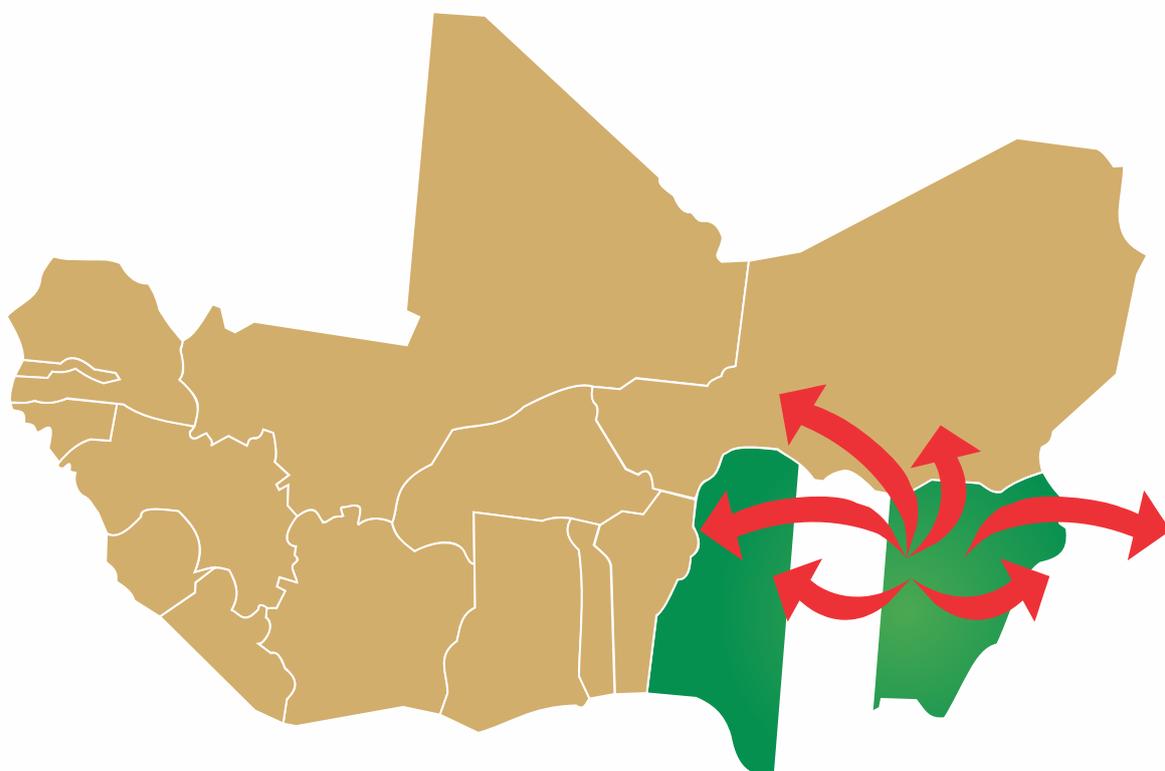


Nigeria's Response to  
**Transnational Organised Crime  
and Jihadist Activities**  
in West Africa



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## Summary

Nigeria's status and role as a regional power continues to impact the entire West African sub-region. However the country is facing serious security challenges that are complicated by transnational threats which are associated with organised crime and the activities of jihadist movements. Threats to security linked to the activities of illegal migrants, smugglers, drug traffickers and human traffickers in West Africa have attracted considerable attention from scholars, policy makers and practitioners alike. As the activities of the Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad) also known as Boko Haram are spreading fast through the northern part of the country into a number of countries in West and Central Africa—notably Chad, Niger, and Cameroon—fears and anxiety have become more noticeable among stakeholders. Also, the challenge of piracy and maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea threatens Nigeria's national security as well as regional stability.

This study presents the role of Nigeria as a regional hegemon, and also discusses its response to transnational organised criminality and jihadist activities in the sub-region, highlighting Nigeria's official response as well as other interventions undertaken through bilateral and multilateral platforms. The study concludes that there is no controversy about the desirability of the Nigerian government to curb transnational organised crime and jihadist activities in the country. However, the complexities of strategies and modalities for effective curbing of transnational threats still requires in-depth and concerted efforts than have been given by stakeholders. One may argue that the prospects for effective control of cross-border crime in West Africa are positive. Both at bilateral and

multilateral levels, Nigeria has shown commitment to working with other countries within the West African sub-region to address the menace of transnational criminality including smuggling, human trafficking and cross-border banditry. On the other hand, the oversubscription of Nigeria and some of its immediate neighbours to pseudo-nationalist policies hinder the implementation of broad-based regional strategies to address transnational threats. Thus the general apathy and lack of courage in official circles and among civil society organizations and other non-state actors in West Africa to organise across national frontiers and engage in security and development discourse, all have the tendency to limit the prospects of effective control of transnational criminality. The efforts of the Nigerian government at combating transnational organised crime and the spread of jihadist activities are yielding some gains. However, lack of political will, bad governance, and poorly equipped and motivated defence and security agencies coupled with other problems such as the porosity of the borders and non-involvement of the people have continued to inhibit progress.

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## I. Background and Problem of Study

Nigeria is located in the West African sub-region which also houses all the member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Mauritania<sup>1</sup>. The sub-region is a large geographic area, bounded at the north by Rio de Oro, Algeria, Libya, and Chad Republic; on the west by the Atlantic Ocean; on the south by the Gulf of Guinea; and on the east by Gabon Republic, Congo (Brazzaville) and the Central African Republic. Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa with a population of about 167 million people. It is the largest oil producer in Africa. Oil constitutes 75 per cent of government revenue but the rapid economic growth (over 7 per cent per year since 2009) is found mostly in the non-oil sector (International Monetary Fund, 2013, 8; Litwack, 2013, 2).

Nigeria has continued to attract global attention since the 1960's due mainly to its buoyant economy and political influence that has impacted its neighbours and the entire continental Africa and even beyond. In the mid-1960s, the administration of General Yakubu Gowon, dazed by the 'boom' from oil revenues, went as far as giving loan to the government of Grenada for the payment of the salaries of the country's civil servants (see Levi & Uzoigwe, 2004, 71; and Abegunrin, 2003, 63). During the same period, Nigeria expressed desire to contribute to the European Development Fund (EDF) for the benefit of developing countries that needed the European Union (EU)'s assistance. General

Gowon was rumoured to have boastfully said that "the problem with Nigeria is not money, but how to spend it." (see Osagie, 1998, 78). Nigeria in the 1970s led the 46-member African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) group of countries in the negotiations with the European Community that resulted in the Lomé Convention on 28 February 1975. This initiative helped the ACP states to evolve an identity of their own through the promotion of regional cooperation (Sanu & Adetula 1989, 28). It was in the same period that Nigeria took the lead by floating the idea of broad West African integration, which culminated in the establishment of ECOWAS in May 1975, just a few months after the Lomé Convention.

Nigeria's influence in Africa increased significantly in the period of the 1970s and 1980s due in part to its economic power and the relative political stability it enjoyed. In the late 1980s Nigeria conceived of its influence beyond the African continent, and consequently promoted and sponsored the Concept of Medium Powers (the Lagos Forum) along with Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Venezuela, Austria, and Zimbabwe. Around this period the country explored the proposal of developing nuclear power weapons ("black bomb") in a self-definition of its role and responsibility to challenge the monopoly enjoyed by the North on nuclear weapons. Nigeria has indeed been playing the role of regional hegemon in Africa, serving as a hub for most new regional initiatives. It has potential and actual capabilities as a regional power, in terms of political and socio-economic vision, aspirations to leadership, political legitimacy, military strength, resource endowment and political willingness to implement those visions. Nigeria and post-apartheid South Africa championed the birth of the African Union (AU) and inauguration of the New Economic Partnership for

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1. There are sixteen countries in West Africa, and 15 of them are members of the ECOWAS namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Eight countries in the region (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo) are members of the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and share a common currency, a common central bank, a development bank, a regional stock exchange and a common banking regulator.

African Development (NEPAD). This high level commitment to pan-African integration by these two countries and a number of others such as Algeria, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, has encouraged the involvement of regional organisations in promoting peace and security on the continent.

