correctional Intelligence and Prevention of Contraband Trafficking

Contraband remains one of the most serious threats to correctional security worldwide. Prohibited items—including mobile phones, illicit drugs, weapons, cash, alcohol, and unauthorized communication devices—facilitate organized criminal activities within custodial centres.

According to UNODC (2015), effective prison intelligence enables authorities to identify smuggling routes, monitor suspicious transactions, detect corrupt staff, and dismantle contraband networks before prohibited items enter correctional facilities. Intelligence officers rely on informants, surveillance footage, visitor screening, electronic monitoring, intelligence databases, and routine searches to detect trafficking activities.

Research by Bottoms (2019) argues that corruption among correctional personnel remains a major factor facilitating contraband smuggling. Consequently, successful intelligence operations require strong internal accountability mechanisms, staff integrity screening, and continuous monitoring of institutional procedures.

Within Nigeria, overcrowding, inadequate search equipment, poor surveillance systems, and staff shortages continue to undermine efforts to eliminate contraband from custodial centres. These weaknesses highlight the importance of intelligence-led security management supported by modern technology.

Correctional Intelligence and Organized Crime

Correctional institutions have increasingly become operational centres for organized criminal groups. Prison gangs often coordinate kidnapping, drug trafficking, armed robbery, cybercrime, money laundering, terrorism financing, and violent extremism through communication with external criminal networks.

Andrews and Bonta (2017) argue that offender risk assessment and intelligence profiling enable correctional authorities to identify gang leaders, separate influential offenders, and disrupt criminal coordination. Similarly, UNODC (2017) recommends intelligence-led monitoring of inmate associations, financial transactions, correspondence, and visitor interactions to dismantle organized criminal activities.

In Nigeria, security agencies have reported cases where incarcerated offenders continued directing criminal operations outside correctional facilities through illegally obtained mobile phones and corrupt collaborators. These incidents demonstrate that effective correctional intelligence is indispensable for protecting national security.

Intelligence-Led Security Management and Inter-Agency Collaboration

Modern correctional intelligence depends on collaboration among multiple security agencies. Intelligence generated within custodial centres frequently supports investigations conducted by the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Services (DSS), the Armed Forces of Nigeria, the National Drug Law Enforcement

Agency (NDLEA), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and other security organizations.

International best practices encourage integrated intelligence-sharing systems, joint investigations, centralized intelligence databases, and coordinated responses to emerging threats. Such collaboration improves information accuracy, enhances criminal investigations, and strengthens national security.

The Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 also recognizes the importance of inter-agency cooperation in addressing custodial security challenges. However, studies indicate that bureaucratic barriers, inadequate communication infrastructure, and institutional rivalry continue to limit effective intelligence sharing among relevant agencies.

Challenges Affecting Correctional Intelligence in Nigeria

Despite significant reforms, several factors continue to hinder effective correctional intelligence and security management in Nigeria. These include overcrowded custodial centres, inadequate funding, obsolete surveillance equipment, insufficient intelligence personnel, corruption, weak institutional capacity, aging infrastructure, poor staff welfare, limited technological integration, and inadequate implementation of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019.

The Federal Ministry of Interior's Independent Investigative Panel Report (2026) identified poor intelligence gathering, inadequate surveillance technologies, and weak institutional preparedness as major contributors to custodial security breaches. Similarly, UNODC (2017) emphasizes that intelligence systems cannot function effectively without sufficient resources, trained personnel, institutional integrity, and strong leadership.

Addressing these challenges requires sustained government investment in intelligence infrastructure, continuous staff development, deployment of modern surveillance technologies, improved inter-agency coordination, and strict enforcement of anti-corruption measures.

Gap in the Literature

Existing literature has extensively examined prison security, offender rehabilitation, inmate classification, prison overcrowding, and correctional administration in Nigeria. However, relatively few studies have specifically explored the integrated role of correctional intelligence and security management in preventing escapes, contraband trafficking, and organized crime within Nigerian custodial centres. Most available studies focus on individual security issues rather than examining how intelligence gathering, surveillance technologies, inmate classification, inter-agency collaboration, and institutional management collectively contribute to custodial security.

