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SECURITY GOVERNANCE BRIEF

FOXTROT SHIELD INSIGHTS

Nigeria Moves Closer to State Police—but the Reform Is Not Yet Law

What both National Assembly votes mean, what remains constitutionally required and what organisations should monitor next.

Foxtrot Shield Intelligence Team

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EXECUTIVE ASSESSMENT

The votes represent one of Nigeria's most consequential proposed security reforms since the return to democratic rule in 1999. They do not establish state police by themselves. The quality of the eventual system will depend on the final constitutional text, state-level approval, funding, oversight and professional safeguards.

What has been confirmed

The House of Representatives approved a state-police constitutional amendment proposal on 11 June 2026. The Senate approved its proposal on 24 June 2026, reportedly with the constitutionally required level of support.

This is a major legislative milestone, but it is more accurate to say that the National Assembly has advanced the reform than to say that Nigeria has enacted a state-police law.

What the framework could change

Reported proposals would replace the present exclusively federal structure with federal and state police services operating within defined areas of responsibility. The final allocation of powers should not be treated as settled until the agreed text is officially published.

- Permit states to establish police services through legislation passed by their Houses of Assembly.
- Preserve a federal police service for national, cross-border and other defined responsibilities.
- Give state institutions a role in appointing and overseeing state police leadership.
- Create professional, operational and accountability standards for participating states.
- Provide safeguards intended to limit political interference and abuse.

What must happen next

01 Alignment of the federal texts

Reports describe different clause counts in the House and Senate proposals. The final text must be clear and agreed before transmission.

02 Consideration by the states

The proposal must be transmitted to all 36 State Houses of Assembly and approved by at least 24.

03 Formal enactment

The completed constitutional alteration must be formally enacted and published before it changes Nigeria's policing framework.

04 Implementation legislation

Federal and participating state authorities would still need enabling laws, institutions, funding, recruitment standards and operating procedures.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Stronger knowledge of local communities, languages and threat patterns.
- Faster response to incidents requiring local mobilisation.
- Improved rural and community-level police coverage.
- More locally relevant recruitment and accountability.

RISKS REQUIRING SAFEGUARDS

- Political use against opponents, journalists or civil society.
- Unequal capability between states.
- Jurisdictional conflict between commands.
- Weak training, discipline or human-rights safeguards.
- Unsustainable long-term funding obligations.

What organisations should monitor

- Publication of the final harmonised or concurred amendment text.
- Voting and resolutions by the State Houses of Assembly.
- The states that intend to establish police services.
- Jurisdictional boundaries between federal and state forces.
- Funding, recruitment, training and professional standards.
- Independent complaint, investigation and disciplinary mechanisms.
- Implications for corporate security, travel risk and incident reporting.

Nigeria is closer—but implementation will determine credibility.

The process remains a constitutional reform, not an operational policing system. Success will depend less on the label “state police” than on funding, command clarity, independent oversight, professional standards and respect for human rights.

SOURCE TRAIL

1. State House, “State Police Constitutional Framework Near Completion”, 4 June 2026.
2. National Assembly, Constitution Alteration Process.
3. Channels Television, “House of Representatives Pass Bill on State Police”, 11 June 2026.
4. Associated Press, “Nigeria’s Senate passes bill to allow creation of state police”, 24 June 2026.