The economic crisis and deteriorated domestic political environment of the 1980s checkmated Nigeria's growing influence and earned her poor external image until recently when the country returned to civil rule. Today the country is on the rise again and therefore a significant part of the "Africa Rising" discourse<sup>2</sup>. No other country in the West African sub-region, and very few in Africa as a whole, can compare with Nigeria in terms of economic and military capabilities. Also the country ranks as the fifth largest contributor to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions. With a strong and growing economy, and considering the above attributes, Nigeria is unquestionably an important regional actor with hegemonic influence (Adetula, 2014b). While Nigeria may not be readily considered a regional hegemon in the strict sense of the word, it has been operationalising its visions of hegemonic power in the West African sub-region, and also continentally in cooperation with other partners. Nigeria accounts for more than half of the total population of West Africa which harbours people of common history, traditions and customs separated by national boundaries under the modern state system. For illustration, Hausa and Fulani are in significant presence in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Ghana, Senegal, Mali and Niger. And

Yoruba is widely spoken in Benin, Togo and Nigeria. Nigeria shares a 1,500 kilometers land border with the Republic of Niger and Chad in the North, about 1,000 kilometers with Benin Republic in the West, 1,700 kilometers with Cameroon in the East and has 700 kilometers of Atlantic coastlines.

While one may argue that the West African sub-region is presently not experiencing civil wars or inter-state wars (in comparison to the Middle East for example), there are concerns about the several security challenges facing the sub-region including the outbreak and escalation of jihadist activities in countries such as Nigeria and Mali. The security situation in Nigeria expectedly has attracted much attention in view of its status and role as a regional power whose security is threatened by transnational organised criminality and jihadist activities especially the Boko Haram insurgency. Other threats to Nigeria's national security and peace and stability of West African sub-region include the illegal spread of small arms and light weapons, illegal drug trade, human trafficking and maritime piracy.

## II. Conceptual and Analytic Framework

A fundamental insight from the sub-discipline of international relations, and from which this study proceeds is that geography plays a crucial role in defining the behaviour of states in the international system. In this context, one refers to a wide range of geographical factors including environment, territory, size, location, population, natural resources etc. The effect of location on the international relations of a state cannot be overemphasized. This study takes due cognizance of the importance of regional location, which refers to location with reference to the immediate vicinity because it determines to a large

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2. The "Africa Rising" concept directs attention to Africa's growing economy, incomes and other indicators of growth. Africa is reported to have made impressive progress in addressing development challenges since the beginning of the millennium in terms of its economic growth rate which is the highest in the world, improved business environment and investments climate, and rapidly expanding labour force (see Ascher & Mirovitskaya, 2013, p.3).

extent how a state interacts with its neighbours. Nichola J. Spykman, in one of the early works on geography and foreign policy, pointed out that "the full meaning of regional location becomes apparent only after considering both the geography and the historical and political significance of a state's immediate surroundings" (1938, 213). The effect of geography is however not limited to external relations. In the words of Louis Cantori and Steven Spiegel, "the domestic politics of a state cannot be fully understood without reference to the neighbouring environment in which that nation has developed" (1972, ix). Thus, the link between geographical facts and politics is important and should not be ignored in the policy-making process including those relating to defence and security. There is great wisdom in Harold Sprout's message that: "The articulation of physical environment with the organization and administration of political authority upon a national or an international scale is a fundamental concern to the student of politics" (1931, 441). Events and developments in West Africa that connect Nigeria and her neighbours have increasingly demonstrated that we must master geography in order to understand other subjects such as international relations and strategic studies, defence studies, peace and conflict studies etc.

A characterizing feature of the international system is the contending national interests of states. The neo-realists argue that the absence of a powerful world government leaves international relations in a state of anarchy and never-ending conflicts as nation-states maximize their power relative to other states. Only a hegemonic power can temporarily overcome the anarchical power struggle and maintain world peace and an open world economy. A hegemon, in international relations, refers to a power that can dictate the policies of all other powers around it, or one

that is able to defeat any other power or combination of powers that it might be at war with. In this regard it is expected that a regional hegemon should be able to exercise expansive power within the region over which it has hegemonic influence. Hegemony is defined as a situation in which "one state is powerful enough to maintain the essential rules governing interstate relations and willing to do so" (Keohane & Nye, 1977, 44). According to Immanuel Wallestein's "world-system theory", a hegemonic power is "a state able to impose its set of rules on the interstate system, and thereby create temporarily a new political order" (Quoted from O'Brien & Clesse, 2002, 300). Hegemonic powers should normally be large and capable of projecting power beyond their own borders in a disinterested way but sometimes for self-interest. The realist school, whose prominence in the development of contemporary theory and practice of international relations remains uncontested, promotes the focus on state power in inter-state relationships. In spite of the increasingly interdependent character of inter-state relations in the modern state system, the statist perspective that focuses on power significantly influences the goals and directions of international relations. A regional hegemon should have the capacity to exercise its dominance through relative military /diplomatic superiority and carefully cultivate legitimacy within the region. However, since the end of the Cold War other powers have emerged (or are emerging) based on factors other than military power, such as advanced economy and effective control of international institutions (Kennedy, 1987).

Samuel Huntington (1967) had predicted the rise of new powers in the last quarter of the century. Paul Kennedy (1987) presents clearly the neorealist reasoning about hegemony. The author shows the importance of the intrinsic relationship between

economic and military power. He describes the United States (US) as a great power in relative decline and that other powers have emerged or are emerging based on their economic strength through which they have been able to leverage significant influence in the world economy and global politics. With this claim, Paul Kennedy, in some respects, illuminates the path for other scholars and analysts to re-engage the concept of hegemony. The assumption about the compelling role of 'economic power' in the emergence of new rising global and regional powers cannot be easily discarded in the discourse on post-cold war international relations. Within this context the questions about the motives of the rising powers, what determines what they use power for beyond their borders, and whether they use their power and influence for self-interested purposes or altruistic reasons such as the provision of international public goods, are relevant in the discourse on post-cold war international relations (see for example, O' Brien & Clesse, 2002; Ferguson, 2003).

The world sees the emergence of new powers that are undisputedly the strongest economies in their respective regions. They are not only a critical part of the modern globalized economy, they are also key symbols of the neoliberal world order based on a number of development variables. In Asia, China and India are undisputed regional powers with considerable influence in regional and global politics. Similarly in Africa, Nigeria and South Africa are playing the role of regional hegemon. The new powers are able to invest in the promotion of global peace and security based on their economic strength and military capability. As regional powers, they pursue foreign policies that are more globally oriented. It is within this framework that the concept of 'regional hegemony' is adapted in this study to demonstrate the role of Nigeria in addressing the challenge of insecurity in West Africa. Nigeria is

regarded as a regional hegemon that is capable of the visions of a hegemonic power in the West African sub-region. It makes good wisdom therefore to study the responses of Nigeria as a regional power to transnational threats in West Africa where it wields significant influence.

Shared geography and history have great influence on the current trends and patterns of transnational processes in the West African sub-region. For instance, trade, commerce and proselytising activities were dominant vocations that bridged the societies in pre-colonial West Africa. These old links have now been transformed into contemporary transnational networks with complex organisational structures and institutions. Analyses which correctly acknowledge that the populations of West Africa have historical ties and exchanges that date back to pre-colonial times need to be developed and incorporated into frameworks to guide policy formulation and implementation in modern West African states. Beyond reference to historical antecedents and their significance as constituting a background condition for the development of transnational relations, it is also possible to argue that globalization is a critical factor in the current trends and patterns of transnationalism in West Africa. This study notes the revived interest of transnational processes. It acknowledges that scholars of transnationalism have begun to draw attention to the challenges of transnational threats including cross-border crimes and transnational terrorism as well as the imperativeness of collective action to guarantee peace and security in a region threatened by transnational organised crime.