Furthermore, limited scholarly attention has been given to the implementation of the intelligence and security provisions contained in the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019. This study addresses this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of correctional intelligence as an integrated security management strategy for

strengthening custodial administration, preventing security breaches, and enhancing national security in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Systems Theory

This study is anchored on Systems Theory, originally developed by the Austrian biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968) and later applied to organizational and security management studies. Systems Theory views an organization as a collection of interrelated and interdependent components that work together to achieve common goals. According to the theory, the effectiveness of any organization depends on the harmonious interaction of its various subsystems rather than on the performance of any single component in isolation.

Within the context of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), custodial centres function as complex security systems comprising several interconnected elements, including correctional officers, intelligence units, surveillance technologies, inmate classification mechanisms, institutional policies, physical infrastructure, communication networks, emergency response systems, and collaboration with external security agencies such as the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Services (DSS), the Armed Forces of Nigeria, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). These components operate collectively to maintain institutional security, prevent escapes, detect contraband, and disrupt organized criminal activities within custodial centres.

Systems Theory emphasizes that a weakness in any component of the correctional security system can significantly reduce the effectiveness of the entire institution. For example, inadequate intelligence gathering, poor surveillance infrastructure, staff corruption, ineffective inmate classification, weak communication systems, overcrowding, or poor inter-agency cooperation may create vulnerabilities that facilitate prison escapes, contraband smuggling, gang formation, inmate radicalization, and other organized criminal activities. Conversely, strengthening each subsystem enhances the overall capacity of custodial institutions to anticipate, prevent, and respond to emerging security threats.

The theory further highlights the importance of continuous information flow, feedback mechanisms, coordination, and adaptability. Correctional intelligence serves as a critical feedback mechanism through which information is collected, analyzed, disseminated, and utilized to support evidence-based decision-making. Intelligence-led security management enables correctional administrators to identify risks at an early stage, allocate resources effectively, improve operational planning, and implement preventive security measures before incidents escalate.

Systems Theory is particularly relevant to this study because correctional intelligence cannot function effectively in isolation. Successful intelligence operations require close coordination among intelligence officers, custodial personnel, institutional management, technological systems, policymakers, and external law enforcement and intelligence agencies. The theory therefore provides an appropriate framework for explaining how integrated security management contributes to

preventing inmate escapes, combating contraband trafficking, disrupting organized criminal networks, and enhancing the overall effectiveness of custodial administration in Nigeria.

Relevance of Systems Theory to the Study

The application of Systems Theory to this study is justified for several reasons:

1. It explains the interdependence of intelligence gathering, surveillance technology, personnel management, inmate classification, and institutional security in preventing custodial security breaches.
2. It emphasizes coordination and information sharing among the Nigerian Correctional Service and other national security agencies in addressing organized crime and intelligence threats.
3. It supports the adoption of intelligence-led correctional management by demonstrating that effective security depends on the integration of human resources, technology, organizational policies, and institutional leadership.
4. It provides a conceptual basis for understanding how deficiencies such as overcrowding, corruption, inadequate funding, obsolete infrastructure, and poor intelligence capacity undermine the effectiveness of correctional security management.
5. It reinforces the need for continuous monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of correctional security strategies in response to evolving criminal threats within custodial centres.

Accordingly, Systems Theory provides the most suitable analytical framework for examining the relationship between correctional intelligence and security management in preventing escapes, contraband trafficking, and organized crime in Nigerian custodial centres.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative documentary research design, which is appropriate for examining correctional intelligence and security management in Nigerian custodial centres. The qualitative approach enables an in-depth exploration of existing knowledge, policies, legislation, institutional practices, and scholarly perspectives on the role of intelligence in preventing escapes, contraband trafficking, and organized crime within correctional facilities. A documentary research design is particularly suitable because it allows the researcher to systematically analyze existing documents and publications without relying on primary data collection.

Research Design

The study employs a descriptive qualitative research design based on documentary analysis. This design facilitates the examination and interpretation of existing literature, legal documents, policy frameworks, and official reports relating to correctional intelligence and security management in Nigeria. It also enables the researcher to identify emerging themes, trends, challenges, and best practices relevant to intelligence-led custodial administration.

