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A JOURNAL OF THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY AND RESEARCH ON TERRORISM



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AND RESEARCH ON TERRORISM**

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African Journal on Terrorism aims to create space for robust, rigorous and innovative research and policy-related papers on terrorism and violent extremism, and encourages fruitful intellectual engagement between policy practitioners and academia. In particular, the Editors are looking for empirical, theoretical and policy-oriented articles that recognize the inherently problematic nature of terrorism on the African continent and employ a critical-normative perspective on the subject.

The scope of subject matter of interest for the journal includes conceptual and field research on terrorism, violent extremism, insurgency and radicalization as well as issues related to Human Security and building community resilience in Africa. African Journal on Terrorism provides a forum for the publication of original theoretical and empirical research articles, disciplinary debates and assessments, editorial commentary, special issues and sections, end of mission reports, research notes, announcements and book reviews.



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African journal on Terrorism is a continental, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal. The journal seeks to publish quality grounded research on all aspects of terrorism, counter-terrorism and violent extremism. The journal seeks to provide a platform that encourages critical analysis and sustained reflection of terrorism and violent extremism on the continent.

## **Procedures**

All submitted manuscripts are subject to an initial blind peer-review by the Editors, and, if found suitable for further consideration, to a second peer-review by at least two independent, anonymous expert referees. The Editor In Chief and Editors review the comments from reviewers, and where appropriate communicate them directly to the author. The Editors will inform the author if the original or revised paper has been accepted for publication in the journal.

## **Length and Format**

Authors submitting papers for the consideration of the journal should limit their works to between 5000 and 6000 words, including references, text, all tables and figures. They are encouraged to support their arguments with relevant statistics, pictures and graphical illustrations. The preferred referencing format of the journal is the electronically generated endnotes. The referencing style however, is the Harvard referencing style. Abstract should not exceed 300 words with at least five keywords.

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## Editorial Comment

The ten papers in the immediate past edition of the African Journal on Terrorism (Vol. 11, N°1) focused on security framing. In it, we presented “framing” as “the process of describing and interpreting a complex security situation” with emphasis on asking and answering a number of “W” questions: what happened, to who and by who, where, in what ways, and with what implications? These questions, as argued by us, speak to causative factors and vulnerabilities. The answers to such questions are expected to guide interveners in gaining better understanding of the security threats and deciding on the best ways for dealing with the complex situations. In the present edition of our Journal, the focus is on the competing strategies for responding to cases of terrorism, based on the questions asked at the stage of “framing” the problems. In all, we have ten papers in the edition speaking to the use of kinetic and non-kinetic methods in managing terrorism, insurgency and small scale conflicts including COVID-19 which has now clearly established itself as a critical security most especially in terms of the number of lives lost to it. Five of the papers focus on the Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria. There is a paper on the Delta crisis in the oil-rich South South region of the country. The other papers are on the experiences in Somalia and Cameroun. In all, the papers speak to issues relating to community engagement, proactive national and international interventions. Our hope is that policy makers and students of security studies across Africa, and even far beyond, would find the papers useful for enriching their understanding of the intervention projects around the continent.

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# EXPOUNDING STATE RESPONSE TO TERRORISM IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: THE EXPEDIENCY OF REINTEGRATIVE APPROACH FOR REPENTANT BOKO HARAM COMBATANTS

By : *Aliu Oladimeji Shodunke*

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## ABSTRACT

The Nigerian state has responded to the violence by the Boko Haram sect using both repressive and non-repressive mechanisms encompassing military offensives, declaration of emergency, arrest, detention, deradicalisation, disengagement, amnesty with pay and a host of other counter-terrorism strategies. As a supplement to the above, the option of reintegration of repentant Boko Haram combatants was also mulled. The reintegration program stationed under Operation Safe Corridor handled by Office of the National Security Adviser in collaboration with security-based and relevant government organisations aims to exhibit the soft side of the government towards bringing a lasting and effective solution to the protracted violence. However, this study expounds on the suitability of program in the light of the developments that were concomitant to it under six headings; continuation of attacks, hindrance to anti-terrorism war, perceived injustice and public resistance, fear and lack of confidence in the ceasefire, sustainability in the reintegration program and finally, effectiveness of reintegration program. From observation, it concluded that reintegration of repentant Boko Haram fighters is not appropriate enough to bring an end to the menace. Thus, there should be a policy shift from the program to another counter-terrorism approach which should consist of localisation of efforts, addressing root causes of extremism through advocacy and good governance, intensified military campaign, technology-based models, porosity of border solutions and renewed partnership among countries in the Lake Chad Region.

## Keywords

Boko Haram,  
Counterterrorism,  
Northern Nigeria,  
Reintegration, Terrorism.

## INTRODUCTION

Security threats and development concerns posed by the Boko Haram sect have necessitated some coordinated response from the Nigerian State with both military tactics and non-military approach. While military operation remains the first counterterrorism response deployed by the government (Onuoha et al 2020), meant to weaken the operational structures of the terrorist, the non-military approach encompassing deradicalisation, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration serves to effectively address terrorist ideology and its basis (Ike et al 2020). Thus, there has been a combination of both approaches to truncate the continuation of the threats and their manifestations. To complement the usual military response, the Nigerian government embraced a blueprint for Demobilisation, Reintegration, and Reconciliation (DRR) targeting Boko Haram fighters which is now in synergy and cooperation with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to amalgamate this plan into the existing arrangement for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and its manifestation (International Organization for Migration, 2017). This move aligns with the existing commitment towards stabilisation of affected communities by treating the conflict perpetrators of their criminogenic tendencies and addressing further escalation of the conflict while implementing the tenets of DRR for safe reintegration of interested Boko Haram combatants.

These programmes are planned to inhibit ex-fighters from offending, and they include different approaches such as rehabilitation, financial subsidies, security monitoring, vocational training and education (Ike, et al 2020). When included with moderate religious views, pluralization and multiculturalism facilitate problem-solving goals and restructure the participants' worldviews by exposure to alternative meaning of social and political systems (Salihu and Yakubu, 2021). While the government has emphasized and paid much attention to this approach, there is no compelling evidence establishing the potentiality of reintegration of former combatants as an effective counterterrorism approach. Only an array of studies has suggested this approach. It is against this backdrop this study conceptually examined the suitability of reintegration of repentant Boko Haram combatants and suggest policy ideas to effectively bring an end to the protracted terrorism.

## BOKO HARAM TERRORISM AT A GLANCE

For more than a decade now, the Boko Haram sect has become an albatross to the peace, security and stability of Nigeria and its neighbours of Chad, Niger Republic and Cameroon. Rooted in the ideology of violent and religious extremism to establish an Islamic State, the sect with full name as “Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna. Lid-da’awati Wal-Jihad” (People Committed to the propagation of the Prophet’s Teach-

ings and Jihad) aims to establish an Islamic state governed by Sharia law in Nigeria by any means available at its disposal even at the detriment of national security.

Etymologically, Boko Haram is translated as “Western Education is forbidden, sinful (Adesoji, 2010), though, it employs modern-day innovations and technological advances to perpetuate its violent campaign. The sect further became an issue of security concern in 2009 when the security forces clamped down on the sect’s members, which later resulted in the extra-judicial killing of its leader, Mohammed Yusuf in Police custody and hundreds of members (Agbibo 2013).

After the clampdown, the sect became disordered and went into hiding and then reappear in 2010 as a deadly terrorist group. Due to violence, weaponisation, sophistication and global links with international terrorist groups such as Islamic State (IS), Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al-Shabab among others, it was declared a terrorist organisation by the United States in 2013 (Campbell, 2013). Since then, it has unleashed violence of varying dimensions on both the civilian population and military interests. Furthermore, the origin and continuation of terrorism have been documented to be closely related to religious extremism, poor socio-economic condition, state failure, institutional weakness of the security forces among others. Originally, Boko Haram terrorism was motivated by the quest to impose strict adherence to Islam and its law regardless of people wishes and faith (Abimbola and Adesote, 2012).

From the argument of Iyekekpolo (2018) based on state-centred theory, the rise of Boko Haram militancy could be attributed to the dealings of fractionalised political elites, who in their jostle for power and domination facilitate local militia groups like Boko Haram that have evolved to an international terrorist organisation with captured territories known as a caliphate. In addition to the argument, the country couldn’t harmonise these elites who are different along ethno-religious fault lines. This problem is now being complicated due to the corruption ravaging the military (Onuoha et al 2020). In addition to the above, the prevalent pillage of public resources and the ineffective management of affairs triggers the sectarian violence (Olofinbiyi and Steyn, 2018).

Economically, the elongation of terrorism is being attributed to poverty, unequal access to socioeconomic opportunities and untold hardship (Adesoji et al 2018) which made recruitment into the sect encouraging with a token amount of money. Consequently, it becomes problematic to the peace and stability of the northeast region of Nigeria and the Lake Chad region. Tens of thousands of people have been killed while millions have been displaced away from their dwelling place (Kaiser et al 2020). It has disrupted the country’s development plans due to heavy budgetary allocation meant to bring it to an end (Awortu, 2015). In socio-economic and

development context, the insurgency has led to the loss of USD 9 billion as of 2016 (African News, 2016). Additionally, it has brought educational and learning activities in the northeast states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe into ruins (Mohammed et al 2016) and also created an atmosphere of animosity and distrust between the Muslims and Christians as some Christians still believe that the sect is propagating an Islamic agenda (Johnson, 2013).

## OVERVIEW OF COORDINATED RESPONSE

Much of the coordinated response to the violence by the Boko Haram terror group have over the years, been focused majorly on repressive instruments (airstrikes, ground operations, arrest and detention) and non-lethal mediums (community engagement, offer of amnesty, reintegration, deradicalisation, demobilisation among others). From the beginning, the government responded through the Nigeria Police with roadblocks, arrest and other law enforcement strategies to curb the operational spread of the group. When the violence started full-blown in 2009, Operation Flush came into execution to identify and arrest insurgents fleeing away from Maiduguri and major areas in the northeast and was later replaced with Operation Restore Order two years later (Gana et al. 2018). As the conflict became more virulent and tactful, a Special Military Joint Task Force (SMJTF) comprising of Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Security, the Nigerian Immigration Service and the Defence Intelligence Agency was created in 2011 (Onapajo, 2017; Nnam et al 2018).

As a supplement, a Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) encompassing vigilante groups, hunters and youths known as “Kato da gora” (men with stick) from the conflict zones also came into operation in 2013 (Agbiboa, 2020). Subsequently, a series of military operation has been conducted under different codenames; Operation Boyona, Operation Ruwan Wuta II, Operation Gama Aiki, Operation Deep Punch I and II and Operation Zaman Lafiya. Additionally, Operation Lafiya Dole was introduced to decimate Boko Haram insurgent, free hostage and discover bomb making factories (Vanguard, 2017) and was subsequently replaced with Operation Hadin Kai in April 2021 with the aim of promoting efficiency in counterinsurgency operations in Northeast Nigeria. On January 7 2021, the Nigerian Army added Operation Tuka Takaibango to the existing military operations with the view of adding vigour to Operation Hadin Kai tackling evolving menace arising from continued existence of Boko Haram, its faction; ISWAP and their hideouts (Team Premium, 2021).

During the most violent times specifically in 2014 to early 2015 when the conflict has transcended beyond the shores of Nigeria, a regional military formation tagged Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) which was created in

1998 comprising of militaries from Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Benin Republic was revived (Bala and Tar, 2021; Varin, 2015) to contain the internationalisation of the sect and the threats it poses to the peace and stability of the Lake Chad region.

Furthermore, the government constituted a Panel of Inquiry to ascertain the grumbles of the sect to achieve ceasefire, peace and stability (Onuoha 2012). At the state level, the government showed interest in dialogue with the sect (Aghedo and Osumah 2012). In addition, the Borno State Government ordered the closure of school across the state (Human Right Watch, 2016), to prevent further loss of lives, a response which has taken a negative toll on education and learning. As a response to the persistent attacks, the federal government declared a state of emergency in Yobe, Borno and Adamawa State (Omede, 2011). Legislatively, Nigeria's National Assembly passed the Terrorism (Prohibition and Prevention) Bill 2011 into law to statutorily strengthen security forces in the crackdown against the terrorists (Udeh, 2013) and provides punishment for those convicted and destruction of suspected terrorists dwelling place.

Finally, the government extended the policy response to cater for the vulnerable population with the institution of arrangements for the victims and those prone to crisis. The North East Development Commission (NEDC) was established to coordinate the affairs of reconstruction and development of northeast Nigeria (Campbell, 2018). As poverty and economic hardship drives criminal engagement, the government introduced Social Investment Program in 2016 in form of money for the poor population to address the problem of poverty as a driver of insurgency. The program involves Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) to assist those who belong to the poorest population, N-Power to assist the youth, Government Enterprises and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) that targets artisans, farmers and traders and Home-grown School Feeding Programme which seeks to feed children while in school to boost school enrolment (State House, 2020).

While the efforts mentioned above vary in method and objectives, there have been tangible outcomes such as freeing of captives, reclaiming of territories formerly controlled by the terrorists, resettlement of victims to their place of residence, dislodging of terrorists' enclaves, rehabilitation of repentant fighters among other achievements though marred with institutional corruption ravaging the country's security forces and mismanagement of funds meant to fight terrorism. This is evident in the report by Transparency International (TI) in 2017 that corrupt military officials looted funds through the creation of fake defence contracts, and the proceeds are transferred abroad (Jimoh et al 2017).

## NIGERIA'S DRIVE ON REINTEGRATION OF REPENTANT TERRORISTS THROUGH OPERATION SAFE CORRIDOR

The need to effectively bring an end to Boko Haram terrorism has necessitated proffering of varieties of solutions comprising of military, political and socio-economic approaches but have not created satisfactory outcomes. The failure of the non-military option to reduce the violence necessitated the government to intensify its efforts on the military campaign (Onapajo and Ozden, 2020). Conversely, the failure of the military option has echoed the relevance of deradicalisation strategy as part of the reintegration process. Tagged as «Operation Safe Corridor Program (OPSC)», it was conceived under the general framework of counter-terrorism operations with the aim of deradicalising, rehabilitating and reintegrating ex-fighters of Boko Haram (Felbab-Brown 2018) which came as a result of advocacy for an alternative strategy to the dominant military-based counter-terrorism approach that has been the focus of government. The advocacy for non-military could be traced back to 2013 when there were consistent calls by northerners to the federal government on the need to address the Boko Haram menace politically and socio-economically.

In a bid to put into practice the blueprint for DRR of Boko Haram militants willing to cease fire and embrace peace, the government in 2016 adopted OPSC as 'soft slap' to lure militants away from Boko Haram. It is a multi-agency humanitarian arrangement spearheaded by Defence Headquarters (DHQ) under the Federal Ministry of Defence to encourage terrorists to wholeheartedly renounce their Boko Haram membership and surrender to the state (Pulse Nigeria, 2021). Under this program, terrorist who are judged to be eligible undergo periods of religious reeducation, psychosocial support service, and vocational and skills acquisition training at a military-run facility in Gombe State. Complimentarily, the Borno State Government too facilitates a rehabilitation center for women, children, and elderly people who are associated with Boko Haram directly or indirectly and of low-risk (Brenchenmacher, 2018). According to International Centre for Investigative Reporting (2020), the program is under the leadership of Brigadier-General Musa Ibrahim and personnel were recruited from the following Services,

Ministries, Departments and Agencies (SMDAs);

- a. Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA).
- b. Defence Headquarters (DHQ).
- c. Defence intelligence Agency (DIA).
- d. National Intelligence Agency (NIA) (for Information Gathering and Intelligence Support).
- e. Department of State Security (DSS).



- f. National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) (Drug Addiction Therapy).
- g. Nigeria Correction Service (NCoS) (Spiritual and Psychotherapy, Counselling).
- h. National Orientation Agency (NOA) (Public Awareness and Counselling).
- i. Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) (Profiling and Repatriation of Foreign Ex-combatants).
- j. Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) (Security and Intelligence Support).
- k. Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD) (Family Reunion, Home Visitation and Follow-up Services).
- l. Nigeria Police Force (NPF) (Security, and Intelligence Support).
- m. National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) (DNA Analysis, Biometry, National Identity Card).
- n. National Directorate for Employment (NDE) (Vocational Training Support).
- o. Federal Ministry of Justice (FMoJ) (Administration of Transitional Justice).
- p. Federal Ministry of Human Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADMSD) (Coordination of all Humanitarian Support).
- q. North East Development Commission (NEDC) (Provision of all kind of Support majorly Financial).
- r. Operation Lafiya Dole (OPLD) (Disarmament and screening of eligible OPSC members).

The activities of OPSC enabled concession of over 87 Boko Haram terrorists to the Nigerian Security Forces between 24 August and 13 September 2017, around 760 alleged Boko Haram members discharged to the Borno State Government, 468 persons accused of terrorism released by the court based on lack of evidence with the support of the Office of the National Security Adviser (The Guardian, 2017). While the program has achieved modicum success in exhibiting the soft side of the government towards the insurgents, it is without doubt fraught with negativities.

In the process of recruiting combatants considered as repentant, the classification of such of set recruits is unclear and could possibly undermine the potency of the program. An instance of this challenge is the criteria for classification based on risk level (who should be admitted and who shouldn't be admitted) between low-risk and high-risk individuals which is necessary for entry into the program, stay and possible release. Consequently, interested combatants find it difficult in ascertaining their eligibility into the program after surrendering thereby, creating disinterest in the program (Salihu and Yakubu 2021). The process of DRR is male

centric focusing on males more than females, women and children affiliated with Boko Haram are preferred to be in Internally Displaced Persons Camps without being treated of their horrible experience (Brechenmacher, 2018). However, the program could suffer a consequential setback with this trend as the same female gender was used in the recent past as suicide bombers. Between 2014 and 2018, 468 women were involved in 240 suicide related attacks which resulted into the death of 12,000 people and injury on 3000 individuals (Campbell, 2020).

Another point of worry is the handling of the OPSC which should ordinarily and legally be within the confines of Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) but under the military. According Section 14(1) of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 which explicitly provides for education, vocational training and general rehabilitation of offenders, the process of deradicalizing, reformation and reintegration of repentant Boko Haram fighters should have been among the operational mandates of the NCoS. Regardless of the nature of the offender and the offence committed, all activities of rehabilitation and reintegration should be efforts the NCS will spearhead with synergy from relevant and allied agencies.

## IS REINTEGRATION A SUITABLE OPTION ?

The use of reintegration to put an end to protracted terrorism has generated series of development concerning its effectiveness, public perception/satisfaction/fear, frequency of attacks and has necessitated discourse of varying conclusion. In the light of those developments, this study explains if reintegration is a suitable counter-terrorism option under the following headings.

## CONTINUATION OF ATTACKS

Despite the clemency shown towards the sect by reintegrating repentant members, the campaign of violence is still active with scores of attacks on the civilian population and military interests. Since when the implementation of rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-fighters started, pockets of attack have been launched in towns and villages across northeast Nigeria with much focus on Borno state and border areas, even, to high profile individuals such as Borno State Governor in 2020 (Aljazeera, 2020; Campbell, 2020). In recent years, the decline in violence has been irregular. As the terrorists were forced back into the remote areas, they resorted to the tactics of guerilla-style attacks. The table below present excerpts of the attacks from June 2019 to April 2021 (a period of almost two years).

| Date         | Events  |
|--------------|---|
| <b>2019</b>  |   |
| 17 June      | Konduga suicide bombing killing 30 people and wounding 40.  |
| 4 July       | Attack on a Damboa, Borno killing 5 civilians and 14 soldiers.  |
| 27 July      | Nganzai funeral attack resulting in the death of 65 people in Nganzy, Borno.  |
| 06 August    | Two suicide bombing killing 3 civilians and wounding 8 in Mafa, Borno.  |
| 23 August    | Casualties of 12 villagers by Boko Haram sect raid in Gueskerou, Niger Republic.  |
| 26 September | An ambush leading to the killing of at least 7 soldiers in Gubio, Borno.  |
| 12 December  | ISWAP fighters killed 14 militiamen and a police officer in Northeast Nigeria.  |
| <b>2020</b>  |   |
| 6 January    | At least 32 killed and 35 injured by an explosive blown in Gamboru, Borno.  |
| 9 February   | At least 30 people killed, and many others abducted by militants in Auno, Borno.  |
| 23 March     | At least 50 Nigerian soldiers killed in an ambush near a village in Yobe.   |
| 5 April      | Two Boko Haram suicide bombers killed seven civilians and themselves in Amchide, Northern Cameroon.   |
| 18 May       | Twelve soldiers killed and at least ten more wounded by Boko Haram militants in an attack on their outpost northeast of Diffa, Niger Republic.  |
| 9 June       | June An attack by ISWAP on the herding village of Gubio in Borno State killing at least 81 people, seven people, over 1,200 cattle abducted, and the village destroyed.   |
| 10 July      | 20 soldiers killed, and fire opened on a military convoy near GadaSokoto State.   |
| 2 August     | Attack on an IDP camp in Nguetchewe, Northern Cameroon, killing 16 people.  |
| 28 November  | About 110 civilians, mostly farmworkers killed in Koshebe, Borno.   |
| 11 December  | 344 schoolchildren from and all males boarding school kidnapped in Kankara, Kastina.  |
| <b>2021</b>  |   |
| 8 January    | 14 people killed by suicide bombing through explosives in Mozogo, Cameroon.   |
| 16 January   | ISWAP militants attacked and destroyed a military base in the town of Marte, Borno state killing 7 people and stole weapons, ammunition, and six vehicles. 11 February Nigerian soldiers ambushed in the suburbs of Monguno, Borno through an explosive killing 3 soldiers and wounding several others. |
| 26 February  | A midnight attack on a secondary school in Zamfara abducting least 317 schoolgirls.   |
| 10 March     | An attack on Goniri near the Niger-Nigerian border killing 2 militiamen and burning down several buildings.   |
| 10 April     | An attack on Damasak, killing 6 people including 2 soldiers and 3 soldiers in Maiduguri, the capital city of Borno state.   |
| 25 April     | An attack in Mainok by ISWAP militants, arriving in around 20 vehicles, killing at least 31 Nigerian soldiers after ambushing a military convoy escorting weapon in Borno state.  |

**Source:** Author's Compilation

From the data above, it obvious that the reintegration meant to encourage the militants from continued attack has not mitigated the rampancy of violence. In 2020 alone, 1400 repentant fighters were rehabilitated and reintegrated back into society (Adibe, 2020). If the option of reintegration will bring a ceasefire, then, the spate of attacks would have reduced to a bearable minimum.

## THE HINDRANCE TO ANTI-TERRORISM WAR

The reintegration of ex-Boko Haram terrorists has the potential to thwart the anti-terrorism war. This is more palpable in a situation where those released to the society still serve as spy agents to the sect (CDD, 2017). Consequently, the violence becomes protracted. The death of a former Nigerian Army Colonel who was ambushed and murdered by members of the sect remains instructive (Iroanusi, 2020). According to Adebayo & Matsilele (2019) and International Alert/UNICEF Nigeria (2016), participants in a 19 Focus Group Discussions done in Gwoza, Daboa, Dikwa, Bama and Maiduguri all in Borno state expressed panic and rejection of repentant terrorists back into society actually due to the possibility of reoffending by acting as an accomplice to current fighters. Additionally, it was expressed that the criminogenic tendencies of repented terrorists could still be inherited by their children and relatives thereby grooming future terrorists. Thus, the option of reintegration will be counterproductive towards achieving peace and stability in the troubled areas.

## PERCEIVED INJUSTICE AND PUBLIC RESISTANCE

Given the virulence and violence by the terrorists occasioning wanton level of destruction, it is expected that the reintegrative approach will be greeted with stiff resistance and resentment by the public most especially if the plights of the affected communities are not well attended to. It will be an affront to the sensibilities of the victims. In a study conducted by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) in 2017, those who survived terrorism expressed their dissatisfaction over the attention and support shown to former Boko Haram fighters by the OPSC while the plight of the victims is being neglected. The resistance of the community is more evident in Hassan and Tyvoll's (2018) where a participant emphasised prosecution and retributive justice. Without catering for the needy communities, reintegrating terrorists who have committed voluminous atrocities will be a herculean task. Regardless of the level of deradicalisation of the ex-terrorists, placing the needs of the ex-fighters above affected communities' interest will further aggravate the existing resentful feeling not towards the sect only but also to the government. The programmes are seen as the legitimisation of crime, rewards for violence and needless

sympathy for terrorists while law-abiding individuals jostle for limited socio-economic opportunities (Adebayo & Matsilele, 2019). As a result, the willingness and cooperation of communities needed for successful reintegration become absent.

## FEAR AND LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE CEASEFIRE

Important to the applicability and success of reintegration is the trust and confidence the community members have for ex-combatants that indeed; they are ready to embrace peace. This is more realistic if proper arrangements that could effectively prevent recidivism are provided. It is documented in previous studies that the fear of retaliation from the society and the sect likely increases the propensity to reengage in terrorism (Riley et al 2017). In a practical sense, the repentant fighters tend to re-join the sect to provide themselves security against any reprisal from the community. This continues to frustrate the program as communities still view the repentant fighters as precarious individuals who should not be mixed with law-abiding people.

## SUSTAINABILITY OF REINTEGRATION COMMITMENTS

Putting repentant terrorist backs in the society comes with sustainability burdens. From financing of rehabilitation programmes to the provision of economic and employment opportunities that could effectively reduce the likelihood of recidivism. In Nigeria where the population of the unemployed stood at 33.3% by Q4 of 2020 (Oyekanmi, 2021), providing job and economic opportunities to ex-Boko Haram fighters will constitute an additional burden, thus, sustenance of reintegrative programmes could suffer a consequential setback. This is well explainable in the context of lessons drawn from the amnesty programmes implemented to curtail the large-scale destruction of economic assets (oil and gas installations) of the country by former militants in the Niger Delta Region. The amnesty programmes done for militants in exchange for peace failed to address the root causes of the militancy such as poor infrastructural development, environmental degradation, economic hardship among other causes (Raimi et al 2017). The fear of sustainability was expressed by a participant in Adebayo and Matsilele (2019) that the issue of money and greed constitutes an impediment towards addressing the problem in the region most especially, in a case where there is a change in government. By implication, the reintegration and responsibility as law-abiding citizens hit the rock if the government renege on its reintegration promises thereby precipitating reoffending.

## EFFECTIVENESS OF REINTEGRATION ARRANGEMENTS

The success of reintegrating ex-combatants depends on arrangements in place, sincerity of the government, the readiness of the excombatants and community support. On the side of the government, the OPSC, the public generally nurse distrust due to discontent and corrupt tendencies of its officials. According to an Afrobarometer survey on public trust for government institutions in 37 African countries, it was detected that Nigeria had the least percentage (31%) of public trust (Bratton and Gyimah-Boadi 2016). Undoubtedly, the distrust stems from mismanagement of public funds, emptying of government coffers, institutional wastage e.t.c. and this is perilous to the success of the program as the involvement of the public plays a significant role in fairness and legitimacy (Tobor, 2016).

Furthermore, Omenma et al (2020), noted that ex-combatant who repented and subsequently released back to the society re-joined the sect due to their incapacity to reintegrate effectively. The current economic conditions do not provide opportunities for those earning a living in the informal sector where reintegrated terrorists could key into. There is a lack of proactive arrangement (in form of educational and socio-economic) meant to discourage radicalisation of susceptible youths against easy enrolment into the sect (Onapajo and Ozden, 2020). Also, Nigeria lacks an accurate and reliable database that could be used to monitor the activities and dispositions of the reintegrated terrorists. Thus, effective checks and surveillance are prone to difficulty because of the fragile national identification system. In the lights of the above developments, the efficacy of reintegration becomes an object of uncertainty thereby suggesting possible discontinuation of the program.

## CONCLUSION

Drawing upon existing studies produced on reintegration program in Nigeria tagged “Operation Safe Corridor Program” for repentant Boko Haram fighters and the development concomitant to it, this study conceptually investigated the suitability of such program under six headings. Also, it presented an overview of the sect by highlighting its causes and effects, the response of the government to the sect’s atrocities with much emphasis on both military and non-military approach. The decision of Nigeria to consider a non-repressive approach of reintegration is useful and commendable but determining its suitability must be of utmost importance so as not to further complicate the already fragile situations.

Invariably, the objection to the option of reintegration reeks on many faults the program is engrossed with. There is no clear-cut definition of those who are eligible for DRR. The implementation is one-sided by focusing on male participants only

while neglecting the female ones who have over time facilitated terror acts by suicide bombing. As a way assessment and evaluation for decision and policy making, the undertakings of OPSC which should be open and subjected to academic examination by independent researchers are cloaked with secrecy which leaves opportunity for doubt. Thus, the sincerity of the authorities, the plights of the participants and the effectiveness of the program become subjects of skepticism.

Furthermore, it is evident that the program has not fulfilled the purpose it was conceived for. While reintegrated ex-combatants have sabotaged anti-terrorism war by spying, current members are still unleashing attacks of varying degrees. The program was conceived and is being funded majorly to motivate the sect to cease violence but unfortunately, the troubled areas are still witnessing wanton destruction. Surprisingly, the attack on the military (its formation, logistics, weaponry and members) have increased in recent times. Consequently, this trigger fears in the public that reintegrated members could still be directly or indirectly involved in the violence in the future thereby rendering the program measures unproductive and ineffective. This same reintegration whose effectiveness to the sectarian violence has not yet been established was successful in reducing the spate of attacks on oil installations in the Niger Delta region by militants, although, there are contextual variations in the ideology of the two groups and mode of operations.

Due to treatment offered to the ex-combatant which is seen as preferential while the interest of the affected communities is suffering unexpected neglect, the program has offended the feelings of affected victims and communities and occasioned stiff resistance from the public. This issue is more complicated by failure to fulfil promises made to the ex-combatants and the community. By implication, the option of reintegration is not suitable enough to combat the menace. The approach has not been proved to be successful due to the negative aftermath trailing it

## RECOMMENDATIONS (TOWARDS A POLICY SHIFT)

Shifting away from reintegration to another counterterrorism approach requires the government and policymakers to take all-inclusive steps incorporating solutions for both root and immediate causes of terrorism. Holistically, much of the response rather need to be proactive, not reactive. While addressing the root causes which border on terrorist ideology, religious extremism, poor socio-economic conditions, state institutional failure among others, community engagement remains a pivotal support system in preventing radicalisation, mobilisation and recruitment into the sect. Therefore, sensitisation by clerics, community leaders and stakeholders on the need to embrace socio-religious tolerance should be at the forefront.

If there will be a continued consideration for OPSC even amidst its bulk shortcomings, the authorities should work more on clarity, transparency and sincerity of the program. This could be done by periodic publication of its dealings particularly the statistics of participants and graduates, the modalities of recruitment amongst others. Also, the problem of lack of funds probably due to gross mismanagement should top the agendas of institutional reformation. Considering the unlikelihood of continuation due to change in government, the program should be pursued with support from actors across different political affiliations and intensity to make it attractive to successive administrations. Until these issues are effectively addressed, OPSC is unlikely to live on public support and acceptance. Thus, diminishing state's legitimacy and propensity of implementation of such program in any other part of the country.

Militarily, much vigour should be channelled to the onslaught against the terrorists to decimate their entire operational infrastructures which strengthen them. Additionally, reforming and funding of the security forces to make them operate effectively against emerging threats of terrorism. As a supplement, the repressive efforts should incorporate localisation where the locals (hunters) who are familiar with the terrain and communities' culture would be recruited and armed to support the conventional military in the sustenance of the existing efforts. Using technological innovations, the directives of the Nigerian government to ensure all individuals link their mobile line to their National Identification Number (NIN) is a necessary step towards checkmating nefarious elements. Thus, such initiative should be used as a soft power to obstruct terrorists' communication networks and other mediums being used to nurse their agendas.

On the foreign scene, Nigeria remains a key player in this struggle, there should be a renewed partnership with other member states of the Lake Chad region. The likely challenges constraining MNJTF in its operational mandates should shape policy ideas in the renewal of the partnership. Additionally, it is imperative to address the porosity of the country's border routes with its neighbours and the illegal entry/exit points facilitating an unchecked mobility of armed groups and their accessories. Putting all these into effective and sustainable practice will not only eradicate the fundamentals of terrorism but also obliterate its manifestations towards achieving peace, stability and sustainable development.



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# EFFECTIVENESS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT DERADICALIZATION PROGRAMME FOR BOKO HARAM DEFECTORS

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## ABSTRACT

Although much has been written about the Boko Haram insurgency, the bulk of existing literature focuses on the sect's origin, structure, objective and the Nigerian government's ongoing military response. However, the sect's unceasing spates of attacks had necessitated a review of the Nigerian government's military offensive in favour of non-military solutions. The hope is that adopting the latter would incentivize Boko Haram's commanders to abandon their command post and simultaneously encourage its rank-and-file to defect. In adopting this tactic, the Nigerian government believed it could successfully deradicalize Boko Haram members, halt the sect's growth, and forestall a resurgence. However, despite the articulation of these aspirations, several challenges constrain their fulfilment. These challenges are inter alia, traceable to the complexities of Boko Haram and the internal convolutions of the Nigerian government's deradicalization aspirations. This paper inquires into these convolutions, and in doing so, contributes to the burgeoning literature on Boko Haram's insurgency.

## Keywords

Boko Haram, Deradicalization, Insurgency, Terrorism, JAS, ISWAP.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, Nigeria's territorial integrity has been subjected to internal insurrections and external aggressions on a scale never before seen (*Amao, 2020*). Boko Haram, which drew most of its followers from the Kanuri-speaking tribes

located in the northeastern part of Nigeria, is primarily responsible for these threats (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 75*). To maximize the impact of its atrocities,<sup>1</sup> Boko Haram - also known as the “Nigerian Taliban” (*Ottuh&Idjakpo, 2010, p. 95*) - acted in consonance with Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to undermine Nigeria’s existing governance structures in hopes of replacing it with a perverted form of sharia law (*Gourley, 2012*).

Although the Nigerian government initially responded to the Boko Haram menace with exclusive military actions (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 76 - 81*), its inadequacy necessitated increasing clamours for alternative solutions. Thus, in addition to military offensives (*Omenma et al., 2020 p. 5 - 8*), the Nigerian government began to explore non-military strategies (*Felbab-Brown, 2018 p. 73*). In doing so, the Nigerian government hoped to incentivize Boko Haram’s commanders to abandon their command post and simultaneously encourage its rank-and-file to defect. Through these tactics, the Nigerian government believed it could successfully deradicalize Boko Haram members, halt the group’s growth, and forestall the possibility of a resurgence (*Felbab-Brown, 2018 p. 86*). However, despite these clear aspirations, several challenges had constrained its fulfillment. These challenges are *inter alia*, traceable to the complexities of Boko Haram and the internal convolutions of the Nigerian government’s deradicalization aspirations. By inquiring into these convolutions, this paper contributes to the burgeoning literature on Boko Haram’s insurgency.

To accomplish this goal, this paper has five parts, with this brief introduction as the first. The second part succinctly deconstructs Boko Haram’s origin, composition, and factions to identify its ultimate objectives. The next part analyzes the feasibility of Boko Haram’s aspirations *vis-à-vis* the Nigerian government’s response. Since deradicalization is the ultimate goal of the Nigerian government’s non-military response, the fourth part inquires into it and the bottlenecks that constrain its effectiveness. My recommendations make up the final part.

## **2. BOKO HARAM – ITS IDEOLOGY, OBJECTIVES, ORIGIN AND CURRENT COMPOSITION**

Terrorism is a wholly complicated matter, with over 100 definitions in the existing literature (*Young & Laura, 2014*). Its complexity had necessitated the quest for its distinction from other related violent-production narratives like guerrilla warfare and secessionist movements. While the theme central to all violent-production narratives is the use of unsanctioned violence, the distinguishing characteristic of terrorism is that the violence it employs is usually carried out by non-state actors against victims that are not its primary targets (*Omenma et al., 2020*). By adopting



these tactics, terrorists hope to influence, intimidate and coerce constituted authority to succumb to their political, social and ideological goals (*Ibid.*, p. 2).

Furthermore and according to O'Neill, "terrorism is a type of warfare that employs violence directly against non-combatants in a purposeful, rather than mindless way, in hopes of achieving specific long-term, intermediate and short-term goals" (*O'Neill, 1990, p. 24*). Terrorists usually accomplish these aspirations by clandestinely deploying high-intensity violence to maximize civilian deaths in hopes of instilling fear in the hearts of the populace, which would agitate them to revolt against their government (*Omenma et al., 2020, p. 2*).

From these viewpoints, Boko Haram is undisputedly a terrorist organization. Not only does it rely on high-intensity violence and guerrilla strategies to draw attention to its misplaced grievances, its direct victims, many of whom are non-combatants, are not its primary target (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 73*). Nevertheless, Boko Haram continues to act violently towards and against these non-combatants in hopes of instigating them to rise against the Nigerian government (*Ibid, p. 75*). By this, Boko Haram seeks to achieve its principal objective of overthrowing Nigeria's sextant quasi-liberal constitutional order in hopes of replacing it with one based on a perverted form of Islamic law.

While the preceding has been Boko Haram's central yearning since 2009, the Nigerian government did not seriously perceive the sect's clamouring as a threat. However, this lackadaisical attitude changed in 2010 after Abubakar Shekau replaced Mohammed Yusuf as Boko Haram's leader. Upon assuming the leadership mantle of the sect, Shekau simultaneously amplified Boko Haram's clandestine high-intensity violence beyond the confines of its original stronghold in Borno state and expanded the victims of its sporadic violence from government security forces to civilians (*Amao, 2020, p. 6 - 7*). By 2013, under Shekau's leadership, Boko Haram had carried out sufficient high-intensity and earth-shattering barbaric violence that the Nigerian government had to accord Shekau the notoriety he craved (*Ibid*).

According to a report provided by General David M. Rodriguez - the then Commander of the United States African Command – Boko Haram's mayhems drew the attention of al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, and the Islamic State, all of whom subsequently extended a hand of fellowship to the sect in pursuit of global jihad (*Guitta & Simcox, 2014, p. 6*). Based on these connections, the United States, Canada and the European Union joined Nigeria to designate Boko Haram as a terrorist organization (*Ibid*). The said designation, rather than deter Boko Haram emboldened it. The sect proceeded to bomb a bus station in the nation's capital, killing scores of travellers (*John Campbell, 2014*). By midnight on that same day, the sect carried out its most prominent attack yet. It invaded an all-girls secondary school in Chibok, Borno

State, and kidnapped 276 of its students, who are colloquially known internationally as the Chibok girls (*Tharoor, 2014*). Disgusted by Boko Haram's brazenness in this stead, the African Union, United Nations, and some western countries, including Australia and the United Kingdom, immediately designated Boko Haram as a terror group and proscribed its activities (*Guitta & Simcox, 2014*).

These countries and international organizations were particularly apprehensive that unless nipped in the bud, the budding transnational dimension of Boko Haram's insurgency is likely to destabilize countries geographically located within the Lake Chad Basin and create a new hotbed for terrorists in the West and Central part of Africa (*Onapajo et al., 2012*). To confront this possibility, the international community, led by the United States, collectively offered financial aid and intelligence gathering expertise to support the Nigerian government's counter-terrorism efforts (*Iwuoha, 2019*).

Still, Boko Haram, under Shekau's leadership, was undeterred. The sect strengthened its relationship with the Islamic State. Convinced of their synergy, Al-Baghdadi availed Shekau with funds, logistic support and sophisticated military hardware to amplify the impact of Boko Haram's high-intensity violence in Nigeria (*Amao, 2020, p. 9*). Yet, this metamorphosis of Boko Haram contradicts its original, though erroneous, perception by most Nigerians, many of whom were initially sympathetic to and supportive of the group's original aspirations of confronting corruption in governance and challenging the socio-economic neglect of Nigerians inhabiting the northeastern part of the country (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 75*).

## 2.1. FROM A SEEMINGLY HARMLESS AGITATION GROUP TO A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION – THE EVOLUTION OF BOKO HARAM

Although general contestation exists about Boko Haram's origin, there are inferences that its emergence is traceable to the Maitatsine riots of the 1980s and the subsequent religious and ethnic crises that followed.<sup>2</sup> At its foundation by Mohammad Yusuf in 2002, Boko Haram had no specific name. While some of Yusuf's followers referred to the group as "Yussufiyyah,"<sup>3</sup> others simply called it "Ahulsunnawal'jama'ah Hijra."<sup>4</sup> The uncertainty of its early nomenclature notwithstanding, Boko Haram was merely a religious group with a school and a mosque where Yusuf extolled Muslim faithful to return to a purified practice of Islam according to the doctrines of Salafism (*Umar, 2011*).

However, unknown to its earliest conscripts, Yusuf had other concealed objectives. His real plan was for the group to be a conscripting ground for future jihadists to confront and eliminate the influence of Western education, culture, precept, and

norms in Nigeria (*Amao, 2020, p. 4*). Yusuf's ultimate aim of turning Nigeria into an Islamic caliphate ingrained in radical Salafism (*Anonymous, 2012*) was succinctly expressed by Thurston, who noted that:

“Boko Haram’s theology and politics encompass more than hatred for Western influence. Its worldview fuses two broader ideas. First, there is a religious exclusivism that opposes all other value systems, including rival interpretations of Islam. This exclusivism demands that Muslims choose between Islam and a set of allegedly anti-Islamic practices: democracy, constitutionalism, alliances with non-Muslims, and Western-style education. Second, there is a politics of victimhood. Boko Haram claims that its violence responds to what it sees as a decades-long history of persecution against Muslims in Nigeria. Boko Haram sees state crackdowns on the sect as the latest manifestation of such persecution.” (*Thurston, 2016, p. 5*) (Emphasis supplied).

Boko Haram’s emergence and expansion are also attributable to its false narrative that Nigeria is losing ground to idolatry forces (*Ibid, p. 6*). Specifically, the group views the pledge of allegiance to the Nigerian flag and the Nigerian national anthem recitation as secular acts of state worship that challenge Allah’s monotheism (*Campbell, 2014, p. 2*). Yusuf coupled this narrative with another - he averred that Nigeria’s constitutional order is currently a nest of corruption and a tool in the hands of the Western infidel countries, and as such, is currently incapable of fulfilling the dictates that Allah requires of Nigeria. (*Ibid*). Through these chronicles, Yusuf convinced his followers that jihad is not only imminent but necessary to actualize Allah’s decrees and rescue Nigeria from impending doom (*Ibid*). Consequently, Yusuf imprinted on Boko Haram’s recruits a duty to utilize the Salafism version of Islam to purify Nigeria and rid it of corruption (*Hansen, 2017*).

To authenticate this claim, Yusuf argued that the sacred texts of the Qur’an contain everything necessary to rebuild Nigeria. He subsequently borrowed ideas and postures from other Salafi-jihadis to give intellectual weight to his stance, thereby presenting his movement as part of a broader tradition (*Thurston, 2016, p. 6*). He specifically drew references from Islamic countries like Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran, “where the doctrines of Wahhabism, Salafism, the non-violent Izala movement, and other fundamentalist sects are dominant” (*Omenma, 2019, p. 2*). To increase its conscription and brainwash its recruits for suicide missions, Yusuf expanded on Salafist ideologies and religious exclusivism. And by so doing, Yusuf turned the erstwhile innocuous religious group into a full-fledged militant organization with a religious undertone (*Omenma, 2019, p. 2*). Thus, within a short period, Boko Haram had mutated into a mini-radicalized group that was not disinclined to use high-intensity violence to achieve its objectives.

By early 2009, Nigerian security agencies monitoring the Yusuf-led organization concluded that it had become a ground-zero for illicit activities in Bornu State (*Idahosa, 2015, p. 5*). Consequently, the then Nigerian President - Dr. Ebele Goodluck Jonathan - ordered the Nigerian Police to disband the group in a security exercise code-named *Operation Flush* (*Ibid*). Characteristically, the Nigerian Police executed this command with excessive force. Yusuf's followers pushed back. The uprising that ensued led to the death of over 800 civilians and the destruction of Boko Haram's spiritual fortress - the *Ibn Taymiyya Masjid* mosque in Maiduguri, Bornu State (*Amao, 2020*).

The Nigerian security forces subsequently arrested Mohammed Yusuf, who later died in police custody under suspicious circumstances (*Ibid*). These events complicated matters for the Nigerian government, whose inconsiderateness to civil disobedience and unrest was generally abhorred by the Nigerians, especially those marginalized (*Nwankpa, 2017, p. 101*). Instead of culminating in Boko Haram's demise, Yusuf's death fuelled its growth, as many of his sympathizers became more amenable to Boko Haram's ideology and open to the pursuit of an aggressive armed campaign against the Nigerian government (*Nwankpa, 2017, p. 96*); (*Amao, 2020, p. 6*). Therefore, some have argued that Yusuf somewhat succeeded in creating the environment of violence, which he deemed essential to actualizing his ultimate objective to replace Nigeria's existing constitutional order with one based on Islamic law (*Thurston, 2016, p. 5-6*).

## 2.2. CRACK IN ITS COHESIVENESS – THE SPLINTER OF BOKO HARAM

After Yusuf's death, the group temporarily disbanded. In reality, its new leader, Abubakar Shekau, renamed the group *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnar Lidda 'awati Wal-Jihad* (JAS),<sup>5</sup> which he transformed into "a network of underground cells with a hidden leadership - a situation that today makes any military solution illusory" (*Marchal, 2012, p. 3*). Shekau's restructuring of Boko Haram changed it into a deadly organization whose atrocities - as indicated by Nigeria's current status as the second most impacted country in the world by terrorism (*Global Terrorism Index, 2020: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism, 2019, p. 18*) - is now a tale of legends.<sup>6</sup>

Shekau's leadership style and JAS's indiscriminate employment of high-intensity violence against its victims without distinguishing its original sympathizers (i.e. Kanuris civilians and Muslims) from its perceived enemies (Non-Kanuris, non-Muslims and government security forces) led to a crack in its ranks (*Felbab-Brown, 2018; Zenn, 2019, p. 76*). In 2013, two of Shekau's lieutenants - Khalid al-Barnawi and Mamman Nur, led other disillusioned JAS members to form *Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis*, also known as Ansaru (*Zenn, 2014*)<sup>7</sup> However,

Ansaru was short-lived. By late 2014, an internal tussle within its leadership over MammanNur's more moderate stance and allegations that he had secretly met with a former Nigerian President to dialogue a ceasefire with the Nigerian government allegedly led to his murder (*Amao, 2020, p. 7*).

Leaderless and miffed by Nur's betrayal, the Ansaru faction rejoined Shekau-led JAS, and Shekau's control over Boko Haram was again absolute (*Ibid*). However, snippets of dissatisfaction continued, but no one expressed their opinion for fear of being killed by Shekau (*John Campbell, 2019*). By 2016, the staggering successes of the Nigerian military offensive against the sect increased apprehension amongst its members and emboldened some of Shekau's lieutenants to break away from JAS (*Ibid*). Abu Abdullah Ibn Umar al-Barnawi led some of these lieutenants and other Boko Haram foot soldiers to switch allegiance to the Islamic State. These breakaways subsequently swore fealty to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and became the Islamic State of the West African Province (ISWAP) (*Ibid*). Although Shekau had privately mused over the idea of forcefully taking over the control of ISWAP, the realization that ISWAP has an estimated 3500-5000 well-trained soldiers - thanks to the support of the Islamic State - which overshadows JAS's roughly 1500-2000 ragtag conscripts, constrained him from embarking on such a quest (*International Crisis Group, 2019*).

### 2.3. JAS AND ISWAP – A VISIBLE DISTINCTION WITHOUT MUCH DIFFERENCE

While the Shekau-led JAS preserves the more rigid stance on who an apostate Muslim is and the necessary consequential reprimand, al-Barnawi's ISWAP appears more moderate (*John Campbell, 2019*). Expectedly, ISWAP viewed the JAS faction "as acting brutally, in violation of the Islamic doctrine, and using methods which undermine support for Islamist militancy in the region". (*International Crisis Group, 2019*). In contrast, JAS questions ISWAP's religious genuineness, arguing that al-Barnawi is not adhering to a sound doctrine of authentic Salafism (*Ibid*). However, the ISWAP faction remained unperturbed. In its desire to regain the popularity that Boko Haram enjoyed during its formative days under Yusuf's leadership, ISWAP adopted a more humane approach to social governance. According to the International Crisis Group:

"ISWAP seeks to provide Islamic education (Western-style education is banned) and basic health care. ISWAP has at its command a number of medical specialists, both militants and captives, who serve not just as fighters and their families, but also local civilians, sometimes for a fee, sometimes for free. The group procures medicine in raids on health centres or purchases it in

Cameroon and Nigeria's Yobe state. ISWAP can organise the transfer of seriously ill patients to hospitals in neighbouring countries. The improvement in access to health care has been particularly felt around Lake Chad, where previously, it was minimal" (*Ibid*).