### III. Trends and Patterns in Transnational Threats

#### **Human trafficking, drug trafficking and other illicit activities.**

Threats to national and regional security in West Africa from the activities of illegal migrants, smugglers, drug/human traffickers and most recently the activities of jihadist movements have provoked serious concerns across the sub-region. The Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) has on many occasions intercepted and foiled attempts to smuggle arms and ammunition into the country. Border control towards Niger, Chad and Cameroon is not quite effective and this makes smuggling of goods relatively easy (West African Network for Peacebuilding, 2013, 4). Nigeria's security agencies often report incidents of arms smuggling, armed banditry and human trafficking along the country's 773-kilometre (460-mile) Cotonou-Badagry road. Maritime insecurity in West and Central Africa has also aided the trafficking and illicit flows of narcotics, people, and weapons.

Clandestine, illegal or undocumented migration is rampant in West Africa and Nigeria is a major receptor of labour migrants. Nigeria's buoyant economy makes it attractive to many West African migrants especially from the less developed countries. Of course, there is also the problem of its porous borders. Virtually all the border entry points in Nigeria are used for drug trafficking, illegal migration, trafficking in persons, and illicit arms transfer into the country. Media reports have implicated some migrants from neighbouring West African countries in civil disturbance, urban and rural violence, theft, armed robbery and general insecurity of lives and property. For example, all the land and sea borders in Nigeria were closed few days to the 2015 national elections to prevent inflow of illegal

immigrants who might want to participate in the elections.

Human trafficking, child slavery and other cross-border crimes are on the increase throughout Africa. Nigeria's large market easily attracts smugglers and illicit drug traders. Nigeria and Benin are among the main sources for the thriving human trafficking business in West Africa. In recent times, West Africa has featured prominently in reported cocaine seizures by the United States (US) Drug Enforcement Administration.

According to Stephen Ellis, "Not only is West Africa conveniently situated for trade between South America and Europe, but ... it has a political and social environment ... generally suitable for the drug trade. Smuggling is widely tolerated, law enforcement is pitiful and inefficient, and politicians are easily bribed or even involved in the drug trade themselves" (2009, 173). There is no doubt that there are risks and threats to peace and security in West Africa associated directly or indirectly with fast-growing illicit cross-border trade in narcotic drugs and human beings.

Free-flow of arms into Nigeria generally has contributed both to the increase in the number of violent conflicts in the country and also to their intensity. Nigeria accounts for about 70% of the illegal small arms in the West Africa sub-region (West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, 2013, 4). These arms are sourced from within West Africa and also from world supply of arms through the collaboration of Nigerians and foreigners. Most of the seizures by the NCS was done along the border with Benin. Also, the proximity of some of the conflict zones in West and Central Africa to Nigerian land and sea borders has aggravated the illicit flows of small arms and light weapons. Illegal arms smuggling is a common feature in West Africa involving some transnational networks. Other possible sources may

include leakages from national armouries often as a result of collusion between criminal gangs and armed and security forces and, pilfering of weapons by unscrupulous peacekeepers in the conflicts in West Africa. Local manufacture of arms also accounts for significant numbers in Nigeria and Ghana. The Arab Spring and indeed the civil war in Libya resulted in the dispersal of militias and significant arms flows in West Africa and the Sahel region.

Available data on cross-border crimes in West Africa such as human trafficking, drug trafficking and livestock poaching show that transnational social networks can have serious negative effects on national security. In Nigeria, for instance, political leaders and government officials including law enforcement officials have accused migrants from other West African countries of various crimes. In Lagos State, criminal activities at different times have been attributed to the influx of migrant labour from neighbouring countries. Also, in some parts of Oyo and Osun states, a handful of migrants were reported to be involved in illegal mining of solid minerals. Similarly, nationals of Guinea, Niger, Mali and Senegal have been found to be engaged in illegal businesses in parts of central Nigeria, notably Plateau, Nassarawa and Taraba States where illegal mining of solid minerals has gained much ground alongside illegal foreign currency exchange deals. Around the northeastern border region of Nigeria, cattle theft, land rights infringement by nomadic herdsmen from neighbouring countries and violent crimes such as armed robbery, car theft and smuggling are a daily occurrence. Cases of criminal violence in the cities and urban centres such as Jalingo, Jimeta, Yola, Gashua, Dikwa, Mubi, Gembu, Damaturu, and Maiduguri are increasingly linked with the presence of immigrants in these communities. Initially, criminal activities by the migrants were loudest in the border

communities. However, recently their activities have penetrated the hinterland. The transnational character of some West and Central African languages and cultures such as Hausa and Fulbe in Northern Nigeria, Yoruba and Egun in South Western Nigeria and Ibibio and Calabari in South Eastern Nigeria has further complicated the problem of illegal migration.

The 1980's was a period of serious economic crisis in Nigeria. Due to economic recession, some members of the dominant classes sought means of accumulation in areas other than the traditional export-imports business, while the less privileged took consolation in crimes. In a country where legitimate economic opportunities were far less lucrative, criminal activities such as drug trafficking, child and women trafficking, female prostitution and child slavery, fraudulent business transactions (otherwise known as '419') presented enormous temptation. There has been an upsurge in the number of Nigerians emigrating abroad since the beginning of the 1980's. Today there is a high concentration of Nigerian nationals in other countries including those of West Africa. Immigration fraud, business fraud and illegal drug trade are common criminal activities by some Nigerian nationals in other countries. In recent times, it has been reported that the activities of Nigerian 'drug pushers' have extended beyond Europe to include some African countries. In Chad and Equatorial Guinea, arrests were made of some Nigerians alleged to be dealing in drugs.

Child trafficking in Benin and Nigeria is one dominant form of increasingly sophisticated regional trend in cross-border crime. Traffickers operate an international network that covers most of West and Central Africa and several European cities. Children 'seized' or 'captured' from source countries notably Benin and Togo are brought to Nigeria under inhuman conditions. Traffickers are also active in Burkina Faso and Mali,

where children are recruited and taken to Cote d'Ivoire to work in cocoa farms. In Nigeria 'slave children' from source countries are used as child labourers on construction sites to dig granite, crush gravel or work in cocoa farms in different parts of southwestern Nigeria. Nigeria is also being used as a transit country to destinations like Cameroon, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea where the captive boys are often used as farm labourers and the girls as domestic hands or prostitutes. The children are usually moved from the southwest through the southeastern Nigeria states of Imo, Abia, Ebonyi, and Cross River to final destinations in Central Africa.

There is another dimension of the trafficking in persons, which is equally disturbing. This refers to the activities of human traffickers in West Africa that specialize in obtaining women and sending them to Europe to work as prostitutes through some West and North African countries. Nigeria harbours a concentration of well-established networks of middle men and racketeers who forge passports and visas and transport or assist the human traffickers and their victims in their journey to Europe through some West and North African countries. Human trafficking, cross-border banditry and other cross-border crimes seem to be on the increase all over West Africa<sup>3</sup>.

The current wave of globalization has generated other forms of violence that are not strictly in the form of conventional warfare but are not any less destructive and destabilizing. Globalization generally has turned transnational criminals into visionaries. Transnational criminal organizations now operate with the aid of complex and sophisticated organizational structures

taking advantage of modern information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance their efficiency, thereby making them more competitive. Although Africa is still lagging behind other regions in the area of ICT, it has however recorded high increase in transnational criminal activities which include trafficking in persons (slaves, child labor, and prostitutes), narcotics, and small arms.

In West Africa, "parallel" economic activities notably in the form of sale of mineral resources, petroleum products, and re-exported products continue to grow and expand. Studies on cross-border crimes such as human trafficking, drug trafficking and livestock poaching in West Africa show the role and influence of transnational criminal networks on cross-border criminality and its negative effects. Since the 1990s the problem of insecurity of lives and property has deepened in West Africa. A number of studies and reports have implicated West African migrants in the general insecurity in the sub-region pointing at the activities of illicit trafficking networks, arms flows, upsurge in terrorist attacks and other forms of destabilization including the growing problem of piracy.