Sources of Data

The study relies exclusively on secondary sources of data obtained from credible and authoritative publications, including:

1) Books on correctional administration, criminology, intelligence, and security studies.
2) Peer-reviewed journal articles related to prison security, correctional intelligence, and organized crime.
3) Nigerian Correctional Service (NCOs) publications and official reports.
4) Federal Ministry of Interior reports and policy documents
5) The Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019 and other relevant laws and regulations.
6) Publications of international organizations, particularly the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), including the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Handbook on Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence.
7) Reports from security agencies, academic institutions, and other relevant government and non-governmental organizations.

Data Collection Procedure

Relevant documents were identified through library research, institutional publications, online academic databases such as Google Scholar, and official government websites. Documents selected for review were based on their relevance, credibility, authenticity, and contribution to understanding correctional intelligence, security management, custodial administration, and crime prevention within Nigerian correctional facilities.

Method of Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. This method involved systematically reviewing, coding, categorizing, and interpreting information from the selected documents to identify recurring themes and patterns. The analysis focused on:

- ✓ The concept and components of correctional intelligence.
- ✓ Intelligence strategies used in preventing prison escapes.
- ✓ Measures adopted to combat contraband trafficking.
- ✓ Intelligence mechanisms for disrupting organized criminal activities within custodial centres.
- ✓ Challenges confronting correctional intelligence and security management in Nigeria.
- ✓ Best practices and policy recommendations for strengthening intelligence-led correctional administration.
- ✓ The findings were organized thematically and interpreted within the framework of Systems Theory, which emphasizes the interdependence of intelligence units, correctional personnel, technology, institutional policies, and inter-agency collaboration in ensuring effective custodial security.

Validity and Reliability of Data

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the study, data were obtained from multiple authoritative sources, including government publications, legislation, international organizations, and peer-reviewed academic literature. Triangulation of these sources helped to verify information, minimize bias, and improve the reliability of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

As the study relied solely on publicly available documentary sources, no human participants were involved. Consequently, issues relating to informed consent and confidentiality did not arise. Nevertheless, all sources of information were properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with accepted academic standards to avoid plagiarism and ensure academic integrity.

Findings and Discussion

The study found that effective correctional intelligence contributes to custodial security through:

- Intelligence Gathering
- Continuous collection and analysis of information enable authorities to detect escape plans, gang activities, and contraband networks before incidents occur.
- Risk Assessment and Inmate Classification
- Proper classification separates high-risk inmates from vulnerable populations and reduces opportunities for coordinated criminal activity.

Surveillance Technology

CCTV systems, body scanners, electronic monitoring, perimeter surveillance, alarm systems, and communication monitoring strengthen institutional security. These measures are expressly provided for under Section 28 of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019, although implementation has been uneven.

Contraband Prevention

Intelligence operations help identify smuggling methods involving inmates, visitors, contractors, and corrupt personnel. Routine searches, informant networks, electronic screening, and intelligence analysis significantly reduce contraband.

Prevention of Escapes

Security intelligence identifies escape preparations, unusual inmate behavior, weaknesses in infrastructure, and external criminal support, allowing preventive intervention.

Combating Organized Crime

Correctional intelligence disrupts prison gangs, organized criminal networks, extremist recruitment, drug trafficking, financial crimes, and communication between inmates and outside criminal organizations.

Inter-Agency Collaboration

Information sharing among the Nigerian Correctional Service, Nigeria Police Force, Department of State Services, Armed Forces, EFCC, NDLEA, and other

agencies enhances intelligence effectiveness and national security. Recent efforts have emphasized strengthening these partnerships.

Challenges

Major challenges include:

- ❖ Inadequate intelligence infrastructure.
- ❖ Overcrowded custodial centres.
- ❖ Corruption among some personnel.
- ❖ Poor funding.
- ❖ Insufficient intelligence training.
- ❖ Limited technological capacity
- ❖ Weak inter-agency coordination
- ❖ Aging security infrastructure.
- ❖ Insider threats.
- ❖ Incomplete implementation of statutory security provisions.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The findings of this study demonstrate that correctional intelligence is an indispensable component of effective security management within Nigerian custodial centres. The study revealed that intelligence gathering, surveillance technologies, inmate classification, and inter-agency collaboration significantly contribute to preventing prison escapes, curbing contraband trafficking, and disrupting organized criminal activities. These findings are consistent with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2017), which argues that intelligence-led prison management enables correctional authorities to anticipate and prevent security threats before they escalate into serious incidents.