Further to the preceding, ISWAP provides the necessary infrastructure, credit for businesses and allowances for unemployed youths within its territories (*Crisis Group, 2017, p. 6-7*). Through these means, ISWAP gained and continues to gain a modicum of legitimacy in the communities it controls (*Amao, 2020, p. 11*). Exerting its influence, ISWAP imposes taxes on people within its territorial control, and inhabitants willingly pay because ISWAP guarantees their safety and continues to create a convivial environment that enables their businesses to thrive (*Crisis Group, 2017, p. 9*). This reality contradicts the void in good governance that these communities experienced while under the control of the Nigerian State and JAS. The local inhabitants themselves best express their perception of life under ISWAP's control. According to Reuters, one such inhabitant noted that:

"If you are a herder, driver, or trader, they won't touch you - just follow their rules and regulations governing the territory. They don't touch civilians, just security personnel. Rather, they protect locals from Boko Haram, something Nigeria's army cannot always do" (*Kingimi & Carsten, 2018*).

Researchers from the International Crisis Group who personally interviewed some of these local inhabitants reaffirm this, reporting that:

"[ISWAP] treats local Muslim civilians better than its parent organisation did, better than its rival faction, Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awatiwal-Jihad (JAS), does now, and in some ways better than the Nigerian state and army have done since the insurgency began in 2009. It digs wells, polices cattle rustling, provides a modicum of health care and sometimes disciplines its personnel whom it judges to have unacceptably abused civilians" (*International Crisis Group, 2019*).

In contrast, JAS continues to maintain its draconian governance over the populace under its control. According to Felbab-Brown:

"[Since 2009], Boko Haram ... has centred its rule almost solely on brutality and predation, providing few to no services to populations in areas it controls. ... Under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram's rule turned exceedingly brutal, with widespread killings, executions, rapes, torture, burning of villages, and the forced recruitment of thousands of men and boys as soldiers, and of women and girls as slaves or brides for Boko Haram

fighters. It has imposed a backward and doctrinaire version of *sharia* that has included cutting off the limbs of thieves and demanding that Christian families pay extra taxes, such as *jizya*, a protection tax for non-Muslims who have been conquered. Meanwhile, Boko Haram has provided almost no social services and public goods to populations in areas it controls. Its rule has been essentially one of wanton destruction and plunder. Boko Haram has [also] targeted any alternative sources of authority and rule, by either co-opting or often executing village elders, such as *bulamas* and *lawans*, or imams who condemn its rule. Killing local authorities has often been among its first acts in a newly conquered locale” (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 77-78*).

Although ISWAP has acted benevolently toward the civilian population living within its territorial control, it has continued to inflict enormous casualties on the Nigerian military. Moreover, ISWAP’s alliance with the Islamic State had created a pipeline that supplies the group with sophisticated weaponry that rival and, in certain instances, is superior to that of the Nigerian security forces (*Omenma et al., 2020, p. 3*). ISWAP’s access to advanced military hardware further reflects a distinction between it and JAS. While Shekau’s JAS is notorious for indiscriminate suicide bombings carried out by children and women, ISWAP employs confrontational engagement with the Nigerian government (*Omenma et al., 2020*). The differences between both groups notwithstanding, JAS and ISWAP continue to rely on high-intensity violence to challenge the Nigerian government’s authority in hopes of actualizing their principal objective of Islamizing Nigeria (*Thurston, 2016, p. 4-5*).

### 3. FEASIBILITY OF BOKO HARAM’S DEMAND VIS-À-VIS THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT’S RESPONSE

As explained in the preceding part, Boko Haram’s ultimate objective is to replace Nigeria’s constitutional order with one based on Islamic law (*Ibid*). This aspiration is broadly achievable by two different means. The first is to alter the provisions of the Nigerian constitution to reflect this desire, as done in countries like Somalia (*Article 2, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia, 2012*) and Mauritania (*Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, 2012*). The second method is to unleash high-intensity violence against the Nigerian state to cripple its extant constitutional order. While success in the former would be difficult, Boko Haram, until recently, has made serious inroads with the latter approach.

For Nigeria to become an Islamic state, it must adopt Islam as its official religion and grundnorm. However, this aspiration remains constrained by the provisions of the constitution, which *inter alia*, mandates Nigeria’s secularity by expressly forbidding

the adoption of any faith as Nigeria's official religion (*Section 10, 1999 Constitution of Nigeria*). While an alteration to the constitution could rectify this hindrance, the high threshold required for its success (*Ajaja, 2020, p. 84-86*), especially when such constitutional change is the aftermath of pressure from an Islamic fundamentalist group, would impact its actualization. For clarity, the 1999 Constitution provides that:

“(2) An Act of the National Assembly for the alteration of this Constitution, not being an Act to which section 8 of this Constitution applies, shall not be passed in either House of the National Assembly unless the proposal is supported by the votes of not less than two-thirds majority of all the members of that House and approved by resolution of the Houses of Assembly of not less than two-thirds of all the States” (*Section 9, 1999 Constitution of Nigeria*).

Nigeria's national legislative body, which comprises a 109-member Senate and a 360-member House of Representatives (*Ibid, Sections 48 and 49*), is somewhat evenly occupied by Muslims and Christians (*Grim et al., 2018, p. 60-61*). Since a successful constitutional amendment would require the support of a minimum of 73 Senators and 240 Representatives (*Ajaja, 2020, p. 84-86*), Boko Haram must secure the support of all Muslims in the legislative chambers and some Christians. Even if this challenge somehow becomes surmountable, it is doubtful that such an amendment would receive the necessary support from the legislative chambers of Nigeria's federating units as constitutionally prescribed.

Moreover, considering the deep distrust that had resulted in previous religious violence between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria (*Canci & Odukoya, 2016; Massaro, 2019*), it is less likely that Boko Haram would succeed in encouraging all Muslims or any Christian in the Nigerian legislature to back such an amendment. This unlikelihood becomes pronounced when the notorious conservative nature of the Salafi-Wahabi version of Islamic law, its propensity to subjugate women, and its draconian punishments for offences come into view (*Harnischfeger, 2008*). Accordingly, any proposal to Islamize Nigeria via constitutional means would likely be met with stiff opposition from Christians and moderate Muslims. Their opposition could, *inter alia*, be traceable to their general unwillingness to live in and swear allegiance to an Islamic state, especially one that came into existence due to pressure from a terrorist group affiliated with other international extremist organizations. Since achieving this objective is doubtful, Boko Haram could not and did not rely on this approach.

The alternative approach, which Boko Haram adopted with some measure of success between 2009 to 2014, was to unleash high-intensity violence against the Nigerian state (*Amaliya & Nwankpa, 2014*). During that period, the government's



military response suffered several initial setbacks due to a lack of expertise in guerrilla warfare and counterinsurgency offensive (*Bappah, 2016*). Post-2015, the Nigerian military had found its rhythm. Accordingly, it stepped up its counter-terrorism offensive in furtherance of its solemn responsibility to defend Nigeria from internal insurrections and external aggressions. While spates of terrorism still exist, the Nigerian government has questionably ensured that Nigeria's constitutional order remains firmly rooted in constitutional ideals (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 81*). By late 2018, the government had dislodged Boko Haram from about 80% of the vast swath of territories it controlled in Nigeria's northeastern part ("*MNJTF: So Far So So*", 2019). Also, civilian casualties reduced from an all-time high of over 2,000 in 2015 to 573 in 2018 (*Ibid*). Despite this reduction, spates of high-intensity violence persist (*Adebayo & Abrak, 2020*). Their persistence highlights the need for an alternate or additional pathway through which Boko Haram's rank and file could defect (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 73*) and subsequently become deradicalized (*Onapajo & Ozden, 2020*). The next part of this paper inquires into this.

#### 4. ATTAINING DERADICALIZATION – WHAT DOES IT MEAN ?

To understand deradicalization, we must first comprehend radicalization. Radicalization is simply the process by which people develop a mindset that becomes amenable to extremist views over a period (*Neumann, 2003, p. 874*). It is also the means that "increasingly motivates [a person or a group of people] to use violent means against members of an out-group or symbolic targets to achieve behavioural change and political goals" (*Doosje et al., 2016, p. 79*). A top United States anti-terrorism expert has averred that radicalization involves "the process of adopting an extremist belief system, including the willingness to use, support, or facilitate violence, as a method to effect societal change" (*Threat of Islamic Radicalization to the Homeland, 2007, p. 4*). Although the concept had long been in existence, it attained greater prominence after the September 11, 2001, infamous attacks (*Ibid; Schmid, 2013*). Since then, it has become the norm for nation-states to rely on radicalization to stereotype and alienate members of a particular group whose views differ broadly from what is obtainable in the mainstream (*Borum, 2011*).

However, radicalization may not necessarily be synonymous with violent extremism (*Ducol, 2015*). For instance, while radicals might either be violent or not, extremists are always violent (*Schmid, 2013, p. 9*). Therefore, while radicals might be redeemable, extremist militants generally are not (*Ibid, p. 10*). This distinction seems to be the most significant difference between JAS and ISWAP. While JAS's blanket reliance on high-intensity violence against all non-JAS members is akin to extremism, ISWAP's narrow focus on the Nigerian security forces while broadly acting humanely towards people under its control presents it as a radical group

(Kingimi & Carsten, 2018). Hence, it is likely that ISWAP's members might be more amenable to deradicalization than members of JAS. However, as this paper will subsequently explain, the Nigerian government's deradicalization program, either due to constrained resources, general disinterest, or non-comprehension of its importance, had not made any attempt to validate or invalidate this hypothesis. This failure is problematic because JAS's defectors, who are presumably extremists, would likely require a longer, detailed and more comprehensive deradicalization program and process than ISWAP's defectors. Yet, the Nigerian government subjects both JAS and ISWAP defectors to similar deradicalization programs. Such subjection might render the deradicalization programs of the Nigerian government, especially as it pertains to JAS defectors, inchoate.

It is equally crucial to note that three factors - push, pull, and personal - generally drive radicalization (Vergani et al., 2018). Push factors refer to societal structural defects like bad governance, poverty, unemployment, socio-economic inequality, illiteracy, political exclusion, marginalization, and state repression, which thrust individuals into violent extremism (Hassan, 2012; Vergani et al. 2018, pp. 8-9). The pull factors are the attractive attributes of an extremist group that motivate individuals to join it (Vergani et al., 2018, p. 9-11), while personal factors refer to specific individual characteristics like troubled childhood, psychological disorders, or traumatic experiences that make people vulnerable to radicalization (Ibid). The radicalization of Boko Haram members is a combination of the pull, push and personal factors.

Deradicalization, which is the Nigerian government's ultimate objective, is a wholly complicated subject and literature on it has generally avoided providing a working definition (Hafal, 2017, p. 124). As a result, it has been used interchangeably with anti-radicalization and counter-radicalization.<sup>8</sup> In the absence of a generally accepted definition, it could simply be the reverse process of radicalization (Hafal, 2017). Also, it might merely be an effort aimed at preventing radicalization from taking place (Bjørge & Horgan, 2009, p. 3) or the process of changing an individual's belief system through the rejection of radical ideologies and violence-prone beliefs (Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists, 2010, p. xiii).

Duchesne, in his contribution to the discourse, argued that deradicalization could be perceived as the process of “prevent[ing] further escalation of violence [and] create[ing] the conditions conducive to dialogue” (Dechesne, 2011, p. 287). Deradicalization could also be described as “a package of policies and measures designed and implemented by authorities in order to normalize and convince groups and individuals who have already become radicalized or violent extremists to repent and disengage from violence”. (El-Said, 2015, p. 10). Therefore, successful deradicalization programs generally encompass preventive measures capable of

discouraging conducive environments for radicalism to thrive while simultaneously teaching repenting radicals the means and skills necessary to embrace mainstream values (*Schmid, 2013, p. 14*).

When nation-states engage in deradicalization, they generally rely on psychological, socio-economic and religious counselling (*Schmid, 2013*). In the global north, the government's deradicalization program focuses primarily on economic assistance and counselling (*Koehler, 2015, p. 127*). In contrast, the deradicalization strategies of predominantly Muslim states rely heavily on theological teaching by scholars and clerics, who are versed in anti-extremist ideologies (*Barret & Bokhari, 2009*). For example, in predominantly Muslim populated countries like Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Singapore, Indonesia, and Iraq, the government's deradicalization program primarily comprise dialogue between Islamic clerics and detained radicals on the appropriateness or otherwise of unleashing violence against unarmed civilians (*Kruglanski et al., 2014, p. 8*). In their theology, these Islamic clerics gently and carefully draw the detainees' attention to portions of the Qur'an that prohibit violence. In this way, the clerics bring to the awareness of such radicals that their conduct contradicts Islam's teachings (*Ibid*). Without denigrating the radicals' aspiration for jihad, these clerics rely on Qur'anic texts, hadiths (teaching of Prophet Mohammed) and sunnah (conducts of the Prophet) to show that real jihad, as carried out by the Prophet, encompasses selflessness, compassion, good deeds and most importantly peaceful conduct. The preceding contradicts the high-intensity violence that radicals have been exposed to and taught as the pathway to accomplishing jihad.

The above-noted approach to deradicalization has achieved some modicum of success. For example, the leaders of *Gammah Islamiyah* - a terrorist organization - after several discussions with some of these Islamic clerics, not only became deradicalized, but they subsequently published about 25 volumes of exhortations to their followers to abandon high-intensity violence in its entirety and embrace real jihad (*Ibid*). Similarly, Sayid Imam Al Sherif (Dr. Fadl), the leader of *al-Jihad* (AJ), another terrorist group operating in Egypt, also became deradicalized after his dialogue with some prominent Islamic clerics versed in anti-radical teachings and strategies (*Ibid, p. 84*). Relying on his deradicalization experience, Dr. Fadl subsequently authored a volume and conducted tours around Egyptian prisons that house radicals to advocate against religious extremism and violence (*Ibid*).

In contrast, the deradicalization program of governments in the global north is staggered. For example, in the United Kingdom, deradicalization is mostly carried out by the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) (*Disley et al., 2016, p. 5-8*). Although MAPPA was initially conceptualized in the year 2000 to manage violent and sexual offenders, the government extended its mandate to accommodate radicalized British subjects (*Ibid, p. vii*). MAPPA is a collaborative effort be-

tween eleven United Kingdom government agencies. It comprises law enforcement, psychiatrists, health care authorities, municipal authorities, border authorities, job center agents, offending youth teams, local housing authorities, educational authorities, and electronic monitor service providers (*Ibid*, p. 5). These respective agencies collectively seek to address the root of radicalism in an individual by simultaneously catering to his socio-economic needs and psychological defects (*Ibid*). Further to this aspiration, these agencies share information relating to an offender undergoing deradicalization under MAPPA (*Ibid*, p. 9-14). Through these means, these agencies map out a risk management plan (*Ibid*, p. 21-27) to assess the likelihood of recidivism (*Ibid*, p. 15-20).

Unfortunately, since MAPPA commenced operations, Muslim communities had been its primary focus, and the outcry from the British citizens necessitated a government inquiry, and that inquiry currently renders indeterminate MAPPA's impact (*Clutterbuck*, 2015, p. 14-15). However, stakeholders collectively agree that the program had the potential to deradicalize radicalized British subjects (*Ibid*, p. 31). It is crucial to note that MAPPA is tailored after the deradicalization programs of Norway, Sweden and Germany, which have all recorded measurable and impactful successes (*Bjorgo et al.*, 2009).

From a psychology perspective, deradicalization implies a cognitive trajectory that focuses on “changing the cognitive framework of radicalized individuals to discourage their involvement in violence and re-integrating them into society” (*Trip et al.*, 2019, p. 438). These cognitive openings arise due to vulnerabilities that an individual experiences, which results in his or her receptiveness to a radicalized way of thinking (*Wiktorowicz*, 2005). These vulnerabilities are also attributable to a radicalized individual's perceived exposure to elements of unfairness and injustice (*Moghaddam*, 2005). Nevertheless, existing empirical evidence reveals that while low levels of education or disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds create cognitive openness to radical thoughts, they do not necessarily breed radicalism (*Krueger & Malečková*, 2003).

Researchers have developed several theories like the integrated threat theory (*Hogg & Adelman*, 2013), uncertainty identity theory (*Hogg & Adelman*, 2013), reactive approach motivation theory (*McGregor et al.*, 2013), and compensation control theory (*Kay & Eibach*, 2013), to inquire into the psychology of radicalism and deradicalization. However, this paper limits its brief inquiry to Rational Emotive Behavioural Psychotherapy (REBT). REBT, itself, draws inspiration from the above-mentioned theories to analyze the deradicalization process (*Trip et al.*, 2019, p. 441).

REBT analyses three main interconnected aspects of human functions - beliefs, feelings, and behaviours - to evaluate the cognition of radicals undergoing deradicalization (*Ibid*). Its starting point is to inquire into a person's perception of reality and the inference such person reaches based on his/her perception. It does this by innocuous interrogations carried out by seasoned psychotherapists who peel the emotional disturbances (anger, anxiety and depression) of such radicalized persons (*Ibid*). These psychotherapists then carefully reintroduce other emotions that reinforce such radical's basic but civil desires to replace their current emotional distress core (*DiGiuseppe & Tafrate, 2010*).

According to Ellis, radicals' three principal demands are often expertly addressed through the above-noted tactics (*Ellis, 2003, as cited in (Trip et al., 2019, p. 441)*). For example, in his analyses of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the United States, Ellis sums up these demands that the terrorist holds as follows: "(i) they [the terrorists] absolutely had to punish America (self-demands); (ii) Americans must absolutely not oppose their standpoint (other demands); and (iii) the world should be fair and just (world-demands)" (*Ibid*). By replacing these demands, which form the emotional distress cores of radicalized individuals, they can begin their journey to emotional civility.

Like the other deradicalization psychology programs mentioned above, REBT has several limitations (*Horgan & Braddock, 2010, p. 268*) that constrain its success (*Schmid, 2013, p. 43*). Nevertheless, empirical evidence reveals that within the past decade, members of about 648 radical groups have successfully undergone deradicalization via the REBT method.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, a detailed analysis of these groups further reveals that previous deradicalized members played instrumental roles in encouraging existing members to defect while simultaneously assisting the government to better understand and counter such groups' activities.

#### 4.1. DERADICALIZATION PROGRAM OF THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT

The deradicalization program of the Nigerian government is broadly rudderless. It did not emanate from preconceived policy initiatives nor any coherent psychological strategy. Instead, it came into existence due to agitations by Nigerians and other researchers who had estimated that between 2011 and 2013, the Nigerian military's counteroffensive had killed over 1,000 Nigerians, many of whom were non-combatant (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 81*). In response to criticism that the Nigerian government's military offensive had become as barbaric as the high-intensity violence that Boko Haram employed, the administration of then-President Goodluck Jonathan sought alternative means to confront the Boko Haram insurgency (*Omenma et al., 2020, p. 6*). This quest led the then National Security Adviser,

Colonel Sambo Dasuki (Rtd.), to engage in failed shuttle diplomacy to persuade community leaders in the northern part of Nigeria to seek means of opening dialogues with Boko Haram (*Ibid*). However, the unwillingness of these community leaders to explore the prospect of dialogue with Boko Haram ranged from fear for their safety and security and the dilemma of appearing to know who the members of Boko Haram are and where they can be found (*Nwankpa, 2017, p. 98*).

As a result, the government did not achieve any significant success in its de-radicalization objective until 2013, when the Nigerian National Assembly amended<sup>10</sup> the earlier Terrorism Prevention Act.<sup>11</sup> The amendment to the Act delegated the coordination of all counter-terrorism efforts of the Nigerian government to the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA). Immediately after the Act was passed, the ONSA established the *Presidential Committee on Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of Security Challenges in the North* (*Onapajo & Ozden, 2020, p. 11*) and the *Office of Deradicalization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration for Individual Defectors* (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 88*), with a mandate to develop a framework to identify and simultaneously commence negotiations with Boko Haram leaders (*Ibid, p. 86*). However, these initiatives had no remarkable impact because the amnesty it offered was rejected by Shekau, who proudly averred that Boko Haram had done no wrong and thus had no reason to seek or accept amnesty from the Nigerian government. In contrast, Shekau, who then was still in total control of Boko Haram, averred that it was the government that ought to seek amnesty from it (*Ibid*).

In 2014, the ONSA created the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) to serve as a think-tank to develop policies and strategies that will be essential in identifying and proposing solutions to the push, pull and personal factors that encourage people to join Boko Haram (*Omenma et al., 2020, p. 6-7*). To enhance the delivery of this objective, the ONSA under NACTEST further created a Countering Violent Extremism agency, code-named *National Security Corridor* (NSC), to counter Boko Haram's recruitment and rehabilitate its defectors.<sup>12</sup> The Corridor classified Boko Haram defectors into three categories: low-risk, medium-risk and high-risk. Defectors considered low and medium risk would be taken to the rehabilitation camps to undergo rehabilitation therapies for 12-weeks, and subsequently re-integrated into the Nigerian society (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 91*). In contrast, high-risk defectors will be prosecuted, with promises of some "yet-to-be-determined leniency for handing themselves in" (*Ibid, p. 86*). However, those captured will not be eligible for leniency (*Ibid*).

It is crucial to note that the Nigerian government did not issue any policies, directives or white papers explaining the criteria for determining how defectors would be classified. Nevertheless, the program continued until its termination in 2015 by the Buhari administration, which took over Nigeria's governance (*Omen-*

ma et al., 2020, p. 4). In her handover notes, the program coordinator alleged that the program had successfully rehabilitated about 305 low and medium-risk Boko Haram defectors (*Ehikioya, 2015*), though no researcher has independently verified these claims!

In 2017, the government bowed to the pressure from the international community and reintroduced the deradicalization program, which it renamed *Operation Safe Corridor* (OSC). The detail of the re-established deradicalization program and the process that defectors undergo during deradicalization was and is still shrouded in secrecy. Whether this approach is strategic or merely an attempt to muddle accountability of the program is currently indeterminate. What is, however, visible as the most significant improvement of the OSC over the NSC was the establishment of a distinct camp in Bulumkutu, Maiduguri, Borno State, to exclusively house women and children recently liberated from Boko Haram territories (*Onapajo & Ozden, 2020*).

While the previous NSC subjected these women and children to a similar deradicalization process as other adult male defectors, the new OSC treated them with compassion. This commendable approach might be a result of the government's realization that most women, if not all, who have participated in and lived within Boko Haram's territory, must have been compelled to do so (*Anonymous, 2012*). This author premises the rationale for the preceding on Boko Haram's Salafi-Wahhabism fundamentalism, which ordinarily views women as possessions to own and discard at will (*Ibid*); hence, women, within Boko Haram's territorial control, are likely to be victims and not defectors in the strict sense (*Ajayi, 2020*). Similarly, the government might also have perceived that any child conscripted into Boko Haram is evidence of its failed responsibility to protect such a child from all forms of exploitation as statute and international instruments prescribed (*Part III, Child Rights Act, 2003; Onapajo, 2020*). Therefore, the government could not refer to such a child, whether liberated by the Nigerian security forces or otherwise, as defectors in good conscience.<sup>13</sup>

The above-mentioned humane approach is yielding fruit. For example, on May 10, 2020, the government announced that some Boko Haram members personally dropped 72 members of their families, comprising 33 women and 39 children, at Ngala town's entrance in Ngala Local Government Area of Borno State for rehabilitation<sup>14</sup> (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 74*). This conduct diverges from the known norms of Boko Haram. Hence, it is doubtful that the members who presented their families sought the approval of their commanders. In this author's view, the isolation of the sect, which had negatively impacted conscription into its ranks, coupled with the unceasing military offensive of the Nigerian security forces that continue to shrink the sects' membership, had created a state of apprehension that a government's

invasion and total collapse of the sect is imminent. Thus, fearing that their families might become collateral damage from the imminent invasion, these Boko Haram members decided to present them to the government for rehabilitation hoping that the Nigerian government would treat them with compassion, thus ensuring their safety and security.

Despite this improvement and the fact that the OSC, unlike the prior NSC, categorized defectors into two - “high-risk” and “low-risk” (*Felbab-Brown, 2081, p. 74*), the OSC still failed to explain the yardstick for determining the defectors’ classifications. All that the OSC prescribes is the prosecution of defectors classified as high-risk. In contrast, those classified as low risk are to undergo rehabilitation and subsequently be re-integrated into society (*Ibid*). Felbab-Brown succinctly stated the problems associated with this murkiness:

“The lack of clarity and consistency in screening processes also means that a potential male escapee or defector has little way to predict whether he will be classified as low-risk or high-risk if he turns himself in . . . . This [uncertainty] potentially undermines the effectiveness of the defectors’ program, as it can generate fears among potential defectors that defecting entails risking their lives twice – first, by running away from Boko Haram and risking its violent retaliation, and second, as a result of mistreatment by the Nigerian military” (*Ibid*).

The complications associated with the uncertainty in a potential defector’s likely classification notwithstanding, when defectors arrive at the rehabilitation camp situated in Mallam Sidi, Gombe State, the ONSA employees screen them by collecting their biometric and DNAs. The ONSA does this to monitor them during their stay in the camp and after their reintegration into the Nigerian society (*Ibid*). However, it is also unclear if the government inquires into the defectors’ affiliation to ascertain whether they are ISWAP members or JAS conscripts. This lack of clarity is troubling because it complicates inquiries into the validity or otherwise of the hypothesis that extremist organizations like JAS are less amenable to deradicalization than radicalized groups like ISWAP. Thus, it constrains the determination of additional efforts, if any, that the government ought to exert in the deradicalization of JAS defectors as distinct from ISWAP converts.

Furthermore, irrespective of prior affiliations, all defectors leave the deradicalization camp after a 12-week stay (*ibid, p. 91*). As stated earlier, details of the government’s deradicalization program are shrouded in secrecy, and little evidence exists to determine whether the secrecy is strategic or merely an attempt to muddle accountability. Irrespective of which it is, the ONSA releases the defectors to their immediate families or community leaders, who become obligated and responsible



for monitoring their activities and reporting any perceived recidivism to the Nigerian government (*Onapajo & Ozden, 2020, p. 12*). To limit the propensity for recidivism, the government simply provides defectors graduating from deradicalization camps with an unfixed amount of money for their sustenance (*Ibid*). The Nigerian government neither provides further deradicalization follow-up nor maintains a central database that documents recidivism. In the government’s view, the 12-week period is adequate to detoxify defectors of all traces of radicalism, even if some of the defectors were extremists (*Ibid*).

Despite some of the gaps identified above, the government’s deradicalization program had encouraged the defection of Boko Haram members. For instance, between September 2017 to 2018, about 760 defectors graduated from the Gombe rehabilitation camp (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 87*). Within that period, over 1,800 women and children liberated from Boko Haram underwent the mandatory 8-week rehabilitation stay at the Bulumkutu Center (BRC) in Maiduguri, Borno State (*Ibid*). As of November 2019, reports reveal that an additional 157 defectors were undergoing deradicalization at the Gombe camp (*Bukarti & Rachel, 2019, p. 16*). Furthermore, in May 2020, the government alleges that an additional 603 defectors have completed the deradicalization process, while another 280 are currently in the program (*Onyedinefu, 2020*). These continued defections, coupled with the Nigerian security forces’ continuous military actions and difficulties the group currently faces in conscription, are undoubtedly thinning Boko Haram’s composition (*Bukarti & Rachel, 2019, p. 16*).

## 4.2. LIMITATIONS OF THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT’S DERADICALIZATION PROGRAM AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Aside from the absence of a conceptual framework for the government’s deradicalization program, several other bottlenecks deplete its potential success. The most significant of these challenges is the societal perception of defectors, which results in misgivings (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 94*). These misgivings are generally traceable to the exclusion of communities that will house defectors who graduate from the deradicalization camps. According to Felbab-Brown:

“Reinsertion and reintegration remain the most significant challenges. [Unfortunately,] little dialogue has taken place with communities about how to define justice and forgiveness, who should be sent to prison, and who should be granted leniency. Neither has there been much dialogue with local communities about how the defectors’ program is constructed, and how the reintegration phase should be designed, such as whether to include apologies and truth-telling” (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 91*).

Research has revealed that defectors are intermittently attacked in their integrated communities by community members, vigilante groups and affiliates of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) (*Onapajo & Ozden, 2020, p. 13*).<sup>15</sup> Similarly, rehabilitated women and children are unceasingly blamed and ostracized by community members for waiting to be liberated by the Nigerian government rather than escaping or dying in the process, as some of their fellow captives had (*Ibid*). As a result, defectors (rehabilitated women and children inclusive) live in constant apprehension. This state of fear blurs the benefits of their defection and deradicalization compared to when they were affiliated with Boko Haram or under its servitude (*Ibid, p. 14*). As a result, some of these defectors, especially those who fared better under ISWAP's control, might be nostalgic and actively seek means to return to the sect. Rectifying this problem will require the Nigerian government to exert deliberate efforts to address the community's collective trauma. Thus, while defectors undergo rehabilitation, their communities must also be subjected to psychological and sociological treatments to prepare them for a broad-based communal reconciliation with defectors (rehabilitated women and children inclusive).

Additionally, the disengagement and deradicalization process is weakly structured. In addition to not having a reconciliation component (*Ibid, p. 15*), the deradicalization program comprises a 12-week period devoid of a transition safety net crucial to sustaining the rehabilitated defectors (*Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 107*). Even some military operators in Nigeria have expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of this approach. They have broadly argued that 12 weeks is insufficient to deradicalize anyone, much less those exposed to Boko Haram's extremist indoctrinations (*Ibid*). Still, after the 12 weeks program, the government release the defectors into the Nigerian society without providing a framework within which they could atone for the pain they had caused their communities (*Onapajo & Ozden, 2020, p. 15*). In the absence of avenues for atonement, defectors have to confront a harsh social environment where they are excluded, judged, and intermittently attacked. As a result, these defectors might soon return to terrorism where they are accepted, acknowledged, and more economically buoyant, thereby making a mockery of the government's deradicalization process (*Ibid*).

In the same vein, the deradicalization program is yet to gain the public confidence of Nigerians. While it is reasonable to moderate trust when engaging with terrorists because of the general notion that terrorists' are generally untrustworthy, the major bottleneck in this context is not the lack of trust for the Boko Haram terrorist but of the Nigerian government itself. Onapajo and Ozden succinctly captured this when they stated thus:

“it has been a Herculean task for the willing defectors to trust the government over promises of not only rehabilitation and reintegration but also protection

from their erstwhile leaders who would feel betrayed by their defection. The issue of trust also affects the societal perception of the supposed deradicalized individuals as the communities' struggle to trust the government institutions and processes in allaying their fears about the former combatants, hence their continued rejection of those individuals". (*Ibid*, p. 14).

To address this challenge, the Nigerian government must deliberately act to restore the confidence of victims of the Boko Haram insurgency and Nigerians in general to its anti-insurgency offensive and deradicalization program. Accomplishing these objectives would require the entire deradicalization program to become proactive and not merely reactive, as it is currently. Furthermore, the pull, push and personal factors that drive people to become amenable to extremist views must be identified and swiftly addressed. Additionally, the deradicalization program must be expanded to encompass psychological and religious detoxifications.

Since most Boko Haram members do not understand English, the government must exert more effort to train psychologists that would participate in the detoxification processes in the Fulani-Hausa language. Doing so would ease the interactions between the sect members undergoing deradicalization and the personnel participating in their deradicalization process. If the preceding noted limitations are not swiftly addressed, the entire deradicalization program would be an exercise in futility.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This paper contributes to the growing literature on Boko Haram's insurgency by inquiring into the Nigerian government's deradicalization pursuit. Unfortunately, this inquiry is an aspect that has received little consideration from researchers. A primary reason for this might be the secrecy of the deradicalization program, which constrains inquiries into it. While the government had clearly articulated its deradicalization objectives, these objectives, despite concerted efforts, have remained broadly unattainable. Its current infeasibility is attributable to the manifest weakness of its design and implementation. To address the above-noted problem, the government must reconceive the entire program and embrace inter-collaborative partnerships from the private sectors to provide the needed support and expertise that the government might require.

The government must also deploy strategies to address the problem of perception affecting the re-acceptance of returning deradicalized individuals in their respective communities. This admonition is imperative because deradicalized individuals currently face mounting difficulties in their integration into their respective communities. If left unaddressed, these deradicalized individuals might return to or bind together to

conceptualize and give life to their version of extremism. Since defectors are shunned by their communities, the optimal way to confront this challenge is to expand the deradicalization program to include victims and communities. Thus, while defectors undergo detoxification of radical views, victims and their communities should be psychologically prepared to confront and possibly forgive defectors.

Finally, the communities where the defectors are to be integrated must also receive all forms of socio-economic, sociological, psychological, theological, and philosophical assistance needed to balance the likely tumult that might intermittently erupt between defectors and the communities where they are integrated. Similarly, the reinsertion and reintegration processes must also be strengthened, with substantial empowerment programs created to engage the deradicalized individuals upon their exit from the deradicalization camps.

Moreover, the deradicalization program must distinguish between defectors and emphasize psychological detoxification, which must be continued even after defectors graduate from the deradicalization camps. While none of these would guarantee the eradication of radicalism among defectors, their adoption would visibly improve the deradicalization program's prospects. Deradicalization is not pure science. As a social science concept, it must continuously navigate the often-conflicting human desires to arrive at an outcome that continuously enhances the deconstruction of radicalism in radicals. Only by doing this will the benefits of deradicalization of Boko Haram defectors that transcend the mere downing of arms become visible.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 *Between 2009 to date, Boko Haram's illicit activities had resulted in the death of over 37,000 Nigerians, created a humanitarian crisis that has displaced over 2.3 million Nigerians, and forced an additional 7.1 million Nigerians to rely on humanitarian aid. See (Amao, 2020) at 4.*
- 2 *For a detailed analysis of the Maitatsine riot, see (Hickey, 1984) at 251.*
- 3 *Literally translated to mean followers of Yusuf – the group's founder.*
- 4 *Meaning Congregation of Followers of the Prophet Involved in the Call to Islam and Religious Struggle. See (Okereke, 2011) at 450.*
- 5 *Translated to mean "People committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad." See (Felbab-Brown, 2018) at 73.*
- 6 *(Adesoji, 2010; Agbibo, 2012; Akinola, 2015; Aro, 2013; Bamidele, 2012; Guitta & Simcox, 2014; Hansen, 2017; Nwankpa, 2017; Okereke, 2011; Omenma et al., 2020; Sampson, 2013).*

- 7 For a detailed analysis of Boko Haram's factional feuds see generally (Zenn, 2019).
- 8 While counter-radicalization is a term "used to describe methods to stop or control radicalization as it is occurring", anti-radicalization is "used to describe methods to deter and prevent radicalization from occurring in the first place". see (Clutterbuck, 2015).
- 9 (Clutterbuck, 2015) at footnote 31. Of 268 completed 'endings', 43% were as a result of politics, 40% from policing, 10% from victory and just 7% from military actions. See S. Jones, M. Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for countering Al Qa'ida*, RAND Corporation (2008), <http://www.rand.org/publications>.
- 10 (Terrorism Prevention (Amendment) Act, 2013).
- 11 (Terrorism Prevention Act, 2011).
- 12 <https://ctc.gov.ng/about-ctc/> accessed on June 12, 2020.
- 13 Admittedly, most of Boko Haram's suicide-bomb attacks have been carried out by women and children, however research indicate that these women and children were either browbeaten into performing such acts or brainwashed. See (Felbab-Brown, 2018) at 78.
- 14 <https://dailytrust.com/troops-recover-72-people-boko-haram-abandoned-in-borno> Accessed on February 20, 2021.
- 15 One author reported that some defectors who graduated from the deradicalization program have been lynched. See (Felbab-Brown, 2018, p. 94).

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# BOKO HARAM AND COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS IN NIGERIA: EXPLICATING THE MILITARY ORDEAL

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## ABSTRACT

In the counterinsurgency operations to decimate Boko Haram, the Nigerian military has experienced several attacks by insurgents leading to ambush on, injury and death of officers, destruction of military formations and loss of weaponry. These actions are targeted to have impacts on the insurgency's intensity, period and aftermaths and are designed by the insurgents to operationally weaken the military in its violent contest for territories and establishment/propagation of a caliphate. Inquisitively, this article focuses on the reactionary attacks. It illustrates that between January and August 2021, such attacks indirectly depict that the existence of the Boko Haram group is threatened thus warranting the annoyance of the group in form of retaliatory attacks against the military. Additionally, a strategically significant triumph for the military in its conventional warfare against insurgents to halt the protracted violence in the conflict zones is observable. Although marred with institutional deficiencies, the tide of victory seems to be with the military. However, much is needed to address fundamental issues incapacitating the military in the performance of its statutory mandates.

## Keywords

Boko Haram,  
Counterinsurgency,  
Insurgency, Military,  
Nigeria.

## INTRODUCTION: WHAT NECESSITATED MILITARY OPERATIONS ?

For over a decade, the Boko Haram insurgent group posed significant albatross to the peace, security and national development objectives of not only Nigeria but also countries of the Lake Chad Basin (See Figure 1 below) which has compelled

the state's actions in form of Counterinsurgency (COIN) engagements. Like in every other country experiencing violent conflict, the military acts when such violent conflict threatens beyond the capacity of the conventional law enforcement agencies. Boko Haram as an insurgent group attracts conventional warfare from the military due to its incalculable atrocities. It is responsible for the humanitarian crisis and development degradation in northeast Nigeria experienced in the last decade. Rooted in the hatred for western culture, it aims to overthrow the current socio-political order, displace the central government and establish an Islamic State (Omenma and Hendricks 2018). Having the name «Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna. Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad» (People Committed to the propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad), the group has capitalized on the vulnerability of the populace to launch its terror campaign that peaked between 2012 and 2015 but now significantly degraded by the vastly grander state forces.

*Figure 1: The Map of Lake Chad Basin showing the riparian countries*



*Source: United Nations Geospatial, <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/lake-chad-basin>*

Starting as a small group of radicals in Maiduguri, Borno State in 2002 with Mohammed Yusuf, a radical pseudo-Salafist cleric who was born in Girir village of Yobe state as its founding father (Onuoha, 2012), it has become a globally designated terrorist organization attracting local, national, regional and international interventions. Its first combat was noticed in Kanema village in Yobe State in December

2003 where some Yusuf's disciples who were dissatisfied with the socio-political order launched attacks against the locals, largely Muslim elites whom they viewed as corrupt and satisfied with the order (Pham, 2016). In furtherance to this, they clashed with the locals over fishing rights and farmland which led to police intervention, looting of stores, freeing of the suspects from police custody and death of two officers (Gana et al 2018). However, some accounts have it that this incident marked the group's debut into weaponry and insurgency (Bamidele, 2016). This violent action that occasioned arrest and or killing of some members forced the surviving ones into hiding.

The armament, lethality and sophistication of the group which occurred in 2009 as a result of a violent uprising in Maiduguri warranted police action. During the process of quelling the uprising which involved arrest, detention and other law enforcement engagements, the extrajudicial killing of Yusuf in police custody and the death of hundreds of his disciples (Ojo, 2020) escalated deep-rooted grievances and quest for vengeance that motivated the beginning of the full-blown insurgency. In the aftermath of Yusuf's death, Abubakar Shekau assumed leadership of the group and since then, it has not only become virulent and sophisticated but has also expanded its operational base beyond the shores of Northeast Nigeria to the Lake Chad Basin. It pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Mickler et al 2019) and has gotten foreign assistance in terms of training, funding, fighters and logistics from other terrorist groups such as Al Shabab, and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (Zenn, 2018). Consequently, it has successfully consolidated its strategic dominance of conflicts and violent extremism in West Africa with a splinter group known as Islamic State of West Africa (ISWAP) headed by Abu Musab Barnawi heading a portion of the group while the rest headed by Shekau.

The group employs psychological warfare (filming caning and beheading of captives), the use of social media, political propagandizing, exploitation of issues of poor leadership/governance, socio-economic disgruntlement across communities in northeast Nigeria to sway the vulnerable population in violent extremism and insurgency (Omeni, 2018). Even though, the use of social media and advanced war technologies negates its opposition stance on westernization, they are however instrumental to its threat exhibition.

Complementarily, it oppressively engages in irregular warfare tactics including mobilization of militants, suicide bombing, kidnapping, ambush hostage-taking among others. The associated complexities and its concomitances have made some analysts to refer to its continued existence as a hybrid security challenge (Comoli, 2015). Notable of these attacks is the infamous Baga massacre occurring between January 3 and January 7 2015 and the ones involving the United Nations building on August 26 2011, Nyanya Motor Park on April 14 2014 and the Nigerian

Police Headquarters on June 16 2011 all in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (Blanchard, 2015; Iyekekpolo, 2016). The focus of the group tilted towards the young persons with the notorious abduction of 276 schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno on April 14, 2014, and 110 female students in Dapchi, Yobe in 2018 (Alimba, 2018).

While the above have happened, over 2 million of people have been displaced away from their homes and tens of thousands killed (Kaiser et al 2020). The United Nations Refugees Agency (2021) estimated 3,019,318 to be the population of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) which geographically spreads across countries of Lake Chad area with Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and Niger having 72.6%, 13.3%, 11.3% and 2.8% respectively. Additionally, 12.5 million victims need humanitarian assistance with 5.3 million suffering from food insecurity. The World Food Programme (WFP) noted that thousands of children could die of malnutrition related ailment occasioned by Boko Haram devastation (Tull & Weber, 2016). Socio-educationally, the conflict led to the disruption of education and learning in Yobe, Adamawa and Borno State. It also incited animosity among Nigerians along a religious fault line (Johnson, 2013). The cost of the conflict was estimated to be worth \$9 billion (African News, 2016).

The transnational routes that have previously facilitated the transit of goods and businesses were disrupted due to persistent attacks on commuters, communication infrastructures and security personnel thereby impeding economic growth and development (Iweze, 2020). As commerce, transportation and trading have been severed occasioning high cost of transportation from the northeast to the southern parts of the country, the Foreign Direct Investment (FDIs) inflows especially in the northeast significantly declined as the violence degenerated into a full-blown insurgency in 2009 from 8.8 billion USD in 2011 to just over 3 billion USD in 2015 (Ikpe, 2017). Agricultural activities too have had a fair share of the horrible experiences. Due to the destruction of an estimated 6000 farming households by the insurgents, the production of staple foods and cultivation of cash crops fall below average in Yobe and Borno State (Mustapha, 2014).

The Nigeria State and its international partners have engaged in various counterterrorism approach to end the conflict using various repressive and non-repressive approaches. It first started with policing – stop and search, periodic patrol, arrest, detention and others. Subsequently, the military swung into action with different operations – Operation Flush, Operation Restore Order (1,2 and 3), Operation Deep Punch, Operation Boyona, Operation Ruwan Wuta II, Operation Gama Aiki Operation Zaman Lafiya, Operation Last Hold, Operation Lafiya Dole (now renamed Operation Hadin Kai), Operation Tuka Takaibango.



From the regional level, member states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission jointly form a regional military known as Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) which was strengthened with the deployment of thousands of troops to urgently decimate the threats and internationalisation of Boko Haram in the sub-region and West Africa by extension. Official counterterrorism and counter insurgency efforts of the Nigerian Government is complemented by community engagement as civilians in the affected communities have taken it as communal responsibility to support the state in the fight against insurgency. They are made up of agile men « Kato Gora » (men with stick) who formed a force known as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) to sustain the military campaign (Agbiboa, 2020).

While the above interventions have been executed, the general kinetic approach the state majorly relies on is enmeshed with shortfalls and projects the Boko Haram group an infallible ‘wild cat’ the military cannot obliterate. However, the military has been experiencing incessant attacks from insurgents. Much of the studies focusing on Boko Haram’s threat, sophistication and attacks concentrated on the civilian population only while neglecting the horrible experience of the military (particularly, the army) in the hands of the insurgents. Thus, it becomes imperative to give the experience a scholarly consideration with the view of picturing the reality. Thus, this study brings to the fore, series of attacks that have been launched on military interests (formations, members and weaponry). It also examines other gray areas within the military that could have sustained the terrorist attacks and these include institutional corruption, inadequacy in weaponry, poor officers’ welfare among others.

## **BOKO HARAM’S TACTICAL EVOLUTION AND SOPHISTICATION**

In line with its objective to overthrow the secular government and propagate an Islamic State (Dawla Islamiya), the Boko Haram began its struggle right inside Kanema village in Yobe State. Mohammed Yusuf, the founder established a training camp and mosque in the village for his members initially known as the *Nigerian Taliban*. It was there that he conscripted fighters, formed religious police and a large agricultural plantation for food production (Bodansky2015; Asfura-Heim and McQuaid, 2015). Subsequently, the security forces responded to the group following their attacks on public properties such as the arson on Local Government Secretariat building, Government Lodge and a police station in Damaturu, Yobe State, Bama and Gwoza, Borno State. In the aftermath, Yusuf’s camp was invaded by the police in October 2003 and consequently, his absconding to Saudi Arabia while his followers escaped to Mandara mountain along Nigerian-Cameroonian border (Kassim2018). Then, the group went underground as several members fled into exile and then reappeared six years later.

Through voluntary fellowship, forceful contagion, jailbreaks, enticement and abduction, the group conscripts fighters who are later indoctrinated and radicalised with the power of intimidation, hypnosis and ideological psychic conversion (Onuoha, 2015). In numerical strength, ISWAP had between 15,000 and 30,000 combatants part of which were 6,000 foreign combatants from other African countries who returned to the Sahel for the jihadist campaign after their contribution to the enthronement of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (Omenma, 2019). Its operations are being financially sustained with funds raised through a donation from local actors (politicians and sympathisers) and foreign allies, membership levy and involvement in criminal activities such as cattle rustling, ransom-motivated kidnapping and extortion of civilians (Mahmood & Ani, 2018). To get assistance from its international allies, Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda in 2002 distributed an amount of US\$3 million among groups that shared Al-Qaeda mission which Boko Haram belongs to and was a major beneficiary while AQIM reinforced the group with US\$ 250,000 in 2012 (Cocks, 2014, Igwe, 2021; McCoy, 2014).

Following its resurgence in 2009, they became sophisticated and reorganized with irregular warfare tactics. Their consistent attacks necessitated the United States to declare them a Globally Designated Terrorist Organisation in 2013 (Campbell, 2013). Before the declaration, the group carried out a jailbreak at Bauchi Prison in 2010 (Pham, 2016) and 2014, they became deadlier through the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and booby-trapped suicide bombers (young boys and girls) causing casualties (Weeraratne, 2017). The Norwegian independent research group, Action on Armed Violence reported that between January and March 2017, the group was responsible for 15 IED explosions involving 25 suicide cases (Gana et al 2018).

Furthermore, they carry Kalashnikov (AK-47) assault rifles, machetes and simple sticks which were mostly seized from Nigerian and Cameroonian forces, machine and rocket artillery, RPG-7 Rocket Launchers which were supported by motorized infantry (importantly, gun-mounted Toyota Hilux vehicles, unarmoured technical and light armoured infantry/ improvised fighting vehicles, main battle tanks), Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs), 4 × 4 pick-up trucks among others which are central to its offensive drives, mobility and speed (Omeni, 2018). However, many of their weapons do not always stem from local or security forces as fieldwork indicated that substantial parts of the weaponry originated from the Libyan armoury following the forced collapse of the Ghadaffi regime (Hassan, 2021).

Tactically, the group resorted to the use of suicide bombers who disguise themselves as pregnant women. They operated into two fronts; the overt front dominated by ranks and files who are military-aged males trained in soldiering and basic infantry tactics and the covert front (combat roles) which is uncharacteristic but

occupied mostly by women who are younger than their male counterparts (Warner and Matfess, 2017). Strategically, the synchronised use of the two fronts gives the group an advantage in the battle strategy as it frustrates the military's COIN operations by prominence on guerilla warfare and counter-denial of military presence. Whenever the battle realities align with its territory-seeking strategy, the overt front is used and was its *modus operandi* between 2010 and 2013 through 2014 before its repeal by the deployment of new task force battalions in mid-2015 (Omeni, 2018).