### **Jihadist activities, terrorism and violent extremism**

Aliens, mainly from countries in the Sahel and Western Sahara, have been linked with religious uprising in Nigeria. The exportation of religious extremism into Nigeria adds another dimension to the challenge of insecurity in the country. Imported religious values and orientations have, at different times, challenged the secular status of the Nigerian state. In Nigeria, the notion that immigrants contribute to religious conflicts has gained ground especially in official circles. They received significant public attention in the 1980s with incidents of religious disturbance in Kano, Maiduguri and Kaduna. Unfortunately the trend has continued to

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3. It is an open secret in Nigeria that forged or stolen traveling documents can be bought at Oluwole Street in Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, for up to US\$6,000.

date with incredible intensity. It is possible that the involvement of immigrants in internal conflicts in Nigeria may have been exaggerated. However, the findings of the various tribunals set up by the government to investigate the remote causes of such uprisings indicate that there were traces of external influence and the involvement of immigrants from neighbouring countries. Similarly, it was recently reported in the media that some members of the Boko Haram sect and other jihadist groups in the Sahel and North Africa received both Islamic and military training from Mauritania, including how to make bombs and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

With the demise of the regime of Muammar Gaddafi of Libya and the dispersion of fighters loyal to him across Africa and Middle East, it is possible that some of Gaddafi's men have come into Nigeria either as mercenaries and joined the militant Islamic groups already operating in the country. These dispersed religio-political extremists and movements are likely to seek new locations to export terror under the cover of fomenting international Islamist revolution. Nigeria with its track record of religious unrest may be one of the locations of interest to these dispersed fanatics. Already it has been cited that some of Gaddafi's loyalists are in Chad and Niger. It should be recalled that Muammar Gaddafi had at one time advocated for the breaking of Nigeria along religious divide. This makes the presence of some of his loyalists and former combatants in some neighbouring countries a matter of serious concern to the Nigerian security and intelligence community. Also, there is a concern in official circles in Nigeria that the ongoing conflict in northern Mali may spill over to Nigeria.

The activities of the Boko Haram jihadist movement have continued to attract global concern and responses. Boko Haram has been described as a Sunni

Salafi Jihadist group. Salafists are adherents of an austere Islamic tradition that rejects any innovations or modern influences on Islam. Salafi Jihadists aspire to implement this traditional form of Islam by overthrowing the current world order through jihad. The Salafists perceive themselves to be reformers with mandate to reestablish a sacrosanct Islamic order that has been undermined by Western civilization, hence the literary translation of the name of the group as 'Western education is sin'. Apart from its stand against Western education, targeting the structures, institutions and agencies as well as symbols of the state authority clearly presents the group as on a mission to destroy the state and create disorder in Nigeria. Its claim of having established an Islamic Caliphate in the north eastern part of Nigeria expectedly drew attention to the politico-religious agenda of the group. Of course these moves provoked serious concerns and reactions from the Nigerian government and other governments across West and Central Africa that felt threatened by the strikes posed by Boko Haram insurgency which by 2013 has resulted in more than 13,000 deaths. The activities of Boko Haram obviously constitute serious threat to human security, economic development, national security and political stability in Nigeria. The impact of the insurgency is being felt in all aspects of Nigeria's existence including its defence, security and external relations. It is appropriate to note that there is a splinter group from Boko Haram known as Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan (Vanguards for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa) which is commonly referred to as known as Ansaru.

The Boko Haram insurgency has grown from a 'local' affair into a complex transnational terrorist group whose destabilizing operations have spread beyond Nigeria to some countries in West and Central Africa. Today Boko Haram has is one of the three most dreaded terrorist organisations in the world. Notwithstanding,

the extent of the links between Boko Haram and other international terrorist groups is not quite clear. Around February/March 2015 when the Nigeria's military offensive started in earnest, Boko Haram hastily pledged allegiance to ISIS and the latter subsequently acknowledged that. That established a clear link although the timing and reasons for such declaration remain controversial. Although still being disputed widely, public perception in Nigeria, measured by media reports, supports the view that some members of the sect were trained by Islamist groups in Mauritania and some countries in North Africa and Middle East. It was also rumored that as early as 2002, some young Muslims had started receiving combat and bomb making training in Mauritania and Algeria with members of al Qaeda's North Africa branch, known as al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM. Also, during a television programme on the African Independent Television, Lagos, Mallam Aliyu Tishau, a self-proclaimed leader of Nigeria's Boko Haram, alleged that some of the group's militants were trained in Mauritania. He made reference to the recruitment of some Nigerian youths into the Mauritanian Islamist group that was trying to overthrow the government of President Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya in 2004. The youths eventually returned home to Nigeria. Tishau claimed that Mauritania 'exported' Boko Haram to Nigeria, saying that the Mauritanian-trained recruits returned to form the armed wing of the Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad.

While the above sources are based largely on media reports, there is the sense in which the attack on the United Nations Headquarters in Abuja on 26th August 2011 marked the internationalization of Boko Haram insurgent group. The inclusion of international targets for attack and the extension of its operations to other locations in West and Central Africa notably Cameroon,

Chad, and Niger marked out the insurgents as a threat to national and international security. Although it is very difficult to draw strong similarities between the Boko Haram group and other international terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and Al-Shabaab in terms of tactics, targets and rationale the claim and declaration by the Boko Haram that it is on a mission to enthrone strict Sharia legal code first in Nigeria and later to expand to other countries through holy war puts the group in the same category as other Islamic Jihadist groups in the world. It was recently reported that the Boko Haram movement is now formally affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) rebels on the former's request. This affiliation will – when operational - most likely strengthen links between the jihadists in West Africa and those in the North and Middle East with enormous implications for the expansion of Islamic Caliphate across North and West Africa.

#### **Oil theft, piracy and maritime insecurity**

Oil theft with the complicity of transnational actors threatens Nigeria's national security and economic interests. The volume of theft of Nigerian oil, both on land and on the sea, is estimated to be 100,000 barrels per day (during the first quarter of 2013) (Katsouris et al, 2013). Closely related to the problem of oil theft is the challenge of maritime piracy and insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. Piracy activities in the Gulf of Guinea centre mostly on theft of crude oil, which is produced mainly in the Niger Delta. Oil smuggling is quite rampant in the Niger Delta which is the main source for the fast growing black market for fuel in West Africa (UNODC, 2013, 45). Also, there has been instances of attacks and robbery of fishing trawlers. Most of the attacks take place within Nigerian waters, with Benin and Togo also severely affected and other attacks throughout the region (Ibid, 50). International Marine Bureau (IMB) Piracy Reporting Centre lists 30 reported

incidents during 2013 related to Nigeria (up until 22 October). This challenge expectedly is attracting international concerns. The EU currently gets 13% of its oil and 6% of its gas through resources from the Gulf of Guinea (Barrios, 2013, 2). The Gulf is also an important transit area for shipping, as well as an important fishing ground.

#### IV. National Level Response to Transnational Organised Crime and Jihadist Activities

Security is a condition of freedom from danger and risk of threat that transcends military threat to include other forms of threat. Threats to national /regional security are often assessed in terms of the extent of risk they constitute to the pursuit of national/regional interests. In virtually all cases, the security situation of a country or region is a function of its ability to anticipate, prevent, manage and effectively respond to threats. In this sense therefore, threat is the basis for any security concern; the *raison d'être* of any security consideration. Threat analysis must be broad and encompassing enough to accommodate all forms of interference with a country/region's security in any of its spheres: economic, social, military, territorial, political, cultural, etc. There is indeed great wisdom in going beyond the minimalist theory of threat (Ukpabi, 1987). In this regard the fundamental concern of national/regional security is the protection and extension of national values against existing and potential adversaries. The extent of Nigeria's compliance with the above conditions in its responses to the challenges of transnational organised crime and jihadist activities is examined below, followed by discussion of responses at

the regional, continental and global levels.

Nigeria's security interest covers all the strategic factors that affect the country's development, including law and order, developmental efforts, political and social stability, trade and economic development, relations with other countries, etc. Thus, any appreciation of the implication of threats for Nigeria's national security should consider socio-economic systems both at the national and regional levels. These socio-economic systems produce the political culture that provides and limits the environment for conceptualization as well as the actualization of threats. For instance, the increased involvement of some West African migrants in organised criminal activities has been attributed to the failure of the state in their home countries. The failure of the state to deliver public goods to the citizenry has led, in several instances, to a "flight from the state".