The study further established that intelligence gathering through informants, staff observations, electronic surveillance, intelligence gadgets, and behavioral monitoring enhances the ability of correctional administrators to identify escape plans, detect prison gangs, monitor radicalization, and prevent violence within custodial centres. This supports the position of Andrews and Bonita (2017), who emphasize that offender risk assessment and intelligence profiling are essential tools for identifying high-risk offenders and reducing institutional security threats.

The deployment of intelligence gadgets such as Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV), biometric identification systems, body scanners, X-ray scanners, electronic access control systems, mobile phone detection devices, digital intelligence databases, and artificial intelligence-assisted surveillance has transformed correctional security from a reactive approach to a proactive, intelligence-driven system. These technologies improve surveillance, facilitate evidence collection, strengthen access control, and enhance decision-making. However, the findings indicate that many Nigerian custodial centres continue to experience inadequate technological infrastructure due to insufficient funding, poor maintenance, and obsolete equipment.

The study also found that inmate classification plays a critical role in preventing escapes and organized crime. Proper separation of high-risk offenders, gang

members, violent extremists, and vulnerable inmates reduces opportunities for criminal collaboration and institutional violence. This finding aligns with the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model advanced by Andrews and Bonita (2017), which emphasizes individualized offender assessment as a basis for effective correctional management.

Another major finding is that contraband trafficking remains one of the greatest threats to custodial security. Mobile phones, illicit drugs, weapons, money, and other prohibited items continue to enter correctional institutions through visitors, contractors, and, in some cases, corrupt officials. Intelligence-led searches, electronic screening devices, surveillance systems, and internal investigations have improved contraband detection; nevertheless, corruption, overcrowding, inadequate search equipment, and staff shortages continue to undermine these efforts.

The study further revealed that organized criminal networks increasingly exploit custodial centres as operational bases for coordinating kidnapping, terrorism, cybercrime, drug trafficking, armed robbery, and financial crimes. Illegal communication devices enable some inmates to maintain contact with criminal associates outside correctional institutions. Consequently, intelligence-led monitoring of inmate communications, visitor interactions, financial transactions, and gang activities has become indispensable for protecting both institutional and national security.

Inter-agency collaboration emerged as another significant determinant of correctional intelligence effectiveness. Cooperation between the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCOs), Nigeria Police Force (NPF), Department of State Services (DSS), Armed Forces of Nigeria, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and other security agencies strengthens intelligence sharing and coordinated responses to security threats. Nevertheless, bureaucratic bottlenecks, inadequate communication systems, institutional rivalry, and limited information-sharing mechanisms continue to impede effective collaboration.

The findings also highlight several persistent challenges confronting correctional intelligence in Nigeria, including inadequate funding, overcrowded custodial centres, obsolete infrastructure, corruption, insufficient intelligence personnel, limited technological integration, poor staff welfare, and incomplete implementation of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019. These challenges reduce the effectiveness of intelligence operations and expose custodial centres to escapes, riots, contraband trafficking, and organized criminal activities.

The findings strongly support the assumptions of Systems Theory, which underpins this study. Systems Theory views correctional institutions as integrated organizations whose effectiveness depends on the interaction of intelligence units, correctional personnel, technology, policies, institutional leadership, and external security agencies. Weaknesses in any subsystem—such as poor intelligence gathering, inadequate surveillance equipment, corruption, or ineffective inmate classification—reduce the effectiveness of the entire correctional system. Conversely, strengthening each component enhances institutional resilience, improves intelligence-led decision-making, and promotes safer custodial administration.

