Boko Haram Terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin Region: Implications for Subregional Security

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Abstract

Terrorist activities in the Lake Chad Basin region of Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, have impacted negatively on the security, socio-political and economic situations in the region. This paper investigates the evolution of insurgency and the factors leading to its growth in the region. It also examines its socio-political, economic and security implications. Nigeria, in the centre of the imbroglio, has had no respite from terrorist activities for a long time. Boko Haram has carried out many gun attacks and bombings in many strategic places, including the United Nations building in Abuja, the federal capital city. There have been similar attacks in Cameroon, Chad and Niger, including a massive attack in Bosso in the Niger Republic with 26 soldiers killed in 2016. This article concludes that the wave of terrorism in the subregion has a connection to the wave of global terrorism. To stem the tide of insurgency in the subregion, this paper recommends that governments at all levels should create enabling environment for investment and industrial growth. It also suggests that security of lives and properties should be given utmost priority. This paper examines the evolution, manifestations, and course of the Boko Haram insurgency in the subregion, exploring the implications for national and international security, socioeconomic order, political stability, and sustainable development of the area. It will suggest ways to curtail the Boko Haram insurgency and probable future insurgencies in the subregion.

The global incidence of terrorism has increased alarmingly since September 11, 2001. The concerted efforts embarked upon by the international community to ensure its elimination have been noted but have hitherto proved inadequate. This increase is not unconnected with the balance of terror and the wave of global insecurity that shaped the beginning of the 21st century; it is the product of unresolved issues of the Cold War and the continuation of the ideological war between the west and the Islamic fundamentalism. Africa, and indeed Nigeria, have in the past decade been bedevilled by an increased incidence of insurgencies, recording a high level of destruction of both property and lives. The most recent rebellion in the Lake Chad Basin Area is the Boko Haram uprising which emanated from Nigeria in July 2009. Other examples of the terror siege on Nigeria and Africa in general were the Maitatsine uprising of the 1980s in Nigeria, the Al-Shabaab in Somalia and al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, which is a menace to peace and security in the region. Since the advent of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region, the security situation has been in a state of confusion.

Since 2009, Boko Haram has attacked the Northeast of Nigeria, capturing territories and spreading to some parts of the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) region of Niger, Chad and Cameroon. Nigeria started an onslaught on Boko Haram at the onset of its activities in the Northeast; however, before the formation of the joint task force by the Lake Chad Basin regional authorities, the activities of the sect had spread to neighbouring countries. Apparently the terrorists targeted these countries for attacks in retribution for their participation in the regional joint task force and for daring to support Nigeria's efforts in quelling the insurgency (Enobi and Johnson-Rokosu, 2016: 25-41). The cost of combating the attacks and defeating the terrorist group has been confounding and has already taken its toll on the LCB. Fighting the scourge of terrorist war in the LCB has been monumental for an impoverished region that for years had been struggling with deforestation and other human activities due to climate change.

Boko Haram, according to Anyadike (2013) set not only a precedent but also strengthened an attempt by the Nigerian Islamic conservative elements to impose a different Islamic religious ideology on a secular Nigerian state in particular. Other insurgencies in the subregion include the Tuareg rebellion of 2007-2009 led by the Sahara Desert Tuaregs of northern Mali and the Niger Republic. Chad has been inundated with a series of crises such as the Chadian civil war of 2005-2010, which has created a mass of disgruntled elements in that country. These disgruntled elements have served as a reservoir for recruitment for insurgency groups. Cameroon has been relatively peaceful, with a major exception being the February 2008 uprising due to a hike in fuel prices at the pump in that country. The aftermath of this unrest has left scars that must be managed by the government. Without the support of the international community and international antiterrorist agencies, such as the European Union, the region might not be able to defeat the scourge of terrorism. The situation has been compounded where such uprisings came with a level of political undertone, such as the accusation that trailed the emergence of Boko Haram at the onset. In Nigeria, the sitting government between 2011 and 2015 had accused the opposition of fanning the ember of disunity as a result of its failure at the polls.

Conceptual Analysis

The development of societies to meet the needs of the people for peaceful coexistence has been dynamic to the extent that for many decades, issues relating to security have taken center stage. In other words, development process has been preoccupied with the discourse on how societies should function for the benefit of its people. The notion of security is not a new

phenomenon. Even in primitive societies, it has always remained a central issue in the discourse on the social relationships in which people willingly surrender their rights to ensure peaceful coexistence.

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a paradigm shift from the former state-centric perspective which emphasizes military and economic power rather than the pursuit of ideals or ethics. This state-centric view is intended to satisfy the needs of the nation-state and its institutions rather than the interest of the citizenry. Today's view is more pragmatic and places a premium on human security with the main thrust on issues relating to human rights and individual security, and from military to non-military issues (Krahmann, 2003:9). It is to be noted that the military should not undertake national security issues dealing with matters such as the economic basis for strategic forces, problems of structural system maintenance, and other related security issues belonging to the domain of other agencies of government. Societies, therefore, adopt an inclusive definition of security that takes into consideration all aspects of state functions, which can lead to a dysfunctional situation if neglected. The contemporary concept of security analysis is, therefore, a far cry from the old belief that national security resides solely with the military. Social issues that directly impact on the citizenry are more germane in the modern conception of security. These social issues include protection of fundamental rights and maintaining a nonviolent environment, healthy living, freedom from socioeconomic and political exploitation, and protection from environmental threats.