The people in response have resorted to exercising new forms of sovereignty that bypass and challenge the state system even where they have to resort to illegitimate means of livelihood including crime. A common pattern is the emergence of criminal networks whose activities transcend national borders. For example, many of the heavily armed gangs of criminals in northeastern Nigeria that have been "attacking road travelers and settlements in Nigeria" are believed to be former rebels in Chad and Niger, "who turned to crime following the collapse of their political cause"<sup>4</sup>.

##### Legislative measures

Legislative measures include laws that the National Assembly of Nigeria have passed in response to transnational organised crimes and jihadist activities. Enabling laws are important especially in relation to new and emerging threats because in a constitutional democracy, laws provide the foundation for action or legitimacy for response (on the principle of *nullum crimen sine lege, nulla poena sine lege*). In addition to

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4. Africa Today, October 2003, p. 13.

existing laws, several relevant Acts have been passed in the past five years or so and may be found on the National Assembly website. These would include Anti-Terrorism Act, Anti-Piracy Act, Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing (Prohibition) Act, etc. The legal texts are there but empirical evidence is rare what impact, if any, the laws have had in the fight against transnational organised crime and jihadist activities, if the provisions of the laws are sufficient or if there are gaps that need to be filled.

### **Policy measures**

Policy measures proceed from the executive, in contrast to legislative measures which are primarily acts of parliament. At the policy-strategic level, the fact that Nigeria's response to terrorism has focused overwhelmingly on military measures and that the country does not seem to have articulated early enough a robust counterterrorism strategy which considers the various available measures as mutually reinforcing seems to be a weakness. The United States, the United Kingdom and many Western countries have counterterrorism strategies which are reviewed periodically to respond to emerging threats and trends. A robust counterterrorism strategy would consider the perceived threat against the country's historical, political and socio-economic context, assess needs and identify gaps, consider options and prescribe approach which would form objective criteria for engagement. In addition to being a confidence-building tool for stakeholders and the various defence and security actors, a clear strategy would also form a guide for military budgeting and procurement in line with identified needs, a tool for tracking military expenditure thereby promoting transparency and accountability, and a yardstick for measuring success and review where necessary.

### **Law enforcement measures**

Law enforcement measures include efforts to improve the customs and immigration services in relation to transnational organized crime, installation of detection equipment at airports and seaports, internal security and policing. Such efforts would include extensive training of officers in the face of new threats such as terrorism, improved intelligence gathering and analysis and its effect on prevention if any, improvement of community policing through cooperation with the Vigilante services in northeast Nigeria, arrests, re-arrests and prosecutions of criminals including prosecution of suspected military officers aiding Boko Haram. The state of imprisonment and detention facilities may also be examined especially since there have been reported cases of jailbreak by Boko Haram. Importantly, efforts at prevention should seek to deny terrorists access to funds, communication, materials and space with which to plan and launch their attacks.

### **Military measures**

Military measures - probably the most visible measures that have been taken by the Nigerian government - include deployment of joint task force and special forces to northeast Nigeria, advanced weapons procurement, training of military personnel in counterterrorism operations, and recently, rescue of over 700 persons, mostly women and girls, from Sambisa Forest. Budgetary implications of the military measures have been significant and may also be examined here. For instance, defence and security took almost 25% of Nigeria's 2014 budget; in addition a supplementary budget of \$1billion was approved to support the fight against Boko Haram in the northeast; shadow transactions and procurement of several military equipment and weapons were also reported in the media. How much difference in outcome was noticed/recorded after the significant spending on military equipment, etc? Why did military success

against Boko Haram take so long? How was the perception of the military by the affected communities managed initially and in the latter part of the operations?

### **Socio-economic measures**

Socio-economic measures are better assessed in the medium to long term since their impact might not be immediately felt. Such measures seek to address and eliminate conditions conducive to terrorism. It includes promoting policies aimed at addressing the root causes of terrorism, including poverty and unemployment, economic and political marginalisation, human rights abuses, corruption, and weak security institutions. Specific policies should also be developed to counter terrorist propaganda, dissuade and deter people from turning to terrorism. In the words of Kofi Annan, "there are statistical correlations between levels of poverty and the incidence of terrorist attacks in particular countries, failed development and poverty create inequalities that underpin many of the grievances that drive terrorism" (Annan 2012, 234). Coupled with the challenge of lack of effective conflict resolution mechanisms, horizontal inequalities, or inequalities among identity groups and feeling of marginalization by groups have intensified political conflicts in many multi-ethnic or multi-religious societies in Africa. George Nzongo-Ntalaja warns that "a transformation is not possible in situations of violent conflicts and/or those in which the institutions and processes of governance are unresponsive, unaccountable, or simply ineffective" (2002). Such measures that have been taken in Nigeria include infrastructural development of border areas and engagement with border communities to help in combating transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking, establishment of and support to Almajiri schools in northeastern Nigeria, Safe Schools Initiative, provision of irrigation and agricultural development to provide alternative livelihoods for the unemployed, sensitization to prevent

radicalization of youth, etc. The author may also touch on the reinforcing link between development and security, why robust responses in the form of socio-economic measures are needed to stem and reverse long years of underdevelopment, and how they contribute to structural conflict prevention.

## **V. Bilateral Responses: Security Cooperation, Border Management & Joint Operations**

There is a new policy consciousness in Nigeria on how best to manage transnational threats. Official response ranges between unilateral actions to security cooperation with other West and Central African states. In addition to a number of unilateral policies and programs, Nigeria has always sought ways to curb organised crime in its territories in cooperation with its immediate neighbours in West and Central Nigeria. For instance, in 1979 Nigeria and Benin concluded an agreement providing for joint border patrols and also for Beninese to attend Nigerian military training institutions. In the 1980s, Nigeria took several measures to improve and strengthen overall border management. After the 1981 clash with Cameroon, Nigeria decided to fence its entire international boundaries, to enclose each border beacon, and to augment its immigration staff by 1,000. In the mid-1980s, 2,100 immigration officers were given a four-week weapons training course, new border posts were established, and modern border-patrol and surveillance equipment was procured. The 1984 border closure was designed to control widespread currency trafficking and smuggling. The borders re-opened only after Nigeria set up trade corridors and joint border patrols with its neighbors and began a program to strengthen and expand customs and patrol posts. In late 1986, after signing phase two of the ECOWAS Protocols on Free Movement, Nigeria deployed immigration officers to each local

government to regulate movements in and out of the country and also opened more control posts. Helicopters, aircraft, boats, vehicles, and communication and surveillance equipment were purchased to enhance surveillance around the borders.

The Nigeria-Benin Joint Border Commission was reactivated in 1981 to deal with incursions by Beninese troops and increased smuggling into Nigeria. In 1986, in response to increasing clashes between communities along the Benin border, Nigeria decided to establish additional border posts staffed by customs and immigration officials. A major conference on Nigeria-Benin border cooperation in Lagos in 1988 agreed that proper border demarcation would help control smuggling, illegal aliens, and harassment of people. In September 1988, the presidents of the two nations agreed to relax formalities so that their respective local authorities could establish direct contacts on illegal immigration and on traffic matters. In April 1989, Lagos began a yearlong effort to survey the 773 border with Benin.

Since 1986 military personnel from Equatorial Guinea have attended Nigerian military academies and trained with Nigerian forces, and Nigerians have manned one of the Equatorial Guinea patrol boats. In January 1987, at Nigeria's request, Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria agreed to conclude several accords to facilitate and to expand bilateral cooperation, reaffirmed their shared strategic interests, and signed a defense pact. In mid-1988, however, reports that South Africa was upgrading Malabo's airport, and had plan to secretly build a satellite tracking station once again raised Nigeria's fears. In response the Nigerian Government

demanded and achieved the expulsion of South Africans from Equatorial Guinea. In January 1999 President Babangida visited Malabo as part of Nigeria's diplomatic engagement to solidify ties with Malabo at the expense of South African and French interests.