CONCLUSION

Correctional intelligence is indispensable for maintaining secure, orderly, and effective custodial centres in Nigeria. Intelligence-led security management enables early detection of escape plots, disrupts contraband trafficking, and weakens organized criminal networks operating within correctional facilities. Although the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 provides a comprehensive legal framework for intelligence and modern security measures, practical implementation remains constrained by inadequate funding, outdated infrastructure, overcrowding, corruption, and limited technological capacity. Strengthening intelligence capabilities, deploying modern security technologies, enhancing staff professionalism, and improving collaboration among security agencies will significantly improve custodial security while supporting rehabilitation and contributing to national security. Effective correctional intelligence should therefore remain a strategic priority for the Nigerian Correctional Service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Fully implement Section 28 of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 by deploying CCTV, body scanners, electronic monitoring systems, alarm systems, and secure perimeter infrastructure in all custodial centres.
2. Strengthen intelligence units through specialized training in intelligence analysis, investigations, counterintelligence, cyber intelligence, and organized crime detection.
3. Improve intelligence sharing among the Nigerian Correctional Service and other national security agencies through secure communication platforms and joint operations.
4. Invest in modern surveillance technologies, biometric access control, drones where appropriate, and integrated offender information systems.
5. Enhance staff welfare, integrity testing, and anti-corruption measures to reduce insider-assisted escapes and contraband trafficking.
6. Improve inmate classification and conduct regular risk assessments to identify high-risk offenders.
7. Increase funding for correctional security infrastructure, intelligence operations, and personnel development.
8. Strengthen internal audit, inspections, and accountability mechanisms to ensure compliance with security standards.
9. Expand research and innovation in correctional intelligence to support evidence-based policy and practice.
10. Develop standard operating procedures for intelligence-led custodial management that align with international best practices.

REFERENCES

Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2017). The Psychology of Criminal Conduct (6th Ed.). Routledge.

Ministry of Interior. Independent Investigative Panel Report on the Nigerian Correctional Service (2026).
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2015). the Nelson Mandela Rules.
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2017). Handbook on Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence.
Manya Manya, N. U. (Year). Correctional Intelligence and Security Management in Nigerian Custodial Centres. ResearchGate.
Manya Manya, N. U. (Year). Cybersecurity and Digital Information Management in Nigerian Correctional Facilities. ResearchGate.
Manya Manya, N. U. (Year). The Role of the Nigerian Correctional Service in Inmate Classification. ResearchGate.
Manya Manya, N. U. (Year). Community-Based Corrections and Non-Custodial Measures under the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019. ResearchGate.
Manya Manya, N. U. (Year). The Philosophy of Offender Rehabilitation in the Nigerian Correctional Service. ResearchGate.
Manya Manya, N. U. (Year). Trafficking in Nigerian Custodial Centres: Security Challenges and Management Strategies. ResearchGate.
Manya Manya, N. U. (Year). The Role of the Nigerian Correctional Service in Agricultural Skills Acquisition and Offender Rehabilitation. ResearchGate.
Manya Manya, N. U. (Year). Electronic Access Control Systems and Crime Prevention in Nigerian Correctional Facilities. ResearchGate.
Manya Manya, N. U. (Year). Artificial Intelligence and Security Management in Nigerian Correctional Institutions. ResearchGate.
Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2017). The Psychology of Criminal Conduct (6th ed.). Routledge.
Bottoms, A. (2019). The Philosophy and Practice of Prison Security. Routledge.
Federal Ministry of Interior. (2026). Independent Investigative Panel Report on the Nigerian Correctional Service.
Nigerian Correctional Service. (2019). Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019.
Nigerian Correctional Service. (2021). Integrated Service Charter.
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2015). United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2017). Handbook on Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence.
.Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2017). The Psychology of Criminal Conduct (6th ed.). Routledge.
Bertalanffy, L. von. (1968). General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications. George Braziller.
Bottoms, A. (2019). Theoretical Perspectives on Prison Security and Correctional Management. Oxford University Press.
Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2019). Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019. Federal Government Printer.

Federal Ministry of Interior. (2026). Independent Investigative Panel Report on the Nigerian Correctional Service. Abuja: Federal Ministry of Interior.

Nigerian Correctional Service. (2021). Integrated Service Charter. Abuja: Nigerian Correctional Service Headquarters.

Nigerian Correctional Service. (2022). Functions and Operational Mandate of the Nigerian Correctional Service. Abuja: NCoS Headquarters.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2015). United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules). United Nations.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2017). Handbook on Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence. United Nations.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2015). Handbook on the Management of High-Risk Prisoners. United Nations.

World Prison Brief. (2024). World Prison Population List. Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research, Birkbeck, University of London.

Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019.

Nigerian Correctional Service. Functions and Mandate.

Nigerian Correctional Service. Integrated Service Charter.