By early 2015, the group had been in control of 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> area of land which is equivalent to the size of Belgium (Payne, 2015). The area of land consists of the following; Gwoza, Bama, Marte, Ngala Mubi, Michika, Madagali, Mubi North Mubi among others other towns and villages across Yobe, Borno and Adamawa State where the insurgents hoisted their flag and declared Gwoza as the capital of their Islamic State. Geographically, ISWAP, a breakaway of Boko Haram with a regional agenda being led by Al-Barnawi cramped itself to parts of Northern Borno, along Nigerien border, Logone-et-Chari department in Cameroon, Diffa section of Niger and Lac region in Chad which he exploited to launch offensives against MNJTF troops using sophisticated military equipment via hit-and-run manoeuvres (Omenma et al, 2020). Due to its reconnaissance drone skills, the insurgents were able to dislodge Nigerian troops from their station successfully many times (UN, Security Council 2019).

## COUNTERINSURGENCY IN NIGERIA: CONCEPT AND PRACTICE

In every insurgent situation, the state responds appropriately with strategies usually known as counterinsurgency (COIN) purposely to achieve a set of national security objectives. According to US Army-Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24), COIN is the military, paramilitary, psychological, social and economic undertakings implemented by the government to foil insurgency (David and James, 2006). By implication, it is the opposite of insurgency and it incorporates socio-political, legal, bio-psychological, security doings legitimately and religiously pursued by the state to annihilate the manifestations of insurgency, reinstate stability, promote public order and strengthen state's legitimacy. It aims to maintain adequate security presence, protect lives and property in the conflict zone and promote public order while decimating an enemy and its facilities, structures and forces (Oyewole, 2016).

As it proactively and reactively involves essentials of national power, government forces and their partners operate to crush an armed opposition, reduce inert opposition, boost inter-agency synergy and reinforce the state's legitimacy (Akanni, 2019). Essentials include strategic planning, training, equipment, fund-

ing, intelligence gathering and analysis, organizational support infrastructural development among others. Decimating insurgency, tends to build popular support for the state. Consequently, the state manages the environment, speed of situation, security apparatus and the (affected) communities which inform the ambition of envisaging counterinsurgency. Within these confines, the peculiarities of the COIN crusade build on the nature of the environment (the conflict zone), in socio-economic, physical, geographical and human context, the nature of the insurgent group and the state and its institutions. However, for effective COIN operations to achieve needed success, there must be consideration of dynamics peculiar to the insurgency. Additional to this, the state must uphold the rule of law and rules of engagements so as not to further complicate the already precarious situation.

In Nigeria, the COIN crusade has over the years been majorly kinetic warfare relying on the use of coercive force to annihilate Boko Haram insurgents. It is a combination of air and land operations by the Air Force and Army that is substantially enemy-centric which aim to:

- a.** maintain civil order.
  - b.** protect the civilian population.
  - c.** conquer/exterminate the insurgents.
  - d.** capture Sambisa forest and the lost territories.
  - e.** arrest or annihilate the leaders of Boko Haram.
  - f.** wipe out Boko Haram and its residues (infrastructure and logistics)
- (Doukhan, 2015).

Foundational to the above, roadblocks, stop and search at checkpoints, raid on suspected insurgent hideout, gun duel, open confrontation and mass arrest are jointly used by the police and the military. Before full military intervention under different operational code names (See table 1 below), there was police involvement involving arrest, stop and search, detention and other policing tactics. Thereafter, Operation Flush was conducted in 2009 and was replaced by Operation Restore Order in 2011. In furtherance to this, a Special Joint Military Task Force (SJMTF) comprising of the Nigerian Army, Nigerian AirForce, Nigerian Navy, Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Security, the Nigerian Immigration Service and the Defence Intelligence Agency headed by Major-General John Ewanshia was formed in 2011 (Vanguard, 2011) to ensure free flow of information and criminal intelligence sharing without the independence of any member agency being compromised in the fight against Boko Haram.

In a bid to ensure success in the military operation, a state of emergency was declared in three northeastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa in 2013 (Omenma et al 2020). Constitutionally, emergency power is the coercive power invoked by the

state usually the president and backed up by the legislature to address grave security concerns which in the reasonable opinion of the invoker, is practically difficult to be addressed by an ordinary law (Section 305 of 1999 Constitution). This power permits *carte blanche* for the security forces to arrest and detain the suspect and take control of any facility reasonably suspected to aid insurgents. Practically, Operation Boyona (BOYONA, an abbreviation of 3 most affected states and Nasarawa – Borno, Yobe, Adamawa) with the operational directive to incapacitate Boko Haram’s ability to detonate explosive IEDs was executed and replaced with Operation Zaman Lafiya (meaning: Live in Peace) with the same obligation. Prior to this, Operation Restore Order I was executed and elevated to Operation Restore Order II and III with the target to reinstate public order in Bauchi and Yobe State.

**Table 1: Illustration of the Military Operations**

| Year | Code Name                             | Description  |
|------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 2011 | <b>Operation Restore Order I</b>      | Restoration of law and order in the north-east and Borno state in particular.  |
| 2011 | <b>Operation Restore Order II/III</b> | Provision security for the locals against Boko Haram in Bauchi and Yobe.   |
| 2013 | <b>Operation Boyona</b>               | Damage of insurgents’ camps and their incapacitation in communicating regrouping and reinforcing, arrest culprits and bringing them to justice.  |
| 2013 | <b>Operation ZamanLafiya</b>          | Same with Operation Boyona.  |
| 2015 | <b>Operation Gama Aiki</b>            | Clearance of remains of Boko Haram from Northern Borno and the border regions with Chad and Niger.   |
| 2015 | <b>Operation Lafiya Dole</b>          | Decimation of many Boko Haram insurgents, their arrest, freeing of abducted hostages and discovery of bomb production factories.   |
| 2016 | <b>Operation Crackdown</b>            | Decimation of weaponry and capacity of Boko Haram.   |
| 2016 | <b>Operation Rescue Finale</b>        | Conquest of Boko Haram in Sambisa Forest.  |
| 2017 | <b>Operation Deep Punch</b>           | Clearance of Boko Haram’s remnants from Sambisa forest and restoration of order in the northeast.  |
| 2018 | <b>Operation Last Hold</b>            | Exhibition of military combat efficiency, complete damage of Boko Haram insurgents locations in the Lake Chad, clearance of the Lake Chad water ways, obliteration of insurgents’ terrorist camps & strong points in the Lake Chad basin, facilitation of rescue operation of hostages, restoration of economic activities & relocation of IDPs back to their communities. |
| 2021 | <b>Operation Tuka Takaibango</b>      | Boosting of Operation Lafiya Dole, tackling of the emerging threats of Boko Haram and ISWAP, their renewed violence and enclaves.  |

**Source:** Author’s Compilation from Omenma et al (2020), Vanguard News (2017) and Team Premium (2021).

Financially, the government increased the budgetary allocation for defence and security by 100% between 2009 and 2013 (Odo, 2015) leading to high military spending to procure arms. In the whole of Africa, the country occupied the 6<sup>th</sup> spot and 57<sup>th</sup> in the world in the ranking on military expenditure (Abdulazeez, 2016). The emergence of Muhammadu Buhari as the 4<sup>th</sup> democratically elected president since the return of democracy in 1999 gave the war against terror a progressive dimension. Having campaigned on the premise of fighting insurgency, ending institutional corrupt practices and boosting the economy, the government took some bold steps to fuel COIN operations. Part of which included the appointment of new security chiefs to energise the state's efforts, the diplomatic trip to Lake Chad riparian countries immediately he ascended the position, the meeting with G7 leaders in June and subsequent meeting with President Barack Obama of United States in Washington on July 14 and President François Hollande of France in Paris on 14 September, all in the year 2015 to muster for international assistance (Onuoha and George, 2016).

Additionally, he directed the release of US\$21 million out of the US\$100 million promised for the operation and effectiveness of the MNJTF (Odunsi, 2015) to be executed by 25,000 troops. As the insurgency intensified, the military scaled up the COIN efforts with additional operations. Operation Ruwan Wuta II, Operation Gama Aiki, Operation Deep Punch I and II and Operation Last Hold. Under the control of Theatre Command North East, Operation Lafiya Dole was introduced in 2015 and it is being coordinated by Infantry Divisions of 7, 3 and 8 of the Nigerian Army (Omenma, et al 2020). By 2015, the numerical strength of the military (army, airforce and naval) combating the insurgency grew to 100,000 (Raphael & James, 2016), which was formerly around 36,000 between 2009 and 2011.

While the Army is dislodging the insurgents with ground operations, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) in conjunction has been supportive through Airpower to destroy the insurgents' structures, communication facilities, remnants, their IED production yard and other facilitative arrangements. Since 2013, it has launched thousands of aerial bombardments and sorties against the insurgents and has strengthened its presence in the COIN multi-agencies efforts (Today, 2015). It has flown a total of 5,390 operational missions comprising; 2,648 for ground attack, 1,479 for air-lift, and 1,443 for ISR, conducted 1,488 airstrikes against the insurgents (Peacock, 2015; Premium Times, 2017). Consequently, leading to modicum success in the COIN theatre – the NAF-Army joint operations in march 2014 in Sambisa Forest killing hundreds of insurgents, the repel of Boko Haram attacks in Konduga in December 2014, the recapture of territories from the insurgents with airstrikes (the battle of Gwoza) in March 2014, the bombardment of the insurgents' hideouts in October 2017 resulting to the death of many terrorists in Urga, Borno among other triumphs (Oyewole, 2016; Soriwei, 2014).

On the regional front, members of the Lake Chad region comprising Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger in 2015 entered into a strategic agreement to revive the moribund Multinational Joint Task Force that was created in 1998 (Bala and Tar, 2021; Varin, 2015) to address the threat of Boko Haram around the region. The agreement was a product of the 14<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit of Head of States and Governments, held in Chad in April 2012. The force was mandated to create safety, security and stability in the troubled zones, facilitate humanitarian stabilisation programs and support the affected with humanitarian operations. Thus, a force of 8700 troops came into operation. Since the commencement of operation, it has been successful in liberating territories that were hitherto controlled by the insurgents; Damasak, Gambori-Ngala and Dikwa along the Chadian borders in Borno state (Folade, 2016).

From the international community, the African Union approved the deployment of 7500 regional troops. Since 2009, 20 nations have militarily supported Nigeria – sales of arms, funding, equipment of regiments and training of troops (Amnesty International, 2015a). The bilateral cooperation with nations like the United States, China, the United Kingdom and France in terms of airspace operations improved Nigeria's Military. Towards the rescue of the abducted 276 Chibok schoolgirls and training of 650 Nigerian troops, the United States offered an amount of USD 8.4 million in 2014 (Onuoha and Ugwueze 2014).

In a similar vein, the country got weapons from the United States, Czech Republic, Russia and China (via supply of drones and five combat helicopters), France, Israel, Norway, Canada, South Africa, Ukraine and Germany and entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 17 nations towards strengthening the military, (Amnesty International 2015b). While in 2011, Israel and Italy trained 6,000 and 340 security personnel respectively in varieties of counterinsurgency practices, the United States, has been spearheading the COIN effort as a bilateral partner via the training of Nigerian soldiers, funding, logistics and criminal intelligence from its Federal Bureau of Investigation (Oyewole, 2015). In 2014, France came to the aid of Lake Chad nations by providing military support (Operation Barkane in Chad and Mali) and reconnaissance missions on Nigerian border areas on behalf of other members states (Griffin, 2016).

## A CARROT APPROACH

In a bid not to rely on repressive aspects of COIN only, there are varieties of socio-economic and political responses by state and non-state actors which are aimed towards addressing the root and immediate drivers of insurgency. In the light of the above, the government in 2011 betrothed former president, Chief Olusegun Obasan-

jo over a peace deal with the leaders of the insurgent groups that will include compensation of families of its erstwhile leader, Mohammed Yusuf and other deceased members and rehabilitation of their mosques (Egunjobi & Odiaka, 2014). To achieve this, the Borno State government paid around 100 million naira as compensation to the families in the same year which was confirmed by someone who claimed to be the representative of the insurgents (Gana et al 2018). In addition, the government adopted the option of dialogue and amnesty with pay. In 2013, a 26-member Amnesty Committee on Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of Security Challenges in the North was established and headed by the then, Minister for Special Duties, Kabiru Tanimu with the view of ascertaining the grumbles of the group and possibly offer amnesty with pay in exchange of ceasefire (Ojo, 2020).

Owing to the contribution of poverty and bad governance as root drivers of violent extremism and insurgency, the government in 2016, introduced social protection programs comprising Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), Government Enterprises and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) and Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (State House, 2020) to the poorest set of people, unemployed youth, school children, artisans. Legislatively, the Nigeria's parliament referred to as the National Assembly enacted Terrorism (Prevention) Act (TPA) 2011 which authorizes a crackdown on insurgents and financiers. The law is the first and only anti-insurgency legislation in the history of the country's constitutionalism (Campbell, 2014). Specifically, Section 11 and 12 of the Act criminalise hostage-taking and legalizes the seizure of cash of suspected terrorists respectively. Subsequently, the TPA was reviewed and strengthened as the Terrorism (Prevention) (Amendment) Act 2013.

## THE FAILINGS OF THE MILITARY

As enshrined in Section 217 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic Nigeria and Section 3 of the Nigeria Armed Forces Act, 2004, the Nigerian Military is mandated to address any attack that could threaten the territorial integrity of the nation. In fulfillment of these statutory obligations, the military has executed and keeps executing COIN operations to defeat the protracted Boko Haram insurgency and defend the territorial integrity of the nation. However, the desired results have not yet been fully achieved. In light of the above, it is not new that institutional inadequacies ranging from massive corruption, poor human rights record, failure of political leadership, compromised legislative oversight, inadequate/outdated weapons and poor welfare occasioning mutiny and desertion account for the problems (Onuoha et al. 2020).



Despite the increment in budgetary allocation for security, defence and allied matters from about US\$1.44 billion in 2009, when the insurgency started full-blown to US\$2.81 billion in 2018 (Onuoha et al. 2020), the military institutions still struggle to obliterate the current insurgency. The funding for these institutions for COIN adventures over the years has progressively increased but has not yet reflected reliable success in COIN operations as public confidence in their capacity keeps declining (Bappah, 2016). Statistically, Nigeria expended an amount over US\$3.9 billion in the procurement of weapons, part of which US\$2 billion was suspected to have been embezzled by corrupt politicians and not used for its purpose leading to a probe tagged ‘Dasukigate’ (Oriola 2018; Ukpong 2017). Corroboratively, in 2015, 13-Men Arms Procurement Investigative Committee set up by President Muhammadu Buhari to probe arms deals between 2007 and 2015 observed an extra-budgetary spending of ₦643.8 billion (\$4.02 billion) and other unexplainable expenditure of about \$2.2 billion in foreign currencies under previous administrations (Nwabughio 2015).

Consequent to military corruption, COIN operations in northeast Nigeria have suffered from capacity failure particularly on the part of ranks and files stationed to the battlefield against the insurgents. For instance, Transparency International (2017) noted that corruption among the top echelons of the military in 2014 led to the withholding of capable weaponry, leaving the frontline troops incapacitated and to flee when attacked. While the military authorities paid lip service to these issues of categorised level of corruption, it endangered the lives of the frontline troops and the civilians who have over time had shares of the grave consequences of the failures in the military. However, the lip service triggered the problem of mutiny and tactical sabotage in the COIN operations where soldiers leak vital strategic information to the insurgents. In 2015, many troops on the battlefield were sentenced to death for mutiny due to their refusal to combat the insurgents, cowardice and unpatriotic attitude which they blamed on lack of capable arms (Sief 2015).

Beaming a searchlight on another fundamental issue, the Nigerian military institutions are not adherents of human rights provisions. Despite the numerous domestic laws and international treaties guiding the conduct of conventional warfare and rules of military engagement Nigeria is a signatory to, those institutions contravene human rights provisions in COIN operations at an alarming rate as they have been accused of gross human rights abuses. The army has over time been known for unimpressive human rights antecedents which have manifested in its engagement in counterinsurgency operations in the northeast. Amnesty International estimates that 950 suspected insurgents died in military custody over the first six months of 2013, and that figure has continued to climb up in 2014 (Weeraratne, 2017). The deployment of 8000 troops for Operation Restore Order to combat the insurgents resulted in extrajudicial killing, dragnet arrests, and intimidation of innocent civilians in Borno State (Onuoha, 2012). Thus, making the civilian population to have sympathy for the insurgents.

Due to the high-handedness of the security forces, the insurgent group has over time hoodwinked the local population to create a sense of resistance in the people against the government and thus, offer overthrow of the government and desirable establishment of an Islamic State that will cater for their needs, plights and prosperity as best alternatives. In addition, the high-handedness hardened the insurgents thereby indirectly triggering them to seek refuge in the Sambisa forest and Nigeria's neighbours from where they organise, plan and launch several audacious attacks on Nigeria (Mickler et al 2019). As a result of this ugly trend, the COIN operations have suffered serious blows. In 2014, the Leahy Law which prevents the United States Defense Department from providing military assistance to foreign security forces facing compelling allegations of gross human rights violation was invoked by the US to impose a ban on sales of arms to Nigeria over allegations of human rights abuses (Omotuyi, 2020). Also, the military has lost the public confidence it needed in its COIN engagements.

Another problem worthy of concern is the leadership setup, particularly on national security issues. The evolution and subsequent sophistication of Boko Haram reeked on ineffective leadership. This is evident in the delayed acknowledgement of the April 14 2014 abduction of Chibok schoolgirls by President Goodluck Jonathan, thinking the alarm blown was a ploy to distract the government. Aside from this sheer directionless behaviour, there was growing discontent among the elites who were divided along political fault lines at the detriment of halting the already-established violence in the buildup to the 2015 general elections. The northern elites had distrust for the then government headed by Goodluck Jonathan, an Ijaw man from the South with the thought that the insurgency was being used to politically devalue the north and facilitate his re-election possibilities in the forthcoming general election billed for March 2015 (Onapajo and Usman 2015).

While this argument is politically related, the practical effect in the context of distraction and lack of nationwide support boils down to national security. Despite a sufficient police presence in insurgency-ridden states; Adamawa, Borno and Yobe State as observable in their possession of 14,833 police personnel in nine Area Commands, 79 Divisions, 126 Stations, 272 Posts, and 398 Village Posts, as of 2011 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015), the group still had its strategic way from local militancy to a regional security threat. Based on the foregoing, the state and military lack the popular support needed to halt the continued existence of Boko Haram.

Even with the country's participation in 40 United Nations and regional peace-keeping missions across Africa by the deployment of over 200,000 Nigerian troops and expenditure of USD 13 billion in a timeframe of 12 years (Esler, 2003), it was expected to have halted the insurgency long time ago. This was however not possible and the country had to rely on foreign intervention for a problem it should be capable of addressing if it was proactive enough from the onset.

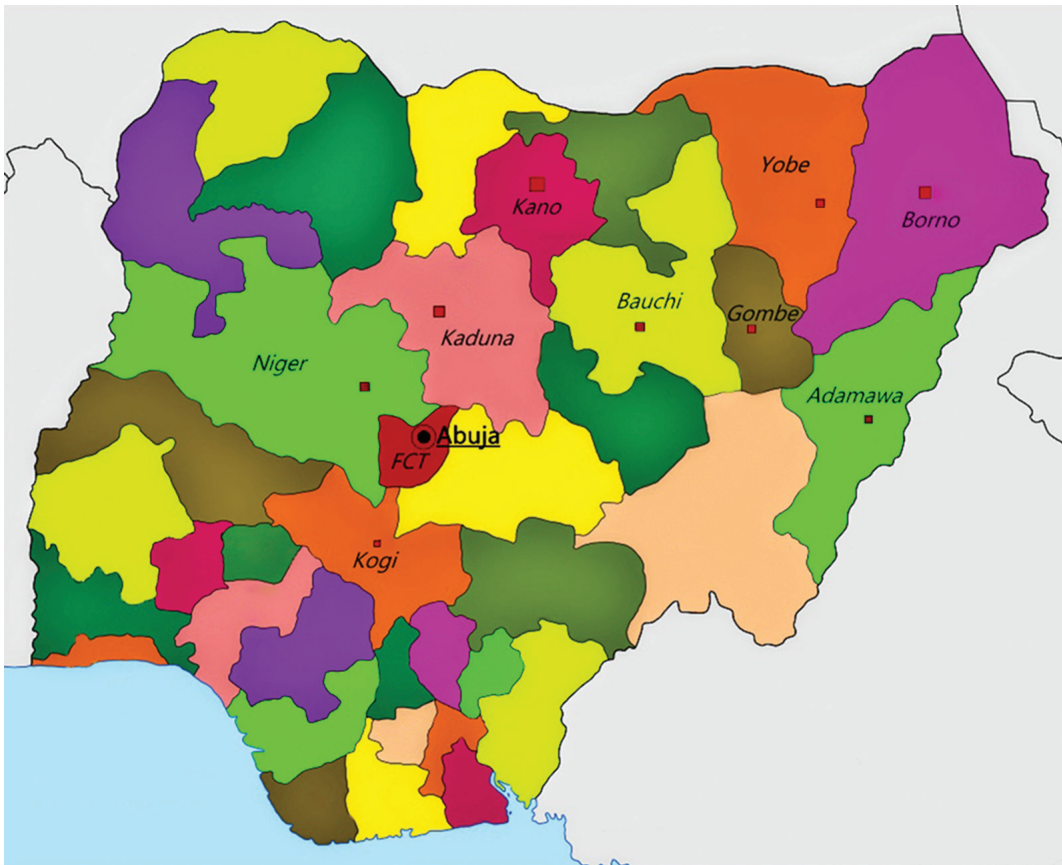
## INCESSANT ATTACKS ON THE MILITARY: FORMATIONS, OFFICERS AND ACCESSORIES

The atrocious dispositions of the Boko Haram insurgent group have all times, since its evolution been a source of concern for academic, policy-making and development sake and the intensity, frequency and changing tactics (target) are attention-seeking. Due to the group threatening sophistication in the Lake Chad basin, the lingering capacity issues the Nigerian military grapples with and the lifeblood the group still has, it has been able to strike and attack the military comparatively more than before. With the passage of time, the cases of such attacks have spiraled thereby giving the insurgents ability to continue with their warlordism and the terror struggle for a caliphate.

With its membership strength estimated to be range from 15,000 to 50,000 (Zenn, 2014), it has been able to strike at different locations (military and civilians) beyond Northeast States – Yobe, Borno and Adamawa. In 2014 and 2015, the group attacked Nigeria’s borders 58 and 136 times respectively (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2015), thus affirming its regional presence. Corroboratively, the insurgent group launched an attack in 900 different locations across Northern Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger as of 2020 (Curiel et al 2020) (See Figure 2 below), thereby creating a widespread sense of insecurity. Beyond most hit states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, the group attacks have been recorded at other states in northern Nigeria. According of Osumah (2013), Boko Haram attacked Bauchi State in January 2010 releasing 700 inmates and police stations in March and April of the same year.

Additionally, another police station was attacked in Kastina State on June 20 2011 resulting to the death of 5 police personnel and market in Kaduna on December 8 2011 killing 15 people. On December 25 2011, a bombing attack was carried out at St Theresa Church in Mandalla, Niger State killing 35 people (BBC, 2011). Similarly, on November 28 2014, a hundred of worshippers were killed and 135 wounded in a coordinated bombing attack on a central mosque in Kano State (Reuters, 2014). In the Nigerian capital city of Abuja, 18 people were reported dead and 41 wounded in a blast at a police station in Kuje and bus park in Nyanya on October 3 2015 (AlJazeera, 2015). In Kogi State on September 11 2021, a heavily armed men confirmed by Sahara Reporters (2021) to be Boko Haram insurgents attacked a medium-security prison forcefully freeing 240 inmates (Al-Jazeera, 2021). The civilian population has been the most hit of these attacks.

**Figure 2:** A map showing Nigerian States in which Boko Haram has launched attacks



**Source:** Osumah (2013).

While the attack on the civilian population is noteworthy, the insurgents' deadly focus on security forces is quite worrisome as it has been a recurrent menace lately in COIN operations (See Table 2 below). Notable of such cases was the January 25<sup>th</sup> 2015 attack on the Headquarters of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Nigerian Army, placed at Monguno which stressed the insurgents' overt capability to counter-attack the growing threats from government forces. Monguno is a local government area in Borno State, northeast Nigeria with an area of 1913 km<sup>2</sup> and was strategic to the military infightings between the MNJTF forces and the insurgents. Spatially, it forms the basis of Nigeria's commitment to the operations of trans-border military outfit, MNJTF which serves as a security cushion in the border areas of the country with Chad, Cameroon and Niger.

**Table 2: Timeline of Boko Haram Attacks on the Military**

| Date (2021)        | Incidents  |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>January 3</i>   | *Six soldiers were killed in Chibok, Borno.  |
| <i>January 11</i>  | 13 soldiers were killed via an ambush by ISWAP militants Gazagana, Yobe. <sup>[4]</sup>  |
| <i>January 14</i>  | *Five soldiers were killed with landmines by Boko Haram in Chibok, Borno.  |
| <i>January 16</i>  | ISWAP fighters attacked and wrecked a military base in Marte, Borno, killing seven people and carting away ammunition, and six vehicles. <sup>[5]</sup>  |
| <i>January 17</i>  | **Seven IEDs were laid against a Nigerian Army convoy of APCs and other vehicles in Gorgi, Borno killing over 30 soldiers were killed, destroying vehicles and an armored vehicle and ammunition were carted away. |
| <i>January 19</i>  | **Boko Haram killed four troops and eight others injured by their vehicle hitting an IED.  |
| <i>January 22</i>  | **ISWAP fighters ambushed and fired machine guns at a Nigerian Army patrol in Borno killing seven soldiers and injuring others.  |
| <i>January 29</i>  | *Boko Haram killed two troops in Dikwa, Borno.   |
| <i>January 31</i>  | **An attack in Dikwa, Borno leading to the deaths of 2 soldiers.   |
| <i>February 3</i>  | **ISWAP combatants ambushed and killed Nigerian troops in the Goniri.  |
| <i>February 8</i>  | **ISWAP militants attacked a Nigerian Army checkpoint in Monguno, Borno leading to exchange of fire, death of three troops, injury to several others and seizure of vehicles and ammunition.                       |
| <i>February 9</i>  | **Boko Haram attacked a group of Nigerian soldiers between Jakana and Mainok, Borno killing seven soldiers, destroying two army vehicles were destroyed and seizing weapons left at the site.                      |
| <i>February 9</i>  | **A Nigerian Army checkpoint was attacked in Geidam, Yobe, killing four soldiers, three were taken prisoner and the rest fled.   |
| <i>February 11</i> | **Nigerian soldiers were ambushed with an IED in the suburbs of Monguno killing three soldiers and several others were wounded.  |
| <i>February 12</i> | *Boko Haram killed three Nigerian troops in Kukawa, Borno.   |
| <i>February 15</i> | *Ten Nigerian soldiers killed in Marte, Borno.   |
| <i>February 16</i> | *A group of Nigerian soldiers was attacked in a village in Borno killing four soldiers several others were wounded.  |
| <i>February 17</i> | **A Nigerian Army convoy was ambushed and targeted by gunfire in the Karito, near Lake Chad killing three soldiers and wounding several others.  |
| <i>February 19</i> | **An attack against a Nigerian Army camp in Dikwa, Borno killing 15 soldiers seizing four vehicles, ammunition. Subsequently, ISIS fighters set fire to the camp which was among the largest Nigerian Army camps.  |
| <i>February 28</i> | ISWAP ambushed the convoy of the Commandant of Nigeria's counter insurgency operation, Farouq Yahaya, killing at least 2 soldiers. <sup>[6]</sup>  |

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- March 1** \*\*ISWAP conquered Dikwa, Borno for several hours after forcing state troops, attacking a the Army base and killing six soldiers.
- March 1** \*\*ISWAP conquered Bukarti, Yobe and attacked a Nigerian Army convoy near Geidam, killing two Nigerian soldiers.
- March 7** \*Three soldiers were killed during a clash with insurgents in Kaga, Borno.
- March 10** ISWAP took responsibility of attack involving the death of at least 30 Nigerian soldiers with two explosive-laden vehicles in Wulgo, Borno.<sup>[7]</sup>
- March 11** ISWAP fighters ambushed a Nigerian Army convoy near Gudumbali in the Lake Chad region, killing 15 Nigerian troops.<sup>[8]</sup>
- March 11** \*The Islamic State in West Africa killed fifteen soldiers in Guzamala, Borno.
- March 12** \*\*ISWAP fighters attacked a Nigerian Army checkpoint near Ngamdu killing six Nigerian soldiers and injuring several others. The remaining soldiers fled, leaving ATVs and ammunition behind.
- March 14** At least 12 Nigerian Army personnel were killed in the attack and at least one was captured.<sup>[9]</sup>
- March 15** \*Boko Haram killed five Nigerian soldiers during an attack on a military base in Mobbar, Borno.
- March 18** \*\*ISWAP militants attacked a Nigerian Army base in Damasak, Borno killing five Nigerian soldiers and wounding several others.
- March 20** \*\*ISWAP fighters attacked a Nigerian Army post in Wulgo, Borno killing a Nigerian soldier was killed and wounding several others and subsequently stole weapons and ammunition.
- March 31** \*Boko Haram claimed responsibility for gunning down a Nigerian Air Force jet with two pilots around Gwoza, Borno.

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- April 10** \*Boko Haram killed three troops in Maiduguri, Borno.
- April 12** \*\*ISWAP damaged a Nigerian Army telecommunications tower, in Mandaragirau, Borno, with an IED.
- April 16** \*Boko Haram killed five troops in Gujba, Yobe.
- April 17** \*\*ISWAP attacked a military base of the 27 Task Force Brigade in Kumuya, Yobe, burning the camp and killing 10 troops and destroying a T-72, a 105mm howitzer, and Camel MRAP.
- April 23** \*\*ISWAP launched a large-scale attack on Geidam, Yobe killing several Nigerian soldiers.
- April 25** ISWAP fighters, arriving in around 20 vehicles, killed at least 31 Nigerian troops after they ambushed a military convoy escorting weapons and overran a base in Mainok, Borno.<sup>[10]</sup>
- April 25** \*Boko Haram fighters killed thirty-three Nigerian soldiers in Kaga, Borno.
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- May 2** \*Boko Haram insurgents killed two soldiers in Mafa, Borno.
- May 3** \*Boko Haram insurgents killed five soldiers in Mafa, Borno.
- May 4** Five Nigerian soldiers were killed after ISWAP militants stormed Ajiri, Borno after raiding a nearby military base.<sup>[11]</sup>
- May 6** \*\*ISWAP militants attacked a Nigerian soldiers base in Bulabulin, Borno killing eight soldiers, wounding several others and setting fire to the barracks, three tanks and artillery.

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- June 13** \*\*ISWAP fighters attacked a Nigerian Army base near Maiduguri killing several Nigerian soldiers, while the rest fled the scene and thereafter, the fighters set fire to an armoured vehicle and seized four vehicles and many ammunition.
- June 16** ISWAP attacked a Nigerian Army post near Bama, Borno killing an unknown number of Nigerian soldiers and seizing weapons, pickups, and two Vickers Main Battle Tank Mark 3.<sup>[12]</sup>
- June 28** \*ISWAP militants attacked a Nigerian Army post in Banki, Borno killing at least four Nigerian troops.

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- July 15** \*\*ISWAP fighters attacked a Nigerian Army camp in Qawari, Borno killing a soldier and capturing many weaponries.

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- August 26** \*\*Five Nigerian soldiers were killed by ISWAP during a rocket attack on a Nigerian military base located at Malam Fatori region.

- August 30** \*The Islamic State in West Africa killed ten troops in Kala/Balge, Borno.
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**Source:** Author's Compilation.

**Note:** The description of an incident starting with;

- a. An asterisk was culled from Council of Foreign Relation (CFR) Security Tracker  
<https://www.cfr.org/boko-haram>.
- b. Double asterisks was culled from Spotlight on Global Jihad  
<https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/global-jihad/>.
- c. The rests are shown in the endnotes.

These numerous onslaughts highlighted above numbering 49 were launched against the military by Boko Haram and its splitter faction, ISWAP between January and August 2021. On average, 6.1 attacks occurred every month which consisted of a raid, ambush, IED detonation, an injury to troops, killing in a gun duel, seizure of weapons and military logistics and damage of base. Consequently, they have had debilitating effects on the reputation not only on the operational capacity of the military only but also on Nigeria as a regional and global power. The same military that has earned a global reputation in international peacekeeping missions

finds it difficult to annihilate the insurgent group. Unfortunately, it has become the target of the group lately. Accordingly, this current situation projects the state as weak and incapable of ending the protracted insurgency as it is evident in the transnational dimension of the attendant violence, the growing population of IDPs in Nigeria and its neighbouring states (worsening humanitarian crisis) and the spilling of violent extremism to other parts of the Sahel.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the situations in the Nigerian military in the COIN undertakings and the negative aftermath manifesting in form damages on the military interest. Meanwhile, it also examined fundamental issues within the military institutions hindering them to obliterate the insurgent group. Coupled with failed political leadership and poor governance, Boko Haram as an insurgent group exploits the poor socio-economic conditions and religious extremism in Northeast Nigeria to recruit members, expand to other parts of Northern Nigeria and Lake Chad Region. Within its half of a decade strategic evolution from local militancy to transnational insurgency; 2009 to 2014, the group became a deadly force the police couldn't withstand. Even, hardened and foreign-trained Nigerian troops and regiments mobilized to the battlefield became its targets. It attempted making Northeast Nigeria the springboard for the jihadist project to the rest of Africa and complementing the struggles of its international allies; Al-Qaeda in the

Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) Somali's Al-Shabaab and Mozambican Ahlu Sunnah Wa Jammah. To this end, it received every support from them in terms of military training, management of weaponry, financing and provision of combatants and sanctuary.

Thus, the Nigerian State and its international partners have mobilized every military and nonmilitary resource at their disposal to end the menace but have not been completely successful due to military shortcomings as the violence is still existent in Lake Chad areas, although, considerable success is being achieved. Suffering decimation as a result of the consistent offensives from the military, Boko Haram reversely employs guerilla warfare tactics to launch reprisal attacks on the military's strategic interests (officers, formations and weaponry) rather than the civilians thereby giving the violent conflict a new tactical dimension aimed at achieving strategic relevance and foothold in the pursuit for territorial control and establishment of a caliphate.



These attacks did not start from the beginning of the period this study considered as it was reported that the breakaway faction of the group, ISWAP started increasing its attack on the military in 2018 (News24, 2018). The patternless onslaught from the insurgents is so rampant to the point that the frontline troops are being attacked leading to death/ injury on officers, seizure of weapons and damage to its base with the view of weakening the military and then continues with its terror campaign. However, it is noteworthy that this strategic shift is an indication that (a) the military has performed reasonably well in the COIN operations thereby attracting annoyance (attacks) from the insurgent group (b) the existence and continued operation of the insurgents are being threatened by state actors and their collaborators.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Central to the fact that the almost a two-decades-long confrontation between the Nigerian State and Boko Haram amplifies the pre-existing social, political and economic anomalies that throw the society into despair and trigger public recalcitrance, every pragmatic and result-oriented effort should therefore be taken to end the prolonged insurgency. The effective ones currently under execution should be sustained with more vigour. In doing the above, the fundamental issues of poor leadership in the military settings and governance, corrupt practices and unimpressive human rights records should be given more attention by putting measures in place to checkmate the conduct of officers, block avenues for financial wastages/ leakages, and sale of weapons to criminal elements. In addition, there should be strict adherence to criminal legislation on money laundering and financial misappropriation, improved oversight in the (financial and logistic) dealings of the military institutions and observance of human rights provisions and the rules of engagements. Thus, it will reinvigorate the battered public image of the military.

While the process of building a strong and reliable military institutions is underway, the conflict-affected communities should not be left in anguish. The process of reconstruction and stabilisation which could be fronted by North East Development Commission (NEDC) must address the root machineries for insurgency. From poverty alleviation through socio-economic empowerment of the vulnerable population, environmental revivification, peace education, public sensitisation to delivery of social justice, the communities would definitely support the state's COIN adventures. In addendum, deepening and strengthening of democratic institutions which would facilitate both repressive and non-repressive COIN undertakings and inform state's rebuilding efforts.

Towards checkmating porosity of borders (producing 1,894 illegal entry routes) as responsible in spilling over of insurgency to Nigerian neighbours, more efforts need to be focused on surveillance and routine patrol around border communities with the neighbours particularly, the conflict zones. Without effective government interventions to address the problem of ungoverned spaces being used by the insurgents as safe haven, no amount of military and non-military will obliterate the insurgency. This could be done with adequate and consistent provision of security, social amenities, responsive leadership and other public goods in those areas which will go a long way in resolving security concerns concomitant to porosity of borders; arms proliferation, human trafficking and armed conflict. Additionally, providing good governance to the communities and building state's legitimacy while decapitating the existence of Boko Haram in those areas; rugged and mountainous terrain.

Considering the resilience of Boko Haram to maintain military stamina even in the face of the sophisticated state's forces and lure the local population into the narrative of being 'saviour of the local population' due to human rights abuse by the security forces, the COIN adventures should incorporate more ingredients of population-centric approach which will sever any social affinity between the locals and insurgents. Based on the accusation and counter-accusation of counter-productive posturing among countries of Lake Chad Basin – purported permission of insurgents in Niger and Chad for sanctuaries, mobility and training, a suspected pact between Al-Barnawi's ISWAP and the Chadian State and Cameroon's hesitation to bestow Nigerian troops the 'right of hot pursuit' across the country's border with Nigeria (Omenma 2019), the MNJTF operations should rather be more region-centric.

Since Boko Haram atrocities had transcended beyond the shores of northeast Nigeria, the operation of MNJTF should incorporate the socio-economic and political peculiarities of each Troops Contributing Countries (TCCs) in the interest of the Lake Chad Region's security and stability. The challenges of finance, lack of cooperation due to supremacy battle, historical differences, resources control and hegemonic politics should be addressed in all-inclusive ways that will not subordinate the independence and sovereignty of member states. An effective idea is the rotation of the leadership and headquarters of the four sectors of the Force among the TCCs. Also, there should be an understanding of Boko Haram as a regional threat not (Nigeria) national one and permission of equality in decision making so to avoid the insinuation of imperialist ambition by any member state. Given the transnational dimension of the menace, national efforts and regional efforts should be complimentary to each other as it will preserve the sovereignty of member states and at the same time, sustain the momentum of the regional offensives against the insurgent towards building a safe, secure and formidable nation/region.

## NOTES

- [1] Section 305(3) and 217 of the 1999 Constitution, Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- [2] Armed Forces Act, Chapter A20, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.
- [3] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), Global Terrorism Database, <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>.
- [4] <https://www.barrons.com/news/jihadists-kill-13-soldiers-in-northeast-nigeria-01610353806>.
- [5] <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/16/armed-group-captures-military-base-in-northeast-nigeria>.
- [6] <https://humangle.ng/iswap-terrorists-ambush-nigerias-counter-insurgency-chief/>.
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# CURRENT TRENDS IN BOKO HARAM'S TERRORISM, COUNTERINTELLIGENCE AND COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY IN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

This article analyses the current trends in Boko Haram's terrorism in Nigeria and explores the existing and emerging dangers the terrorist group poses to Nigeria. Using qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, the article specifically examines the effectiveness of some counterintelligence and counterterrorism strategies adopted by the Nigerian military as well as their respective concomitant challenges which underlie the fight against Boko Haram terrorism. The article apprehends the cracks in local intelligence gathering, lack of interagency cooperation, expanding Boko Haram's global networks and transnational exit routes, and the drawbacks in the adoption of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), as major interlocking factors that impinge on effective military action against the dreaded Boko Haram. The article recommends closer interagency cooperation, increased institutional support, and a new strategy of military intelligence gathering for improved counterintelligence and counterterrorism fight against Boko Haram.

## Keywords

Boko Haram, Terrorism, Counterterrorism, International Counterterrorism support, Security, Military, Multilateral Joint Task Force (MNJTF).

## INTRODUCTION

Boko Haram terrorist activities are widespread, and the group has evolved since 2009 to become one of the world's deadliest terrorist groups. Mohammed Yusuf, an influential Islamist cleric from Borno State, founded the group in Mai-

duguri in 2002. The U.S. intelligence officials estimate that Boko Haram has about 4,000-6,000 “hardcore” militants. Many of the group’s activities are those typically linked with terrorism, including suicide bombings, use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), car bombs, massacre, kidnappings, and destruction of property (Blanchard 2016). In recent years, it has increased attacks on soft targets, or relatively unprotected public places, and used more women and children as suicide bombers (Iwuoha 2019a).

Boko Haram overtook the Islamic State as the world’s deadliest terrorist group in 2015. The increasing lethality and sophistication of Boko Haram’s attacks on local targets have attracted international headlines with its brutal tactics and targeting of civilians, including the abduction of over 270 schoolgirls from the town of Chibok in 2014. The activities of Boko Haram in the last twelve years have caused over 300,000 deaths, and the large-scale humanitarian crisis is on the verge of famine status (Khalid, 2021). By U.N. estimates, roughly 2.8 million people have been internally displaced by Boko Haram-related violence in the Lake Chad region, where approximately 5.6 million are in need of emergency food aid (Blanchard and Cavigelli, 2018). Amnesty International estimates that Boko Haram had abducted more than 2,000 women and girls in total, forcing some to participate in terrorist attacks. UNICEF estimates that in 2014-2016 nearly 20% of Boko Haram suicide bombers were children under the age of 18; 75% of them girls. (UNICEF, 2015). In December 2015, Nigeria announced it had ‘technically defeated’ Boko Haram. However, Boko Haram continues to incite increased terror through high profile kidnappings and deadly bombings across Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region (Iwuoha, 2020a).

This article examines the cracks and loopholes in local intelligence gathering and the drawbacks in the adoption of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which impinge on effective military action against the dreaded Boko Haram. An important concern is how the Nigerian government is implicated in information conspiracy, especially as it increasingly engages in producing false reports that show that Boko Haram is defeated as well as claiming that its leader Shakau has been killed. This article uses empirical evidence to depict these developments as counter-productive intelligence strategy that undermine international counterterrorism intelligence support to Nigeria.

The remainder of article is divided into different parts such as trajectory of Boko Haram activities, Boko Haram technically defeated, funding counterterrorism operations, installation of Multilateral Joint Task Force (MNJTF), cracks and loopholes in local intelligence gathering, fragmentations in interagency cooperation, international intelligence support to Nigeria, and conclusion.

## BOKO HARAM'S INTELLIGENCE AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

Importantly, disagreements over doctrine, ideology and targets, have caused a major split in its leadership. This became all too obvious in August 2016, when ISIS installed Abu Musab al-Barnawi as the new leader of Boko Haram – a move which was outrightly rejected by Shekau who insisted on heading the Boko Haram faction (Onuoha, 2016; Aljazeera 2016; (Congressional Research Service 2018). The result was the emergence of two notable factions. One faction that retained the name Boko Haram was led by Shekau until his reported death on 19 May 2021. The second faction, ISWAP, was initially led by Abu Musab al-Barnawi but he was later replaced by Ba Idrisa (also addressed as Abu Abdullah Idris ibn Umar al-Barnawi) (Zenn, 2020). The United States designated both groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO): Boko Haram in 2013 and ISWAP in 2018 (Congressional Research Service 2018, p.1). Following the reported death of Shekau in May 2021, both factions resolved to work together after pledging allegiance to one Aba Ibrahim Al-Hashimiyil Al Khuraishi, designated as Khalifa Muslimai, or ‘the Leader of all Muslims’ (Sahara Reporters, 2021).

To be sure, Boko Haram's most active and lethal period peaked in 2014-2015, in the lead up to the March 2015 elections in Nigeria. Since then, the group's attack rate and resulting fatalities have declined. The number of incidents reduced by 8% while associated fatalities declined by 60% between 2015 and 2019 (Onuoha, Nwangwu, and Ugwueze, 2020). The fluctuation is influenced by several factors including offensive military operations by Nigerian troops acting under Operation Lafiya Dole and the MNJTF, as well as the insurgents' tactics of withdrawing into enclaves to avoid major losses during periods of intensive military operations.

Notwithstanding, Boko Haram has exhibited mastery of military intelligence with its key members infiltrating the Nigeria military (Badeh 2015) and major townships under the guise of various professions; thus, countering or cracking its intelligence strategy is extremely difficult. This explains why the terror group demonstrated its renewed strength and audacity with strikes at hard military targets and deadly assaults on civilians in which over a six-week period, four military bases were attacked, one of which was staffed by over 700 soldiers in November 2018 (Olojo 2018). It is argued that the extremist group's offensives have been relatively sophisticated – probably executed by the faction of Boko Haram led by Abu Musab al-Barnawi who has a penchant for targeting the military. The boldness of Boko Haram to strike military targets gains traction as the group discerns cracks in Nigerian army's approach. The extremist group is interested in exploiting the army's vulnerabilities. It is therefore only with more attention to intelligence and troop morale, that the army will suffer fewer setbacks.

The Nigerian government lost 40%-70% of Borno state and some territories in neighbouring Yobe and Adamawa states, including border areas near Cameroon to Boko Haram (Blanchard and Husted 2018, p. 22) where the terrorist group proclaimed an 'Islamic caliphate' hoisting black flags in the newly acquired territories (Pieri and Zenn 2018). Deaths attributed to Boko Haram rose by 317% in 2014 to 6,644 deaths in 2015 compared to ISIL's 6,073 terrorist deaths, making Boko Haram overtake ISIL in 2015 as world's most deadly terrorist group. Nigeria has consistently been ranked third most terrorist nation over a 5-year period since 2015 (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2018, p. 16).

### **COLLABORATIVE COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY AGAINST BOKO HARAM: THE MULTILATERAL JOINT TASK FORCE (MNJTF)**

Since 2015, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger have deployed thousands of troops as part of the MNJTF. There have been at least four large-scale military operations by the MNJTF alongside the national units of the relevant countries: from 11-14 February 2016 in the Nigerian town of Ngoshe (as part of Operation Arrow Five); on 24 February 2016 in the town of Kumshe in Nigeria near the Cameroonian border, considered to be a support base for Boko Haram; on 16 March 2016 in the Cameroonian and Nigerian localities of Djibrili and Zamga (within the framework of Operation Tentacule); and on 10–16 May 2016 in the Madawya forest in Nigeria, in a joint action conducted by troops from the MNJTF's Sector 1 and soldiers from the Cameroonian Operation Émergence 4, supported by the Nigerian army. In June 2016, Operation Gama Aiki ('finish the job' in Hausa) was initiated by the MNJTF. MNJTF's troop strength is estimated at 11,150 personnel: Nigeria – 3,750; Chad – 3,000; Cameroon – 2,650; Niger – 1,000 and Benin – 750. However, most MNJTF contributing countries fail to provide the required number of military forces. MNJTF interventions have led to the 'neutralization' of at least 675 presumed Boko Haram members, the arrest of 566 others and the dismantling of nearly 32 training camps and alleged factories for the manufacture of improvised explosive devices and mines. It is also claimed that nearly 4,690 of the group's hostages have been freed (Assanvo, Abatan and Sawadogo 2016).

However, the MNJTF has a number of challenges which tend to undermine the effectiveness of the force. There is acute shortage of funds to match the initially estimated budget of US\$700 million for MNJTF intelligence and logistics operations (including bonuses for soldiers estimated at US\$90 per day, per soldier). Only the financial contributions by Nigeria, the United Kingdom (UK) and the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) have materialized, while Nigeria is said to have contributed at least US\$30 million to the force command headquarters. The UK disbursed an estimated US\$3.5 million at the level of the AU. CEN-SAD, for its

part, announced on April 2015 that it had contributed US\$1.5 million to Chad, Niger and Benin to prepare their respective contingents (Reuters, 2016). The MNJTF has been able to install operational infrastructure, but with very few utility vehicles and communications and IT equipment at its disposal. A critical challenge that faces the MNJTF in its counterterrorism programme is the proliferation of arms in the Lake Chad region. The years of insurgency led to a significant increase in demand for firearms which are still in circulation.