Bilateral security cooperation to control cross-border crime has advanced between Nigeria and Benin Republic compared with other countries in the sub-region. In August 2001 Nigeria and Benin established a joint police patrol of Seme border to check increasing criminal activities across it. The Nigeria-Benin border police is the first of its kind in the sub-region. The experience of national police in handling cross-border crime in West Africa is recent which probably explains the low performance by the joint border patrol. Thus, in spite of the existence of the joint police patrol, there was upsurge of cross border crime which eventually moved Nigeria to close its border with Benin. Be that as it may, the governments of Togo, Ghana, Benin and Nigeria have continued to encourage and facilitate meetings of their police chiefs to discuss cooperation in dealing with cross-border crime. They have among other things identified immigration protocols as hindrance to collaboration and rapid response in criminal cases where response speed is critical.

On 9 August 2003, the Federal Government of Nigeria closed Nigeria's land borders with Benin Republic indefinitely over incessant cross-border crime. The decision to close the borders, according to a statement by the Foreign Affairs Ministry, was to drive home its concern over cross-border crimes. The Nigerian government claimed that many complaints had been made to the Benin authorities about the threats that cross-border crimes posed for the Nigerian economy as well as the people's lives, property and investments<sup>5</sup>. In spite of the complaints, it claimed that it discovered that "there was an increase in the number of cross border

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5. The statement issued by Nigeria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs recalled that Benin's President Mathieu Kerekou had previously pledged to take effective measures to curb cross-border crime but that he held back on taking immediate steps to redress the situation.

crimes". A few days later, Nigeria and Benin signed an agreement that encouraged Nigeria to reopen her borders after President Mattheu Kerekou pledged to cooperate more actively with the Nigerian authorities. Not long after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Benin, the Nigerian government announced her intention to negotiate security pacts with its northern neighbours - Niger and Chad - to clamp down on smuggling, human trafficking and cross border banditry.

The closure of Nigeria's border with Benin Republic did not only draw attention to the importance of trans-border cooperation in the fight against transnational crime; that event also served to send a message to Nigeria's neighbours about its readiness to apply, if the situation demands, appropriate pressures to secure its borders and which in turn reinforce public security, economic security, and the security of the Nigerian economy. The recognition of this fact was demonstrated by the Malian government in her quick response to the diplomatic moves by the Nigerian government in early September 2003 soliciting the cooperation of Mali to track down Hammani Tidjani when the latter escaped to Mali. Also, around the same time the Nigerian government threatened to close its border with Chad Republic to ensure the security of lives and property of its citizenry. The threat was in response to perceived uncooperative and non-supportive moves of Nigeria's northeastern neighbours.

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6. The modern state system and the political and economic life of the modern territorial state among other things impose new responsibilities on states. These include determining the rights and duties of citizens within the geographical areas they govern. Consequent upon this, states have, out of concern for their security, introduced rules and immigration regulations that inhibit the rights of individuals to settle in any part of the world. See Osieke et al., 1989.

7. Such responses include the various agreements on internal security between and among ECOWAS countries, as well as the various meetings of internal security officials of ECOWAS countries. Notably, more than ever, the Secretariat of ECOWAS is giving serious concern to joint border patrols and joint operations to combat criminal activities in West Africa.

Nigeria, like many other countries in West Africa, has shown deep concern over the activities of migrants. Official attitudes in most West African countries have centered on anti-immigration measures to control the influx of immigrants. It is now a common practice in West Africa for migrants-receiving countries to justify anti-immigration measures on the ground of security. Even at that, the imposition of such measures has the tendency to result in the deterioration of relations between countries. This is true for many West African countries where measures such as border closure and expulsion of illegal aliens has led to accusations and counter-accusations. These notwithstanding, movements of people across borders as well as activities in border areas in West Africa have continued to generate security concerns for virtually all the countries in the sub-region, and the capacity of the state to secure its borders is increasingly under pressure<sup>6</sup>. Usually the responses of governments have ranged from first-track diplomacy such as bilateral dialogue on the problems of security of border areas to the use of platforms for multilateral diplomacy such as the ECOWAS to promote cooperation towards ensuring the security of border areas<sup>7</sup>.

Security reasons were more pronounced as the rationale for enacting strict anti-immigration regulations in Nigeria. However, economic elements can also be connected to Nigeria's official decisions and actions. The closure of the Benin border in 2003 is illustrative. Poor management of the Seme border poses serious threat to the Nigerian economy. Nigerian goods, especially its cheap fuel are frequently and massively smuggled into Benin. The economic element can be connected with the security of the Nigeria oil sector. Oil is the mainstay of the Nigerian economy; the exploitation and protection of existing and potential oil deposits are inextricably linked to national security. Nigeria's recognition of this vulnerability was evident in

the deployment of security forces to curb oil smuggling by sophisticated criminal gangs that divert crude oil from pipelines into vessels for sale abroad. It was so serious that the Nigerian Navy, with assistance from the US Defence Department, was mobilized to curb oil smuggling especially in the Niger Delta region<sup>8</sup>. Also, whenever Nigeria imposes protectionist policies banning various imports, the border with Benin Republic has been the preferred route for prohibited goods. Imports at Benin's main port of Cotonou have risen sharply and its border area has become one vast market supplying Nigerian traders. For example, most of the second hand cars sold in Nigeria are procured from the Cotonou port and smuggled into the country through illegal routes. Also, most banned products find their way into the country through the Seme border.

Nigeria's borders with Chad and Cameroon have witnessed serious hostilities which have implications for national security. Nigeria has in the past had conflicts with Cameroon over contested offshore oil rights and long stretch of land territories (including the Bankassi dispute). Its border with Cameroon witnessed several clashes. Neither Cameroon nor Chad is a member of ECOWAS and therefore they are not signatories to the ECOWAS Protocol on the Rights of Entry, Residence and Establishment and the Protocol on Free Movement of Goods. This partially explains the occurrence of greater border tensions between these countries and Nigeria. In 1981 five Nigerian soldiers were killed and three wounded when a Cameroonian patrol boat fired on a Nigerian vessel off the contested Rio del Rey area, which was thought to be rich in oil, gas and uranium deposits. In May 1987, Cameroonian gendarmes allegedly occupied sixteen border villages in Borno State until they were repelled by the Nigerian Army. The Federal

Government issued orders to state governors to take military reprisals against any belligerent neighboring country, and tensions remained high until President Babangida's visit to Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon, yielded mutual pledges of steps to prevent a recurrence of border clashes, including joint border patrols.

Unlike before, today the security of Nigeria's borders and borderland involves almost all the security agencies including the intelligence agency. While the Customs, Immigration and other paramilitary organizations especially the Civil Defence Organization are the ones most visible in the border areas of Nigeria, the country's security apparatus notably the Nigeria Police Service, the State Security Service (SSS – the intelligence service) and the military are at the forefront of the country's counter-terrorism campaigns which is targeted at curbing the activities of the jihadists and insurgents. Initially, both the police and the military were involved in the management of the situation, which relates primarily to the mandate of the police to maintain public order and safety. However, as the security situation in the northeastern areas deteriorated, the approach of the security forces became more militaristic which resulted in several allegations of human rights abuse and extrajudicial killings.

## VI. Sub-Regional, Continental and Global Level Responses

At the sub-regional level, there seems to be a gradual recognition of the point that effective control of cross-border crime must necessarily consider the harmonization of criminal justice laws and policies, and strengthening of capabilities and institutions. ECOWAS' comparative advantage lies in efforts at combating transnational organised crime, cybercrime and money laundering, human and drug trafficking, the smuggling of illicit goods, the flow of small arms

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See *Africa Today*, October 2003, p.13.

and light weapons, and other threats which cannot be sufficiently addressed by one country acting alone. Sad enough, even with the existence of the ECOWAS Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters of 1982, the Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters of 1992 and the Convention on Extradition of 1994, cooperation in criminal and law enforcement matters is still at a very low level among West African countries. This may partly stem from the fact that Anglophone West African countries are of the common law tradition while the Francophone countries are of the civil law tradition. The structure, organization and management of the armed forces and security services also differ in several respects between the two traditions. Also, the prospect of applying unilateral law enforcement measures beyond national borders is not bright, given the attachment to sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states by African countries generally.