Although the complexities involved in the concept of security are enormous, the most important issue here is that the term and its understanding show that it is vital for national cohesion, peace and sustainable development. Igbuzor (2011:2), therefore submits that security forms a condition that ensures safety from harm, the defense and protection of the populace, and absence of threats. Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) opine that security is the ability of a nation to ensure that its people are free from danger or threats to develop their potential, engage in promoting their cherished values, enhance their well-being and pursue legitimate interests under an atmosphere conducive to doing so.

Ensuring internal security for the promotion of core values and socio-political and economic development must therefore be the primary objectives of the government. In furtherance of this objective, therefore, national security that avoids desecration of the nation's core values and prevents violent conflicts is a desideratum for economic growth and development of any country and must be embraced. In other words, security is vital to maintaining peace for the socioeconomic and political development of a nation, and the attempt to prevent violent conflict either originating from within or outside the state must be vigorously pursued (Stan, 2004: 2). Despite the continued presence of terrorism in international and domestic life, there is currently no concise, universally accepted definition of the term or of who we should regard as a terrorist. Therefore, the concept remains a global enigma. The argument put forward by Anger (2002) therefore suffices with its contention that a definition of terrorism has been contested due to political sentiments attached to it rather than semantics. From this perspective, the description of terrorism may depend on the political divides to which one belongs or to the institution applying the term, as well as the current situation. The duo of Nelson Mandela and Yasser Arafat were once described as terrorists by the United States but were later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. This demonstrates that the term "terrorism" can be highly controversial as well as political.

The main issue here is that every party has defined the term to suit its motive or purpose. Ruby (2002: 9-14) however, reasons that semantic vagueness has resulted in difficulty to define

the phenomenon and the inability of scholars to have a consensus on its definition. Ruby went further to state that researchers on terrorism tend to use the same term to refer to a wide range of events. In this context, people have described terrorism as killing innocent people, shootings in public places by a lone gunman, and as a violent attack by the state. Looking at this description, it seems that there are many characteristics of terrorism, but scholars tend to pick the aspects most suitable to them when researching it. Terrorism characterised by violence is a disturbing phenomenon which is not new in human history. What differentiates the violence in terrorism from other types of violence such as that used against soldiers in defense of the state is that innocent civilians are mostly targeted. The idea behind such acts against civilians is to cause terror or panic among the civil population, and of course, to render the state ungovernable.

Omar Lizardo (2008:91-118) however, sees terrorism as a "premeditated use or threat of use of extra-normal violence or brutality by sub-national groups to obtain political, religious, or ideological objectives through intimidation of a huge audience, usually not directly involved in the policy-making that the terrorists seek to influence." It would not be out of place to argue that the definition of terrorism is replete with dimensional semantics. Malden, (2004) defines terrorism as an asymmetrical warfare of threat and violence targeted against enemies by deploying unconventional means not within the forms of political struggle routinely operating within some current regime. This symbolism is reflective of the European Union's definition that terrorism is geared to intimidate the population or to compel a government to unduly carry out or abstain from performing a particular act, or to cause a major political social or constitutional order to destabilise the polity. Thus, these perceptual differences will linger on for a long time to come because of the imprecise nature of terrorism.

Factors Responsible for Terrorism in the Region

For several years, there have been scholarly analyses on security challenges as well as the links between them and many grievances, such as marginalization, resource control, unemployment, religious intolerance, and neglect of educational and health sectors. These factors have heightened the spate of insecurity and insurgency in the subregion, including the militarization of the entire political landscape by the military dictatorship that ruled for several years in the area. The military regimes that dominated the region for several years lack the capacity to develop the area, hence the case of millions of jobless youths. Money meant for development was shipped out of the region by military leaders to their families living in various European countries. The leadership of the military juntas also used misappropriated funds to buy properties in choice cities around the world, rendering their countries impoverished. As a result, there were no resources for the development of the region. Thus, it is argued that in developing nations one of the root causes of terrorism is poverty.

A statistical distribution of poverty in Nigeria shows that northern Nigeria is more deeply affected, with the North-Central States recording 67% poverty levels, North-West States at 71.1%, and North-East States 72.2% (Danjibo, 2011). It would not be out of place to suggest therefore that poverty is so prevalent in Northern Nigeria as a result of injustice, lack of fairness in policy, negligence on the part of the political class to develop education in that region, and an imbalance in resource allocation. Unfortunately, this pervasive poverty plays out in a region that historically had a culture derived from well-organised Islamic wars (Ahokegh: 2012). The conspiracy between the colonial authority and the Nigerian elites at the inception of colonial

administration through indirect rule has also impacted negatively on Nigerian sociopolitical landscapes, especially in the north. Sanusi (2007: 181) has opined that:

> One of the consequences of the alliance between the British and the emirates was that the integrity of the political and social structures in the north could only be achieved by sealing the region off from Western influences, including from southern Nigeria. In an attempt to insulate the north from modernity, Western education was severely curtailed in order to prevent in the north what Lord Lugard termed the "utter disrespect" for British and natives' ideals alike that was beginning to emerge in the south.