## CRACKS AND LOOPHOLES IN LOCAL INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

SBM Intelligence (2017) notes that cooperation between the Nigerian Army and residents of the communities under Boko Haram threat has continued to be frosty and negative, with regular reports of human rights abuses on the part of the military. There are serious concerns of military corruption regarding military's appropriation of the welfare of the IDPs as well as human rights abuses and violation of women and girls in the IDP camps by some bad eggs in the military. The distrust between the security agents and the local communities had been mutual and reinforcing, as the former accuse some of the community residents of availing Boko Haram with intelligence on troop movements, pointing to instances of well targeted ambush operations by Boko Haram against the military (Iwuoha, 2019b). It is further alleged that some local residents provide cover to Boko Haram militants by accommodating, shielding and allowing members of the group to use their houses as escape routes after attacks (Soriweh, 2012). This may be for fear of retribution from the sect or the inability of the security agencies to provide them security (Osumah, 2013). The poor level of trust and confidence building between security agents and local people essentially hampered the ability of the security forces to leverage the local knowledge bank available to gather intelligence and provide early warning on insurgent movements. Many residents reported multiple situations in which the military's response had been ineffective and delayed, despite privilege reports ahead of Boko Haram attacks. This was the case in abduction of over 270 schoolgirls from the town of Chibok in 2014.

Although a closer working relationship had been developed between the military and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). The Civilian JTF consists of indigenes or community residents whose local knowledge serve as invaluable intelligence towards countering and aborting potential attacks of the insurgent group (Omenma and Hendricks, 2018). The local intelligence provided by the CJTF is intended to act as a solid bridge that reconsolidate and reinforce renewed trust between military and local people. Unfortunately, there has been increasing friction between the Civilian JTF and the military on the one hand, and the military and international aid agencies on the other, thus undermining and eroding both the intelligence and avenues of

building trust on the ground available for engaging with the insurgents (SBM Intelligence, 2017).

Boko Haram therefore exploits the cracks within the differing operational strategies and intelligence being forged against it. This is reflected in the ability of the Boko Haram fighters to swiftly leverage on intelligence gaps to recapture communities and areas where the military had reclaimed. This is easily possible owing to the reluctance of the local people to provide intelligence on the possibility of renewed or resurgent militant attacks, as well as the security agents' reluctance to share and leverage on available local intelligence to potentially forestall attacks. Again, government's failure to adequately step in with an effective presence and efficient governance in reclaimed territories and communities open more security gaps which the insurgents have proved more than willing to exploit. In most cases, Boko Haram particularly preys on the unemployed, marginalized and disillusioned Muslim youths in Nigeria's northeast, who are fed up with corruption and have limited economic opportunities (Onuoha, 2014). In Northern Nigeria, 72 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, compared to only 27 percent in the southern Nigeria (Bartolotta 2011). A Boko Haram spokesman stated that "there is a large number of our brothers, all eager to carry out suicide missions because of the abundant reward that awaits the person. So, we decided to introduce balloting to avoid disharmony among us" (Bartolotta 2011, p. 45).

Beginning from 2015, the Nigerian military achieved important success in dislodging the Boko Haram from territories they had previously seized and controlled (Onuoha, Nwangwu, and Ugwueze, 2020). In response, Boko Haram made a tactical shift in which it changed its operational posture from fighting to capture territory to guerrilla-style hit and run attacks and increased its campaign of suicide bombings against soft targets. (Pierri and Zenn 2018). This new tactics availed the insurgent group the opportunity to adapt itself to its own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of its enemy, with less emphasis on re-surfing or claiming more territories. Its new strategic focus is on building intelligence that helps it achieve more social and economic disruptions than territorial control. Boko Haram harnesses local intelligence and information on how to evade security agencies while covertly recruiting and indoctrinating community women and young girls for suicide bombings, and using its males for direct ambushes and assaults (SBM Intelligence 2017). In 2015, Boko Haram abducted more than 2,000 women and girls, forcing some to participate in attacks (Amnesty International, 2015). In 2014-2016 nearly 20% of Boko Haram suicide bombers were children under the age of 18; 75% of them girls. The violence has forced more than 2,000 schools to close and disrupted the education of more than a million children in Nigeria's northeast (UNICEF, 2015).



This continues to raise serious concerns as to whether Boko Haram tactics and intelligence machinery are more sophisticated and formidable than that of the Nigerian military and security agencies. The dilemmas of the defense and intelligence establishments in effectively countering the insurgent group have become more significant.

### FRAGMENTATIONS IN INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AMONG SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE ESTABLISHMENTS

Essentially, effective interagency cooperation is important in enhancing intelligence gathering, information management and government communications toward mitigating both real and potential threats posed by terrorists groups (Cline 2016). Hence, any counterterrorism strategy against Boko Haram in Nigeria should be fundamentally underpinned by interagency collaboration among key security agencies. Notwithstanding, Ikeanyibe et al assert that there still exists fogginess about the nature, triggers, and what determines results of interagency collaboration as it concerns counterterrorism in Nigeria (Ikeanyibe, Olise, Abdulrouf and Emeh 2020). Weiss argues that the success of achieving effective interagency cooperation depends largely on the availability of resources and the capacity of collaborating institutions (Weiss 1987). Hence, despite the shared willingness by the government and security agencies in quelling Boko Haram terrorism, lack of resources and weak institutional capacity to mount collaboration largely explain why the counter-insurgency collaboration has not yielded the expected results (Ikeanyibe, Olise, Abdulrouf and Emeh 2020). Table 1 shows the key national agencies involved in Boko Haram counter-insurgency operations in Nigeria.

**Table 1:** Key national agencies involved in Boko Haram counter-insurgency operations

| Name of Agency                     | Role in Intelligence and Counter-insurgency Operations   |
|------------------------------------|--|
| National Security Adviser (NSA)    | Coordination for anti-terrorism operations to prevent infighting among security agencies – Central Coordinator                 |
| Nigerian Military                  | Frontline Operations   |
| Department of States Service (DSS) | Counter-terrorism intelligence gathering and sharing with sister agencies  |
| Nigeria Police Force (NPF)         | Investigating acts of Terrorism and Conducting proactive measures to prevent terrorist attacks through its established CTU/TIB |
| National Intelligence Agency (NIA) | Coordination of intelligence with other intelligence gathering agencies to prevent terrorist activities                        |
| Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA)  | Coordinate Military Operations with U.S. Counter-Agencies: DOD, DOS, FBI, & USAID  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)              | Contribution of Men on request by sister security agencies to combat terrorists  |
| Nigeria Customs Service (NCS)                                 | Checkmating illegal movement of items into/from the country to prevent importation of weaponized materials                 |
| Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS)                             | Border control to checkmate movement of persons to/from the country at entry point   |
| Ministry of Justice   | Administration of legal instruments against terrorist acts through administration  |
| Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)               | Countering terrorism financing   |
| Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU)                    | Countering terrorism financing   |
| Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Centre, Jaji (CTCIC) | Training security personnel from various security agencies on terrorism  |
| Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)                              | Provided critical and necessary responses to terrorism threats in the Northeast through its knowledge of the local context |

*Adapted from Ikeanyibe et al (2020).*

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A major drawback faced by defense and intelligence establishments in forging strong intelligence and counterintelligence against Boko Haram is the lack of mutual trust and confidence building amongst them (Iwuoha and Aniche 2021). There is undue rivalry and suspicion among the sister organizations, and a quest for personal glory at the topmost levels of the agencies (Osumah 2013). For example, it was reported that lack of cooperation and teamwork was responsible for the failure of

the security agencies to prevent the United Nations building attack in 2009, despite receiving intelligence on the plan about nine days before the attack was launched (Ayorinde 2011). The Nigerian Department of State Security (DSS) reports in 2004 predicting imminent Boko Haram attacks were treated with levity by some government officials (Danjibo 2018).

Again, there are inherent conflicts and fragmentations in the role of various security agencies that mount on Nigerian borders. The porosity of Nigerian borders which seem ungovernable further complicates the dilemma. Nigeria shares borders with the Niger Republic, Chad, the Benin Republic, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe. The Nigerian Immigration Service disclosed it has discovered along the borders about 1,487 illegal routes into Nigeria and 84 regular routes (Vanguard 7 February 2013). The expansive length of these numerous entry points can challenge even the best security plans. Thus, in the lack of secured and policed borders as well as ineffective cooperation by security agencies, the Boko Haram exploit these gaps to move in arms and illegal immigrants into the country, as well as escape from the security agencies in the wake of attacks (Osumah 2013; Iwuoha 2019c).

Corruption also underplays the efficacy of intelligence gathering to forestall covert shipments of terrorist arms and movement of their militants across military checkpoints. Boko Haram militants claim that they offered bribes to maneuver and navigate their way through the numerous checkpoints mounted by different security agencies to execute the attack on the UN office in Abuja (Ayorinde 2011). The defense and security establishments have only accumulated little or no relevant intelligence on the covert activities of the Boko Haram organization and as such cannot keep pace with their activities including indoctrination, recruitment and training of members to carry out suicide bombings at different locations.

In 2011, former National Security Adviser General Owoye Azazi alluded that Nigeria's intelligence system and security infrastructures were grossly inadequate to confront the Boko Haram threat (Obayiuwana 2011). The concern for capacity building for security agencies has therefore been identified in the national security strategy as a key factor for defeating Boko Haram and preserving national security (Azazi 2012). Police and military expenditure was therefore raised to an all-time high corresponding to one-fifth of total government overlays in 2012 (Hinshaw 2012). Despite these efforts, however, the negative impacts of interagency rivalry and lack of coordination in which there is overstretched competition for resources, need for visibility, and quest for a favorable public rating of the agency's effectiveness have remained a common feature of the Nigerian security architecture (Udounwa 2013). The unwieldy number of security agencies in Nigeria made coordination of their activities difficult despite the centralization of oversight functions on the

National Security Agency (NSA) (see table 1). In a system with deep inter-service rivalry, it will not be difficult to apprehend why some of the agencies worked hard to undermine and out-do each other (Udounwa 2013).

Salisu et al (2015) argue that the challenge of gathering accurate and timely intelligence and security tips that could assist security organizations has been a significant clog in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency. It is unfortunate that even when there is intelligence gathering on Boko Haram, acting on it sometimes becomes impinged given that some section of the military share sentiments and ideological bias with the terrorist organization. This amounts to sabotaging the effort of the security agencies. Haleru points to circumstances in which military raids on the camps of the terrorists were foiled because information of the raid was leaked to the leaders of the terrorist group from top ranking military officers of the Nigerian Army (Haleru 2011). This draws attention to the convictions of Raimi and Robert on the complicity of some Nigerian northern elites and top Muslim politicians within the central government in providing underground support for the activities of the insurgents (Raimi and Robert 2019).

Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) argues that the Nigerian security agencies are handicapped and consequently powerless because they lack the operational intelligence to thwart the activities of the Boko Haram (IRIN 2017). This is because security agencies themselves sabotage the intelligence gathering process by acting as snitches for the terrorist group making it difficult to effectively combat terrorism. This loophole in the intelligence gathering process is likely to be difficult to manage except the government promotes a very tight mechanism for monitoring security information (Raimi and Robert 2019). This flags attention on the need to build a cooperative framework that take into account the areas of interface such as policy coordination, intelligence sharing, integration of resources, and joint planning and conduct of operations (Iwuoha 2019a). The government should therefore hinge critical decision making on accurate information and intelligence especially in developing its counterterrorism and national security strategy.

Olojo (2018) highlights the infiltration of the military by Boko Haram which critically undermines intelligence gathering. It is also alleged that there are some political links to factions of the group. The impression that Boko Haram has absolutely infiltrated the Nigerian military, security services and government agencies was a long hidden secret and poorly managed intelligence report. President Goodluck Jonathan let the cat out of the bag by alerting that Boko Haram had penetrated the innermost circles of his government and the security services. According to him, “some of them [Boko Haram] are in the executive arm of government, some of them are in the parliamentary/legislative arm of government, while some of them are even in the judiciary. Some are also in the armed forces, the police and other

security agencies” (Jonathan 2012, p. 1-2). Former Chief of Defence Staff, Alex Badeh confirms that;

The activities of fifth columnists in the military and other security agencies who leaked operational plans and other sensitive military information to the terrorist, combined to make the fight against the insurgents particularly difficult. The activities of these unpatriotic members of the military not only blunted the effectiveness of the fight, but also led to the needless deaths of numerous officers and men who unwittingly fell into ambushes prepared by terrorists who had advance warnings of the approach of such troops (Badeh 2015, p. 1-2).

However, the above-stated information left no important clue on the nature and modalities of such terrorist infiltration of the government and public institutions. Again, there were no further revelations or tangible evidence to establish the perpetrators and how such security threat was tackled. This half-baked intelligence report raised serious apprehensions and distrusts that further shattered interagency confidence and mutual trust in the fight against Boko Haram. It also sent strong signals to Nigeria’s counterterrorism partners abroad, with far-reaching imprints on US–Nigeria security cooperation and counterterrorism against Boko Haram (Iwuoha 2019a).

## INTERNATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT TO NIGERIA

One of the critically significant and crucial international intelligence components in the fight against Boko Haram is the United States intelligence sharing/support to Nigerian forces. An improved U.S. intelligence strategy would increase nonlethal effects focusing on information, electronic warfare (EW), and cyber support. Hilary Clinton proposes ‘intelligence fusion cell’ that would combine information from the military, spy services, police and other federal, state and local agencies. The cell would also coordinate counter-terrorism activities and serve as a contact for foreign intelligence services (Cooper 2019). Again, the relatively new cyber domain, with significant cyber security risks, offers more attack vectors and room for ambiguity for not only cyber criminals but also terror groups such as Boko Haram (Duncan 2018). This has attracted the intervention of US security officials in its bid to develop anti-cybercrime units against Boko Haram. In October 2017, the US Consulate in Nigeria headed by John Bray called for improved cyber security awareness and encouraged police units to develop anti-cybercrime units (Osuagwu 2017). The United States organizes military forces to be prepared to fight in the cyber domain, but Nigeria is yet to benefit from similar training. By increasing the awareness and competency of Nigerian forces on non-lethal effects such as cyber and electronic warfare, Nigeria

can proactively attack threat groups like Boko Haram instead of being reactive to a change in tactics (Duncan 2018).

The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) has other measures to improve its intelligence cooperation with the Nigerian military. Particularly, there is a renewed coordination in the establishment of counter-IED and civil-military operations capacity within the Nigerian army in order to make C-IED an integral part of Nigeria's security doctrine. The concept is to build Nigerian institutions so that C-IED skills are organic and can be maintained and passed along by Nigerians themselves (Friend 2014). In addition, the U.S. DOD Principal Director for African Affairs, Alice Friend, highlights that;

We [U.S.] have also supported the establishment of an intelligence fusion center in an effort to promote information sharing among various national security entities and, overall, to enable more effective and responsible intelligence-driven CT Operations. More recently, we have begun working with Nigeria's newly-created Ranger Battalion to impart the specialized skills and disciplines needed to mount effective CT operations (Friend 2014, p. 2).

However, the U.S. officials are sometimes hesitant to share intelligence with the Nigerian military and security services because they contend it has been infiltrated by Boko Haram (Cooper 2019). Even though the U.S. DOD shares aerial imagery with Nigerian military, no raw data has been included in the intelligence they provided because they are afraid that their sources could be compromised (Schmitt 2014). The U.S. DOD officials describe Nigeria as “an extremely challenging partner to work with,” and “slow to adapt with new strategies, new doctrines, and new tactics”, (Friend 2014, p. 4) and that they are being “exceedingly cautious when it comes to sharing information with the Nigerians because of their unfortunate record” (Friend 2014, p. 4). One of the primary aims of DOD engagement is therefore to “convince Nigerian military to change their tactics, techniques, and procedures toward Boko Haram” (Friend 2014, p. 3).

On the other hand, there are still skepticisms and distrusts in the Nigerian military leadership regarding perceived U.S. ‘excessive’ interference in its internal affairs, hence they are quite dismissive of certain training offers. For example, in November 2014, Nigeria cancelled advanced infantry training by U.S. Special Forces for an elite Nigerian army unit that had been cleared for assistance (Schmitt 2014). These factors have further constrained security cooperation and intelligence sharing, despite shared concerns over terrorism and other regional security threats. Key Nigerian military officials believe that military partnerships with the U.S., such as the Military Professional Resource Initiative (MPRI), offer U.S. undue access to Nigeria military secrets.

Former Nigerian Chief of Army Staff and Commander of West African ECOMOG, Lieutenant General Victor Malu stated that the Americans were simply asking for unfettered access to Nigeria's military facilities and resources through military partnership programmes. Malu insists "we would not want them [U.S.] to change these doctrines... Our interplay with any country should not in any way compromise our military strategy" (Malu 2001, p. 3). Asobie further explains that "Nigeria military is not happy with the degree of access granted U.S. military to Nigeria's military installations and defense secrets. It is feared that it places the U.S. armed forces at an undue advantage in any future conflict with Nigeria" (Asobie 1991, p. 32). Therefore, tied up in this mutual distrust which impedes effective intelligence sharing to counter Boko Haram terrorism, it is highly difficult to make progress in the U.S –Nigeria intelligence cooperation on counterterrorism despite the rhetoric (Iwuoha 2020b). A senior military official with the US AFRICOM confirms "We don't have a foundation for what I would call a good partnership [with Nigeria] right now. We want a relationship based on trust, but you have to be able to see yourself. And they're in denial" (Cooper 2017, p. 1-3).

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

This article examined current trends in Boko Haram terrorism and Nigeria's counterintelligence and counterterrorism strategies against the terrorist organization. The article highlights the tactical gains and operational success of the Boko Haram in recent years as demonstrated in the high level coordination of attacks and formidability of local intelligence which enhance the group's covert activities. This concern is contextualized amidst Nigeria's failing counterterrorism strategies illustrated in the poor intelligence system, lack of interagency cooperation, ungovernability of porous borders, disconcertion of the various security apparatuses, Boko Haram's infiltration of the military and public institutions, as well as military corruption. These complex and interlocking dilemmas combine to undercut Nigeria's capacity to defeat Boko Haram after about a decade of the terrorist group's operation in Nigeria.

Of particular concern is Nigeria's inability to leverage on the counterintelligence support provided by important international partners such as the United States. Hence, there is need for Nigeria to 'change their tactics, techniques, and procedures toward Boko Haram' (Friend 2014). Nigeria is wary of perceived US 'excessive' interference in its internal affairs and dismissive of certain training offers, claiming that the Americans are simply asking for unfettered access to Nigeria's military facilities and resources. Hence, they would not want them [US] to change their military doctrines or compromise their military strategy. These underlying realities not only undermine US–Nigeria security cooperation and counterterrorism engagements (i.e. troop contribution, intelligence sharing, military financing, weapons supply, military

trainings, cyber support etc) but are implicated in the intractability of Boko Haram insurgency.

The way forward to the fight against Boko Haram remains a collaborative counterterrorism action among neighbouring states of invaded countries. Therefore, the MNJTF must be reorganized with clear operational framework for effective collaborative counterterrorism operations, military infrastructure development, adequate mobilization of military personnel across force contributing countries, effective funding by affected states, and strong counterterrorism partnership with foreign countries in order to address the Boko Haram challenge. There is the need for the various security agencies in Nigeria to share intelligence among one another and coordinate their responses to such intelligence.

It is important to develop more robust security agencies-community cooperation to enhance intelligence sharing between the security agents and people of local communities in the affected Boko Haram flashpoints. In these communities, the security and intelligence establishments should respect the fundamental rights of the residents. More conscious efforts should be made to renew sustainable international counterterrorism assistance especially in the areas of intelligence sharing, counterinsurgency operations, the detection of improvised explosive devices, forensic analysis, intelligence gathering and analysis, and the mounting of a de-radicalization programme.

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# WOMEN'S ROLE IN COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

Women in Nigeria particularly in the northeast region of the country have in recent times been adversely affected by violent extremism perpetrated by Boko Haram insurgents. Not only are they victims of violent extremism, they are perpetrators and supporters. Despite these, their voice is largely absent in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) efforts. In recent times, there is a growing attention by the international development community to conflict resolution and the increasing recognition that women like men have a fundamental stake in building peaceful societies. This study aimed to contribute to a more dynamic understanding of women's role in counterterrorism in North East Nigeria. Adopting a qualitative approach with data from desk review of relevant secondary data, this study goes beyond conventional images of women as victims of violence, to document the many different ways in which they act as perpetrators as well as ways in which they can make a contribution to P/CVE. The study found that women are largely absent in Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations and post-conflict plans. For sustainable peace, a more comprehensive multi-stakeholder approach to addressing the challenges of violent extremism which mainstreams women in P/CVE processes is recommended.

## Keywords

Boko Haram, Counterterrorism, Gender mainstreaming, Insurgency, Violent extremism.

## INTRODUCTION

The exclusion of women from security apparatuses remains one of the most fundamental challenges of our time. Across the globe, women remain largely absent from negotiating tables. Between 1992 and 2018, women constituted 13 per cent of negotiators, 3 per cent of mediators and only 4 per cent of signatories in major peace

processes (Unwomen, 2019). Despite a growing awareness on the role women play in violent extremism as supporters and perpetrators, as well as the impact of violence on them, the counter insurgency strategy in Nigeria so far has not explored the roles of women and, importantly, their perspectives on counterterrorism. As a result, the potential for women to act as a vital resource in policy and planning on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) has remained largely untapped.

North East is the base of violent extremism in Nigeria. The Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), popularly referred to as Boko Haram or *Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad*, has been waging a war against the Nigerian state for the past eight years. The insurgency which has claimed over twenty thousand lives, displaced over two million people, and destroyed billions of dollars' worth of personal and public property, has women and girls as its major victims (Hassan, 2017). Since its onset, hundreds of women and girls have been abducted from villages across the zone. In 2014, more than 276 school girls were kidnaped from Chibok village in Borno State and in 2018, 210 girls were abducted from a school in Dapchi, Yobe state (Ndahi 2018). However, while many resources have been dedicated to P/CVE efforts in Nigeria, little attention has been paid to integrating a gender dimension into many of the national and local efforts to address the problems of violent extremism.

In spite of the exclusion of women from negotiating tables and security apparatuses by the Nigerian government, the multifaceted role of women as bread winners, combatants and peace activists at the same time is increasingly being recognized. The roles of women in international peace and security efforts have been underscored by the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 and subsequent thematic resolutions on women, peace, and security issues. The Resolution for instance recognizes the importance of increasing the role of women in all aspects of maintaining international peace and security, including encouraging women to take an active role in resolving conflicts and called on all actors to adopt a gender perspective to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. UNSCR 1325 was the result of several past statements, charters, and declarations involving the basic principle of equal rights and liberties for women, such as the right to self-determination, to participating in politics, and to nondiscrimination (Klein, 2011). The resolution and other efforts after it marked a milestone in gender mainstreaming in conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. While extremism was not mentioned in the resolution 1325, the most recent Security Council resolution on women, peace and security - 2122 (2013) - refers to the Security Council's intention to increase its attention to Women, Peace and Security (WPS) issues in all thematic areas of work on its agenda, including in relation to peace and security threats caused by terrorist acts. There is also the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security appointed in January 2014 by the Chairperson of the African

Union Commission (AUC), with a mission to ensure gender mainstreaming and equal participation of women in peace processes, including in conflict prevention, management, resolution and peace building, as well as the Guidelines on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) launched by the ECOWAS Commission on the 23rd of April, 2021 in Abuja, Nigeria in furtherance of the drive to enhance greater gender mainstreaming and bring to the front burner, the importance of women in peace building efforts within the ECOWAS region, while highlighting their role in the sustenance of the regional peace and security architecture. In spite of these instruments, women in Nigeria are yet to be in the mainstream in counterterrorism and are thus faced with the challenges of translating legal instruments into real rights and concrete change.

Women's role in peace processes in Nigeria spans the precolonial era to the post-independence period. From the earliest times in Yorubaland, Iboland and Hausaland, women have been active in traditional methods of conflict resolution. In recent years, women organisations such as the Women Without Walls Initiative (WOWWI), Christian Women for Excellence and Empowerment in Nigeria (CWEENS), Total Woman Foundation (TWOFF) and several others have actively opposed extremism and mobilized against it in creative and peaceful ways such as the use of dialogue (Akpan, Olofu-Adeoye & Odey 2014). Despite these efforts, women's voices have been largely absent from official P/CVE efforts (Donli, 2008). While many resources have been dedicated to CVE efforts, the Nigerian government has made no efforts to integrate women in counter insurgency operations (Peace Direct, 2017). Despite that women and girls are the most affected by insurgency, there are few women involved in the government-led counter insurgency operations in the country made up of an estimated 98 per cent male while most of the post-conflict plans by the government do not include women in the rebuilding process (Peace Direct, 2017). The article attempts to understand the reasons behind this gap.

## CLARIFYING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND COUNTERTERRORISM

**Violent Extremism (VE)** – Violent extremism is a form of extremism that condones and enacts violence with ideological or deliberate intent (Homeland Security, 2016). It is “believing and supporting ideas that are very far from what most people think is correct or reasonable ..... or attitudes or behaviors that are considered out of the norm (FNEST, 2008). According to USAID (cited in Dyrenforth, 2018), violent extremism is “advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political objectives. This definition is expansive as it encompasses the various ways individuals participate in violence extremism and for what purpose. In the same vein,

UNESCO (2016) views violent extremism as the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to attain ideological, religious, or political goals and this includes terrorism and other forms of politically motivated or sectarian violence.

**Counter-Terrorism (CT)** is a strategy intended to prevent or counter terrorism. It is a combination of military operations as well as the adoption of legislative and policing frameworks to control, repress and track terrorist activities; training, equipping and reorganizing national security forces and intelligence services; and enhancing border surveillance and checkpoints (Dyrenforth, 2018). Counterterrorism efforts include Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE). While CVE is focused on countering the activities of existing violent extremists, PVE is focused on preventing the further spread of violent extremism. In practice, strategies are combined giving rise to preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) processes.

## VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN NIGERIA

Violent extremism has been on for decades in Nigeria, beginning with the Islamic fundamentalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and spanning the 1980s to the present times (Ngbea, 2016; Harnischfege, cited in Marc-Antoine, 2014). However, the magnitude of deaths and destruction resulting from the act as perpetrated by the Boko Haram sect in recent times has led to more attention being paid to it. Boko Haram, a group that seeks to rid the country of Western and secular institutions and to resuscitate the Kanem-Bornu caliphate was founded by a Salafist cleric, Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 in Maiduguri, Borno State. In March 2015 the group pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and shortly after, ISIS' spokesperson at the time, Abu Mohammad al-Adnani directed individuals who could not enter Iraq or Syria to travel to West Africa, an action which led to Boko Haram becoming recognized as ISWAP. ISWAP's regional outlook has attracted a significant number of foreign fighters, approximately 3,500 to Nigeria (The Soufan Centre, 2018; Counter Extremism Project, not dated).

Various “push” and “pull” factors drive violence. Push factors include marginalization, inequality, discrimination, persecution, limited access to quality education, denial of rights and civil liberties and other environmental, historical and socio-economic grievances while the pull factors include attractive ideas and causes, financial, social, and material incentives, quest for adventure and freedom, a place to belong and a supportive social network (UNESCO, 2016; Okenyodo, 2016).

The push factors among which are psychological factors such as extra judicial killings by law enforcement agents against civilians particularly loved ones, sexual,



physical and verbal abuse provide a fertile ground for radicalization in Nigeria. An individual who has lost a loved one to the brutality of law enforcement agents and cannot get justice, may see a terrorist cell as the only ‘family’ they have. The same goes for victims of all forms of abuses in the society as well as those that have been denied the needed love and in most cases viewed as out-casts and good-for-nothing and subjected to a life of rejection.

For the pull factors, the desire for acceptance particularly among young people as well as low level of parental involvement in a child’s life, a relative lack of exposure to people of other ethnicities and neglect both by the state and its educational facilities as manifest in the North East have driven them to join extremist groups (UNDP, 2017). Furthermore, socio-economic factors such as unemployment, poverty, illiteracy provide fertile grounds for individuals to become members of an extremist group. According to UNDP (2017), while there is agreement that poverty alone is not a sufficient explanation for violent extremism in Africa, it is accepted that violent extremist groups exploit perceptions of disproportionate economic hardship or exclusion due to religious or ethnic identity, while failure to generate high and sustainable levels of growth and job creation are also critically linked; thus, economic factors can thus best be described as one among several sets of issues driving recruitment of individuals by violent extremist groups. Nigeria has the highest number of extreme poverty globally and the World Bank has warned that the number of Nigerians living in extreme poverty might increase by more than 30 million in 2030 (Kazeem, 2018; Olalekan, 2019). Extreme poverty in Nigeria is estimated to be growing by six people every minute (Vanguard, 2018). In 2018, with about 87 million (half of its estimated 180 million population) Nigerians living in extreme poverty, Nigeria overtook India as the poverty capital of the world and it is estimated that the situation will get worse unless something is done by 2025 when the country will become the third largest country in the world (Kazeem, 2018). Of the six geopolitical zones in the country, the northern zones have the highest indices of poverty-North West (77.7 per cent), North East (76.3 per cent) and North Central (67.5 per cent). The poverty situation in some states in the north is said to be as high as 95 per cent of the population and this has supported the breeding of insurgents (Khan and Cheri, 2016).

One of the key indicators for measuring poverty level is education, an area which the north also performs dismally. UNICEF estimated that Nigeria had the highest number of out of school children globally estimated at 13.2 million in 2018 with 69 per cent of this in the north, which invariably has the highest population of out-of-school children in the world (Eze, 2018; Ibrahim, 2008; Amzat, 2017; Mohammed, 2018). Research shows that a significantly larger percentage of those who voluntarily become members of the Boko Haram sect are often those with the lowest levels of secular schooling with the susceptibility to future recruitment predicted to be significantly influenced by lack of basic education (UNDP, 2017).

Another huge incentive for recruitment is the promise of employment by extremist groups. Research finding identifies employment as the single most frequently cited ‘immediate need’ at the time of joining a sect (UNDP, 2017). Unemployment in Nigeria is high with an estimated 1.8 million graduates entering the labour market every year according to the National Bureau of Statistics (The Nation, 2014). In 2018 unemployment rate in the country was put at 20.9 million with youth unemployment being 52.65 percent (Nnorom and Adegbesan, 2018). The unemployment situation is worse in the north where millions of youths are jobless. It is typical to see unemployed youths along major towns and cities in the north with bowls in hand begging for food or stipends. This group of youths known as *almajiris* which literally interpreted means disciples is often the target of extremists. Many of them are often conscripted as fighters during religious crisis in the north and are currently dominant in the Boko Haram group. Unemployment therefore predisposes young people to radicalization and recruitment by extremist groups.

Political factors also play a critical role in an individuals’ radicalization process. The Nigerian polity is weak and characterised by bad governance, unstable political structures and fragmented political culture which results in grievance towards, and limited confidence in, government and make individuals prone to extremism (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, Ojua and Okorie; 2017; UNDP, 2017). The situation in the northeast characterised by lawlessness, corruption and governance that takes more than gives to the people has encouraged violence. People vote in leaders who often do not carry out their promises and as a result, disenchantment sets in. In some instances, unemployed individuals are recruited as thugs who help politicians to win elections but are thereafter abandoned. In such instances, the end result is recourse to violence.

## WOMEN AS VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE NORTH EAST

One significant feature of extremism in Nigeria in recent times is the fact that women are becoming the main target. The Boko Haram extremist group has mounted strategic attacks on women’s rights and freedoms, including the ability to move freely, engage in public life, access education and employment, enjoy health services, express themselves without the fear of repercussion and live as equal citizens. Deliberate killing, rape, mutilation, forced displacement, abduction; trafficking and torture of women and girls are features of the ongoing insurgency. Women are also sex slaves and forced laborers. In 2014 more than 276 school girls were abducted from a boarding school in Chibok village in Borno State, an action which drew national and international outcry. Four years later, in 2018, 110 school girls were abducted from Government Girls Science Technical College (GGSTC) in Dapchi,

Yobe State. Apart from these cases, two aid workers with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Saifura Hussaini Ahmed Khorsa and Hauwa Liman, were murdered by the sect in September and October 2018 respectively (ICRC, 2018a; ICRC, 2018b).

Women are also enablers and perpetrators of violent extremism contrary to the view of men as the major perpetrators and women as victims (Sharoni, 1994). According to Oudraat and Brown (2016), women have supported or partaken in violent extremism for as long as it has existed while Lindsey O' Rourke (2009) points out that the number of female suicide attackers has risen globally from eight during the 1980s to well over one hundred since the year 2000 (Olojo, 2013). The notion of women as perpetrators and enablers has become glaring in the North East in recent times. Boko Haram has played on the common perception of women as nonviolent to effortlessly mainstream them into their operations, using them as informants, suicide bombers, domestic servants, masterminds, soldiers, couriers who carry money and weapons to various cells; as recruiters who seek out new members and mobilize grassroots volunteers by taking advantage of family ties or other personal relationships, fighters, and operational leaders who carry weapons during combat among many other roles (Hassan, 2017; Okenyodo, 2016). Beginning in June 2014, when a woman detonated the explosives strapped to her body, ending her life and killing a soldier in the process, women have been actively involved in targeting civilians at markets, bus depots, and mosques with 89 attacks between June 2014 and January 2016, mostly of civilian soft targets, responsible for more than 1,200 deaths and an even greater number of injuries (Bloom & Matfess, 2016). Women's membership of the sect is either involuntary or voluntary and is the result of certain factors. Most women in the North East are dependent on the men for their livelihoods and as a result, male relatives' involvement in radical groups automatically includes women's participation even when ordinarily they would not have loved to (Okenyodo, 2016). On the other hand, factors such as lack of access to justice, infringement on their rights, lack of social or security cover, marginalisation, inequality, and alienation make women voluntary members and willing perpetrators. As victims, women and girls are abducted, killed, raped, turned into sex slaves and forced into marriages with extremists. Young girls are also forced to withdraw from school as a result of attacks on educational institutions and the insecure environment. The result is that they end up being forced into early marriages. Among those that are lucky to be rescued, many return with unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and children born out of wedlock. This group of women face a double jeopardy of stigmatization and ostracism from the community and their immediate family members who view them as allies of extremists.

Victims are also denied their rights to freedom of religion and worship as was the case of Leah Sharibu a Dapchi captive of the Boko Haram who is yet to regain

her freedom. Sharibu was abducted along with other girls in 2018 but was denied freedom for refusing to recant her Christian faith. In 2019, the spokesman for the sect, announced that she had been married off to one of the leaders and had given birth to a boy. Leah Sharibu's case is one of the many instances of denial of freedom of religion in the northeast where Christians are regarded as infidels.

Women and girls also face the challenge of widowhood and being orphaned and the practices of disinheritance that goes with it. Where the man did not have a will before his demise, the wife and female children may not have access to his property as preference is given to male children. Where there are no males, the man's brother or any near kinsman inherits his property.

### ENGAGING WOMEN IN COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA

Policymakers and practitioners have increasingly recognized that a closer understanding of the roles women play in relation to P/CVE is critical to developing tailored strategies to strengthen resilience against extremist violence, and support victims and survivors of terrorist attacks (Global Center on Cooperative Security, 2017). Women play crucial roles in families, communities, educational institutions, law enforcement agencies and the broader public sector, and can bring important unique perspectives to understanding and countering violent extremism and terrorist radicalization (OSCE, 2014). According to Edit Schlaffer, "Women and mothers in particular possess the unique ability to recognize early warning signs of radicalization in their children. They can play a key role in curtailing violent extremism" (Majoran, 2015). Despite these multiple roles of women as victims and perpetrators as well as their capacity to prevent and counter violent extremism, their voices have been largely absent from P/CVE processes in Nigeria and their roles less explored by policy makers (Donli, 2008; Chowdhury, Barakat and Shetret, 2013). Although the government has developed a National Action Plan to fulfill UN Security Council Resolution 1325, this is not reflected in the conflict with Boko Haram where women only few women are involved in Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations, with government forces estimated to be 98 percent male (Hassan, 2017). The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 recognizes the importance of increasing the role of women in all aspects of maintaining international peace and security, including encouraging women to take an active role in resolving conflicts (sections 2, 8b and 16 of SCR1325). Also, resolution 2129 of the Security Council reaffirms the Council's objective to "increase its attention to women, peace and security issues on a relevant thematic areas of work on its agenda, including threats to international peace and security by terrorist acts." (Peace Direct, 2017).

Furthermore, most of the post-conflict plans for the North East do not include the role of women in the peacebuilding or specify their needs. For instance, the Recovery and Peace Building Assessment (RPBA) blueprint developed by the government of Nigeria, World Bank, and other development partners, did not dedicate a specific portion of the plan to women despite the impact of the insurgency on women and children. Also, the Presidential Committee on the North East (PCNI) and the National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) lack substantial gender inclusion as they have not adequately explored the intersectionality between gender, peace, and security, and the centrality of gender in P/CVE. In addition, there is little or no local ownership of the P/CVE process and when trying to participate, women continue to face many challenges such as overall lack of accountability within the process, trust deficit, lack of funding and access to funders, and trouble deciphering what P/CVE means exactly for effective programming within communities. Also, the P/CVE process, a soft approach does not consider the potential for women to significantly engage in counterterrorism (CT) efforts despite the fact that women play vital roles within the family, particularly in forming the character of children in addition to their ability to offer diverse perspectives for problem solving (Wulan, nd).

Evidence has however shown that security efforts are more successful and sustainable when women contribute to prevention and early warning, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict resolution and peacebuilding. According to Oluyemi-Kusa (2009):

women often introduce other experiences with conflict, set other priorities for peace building and rehabilitation, manage to form coalitions bridging deep political, ethnic and religious divides and on the basis of their shared interest are regarded as less threatening to the established order thus having more freedom of action, and bringing a better understanding of social justice and existing gender inequality to peace negotiations.

Women are often uniquely positioned within their families and communities to provide essential information to those working to counter extremism but in many cases, CVE practitioners engage with only certain community gatekeepers and neglect the input of women and women's civil society groups who may also have access or intelligence. Furthermore, the traditional roles ascribed to women in many societies as wives and mothers often uniquely position them to act as powerful agents of prevention. Peace is in the interest of women who are impacted differently by conflict and also tasked with the business of keeping families intact and ensuring livelihoods. This is why (Okenyodo, 2016) asserts that "There can be no effective prevention against terrorist radicalization without the involvement of women as educators, influencers and positive agents of change in their families, communities and broader society. Women in the North East can use their influence in their homes

to prevent the radicalization of their children and other members of the society. As educators, women can inculcate positive values in their children which could help in curbing the tendencies towards violent extremism. The family is the first unit of socialization and evidence shows that family ties are a strong predictor of extremism, and that women are central to understanding how to leverage the role of the family in promoting positive change (Georgetown University, nd).

Women can form as well as belong to associations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), as a means of countering violent extremism. Through membership of such groups, they can positively influence young people within their families and in the society from becoming members of extremist groups and also reintegrate the repentant ones successfully and peacefully into the society. Women can also organize conferences and seminars or partner with sister organisations with a focus on P/CVE.

Religious fundamentalism is one of the causes of violence extremism. Women can be important shapers of religious narratives that oppose violence by sensitizing young people in particular and the society in general to the danger of religious extremism while promoting religious tolerance through awareness campaigns carried out by people of different faith.

The Internet has been instrumental to the spread of violent extremism across the globe as a tool of recruitment by extremist groups and ISWAP is sophisticated and effective in using this in its operations. Despite its negative use, the Internet creates opportunities for women to counter violent extremism. They can form an online platform and through various resources available to them such as music, pictures, banners, symbols, infographics among others, prevent recourse to violent extremism by members of the society, especially young people who are its major users.

Strategies to counter violent extremism that promote women's participation, leadership and empowerment are critical and these should include the following;

- There is the need for legal reforms. Women first have to be recognised, included and protected as full and equal citizens before the law. Legal reforms that are then followed up with implementation can provide an important avenue towards improving the lives of women and reinforcing their ability to lead as change makers in countering violent extremism. In addition, women especially those at the grass-roots where the majority of Boko Haram members are recruited should not only be incorporated as participants in decision making processes, but also be included as beneficiaries of counter-terrorism laws (Olojo, 2013).

- The counter-terrorism community needs to recognize that gender is not a marginal issue but a central issue in the terrorism arena. It therefore needs to think more regularly and more systematically about women, gender, and counter-terrorism. Women's involvement and the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into conflict prevention processes are essential components towards durable peace, security and reconciliation. This includes the incorporation of gender-sensitive indicators into early warning systems, intelligence gathering and the strengthening of prevention strategies relating to violence against women.
- More importantly, women must be present at the solution table. Women need to be part of the planning within a counter terrorism strategy because of their ability to offer a different but vital perspective on the analysis of conflicts (Ashiru and Hayes, 2015).
- There is also the need to address the issues underlying women's membership of the Boko Haram sect. It is crucial that the international community and the Nigerian government engage with women in preventing violent extremism, and focus on the gender-related reasons why women become involved as protagonists and supporters of violent extremism (Giscard, 2017). For instance, unemployment and poverty have been identified as two of the reasons women voluntarily join extremist groups. As such women need to be empowered economically.
- Women's presence among counter-terrorism professionals, including in the military and the Nigeria Police Force must be increased. These structures need to strengthen their efforts to recruit and retain women, including in operational roles, and to ensure that obstacles to their career advancement are removed (OSCE, 2013).
- It is also important to identify and empower women within the civil and security sectors. This can be done by developing training programs that are multilayered from the grassroots to the state to the national levels. These women should be trained on advocacy skills that are strategic which allows them to take advantage of their positions and localities. This may include strategic ways to disseminate narratives that counter violent extremism (Okenyodo, 2016).
- Similarly, a gender dimension should be included in efforts to promote inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogues. This would facilitate women's engagement in promoting tolerance and living together and preventing conflicts across ethnic, cultural and religious lines, thus also helping to prevent and mitigate tensions that can potentially lead to violent extremism. Women may be able to engage more effectively and constructively in dialogue, where it has otherwise failed (OSCE, 2013).

- Protection of women is advocated for their effective participation in P/CVE. Effective P/CVE requires local knowledge possessed by women who have been victims, supporters and perpetrators of violent extremism. This is because their perspectives on and approaches to P/CVE will be distinct based on their lived experiences. However, in order for them to rise up as advocates and leaders, they must be protected and able to use their voice.
- Counter-terrorism policies and practices should be designed to respect human rights and the rule of law at all times in order to be successful because as Zeina-bouHadari, argued, “every step forward for women’s rights is a piece of the struggle against fundamentalism” (OSCE,2013; Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

Violent extremism and the underlying forces of radicalization are among the most pervasive challenges of our time. While violent extremism remains one of the security challenges of our time, more challenging is the need to counter it. Despite the fact that women are victims as well as enablers of insurgency in Nigeria, the Nigerian government has made no discernible efforts to integrate them in counter insurgency operations. In recent years, the role of women in P/CVE has gained momentum in the international counterterrorism policy discourse with the counter-terrorism community recognizing that counter-terrorism efforts must include initiatives to prevent the radicalization and recruitment of women and girls. This means paying more attention to the special social, economic and political conditions of women and girls who may be susceptible to violent extremist ideologies as well as the recruitment messages that are targeted specifically at women and girls. This shows that the international community has shifted from a reactive to a more preventive approach regarding violent extremism and Nigeria needs to align with this. A more comprehensive multi-stakeholder approach to addressing the challenges of violent extremism in the North East will require the inclusion of women in P/CVE processes for sustainable peace to be achieved in Nigeria. When empowered, women can bring unique perspectives to countering violent extremism and serve as equal partners with their male counterparts in the CVE process.

Considering that only few researches have been conducted on women’s efforts in countering violent extremism in Nigeria, further research is needed on the subject. To this end, quantitative researches should be conducted by researchers and practitioners on how lessons learned from women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention can be applied to CVE. Also, researches should be conducted on the way women/mothers can be engaged in reinforcing lessons learned in school during the formative years of a child’s life, with a view to prevent and counter violent extremism.



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# NON-TERRORIST CONFLICTS, CREDIBLE COMMITMENT AND PEACE BUILDING IN THE DEVEL- OPING SOCIETIES: EVIDENCE FROM POST AMNESTY VIOLENCE IN THE NIGER DELTA, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

Modern terrorism studies have understudied non-terrorist conflicts in relation to credible commitment to peace building in the developing countries. Contemporary theories of peace building bring this to scholarly glare. From this perspective, the contradictions of mediation and negotiation, without credible commitment among key stakeholder groups, leads to complex and multidimensional resurgence of post recovery conflict. This study draws from the Niger Delta experience. It conceptualizes militancy as a non-terrorist violence to differentiate it from terrorism and further builds on credibility and reputation theory and posits that non commitment to peace process may not only trigger new conflict rather mars the reputation of parties to the conflict. In this context, the paper demonstrates that State lethargy has been a major trigger of post amnesty violence in the Niger Delta. Based on in-depth interviews with ex-combatants, presidential amnesty programme(PAP) representatives, and civil society organizations(CSOs) working on peace building, it argues that credible commitment is a marginalized concept that has a high mediation and reconciliation impact. To make an original contribution in this complexity, dimensions of non - credible commitment was discussed to identify key social processes or drivers, which helped explain how and why credible commitment is essential for post amnesty sustainable peace. These drivers also increased understanding of the wider diversity of resurgent post amnesty violence and implications for peace building. The study provides guidance for developing a commitment to peace, which offers some policy insights to non- terrorist conflict and in particular, post amnesty armed violence in the Niger Delta.

## INTRODUCTION

Little is known about non-terrorist conflicts in most crises ridden developing societies. Non-terrorist conflicts are those conflicts that are not linked to terrorism. These conflicts have been in the margins in terrorist studies. The study of non-terrorist conflicts have become important in the post-Cold War era following the resurgence of new wars and local conflicts within borders. Whilst non-terrorist conflicts are not targeted at destruction of humans such as violation of human rights, killings or direct attacks on the state, it entails indirect opposition to state policies or attacks on state agencies or violation of state rules largely by an aggrieved or marginalized section of the society. This includes civil disobedience, mass action, riots, separatist agitation such as the Indigenous People of Biafra(IPOB) in south eastern Nigeria, communal conflicts and similar forms of internal insurrection that trigger conflict such as militancy by aggrieved Niger Delta youths in the South-South Nigeria.

On its part, terrorist violence takes various forms including mindless and senseless killings, violent attacks on the state, its agencies and the citizenry, violation of human rights, rape, banditry, criminality, abduction of citizens for ransom, suicide bombing and all other forms of violence by 'faceless' groups. This has been the case with Nigeria's Boko Haram. The 2021 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) ranked Nigeria third terrorist nation in the world.

The UN General Assembly Resolution 60/288 (1994) posits that the aim of terrorism is to invoke political attention for whatever objectives or gains by the terrorists. Schmid (2011) identified three main elements in defining terrorism; **(1)** the use (or threat) of violence, **(2)** political objectives and **(3)** the intention of sowing fear in a target population as a means of achieving these political objectives.

A common feature of both terrorism and non-terrorist conflict is the disruption of the polity, through tension and panic. The study of non-terrorist conflict has been a useful research agenda for scholars seeking to understand dynamics of contemporary terrorism especially in contexts linked to credible commitment and post conflict peace building.

In non-terrorist conflicts, issues of non-credible commitment have been identified as responsible for perverse post conflict violence. For instance, there is looming credibility crisis in resolving the Niger Delta armed conflict. With the recent incendiary and ongoing post amnesty violence in the region alongside the broader rise of resource justice movements, it appears that some of the core ideals of the federal government's amnesty programme as a peace building mechanism are not working. Such trends have led to increasing scholarly debates on post amnesty violence in the Niger Delta (Ukiwo, 2016; Ebiede, 2018; Vurasi & Nna, 2020). Ojione (2010) captured the intensity of the violence when he identified a twist in the current wave of militancy as the battle extends from the creeks, to upland areas and at times to the seats of government. Many of these studies, however, have tended to ignore the longer-term relevance of credible commitment in the process of post conflict peace building – a gap which extends to the dominant theorizations in contemporary peace and conflict debates. Thus, emphasis on 'credible commitment' as a strand of post conflict peace building that is based on the implementation and strict adherence to issues of conflict resolution by conflicting parties have been in the margins in conflict resolution discourse in the developing countries.

In the late 2000s, at various parts of the Niger Delta, armed militia groups most notably Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), and Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) inhabited much of the creeks and erected what became popularly known as 'camps'. The activities of the leadership of these camps gave rise to an entirely new and unanticipated crisis: oil resource sabotage, abduction of expatriate oil workers for ransom, vandalization of oil pipelines resulting in sharp decrease in production and export of oil from the Niger Delta. Virtually all the major oil multinational companies experienced one form of attack or the other (Ikelegbe, 2010; McNamee, 2012). These militia groups became the symbol of insurrection and armed violence against the Nigerian state, in which agitation that took various violent forms including criminality emerged as real 'strategic' threat, to Nigeria's oil resource – the mainstay of the country's economy. This representation of the Niger Delta in a vortex of volatility gained popular currency both in debates and social circles as the various militia groups take up arms against the Nigerian state (Osaghae, Ikelegbe, Olarinmoye & Okhonmina, 2011).