ECOWAS continues to promote efforts to combat cross-border criminal activities. Such commitment is demonstrated by the Heads of State and Government of West Africa in adopting the ECOWAS Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in West Africa of 2008 and its five-year action plan. Through statutory bodies such as the West African Police Chiefs Committee (WAPCCO), the Committee of Chiefs of Intelligence and Security Services (CCISS), and the Committee of Chiefs of Defence Services (CCDS), ECOWAS member states use common platforms to share experience and information, and to organize joint trainings and joint operations to combat transnational organised crime and jihadist activities. Further, the Protocol to Establish an ECOWAS Criminal Intelligence and Investigations Bureau seeks to facilitate the centralization and sharing of information among the

security services of the sub-region in the prevention, investigation and punishment of those engaged in common law crimes, subject to the national laws of each country. Also, the West African Police Information System (WAPIS) which was set up by INTERPOL and supported by the European Union seeks to fight transnational organised crime and terrorism. WAPIS establishes an electronic police information-sharing platform to enable West African countries share police data, and contribute to the analysis of criminal trends affecting the region.

To combat terrorism, the Authority of Heads of State and Government adopted the ECOWAS Counter-terrorism Strategy and its Implementation Plan in 2013. The strategic approach of the Counter-terrorism Strategy is based on three pillars: Prevent, Pursue and Reconstruct. Priority areas of support and intervention by ECOWAS and its member states are enumerated under each pillar. The Implementation Plan goes a step further to set targets and list stakeholders in meeting the targets. An important institution of ECOWAS in the fight against transnational organised crime and terrorism is the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) which was established in 2000. GIABA is responsible for strengthening the capacity of member states towards the prevention and control of money laundering and terrorist financing. It also strengthens cooperation among member states and promoted harmonized and concerted measures to combat money laundering and financing of terrorism. There is no doubt that adequate structures and policies exist at the sub-regional level for West African countries to take advantage of in the fight against TOC and terrorism. How much will be achieved depends a lot on the capacity and political will of the countries to implement commitments and common standards that have already been agreed to.

Notably, Nigeria and some of her neighbours are signatories to international agreements that touch on the problem of cross border crime. Nigeria is a party to the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and Other Related Materials of 2006. The objective is to stem the prevalence of crime and violent conflict within member states. In line with the Memorandum, which preceded the ECOWAS SALW Convention, on 7 May 2001, the Nigerian government inaugurated a National Committee on Small Arms and Conflicts, composed of representatives of various ministries and agencies. The Committee's functions are aimed at reducing arms-related crimes and conflicts in the country. In addition the Nigerian government has set up a National Committee on the Proliferation and Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons. Its members include representatives of the Army, the Navy, the State Security Services, the Nigerian Immigration Service, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency and the Ministry of Defense. The committee is charged with collating a report on the proliferation and illicit trafficking in SALW within the country and around the national borders. There is open show of commitment by the Nigerian government which is likely to receive the support of the international community in promoting global awareness against all forms of cross-border crime.

Outside of West Africa, Western countries especially have shown marked interest in assisting Nigeria to overcome the challenge of militancy in the Niger Delta. Unfortunately the insurgency in the northeastern part of the country did not attract proportionate attention from the West until the activities and operations of the insurgents spread beyond Nigeria and into other countries in West and Central Africa. This arguably made the US and some European powers notably France and the United Kingdom (UK) to step up their bilateral assistance to Nigeria to enable the government

combat terrorism. In November 2013, the US classified Boko Haram and Ansaru as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Specially Designated Global Terrorists. Also, the US is providing an array of military, law enforcement, and intelligence support which include counter-IED training and forensics training. Other assistance include support for the professionalization of key military units as well as supporting the efforts of Nigeria and its neighbours to increase regional cooperation to combat Boko Haram. These are in addition to other support under broader multilateral arrangements such as the Pan-Sahel Initiative and the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership through which the US is building the security capacity of some countries in West Africa including Nigeria for effective counter-terrorism.

As part of her own response to the challenges of insecurity in Nigeria and in West Africa generally, France has scaled up her military presence in the Sahel as the activities of the Boko Haram insurgents spread to Cameroon, Chad and Niger. France also convened a Regional Summit on Security in Paris in May 2014 where Nigeria participated fully. Also, in June 2014, the UK hosted a follow up meeting to the Regional Summit in Paris. The London Ministerial Meeting on Security in Northern Nigeria brought together Nigeria, Benin, Chad, Cameroon and Niger with the UK, the US, France, Canada and the EU to advance the coordination necessary to defeat Boko Haram. China and Germany have also pledged support to Nigeria in her fight against terrorism and have indicated willingness to join the US and other European powers to fight terrorism in Nigeria and neighbouring countries.

Nigeria has been receiving support from Niger and Chad within the framework of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) that was formed in 1998 to combat international crime. The mandate of MNJTF was

recently expanded to include counter-terrorism. With this mandate the MNJTF was able to conduct a number of military operations within Nigeria. Support for Nigeria is overwhelming both within the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS as concerns have been regularly expressed and resolution passed on Boko Haram insurgency and the implications for regional security. Interestingly, many African leaders have alluded to Nigeria's claim that her security is directly related to African stability. At the level of the AU, the Peace and Security Council and the Summit of Heads of States and Government, at its meeting in Addis Ababa in February 2015, took a decision to send a regional intervention force to fight Boko Haram. However, there were no details of the command and control of the MNJTF, the scope and flexibility of contingents (apart from the general information that the AU was to send 7,500 troops to fight Boko Haram, building on the already existing support from Chad, Cameroon and Niger (and Benin) under the MNJTF. Nigeria had already committed about 25,000 of its own troops to fighting the insurgency in the northeast with the military success known to the outside world) to undertake cross-border operations and the timelines for its mobilisation. Meanwhile, the PSC has been reviewing plans and progress of the MNJTF against Boko Haram. Also, the AU Commission is working assiduously to update the UN Security Council (UNSC) on deployment of the MNJTF.

The extent of support for Nigeria in her fight against terrorism and insurgency to some extent suggests global acknowledgement of Nigeria's status and role in regional and global politics (Adetula, 2014b). It is plausible to argue that the support for Nigeria has come mainly from countries that have stakes in the Nigerian economy. The US, France, UK and other Western countries are interested in ensuring internal security in Nigeria which in turn help to secure Western capital in

the country and as well reduce the risk of loss of investment and international trade.

## VII. Limitations of Responses and Challenges

While the collective efforts of Nigeria and other West and Central African states at combating transnational organised crime and the spread of terrorism are yielding some gains, lack of political will, bad governance, and poorly equipped and motivated military and security agencies, coupled with others problems such as the porosity of borders and non-involvement of the people continue to inhibit real progress. For example, some of the regional initiatives towards curbing transnational criminality and addressing security threats are lacking the required financial resources. Some within the Nigerian foreign policy community feel that Nigeria has not been duly acknowledged for its role in restoring peace and stability in war-torn Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s, and in Togo, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Guinea Bissau more recently. They argue that despite Nigeria's laudable investment in international relations, especially with African countries, its external image continues to suffer greatly. The recently Nigeria-led ECOWAS intervention in Mali was not favourably received by many Nigerians who felt that President Goodluck Jonathan had no business sending troops abroad to fight, while Nigeria was facing a national security threat from Boko Haram, militants in the Niger Delta and sectarian violence on Jos Plateau. The drastic reduction in Nigeria's forces in Mali may be connected with domestic pressures on the government (Adetula, 2014b).

There are many questions about the technical capacity of the Nigerian armed forces including their combat-readiness to carry out military operations against

insurgents. This is worrisome since the Nigerian armed forces are not usually ranked among the armed forces in Africa that lack combat-readiness, armaments, mobilisation and rapid deployment capability, which are required for so complex peace operations. Nigeria is credited with having strong military forces, but has been recently almost humiliated in the northeastern parts of Nigeria by the Boko Haram insurgents that are generally regarded as rag-tag, poorly trained bandits. To the surprise of many, the latter was able to capture a number of territories, made a claim of establishing a Muslim Caliphate, and ran its own 'government' in the occupied territories for some months. Aside from inadequate technical capabilities, Nigerian armed forces are also faced with the challenges of inadequate funding, low motivation, poor conditions of service and corruption.

