

Ibi Kontein

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Women, Peace and Security; Gender and Security; African Politics; Political Legitimacy; Conflict and Post-Conflict Governance; State Protection and Security Institutions; Democracy and Authoritarian Influence; Survey Research; Political Text and Discourse Analysis

EDUCATION

American University, School of International Service Washington, DC
PhD, International Relations, 2025 to Present

Research focus: women's security, state protection rhetoric, political legitimacy, and conflict dynamics in Nigeria and West Africa.

Baze University Abuja, Nigeria
MSc, International Relations and Diplomacy, Distinction, 2024

Dissertation: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Security of Women in Nigeria's Boko Haram Conflict (2009–2023). Commendation for dissertation excellence.

Babcock University Nigeria
BSc, International Law and Diplomacy, 2020

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistant, Carl LeVan 2025 to Present
American University, School of International Service

- Conduct research on democracy, political violence, foreign authoritarian influence, governance, and strategic competition in Africa.
- Produce literature reviews, archival research, data summaries, and research backgrounders for academic and policy-facing projects.
- Code and analyse qualitative data from policy documents and primary sources for multi-country research on foreign influence and political institutions in Africa.
- Contribute to research on state-society relations, institutional performance, and political stability across Sub-Saharan Africa.

FELLOWSHIPS AND ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS

Doctoral Fellow, Institute on Disability and Public Policy, American University 2026 to Present
Contribute to work on disability rights, policy, data, and rights monitoring, including questions concerning women, security, protection, and disability.

Student Fellow, Center for Security, Innovation, and New Technology (CSINT), 2025 to 2026
American University
Participated in research and policy engagement on technology, security, and governance.

RESEARCH AND WORKS IN PROGRESS

“Performing Protection: State Gender Rhetoric and Women's Rights in Nigeria.”
Working paper examining state protection rhetoric and women's security outcomes in Nigeria.

“Global Autocratization in Africa.”
Work in progress, with Carl LeVan.

“United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Security of Women in Nigeria's Boko Haram Conflict (2009–2023).”
MSc dissertation, Baze University. Commendation for excellence, 2024.

“Criminal Aliens and Real Americans: Discourse Analysis of Trump Administration Immigration Rhetoric.”
Doctoral seminar paper, American University, 2025.

SELECTED CONFERENCES AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- American Political Science Association Annual Meeting 2026
Performing Protection: State Gender Rhetoric and Women's Rights in Nigeria.
- 19th Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP19) United Nations, New York, 2026
Participated through the Institute on Disability and Public Policy, including a side session on AI and data analytics for community engagement and disability-rights monitoring.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Teaching Assistant, Foundations of State/Society 2025 to Present
American University, School of International Service
Support course administration and instruction on state formation, governance structures, and state-society relations.
- Teaching Assistant, Conflict Studies 2023
Baze University, Abuja, Nigeria
Supported undergraduate instruction on armed conflict, insurgency, terrorism, state responses to violence, and institutional capacity in fragile settings.

CREATIVE PRACTICE

- Founder, Writer, Director and Producer, Sabi Arts Nigeria, 2018 to Present
Founded and lead a theatre company producing original work on gender, autonomy, violence, work, religion, conflict, and contemporary Nigerian life. Develop and manage productions from writing and creative development through partnerships, budgeting, production, and performance.
Selected productions: Back For Ground, Waterside, Dear Applicant, Cut and Join.
Selected work has been presented in Nigeria and internationally, including Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, London, and Edinburgh.

PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY WORK

- Women's Rights, Gender-Based Violence and Protection Nigeria / West Africa, 2023 to 2025
Worked on initiatives addressing gender-based violence, women's protection, institutional responses to insecurity, policy engagement, advocacy, and stakeholder coordination.
- Community Education Support Nigeria, Ongoing
Run an education-support initiative providing school-fee assistance and other educational support to primary-school pupils.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Customer Experience Manager, Flutterwave Technologies 2021 to 2023
Led cross-functional teams and managed stakeholder relationships, CRM systems, data-driven workflows, and operational processes supporting international clients across multiple markets.

METHODS AND SKILLS

Research: Mixed-methods research; survey research; quantitative analysis; qualitative coding; policy analysis; archival and document analysis; text and discourse analysis; literature reviews; research synthesis

Data and tools: Afrobarometer data; Microsoft Office; Salesforce; Zoho Desk; Intercom

Additional: Academic and policy writing; project management; stakeholder coordination; public engagement; theatre production

LANGUAGES

English: Full professional proficiency · French: Basic proficiency, ongoing study · American Sign Language: Basic proficiency, ongoing study