The rise of militia agitation was largely an attribute of growing poverty, neglect and increasing youth unemployment, which contrasts the oil wealth of the region (Ebiede, 2018). Recent accounts demonstrate that most of the militants were university graduates who could not be gainfully employed in Nigeria's public sector (Ebiede, 2018). Some studies highlight that the core trigger of the violent agitation was increasing marginalization of the oil bearing Niger Delta as Nigeria's government has a history of unequal revenue allocation formula (Obi, 2010; Ukiwo, 2011).

In 2009, the federal government granted unconditional amnesty to the militants. What has been less explored is the cause of the recent post amnesty violence, in relation to credible commitment on the part of the federal government and its implication to peace building policy in the developing societies. Thus, issues of local conflicts in the developing societies have taken complex dimensions. In particular, discourses promoting peace building and credible commitment among the developing societies have become more important as the development contradictions of most resource rich countries have not been adequately resolved in contemporary peace and conflict studies.

This study seeks to broaden the scope of terrorism studies with emphasis on transformation of non-violent conflicts conceptualized in the context of post amnesty Niger Delta. It focuses on non-terrorist conflict and the need for credible commitment as essential to mitigate post conflict violence. It draws on evidence from the Niger Delta post amnesty violence. The post amnesty era is important as the Niger Delta has experienced complex post recovery conflicts, and particularly as oil rich Nigeria, Africa's largest economy was recently declared the "World poverty capital", by the Brookings Institute (Kharas, Hamel & Hofer, 2018). This draws local and international attention to post transition peace building.

Again, the magnitude of the on-going crisis in spite of democratic rule suggests the need for effective resolution of the conflict, which remains central to the processes and practices of inclusive and participatory democracy. This makes credible commitment inevitable. Whilst there are important empirical and theoretical debates on armed struggle and violent conflicts in post amnesty Niger Delta, these accounts, say little or nothing about the place of credible commitment in their respective accounts and, more importantly, omit any conceptualization of credible commitment in their empirical or theoretical schemas. This not only weakens their respective analyses but also serves to misconstrue the relevance of credible commitment to peace building and more particularly, post amnesty transformation of the Niger Delta.

The central research question is; what factors account for non-credible commitment to post transition recovery in the Niger Delta? To find answer to this question, this paper seeks to explore the conceptual and theoretical relevance of the term "credible commitment" in relation to non-terrorist – conflict transformation by highlighting the importance of credible commitment in postrecovery era. In particular, it draws attention to the role of commitment and compliance to peace deals by stakeholder groups in the building and maintenance of a peaceful social order. This emphasis on credible commitment not only underscores some neglected aspects of post-Cold War local conflict resolution but also accounts for persistence of new wars and local conflicts in post 1990 global South (Kaldor, 1999).



Essentially, the notion of credible commitment in post amnesty Niger Delta, puts peace building in proper perspective in conflict transformation contexts and accounts for the specific ways prevailing peace building processes have failed. Succinctly, the assumption that credible commitment has been a marginalized concept in post conflict peace building within the developing societies will be elucidated.

The paper demonstrates the critical relevance of credible commitment in post conflict transformation. Our debate follows on the heels of recent and ongoing arguments, which emphasize the persistence of post amnesty violence. Some of the leading contributions to the debate highlight state repression and militarization as well as fallacy and contradictions regarding the core ideals of amnesty (Joab-Peterside, 2011 ; Ukiwo, 2016), as some of the key drivers of post-amnesty violence. Others identify corruption and non-transparency in governance process (Joab-Peterside, 2011). This reflects a contradiction of state commitment and its alleged coercive approaches by which both the ex-combatants and other stakeholders tend to resort to violence as alternative and inevitable means to demonstrate grouse and disavowed commitment of the state to amnesty. Further, many peace and conflict accounts of the post amnesty Niger Delta have been criticized not only for their shortcomings in their analysis of how the state has failed, which has undermined the peace process, in some ways resulted in new violence, rather their inability to provide alternative strategies. This is also a gap the present study addresses.

Specifically, the paper goes beyond superficial framings of post amnesty peace building that dominate several non-critical accounts such as arguments that amnesty has doused marginalization and volatility of the region (Kuku, 2011 ; PAP,2015). These accounts are superficial insofar as they conceptualize amnesty as more or less viable instrument of peace building without deepened interrogation of its core ideals and prospects. They are uncritical in terms of context-sensitive exploration of development failures in the Niger Delta including poverty, low human development, and ecological breakdown. This contributes to non-fulfilment of the development needs or existential requirements of the local oil bearing communities. As such, existing approaches to the study of amnesty in the Niger Delta tend to understate the need for state accountability and transparency as integral to the understanding of the level of transformation in ways that are inclusive and participatory in line with the ideals of liberal democracy.

The paper demonstrates that while there is a need for a debate on the possibility of popular solution and consensus on mediation regarding armed conflicts in the Niger Delta, such debates cannot be separated from the theoretical and normative debates on the issues of equality and distributive justice. Discussions on amnesty issues, cannot set distributive justice issues aside, even when issues of consensus on the nature and scope of amnesty is raised, there is need to make a distinction

between possible means of equitably resolving the causes of the crisis. Credible commitment as an expanding post conflict phenomenon should be adhered to and adopted by conflicting parties. Essentially, as an attempt to universalize a particular set of post conflict resolution principle and values, credible commitment should be adopted and adhered to, in local and international peace building.

Drawing on secondary data and interviews with ex-combatants, some PAP representatives, and CSOs working on peace building, the central objective of this paper is to explore the ramifications of credible commitment and its implications for sustainable peace building in post amnesty Niger Delta. This is important as dominant theorizations of contemporary armed struggles in the Niger Delta is increasingly hinged on a shared assumption of its inherent violent character based on the dominant notion of "volatility" of the Niger Delta. In the alternative, this paper reexamines this existing perspective through a critical theoretical and historical exploration of the relevance of credible commitment in institutionalizing peace building. Building on the concepts of "credibility" and "reputation in peacemaking" alternative theoretical positions are taken with distinct attention to the relevance of commitment of all stakeholders to the peace process in the workings and institutional fabric of the amnesty programme.

The paper draws on some of these arguments in the literature and, in more specific ways, shares their perspectives in advancing alternative arguments on credible commitment. Thus, by focusing on the critical perspectives of post amnesty violence, the paper aims to make a new contribution to the wider literature and theoretical debates on non-terrorist conflict and peace building one that is linked to the understanding of the relevance of credible commitment and the specific contexts of non-state commitment, resurgent post amnesty violence and the persistence of armed conflicts in the region – one that also speaks to the contemporary context of a rent seeking state. The paper discusses how and why credible commitment plays a key role in sustainable peace building, thereby addressing a relevant theoretical gap in the literature. It examines some of the limitations of the amnesty programme, which are further developed in conceptualizing credible commitment; the structured relations between the elites and the ex-combatants and ideologies in the construction and relevance of post amnesty peace building in particular.

**Table 1. Differences between Terrorist and non-Terrorist Conflicts**

| Terrorism   | Non -Terrorist Conflicts  |
|---|---|
| Violent attacks always targeted at the government, its agencies or citizens.  | Could be violent or non violent and may not always be targeted at the state. It could be inter or intra communal conflicts or peaceful demonstration or violent agitation against the state ie the #End SARS# protest in Nigeria in 2020.   |
| Faceless,senseless violence, shootings, bombings and mindless killings.   | Has a face and could be triggered by political or economic marginalisation of a group. Takes the form of separatist agitation ie IPOB, or militancy in the Niger Delta, demonstrations, urban riots, mass action etc.   |
| Always with violent threats to intimidate the government, trigger tension and panic in the society.   | May not always have violent threats rather agitation for a-cause such as ethnic minority agitation, strikes or demonstrations in which dialogue could be solicited or adopted. Youth militancy ie the Niger Delta experiences armed insurrection against the state over resource marginalisation, environmental degradation and alienation. |
| Seisure of a state,or part of a territory within a state. Example the Talaban and the seizure of Afghanistan, Boko Haram and the seizure of Gwoza and other communities in the Lake Chad Basin. | No form of seizure or occupation of a territory, rather vandalization of government facilites such as militancy and vandalization of oil facilites in the Niger Delta.  |
| Imposition and collection of taxes from seized or occupied territory eg. ISIS, Hezebolah, Boko Haram.   | No imposition of taxes rather incompartibility of goals such as demonstrations by federal workers over non payment of minimum wage by the federal goverment, resource conflicts such as oil rent related conflicts among Niger Delta communities, communal conflicts ie border and land disputes.   |
| Violation of human rights including gender rights such as abduction of school girls and the use of female teens as suicide bombers, threat to human security.                                   | Non violation of human rights, rather agitation or demonstration to guarantee human rights, equality and freedom ie gender equality agitation, ecological lights, separatist agitation,harmoniztion of salary structure ie minimum wage, the #End SARS# demonstration in Nigeria, restructuring of Nigeria’s federal system etc.            |
| Outright killing.   | Ethno-religeous crises, vandalization of state facilities such as militancy and oil facility vandaliztion in the Niger Delta.   |
| Criminality and banditry. Example, Herdsmen killings,rape and abduction including school girls by Boko Haram.   | Grevance, militants abduct expatriate oil workers in the region to draw state attention to their demands.   |
| A terrorist group affiliated to ISIS.   | A non terrorist group agitating for equality, resource right and distributive justice.  |

## THEORETICAL CONVERGENCE BETWEEN CREDIBLE COMMITMENT AND PEACE BUILDING

Credible commitment theory was popularized by neo-liberal institutionalists (Keohane, 1989; Moravcsik, 1991; Rodrik, 1991; North, 1993; Sen, 2015). The term credible commitment within peace and conflict studies has a substantial body of theoretical literature (Hovi, 1998; Addison & Murshed, 2002; Mattes & Savun, 2009; Stankovic, 2009; Flores & Nooruddin, 2011). An influential treatise on non-credible commitment applicable to the Nigerian scenario is the credibility and reputation theory of peacemaking (Addison & Murshed, 2002), which argues that the regularity with which peace agreements break up in civil wars is an attribute of non-credibility and reputation. This captures the majority/minority strand of non-credible commitment thesis popularized by Fearon (1998), who argued that since majority groups cannot credibly commit to fair treatment of minority, the minority agitation turns violent. Fearon (1998) posits that five issues that can vitiate the intensity of the credible commitment problem. **Firstly** where, minority group demonstrate military weakness or exhibit weak cultural preferences for secession, invariably the expected benefits from fighting will tend not to linger even among worst compromise.<sup>1</sup> **Second**, physical separation of the two groups vitiates the credible commitment problem, as the minority can secede with less violence. **Third**, external power might enforce the division of benefits. **Fourth**, the less stark the anticipated drop in power between first and second rounds, the less difficult the problem. **Finally**, when a large percentage of the members of the minority group has the option of "exiting" the game by emigrating, the minority group's will to fight decreases. Based on this logic, Fearon (1998) suggests that, since rural dwellers have comparably less of an exit option, they tend to bear a larger percentage of the costs of fighting in "sons of the soil" wars.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the particular Niger Delta scenario is aptly buttressed as the ex-militants return to creeks fighting to secure oil on their soil.

The theoretical arguments of the paper draw on this framework. The theory will help explain whether the federal government has demonstrated credible commitment to the amnesty granted the ex-combatants or otherwise. Given the unique situation of the Niger Delta-an oil rich minority region since the discovery of crude oil in the region in 1956, and the increasing poverty and environmental degradation (UNEP, 2011), credible commitment has become critical to both the understanding of the transformation of the Niger Delta within the context of balance of power and in terms of genuine commitment of the federal government. While policies can be

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1- This was the particular case of the Niger Delta in 1966 when Isaac Adaka Boro declared the republic of Niger Delta. Due to weak military power he was crushed by the federal military government.

2- The notion of "sons of the soil" gave rise to increasing militancy and resource conflict in the Niger Delta as the militants took to the creeks fighting to protect oil in their soil despite amnesty.MEND provides a clear example.

credible whether or not trust exists, policies and statements are more likely to be credible when there is prior trust (Rodrik, 1997; Miller, 2011).

Yet, the concept of credible commitment remains one of the least explored or interrogated in the study of contemporary arms struggle and peace building in the Niger Delta, as none of what has recently emerged as the major works on armed struggle especially since post amnesty era considers the concept important enough to be a tool for analysis. The theoretical significance of this concept drives from the insights it offers in understanding the fundamental cause of persistence of armed conflict in the Niger Delta and more so the evidence it provides regarding underdevelopment of the region.

Theorizing the linkages between credible commitment to amnesty as a modality for peace building by the Nigerian state infers from a historically specific intuition of passive response to socioeconomic transformation of the Niger Delta, which invites an analysis of the various ways by which the government – in certain instances – failed to provide the much needed peace in the volatile region. While recognizing a broader process of Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) "from below", the outcome is neither transformative nor uniform.<sup>3</sup> Instead, the increasingly aggrieved fragments and social movements within the futile structures of the broader programme ultimately re-consolidated and re-emerged as crucial threat to the State in the form of post amnesty combatants. Conditioned by both the exploitative and asymmetrical "relations of forces" between cross-cutting, contending and complex classes and their differential access, control and positions within the broader context of oil resource rent appropriation. Non credible commitment is thus, evident and indicative of the processes and dynamics of minimal state response to the demands of the agitating youths and the Niger Delta in general. The typical outcome of noncredible commitment is the "very contradictions" of amnesty in institutionalizing sustainable peace.<sup>4</sup> The scholarly literature and theoretical debates on credible commitment reinforce such theoretical and policy relevant discourse (Miller, 2011; Sen, 2015) akin to post amnesty transformation failure.

In relation to the various theoretical underpinnings of the concept of credible commitment, the paper considers the prospects and problems associated in the practice of credible commitment by the government in relation to peace building as a tool for policy response. Further, the paper discusses the need for "credible commitment" as an important area of study that expands the field of both traditional peace building and research on armed conflict in the developing societies in relation to global attention. In particular, the paper seeks to examine further where the

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3- Interview with ex-combatants, 15/3/2021, Port Harcourt.

4- Personal Interview with a CSO leader 16/3/2021 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

discussion on "credible commitment" stands theoretically in the peace and conflict debate, and how this affects the complex and cross cutting power structure among the elites, other key stakeholder groups and the oil bearing local communities.

Further, it demonstrates that re-conceptualizing the amnesty programme within the context of credible commitment, not only deepens theoretical relevance of the credible commitment thesis, but also provides a re-evaluation of post-conflict peace building to forestall future reoccurrence. Thus, credible commitment is an alternative theoretical framework for understanding resurgence of post amnesty violence, building upon the interconnected ideas of non-commitment of the federal government to the amnesty deal, "resource alienation", "marginalization", and "nontransformation" within an increasingly asymmetrical majority/minority relationship. It focuses particular attention on how the recurrent armed violence aided in the understanding of noncommitment of the federal government to amnesty and alternative conceptions of credible commitment to peace building, thus, calling into question the supposedly "transformative" and "inclusive" elements of the amnesty programme. It does so, first, by highlighting the social foundations of armed conflict, persistence of post amnesty violence – within and among the localities, dimensions of non-credible commitment by the federal government, and conclusion. This is important to provide further guidance for policymakers and stakeholder groups. And essential to understand the bounds of the prevailing programme and therefore, the idea of a supposedly "new post amnesty transformation" and mechanisms to further gauge, the *extent* amnesty has been either a failure or a success.

## THE SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF ARMED CONFLICT AND AMNESTY IN THE NIGER DELTA

There are distinct explanations of armed conflict in the Niger Delta, and its relation to peace building (Ushie, 2013; Vurasi & Nna, 2020) as well as causes and origins of such intractable violent armed conflicts in the region (Isumonah, 2012). With particular reference to the post-Cold War politics and, in particular, the distinct character of armed conflict across the third world, a number of theoretical perspectives have sought to explore the linkages between armed conflict and peace building.

To this end, it is worth exploring the nexus between armed conflict and amnesty and its linkages with credible commitment in peace building theory. Some scholars have provided empirical and theoretical perspectives to the Niger Delta armed violence by explicating the complex and intractable contour of the conflict including "the underlying" causes that inform and shape the dynamics of the armed conflict (Duquet, 2009).

Arms struggle has been well documented in the debates on oil resource politics and conflict in the Niger Delta since the discovery of crude oil in Oloibiri a community in the Niger Delta in 1956 by Shell.<sup>5</sup> Ojatorotu & Okeke-Uzodike (2006) have provided one the most sustained theoretical accounts of armed conflict in the Niger Delta. The complex development crises that have confronted the oil rich Niger Delta has drawn out the structural contradictions between the government, oil resource rents and other stakeholder groups as well as the making and evolution of armed conflict.

In February, 1966 a Niger Delta activist Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro declared the Republic of Niger Delta leading to a 12 day revolution in former Eastern region of Nigeria, which was crushed by the federal military government. This incipient agitation, formed the background to subsequent resource struggles and agitations in the Niger Delta as oil resource struggle has not ebbed (Amadi et al, 2016). The quest for oil resource justice necessitated by the contradictions of alienation and systemic dispossession of the oil bearing communities on whose land oil is exploited triggers repeated violent agitation and resource conflict.

In the early 1990s, non-violent agitation was rekindled following the formation of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) led by Ken Saro Wiwa in August 1990. The execution by hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight Ogoni compatriots in November, 1995 by the federal military government headed by General Sani Abacha intensified the Niger Delta struggle. On December 11, 1998 there was the Kaima Declaration in which the people of Ijaw extraction laid further claims to the ownership of oil in their soil.

Similar groups that emerged during this period included the Movement for the Survival of Ijaw Ethnic Nationality (MOSIEN), Niger-Delta Women for Justice (NDWJ), Chiiccoco Movement, Community Rights Initiative (CORI), Ijaw National Congress (INC) and Egbema National Congress (ENC). These groups have been agitating against the federal government and the Multinational Oil Companies (MNOCs) regarding issues of environmental degradation arising from oil exploration activities of the MNOCs.

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5- Personal interview with Ex-Combatant 15/2/2021 in Igbogene Bayelsa State.

**Table 2: Structure of the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme**

| 1  | Disarmament                                | Demobilization/Rehabilitation          | Reintegration  |
|----|--|--|--|
| 2  | Duration: 6 August to 4 October 2009       | Duration: 6 to 12 months               | Duration: Up to 5 years  |
| 3  | Collection of arms, ammunition, explosives | Ex-militants report to camp            | Knowledge and skills acquisition                               |
| 4  | Biometrics                                 | Verification and documentation         | Financial empowerment  |
|    |  |  | Placement programmes   |
|    |  |  | Microcredit  |
| 5  |  | Transformational training              | Education  |
| 6  |  | Peace building and conflict resolution | Reconciliation with local community                            |
| 7  |  | Counseling                             | Conflict resolution Framework/ mechanism                       |
| 8  |  | Career guidance                        | Monitoring and evaluation                                      |
| 9  |  | Wellness assessment                    | Exit from amnesty  |
| 10 |  | Reintegration classification           |  |
| 11 |  | Education and vocational placement     |  |
| 12 |  | Graduation and demobilization          |  |
| 13 | <b>Key enablers</b>                        |  |  |
| 14 | Disarmament camps                          | Transformational training centres      | Partnering government agencies, NGOs and private organizations |
| 15 |  | Rehabilitation camps                   | Oil and gas institutions (OGIs)                                |
|    |  |  | Tracking and support system                                    |

**Source:** Federal Government of Nigeria-PAO, Niger Delta Amnesty Programme:

[http://www.nigerdeltaamnesty.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id%454&Itemid%455](http://www.nigerdeltaamnesty.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id%454&Itemid%455)

Following the return to Democracy in 1999, punitive act in the Niger Delta was exemplified in February, 2002 by the Nigerian military following the military invasion and killings in Odi village, an oil bearing community in Bayelsa state. This had implications for peace building in the region as several youth movements and activist groups condemned the activities of the Nigerian military. Armed conflict in the 2000s took a different dimension and became more violent, there were severe disruption of oil activities, which adversely affected the Nigerian state as volume of oil resource export dropped (Moody, 2016 ). It was on the basis of the increasing



disruptions that the federal government considered amnesty as a better option. The main objective of the amnesty was to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate repentant militants back into the society. The programme was envisioned to offer benefits to the militants who gave up their arms with skills acquisition, education and stipends (Ebiede, 2018). Following the terms of the amnesty, militants who surrendered their arms and demobilized were not prosecuted rather were rewarded. The rewards included; vocational training, formal education in Nigeria or abroad, loan to set up businesses as well as a monthly stipend of about US\$400 which as at that time was higher than Nigeria's minimum wage of about US\$60 per month (Ebiede, 2018).

Leaders of militant groups were also offered huge and profitable contracts both in the oil industry and other sectors of the economy. At the immediate post amnesty era, ex-militant leaders gained political power and influence in the cities which they returned (Amadi et al. 2016). While it is commonly believed that the amnesty programme has promoted stability in oil production, there are underlying socio-political contradictions that undermine its effectiveness and credibility' (Ushie, 2013: 30).

It was the specific "marginalization" character of the Nigerian State that gave rise to the evolution of armed violence, which largely accounts for the recent "attention" to the region no matter how minimal. Such context-sensitive outcome is historically unprecedented in terms of what followed such as the establishment of interventionist agencies such as the Niger Delta Development Board(NDDDB), Oil Minerals Producing Areas and Development Commission (OMPADEC), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the creation the Ministry Niger Delta in September 2008.

**Table 3: Participants in the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme\***

| States      | Male   | Female | Registered |
|-------------|--------|--------|------------|
| Akwa Ibom   | 155    | 8      | 163        |
| Bayelsa     | 6,900  | 61     | 6,961      |
| Cross River | 159    | 1      | 160        |
| Delta       | 3,361  | -      | 3,361      |
| Edo         | 450    | -      | 450        |
| Imo         | 297    | 3      | 300        |
| Ondo        | 1,198  | 2      | 1,200      |
| Rivers      | 6,958  | 39     | 6,997      |
| NDDC        | 571    | 19     | 600        |
| Total       | 20,049 | 133    | 20,192     |

**Source:** Federal Government of Nigeria-PAO, Niger Delta Amnesty Programme:

[http://www.nigerdeltaamnesty.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id%454&Itemid%455](http://www.nigerdeltaamnesty.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id%454&Itemid%455)

\* Accounts for only the first batch of demobilised ex-militants.

## POST AMNESTY VIOLENCE AND DIMENSIONS OF NON-CREDIBLE COMMITMENT

The federal government amnesty programme popularly called Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP), which was unveiled on 15th June, 2009 was scheduled to run between 6<sup>th</sup> August to 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2009 that is, a-60 day period. It was predicated on the willingness and readiness of the militants to give up all illegal arms in their possession and renounce militancy completely.<sup>6</sup> Ukiwo (2016) argued that following high incidence of violence in the Niger Delta, the government came under pressure to find solutions and bring armed insurgency to an end. The amnesty programme was in three phases, namely; the disarmament and demobilization of militants, the rehabilitation and integration of ex-militants and the final stage was the post-Amnesty package of infrastructural development.<sup>7</sup> However, while several militant-groups embraced amnesty, others like the MEND which claimed that it doubted the sincerity of the federal government declined the deal. This was a sign that militant activities has not completely ebbed in the region (Ojione 2010). Undoubtedly, since 2009, the repentant militants had undergone several "transformations" such as training and alternative means of livelihood. While the later suggests a strategy for subsistence, training were aimed to empower the ex-combatants at first instance. Kuku (2011) argued that the presidential amnesty has consolidated peace, safety and security in the Niger Delta and boosted Nigeria's economy. Similarly, Onapajo & Moshood (2016) suggest that the reintegration programme of the PAP has recorded some positive progress.

However, the non-sustainability of the training beyond the amnesty programme span in later years, pointed to a different interpretation, which has dominated much of recent debates on amnesty failure. It has been argued by critics that the amnesty programme was riddled with poor planning, implementation, corruption and non-involvement of key stakeholder groups (Ogege 2011; Ikelegbe 2014; Eke 2014; Amaize 2016; Ebiede 2018; Vurasi & Nna 2020). Ebiede & Langer (2017) posit that one major problem is that the Nigerian government failed to tackle wider socio-economic grievances. This lack of commitment to the wider socio-economic realities of the region triggered dissent. These include the lack of social development in local oil communities, environmental pollution and the exclusion of local communities from the governance of oil production in the Niger Delta region. Non commitment to socio-economic transformation of the ex-combatants gave rise to resurgence of violent conflict. Perhaps, the most revealing aspect of the contradictions of post amnesty "transformation" is how most of the ex-combatants have come to position themselves as "new War Lords"; leading to challenges of reintegration and in contrast to the objectives of the amnesty programme. In practice, while some

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6- Interview with PAP official, 12/2/2021, Abuja, Nigeria.

7- Interview with PAP official 13/1/2021, Abuja, Nigeria.

embraced the amnesty what has emerged in the wider academic debate is a new set of ex-combatants waging crucial war against the Nigerian state. Such groups as the Niger Delta Avengers (NDAs), Red Scorpions and the Niger Delta Greenland Justice Movement (NDGJM) pose potential threat to oil resource extraction. This has been a consequence of superficial commitment to re-integration and rehabilitation of the repentant militants.

Non-commitment to ecological transformation of the Niger Delta is a major factor. In 2011, United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) released its report on environmental degradation in Ogoni, an environmentally degraded community in the Niger Delta, the report stated among other things that it will take 25 to 40 years for an effective clean-up of Ogoni. The clean-up remains an exercise politicized, same ecological degradation is common among several oil bearing local communities in the Niger Delta as most of the communities are poor.

Thus, poverty is a key evidence of non-commitment of the federal government's amnesty programme. Following the strategic relevance of the Niger Delta, the federal government should have embarked on massive infrastructural development of the area. On the contrary, UNDP Niger Delta Human Development Report (2006) identified low human development index in the Niger Delta compared to other oil rich countries of the global South.

Monetized incentive against militancy was a major evidence of non-credible commitment. This has been critiqued as "political settlement" accounting for "no pay no peace" (Eke 2014). The federal government's preference to monetary incentives rather than institutionalized mode of livelihood was a disincentive for sustainable reintegration as ex-militants preferred to remain enrolled in the amnesty programme, rather than switch to a less-paid jobs.

There is non-commitment of the Federal Government to harmonized revenue allocation formula as unequal revenue allocation remained a common problem of the Nigerian federal system. It is instructive to note that harmonization of the federal system in terms of equitable revenue allocation was part of the recommendations of the Ledum Mitee (2008) technical committee on Niger Delta (2008). The Committee's recommendations among others included appointing a mediator to facilitate discussions between government and militants, granting of amnesty to some militant leaders, launching a disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation campaign and increase in the percentage of oil revenue to 25 percent from 13 percent, establishing regulations that compel oil companies to have insurance bonds making the reinforcement of critical environmental laws a nations priority; exposing fraudulent environmental clean-ups of oil spills and prosecuting operators, ending gas flaring by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008 as previously ordered by the federal government (Report of

the technical committee on the Niger Delta, 2008). Despite the recommendations, the federal government has not credibly implemented any. Revenue allocation remains unchanged, the Niger Delta has not been cleaned, the amnesty has not been credibly implemented, neither are there evidence of insurance bonds making critical environmental laws a priority, gas flaring is still a daily occurrence.

Another evidence of non-credible commitment is exemplified in the argument put forward by Aziken (2010: 7) that there was delay on the part of the Federal Government to give considerations to the issues that led to the declaration of Amnesty. This delay triggered complex post amnesty violence. On the 4th of October, 2009, following official end of the amnesty, militant activities persisted as exemplified with bombings in some upland areas. As a consequence, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, 2010 in Warri, Delta state, two explosions ensued about 200 meters from the border fence of the Delta State Government House Annex. The next bombing recorded one casualty, MEND claimed responsibility for both (Amaize et al. 2010: 1-5, Ojione, 2010: 9).

During the 2010 independence day celebration on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, there was twin bomb blasts, about 20 meters away from Eagle Square, Abuja, venue of the celebration. This claimed 20 lives which, included 8 security agents (Ojione, 2010: 9). MEND also claimed responsibility stressing that they were protesting against federal government's neglect of the Niger Delta.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2010, a violent gun battle broke out between soldiers of the Joint Task Force (JTF) and some militants that re-grouped in the a post-amnesty period under the name Niger Delta Liberation Force (NDLF) led by "General" John Togo who resisted the military (Amaize 2010: 5; Ojione 2010: 9). The militants resumed attacks on oil installations and other critical infrastructures. On 14<sup>th</sup> November 2010, the MEND attacked Exxon Mobil facility in Akwa Ibom State and threatened to resume full attack on oil installations in other parts of the region.

Two events, which suggest persistence of militancy appear particularly relevant to the theoretical exploration of non-credible commitment of the Nigerian State to amnesty. First was the federal government's refusal to fully implement the report of the Ledum Mitee Technical Ccommittee on Niger Delta (2008), especially the equitable review of the revenue allocation formula. This argument is consistent with the logic of resource alienation and marginalization in post conflict peace building. Thus, non-commitment could hitherto result in resurgence of post transition violent conflicts.

The next was corruption and weak institutional capacity to effectively implement the amnesty programme. Ushie (2013, p. 33) argued that "the Nigerian state put in significant resources to the amnesty programme. Between 2009 and 2011, the

programme was allocated N127 billion (US\$819 million) in the national budget. Of this amount, N3 billion was the "take-off" grant, N30 billion was spent on militants' stipends and N96 billion on feeding the militants. In 2012, N74 billion (US\$ 477 million) was allocated to the amnesty programme (Ushie 2013: 33). There are also fiscal transfers to the Niger Delta between 2009 and 2012 – for the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, N241 billion (US\$1.55 billion), and for the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) N 246.6 billion (US\$1.6 billion)". In addition to the budgets of the six core oil-producing states in the Niger Delta, which totaled N1.74 trillion (US\$11.2 billion) just for the fiscal year 2012 (Ushie 2013: 33). This scenario snugly justifies our theoretical framework that "credibility and reputation" is essential for post conflict peace building (Addison & Murshed 2002). For instance, while the amnesty programme in some respects is contradictory and, less transformative toward sustainable peace building, it has equally been argued that it is inherently inconsistency in its avowed claim for youth empowerment.

Ebiede (2018) highlights that amnesty on the contrary, created more violence and exacerbated youth unemployment. As the later remains – a defining element of violence and conflict, it is this "less transformative" strand of the amnesty that makes the question of credible commitment much more inevitable in contemporary peace and conflict debates in the Niger Delta. Ebiede (2018: 106) further argued that the PAP failed to facilitate the rehabilitation of ex-combatants through its inability to create employment for a large number of ex-militants in the region. He demonstrates that there is a gap between the government's claim and verifiable figures on the employment rate of excombatants. Ebiede (2018: 106) provided an example, that the government claimed that it registered 30,000 ex-militants in the PAP, yet it has only provided training for 15,459 individuals (PAP 2015; Ebiede 2018: 106). Data on actual levels of employment resulting from the programme are scarce, but the last official figures show that only 2,072 participants in the PAP have found jobs (Omonobi 2014; Ebiede 2018: 106). These contradictions on the part of the Federal Government triggered the emergence of new post amnesty militant groups in addition to MEND.

The new militant groups claimed to represent the grievances of local oil communities. These groups include the Niger Delta Avengers (NDAs), Red Scorpions and the Niger Delta Greenland Justice Movement (NDGJM). They commenced attacks on the region's oil infrastructure and claimed responsibility, resulting in a reduction of Nigeria's oil production from 2.2 million to about 1.1 million barrels per day in 2016 (Moody 2016; Ebiede 2017) In this vein, Moody (2016) highlighted that the Niger Delta Avengers (NDAs) posed a new threat to oil producers in Nigeria.

The fact that ex-combatants are currently waging "post amnesty wars" is reflective of poor institutionalization of peace by the federal government's amnesty pro-

gramme. The ex-combatants align with various "antagonized stakeholder groups" such as ethnic militias as well as crime syndicates within the wider "democratic" space. This is understandable as funding of the combatants is inevitable, thus they engage in oil bunkering activities, shutting down of oil exploration by MNOCs, artisanal refining, abduction of expatriate oil workers for ransom evidenced as a reaction to the neglect of the region and alleged marginalization of the oil bearing communities in the exploration of oil resources on their land including security threats within the oil-bearing area (Watts 1999). These notions fueled continuous armed struggle and crisis and reflect the basis for continued agitation and the unresolved minority question in the wider Nigerian politics, which has taken more critical dimension since Nigeria's democracy in 1999.

## CONCLUSION

The Niger Delta amnesty programme was built on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). The pronounced role of the amnesty programme in peace building has been contradictory. The contradictions and complexities reduced amnesty to the level of mere social logic to douse youth agitation and restiveness for smooth flow of oil exploitation rather than any sensible articulation of transformation, one that speaks to strategic overhaul of the region beyond amnesty. Such evidence point out the discriminatory inclinations of the Nigerian state against the Niger Delta agitations as an issue of less importance. Rather, what is more important is the daily volume of oil resource that accrues to the state. Thus, to glean the interplay of forces across class and political elite is appropriate to understand the basis for the historic armed struggle in the region including post amnesty resurgence of conflict.

A key issue is that the present study has re-established that militancy in the Niger Delta context is a non-terrorist violence. Yet the amnesty programme has been less transformative. The DDR, which dominate socio-political and economic policy strategy of the government as argued, are ill-equipped to provide the much needed transformation. This has been a dominant scholarly debate in post amnesty studies in the Niger Delta (Ushie 2013), while the demobilization component of the programme is seldom able to counter the dominant strategies of most of the ex-combatants to fully accept the amnesty such as MEND and Mujahid Asari Dokubo's Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) as the later claimed that he is a freedom fighter. There was a limited reform that ought to have accompanied the Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration components, which proved less transformative.

Where-as militia groups as state adversaries became largely dismantled and discouraged, they were not completely depleted. While there are important empiri-

cal and theoretical debates on armed struggle and violent conflicts in post amnesty Niger Delta, these accounts, say little or nothing about the place of credible commitment in their respective accounts. This historical-cum-theoretical lacuna stems in part from scant investigation of policy relevance of credible commitment to post conflict peace building.

Beyond these, the point this paper has been emphasizing is that, it is not enough to grant amnesty to the combatants, rather there is need to enforce amnesty through commitment to the ideals of the programme by the federal government. Fearon (1995: 401) argued that "mutually acceptable bargains erode, due to the lack of enforcement". This paper theorizes that in contrast, the Niger Delta amnesty as constitutive element of socio-economic transformation, reflected superficial commitment to the normative foundations of socio-economic transformation of the region, this limits the scope and depth of sustainable peace in post amnesty era, thereby providing openings for significant resurgence of post amnesty violence.

It is only proper to understand state interest as a distinct rationality and imaginary that informed the adoption of the amnesty option framed as a legitimate instrument to douse oil resource crisis. What is critical is a reconceptualization of the amnesty phenomenon as reflective of an increasingly lethargic state system that co-exists with indigenous capitalist elites and political class notably owners of the oil bloc concession – a version of exclusionary and exploitative component of oil resource extraction in the ongoing context. This inherent exploitation in contemporary Niger Delta remains glaring as strains of contradictions, which are diversionary, lurks between popular/militia transformation and vested elite capitalist interest, and in particular, radical versus conservative quest for Niger Delta transformation.

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# IMPACTS OF MILITARY EXPENDITURE AND INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ON INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN SOUTH AFRICA (1994-2020)

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** In this study, the author contributes to the existing literature by examining the impact of military expenditure and institutional quality on inclusive growth in South Africa as a case study for the period 1996 to 2020 using Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) estimation technique.

**Approach/Methodology/Design:** Data used in this study are yearly data covering the period of 1994 to 2020 and the main variables of the study are Inclusive Growth Index (I.G.I.), Institutional quality proxy by Corruption (COR), and Military Expenditure (ME). Data were collected from World Bank and other reliable sources. IGI was computed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) from five economic variables and five social variables, ME is expressed as a percentage of economic growth and institutional quality proxied by Corruption (COR) is expressed in natural form.

**Findings:** Using ARDL, the result of the interactive form of military expenditure and institutional quality exhibits a positive long-run relationship with inclusive growth in South Africa. The long-run coefficient is 0.041565. The implication of this is that military expenditure joint relationship with institutional quality stimulates inclusive growth. This result is supported theoretically by the greaser school of thought proposition.

**Practical Implications:** The study will contribute positively to the understanding of influence of Inclusive growth on military expenditure for emerging and developed bloc economies like BRICS

**Originality/value:** This study innovates by using ARDL to find out the joint impact of military expenditure and institutional quality in attaining an apex inclusive growth in developing economies like South Africa.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The relevance of military expenditure on economic, political and social transformation in any country has become a controversial issue which has raised serious divergent debates and empirical findings from the different quarters from different scholars across the globe. The question of how military expenditure affects economic growth is a longstanding one in the literature, dating back to empirical studies by (Benoit, 1973, 1978) which argued that military expenditure is a positive impact on economic growth. However, this subject matter has fascinated a growing attention in the empirical literature and lead to diverse number of empirical research using various methodologies and theoretical framework, failed to reach much of a consensus (Alexander, 2015); (Dunne et al., 2005).

A potential rationale for these divergent results is the environment that this military expenditure occurs. (Aizenman & Glick, 2006; Compton & Paterson, 2016) affirms that a common concern is whether military expenditure is efficient response to combat a real threat or whether it is in response to agent engaging in rent seeking and corruption. In summary, they affirmed that an economy with wide spread of corruption and rent seeking will definitely be different in terms of its military expenditure growth levels than in an economy absent of these challenges.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The objective of this section is to presents the theoretical and empirical literature related to military expenditure and institutional quality on growth as well as the joint impacts of military expenditure and institutional quality on growth.

### 2.1. THEORETICAL REVIEW ON MILITARY EXPENDITURE AND GROWTH

#### 2.1.1 Guns-and-Butter argument

In military economics, there have been serious contentions as to whether the central government should spend funds on “butter” (i. e., provision of food, education, and other related services) or invest in the “guns” which is money spent by the

government for the military sector. That is, the “guns-and-butter” argument reasons that there is a trade-off between military expenditures and other major government expenditure. It can be understood that with the limited overall government budget, to raise defense spending may result in the crowding-out effect on other components of government expenditures such as education, health, infrastructure, and agriculture.

### 2.1.2 Military Keynesianism

Military Keynesianism is an economic policy in which the government advocates and implements policy for increased spending in the military sector to stimulate economic growth. For better understanding, the researcher intends to provide background information about Keynesian economics. Keynesian economics is an economic model that chiefly centre the beliefs of the English economist John Maynard Keynes. The concept was first presented in his book *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. (Keynes, 2016) advocated for a private sector-driven economy under the guidelines of the public sector (central government) providing the enabling socio-economic and institutional environments such as a fiscal and monetary framework. Keynes’ focal idea is that if a government invests in public goods such as good roads, electricity and security, it produces revenue that results in more spending in the economy, which further stimulates production and investment. Thus, the original investment creates a multiplier effect that ends up with economic growth.

Military Keynesianism is a deviation of Keynesian Economics. Slightly different from the main idea of Keynesianism, Military Keynesianism postulates that government expenditure be used for military development, which will, in turn, stimulate the country’s economy as a whole. The core of this theory is that the demand for military goods and services is increasing because of the increasing of government expenditure on the military. There is also a multiplier effect by the government expenditure on the increased consumer spending. There are many jobs created when the government is maintaining or expanding a standing army, which absorbs more labourers into production and activity. Some scholars support Military Keynesianism as a necessary component of capitalist growth. In his book *The Sources of Social Powers*, Vol. 2, (Mann, 1993) argues that the PSouth African (now Germany) capitalists became militarised and the bourgeoisie became incorporated into the regime, becoming militaristic on domestic and foreign policy.

The military has been historically the medium for the modernisation of civilian production based on countries such as PSouth African (now part of Germany), Japan and the United States as examples (O’Connor, 1973). At the end of the eighteenth century, PSouth Africa (now part of Germany), spent more than 70 percent of its national budget on the military. Some Japanese industrialists believe that militarisation is necessary for advancing technology. (O’Connor, 1973) further argues

that many industrial revolutions owe their expansion to militarisation and war, and military R&D should be regarded as a social investment instead of social expenses, considering the huge effect and changes that military R&D has innovated products such as airplanes, atomic power, plastics and electronics (O'Connor, 1973).

Conversely, though Military Keynesianism seems intuitively reasonable, some scholars, such as Jeffrey Kentor 2008, argue that military expenditure is not as efficient as the private sector. Independent capitalists and civilians can use money more efficiently in promoting research, investment, labour force utilisation and development. At the same time, the development of the military might lead a country to war, which will result in destruction. Both Germany and Imperial Japan had a period of economic growth under militarisation before World War II. However, both countries suffered huge destruction during the war because their militarisation led them to self-destruction. Therefore, even if Military Keynesianism is intuitively reasonable, it usually leads to war, which destroys all the economic growth caused by military expenditures.

Mathematically, Military Keynesianism is denoted by

$$\uparrow \text{growth} = f(\uparrow \text{Me}) \dots\dots\dots 1$$

The causation runs from the Military expenditure to growth.

The main theory that underpinned this is the Military Keynesianism and supported by Gun and Butter.

### **2.1.3 Theories on corruption proxy for institutional quality:**

#### **The “grease the wheels” hypothesis of corruption (also called the “greasers” school of thought)**

The “grease the wheels” hypothesis of corruption states that graft may act as a trouble saving device, thereby raising efficiency. Furthermore, the “greasers” school of thought of corruption posits that corruption may enhance growth, investment and development in the short run depending on the low quality of governance and bureaucratic rules and regulations. They also argue that it could also motivate public officials in a situation where the wage is grossly insufficient (Leff, 1964, Leys, 1965, Aidt, 2003, Cuervo-Cazurra, 2006, Wang and You, 2012).

Some of the common consensus among prominent scholars of the “grease the wheels” hypothesis of corruption is that corruption may enhance economic growth through various channels especially in the presence of ill-functioning of bureaucracy.

One of the channels of ill-functioning of bureaucracy is slowness. Lui (1985), Aidt (2003), Cuervo-Cazurra (2006) applying a formal economic model to estimate

the impact of corruption on growth assert that corruption could efficiently reduce the time spent in queues but speed up the transaction process. The rationale behind this is that bribes could serve as a motivation to bureaucrats to fast track the process in a sluggish administration. Also, Huntington (1968) affirms that corruption could lessen the tedious bureaucratic regulations and enhance growth. The author further cited the United States of America railroad utility and Industrial Corporation in the 1870s and 1880s where the high-level prevalence of corruption also witnessed rapid growth during the same period.

Secondly, (Hewitt and Van Rijckeghem (1995) and Méon and Weill (2010) argue that another channel through which corruption can drive growth in the presence of ill-functioning bureaucracy is focus on the quality of civil/public servant. Also, Leys, (1965), Bayley (1966), Van Rijckeghem and Weder (2001) and Muttreja et al. (2012) posit that if wages in government institutions are low or insufficient, corruption (bribes) could serve as perks/motivation to civil servants. As a result, this attracts highly skilled manpower from poorly remunerated private Organisations to government owned corporations.

Thirdly, corruption could serve as a means of decision rule by public officials (Beck and Maher, 1986, Lien, 1986). For instance, in competition auction or bidding for government contracts or projects, the authors assert that only firms that pay the highest amount of bribes in such bidding process will win such contracts. Therefore, corruption can be said to be a benchmark for granting government procurement contracts.

Also, Leff, (1964) and Bayley (1966) affirm that corruption could serve as a hedge against unfavorable government policies especially if institutions are biased against entrepreneurship due, for example, to an ideological bias.

Furthermore, Leff (1964) asserts that corruption could enhance the quality of investment provided if it is in form of tax avoidance and such investment is channeled in high yielding project with Return On Investment (ROI).

Akai et al. (2005) assert that, in the short run, corruption may counteract government failure and promote economic growth and exogenously determine suboptimal bureaucratic rules and regulations.

Recently, Wang and You (2012) confirmed that corruption may promote the most efficient form to bypass strict and rigid laws and regulations in China. Also, Dreher and Gassebner (2013), who use an extreme bounds analysis in a panel of 43 countries from 2003 to 2005 share the same view. The result indicates that when government regulations are excessive, corruption might be beneficial.

In summary, the aforementioned propositions confirm that corruption may positively drive inclusive growth because it greases the adverse defective bureaucracy and bad policies.

#### **2.1.4 Theories on corruption proxy for institutional quality: The “sand the wheels” hypothesis of corruption (also called the “Sanders” school of thought).**

The “Sanders” school of thought of corruption affirms that corruption is inimical to economic growth, investment and development (Mauro, 1995, Tanzi, 1998, Al-Sadig, 2009, Méon and Weill, 2010, Ibrahim et al., 2015). The “sand the wheels” hypothesis of corruption is of the view that corruption is detrimental to economic growth through several distorting channels.

Kurer (1993) argued that corrupt officials have an incentive to create other distortions in the economy to cover up their ill-gotten wealth. Also, that a civil servant can limit new or other civil servants access to key or “juicy” positions to preserve the rent from corruption.

Rose-Ackerman (1997) counter the assumption that graft can promote the choice of the right decision as subjective. The authors argue that a firm willing to pay the highest bribe tends to compromise in the quality of goods and services to be produced or to be rendered.

In conclusion, the aforementioned argument affirms that corruption may negatively retard inclusive growth because of the “sand effect” on investment and good policies.

## **2.2. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE RELATED TO INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY - GROWTH**

A considerable amount of country and cross-country studies has been done on the relationship between economic growth and institution. Among the prominent ones is that of (Acemoglu et al., 2005) which emphasised the fundamental importance of institutions in causing growth and differences in the levels of development across countries.

Also, while examining discussions on institutions and economic development, (Chang, 2011) suggested that more attentive institutional economists were needed to focus on the real world institutional research, rather than retelling fairy-tales. According to the author, it is because of reality and not fictions, that policy-relevant theories of institutions could be developed.



(Valeriani & Peluso, 2011) explore the effect of institutional quality on economic growth over sixty years among countries at different stages of development, using pooled regression fixed effects model to test three institutional indicators which included civil liberties, number of veto players and quality of government. The result revealed that institutional quality impacted positively on economic growth. However, further finding from the study showed that the size of the institutional impact on growth varies between developed and developing countries considered. Thus, in conclusion, the study claimed that institution mattered for growth. Also, (Berggren et al., 2013) investigated the impact of institutions on economic growth in the EU-27, seven other similar European countries and Israel over the period from 1984 to 2009. The result of the panel data analysis submitted that then the quality of policy, which included the stability of government, favourable socio-economic condition, strong investment environment and democratic accountability, was growth-enhancing.

According to (Bhupatiraju & Verspagen, 2013), explained differences in the levels of development across countries using a multi-faceted database to measure institutions. Findings showed that institutions ranked above other factors when GDP per capita was the regress and. However, when factors such as investment and growth were included as independent variable, institutional factors were negatively associated with development variables.

(Goel & Korhonen, 2011) examined the role of institutional quality as a determinant of economic growth in BRIC (excluding South Africa) for period 2000-2007 based on simple two factor production function. Their result revealed that efficiency aspects of corruption (as a proxy for institutional quality) subdue the adverse impact. Therefore stimulating growth rates.

(Mbulawa & Finance, 2015) explored the impact of institutional quality on Southern Africa Development Community SADC by employing the Generalised Method of Moment GMM spanning from 1996 to 2010. Government effectiveness, regulatory quality, Rules and Law and corruption were institutional variables were used in the study. Their results indicate the institutional quality are a key determinant for economic growth to take place in the region.

(Asongu & Policy, 2016) investigated the whether institutional quality matters in economic growth determinant in BRICS and MINTS for the period 2001 to 2011 by selecting 10 institutional qualities proxies using panel regression and Principal Component Analysis. The outcome indicates the institutional qualities does have positive but varying level of significance for each of the BRICS countries.

(Sabbagh & Research, 2017) also re-examined the impact of institutional quality as a catalyst for real economic growth rate for BRICS countries by employing

a dynamic panel data. Proxies for institutional quality were democracy index, law enforcement index and economic freedom for the period of 2000-2012. Their result show that all the three institutional quality proxies have strong impact BRICS countries economic growth.