The complicity of state and non-state actors in security-threatening activities is a serious challenge, especially where such actors are inclined towards parochial nationalism or are interested parties in the conflict. In some instances, the problem is how to contain unhealthy rivalry among states within West Africa, or how to manage any possible changes in the regional balance of power. There is also the challenge of how to check the expansionist aspirations of some regional powers that may want to exploit security-threatening situations to their own advantage. Some illustrations are useful here: The reactions of some countries to the possible use of drones in the Sahel to combat insurgency and terrorism. There were media reports that the United States had reached agreement with the Republic of Niger to set up a drone base in the West African state, and that there were concerns about the

location of the drones. Some persons in Nigeria were concerned about the possibility of violating Nigeria's territorial integrity and internal security. There was concern in Nigeria's security and intelligence communities about implications of having such equipment that can gather sensitive information about the country. Also, some francophone neighbours of Nigeria notably Chad and Cameroon were rumoured to be indifferent to Nigeria's ordeal with the Boko Haram insurgency especially in the early period. Chad and Cameroon were said to be having links with the insurgents.

Closely related to the above is the difficulties created as a result of lack of consensus among states in the West African sub-region. For example, Nigeria initially was not open to external assistance and did not want the involvement of foreign troops in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency. This possibly explains why the concerns of ECOWAS about the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria were limited to rhetoric declarations. Even with the establishment of the multinational force to fight the insurgents, there are concerns that the contributing countries were not as committed as the public was made to believe. For example, in January 2015 it was widely reported in the media that Chad and Niger withdrew from participating in the multinational force. However, later the leadership of the Nigerian armed forces admitted that the two countries did not pull out from participating in the multinational force but that they seemed not to be cooperating because "they have not contributed troops to the point of Baga"<sup>9</sup>.

On the other hand, the involvement of foreign troops in addressing internal conflict in parts of Africa and in other regions calls for caution. Many foreign-supported counter-insurgency operations have not resulted in much peace and stability. The defeat of the US-backed

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9. See *The Guardian*, Wednesday, January 7, 2015, p. 3.

Somalian forces by insurgents after the military overthrew the elected government is one such case. Similarly, in Central African Republic, US-supported forces were unable to prevent a rebel group from ousting the president. Also, the Western-backed transitional government in Libya has not been able to check the militias.

The influence and interests of actors outside West Africa have serious consequences for the national security and stability of the entire sub-region, especially where those actors do not enjoy the confidence of all the parties to the conflict. A case in point is the growing interest of ECOWAS and some Western countries, notably the UK, France and the US in the fight against the insurgency in northern Nigeria. The Nigerian government has sought assistance notably from the US and France to quash the Boko Haram insurgency. Through the US-sponsored Pan-Sahel Initiative and the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership, the US has been building the capacity of certain West African countries, including Nigeria, to combat terrorism. France, on its own, is scaling up its military presence in the Sahel. However, it is feared that the perception among the insurgents of France and other Western countries as 'enemy nations' may encourage them to extend their activities to Benin, Cameroon, Niger and other francophone countries thereby causing further instability in West and Central Africa.

Dominant international relations discourse in the post-cold war era acknowledges "complex interdependence" as one of the defining characteristics of the global system and tends to favour a regionalist approach towards ensuring peace and security. However, there are still challenges at various levels – national, regional and global. For example, some states are still protective of their sovereignty despite the overwhelming impact of globalisation and the attacks

on the territorial state. Regionally, many organisations have serious capacity gaps. And globally, there are, among other things, the challenges of power politics, new geo-politics, i.e. enlarging zones of influence.

## VIII. Conclusion and Recommendations

There can hardly be any controversy about the desirability of effective control of organised crime and jihadist activities in West Africa by the Nigerian government and the governments of the neighbouring countries. However, the complexities of strategies and modalities for effectively combating transnational organised crime and other transnational threats still demands in-depth attention than have been given by the stakeholders. On the one hand, one can argue with some conviction that the prospects for effective control of cross-border crimes in West Africa are positive. Both at bilateral and multilateral levels, Nigeria has shown commitment to working with other countries within the West African sub-region to address the menace of transnational criminality including smuggling, human trafficking and cross-border banditry. Nigeria seems to have considered seriously the lessons from the experiences of other regions of the world that show that cross-border crime can be effectively addressed only through cooperation of all the countries involved. On the threat of jihadism, Nigeria has recorded mixed results so far. The initial official perception of the Boko Haram insurgent group as 'local' was indeed misleading, and so was the overwhelming emphasis on military approach to curb the activities of the insurgency groups. At one time the Jonathan Presidency announced what seemed like a platform for negotiation but that never went far. Similarly, the unilateral declaration of ceasefire by the leadership of the armed forces only served to reveal the inconsistency and disconnection in the official response to the Boko

Haram insurgency. It is however interesting that Nigeria appears to be making noticeable progress with the situation. For example, virtually all the areas that were previously under the control of the insurgents have been freed by April 2015, over 700 women and girls have been rescued from Sambisa Forest, and the efforts to rehabilitate the people of the areas are ongoing. The intervention of the MNJTF comprising of troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger is a welcome development. This however needs to be complemented by commensurate politico-diplomatic processes that may help find solution beyond the military defeat of the insurgents.

Furthermore, the Nigerian government and other stakeholders need to understand the social and economic conditions that promoted the Boko Haram insurgency and come up with long-term solutions. The existence of many new and renewed wars in Africa is linked with the crisis of governance "bad governments and stagnant economies" which in turn have impoverished the people most of whom are now discontented (Adetula, 2015, 15). In this regard, strategies for political settlement of the issues underlying the Boko Haram insurgency need to be put in place. This calls for political will and readiness on the part of all stakeholders to negotiate and make compromises. Within the West African sub-region, there is need for Nigeria's immediate neighbours to rethink their strict adherence to sovereignty, which may inhibit support for transnational initiatives. Also, the dominance of restricted notion of security that pervade official circles, and the general apathy and lack of courage among civil society organizations and other non-state actors in West Africa to organize across national frontiers and engage in security discourse, all have the tendency to limit the prospects of effective control of transnational criminality.

The strengthening of regional organisations and the emergence of new sub-regional networks are important features of the post-Cold War system. Regional and sub-regional institutions are becoming increasingly prominent in contemporary international relations. The complexity of security challenges in the post-bipolar world requires greater cooperation and coordination among states within a region and sub-region. Current waves of globalisation are already promoting sub-regional consensus-building and coordination. The inability of many national governments to address problems with cross-border dimensions such as drug and human trafficking makes a sub-regionalist approach imperative. Thus, states in the West African sub-region should continue to promote cooperation in the areas of economic development and security.

The importance of the support of the international community cannot be overemphasised. For example, there is need to broaden the notion of preventive diplomacy in West Africa to include support for governments in the sub-region to help them address illicit trafficking,, transnational organised crime, terrorism, and some other forms of violence that constitute serious threats to peace and security in the sub-region. In 2011, Africa experienced 978 terrorist attacks, an 11 per cent increase over 2010 and mainly attributable to the increase in Boko Haram attacks (from 31 in 2010 to 136 in 2011) in Nigeria (US Department of State 2012). Concerted efforts by the international community are required to check illicit trade networks and the activities of terrorist organisations in West Africa. Already there are some initiatives in this direction by African regional organisations. The 360th AU Peace and Security meeting on 22 March 2013 addressed issues of preventive diplomacy, and noted the significant

reduction in conflicts in Africa as a result of collective AU efforts supported by international partners. While these efforts are commendable, powerful nations, notably the US States, Russia and key EU members need to support regional and sub-regional initiatives on the ground by providing technical and financial resources.

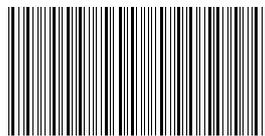
The importance of effective regional-national partnerships in the management of regional security cannot be overstressed. To effectively address the security challenges in West Africa, there is a need to engage a network of regional and local actors as opposed to a unilateral single nation approach. There are a few examples of national-regional initiatives. However, there is much to be done to improve on the performance of some of the regional-national partnerships in conflict resolution.

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