### **2.3. EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON MILITARY EXPENDITURE AND INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ON GROWTH**

(d'Agostino et al., 2012) further examined military expenditure-growth in the presence of corruption using African sample from 2003 to 2007. They found that corruption does influence the impact of military expenditure on growth. In related paper, (d'Agostino et al., 2017) re-examined the military expenditure –growth using 1996-2007 period by employing a System GMM estimation confirms that military expenditure and corruption does retard economic growth.

Recently (Compton & Paterson, 2016) consider how institutions can impact military expenditure-growth nexus. Based on 100 countries of annual data from 1988 to 2010 by employing Panel Ordinary Least Square (OLS) and system-generalized methods of moments (GMM). The authors find that military expenditure on growth is negative or zero at best and this impact is lessened in the presence of good economic and political institutions.

### **2.4. GAPS IN THE LITERATURES**

To the best knowledge of the researcher, the following notable gaps are as follows:

1. There are limited studies that have examined the causes of rising military expenditure but not in the context of South Africa as well as what nature of South Africa military expenditure that is, the pull and push factors responsible;
2. To the best knowledge of researcher, no studies was found exploring the combined impact of military expenditure and institutional quality on South Africa inclusive growth from 1984 to 2017 except for (Compton & Paterson, 2016) which focused on 88 countries from 1988 to 2016 without taking cognisance of each country's prevailing growth inclusiveness level as well as not taking the political administration in place of the countries examined;
3. Previous empirical studies were discovered using inappropriate econometric modelling technique as well as using an inappropriate proxy (Bates & Unions) for inclusive growth.

In conclusion, these gaps will make the current research a worthwhile as well as it would help put in perspective the extent to which military expenditure and institutional quality can influence inclusive growth using South Africa as a case study.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This section presents the model specification, prior expectations and the estimating technique for analysis.

#### 3.1 MODEL SPECIFICATION

The model specification for this study centre on (Aizenman & Glick, 2006; Compton & Paterson, 2016) works as the foundational theoretical framework pillars that suit the nomenclature of this research, which has been extensively discussed in the theoretical framework section (Compton & Paterson, 2016) developed a theoretical framework to analyze the interaction military expenditure, growth and institution quality by improving on (Aizenman & Glick, 2006; BARRO & SALA-I-MARTIN, 1992) works. The growth equation developed by (Compton & Paterson, 2016) for investigating the military expenditure, institutions quality on growth is written as

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 M + \beta_2 I + \beta_3 M * I + \gamma'X + \eta_i + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots 2$$

Where *Y*- is the inclusive growth Index, *M*- is the percentage of military expenditure, *I*- is the institution, *M.I<sub>it</sub>* - is the interaction of military expenditure with institution, *X<sub>it</sub>* - is the set of control variables – education, population and Investment variables. *ε<sub>it</sub>* - is the error term for period of 1984 to 2017.

However, this study differs from (Compton & Paterson, 2016) work as the author first compute an inclusive growth index (IGI) as the dependent variable; the institutional quality is proxied by corruption, since corruption is often a symptom of bad institution; the duration covered in this study (that is, 1970 to 2017) exceed the time frame covered by (Compton & Paterson, 2016) study as well as a comparison of the inclusive growth index with other development indicators (that is GDP annual growth and Per capita income) will be examined in the context of BRICS countries. The model specification for this study as follows

$$IGI = \alpha + \beta_1 M + \beta_2 I + \beta_3 M * I + \gamma'X + \eta_i + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots 3$$

In conclusion, the theoretical models imply that the relationship between military expenditure and growth depends on the institutional quality environment (that is, corruption and rent-seeking behaviour). Thus, acting as tax fiscal expenditures, corruption increases the desired level of military expenditure.

### 3.2: DEFINITION OF VARIABLES AND SOURCES OF DATA

**Table 1:** Description of Variables and data source

| Variables  | Definition   | Data measurement | Sources   |
|--|--|------------------|---|
| Inclusive growth Index (IGI)                       | Inclusive growth <sup>1</sup>                                      | Annually         | Author computation  |
| Military Expenditure (ME)                          | Military expenditure (percentage of GDP)                           | Annually         | World Bank Indicator online database  |
| Institutional quality (IQ)                         | Institutional Quality (proxy by corruption)                        | Annually         | International Country Risk Guide 1996-2020  |
| Military expenditure * Institutional Quality (MIQ) | Interactive form of military expenditure and institutional quality | Annually         | World Bank Indicator online database and International Country Risk Guide 1996-2020 |
| Population growth (POP)                            | BRICS Population growth rate                                       | Annually         | World Bank Indicator online database  |
| Education  | Education expenditure (% of GDP)                                   | Annually         |   |
| Investment   | Investment (% of GDP)  | Annually         |   |

*Source: Author's computation*

**Table 2 :** Apriori expectation

| S/N | Variables   | Expected Signs |
|-----|---|----------------|
| 1   | Inclusive growth Index (IGI)  | +              |
| 2   | Military Expenditure (ME)   | +/-            |
| 3   | Institutional quality (IQ)  | +/-            |
| 4   | Interactive form of military expenditure and institutional quality (MIQ) <sup>2</sup>                                       | +/-            |
| 5   | Population growth (POP) – to reflect the negative growth impact of overpopulation pressures on the capita – to labour ratio | -              |
| 6   | Education – as a proxy human capital development  | +              |
| 7   | Investment – as a proxy for physical capital  | +              |

### 3.3. ESTIMATING TECHNIQUES

The choice of this estimation procedure is primarily informed by the fact that it passes the fitness-for-the-purpose-test. For instance, one option available to perform the co-integration test is the Engle-Granger approach, but its weakness lies in the fact that it is only able to use two variables. A multivariate analysis, such as that considered in this study, leads to the use of the Johansen and Juselius co-integration analysis (Johansen & Juselius, 1990) or ARDL model. These two models provide the statistical equivalence of the economic theoretical notion of a stable long-run equilibrium, but the choice will depend on the characteristics of the data. The guide

that is followed in this study is that if all variables are stationary,  $I(0)$ , an ordinary least square (OLS) model is appropriate and for all variables integrated of same order, say  $I(1)$ , Johansen's method is very suitable. But when we have fractionally integrated variables, variables at different levels of integration (but not at  $I(2)$  level) or cointegration amongst  $I(1)$  variables, then ARDL is the best model.

This study is unable to use the Johansen procedure (an option) as all the variables used in this study are not completely  $I(1)$ , that is, integration of order one. This assumption is a pre-condition for the validity of the Johansen procedure. Alternatively, the ARDL model is appropriate to run the short-run and long-run relationships (Shin *et al.*, 2014). The choice of ARDL is further informed by the advantages it portends. Firstly, it is not as restrictive in terms of the meeting of integration of the same order (as in Johansen); it is not sensitive to the size of the data as small sample sizes can also be efficiently accommodated subject to non-compromise to the optimal lag-length selection affecting estimation efficiency owing to the consumption of the degree of freedom; and it also produces unbiased estimates even in the presence of endogenous covariates (Harris and Sollis, 2003).

The study uses ARDL since not all the variables are  $I(1)$  and there is no  $I(2)$  among them and guide that is followed to test for the cointegration is bound test. Under the Bound testing, a set of critical values are based on the assumption that variables are  $I(0)$  while the other set is based on the assumption that variables are  $I(1)$  in the model. The selection criterion is then that  $H_0$  is rejected if the F-statistic is greater than the upper boundary. But we shall fail to reject  $H_0$  if the F-statistic is lower than the lower boundary. The cointegration test is deemed inconclusive when the F-statistic value falls within the two boundaries. (Gujarati, 2009) provides an extensive list of advantages of panel data:

1. The problem of heterogeneity in panel data units is solved by estimation techniques that allow for individual-specific variables.
2. Data gives “more informative data, more variability, less collinearity and greater degrees of freedom and more efficiency”.
3. Panel data are more appropriate for investigating the dynamics of change.
4. Panel data can better detect and measure effects that cannot be observed in pure time series or pure cross-section data.
5. Panel data allow us to study behavioural models that are more complicated.
6. Panel data minimise bias caused by aggregation of micro-units' data.

### 3.4 GENERAL DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

To ensure that the estimation model was appropriate so as to ensure consistency of the coefficient estimate diagnostic test were undertaken.

- **Jarque Bera test:** The test is a goodness of fit measure of departure from normality based on the sample kurtosis and skew. In other words, Jarque Bera test determines whether the data the skew and kurtosis matching a normal distribution. The study employed Jarque-Berra static for normality tests to test for serial autocorrelation;
- **Breuch-Godfrey langrage multiplier test:** is used to assess the validity of some of the modelling assumptions inherent in applying regression-like models to observed data. To use to test for the presence of serial correlation. If found, to be the presence of serial correlation would mean that a spurious conclusion would be drawn from other tests.
- **Langrage multiplier (LM) test:** To ascertain the assumptions on the residual of the ordinary least squares, a langrage multiplier test for autoregressive conditional heteroskedasticity (ARCH) were performed.

## 4. EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the time series results on the analysis of the impact of military expenditure and institutional quality on Inclusive growth in South Africa.

### 4.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS RESULT FOR THE IMPACT OF MILITARY EXPENDITURE, INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH 196-2017 IN SOUTH AFRICA

The summary of statistics is important to explore the time series distribution of the data collected on each of the variables. The table indicates that all the variables used in the South Africa model are positive.

**Table 3:** Summary of Descriptive Statistics Military expenditure, Institutional quality and Inclusive growth 1996-2020 in South Africa

|                     | GROWTH   | INV      | MCP      | ME       | POP      | COR      | EDU      |
|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>Mean</b>         | 0.525882 | 1.399084 | 5.851011 | 3.142169 | 0.058114 | 1.475245 | 0.960027 |
| <b>Median</b>       | 0.47     | 1.02513  | 6.483624 | 3.654318 | 0.03692  | 1.516667 | 0        |
| <b>Maximum</b>      | 0.85     | 4.502704 | 18.13993 | 5.503756 | 0.776688 | 3.916667 | 4.10175  |
| <b>Minimum</b>      | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | -0.46006 | 0        | 0        |
| <b>Observations</b> | 26       | 26       | 26       | 26       | 26       | 26       | 26       |

*Source: Author's Computation*

The results of correlation matrix of the variables used are presented in Table 5.42. Again, correlation matrix shows the degree of association and direction of the relationship among the variables.

**Table 4: Correlation Matrix Military expenditure, Institutional quality and Inclusive growth 1996-2020 in South Africa**

|        | GROWTH   | INV      | MCP      | ME       | POP      | COR      | EDU |
|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----|
| GROWTH | 1        |          |          |          |          |          |     |
| INV    | -0.44587 | 1        |          |          |          |          |     |
| MCP    | -0.54724 | 0.224603 | 1        |          |          |          |     |
| ME     | -0.66364 | 0.385084 | 0.71726  | 1        |          |          |     |
| POP    | 0.745907 | -0.44983 | -0.48262 | -0.69342 | 1        |          |     |
| COR    | -0.63945 | 0.348029 | 0.972969 | 0.709878 | -0.57695 | 1        |     |
| EDU    | -0.27708 | 0.408273 | 0.000492 | 0.216894 | -0.57056 | 0.055234 | 1   |

*Source: Author's Computation*

One of the major reasons for conduction correlation matrix is to ascertain the presence of multicollinearity or otherwise among the independent variables. The result on South Africa has therefore shown that all independent variables can be included in the same model without the fear of multicollinearity.

#### 4.2 ARDL BOUNDS TEST FOR IMPACT OF MILITARY EXPENDITURE, INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH 1996-2020 IN SOUTH AFRICA

After the confirmation of time series properties of the variables, the next is the cointegration test before the estimation of the ARDL regression for both long and short-run periods. The result of the ARDL bound test for cointegration is presented in table 5

**Table 5: ARDL bounds test results for Military expenditure, Institutional quality and Inclusive growth 1996-2020 in South Africa**

| ARDL Bounds Test                                 |          |          |  |
|--|----------|----------|--|
| Null Hypothesis: No long-run relationships exist |          |          |  |
| Test Statistic                                   | Value    | K        |  |
| F-statistic                                      | 8.670868 | 6        |  |
| Critical Value Bounds                            |          |          |  |
| Significance                                     | I0 Bound | I1 Bound |  |
| 10%  | 2.12     | 3.23     |  |
| 5%   | 2.45     | 3.61     |  |
| 2.5%   | 2.75     | 3.99     |  |
| 1%   | 3.15     | 4.43     |  |

*Source: Author's Computation*

The ARDL bound test results indicate that there is a long run relationship between military expenditure, institutional quality and inclusive growth in South Africa since the calculated value of the F statistics is greater than 5% critical values at both lower and upper bounds. This shows that there is co-movement among military expenditure, institutional quality and inclusive growth.

### 4.3 ARDL COINTEGRATING AND LONG RUN FORM FOR IMPACT OF MILITARY EXPENDITURE, INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH 1996-2020 IN SOUTH AFRICA

After the confirmation of a cointegration among variables, the next line of action is to estimate the short run and long-run form of the coefficients. The results are presented in table 6.

**Table 6:** ARDL Cointegrating and long run form result for Military expenditure, Institutional quality and Inclusive growth 1996-2020 in South Africa

| ARDL Cointegrating And Long Run Form   |             |            |             |        |
|--|-------------|------------|-------------|--------|
| Dependent Variable: GROWTH   |             |            |             |        |
| Selected Model: ARDL(2, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 2)  |             |            |             |        |
| Cointegrating Form   |             |            |             |        |
| Variable   | Coefficient | Std. Error | t-Statistic | Prob.  |
| D (GROWTH (- 1))   | 1.158349    | 0.427403   | 2.710205    | 0.0178 |
| D (COR)  | 0.018456    | 0.119169   | 0.154869    | 0.8793 |
| D (COR (- 1))  | 0.105862    | 0.035752   | 2.961022    | 0.0110 |
| D (EDU)  | - 0.014177  | 0.012776   | - 1.109596  | 0.2873 |
| D (INV)  | 0.033384    | 0.021205   | 1.574336    | 0.1394 |
| D (INV (- 1))  | - 0.023957  | 0.020426   | - 1.172917  | 0.2619 |
| D (MCP)  | - 0.005245  | 0.027474   | - 0.190908  | 0.8515 |
| D (ME)   | - 0.005483  | 0.017194   | - 0.318909  | 0.7549 |
| D (ME (- 1))   | 0.105100    | 0.030505   | 3.445322    | 0.0043 |
| D (POP)  | 0.821418    | 0.227655   | 3.608166    | 0.0032 |
| D (POP (- 1))  | 0.399942    | 0.270844   | 1.476650    | 0.1636 |
| CointEq (- 1)  | - 2.398264  | 0.418948   | - 5.724485  | 0.0001 |
| Cointeq = GROWTH - (- 0.1832 * COR - 0.0186 * EDU - 0.0081 * INV + 0.0416 * MCP - 0.0768 * ME + 0.0286 * POP + 0.8314) |             |            |             |        |
| Long Run Coefficients  |             |            |             |        |
| Variable   | Coefficient | Std. Error | t-Statistic | Prob.  |
| COR  | - 0.183189  | 0.059764   | - 3.065224  | 0.0090 |
| EDU  | 0.018604    | 0.009856   | 1.887541    | 0.0816 |
| INV  | 0.008147    | 0.000187   | 0.886761    | 0.0513 |
| MCP  | 0.041565    | 0.014080   | 2.952069    | 0.0112 |
| ME   | 0.076798    | 0.011009   | 6.976173    | 0.0000 |
| POP  | 0.028648    | 0.063175   | 0.453471    | 0.6577 |
| C  | 0.831356    | 0.050367   | 16.505811   | 0.0000 |

*Source: Author's Computation*



Considering the individual variable in the context of South Africa, Military expenditure indicates a significant positive long-run relationship on inclusive growth; the result is an indication that military expenditure exhibits a positive long-run relationship with inclusive growth. The long run coefficient of military expenditure is 0.076798. The implication of this is that military expenditure promotes inclusive growth.

The long-run relationship and impact of institutional quality (proxy by corruption), the result is an indication that institutional quality (proxy by corruption) exhibits a negative long-run relationship with inclusive growth. The long-run coefficient of institutional quality (proxy by corruption) is  $-0.183189$ , and it is statistically at 5% level. The implication of this is that institutional quality (proxy by corruption) in South Africa retard inclusive growth.

Another variable employed in the model is education. The result is an indication that education exhibits a direct long-run relationship with inclusive growth. The long-run coefficient of education is 0.018604. Since the coefficient is only significant at 10%, the implication of this is that there is a need for a more inclusive education system that stimulates inclusive growth.

The investment long-run coefficient is 0.008147. The result is an indication that investment exhibits a direct long-run relationship with inclusive growth. It is significant hence, investment in South Africa supports inclusive growth significantly.

Another variable employed the military expenditure-institutional quality (proxy by corruption) interactive form. The result is an indication that the interactive form of military expenditure and institutional quality exhibits a positive long-run relationship with inclusive growth. The long-run coefficient is 0.041565. The implication of this is that military expenditure joint relationship with institutional quality stimulate South Africa inclusive growth. Therefore, according to the result, a unit rise in the interactive form of military expenditure and institutional quality will promote inclusive growth by 4.1%.

The population long-run coefficient is 0.028648. The result is an indication that the population exhibits a positive but not significant long-run relationship with inclusive growth in South Africa.

Under the short-run aspect of the cointegration regression, the short-run dynamics produces error correction term that is negative and significant, which is a good adjustment process to inclusive growth equilibrium in South Africa.

#### 4.4 POST ESTIMATION TEST FOR IMPACT OF MILITARY EXPENDITURE, INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH 1996-2020 IN SOUTH AFRICA

The post estimation diagnostic tests ranging from heteroscedasticity and serial correlations for South Africa are presented in tables 7 and 8. The rationale of the post estimation tests is to ascertain the robustness the estimated ARDL regression results.

**Table 7: Heteroscedasticity Test: Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey Test for South Africa**

| Null Hypothesis: No Heteroscedasticity |          |                      |        |
|--|----------|----------------------|--------|
| F-statistic                            | 3.358836 | Prob. F(18,13)       | 0.0654 |
| Obs*R-squared                          | 26.33698 | Prob. Chi-Square(18) | 0.0923 |
| Scaled explained SS                    | 4.662358 | Prob. Chi-Square(18) | 0.9993 |

*Source: Author's Computation*

The null hypothesis is that there is no heteroscedasticity. Using the F statistics, it is discovered that the probability of F shows that the null hypothesis is to be accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that the model is not having the problem of heteroscedasticity, which may affect the validity of the result.

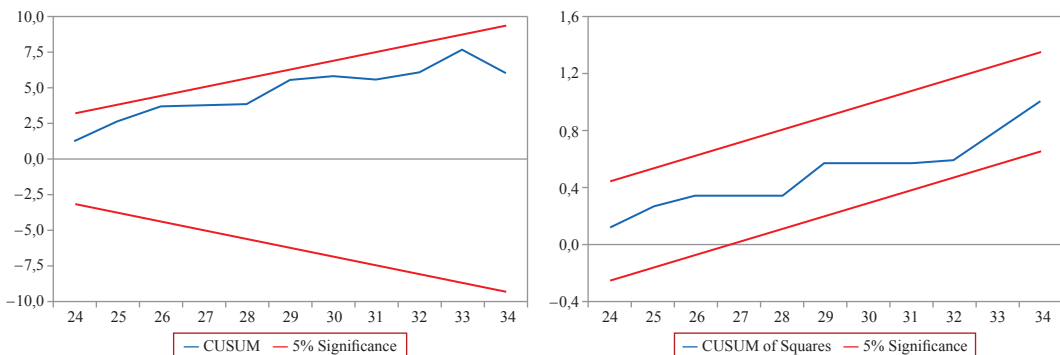
**Table 8: Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test for South Africa**

| Null Hypothesis: No Serial Correlation LM Test: |          |                     |        |
|---|----------|---------------------|--------|
| F-statistic                                     | 1.504894 | Prob. F(2,11)       | 0.2644 |
| Obs*R-squared                                   | 6.874708 | Prob. Chi-Square(2) | 0.0321 |

*Source: Author's Computation*

The null hypothesis for South Africa indicates that there is no serial correlation. Since the F-statistic and the probability, it is obvious that the null hypothesis is to be accepted while we rejected the alternative hypothesis that there is a serial correlation. Consequently, the estimates from our model are valid and can be used for forecasting.

**Figure 1: Stability test for South Africa**



*Source: Author's Computation*

In conclusion, the stability test indicates that the model is reliable (that is, the model does fall within the red lines) and does not suffer from any structural break. This is an indication that the estimated results exhibit the stability required for a model that will be useful for forecasting.

## 5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Findings on South Africa for the period examined shows an indication that Military expenditure influences inclusive growth positively while institutional quality proxy with corruption discourages inclusive growth. However, the interaction of military expenditure and inclusive growth produce a positive and significant impact on inclusive growth in South Africa. This result is backed in theory by the greaser school of thought.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Inclusive growth index is an index computed based on ten socio-economic variables for South Africa from 1996 to 2020.
2. If MCP is positive and significant, it will lead to strong inclusive growth, while if MCP is positive and not significant it leads to jobless growth.

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# SOMALIA AND COVID-19: WHY WINNING THE HEARTS AND MINDS MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

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## ABSTRACT

Do natural disasters and pandemics affect state legitimacy? This paper seeks to examine the relationship between pandemics and legitimacy. It adopts the case study of Somalia, a country whose government has been struggling to restore full legitimacy since the 1991 civil war. The paper examines how non-state actors, particularly Al Shabaab, a terrorist organisation, has been exploiting natural disasters and pandemics such as COVID-19 to promote its soft power and challenge the legitimacy of the central government. Using the theory of legitimacy (Beetham, 1991), the authors coin a new (fourth) variable to strengthen the theory of legitimacy. The paper finds that the nature of response by government during natural disasters and pandemics can influence the level of legitimacy it enjoys in the short and long-term. The paper concludes with a set of recommendations that the government of Somalia can adopt to win hearts and minds.

## Keywords

COVID 19, Legitimacy, Al- Shabaab, Somalia, Counterterrorism.

## INTRODUCTION

Reflecting on the over three decades of violence that has characterised the state of Somalia, the works of Thomas Hobbes, an English philosopher writing in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century comes to light. According to Hobbes, the absence of a legitimate authority that could govern and regulate the society can lead to what he describes as the ‘state of nature’, - a situation where life is “nasty, brutish and short” (Hobbes, 1651/1969). In Somalia, the violent disintegration of the central government in 1991 left a leadership vacuum that has attracted several actors attempting to exert their influence over the years. At the center of this fierce struggle for domination between state and non-state actors has been the question of legitimacy. Legitimacy is an important aspect of defining relations between the governing entity and the governed (Nyadera & Bincof, 2019). It emanates from an invisible social contract between the people and the authority allowing them to act on their behalf. However, the social contract comes with a set of obligations and responsibilities that each actor is required to fulfil so as to experience smooth interaction. For example, while the government is expected to provide security, public health safety, education, ensure access to food, protection of properties among other responsibilities, citizens are expected to pay taxes, obey law and order, and abide by the rules and regulations set out by the state.

By fulfilling its responsibilities, the government appeals to the people thus gaining legitimacy and ensures the stability of the country (Onderand Nyadera, 2020). In many cases, governments are not able to live up to the expectations of each and every person, however it continuously seeks to reform and restructure its activities in order to reach out to as many people as possible. So, what happens if the government does not exist? Or when its legitimacy is seriously challenged by other state or non-state actors? This is the situation Somalia has been experiencing for the consecutive three decades after 1991. Efforts to re-establish a government in the country has been challenged by different conflicting groups and ideologies. By 2021, the Mogadishu based government had made some gains with the support of AMISOM and international troops to recapture sovereign territories from different non-state actors. These efforts are however yet to help the government gain physical and complete control of a vast territory of the country and with the constant attacks, natural disasters and poverty, the image of the government remains dented. Talks for peacebuilding and/or nation-building by scholars and policymakers have fallen short of addressing the issue of legitimacy and how the established authorities can win the hearts of the people.

Somalia embodies a country deeply divided along clan identity and increasingly religious, economic, political, and generational spheres. This paper emphasizes the need to focus on winning hearts as a new strategy for bringing sustainable peace in the country. It argues that past and current experiences by the people have left

room for skepticism and lack of trust on the government. The alternative entities have equally proved too assertive, violent, and conservative to enable the society to integrate in the fast paced, rapidly changing global socio-cultural, political, and economic environment. The study uses the example of Al Shabaab to shed light on how non-state actors in the country are able dilute people's loyalty to the government by using ideological, economic, and a combination of hard and soft power strategies. Particularly, the authors notes that groups such as Al Shabaab are able to win people's hearts during calamities, disasters, and pandemics.

The official COVID-19 statistics in Somalia stand at 17,947 as of 6 September 2021 with 1005 deaths and a total of 8,896 recoveries during the same period. While these figures appear to be comparatively low to other countries within and outside the continent, one can attribute this to the insufficient number of testing kits, extended periods of testing samples, few government run testing sites across the country, and other constraints including insecurity, fake news, poor infrastructure, and insufficient medical facilities that undermine efforts by the government and the people to provide and access testing respectively (Adam, Mohamed and Said, 2020). However, despite the low figures, there are growing concerns (Burke and Mumin, 2020) that the actual number of infections and death could be much higher. This is based on the general response by the government and community behavior. Cases of family members visiting COVID-19 patients at the hospital, government officials not complying to the set guidelines and continued cultural practices such as mass attendance at burial ceremonies have been reported (Burke and Mumin, 2020, Onditi et. al, 2020; Muragu et. al, 2021).

The failure by the government to offer effective and efficient solutions to the challenges facing Somalis is pushing sections of the society to seek for alternative sources of leadership, support, and authority. It is that shift of loyalty from the state to non-state actors that has led to perceived illegitimacy of the government and the cycle of violence being witnessed across the country as growing number of actors are scrambling to appeal to the support and loyalty of the masses. The authors identify that swift and effective response during economic crises, disasters, pandemics, insecurity, and other forms of socio-economic and political treats as being critical in winning the hearts of the public and generating legitimacy for the government. The paper therefore provides recommendations to the government of Somalia, peace advocates, local and international partners on how to win more hearts in Somalia especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. But first the paper begins by coining the concept of legitimacy into a framework of promoting peace in Somalia, it then discusses the challenges Somalia is facing that makes it difficult for the government to win the hearts of the people, then looks at the approaches used by Al Shabaab in winning hearts of its supporters before concluding with policy options.

## THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: LEGITIMACY AND WINNING HEARTS

To understand the race between the state and non-state actors to win hearts in Somalia one needs to examine the question of legitimacy. As a concept and in practice, legitimacy defines power relations between a superior authority and the subjects. It also refers to how the power relations are constructed and how one ascends to power or the mode of transfer of that power. Important to note, the means through power is exercised also defines whether an entity is legitimate or not. There are two broad means of exercising power; one is voluntary and, in this context, the level of legitimacy will be higher. The second means is through coercion or force which challenges the legitimacy of an entity. The more dominant analysis of legitimacy can be drawn to the works of Marx Weber (Udy, 1959; Olsen, 2006). However, other scholars have come up with ways of assessing legitimacy. For example, Andersen (2012), looks at legitimacy from a normative neo-liberal western lenses which looks at legitimacy based on respect of human rights and democracy. Lemay-Hebert, (2009;2010; 2015), Fukuyama (2004), Kaplan (2004; 2005), on the other hand looks at legitimacy from a neo-Weberian perspective emphasizing more on the ‘functionality of institutions’ that form the state. The third level of analysis is based on examining the ‘rightness of an authority’ as determined by the authorities and more so the perception of the governed on the actor, political order, or institutions. It also touches on the incentives needed for a community to assent to authorities (Roos&Lidström, 2014; Beetham, 2013; 1991).

A more elaborate framework that can be applied to assess the question of legitimacy between the government of Somalia and Al Shabaab, a non-state actor is proposed by Beetham (1991). Beetham’s approach consists of three categories of legitimacy that interact in a complex power structure. Under this approach, there are three levels that distinguish legitimacy from other forms of power. These include (1) conformity of power to existing rules (2) justification of rules based on shared beliefs of the subordinate and the dominant groups and (3) is evident that the subordinate actor consent to the authority of the dominant group either through coercion or voluntarily. The application of the question of legitimacy and the competing goal to gain the consent of the people is what continues to characterise the war-torn Somalia where the central government is seeking to gain control of the country and legitimacy from groups that have established themselves in the territory with different narratives and strategies of earning the support of the people.

The three categories proposed by Beetham (1991) cannot comprehensively capture Somalia’s experience without adding a fourth variable; (4) ability of the dominant actor to provide public goods. This fourth variable touches on the question of fragility and how any signs of fragility could lead to challenging of an actor’s



authority. When a dominant actor fails to provide public goods, new actors are likely to emerge with the aim of filling up this gap. Furthermore, when none of the actors can be able to fully provide the four variables, it leads to divided loyalty of the subordinate actors. This paper argues that the situation in Somalia is indeed complicated by the fact that the none of the dominant actors is able to satisfactory fulfil these four categories of legitimacy. The government of Somalia on the one hand is struggling to provide public goods even during natural disasters, has failed appease those keen on implementing extreme religious ideology in the country, and the current and former governments equally failed to conform to the existing principles of good governance that addresses challenges of corruption, nepotism and clannism that characterise allocation of resources. In addition, the government has not been able to fully gain the consent of citizen as growing calls for secession and more autonomy in territories such as Somaliland and Puntland continue to grow.

Al Shabaab on the other hand has been 1) able to tap on the grievances of the people especially those who prefer religious ideology to be the governing principle in the country; and 2) attract individuals and clans that feel marginalised by the government as well as the conservative wing of the country that seek to revive traditional legal, social and cultural lifestyle in Somalia. However, Al Shabaab has no capacity to fully provide public goods even though the group has taken advantage of natural disasters, poverty, and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic. Figure 1 below shows a summary of how the government and Al Shabaab perform in fulfilling the four variables.

**Figure 1:** A summary of how the government and Al Shabaab conform to the four variables

| Actor                 | Conformity to existing rules   | Justification of rules based on shared beliefs  | Evidence of consent by the subordinate actor  | Ability to provide public goods  |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Government of Somalia | The government is expected to conform to existing rules such as good governance, equity, and effectiveness, so far not much success.             | The structure of the government is based on the western model of state. This causes opposition from conservatives           | The government is facing a challenge of holding the nation together as different groups are demanding autonomy                            | The government considered a fragile state as it fails to meet all the public needs                             |
| Al Shabaab            | Although a non-state actor the group is expected to observe the rule of law, avoid violence, extortion or intimidation. So far not much success. | Relies on religion and culture to justify its activities. Conservatives do support such approach but not progressive groups | Al Shabaab has support but from a small part of the country. The methods of getting these support has also involved coercion and violence | Al Shabaab has very limited capacity to provide public goods but uses effective strategies to maximise support |

*Source: Author Compilations*

## SOMALI'S TROUBLES AND THE AL SHABAAB CRISIS

To better understand the complexity of the situation in Somalia in the run-up to the COVID -19 pandemic, one needs to examine the pre-existing challenges that make the country a suitable option for non-state actors to challenge the government's legitimacy. In the wake of the 1991 collapse of the Siad Barre government, there was a trail of authoritarianism, high handedness and poor economic and military strategies that created violent conflict internally and with the neighbouring states (Leeson, 2007; Abdullah, 2007; Ghalib, 1995; Nyadera, Ahmed & Agwanda, 2019). The consequence of Barre's military regime was that it deeply polarised the country to the extent that even after a coalition of clan-based militiagroups successfully ousted him from power, they could not agree on a common framework and agenda to move the country forward. Different warlords and groups sought to galvanise support from their clans and ideologically leaning individuals, thus, splitting the country further into different segments. So deep were the socio-political divisions that earlier interventions by regional and intentional actors such as the UN, African Union, Djibouti, and other African countries failed to convince the different actors involved in the civil war to put the interest of the nation first. What followed was over a decade of continued violence, failed peace agreements and emergence of new interest, ideologies, and actors (Nyadera & Mohamed, 2020). Even when interim governments were put in place under the Islamic Courts or the Transitional National Government, the loyalty of the people remained divided to different actors.

The sustained relevance of non-state actors in Somalia cannot be distanced from the challenges facing the citizens. Economically, the country was yet to recover from over a century of colonialism when a coup followed by the total collapse of the military government in 1991 occurred. The conflict disrupted economic activities in the country by disrupting production, agriculture, trade and even employment in both the formal and informal sectors which pushed millions of citizens to seek alternative means of survival. This meant being loyal to cartels, smugglers and armed groups was an important way of survival as the government had failed to provide or guarantee fundamental economic needs and rights. The works of Little (2003) and Menkhaus (2007) illuminate well the level of control non-state actors have in the economy thus, explaining why many citizens prefer to be and to remain loyal to non-state actors hence a source of their legitimacy.

Provision of security remains a critical role of the state which is expected to have monopoly on the use of force. However, since the 1991 collapse of government, the state has faced severe challenges in the provision of security. Frequent bombings, attacks on civilians, and intimidation have characterized large parts of the country. Al Shabaab, which on the one hand is responsible for much of the insecurity in the country has also established itself as an actor providing security services to the locals.

In several towns that are under the control of Al Shabaab, the Islamic ‘Police Force’, commonly known as the *Hisbah*, patrol the towns in their uniforms and branded vehicles to promote religious virtues, prevent vice, and encourage morality among locals making the group successful in combating crime (West, 2016). And while the locals may not agree with the group’s military campaign, they certainly appreciate Al Shabaab for bringing some resemblance of law and order. One local interviewed by Channel 4 television network hailed life under Al Shabaab rule as that which is characterized with safety “day and night without hearing of gunshots.” In addition to ensuring safety and curbing crime, the role of *Hisbah*, as observed by the authors in the video documentary posted by Channel 4 TV network, also included ensuring quality control in pharmacies, an indication of the dedication of this police unit to serve the local community (Marqaati, 2016). This is in contrast with the Somali police force that has been blamed for “harassing civilian vehicles into paying cash” which has often led to the murder of auto rickshaw (*bajaj*) drivers by police that for instance sparked demonstrations in Mogadishu streets in April 2019 (Hiiraan, 2019).

Socio-culturally, Somalia is still one of the few countries in which colonialism had limited impact on their socio-cultural lifestyle (Langellier, 2010; MacGregor, Walker & Katz-Gerro, 2019). This does not mean that the forces of globalization have not penetrated the society, it only means that significant size of the population still cling on traditional and cultural practices. So much so that the contemporary Westphalia state system seems subordinate to traditional sources of authority. This continues to weaken the strength of a centralized system of government which prefers to adopt a modern legal (constitutional), ideological (economically driven) and structural (central executive, legislature, and judiciary). For the conservatives, having an alternative actor willing to implement traditional or cultural ideologies could be worth their loyalty. This explains why groups such as Al Shabaab are keen to shape their ideological narrative in a manner that they are attractive to the conservatives.

Public goods are an essential part of a society. Citizens expect to benefit from different development projects that can ensure their survival and prosperity. In many cases governments or in collaboration with private sector actors are on the forefront to deliver these goods to the citizens. However, as Somalia has continued to be embattled with disasters such as famine, drought, locust invasion and COVID-19, Al Shabaab has used these tragedies to show their soft image as evidenced by their various initiatives involving supply of food, water, education, and security. According to Rono (2017) the group has been distributing food to the locals during famine since 2011, a trend that has also been seen in the provision of other public goods such as water and education. Figure 1 is one of the pictures (posted on Somali Memo Website) showing local women benefiting from food aid being distributed by Al Shabaab.

**Figure 1:** Food aid provided by Al Shabaab to local women



*Source: Onyango (2017)*

Al Shabaab has been able to project themselves to the masses under their geographical spheres of influence as providers of *maslaha* which translates into ‘the common good’ or ‘in the public interest’. This strategy has had significant repercussions on their legitimacy as it is fundamentally linked to Islamic religious and legal philosophy - the two main domains that Al Shabaab claim to constitute their ideology. Al-Ghazali, a famed Islamic jurist and philosopher defined *maslaha* as “the preservation of the objective of the Law (*Shar*) which is comprised of five fundamental responsibilities (Morales, 2016). These include the protection of religion, property, life, intellect, and lineage. Indeed, by providing public goods to the masses, Al Shabaab has therefore been able to attract legitimacy from large sections of the society who have been confronted with the choice of either giving their loyalty to an unpopular central government perceived to be corrupt, or clan militias fighting between themselves for control of federal governments.

During the pandemic, Al Shabaab established a COVID-19 center in the southern city of Jilib in a facility that was previously owned by the UNICEF and was believed to have had all necessary equipment to isolate possible cases. This is a sign that it takes the pandemic seriously and on the other hand a demonstration of their intent to win more hearts during the pandemic. Sheikh Mohamed Bali, one of the senior members of the group in a broadcast through the *Andalus* radio channel quoted saying that “I am urging people with the disease symptoms to come to the medical facility and avoid infecting other Muslims” (Guled, 2020). The facility, according to information Associated Press received from a responder who answered an Al Shabaab COVID-19 hotline number is “open for all people.” The group rejected calls by the federal government to offer support in the territories under the control of Al Shabaab.

## BATTLE FOR HEARTS, THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND AL SHABAAB

The outbreak and rapid spread of COVID-19 is just but one of the latest avenues upon which state legitimacy could be and has been challenged. While this can be formal critique of the government handling of the pandemic by opposition parties and other non-state actors such as civil societies and workers unions, however there are other forms of challenges that the government can face. These may include propaganda narratives developed by armed groups and cessation movements. When it comes to the latter, the government ought to act swiftly and effectively to suppress such forms of contests but at the same time ensuring its citizens are shielded from the negative effects of the pandemic. If the government is able to respond effectively to the pandemic, this paper opines that such a government will generate positive support even from areas where it was less popular. Should the government fail to address the crisis effectively, it will be vulnerable from all manner of narratives challenging its legitimacy. In the case of countries such as Somalia, the stakes are even much higher given that the government was already being challenged by numerous actors with different interests and objectives long before the COVID-19 broke out. Therefore, this pandemic can either give the government an opportunity to outsmart other actors challenging its legitimacy or it can once again fall short of fulfilling its obligations and thus allowing other groups to fill in the gap and gain more legitimacy. In this section, the paper seeks to provide a set of recommendations that can help the government win more hearts and minds amid the pandemic.

- 1. *Cessation of Hostilities*:** In March 2020, the UN secretary general, Antonio Guterres made a passionate appeal for actors involved in conflict to pause hostilities until the COVID-19 pandemic is put under control. This appeal was followed by a unanimous resolution by the UN Security Council on July 1, 2020 calling for “90-day humanitarian pause”. Despite these international calls, only few actors globally have been able to respond to the call and halt violence. In Somalia, Al Shabaab attacks against civilians and government targets have spiked during the pandemic (West, 2020). This dangerous trend seems to overlook the threat of COVID-19 as well as other pandemics in the past. For example, during the first World War, diseases such as Malaria, Typhus fever, Influenza and Syphilis were able to spread rapidly among the soldiers and civilians. For the case of Somalia, a combination of COVID-19 and persistent violence will overburden the already fragile health system and lead to further loss of life. Given that direction has been provided by the Security Council calling for a global ceasefire, it is time for the Somali government to show leadership by extending a collaboration offer to other non-state actors in the region.

- 2. *Transparency:*** during pandemics and natural disasters, citizens expect support from their government to help them overcome the negative impacts of the situation they are facing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there are many ways in which the government can show that it is exercising transparency. For example, the distribution and utilisation of donations received from various local and international actors must be accounted for. Secondly, the number of tests, infections, recoveries, and deaths need to be verifiable to avoid doubts and underestimating the real situation. Furthermore, the government can engage citizens on the strategies in place to sufficiently deal with the disease, update on the progress in securing medication or vaccine as well as the potential challenges that can undermine the successful implementation of government strategies. Transparency can go a long way in helping the government gain public trust as well as inform public participation in solving the problem.
- 3. *Medical and living costs:*** Millions across the world are today facing serious uncertainty due to the negative impact of the pandemic. On the one hand, many people have lost jobs and incomes as economic activities have sharply declined. This has left many people worried about their source income and how they can finance their medical treatment in case they are infected with the disease. To cushion citizens from such worries, the government of Somalia can 1) involve development partners both local and international to come up with an effective emergency packages that can ease the economic burden caused by the pandemic. 2) the government introduce a number of fiscal and monetary policy reforms, and 3) provide cash transfers to the most vulnerable members of the society. More importantly, the government can intervene and subsidize the cost of testing and treatment to allow even the poor to access quality COVID-19 treatment. This can be achieved by signing public private partnership agreements and memorandum of understanding with private entities including hospitals.
- 4. *Effectiveness and Efficiency:*** the crisis that has been brought about by the pandemic poses a serious threat to the very survival of nation-states. The disease is not only affecting the health sector but also socio-economic and cultural spheres of the society. To adequately address the crisis, governments need to adopt measures and policies that are swift, effective, and efficient. The epidemiological characteristics of COVID-19 show that the disease has the potential of causing mass infections with a reasonably high mortality rate especially among those with pre-existing health conditions. Therefore, this is not the time for government to take chances or pursue other interests that do not support its efforts in dealing with the pandemic. Weak and delayed response by the government can result into serious catastrophe that can lead to decline in government legitimacy.

**5. Decentralised and coordinated response:** given the robust extent in which the coronavirus has spread globally, the importance of decentralisation has once more been highlighted. Any effective response requires the adoption of an equally robust approach that includes local actors who can play an important role in intelligence gathering, public awareness campaigns, monitoring and evaluation, as well as resource mobilisation and distribution. However, these actions and individuals must be highly coordinated to ensure consistency, effectiveness and responsiveness while covering a wider scope. This is critical in promoting the image and presence of the government beyond major cities. These networks can be useful in the short and long run as the teams and individuals can be easily activated in cases of future pandemics. Equally the presence of people/officials accredited to the government can dilute the notion of a power vacuum.

## CONCLUSION

This paper sought to examine how pandemics and natural disasters affect the legitimacy of a government. It examined the case of Somalia where groups such as Al Shabaab have often used natural disasters as avenues to promote their narratives as a ‘parallel government’. At the bottom of this is the issue of legitimacy which the government of Somalia has continued to try and consolidate since the collapse of the central government in 1991, albeit with limited success. This paper recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic, just as other previous disasters, can further lead to the loss of legitimacy by the government should it fail to effectively respond to the crisis. The authors acknowledge that the government was facing other constraints prior to the pandemic that can limit its response. However, with a set of recommendations provided in this paper, there is still hope that the government can turn the tables and emerge as a more popular actor in the post-pandemic era should it adopt these measures.

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# TRENDS AND PROSPECTS OF AFRICAN SECURITY REGIONALISM TO FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM AND PARA-TERRORISM

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## ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the socio-spatial logics and the challenges faced by regional security mechanisms with regards to the rise of new threats to security like terrorism and para-terrorism on the African continent. By discussing the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) that supports the jure security regionalism through the five regional brigades and its actions in maintaining peace and security on the continent, the paper assesses and analyses the effectiveness of regional strategies in dealing with terrorism and para-terrorism. It goes on to highlight that the rise of new forms of security threats such as terrorism and para-terrorism has seriously challenged this “traditional” regionalism, putting in the prism, a new formula for trans-regional responses built in time and space through ad hoc mechanisms (G5 Sahel, MNJTF, RIFU in the Lake Chad Basin). It examines the dynamics and relative roles of security regionalism in countering terrorism. It also highlights the weaknesses of the traditional peace and security architecture of the AU, while examining at the same time, the reasons behind them. Most importantly, the paper proposes the need to adapt regional security mechanisms to the new security realities on the continent.

## Keywords

Collective security,  
Geo-strategy, Para-terrorism,  
Securitization, Regionalisation  
Terrorism, Trans-regionalism.

## RÉSUMÉ

Ce travail se penche sur les logiques socio-spatiales et la mise à l'épreuve des mécanismes régionaux de sécurité, face à la montée en puissance de nouvelles menaces sécuritaires sur le continent africain. Elle évalue l'efficacité de ces stratégies régionales dans le traitement du terrorisme et du paraterrorisme. La note aborde d'abord le cadre de l'architecture de paix et de sécurité en Afrique (APSA) qui soutient le régionalisme sécuritaire de jure à travers les cinq brigades régionales et ses actions dans le maintien de la paix et de la sécurité sur le continent. Elle souligne en suite que la montée en puissance de nouvelles formes de menaces sécuritaires, à l'instar du terrorisme et paraterrorisme, a sérieusement mis au défi ce régionalisme de jure, mettant au prisme, une nouvelle formule de réponse transrégionale, construite dans le temps et dans l'espace à travers un système de riposte ad hoc (G5 Sahel, FMM, URFR dans le Bassin du Lac Tchad). Elle met également en évidence les faiblesses de l'architecture traditionnelle de paix et de sécurité, tout en examinant les raisons qui les expliquent. Plus important encore, la note propose la nécessité d'adapter les mécanismes régionaux de sécurité aux nouvelles réalités sécuritaires sur le continent.

## Keywords

Géostratégie, Para-terrorisme, Sécurité collective, Régionalisme, Régionalisation, Sécuritisation, Terrorisme, trans-régionalisme.

## INTRODUCTION

Before the September 11, 2001 attacks, African countries have been struggling with the rise of terrorist threats on the continent of which, Al Qaida in the Maghreb, al Shabaab in the East, Boko Haram in West Africa and the Lord's Resistance Army in Central Africa. As a result, the African Union (AU), and its ancestor the Organization of African Unity (OAU), have been dynamically engaged in collective efforts to combat these threats for more than four decades. The OAU adopted a Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, at Algiers in 1999, in order to put in place a solid framework to deal with the threat of terrorism. This convention not only qualifies and identifies terrorism, but also laid down important areas of cooperation among states as well as strategies for eradication. This was followed by a Plan of Action on Prevention and Combating of terrorism in 2002, which put forward different measures for *“border surveillance, issue of machine-readable passports, checking illegal transfer of weapons, introduction of legislation preventing the financing of*

*terrorism, and sharing of information and intelligence*”<sup>i</sup> on terror activities. The Plan of Action took into consideration the international measures for combating terrorism, in line with the provisions of the UNSC Resolution 1373 of September 28, 2001. It also called for the establishment of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), with the purpose of contributing to and strengthening the capacity of the African Union to deal with issues relating to the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa, as well as eliminating the threat posed by terrorism to peace, security, stability and development on the continent. However, despite the existence of these instruments, terror networks continue to rise on the continent.

The spiral of terror activities that set Africa on fire since 2001 made it clear for the need of regional security responses, with the blessing of the African Peace and Security Architecture in 2002, dedicated to prevent, manage and resolve conflict on the continent. Unfortunately, just like the efforts to support and promote socio-economic and political integration, these regional security mechanisms have not produced the desired results. The rise of new collective instruments (CROCKER, HAMPSON & AALL, 2011) highlights the concern for a new regional security system, believed as a fine-tune structured response to terror threats on the continent.

These new regional security instruments that emerged in response to terrorism and paraterrorism<sup>ii</sup> on the African continent, form trans-regional security structures that inspire us on a geographical construction of threat, for it has modelled the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) that emerged with a five-pronged regional brigades system (DERSSO, 2013:90-93), based on the African Standby Force<sup>iii</sup>. The trans-border, or trans-regional nature of terrorist threat makes the current traditional regional security framework inadequate and near obsolescence. The situation then calls for new strategies, empowering regional instruments and their restructurings, like the reappearance in 2014 of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko-Haram in the Lake Chad Basin, comprising countries from different sub-regions, the G5 Sahel in North Africa against Al Qaeda in the Maghreb, created on December 19 2014, the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Centre between ECOWAS and ECCAS...), to combat maritime piracy, the Regional Intelligence Fusion Unit (RIFU) to combat Boko-haram in the Lake Chad Basin, the Intelligence Fusion Centre in the Great Lakes against the Lord Resistance Army (LRA)... This reconfiguration of regional security constitutes a great deal and interest in elucidating the central question concerning the new dimension of regional security patterns which have not fallen within a consensus-based universal operational designation in terms of strategy before then (BUCHANAN, CLARKE & LEKALAKE, 2016: 2). A set of collective security strategies, creating a great deal for ‘*regionalisation*’, providing at the same time military coalitions of states in countering terror threats<sup>iv</sup>. This has thus become of great concern for the African Peace and security system, with the establishment of a regional security framework to build a resilient peace

and security order<sup>v</sup> on the continent. So, how do *ad hoc* regional security measures put in place to combat terrorism and para-terrorism in Africa fit into the continental peace and security strategy? Do they effectively and efficiently contribute to eradicate these threats? what are the challenges that hinder their optimal implementation in the African security architecture? How can they be optimised to integrate the new security situation posed by terrorist threats on the continent?

The objective of this paper is to assess the trajectory of the African regional security system, evaluate its capacity to react to new security challenges on the continent, and identify its possible integration into the continent's security situation. The paper uses the regional security complex theoretical framework developed by Barry BUZAN (1991:190).<sup>vi</sup> According to this theory, the region, considered in terms of security is seen as “a distinct and significant subsystem of security relations” among a certain number of states that are intertwined in a geographic spiral with each other (BUZAN 1991). The paper also rely on constructivism to study regional security cooperation to counter terrorist threats on the continent. The perspective of this paper is close to the security community approach developed by Karl DEUTSCH, readapted by Adler and Barnett (DEUTSCH,1957; ADLER & BARNETT, 1998), but adopts the notion of regional security community complex, and proposes a description to catch the nature of a large spectrum of the actual security cooperation process on the continent. Using this theoretical approach, the paper examines the effective materialisation of the new approach to regional security to fight against terrorist threats on the continent, but not without having analysed the trajectories of regional security issues in Africa, highlights its inclinations and trends, identify its weaknesses, and then evokes its prospects under the prism of spatial perspectives against new threats to security.

## **I. THE CONSTRUCTION OF REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION IN AFRICA**

Since the 1990s, regionalism and, or/ regional cooperation has developed as structures of continental politics. These years marked by the end of the Cold War, resulted in the establishment of multilateral regional organisations across the continent structured around Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The increase of these regional engagements was further supported by a major transformation in the norms and institutions governing multilateral cooperation, and the creation of the AU Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in the early 2000s. The launching of the APSA brought with it new considerations on peace, security and defence, with the development and establishment of the African Standby Forces with its five brigades to prevent, manage and promote peace and security and resolve conflicts as strategically defined by the 2003 protocol (JUMA and MENGISTU, 2002). The rise

of international terrorism since 2001 and the progress of globalization generated a new form of regionalism, with the establishment of a number of regional cooperation frameworks *ad hoc* in nature, such as the MNJTF, RIFU, G5 Sahel, though with some efforts to restore and strengthen existing regional institutions.

### ***A. The Adoption of a Regional Security System, as an Instrument to Prevent, and Manage Peace and Security Issues in Africa***

The proliferation of intra-state conflicts throughout the African continent after the end of the Cold War, led to the building of a regional security framework in the late 1990s (FRANKE, 2010) as a strategic mechanism in order to promote peace and security on the continent. The strategy consisted of shaping security from an institutional perspective consisting of several states, rather than that of a single state. This approach to security in Africa has been structured, as noted above, around the RECs to conduct interventions or peace and security operations, in other to deal with security threats, after the OAU's regional security initiatives<sup>vii</sup> have been unsuccessful. The AU then adopted in July 2002 summit, a "Protocol involving to the Launching of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and adopted a normative<sup>viii</sup> and institutional arsenal to prevent and manage security issues on the continent. In order to develop its security response ability, the AU put in place an African Standby Forces (ASF) system, consisting of five regional brigades: the North African Regional Standby Brigade (NASBRIG); the Southern African Standby Brigade (SADCBRIG); the Force Multinationale de l'Afrique Centrale (FO-MAC); the ECOWAS Standby Brigade (ECOBRI) and the East African Standby Brigade (EASBRIG) (BATWARE, 2011). These institutional changes that took place with the drafting of APSA which has been operating as a comprehensive guide and framework for governing bodies on the continent to address and respond to serious security threats. This new security approach brought with it a stronger dimension towards the principle of regionalism.

In the era of the AU, however, regionalism has become an imperative for peace and security, not only regarding maintaining global competitiveness in global trading, but also in addressing conflict prevention strategies. It is the aim of the AU, together with the RECs, to realize these new goals by bolstering the capacity of regional institutions, a feat that has increasingly been internalized by RECs on the continent. This security mechanism has the common designation of Regional Collective Security System (BENEDITO XAVIER, 2015:9) as a region-based security structure. The development of this security structure is not scheduled at an unvarying speed, but, rather, it is progressing with situation inside each regional structure which were initiated to point out for economic perspectives. But their initial mission experienced a rapid instability endemic facilitated by the rise of enter

and intra-state conflicts on the continent, leading to the establishment of a regional geopolitical system, which is an integrative-based model to work within the context of conflicts involving the states of a given community, over a sub-regional security agenda (MWANASALI, 2003).

From this perspective, the regional brigade security system, vital to the African security architecture<sup>ix</sup>, is the premise of efficient measures, capable of responding promptly to a crisis encountered by any state in the regional or sub-regional body. By so doing, a Protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security, was adopted in 1999 (ARTHUR, n.d: 4). It set up a regional security model, which is probably the implementation of an ambitious program in the realm of complex security threats (KWESI, 2007: 8), where the security of one state reliant on that of all the others, with ties in social, economic and political domains that impasse the countries in the region.

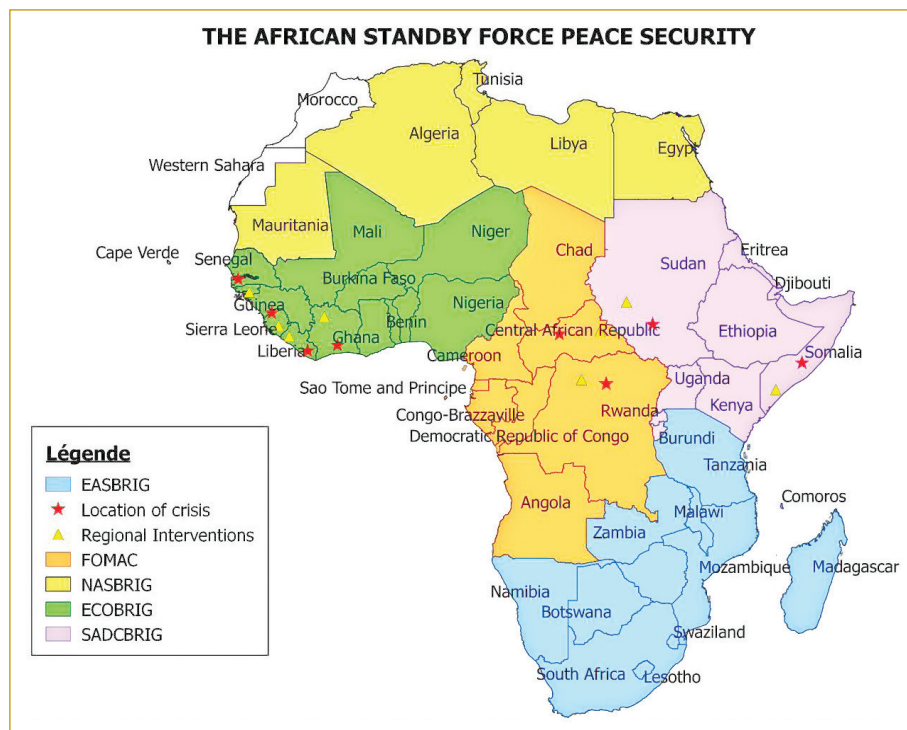
The 1999 Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism was adopted by the African Union (AU), reinforced by a Plan of Action, adopted in September 2002 (WANI, 2007: 46-47). In order to facilitate the implementation of the 2002 Plan of Action, a Protocol was adopted on July 8, 2004 to address the new forms of terrorism, giving a prominent role to the Regional Mechanisms (RECs/sub-regional organizations) to stabilize the continent (Regional Bodies are core components of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) (ALHAJI S., et al, 2014: 21). The development of a determined regional security system since 2002 to cope with the new global security framework (Bruce JONES, 2003: 19) to prevent and manage the peace and security realm on the continent became operational within the African Standby Force.

Regional organizations in Africa henceforth play a major role in the promotion of peace and security on the continent. During the OAU's era, regional bodies were not at a best standing point to lead peace and security efforts within the region. This new roadmap<sup>x</sup> of which regional structures is justified by the global security context of the post September 11, 2001 events and the structuring of the UN global Counter-Terrorism strategy launched in September 8, 2006. Sixteen years ago, the African Union (AU) has engaged in the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) as expressed in the 2002 Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union. Since then, the architecture has made important advancement, not only in establishing the APSA bodies and instruments, but also in using them for the purpose of conflict prevention, management and resolution, with the objective of promoting peace, security, and stability on the continent, as determined by the Constitutive Act of the AU of 2000 in accordance with the aspirations of the African people.



With regards to peace and security on the continent, the achievements of the APSA have focused on conflicts and crisis (Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Guinea Bissau, Central African Republic, Libya South Sudan, Sahel/Mali, Burundi...) to address the peace and security challenges on the continent. But it should be noted that these mechanisms focus mainly on military cooperation more usually expressed in terms of peace building interventions in intra-states conflicts like the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the civil war in Burundi, Uganda in East Africa (JORDAAN, n.d.: 160-184) In West Africa, it was manifested via its brigade (ECOWAS Monitoring Group [ECOMOG]) formed in 1990, with the efforts to resolve the Liberian civil war of 1989; the Sierra Leone civil war of 1991-2002 and the Guinea-Bissau civil war of January 1998. Even if it is a retrospective consecration of the mission of ECOWAS, it is still the beginning of a new trend to entrust conflict resolution to regional and sub-regional bodies. ECOWAS has been leading the peace and security initiatives within the region. It greatly contributed in bringing peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s. Actually, ECOWAS and other regional organizations play important role in informing the AU's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) on security issues thus, becoming essential partners in the new road map of the fight against terrorism. The establishment of the Early Response Mechanism (ERM) in 2009 was used to react immediately to crisis across the continent, led to the IGAD's intervention in South Sudan in 2013.

### Map of the five regional Brigades



Source: The Authors

Through its Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (SIPO), launched in 2004, SADC BRIG expects to create a collective security environment through which the region will try to realise its security aims (MADAKUFAMBA, 2015). Its peace and security policies, processes and structures, framework in the regional approaches have taken to the respective crises in Madagascar (2009) and Zimbabwe crises (within the MDC and ZANU-PF).

IGAD, as a sub-regional organization established in 1996 for economic development and integration in the Eastern region of Africa, created an Eastern African Standby Brigade (EASBRIG), as constitutive element of the African regional security system, as embodied in the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict, and played an important role in the Sudan and Somali conflicts where outcomes were brought on peace and security. It is known that the past 50 years after the creation of the OAU, countries in all the five regions that constitute the APSA have experienced different aspects of insecurity as indicated in the Agenda 2063 framework. Although the APSA has been strongly institutionalized, the threat of terrorism and para-terrorism remains significant via the essential neighbourhood effects.

As hitherto described, the AU's regional security system has been insisting on the role of an African Standby Force, comprised of five sub-regional brigades (OCHIAI, 2006). But the rise of new threats like terrorism and para-terrorism which have been fascinating global considerations since September 2001, have strengthened the patterns of regional security on the continent, reinforcing the desire for greater efficiency on solutions to security problems on the continent. APSA instruments are involved in a wide-range of security actions resulting from the exacerbation of violent extremism and terrorism. Despite the intense engagement of the regional bodies, important challenges to ensure peace and stability on the continent remain.

### ***B. The Resurgence of Terrorism and Para-terrorism in Africa and the reappraisal of Regional Security Frameworks to Stabilize the Continent***

In the 1990s, terrorist attacks in Africa has been to an extent episodic and limited to relatively well-defined environments like in Algeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Rwanda... But the emergence of groups like Boko Haram in the 1990s in Nigeria, with its regional reach since 2010, and the spread of Al-Shabaab in Somalia and other countries like Kenya and Uganda, as well as Al Qaeda in the Maghreb have made terrorism a key security threat in Africa (CILLIERS, 2015). According to Shwit WOLDEMICHAEL, the African continent has experienced 1168 terrorist attacks only from January to August 2020, that is, 18% more than the 982 incidents in the same period in 2019 (WOLDEMICHAEL, 2020). Though different counter-terrorism operations have been deployed, including the African Union (AU) Missions in

and many non-African missions, the continent still have difficulties in containing this threat. The threat has been spreading to regions such as the Great Lakes, Lake Chad Basin, Sahel, and Southern Africa, and to countries such as Cameroun and Benin, Mozambique and West African coastal states that until recently hadn't experienced such attacks (WOLDEMICHAEL, 2020).

Recurring terrorist attacks and the regionalisation of terrorist groups on the continent made it an ideal terrain to revive the traditional regional security instruments to adapt to the new security threats, though African countries have been slow to agree and define regional strategies (VIRCOULON, 2017). As noted by Karl Deutsch, a region is a group of states which are interdepending on a variety of different domains (DEUTSCH, 1957). Adler and Barnett adopted the constructivist approach in order to propose a model for analysing the current security building process in region. As such, regions, in this case are not geographic-based phenomena, but rather political, or geopolitical constructions (ADLER & BARNETT, 1998). This agenda greatly sets out requirements for cooperation to pursue a collective action and execute effective response to security challenges through new forms of regional initiatives on the African continent.

These initiatives have been greatly acknowledged as the prominent approach to counter terrorist activities on the African continent, in reaction to their resurgence since 2010. The 'reappropriation' of regional security has the potential of changing the manner in which States address the mutually constituted challenges to their security. This new form of regionalism is likely to alter the nature of traditional regional relations within RECs and their relations with APSA. The creation of G5 Sahel in February 2014, or the MNJTF in January 2015 expanded their spheres of competence and created fullfledged *de facto* security regions, appearing more efficient in substance than the traditional regionalism had been (VIRCOULON, 2017).

Within these frameworks is the need to strengthen security by emphasising on the importance of harmonising and, coordinating security operations and response to terrorist activities. Based on a sort of "*coalition of the willing*"<sup>xi</sup> (CASOLA, 2020), the construction of these frameworks has been supported by different international partners to operationalise intelligence collaboration against terrorism in Africa. These efforts to address the challenges posed by such transnational security threats have been rather ad hoc, with different key external actors, including the United Nations, African Union, France, United Kingdom, United States, pursuing their own policies, interests, and objectives. It is important to note that, African states are generally encouraged by the international partners to play a more determinant role in confronting new security threats on the continent. This support is mostly structured around structural arrangements, distributive or symbolic rewards or punishments.

De facto's institutional design was shaped in a decision taken by States in the Sahel region against AQIM. Governments have taken some steps to respond to AQIM but have failed to devise a strategy to counter AQIM's gradually refined and regionally embedded methods. It is obvious that some countries in the region have been hesitant to admit the increasing terrorist threat. Their actions are often based on short-term activities with little regard for long-term strategies. Cooperation among regional countries is improving in the form of G5 Sahel created in 2014, but disagreements and challenges remain. However, the growing threat posed by terrorism across Africa shows the need to revisit existing continental responses. In February 2020, the African countries decided in the AU summit, to reconsider the AU fight against terrorism approach by forming a special counter-terrorism unit in the African Standby Force (ASF). This reconsideration also led to the formation of a taskforce comprising a diversity of stakeholders including the PSC Military Staff Committee, regional mechanisms and AU security cooperation agencies. It was to evaluate the implications of the proposed unit. The counter-terrorism unit under the ASF could play a determinant role streamline the *ad hoc* mechanisms that appear to be an efficient response to terror threat on the continent. Under these mechanisms, counter-terrorism and para-terrorism operations could also expand from its heavy military focus to include non-violent preventive measures aimed at the underlying conditions driving radicalisation and violence.

## II. THE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS TO THE REGIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM

Considering a changing security environment with the rise of transnational threats to security like terrorism and para-terrorism, maritime piracy and drug trafficking on the African continent, another project to regional security system intending to use contextual, or *ad hoc* approach to manage these threats, has been growing. During the last decade, threats have become trans-regional, making the regional approach on the continent to be subjected to a consensual and operative designated new puzzle for collective security. This apprehension grows to various interpretations, as justified by the new security approach presented as *de facto* regionalism.

### A. *Terrorism and Para-terrorism do not consider the Regional Structures*

The resurgence of terrorism and para-terrorism in Africa reflects the new forms of challenges to the African regional security structure. In the face of these challenges, characterized by the transnationality of threat, the African regional security structure, based on the regional brigades takes on to be in a 'territorial trap'<sup>xii</sup> (AGNEW, 1994). However, dealing with these new challenges to security appears difficult for these regional structures. The *transnationalisation* of terrorist movements or para-terror-

ist groups has become a great challenge to the regional security system. The rise of groups like Boko-haram in the Lake Chad Basin, militant Islamist groups in the Sahel, Burkina Faso, Mali, western Niger..., *Wahhabism* in the Horn of Africa (East African region) is incarnated by groups like al-Shabaab and ISIS operate in a gradually radical way in countries like Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda... thus having important impacts on the regional politics of the sub-regions in which it is active, for it is initially imported not only from Saudi Arabia (KWESI, 2007) but also from the Sahel region These groups do not respect neither political nor geographical boundaries; and, except perhaps for Al-Shabaab militants in Somalia, terrorist movements in Africa do not articulate clear local political goals.

The African continent is currently a hosts of several terrorist groups that are affiliated in one way or the other with Al-Qaeda. These groups operate across the vast expanse of the Sahel in Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria, as well as Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, in the Lake Chad Basin, Somalia, Mali and Kenya in the Horn of Africa. Boko Haram for example has killed more than 15,000 people and displaced more than 2.1 million since it began its extremist activities in 2010 (GBERIE, 2016).

According to the *IHS Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre*, terrorist attacks in Africa have increased by 200 per cent and fatalities by more than 750 per cent during 2009-2015<sup>xiii</sup>. Despite the fact that Africa has about 16% of the world's population, an arc of instability is spreading across the continent, from Nigeria in West Africa, to Mali in Sahel, passing through Libya in North Africa, and Somalia in East Africa.

The difficulties of regional mechanisms to combat these threats result not only from their magnitude, but also from the lack of regional capacity to respond quickly and effectively to them. Some of the significant security challenges are structured around the difficulty of managing hegemonic regionalism which rise with the absence of common regional values, elitism in their integration form, institutions with little or no capacity to manage security threats, thus causing a simply formal regionalism with the perception of an externally driven project (FAYEMI, 2004).

The persistence of terrorist groups operating in Africa is becoming increasingly severe. It could reasonably be argued that this threat is a variant of serious organized movements with regards to the *modus operandi* of certain groups and their spatial distribution like Al-Qaida operating in the Sahel. The group was initially organized in cartels, but gradually moved into Salafism with ramifications to small groups at the mercy of opportunistic alliances with the fanatics of different sub-regions. These new challenges to security, occur, changing today's security threats. In order to handle them, regional institutionalism has become a spatial security management process. This process flourishes through the reorganization of responses, according to the spatial distribution of threat.

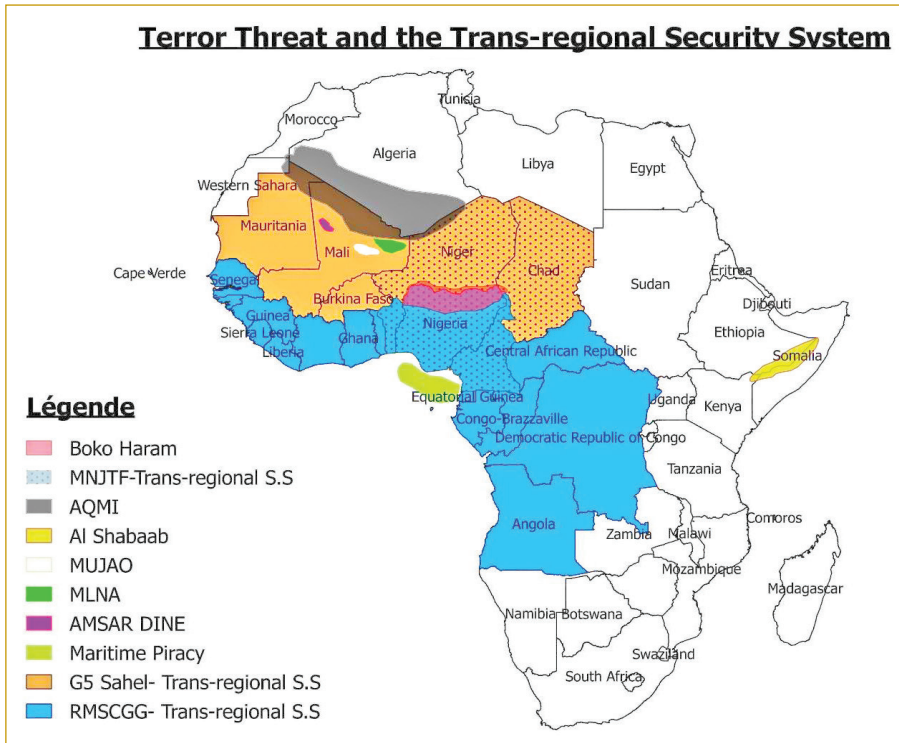
Regional bodies, apart from ECOWAS really endure solutions to terror security problems. There need to be placed at the centre of security efforts. But it is difficult for them to play this leading role without further *spatialising* and renewing transnational engagement.

***B. The Turn in Tides of the Regional Security Architecture and the Carving out of ad hoc instruments: Towards the Redrawing of the Regional Security Map?***

There is a general recognition in Africa that terrorism and para-terrorism are not only transnational problems, but also trans-regional and, therefore, there is a growing need for African countries to develop collective mechanisms in order to effectively deal with them. The role of a new regionalism hence becomes relevant because it involves the construction of threat (DODDS, 1993), with a new security mechanism presented as the solution. This new regional configuration that aims at pursuing the purposes of collective security partnerships, appears to be the solution for the failure of the old regionalism of the APSA (VIRCOULON, 2017). The G5 Sahel created in February 2014 to fight against Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQMI), the launching of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in January 2015 in the Lake Chad Basin against ISIS-West Africa and Boko-Haram (including countries like Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria), the establishment of the Regional Maritime Security Center in the Gulf of Guinea (RMSCGG) against maritime piracy between ECOWAS and ECCAS in 2013, show not only an increase in the regional mechanisms, but also a transformation, a trans-regional nature of African security regional.

The relatively recent developments within the regionalism and the collaboration of several security apparatus on the continent has led to an increased academic focus in the field of “regional security complexes”<sup>xiv</sup> in reaction to the existence, and or, perception of transnational threats to security (BUZAN & Ole WÆVER, 2003). Taking regional security as a variable of the relationship between the spatial deployment of threat, and the mode of response to this threat, is addressing the geographical complexity of the security issues. Lake and Morgan’s demonstration of regional security, seems particularly relevant to this case, for they argue that, the ‘*regional security appears when the states are affected by at least one trans-border but local security externality*’ (LAKE and MORGAN, 1997). For them, this is a way of taking the space-frame into account. Considering the space-frame in the regional security architecture corresponds to the new reading of threats to security, with regards to the immediate environment of threat.

## Terror Threat and the Trans-regional Security System



*Source: The Authors*

This approach reveals, according to Fredrik SÖDERBAUM and Björn HETTNE, a ‘regional security management’ system (SÖDERBAUM and HETTNE, 2009). This security management system is fundamentally related to a neighbourhood perspective according to which it is shaped from within a geographical area. The multidimensional nature of contemporary regionalism gives rise to a number of new puzzles and challenges for the understanding of security in today’s African security studies.

Indeed, this trans-regional security system may be seen as a new regional security landscape in the making, as it is characterized by a set of spatial operations and trans-regional related dimensions. But the patterns lead in turn, to the fact that there is much greater role for action at the spatial level by the affected neighbouring countries. In a context where threats are becoming more pressing and the continental security system seems to be paralysed, this new regional security partnership appears to be the most pragmatic response to terrorist activities. Indeed, unlike the APSA, they are *ad hoc* alliances, or collaborations “*coalition of the willing*”, but with the endorsement of the United Nations and the African Union. This includes those who wish to do so, i.e. those who have become aware of the need for joint security actions, the definition of which remains general. Neither the formation of the cooperation nor its content is obligatory, but it is necessary. The MNJTF is, for example, composed of four of the six member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission including Benin, which is not part of the Lake Chad Basin. Their logic

is not that of the institutional division of Africa into five major regions embodied by regional structures, but that of responding geographically to threat. That is why countries in the Sahel region like Senegal, which did not experience the AQIM attacks are not part of the G5 Sahel.

These *ad hoc* forms of security collaboration or cooperation are not subjected to the bureaucracy of regional communities and their power games. They have shorter and therefore faster decision-making mechanisms and appears to be adapted, collective and efficient solutions against terrorism and para-terrorism in Africa.

## CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of security threats on the African continent pushed the African Union to step up its role in preventing and managing these issues, mainly via the establishment of a regional building bloc to prevent and combat security threats, and to promote and implement peace activities. This regional mechanism is a collective security design based on a five regional brigade system to facilitate efficient and timely responses to crisis and security situations within the regions and sub-regions. But the rapid resurgence and regionalisation of terrorist threat has led to the emergence of another form of regional *ad hoc* collaboration from a geographical-based structure. This kind of structures are more flexible and more operational than large security instruments, or institutional regionalism. This situation reveals at least two things: firstly, the failure of national responses to transnational threat, and secondly, the difficulty of the old security regionalism embodied in the APSA to efficiently fight against terrorist activities. This is partly because they do not clearly have control over specific security threats than might be possible with a smaller and more reduced involvement, like the MNJTF or the G5 Sahel which actually have more familiarity in executing responses to terrorism than ECCAS, NASBRIG, or ECOBRIG which have been undertaking observer missions. This situation partly explains why some regional organisations and regional bodies are hesitant to share responsibility for regional security, rather than assuming charges in their immediate geographical spheres of influence.

However, the African response to terrorist threat could expand from its existing military focus and embrace preventive measures aimed at identifying profound conditions driving radicalisation and violent extremism on the continent. This consist of rationalising regional structures in the security area. By so doing, African governments will determine the efficient security organisations to better counter terrorism and para-terrorism on the continent.



## NOTES

- i. Plan of Action of the African Union High-level Inter-Governmental Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa, Algiers, Algeria, September 11-14, 2011, African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism.
- ii. Para-terrorism represents a form of security threat that does not fundamentally fall within the spectrum of terrorism. It takes into consideration, all the other forms of organised violent activities like: maritime piracy and violent practices like the Mai Mai in Eastern Congo, violence in the Darfur region of Sudan, in Uganda, in Rwanda, in C. A. R with the Seleka and Anti Balaka groups, in Cameroun with the resurgence of the Ambazonian secessionism... Globally, para-terrorism covers the entire spectrum of political violence, which does not fundamentally appear as terrorism, but in terms of practices corresponds to the production of terror. Without resorting to a strict typology, it is clear that this concept links the diversity of irregular or para-military violence on the African continent.
- iii. Besides the Peace and Security Council, the African Union Commission (in particular the Chairperson and the Commissioner for Peace and Security), the Panel of the Wise (PoW), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF), the African Peace Fund and the regional economic communities are part of the APSA.
- iv. The establishment of the Commission of Defence and Security (CDS) in 2002 by ECCAS, the Multinational Central African Force (FOMUC) and its transformation to Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the CAR (MICOPAX) in 2008, the Mécanisme d'Alerte Rapide de l'Afrique Centrale (MARAC...
- v. African Union, Statement of Commitment to Peace and Security on the Continent, issued by the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, Addis Ababa, May 25, 2004. Article 1.
- vi. BUZAN describes the "Security Complex as a group of states whose primary security concerns link together closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another. The name has the advantage of indicating both the character of the attribute that defines the set (security) and the notion of intense interdependence that distinguishes any particular set from its neighbors".
- vii. The OAU Assembly of the Heads of State and Government held in Cairo in June 1993, where the "Declaration on the Establishment of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution" was adopted, which became the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (MCPMR), as the conflict response system unique to the OAU.
- viii. The Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism; the adoption of a Plan of Action in September 2002; of a Protocol to the AU Convention intended to reflect the new forms of terrorism and facilitate implementation for the instruments.

- ix. Created in July 2002, in Durban, South Africa, with leaders representing 53 African nations to replace the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).
- x. The development and implementation of the APSA Roadmap 2016-2020 is guided by the principle of collective security and self-reliance, among others.
- xi. According to Camillo CASILA, “the same model of security and military cooperation was adopted later by the G5 Sahel, an international organisation established on the initiative of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, which in 2017 gave birth to a joint military force to address the al-Qa’ida- and the Islamic State-linked armed groups’ activities in the Western Sahel. The G5 Sahel Joint Force suffers from budgetary and operational constraints that have hindered its effective deployment”.
- xii. It is according to John AGNEW, “the common view of the international system as comprising a set of state building blocks with well-defined territorial boundaries.
- xiii. “Numbers Show Dramatic Rise of Terrorist Attacks in Africa Over Past Six Years, HIS Says”, *Business Wire*, June 27, 2016.
- xiv. Regional Security Complexes shows how security is clustered in geographically shaped regions, which are regarded as mini systems where polarity, interdependence, alliance systems are applied.

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# REINSTATING PEACE AND SECURITY IN ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON : AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFORTS MADE BY THE NATIONAL DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRA- TION COMMITTEE (NDDRC)

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## ABSTRACT

The disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-fighters constitute a vital component of peace processes, post-war reconstruction and sustainable peace building. Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programs consist of strategies that assist fighters to lay down their weapons, dissociate from armed groups and to regain civilian status. DDR programs have as major objective to reinstate peace and security in war-torn societies and to prevent relapse to conflict. In an attempt to assess the efforts made by the National DDR Committee (NDDRC) in reinstating peace and security in Anglophone Cameroon, this paper provides an evaluation of the strategies put in place by the NDDRC and suggestions for greater success. This paper is based on the emerging body of qualitative research. It draws on scholarly articles, newspaper articles, reports of practitioners, internet sources, with the case of Cameroon being of great interest because the government is attempting to implement DDR through the NDDRC which was created and mandated to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate secessionist fighters in Anglophone Cameroon and ex-Boko Haram militants in the Far North region of Cameroon.

## Keywords

Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration, National DDR Committee, Anglophone Cameroon, Ex-fighters, Secessionist fighters.

## INTRODUCTION

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programs play a vital role in reinstating peace in war-torn societies. Many peace agreements around the globe incorporate DDR programs and activities, which provide a flexible framework that enables ex-Combatants (and/or their supporters and family members) to be disarmed, demobilized from armed groups and reintegrated into society. Disarmament has been defined as “the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population.”<sup>1</sup> In simple words, disarmament entails the withdrawal of weapons and equipment from soldiers and destroying or reallocating them according to a peace agreement.<sup>2</sup> The collection of arms and weapons from “gun men” is followed by their dissociation from armed groups through the process of demobilization.

Demobilization is defined as “the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups.”<sup>3</sup> Defined thus, demobilization simply refers to the process of reducing the numbers of combatants in an armed conflict. It is the process of dissociating combatants from armed groups and turning them into civilians by facilitating their reinsertion/reintegration into the society. “Reintegration is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income.”<sup>4</sup> Reintegration is essentially the process that facilitates the assimilation of ex-combatants and their families into socio-economic and political life in civilian communities by enhancing their self-sustainability and productivity. The DDR programs vary according to contexts and are part of a broader peace process which includes political, security and socioeconomic reforms. Although DDR processes are not a one size fits all, DDR experts and practitioners implore their knowledge and practice to adapt in varying DDR operations by exploring the strategies of traditional DDR and/or second-generation DDR.

## TRADITIONAL DDR Vs SECOND GENERATION DDR

Traditional DDR requires some minimum preconditions to be met for the DDR process to commence whereas Second Generation DDR entails techniques for disarming, demobilising and reintegrating ex-combatants into communities while the conflict is still on-going. As earlier mentioned, the implementation of traditional DDR requires a set of preconditions to be put in place before the process begins. These include the signing of a ceasefire and/or a negotiated peace agreement that establishes; the legal framework for DDR; builds trust and confidence in the peace process; reveals the willingness of the conflicting parties to engage in DDR; and that guarantees the minimum security required to drive the peace process.<sup>5</sup> Howev-

er, this has not always been the case with the UN's practice in the implementation of DDR programs. In most cases, DDR programs are driven in contexts with limited security and political conditions.<sup>6</sup> Hence, with the Second Generation DDR, strategies are devised in order to disarm, demobilize and integrate combatants in contexts where security is still very volatile and where cease fire and/or peace agreements are lacking or non-inclusive and where undisciplined armed elements abound with little or no command and control systems and with fluctuating allegiances.<sup>7</sup>

Disarming armed groups where conflict is still on-going with a high diffusion of violence against unarmed civilians remains the issue that Second Generation DDR strategies seek to address. As such, Second Generation DDR strategies entail community-based security and violence reduction approaches that aim at dousing violence and enhancing/ building social cohesion in war-torn societies. These include post conflict stabilization measures as well as measures to disarm militias and protect at risk youths. These measures are designed and implemented based on an analysis of contextual realities. However, these generally include emergency employment programs such as infrastructure for employment, labour intensive projects, food for work programs) as well as reinsertion programmes (transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools).<sup>8</sup>

The use of incentive programs to disarm and dismantle militias, commanders and senior officers and their groups is also relevant. Pension schemes, at-risk youth and gang programmes, as well as psychosocial recovery strategies have been used in varying contexts. Context specific weapons collection programmes, vocational training, special youth programmes, and medical and legal assistance as well as weapon management and control schemes all play a relevant role in mitigating violence during on-going conflicts. Second Generation DDR complements traditional DDR and is implored in situations where traditional DDR faces several challenges or have failed. It can also be implemented alongside traditional DDR to yield better results during peacebuilding processes. Although both notions of DDR may vary in certain aspects, they both share the same strategic aims of supporting peace processes, contributing to secure environments and creating serene political spaces. It is against this backdrop that this paper presents the conflict situation in Anglophone Cameroon, evaluates the efforts put in place by the NDDRC in reinstating peace and security in this part of the country and outlines suggestions for greater success.

## BACKGROUND OF THE ANGLOPHONE CRISIS

A year after German rule which lasted from 1884 to 1915, Cameroon was divided between Britain and France in 1916. The partition of Cameroon between the British and the French led to the emergence of distinct cultural identities as well

as educational and legal systems. In 1961, British Southern Cameroons and East Cameroon (the Republic of Cameroon) agreed to cohabit through a federal system of governance. The practice of cohabitation was rather contrary to expectations of the terms agreed upon, because this union failed to provide for the equal partnership of both parties. The root causes of the Anglophone crises can be traced back to the long term grievances expressed by Anglophones with respect to the form of state and the modus operandi of state institutions. Many Anglophone elites argue that the failure of successive Cameroonian governments to respect and implement the articles of the 1961 federal Constitution that uphold and safeguard British Southern Cameroons' interest constitutes a major cause of the Anglophone problem.<sup>9</sup>

Some of the violations of the 1961 federal constitution which form the basis of the Anglophone problem include the transition from the multi-party to the one party system in 1966 which was viewed by many West Cameroonians to be unconstitutional and undemocratic. Also, the 1984 Law amending the Constitution, which changed the name of the union (between British Southern Cameroons and East Cameroon) from the Federal Republic of Cameroon to 'The Republic of Cameroon' - the name of the former East Cameroon, erased the identity of West Cameroonians from the original union.<sup>10</sup> As such, many Anglophones view these constitutional manipulations as a deliberate and systematic move to assimilate the British Southern Cameroons' cultural identity which the 1961 Constitution sought to preserve and protect by providing for a bi-cultural federation. It has been argued that professional jobs are very difficult to get in Cameroon and the popular opinion of Anglophones is that they are denied opportunities because of their Anglophone background.<sup>11</sup> A bad situation was made worst when some francophone lawyers (unable to speak English and running on common law) and teachers (without knowledge of Anglophone curriculums) were transferred to the Anglophone regions.<sup>12</sup>

As such, the Anglophones feel that their cultural identity has been ignored and that they have been economically and politically marginalized by the government. Over the years, Anglophones have been airing out their frustrations to seek government redress which proved abortive. At the end of 2016, these frustrations degenerated into outright riots and strikes, with the Anglophone Lawyers and Teachers demanding for reforms in the legal and educational systems respectively. The Anglophone Consortium was formed through which Anglophones made several political demands including the request to return to the federal system of government that the Ahidjo administration abolished. Government's retaliation through the use of force to crack down the protests as well as the banning of the Consortium further radicalized some Anglophone elite and the youths. Debates surrounding the form of state to be adopted have been the order of the day in Cameroon with many proponents arguing in favour of decentralization, others for federalism and some for secession.



Anglophone Cameroon consists of two regions namely, Northwest and Southwest. It makes up 20% of the population of Cameroon.<sup>13</sup> As mentioned above, the people of these two regions have had long term grievances against the government accusing the latter for marginalization and assimilation practices. These grievances degenerated into riots, protests and strike actions organized in 2016 leading to the escalation of tensions. Since 2017, the Northwest and Southwest regions have witnessed outright violent clashes between armed separatists and government security forces, leading to insecurity and thereby jeopardizing the peace and wellbeing of thousands of people in these regions. The conflict has made more than 711,000 people homeless as they seek for refuge within other towns in Cameroon as well as neighbouring Nigeria (IOM/UNHCR, 2021).<sup>14</sup> Anglophone Cameroon has continued to witness the atrocities orchestrated by separatist fighters such as kidnappings, theft, calls to demand for support, and torture while cases of arbitrary arrest, burning of houses and killings have also been reported on the part of government security forces, justifying the need for humanitarian assistance in these regions.

The government of Cameroon has put in place several measures to resolve the root causes of the crisis and to reinstate peace and security in the restive regions. These include among others; the redeployment of some francophone teachers and magistrates from the English speaking to the French speaking institutions, the creation of the National Commission on bilingualism and multiculturalism, the creation of the common law section at National School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM) and the creation of the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Committee. These measures did not reinstate peace in these restive regions and security continued to deteriorate leading to more people being displaced and killed. Both internal and international pressure pushed the government to convene a Major National Dialogue in view of developing inclusive solutions to the Anglophone problem. This dialogue resulted in the adoption of several recommendations including the granting of special status to the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon. Also, regional Councillors were elected in view of enhancing the process of effective decentralization. These measures have been greatly applauded by some and heavily criticized by others who justify their position by arguing that the secessionist fighters are still in the ‘bushes’ and have continued to orchestrate violence. As such, it is relevant to evaluate the role of the National DDR Committee which was created in view of silencing the guns in these regions.

## HAS THE NATIONAL DDR COMMITTEE DONE ENOUGH?

The President of the Republic of Cameroon signed a decree on November 30, 2018, establishing the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Committee (NDDRC) endowed with the competence to disarm, demobilize and re-

integrate (DDR) secessionist fighters in Anglophone Cameroon and ex-Boko Haram militants in the Far North region of Cameroon. As such, the committee's mission is to organize, supervise and manage the "disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-fighters of Boko Haram and armed groups in the Northwest and Southwest Regions willing to respond favourably to the Head of State's peace appeal by laying down their arms."<sup>15</sup> Under the auspices of the Prime Minister-Joseph Dion Ngute and Fai Yengo Francis – the National Coordinator of the DDR Committee – the works of the national DDR committee is to receive and disarm ex-fighters of Boko Haram and armed groups in the Northwest and Southwest Regions and to help them regain civilian status and reintegrate the society.

As of April 2021, the Bamenda, Buea and Mora regional DDR centres had received about 850 ex-fighters with the Mora centre hosting more than 400 ex-fighters.<sup>16</sup> The National Coordinator of the committee, Fai Yengo Francis asserted that the construction of infrastructures and the design of an accelerated de-radicalisation training programme constitute the main strategies of the committee.<sup>17</sup> During the second session of the National DDR committee meeting held to examine strategies of reintegration and opportunities for financing; the Minister of Youth and Civic Education, Mounouna Foutsou suggested that projects proposed by ex-combatants could be financed through projects like Cameroon's National Support Programme for Rural and Urban Youth (PAJER-U), project for the socio economic insertion of youths for the creation of micro enterprises in the manufacture of sports equipment (PIFMAS), the 3 year youth development plan and the socio-economic resilience support programme. The Northwest DDR Regional coordinator – Sixtus Gabsa – revealed that for the DDR centre in Bamenda, the reinsertion of inmates was done by involving them in the execution of some public projects.<sup>18</sup> He added that the centre was also equipped to handle post-traumatic disorders and ex-combatants with aggressive mind sets.<sup>19</sup> Also, the government affirmed that it would recruit some qualified ex-fighters into the military although it did not declare the numbers to be absorbed.<sup>20</sup> However, it can be argued that these were mere declarations due to the massive strike actions organised by ex-fighters to demand for better reintegration conditions following the deplorable conditions of both the Bamenda and Buea DDR centres.<sup>21</sup>

Based on the above promises or declarations (made by some government officials) that are yet to be fully implemented by the NDDRC, I argue that much still has to be done with respect to the high rates of violence still orchestrated by separatist armed groups. Although some ex-fighters attest that the DDR centre in Bamenda provides training (in poultry, computer studies, sports, religious studies) that can enable them to be financially stable and reintegrated into the society, others argue that the centres for DDR offer them very little support and are failing to enhance their reintegration process. This justifies the protests staged by ex-com-

batants to denounce their poor living conditions.<sup>22</sup> The National DDR Committee in Cameroon is facing a number of challenges that impede the full realization of its objectives. First and foremost, by observing the programmes of the DDR committee, it can be argued that the committee is not well prepared and equipped to handle the DDR programme in Cameroon. The government relies on broad national youth support programs to reintegrate ex-fighters as explained above, as it is yet to craft clear and context specific reintegration and reinsertion programmes for ex-combatants. Such delays are frustrating to ex-fighters who have dropped their weapons, thereby incentivizing them to reconsider picking up their arms and dashing back into the bushes.

Several politicians and government officials have advocated and encouraged separatist fighters to lay down their weapons and join DDR centres (with promises of granting them amnesty for crimes committed) although these have had a very little impact on the DDR process. I argue that this is due to lack of political will, trust and confidence for the disarmament process. Just as explained above, DDR requires a set of preconditions that guide the success of the process. The signing of a cease fire and/or a negotiated peace agreement establishes the legal framework for DDR; builds trust and confidence in the process; asserts the willingness of the conflicting parties to engage in DDR; guarantees the minimum security required to drive the peace process and even outlines the modalities for executing the DDR process. The National DDR Committee was created by a Presidential Decree without getting all the parties and stake holders of the conflict involved, thereby resulting in the lack of trust for the DDR process. As such, it can be said that the National DDR model is bound to yield negligible results or even fail. With the continuous violence being perpetrated in Anglophone Cameroon, it is clear that the National DDR Committee has to revisit its DDR strategies and I think that one of the pertinent questions it should seek to answer is; *how can fighters be disarmed when the conflict is on-going?*

## CONCLUSION

The National DDR Committee has at least gathered some ex-fighters in its regional centres although these centres still face serious challenges in offering decent livelihoods to ex-combatants and in reintegrating them into the society as promised by the government. Although the committee is still in a continuous process of developing strategies for DDR and in upgrading the DDR centres to meet the needs of ex-combatants, much still has to be done in order to silence the guns in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon. Following an evaluation of the progress made so far by the National DDR Committee compared with the high rates of violence ravaging the Northwest and Southwest regions, the National DDR Committee hasn't had a significant impact on the insecurity observed in Anglophone Cameroon. As such, to

increase the National DDR Committee's chances of succeeding in silencing the guns in this part of the country, the government may consider the recommendations mentioned below so as to boost the DDR process in Cameroon.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Critics assert that the National DDR Committee failed from its inception because it ignored the preconditions required to build trust, confidence, legitimacy and legality for a DDR process; thereby justifying the *raison d'être* for continuous violence being witnessed in these regions. Hence, the first thing the government should do is to consider signing a cease fire or peace agreement with separatists so as to build trust, confidence, legitimacy, legality; and to rekindle the political Will to commit to the DDR process. However, the government of Cameroon rather appreciates the resolution of the Anglophone crisis from a state centric approach and pays a deaf ear to calls for engaging in a cease fire or peace agreement with separatists. I will argue that although signing a cease fire or peace agreement with separatists is a position the government is very hesitant to adopt, it is very necessary.

Secondly, in addition to the fact that the government has to harness more efforts in improving on the living conditions in DDR centres including psychosocial support, I argue that rather than reintegrating ex-combatants by involving some of them in the execution of some public projects, or by involving them in broader projects like PAJER-U, PIFMAS, the 3 year youth development plan and the socio-economic resilience support programme aimed at empowering and enhancing the development of youths in Cameroon; it is preferable to design specific projects with clear objectives that address the specific and immediate needs of ex-combatants while building the basis for addressing their long term needs. Such projects should be designed based on the socioeconomic data collected from ex-combatants and should include transitional assistance measures that enable them to cover both their basic needs and those of their immediate families because practice reveal that ex-combatants are usually in a vulnerable financial situation during demobilization. However, such assistance should be limited in scope and time to prevent the generation of the spirit of dependency.

Thirdly, it is of vital importance for the government to create several heavily-guarded DDR collection points at the Divisional, Sub-Divisional and Community levels as well as 'hot spots' so as to shorten the distance and risk that fighters who wish to drop their weapons have to undertake before actually reaching the Regional DDR centres. These DDR collection points will serve as temporal facilities where fighters can easily dash out of the bushes and seek refuge in them while waiting to be transferred to regional DDR centres under proper security conditions.

Furthermore, based on the fact that DDR entails a wide range of activities that can't be handled by a unique actor, I argue that for a successful DDR strategy, the government should include NGOs, civil societies, communities and other organizations with expertise in the domain which will work closely and in tight coordination, joint planning, capacity development and ensure sustained funding for the DDR process. Expertise in reinsertion and reintegration programs, expertise in dealing with child soldiers, expertise in dealing with disabled and disease affected combatants not mentioning the expertise required in the destruction and/or storage of arms and ammunitions which can be handled by the State's military unit is required for a successful DDR process. Involving community leaders and religious authorities in the reintegration process is very important because if communities are not prepared to receive ex-fighters, then revenge killings will abound when the ex-fighters are found living freely among people after the atrocities they have committed. This explains why traditional methods like the Gacaca courts in Rwanda where ex-fighters had to denounce their atrocities and undertake cleansing before community members played an important role in the reintegration process in Rwanda. As such, there is an interest for the government to involve traditional leaders and religious authorities in the reintegration process.

Again, in a conflict situation, the rule of law is usually weakened, thereby enhancing the illegal acquisition of weapons. As such, coupled with the porosity of Cameroonian borders, it is relevant for the government to reinforce the legal framework governing weapons ownership in Cameroon so as to limit easy access to weapons. It is true that the Minister of Territorial Administration issued a Ministerial order warranting that inhabitants of the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon obtain an authorization before purchasing machetes, but more rigorous actions still have to be taken to monitor the proliferation of arms in this region. This range from the tightening of security at border check points surrounding these regions to the total restriction of the possession of fire arms by the inhabitants of these regions.

In addition to these, the government has to develop strategies as discussed below to disarm fighters when the conflict is still on – going as with the case with the Anglophone crisis and the Boko haram insurgency – the notion of second-generation DDR. Second Generation DDR programmes refer to different strategies for disarming fighters when the preconditions for traditional DDR are not in place to support the peace process, ensure a minimum secure environment, and build trust and confidence for the DDR and the long-term peace-building process. Hence, the government of Cameroon may implore post-conflict stabilization measures like emergency employment programmes, reinsertion programmes and sub-national/community approaches. Emergency employment programs such as “infrastructure for employment,” can be used to provide economic incentives for

inmates. The government can involve fighters in labour-intensive projects, like the rebuilding of the houses, schools and health centres that were burned during the crises. Fighters can also be involved in road construction, as well as small agriculture schemes considering the fact the government has inadequate capacity and revenue for projects which require a large investment and extensive technical expertise. Furthermore, the government could adopt a form of transitional assistance to help inmates cover their basic needs and that of their families. This can be done by providing inmates with minimum survival allowances, food, clothes, medical services, training and tools that enhance self-reliance.

Another important technique the government can adopt is that of selling the disarmament agenda to commanders and senior officers of armed groups by designing a technical incentive program. This entails selling the DDR agenda to rebel leaders by proposing political or administrative positions of lesser authority to commanders and superior officers either in the government or the National DDR Committee. This will enable these rebel leaders to commit to the DDR process, reveal the actual numbers of fighters within their command and facilitate the overall DDR process.

## ENDNOTES

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# OF BANDITRY AND ‘HUMAN RUSTLING’: THE SCOURGE OF KIDNAPPING IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the phenomenon of kidnapping in northern Nigeria within the context of the burgeoning incidence of banditry in that context. It situates kidnapping within the material context of violence-criminality dynamics in a fragile state. The paper posits that the scourge of kidnapping currently afflicting the wider northern Nigeria reflects the logic of criminal opportunism in a jurisdiction where the state lacks the coercive capabilities to deter criminal indulgence and impunity. In such a context, banditry has reproduced itself into strands of violent crime of which kidnapping is a veritable dimension. Plugging opportunities for kidnapping, destroying its reward system, as well as ensuring deterrence of its committal through stringent sanctioning of perpetrators would go a long way in bringing about the desired respite. This would entail, among others, de-incentivizing the kidnapping enterprise through a pragmatic community policing system that ensures effective protection of the vast forested and rural landscapes that dot Nigeria’s remote hinterlands.

## Keywords

Banditry; human rustling; insurgency; kidnapping; ransom; terrorism.

## INTRODUCTION

Banditry counts as one of the critical challenges to Nigeria’s contemporary national security. This is in view of its fatal consequences in various parts of the country over the years (Kuna & Jibrin, 2015). The phenomenon has viably competed with insurgency and militancy as the albatross of Nigeria’s embattled

national security. Quite like Boko Haram insurgency, rural banditry has led to dire humanitarian consequences in northern Nigeria and beyond. Hand in glove with insurgency, banditry has transformed into an aggravated national security conundrum that can be rightly characterized as crime-terror convolution (Makarendo, 2004; Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, 2021).

Common manifestations of banditry in contemporary Nigeria include cattle rustling, armed robbery, kidnapping, and criminal raids. Of all these patterns of banditry, kidnapping has been the most endemic and widespread in recent times. According to a recent report by West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), no fewer than 3,312 persons were kidnapped in various states of Nigeria between January and December, 2020 (WANEP, 2021, p.1). The report adds that a total of 1,181 persons have fallen victim of kidnapping in the country from January to February, 2021 alone (p.1). With particular reference to Northern Nigeria, a report by Sahara Reporters (July 2021, para.7) indicate that a total of 2,557 people were abducted in the region between January and June 2021.

Although kidnapping has been prevalent in the various parts of Nigeria, it has been most endemic in northern Nigeria. In that context, it has opportunistically intersected with insurgency to engender an exacerbated security crisis (Rufa'i, 2021; Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, 2021). This paper dwells on the phenomenon of mass kidnapping as a veritable pattern of banditry in Nigeria. This is against the escalating trend and dynamics of such an occurrence in that context. Existing studies on the subjects of banditry and kidnapping in Nigeria have largely stopped short of a rigorous socio-contextual analysis of the phenomena (Ogbonnaya, 2020; Ojo, 2020; Onwuzuruigbo, 2020).

In attempting to address this seeming epistemic gap, this paper situates kidnapping within the social dynamics of banditry in a fragile state. With reference to the phenomenon of kidnapping in northern Nigeria, the paper posits that the incidence reflects the logic of criminal opportunism a jurisdiction where the state lacks the requisite legitimacy and capabilities to deter criminal indulgence. In such a context, banditry has reproduced itself into strands of violent and extortive crime of which the gale of kidnapping is a veritable expression.

The remainder of the paper is organized into select themes. Coming next to the foregoing introduction are conceptual and contextual background to the subject matter: meaning, conceptions, and patterns of kidnapping. This is followed by the exploration of kidnapping as a trend in the burgeoning banditry escapades in Nigeria. The last segment is the conclusion which highlights relevant theoretical and policy implications of the banditry/kidnapping conundrum.

## CONCEPTUALIZING KIDNAPPING

Kidnapping is the act of holding a person captive in order to make him offer material or non-material payment for his/her release (Odoemene, 2014). Kidnapping-for-ransom is essentially an economic activity. This is because the underlying motivation is economic. Other forms of kidnapping, such as hostage-taking, may be politically or ideologically motivated; but kidnap-for-ransom is characteristically driven by the quest for economic accumulation. Kidnapping-for-ransom is therefore both extortive and accumulative.

**Table 1: Operationalizing Kidnapping**

| Actors  | Factors  | Motivations   |
|---|--|---|
| Abductor(s), abductee(s), ransom-negotiator(s), ransom-payer(s) | Abduction (often by force, but also by fraud), making of demands, payment of demands | Political, economic, ideological<br><i>Note: This could include motivations such as using the hostage to swap for prisoners, negotiating a withdrawal of security forces from an area, or for propaganda purpose.</i> |

*Source: Adapted from Odoemene (2014).*

The underlying motives for kidnapping include subjecting the victim to some form of involuntary servitude; to expose him or her to the commission of some further criminal act against his/her person; or to obtain ransom for his/her safe release (Odoemene, 2014). The economics of kidnapping is centred on ransoming. By ransoming is meant “the demand for some payment of sort, either in cash or kind, in exchange for and abductee, either a person or something, often in disadvantaged position” (Odoemene, 2014, p.185).

The phenomenon of kidnapping is herewith likened to cattle rustling in that it is tantamount to ‘rustling’ of humans for extortive reward just in the same fashion that cattle rustlers would rustle cattle. Both phenomena reflect a common logic of primitive accumulation in a social context where criminal indulgence is accentuated by the existential materialism of violence. In such a context, criminals and violent groups perpetrate acts of criminality, both for subsistence and capital aggrandizement. And they do that with crass impunity amidst the declining capacity of the state to exercise coercive control.

## SCOPING THE PERSPECTIVES ON BANDITRY IN AFRICA

Banditry refers to the actual or threatened use of arms (any instrument of force/coercion/violence) to dispossess people of their material belongings (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019). Banditry is, more often than not, a gang phenomenon, although some bandits have been known to operate as lone brigands not associated with any

criminal networks (Ladan, 2015). The phenomenon of armed banditry has been understood and explained from a variety of standpoints. In this segment, four of such standpoints are considered, namely:

- i. climate-change adversity narrative,
- ii. un(der)governed spaces thesis,
- iii. crime-terror nexus viewpoint, and
- iv. farmer-herder conflict perspective.

Climate-change adversity narrative attributes armed banditry to the crisis of agropastoralism in the era of climate change. It holds, among other things, that the ecological adversities of global warming, instantiated by rising incidences of drought, desertification, flooding, and famine have occasioned volatile livelihood situations among traditional agropastoralists in the Sahel, displacing and plunging some of them into desperate survival tactics such as banditry (Rufa'i, 2021). Hence, in their existential struggles against the vicissitudes of climate change, crops of such embattled agro-pastoralists. Who have been dislodged from their native livelihood systems, have resorted to banditry as a mode of survival and alternative subsistence (Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016; Olaniyan, 2017). The involvement of young and middle-aged nomads in acts of rural brigandage, cattle rustling, and allied criminal raids in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa tends to affirm this standpoint.

The un(der)governed spaces thesis posits that armed banditry is driven by the inability or failure of the state to assume territorial control within its jurisdiction. The incapacity of the state to assert and enforce its will and purposes in the countryside, frontiers, borderlands and forested landscapes of Africa has created spheres of competitive influence where the violent non-state actors exercise quasi-territorial powers in negation of the sovereign and territorial integrity of the state (Ojo, 2020). In some instances, the state merely exists in absentia in such spheres, thereby abdicating its territoriality to the underworld and clandestine elements. The ungoverned and undergoverned spaces that dot Nigeria's vast rural and forested landscape as well as borderlines and frontiers have created safe havens for armed bandits, who operate with utmost criminal opportunism and impunity in such spheres.

The crime-terror nexus viewpoint is an attempt to situate the functional linkage between banditry and terrorism (insurgency implicit). This perspective holds that the incidence of armed banditry in Africa today has a lot to do with terrorism and insurgency. Terrorists and insurgents have often resorted to cattle rustling, armed robbery, bank raids, and kidnapping as a means of financing and sustaining their operations (Rufa'i, 2021). In this regard, armed banditry has become a veritable

strategy for both insurgents and terrorists. The synergy between terrorism/insurgency and banditry is more operational than ideological. Although terrorists/insurgents often engage in forms of banditry by self or by proxy, banditry in itself has never been an end of their corporate agenda; rather, it has been a means to an end - fund raising, publicity, forced recruitment, coercive bargaining, and propaganda. Crime-terror nexus explains the growing articulation of banditry and insurgency in northern Nigeria, where jihadists allied to Boko Haram or ISWAP have engaged in sundry functional synergies particularly in the northwestern hotbeds of Kaduna-Katsina-Zamfara (Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, 2021).

Lastly, the farmer-herder conflict perspective maintains that armed banditry is a logical consequence of the conflict between the sedentary farmers and migrant herders in parts of Africa. It links armed banditry to herders' militancy occasioned by the imperative of selfdefence (International Crisis Group, 2020). Resonating with this perspective is a narrative to the effect that the bandits originated from the rank of hired militants (mercenary fighters) who hitherto fought on the side of the herders in their confrontation with crop farmers. The narrative holds that these militants later defected to opportunistic criminality, beginning with cattle rustling and thereafter kidnapping for ransom. The crux of this perspective, therefore, is that banditry is a collateral complication of the perennial farmer-herder conflicts in Africa (International Crisis Group, 2020).

The afore-mentioned perspectives are important and plausible to the extent that they offer some insights into the phenomenon of armed banditry in Africa. However, none of the perspective can be said to be absolutely right or wrong. In effect, each of them has some explanatory strengths and weaknesses which can be exposed by their contextual applications. For instance, nearly all the perspectives (with the exception of crime-terror nexus narrative) tend to be more plausible in explaining the rural dimension of banditry. Much as this dimension is important, the urban and peri-urban manifestations of the banditry phenomenon may not be meaningfully accounted for based on these perspectives. In the present discourse, we are inclined to triangulating the above-mentioned contending perspectives.

## **PATTERNS AND MODALITIES OF KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA**

Kidnapping manifests in a variety of patterns and modalities in Nigeria. Common patterns of kidnapping in the country include kidnapping for ransom (K4R), kidnapping for ritual, hostage taking, mass abduction, and child abduction.

K4R is the most prevalent pattern of kidnapping in Nigeria (WANEP, 2020). It is primarily driven by the quest for ransoming. Kidnapping in this regard is

often carefully planned, prospected, organized, and prosecuted. The planning and prospecting usually start with profiling of a target with a view to determining his kidnap ransom value (KRV). KRV refers to the target's capital worth plus social premium (i.e.  $KRV = CW + SP$ ). CW has to do with the target's material substance quantifiable in monetary terms while SP refers to the target's family or corporate strategic value (cf. Odoemene, 2014). The strategic value in this sense varies in degree per circumstance. For instance, a kidnapped child of a wealthy family is worth a high KRV; but a kidnapped only child of an affluent household possesses an extra KRV in view of the premium on such life.

Affluent individuals and their relations are adjudged to be of high KRV in view of their material resources which could be extracted by way of ransoming. This is also true of strategic members of organizations that are believed to be wealthy. Sometimes, a target's KRV is determined, not necessarily from the standpoint of his material affluence, but by virtue of the perceived worth of his/her capital. In this regard, one's membership of a perceptibly well-todo family or organization confers on him/her some higher degree of KRV. The rationale is that when such a person is kidnapped, members of his wealthy family or organization would conveniently see to his release expectedly through contributory ransoming.

The rational calculus of K4R is based on the political economy of ransom prospecting and payment. This is predicated on the likelihood that a kidnap victim possesses the material and social capital to enable the appropriate ransom payment. There are, however, instances of K4R where the aforementioned rational considerations hardly apply. Petty and opportunistic criminals often engage in predatory abduction of individuals in vulnerable situations even without recourse to any target-profiling. For such occasions, determination of KRV is impromptu and less systematic, often leading to lower ransom trades-off.

Kidnapping for ritual is another dimension of the kidnapping phenomenon in Nigeria. This has to do with abduction of persons for ritual purposes, often in fulfillment of fetish rites or sacrifices. Perpetrators of this pattern of kidnapping often deploy tactics such as predatory waylay, advanced fee fraud (aka 419), commuter vehicle scam (CVS: aka 'one chance' phenomenon), etc. There have been incidents of human disappearances in various parts of the country. Victims of such incidents are preyed or defrauded into fatal captivity by kidnappers who merchandize on human beings or members (body parts) for ritual/sacrifice-related purposes. The sporadic discoveries of dismembered human bodies in hotels, shrines, construction sites, riverlines, and forests in various parts of Nigeria attests to the prevalence of this form of kidnapping.

Hostage-taking counts among the common patterns of kidnapping in the Niger Delta region. It has been deployed by militants and pirates in the region as both a strategy for eliciting ransom as well as an instrument of coercive bargaining. In the case of the latter, kidnapping is undertaken to force the government or oil multinational firms to come to terms with certain strategic demands or concerns of the militants and their allied clandestine groups. For instance, oil expeditors have been severally kidnapped by the militants in order to compel the oil firms to some strategic undertakings.

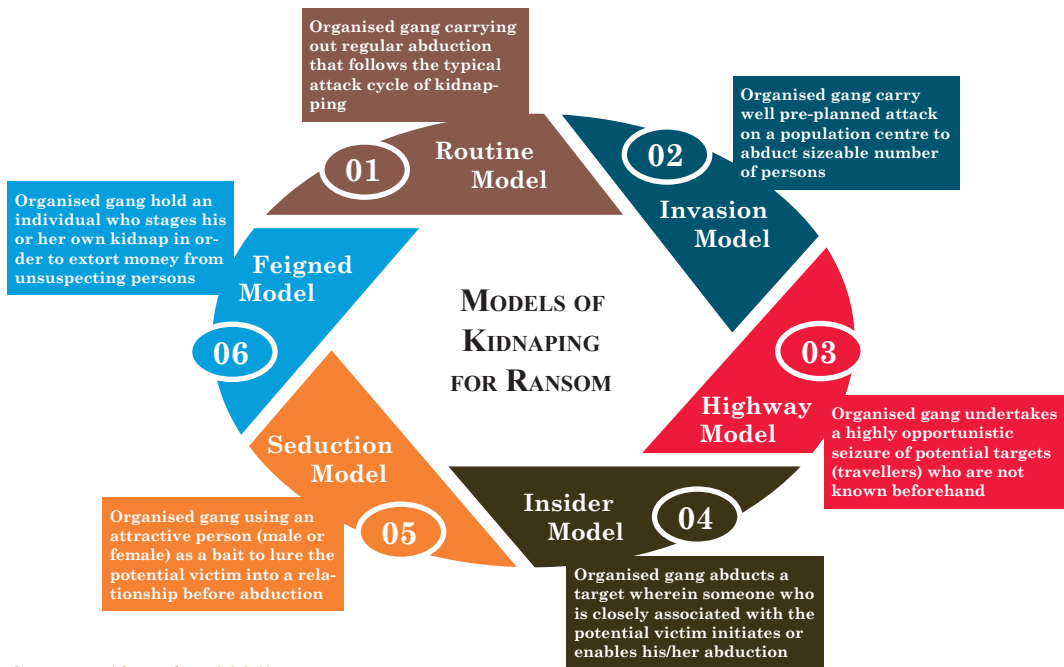
Another important genre of kidnapping in Nigeria is mass abduction. This follows the ‘invasion model’ of kidnapping (Figure 1), whereby a group of persons is targeted for ‘wholesale’ abduction. Terrorists and bandits have engaged in kidnapping of school children in the country over the recent years (Table 4). Often times, Mass abduction is effected on the highway where a vehicle commuting passengers is ‘highjacked’ and the passengers are taken into captivity in masse in prospect of ransoming or other strategic bargaining.

Child abduction is yet another relevant form of kidnapping in Nigeria. There have been cases of missing children in the cities and rural areas alike. Some of the children are abducted by local kidnapers who would later contact their parents in order to prospect for a ransom. In some instances, the children are abducted for purposes of ritual or illicit adoption (Okoli & Ezeh, 2021). Child abductors prey on strayed or unaccompanied kids in populated neighbourhoods, public event arenas, market squares, and other crowded gatherings.

Akin to child abduction is what can be designated kidnapping by other means. This includes dimensions of human trafficking such as trafficking for forced prostitution, trafficking for forced labour, trafficking for domestic servitude, and trafficking for illicit surrogacy. All of these involve forcing or defrauding someone into some form of captivity and holding such a person up against his will and wish. Teenagers and young women held up in ‘baby factories’ for the purpose of illicit surrogacy are, in fact, kidnap victims (Okoli & Eze, 2021). This is also true of those that are held up in homes and brothels as domestic or sex slaves.

With regard to modalities of kidnapping in Nigeria, six categories have been identified. These are routine model, invasion model, highway model, insider model, seduction model, and feigned model (Onuoha, 2021, p.21). Figure 1 is instructive in this respect.

**Figure 1: Models of Kidnapping**



*Source: (Onuoha, 2021)*

## **ARMED BANDITRY AND RISING INCIDENCE OF KIDNAPPING IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

The gale of kidnapping in northern Nigeria is a necessary complication of the banditry conundrum in the region. The criminal quests of the bandits have found ample fulfillment in the prevalence of criminal opportunity amidst the prevailing gross security-cum-governance deficit in the region. As a consequence, there exists a gamut of vulnerable population and spaces where acts of criminality are widespread. This scenario has been essentialized by three fundamental trends, namely:

- Criminal occupation and weaponization of forests,
- Sedendarization of banditry, and
- Banditry-insurgency intersection.

Criminal occupation of forests refers to the inhabitation of forests as fortresses or safehavens by clandestine organizations. These sites are not merely criminal hideouts; they are, in effect, operational fountains where violent non-state elements such as bandits plan, plot, and prosecute their criminality (Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016; Onwuzuruigbo, 2020). Such sites hosts the command structures of bandits, including their camps, armories, cells, and warehouses. The difficult and volatile terrain of the forest's landscapes affords the bandits the opportunity of tactical maneuver when confronted by the government forces (Albert, 2018). They often plan, simulate and



launch their sporadic attacks from forests and withdraw thereto when they are done or are confronted. The instrumentalization of forested terrains as a mechanism for asymmetric violence by the bandits is tantamount to weaponization of forests. Table 2 highlights some of the notorious forests in northern Nigeria where bandits inhabit in order to carry out their operations, including kidnapping for ransom.

**Table 2: Dangerous Forests occupied by VNSAs in Northern Nigeria**

| Location                           | Forest   |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Kaduna: Kamuku, Kuyambana forests  | For many residents of Kaduna State and environs, the mention of Kamuku and Kuyambana forests create a sense of fear and despair, being the foremost fortresses for bandits in the state and parts of the northwest. Security agents have described the two forests as some of the most dangerous in the country and are often compared to the famous Sambisa forest in the northeast.  |
| Borno: Sambisa forest              | The notorious Sambisa Forest in the southern part of Borno State, located along the Lake Chad shores near Nigeria’s border with Cameroon, used to be a game reserve where wild animals such as elephants strayed in from other countries, but constant hunting and other human activities drove most of the wild animals away  |
| Kano: Falgore, Gomo forests        | There are two dangerous forests in Kano State namely – Falgore Forest in Doguwa Local Government Area and Gomo Forest in Sumaila Local Government Area. Both forests had been dens for series of criminal activities over the years.<br>In 2014, gunmen suspected to have emerged from Gomo forest attacked Sumaila divisional police division station, injuring two policemen and setting free some criminals in detention at the division. It was also gathered that resident Fulanis and farmers in the area have been victims of kidnappings and cattle rustling over the years.<br>It was also gathered that the Gomo forest is linked with Bauchi State’s Yankari forest and as such, criminals usually navigate at will across the forest boundaries to unleash mayhem on innocent villagers. |
| Nasarawa: Uttu/Kenyehu forest      | Uttu/Kenyehu forest and contiguous hills, in Toto Local Government Area, could be classified as the most dangerous forest in Nasarawa State. Recently, the Nigerian Army busted a terrorist cell in Uttu forest which led to the surrendering of 410 members of Darusalam which had held sway for about three years.<br>Toto Local Government Area shares boundary with Nasarawa Local Government Area in Nasarawa State, and is sandwich between Abaji in Abuja and Lokoja in Kogi State.   |
| Kebbi: Dansadau, RafinKuka forests | Zuru Emirate, which encompasses four local government areas in Kebbi State, borders Niger and Zamfara states.<br>Armed bandits, who launch attacks on innocent citizens of the state, infiltrate into Kebbi State through Dansadau forest from Zamfara State and RafinKuka forest from Niger State.  |

Source: *Daily Trust*; <https://dailytrust.com/norths-many-deadly-forests>

Sedentarization of banditry has to do with its growing communitization and socialization (Okoli & Abubakar, 2021). Some bandit tribes operating in northern Nigeria have the tendency to settle and mingle in communities. In effect, they have become, not only stationary but also sedentary in some instances. This trajectory is evidenced in the phenomenon of ‘crimelordism’ (Okoli & Abubakar, 2021) whereof established bandits wield territories in which they cultivate community allegiance (see Table 3). In such ‘underworld fiefdoms’, dwellers are forced to accept and patronize the treasonable rulership of a criminal overlord in order to live. Kidnapping and allied extortive crimes for the thrust of the political economy of such a crime commune.

**Table 3: Manifestational Patterns of ‘Crimelordism’**

| <b>Pattern</b>              | <b>Manifestation(s) and Instance(s)</b>   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Criminal enterprises        | Acquisition of illicit capital through armed robbery, kidnapping, cattle rustling, arms and drugs trafficking, mines and market raids, smuggling, etc.  |
| Legitimate enterprises      | Crop and livestock farming, trade and investment, etc. Local anecdotes hold that some crimelords in northwestern Nigeria own estates in Niger Republic.   |
| Partisan mercenarism        | Deployment as paid thugs of politicians, political parties and interest groups during electioneering. For instance, Crimelord Gana of Benue State was said to have been hired by local politicians during elections to perpetrate electoral violence.   |
| Combatant mercenarism       | Deployment as hired combatants fighting for an ethnic or sectarian militia. Crimelords have been enlisted to fight for parties in the farmer-herder conflicts in northern Nigeria. For example, Gana rose to ‘fame’ while fighting for his ethnic Tiv in their longstanding feud with the Jukun.  |
| Criminal governance         | Settlement of local disputes; provision of social protection; assisting individuals and families in recovering stolen items or securing release of kidnap victims; participation in local vigilantism. A case in point is the notorious BuharinDaji of Zamfara to whom locals brought matters for settlement.   |
| State-under-world linkage   | Assisting the government in assuaging criminal gangs; assisting the police in securing arrest of criminals or release of prisoners of crime. For instance, Zamfara, Kaduna and Katsina state governments have variously interfaced with the disparate bandit groups in their domains through the facilitation of some kingpin-bandits.                    |
| Philanthropic interventions | Civic engagements such as building of schools, granting of scholarships, humanitarian interventions. For example, Gana of Benue was said to have built a school for his village in addition to awarding scholarships to indigent pupils/students.   |
| Crime-terror synergy        | Working in strategic alliance or instrumental affinity with insurgent/terrorist/extremist groups to perpetrate criminality. For instance, crimelords in parts of northwestern Nigeria were believed to have often been commissioned by Boko Haram or other extremist sects to engage in kidnapping and cattle rustling in support of terrorism financing. |

*Source: Okoli and Abubakar (2021, p.8).*

Banditry-insurgency/terrorism intersection trumps the contemporary banditry crisis in northern Nigeria. Boko Haram insurgents and their allied splinter groups have often resorted to cattle rustling, localized raids, and kidnapping as a means of raising funds in order to sustain their operations (Olaniyan, 2017; Ladan & Iguda, 2019). Kidnapping for ransom has been the most audacious and tactic in this regard. Syndicates of bandits in northwestern Nigeria have worked with or for insurgents in perpetrating series of solo, group, or mass abductions in the region. Table 4 shows instances of mass kidnapping in Nigeria over the years. Nearly all the incidents happened in northern Nigeria where the intersection of banditry and insurgency has form a dynamic that aggravates extant crisis. More often than not, such incidents have been primarily motivated by the quest for material reward in the form of ransoming.

**Table 4: Selected Incidents of Mass Kidnappings in Northern Nigeria and beyond (April 2014 – May 2021)**

| <b>Date</b>    | <b>Incident</b>  |
|----------------|--|
| 2021<br>May 30 | <b>Tegina school abduction</b><br>136 pupils of Salihu Tanko Islamic School in Tegina town of Niger State abducted.  |
| April 17       | <b>Greenfield varsity abduction</b><br>20 students of Greenfield University in Kaduna kidnapped, with 5 killed.  |
| March 11       | <b>Kaduna Forestry School abduction</b><br>29 students kidnapped from Federal College of Forestry Mechanization in Kaduna.   |
| February 26    | <b>Jangebe raid</b><br>Armed gang kidnaps 317 girls from the Government Girls Science Secondary School in the town of Jangebe, in northwestern Zamfara State.  |
| February 18    | <b>Bus seizure</b><br>Gunmen seize 53 passengers including 20 women and nine children from a state-owned bus in Kundu village in Niger state.  |
| February 17    | <b>Kagara kidnappings</b><br>Armed gunmen raid the Government Science College in Kagara, a district in the northcentral Niger province, killing one student and kidnapping dozens of others – including 24 schoolboys, three teachers and eight relatives of school staff. |
| February 15    | <b>Niger state bus raid</b><br>Bandits stop a bus in north-central Niger province and abduct at least 21 passengers. At least 10 people are released on February 16.   |
| January 23     | <b>Pirates kidnap sailors</b><br>Pirates kill one Azerbaijani and kidnap 15 Turkish sailors after attacking a cargo ship off Nigeria’s coast.  |

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| January 25          | <b>Kogi raid</b><br>Gunmen strike Kogi state in central Nigeria and kidnap 14 people. Five people are freed and others are held by the armed gunmen. Armed gunmen kidnap 11 people, including eight orphans, in Abuja city.  |
| January 27          | <b>Wedding guests kidnapped</b><br>Armed gunmen kidnap 25 people coming back from a wedding in northeastern Taraba state.  |
| January 28          | <b>Farmer community attacked</b><br>Bandits raid Bassa community in Shiroro area of north-central Niger state, kidnapping at least 50 people.  |
| 2020<br>December 19 | <b>Katsina abductions</b><br>Gunmen abduct more than 80 Islamic school students in northwestern Katsina state.   |
| December 11         | <b>Katsina school raid</b><br>More than 100 gunmen on motorcycles storm the all-boys Government Science Secondary School in the town of Kankara, in Katsina state, seizing 344 students. The attack is initially blamed on armed criminals before Boko Haram – which operates hundreds of kilometres away – claims responsibility.                                       |
| 2018<br>February 19 | <b>Dapchi schoolgirls kidnapping</b><br>On February 19, 2018, the Islamic State West Africa Province, an offshoot of Boko Haram, kidnaps 111 girls from their boarding school in the northeastern Yobe province’s Dapchi town.<br>Militants free more than 100 girls on March 21 after talks with the government. Five of their schoolmates reportedly die in captivity. |
| 2014<br>April 14    | <b>Chibok girls seized</b><br>Boko Haram gunmen seize 276 girls aged between 12 and 17 from the Government Girls Secondary School in the remote town of Chibok in northeastern Borno state on April 14.<br>The girls are forced from their dormitories onto trucks and driven into the bush. Some 57 manage to flee in a daring escape.                                  |

*Source: TRT World: NEW/ Africa: Nigeria’s Mass Kidnappings: A Timeline*  
<https://www.trtworld.com/africa/nigeria-s-mass-kidnappings-a-timeline-44619>

## CONCLUSION

Nigeria’s banditry crisis is a complicated situation involving an intersection of interests, motives, and actors. Opportunistic and organized criminals have taken to banditry as a means of clandestine livelihood. Likewise, militants, terrorists, and insurgents have often resorted to banditry as both a means of raising funds for their operations as well as a strategy for coercive bargaining. Associated with this scenario is a complex security scenario characterized by criminal opportunism in the fashion of crime-terror convolution. Kidnapping has been the most prevalent and audacious predictor of the contemporary banditry conundrum in Nigeria.

More often than not, kidnapping has been driven by the logic of economic opportunity: the quest for and prospect of a material reward by way of ransoming. Kidnapping for ransom thrives in Nigeria because the material incentive and opportunity is there. Amidst the declining guarantees for state and human security in the country, predatory VNSAs have resorted to extortive crimes such as kidnapping for ransom as a means of primitive accumulation, often in advancement of a group cause. And the helpless victims invariably find it expedient to pay ransom in order to secure freedom.

The patronization of kidnapping through payment of ransom provides the material incentive for its committal. In effect, the cost of indulging in kidnapping is far less than its reward. This has motivated criminals, insurgents, terrorists, militants, and other clandestine elements to indulge in kidnapping with impunity. The incidence of kidnapping in northern Nigeria has been complicated by the involvement of bandits in the act. Often operating in tacit ideological and tactical synergy with insurgents, the bandits have evolved a crime-terror political economy by which they sustain and promote their subversive ends. Plugging opportunities for kidnapping, destroying its reward system, as well as ensuring deterrence of its committal through stringent sanctioning of perpetrators would go a long way in bringing about the desired respite. To this end, the paper recommends thus:

- i. The vast forested and rural landscapes in the Nigeria's remote hinterlands should be 'governed' through a pragmatic community policing strategy that involves local vigilantes and neighbourhood watch groups.
- ii. More decisive and stringent sanction, such as death penalty, should be meted out on perpetrators and accomplices of kidnapping in order to make for strong deterrence.
- iii. Payment of kidnap ransom should be discouraged, and possibly criminalized, so as to dis-incentivize quest kidnapping.

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# BOOK REVIEW

## AFRICA'S SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: POWER, PRINCIPLES AND PRAXIS IN GLOBAL POLITICS

**Author:** Tunde Adeniran

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**Reviewer:** Isaac Olawale Albert, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Africa is an interesting paradox. Though one of the most blessed with rich environments, natural resources and very resourceful peoples it houses the poorest of the poor in the world. It is bedeviled by some negative forces of globalization, widespread leadership deficits, resource curse and consequently armed conflicts and other politically destabilizing occurrences. The continent has the highest number of displaced persons, peacekeeping missions and international development organizations working on conflict issues in the world.

There are a plethora of books, chapters in books, journal articles, project reports and anecdotes on these Africa's security challenges and their management. Most of these works focus on how the problems are managed most especially by non-Africans. Tunde Adeniran's *Africa's security challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: power, principles and praxis global politics* provides an Afrocentric analysis of the dimensions and root causes of the problems. Hence, it neatly complements the existing studies. The size of the publication (478 pages), the theoretical and analytical tools adopted and adapted by the author, his choice of words, adjectives and how he explained his explanations gave Adeniran out as a man not happy with the ways African security problems are handled so far. His analysis are aimed at goading African leaders to start dealing with the issues based on knowledge economy.

The book under review consists of twelve chapters and an epilogue. The first chapter situates the study in a global context by defining relevant concepts most especially security and the different contexts in which it is used in the 21<sup>st</sup> century most especially in international diplomacy and securitization. The focus of the second chapter is on the causes of regional insecurity in Africa. It starts by calling attention to what must obtain for a region to be said to be secure. The first is regional solidarity. This is absent in Africa. There is a wide gulf between the Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone in the continent. The recent cases of Afrophobia in South Africa show that the people of the former apartheid enclave are not too willing to collaborate with the other Africans. North Africans feel closer to the Arab world and Europe than Africa. What more? African states are too weak internally to make good any external collaboration on peace and security matters. The factors of the states' fragility include ethnic chauvinism, religious fundamentalism, technological backwardness, poor resource management capacity, import dependency, political exclusion, poor leadership orientation and lack of interest to develop indigenous technology. The countries lack well-trained security forces with the capacity to detect and pre-empt domestic and external security threats.

Resolving all these internal contradictions of Africa's regional security requires a good governance structure which the third chapter argues are absent in Africa. Many of the countries lack clearly defined national interests in a rapidly globalizing world. They have no coherent foreign policies that could enable them act decisively on the international scene. They are therefore a wax in the hands of the developed world that exploit them to advance their own foreign interests. Most of the have little or no respect for the protection of individual and group rights. Not even the Charter of the African Union which provides for the protection of fundamental human rights are respected beyond the paper on which they are written. Conduct of free and fair elections and the promotion of equity between and amongst the diverse groups in the countries are near impossible. All of these exacerbates the security challenges in the Africa as many of the armed conflicts in the continent are traceable to them. The fourth chapter is on how Africa's lack of sustainable development poses security challenges. In this respect, the focus of the chapter is on Africa's weak economies, African leaders inability to enforce rules that enables economic growth; African leaders lack of readiness to make sacrifices for the good of the people. The other factors include the unequal exchange between the continent and the developed world; the compromising influences of the powerful MNCs; the consuming impact of corruption; poor attention to youth development and the continent's lack of capacity to develop indigenous capacity that could reduce Africa's dependence on the outside world for its future. The fifth chapter focuses on how African countries' inability to solve their energy crisis add to the regional security problems while the sixth deals with how the continent is unable to take the best advantage of its highly resourceful oceans for reducing the security vulnerabilities



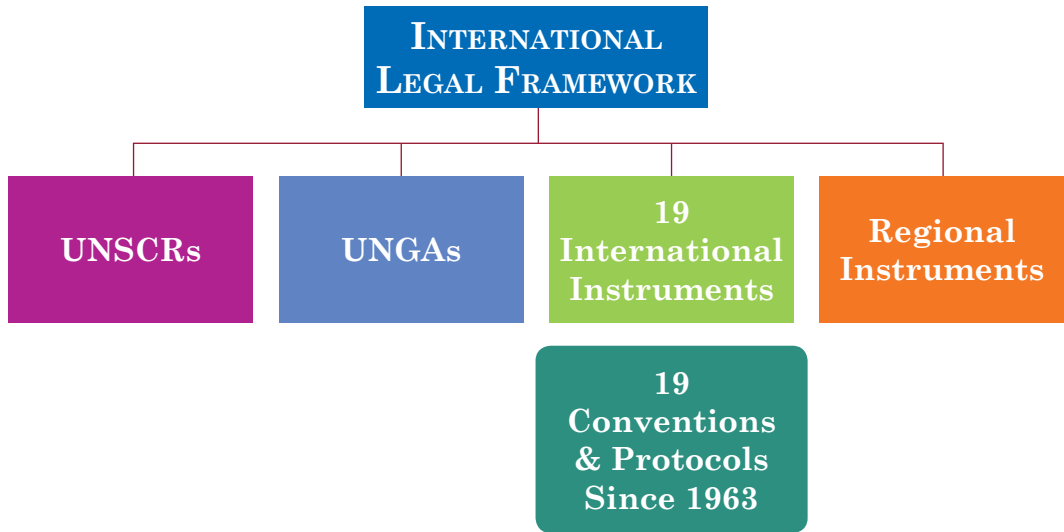
and challenges in the continent. A missing gap in this sixth chapter is how the Gulf of Aden and Gulf of Guinea rank as the most dangerous waterways in the world in terms of the high rate of sea piracies in them. The seventh chapter revolves around the question of environment.

The eighth chapter provides a nuanced discussion of the insecurity at national levels resulting from colonial heritage, separatist agitations, radical ideologies, ethnic supremacy, religious intolerance, elections, leadership deficits and external forces. Such conflicts are found all over the African continent. The most troubled countries are discussed by the study one-by-one. Dealing with these problems, according to Adeniran, requires two interconnected steps. The first is what individuals countries could do for themselves and the second is what they could do collectively using the existing continental and regional architectures for peace and security.. Adeniran observed that some of these violent conflicts take forms of international terrorism. The nature of these terrorist tendencies are presented in the ninth chapter. The terrorist organizations captured by the analyses include Boko Haram, Al Shabab, and the other franchises of al Qaeda and ISIS in diverse places in Africa. The tenth chapter discusses the roles of cross border alliances and international organizations in dealing with these regional security problems. The eleventh chapter addresses the problem of food insecurity in Africa and how this further escalates the security challenges in the continent. The twelfth and last chapter focuses on the questionability of foreign intervention in Africa's security problems. In the epilogue to the book, the author called attention to the need for technological innovation and a renewed commitment to the ideal of pan-Africanism by African leaders for surmounting the regional security challenges. The tasks start with individual African states doing more for themselves.

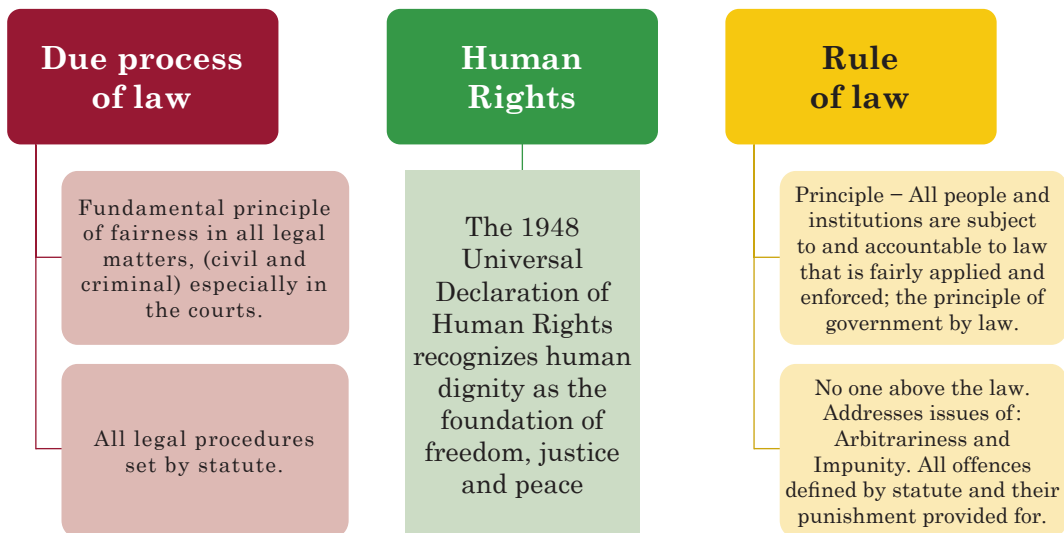


# ACSRT Terrorism Dossier

## INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON TERRORISM & VIOLENT EXTREMISM



### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS-COMMON GROUNDS



## INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

| SRL | Category (Instruments Regarding)      | Total |
|-----|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 1   | Civil Aviation                        | 7     |
| 2   | The Protection of International Staff | 1     |
| 3   | The Taking of Hostages                | 1     |
| 4   | Nuclear Material                      | 2     |
| 5   | Maritime Navigation                   | 4     |
| 6   | Explosive Materials                   | 1     |
| 7   | Terrorist Bombings                    | 1     |
| 8   | The Financing of Terrorism            | 1     |
| 9   | Nuclear Terrorism                     | 1     |

## UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS ON TERRORISM

| SRL     | SCR  | Details   |
|---------|------|---|
|         |      | 1999  |
| 15 Oct. | 1267 | Established the Al-Qaida and Taliban Committee and its sanctions mandate. |

| SRL     | SCR  | Details  |
|---------|------|--|
|         |      | 2001   |
| 18 Sep. | 1373 | Placed barriers on the movement, organisation and fund-raising activities of terrorist groups. Imposed Chpt VII legislative, policy and reporting requirements on MS. Also established a CT Committee (CTC) to monitor state compliance with these provisions. |

## INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

| Year    | A. INSTRUMENTS REGARDING: CIVIL AVIATION  |
|---------|---|
| 1. 1963 | <p><b>Convention on Offences and Certain Acts Committed on Board Aircraft</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acts affecting in-flight safety ;</li> <li>• Contracting States acts to take custody of offenders and to return control of the aircraft to the lawful commander.</li> </ul>  |
| 2. 1970 | <p><b>Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• « unlawfully, by force or threat thereof, or any other form of intimidation, [to] seize or exercise control of that aircraft » or to attempt to do so ;</li> <li>• Parties to the convention to make hijackings punishable by « severe penalties ».</li> </ul>  |
| 3. 1971 | <p><b>Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act of violence against a person on board an aircraft in flight, if act is likely to endanger the safety of the aircraft ;</li> <li>• To place an explosive device on an aircraft, or to be an accomplice ;</li> <li>• Parties to the Convention to make offences punishable by « severe penalties ».</li> </ul>                          |
| 4. 1988 | <p>Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation, supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation.</p>   |
| 5. 2010 | <p><b>Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using civil aircraft as a weapon to cause death, injury or damage.</li> </ul>  |
| 6. 2010 | <p><b>Protocol Supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplements the <u>Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft</u>. Expands scope to cover different forms of aircraft hijackings, including through modern technological means ;</li> <li>• Incorporates provisions of Beijing Convention relating to a threat or conspiracy to commit an offence.</li> </ul> |
| 7. 2014 | <p>Protocol to Amend the Convention on Offences and Certain Acts Committed on Board Aircraft.</p>   |

| Year        | B. INSTRUMENT REGARDING :<br>PROTECTION OF INTERNATIONAL STAFF  |
|-------------|---|
| 8. 1973     | <p><b>Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defines an « internationally protected person » as a Head of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs, representative or official of a State or international organization who is entitled to special protection in a foreign State, and his/her family.</li> </ul>   |
| Year        | C. INSTRUMENT REGARDING : THE TAKING OF HOSTAGES  |
| 9. 1979     | International Convention against the Taking of Hostages.  |
| Year        | D. INSTRUMENT REGARDING : NUCLEAR MATERIAL  |
| 10.<br>1980 | <p>Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material</p> <p>Criminalizes the unlawful possession, transfer and use of nuclear material and threats to use nuclear material to cause death, serious injury or damage.</p>  |
| 11.<br>2005 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material ;</li> <li>• States Parties to protect nuclear facilities and material in peaceful domestic use.</li> </ul>  |
| Year        | E. INSTRUMENT REGARDING : MARITIME NAVIGATION   |
| 12.<br>1988 | <p><b>Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar to regimes established for international aviation ;</li> <li>• Makes unlawful, intentional seizure of a ship by force, threat, or intimidation that endangers the safe navigation of the ship ; to place a destructive device or substance aboard a ship ; and other acts against the safety of ships.</li> </ul>  |
| 13.<br>2005 | <p><b>Protocol to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminalizes use of a ship as a device to further an act of terrorism ;</li> <li>• Criminalizes knowingly transporting on board a ship, materials for causing or threatening death or serious injury or damage to further an act of terrorism ;</li> <li>• Criminalizes transport on a ship, persons who have committed act of terrorism ;</li> <li>• Establishes procedures for boarding of a ship believed to have committed an offence under the Convention.</li> </ul> |

| <b>E. INSTRUMENT REGARDING: MARITIME NAVIGATION (CONTD)</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>14.</b><br><b>1988</b>                                   | <p><b>Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes a legal regime applicable to acts against fixed platforms on the continental shelf.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>15.</b><br><b>2005</b>                                   | <p><b>Protocol to the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms located on the Continental Shelf</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adapts the changes to (1988) existing protocol.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>F. INSTRUMENT REGARDING: EXPLOSIVE MATERIALS</b>         |  |
| <b>16.</b><br><b>1991</b>                                   | <p><b>Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective measures to prohibit and prevent the manufacture and movement of unmarked plastic explosives.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>G. INSTRUMENT REGARDING: TERRORIST BOMBING</b>           |  |
| <b>17.</b><br><b>1997</b>                                   | <p><b>International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regime of universal jurisdiction over the unlawful and intentional use of explosives and other lethal devices against public places with intent to kill or cause serious bodily injury/destruction of the public place.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>H. INSTRUMENT REGARDING: THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM</b>  |  |
| <b>18.</b><br><b>1999</b>                                   | <p><b>International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parties to prevent and counteract the financing of terrorists. Note groups claiming to have Charity, Social &amp; Cultural goals/illicit activities ;</li> <li>States to hold culprits criminally, civilly or administratively liable ;</li> <li>Bank secrecy no longer adequate justification for refusing to cooperate.</li> </ul> |
| <b>I. INSTRUMENT REGARDING: NUCLEAR TERRORISM</b>           |  |
| <b>19.</b><br><b>2005</b>                                   | <p><b>International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regime of universal jurisdiction over the unlawful and intentional use of explosives and other lethal devices against public places with intent to kill or cause serious bodily injury/destruction of the public place.</li> </ul>   |

## UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

| Date       | GAR                                   | Details   |   |   |   |
|------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 8 Sep 2006 | A/RES/60/288<br>UN Global CT Strategy | <b>Pillar I</b><br>Addressing the Conditions Conducive to the Spread of Terrorism                       | <b>Pillar II</b><br>Preventing and Combatting Terrorism | <b>Pillar III</b><br>Building States' Capacity and Strengthening the role of the United Nations | <b>Pillar IV</b><br>Ensuring Human Rights and the rule of Law |
| 1 Jul 2016 | A/RES/70/291                          | UNGA Recommends SG's PoA to Members (UNSG's PoA to PVE) 70 Recommendation for adoption by member states |   |   |   |

## OAU/AU: REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS

| Year | Type        | INSTRUMENTS DETAILS   |
|------|-------------|---|
| 1992 | Resolution  | The strengthening of cooperation and coordination among African states to fight Extremism 28 <sup>th</sup> ordinary session OAU, 29 June – 1 July 1992, Dakar.  |
| 1994 | Declaration | Code of Conduct for Inter African Relations (Tunis Declaration) denounced Extremism & Terrorism. 30 <sup>th</sup> ordinary session, 13-15 June 1994, Tunis  |
| 1998 | Declaration | Reaffirmation of values & ideals of OAU Charter – Solidarity, Unity, Freedom, Justice, Peace, Security, Stability and Development. 34 <sup>th</sup> ordinary session/2 <sup>nd</sup> Ordinary session of the African Economic Community 8 – 10 June 1998, Ouagadougou |
| 1999 | Convention  | Prevention and Combating of Terrorism – OAU 35 <sup>th</sup> Assembly of heads of state and government, 12-14 July 1999, Algiers (Came into force in December 2002 once 30 states had ratified) Article 1 (3). Defines “Terrorist act”                                |



## THE OAU/AU CONVENTION ON PREVENTING AND COMBATING TERRORISM

### ARTICLE 3) 1) (A) OF THE CONVENTION DESCRIBED TERRORISM AS :

Any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to :

- (i) Intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint, or to act according to certain principles ; or
- (ii) Disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency ; or
- (iii) Create general insurrection in a State.

### ARTICLE 3 OF THE CONVENTION HOWEVER STATES THAT :

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 1, the struggle waged by peoples in accordance with the principles of international law for their liberation or self-determination, including armed struggle against colonialism, occupation, aggression and domination by foreign forces shall not be considered as terrorist acts. Political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other motives are however not justifiable reasons for terrorist act.

## OAU/AU: REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS

| Year | Type            | INSTRUMENTS DETAILS   |
|------|-----------------|---|
| 2001 | Declaration     | Reaffirmed unequivocal rejection of Terrorism ; proposal for the adoption of the Protocol to 1999 Convention African Summit 17 October 2001 Dakar   |
| 2002 | Protocol        | Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU : 1 <sup>st</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, 9 July 2002 Durban  |
| 2002 | Plan of Action  | AU Plan of Action on Prevention and Combating of Terrorism 11-14 Sep 2002 Algiers   |
| 2004 | Policy          | Common African Defense and Security Policy (CADSP) : 2 <sup>nd</sup> Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union 28 February 2004, Sirte, Libya. (attack on one country is attack on whole continent)  |
| 2004 | Protocol        | Protocol to the 1999 OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism - Assembly of AU Third Ordinary Session July 2004, Addis Ababa Entered into force on 26 February 2014 thirty (30) days after the deposit of the fifteenth instrument of ratification |
| 2009 | Decision        | Combat the Payment of Ransom to Terrorist Groups - Assembly of AU, 13 <sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session 1 – 3 July 2009, Sirte.  |
| 2014 | Model Law       | African Model Law on Counter Terrorism – Adopted 2011, Assembly/AU/Dec.369(XVII)  |
| 2014 | Charter         | The African Charter on the values and principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development Adopted by the African Union on 27th June 2014 in Malabo.(Burundi, Madagascar, Namibia, Mali and Camerron)   |
| 2016 | Principles (14) | African Union Principles and Guidelines on Human and Peoples’ Rights while Countering Terrorism in Africa. January 2016   |

## AFRICAN MODEL LAW ON COUNTER TERRORISM

- **African Model Law on Counter Terrorism:**

- “the fight against terrorism must be carried out in accordance with international law, including international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law”.
- more comprehensive definition of a “Terrorist Act”. States specific exceptions of acts, which “shall not be considered as Terrorist Acts”.

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