The northern part of Nigeria has therefore produced millions of uneducated elites who could not understand why the security of a nation should be taken as a serious issue. It was not surprising then that many of the youths who were jobless were a ready market for the recruitment by the Boko Haram insurgents. The return of Nigeria to democratic rule after many years of military dictatorship in 1999 was ushered in with high hope by Nigerians and the international community for rapidly increased democratisation and socioeconomic development. This expectation was not unfounded because democracy is about good governance. It is, however, unfortunate that after 15 years of democratic rule in Nigeria, the country has not reaped the dividend of democracy. In all respects, the Fourth Republic of Nigeria has been a paradox (Unumen and Oghi, 2016).

The situation is not better in Chad, where about 11 million live in abject poverty. Since independence, Chad has experienced social unrest, political instability, and conflicts with neighbouring Sudan. These conflicts have destabilised the country's infrastructure and, combined with an unstable government, have led to a dire humanitarian situation. The Global Development Report 2007 asserts Chad as the seventh poorest country in the world, and poverty is said to affect 55% of the population, especially in the rural areas. The challenges of the wars in the countries contiguous to Chad have compounded the situation as refugees from the Central African Republic and IDPs from Sudan further overstress the already lean infrastructure on the ground.

Western nations are believed to be peaceful and developed because of democratic culture that brings about equal distribution of wealth, enables good governance and fast-track development. The failure of improving on the livelihood of the people has brought much discontent and an attitude of revolt from Nigerians, Chadians, Cameroonians and Nigeriens who expected better opportunities than they have received. People believe that the governments of these countries have undermined, under-developed and impoverished the vast majority of the peoples.

Insecurity continues to spread in these countries because of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). Many West African countries have fought intra-state wars in which small arms were the primary weapons. The disarmament of the combatants in these conflicts was haphazardly done during demobilisation. It makes these weapons available to many people who are not supposed to be in possession of arms. The availability of such weapons in the hands of the wrong people has also impacted negatively on security in the Lake Chad subregion. The arms illegally smuggled into the area through the unpoliced, porous borders have been used to commit crimes against the state. One is therefore constrained to say that Boko Haram must have gotten some of the weapons for its operations from this source. In this instance, Edeko (2014) has observed that Nigeria alone is estimated to host over 70% of about 8 million illegal weapons in the West African subregion due to the porosity of Nigerian borders. In Chad, procurement of arms has heightened conflict in that country and facilitated human rights abuses. There is a risk in

this because some of these arms smuggled out of government control into private hands are used to cause confusion, and some transferred to the war-torn Darfur assist the rebels there. It is estimated that importation of weapons by Chad was five times higher in 2004–2008 than in 1999–2003 (Wezeman, 2009).

Other factors that have contributed to the heightening of insecurity and insurgency in the subregion include the militarization of the entire political landscape by the military dictatorship that has ruled the countries for several years. In the seventies and eighties many of the West African countries went through various military dictatorships that did little or nothing to develop the region. In Cameroon, stay-put leadership has been a bane of development. Paul Biya, the president, has been in government for more than three decades. The challenges that trailed this development were lack of basic infrastructure, lack of employment for the youths, lack of transparency and accountability, mismanagement of public funds, and poverty. The availability of the jobless youths became commonplace in the region. Therefore, at the onset of every insurgency, the youths are always available to be engaged by the insurgents.

Contrary to widely believed notions that democracy is beneficial to peace, Omilusi, M. (2016:2) contends that democracy in Africa has increased the culture of impunity in some people, while political differences have fuelled some of the violence that has erupted. The frequent occurrence and manifestation of ethno-religious conflicts with the institutionalization of democratic culture in Nigeria might be due to the democratic institutions' and elected leaders' failure to mitigate communal tensions and, in many instances, their exacerbation of conflict for political gains. Thus, there is the need to be concerned about the impact of religious tensions on Nigeria's fragile democracy, as the growth and manifestation of democratic culture cannot thrive in an atmosphere of disharmony.

Boko Haram Terror in the Lake Chad Basin

The exact date of emergence of the Boko Haram sect is not known. The only relative facts about this sect are the accounts gathered from the media and scant extant academic documentations. However, according to Onuoha (2010: 54-67), the emergence of Boko Haram can be traced to 1995, when Abubakar Lawan established the *Allusunna wal'jama'ah hijra* sect in the University of Maiduguri. Lawan then left the country for studies in Saudi Arabia at the University of Medina and since then nothing has been heard about him. The sect gradually developed, spreading to Adamawa, Bauchi, and Yobe, and eventually could be found not only in many parts of northern Nigeria but also in the neighbouring countries of Chad, Cameroon and Niger. The sect continued to move about with its slogan that Western education and civilisation are sinful. The sect has concentrated on destroying government establishments because it believes that the government imposes Western education on it, and it blames the government for not managing the resources of the state for the benefit of the people.

Notwithstanding the conflicting accounts about the origin of the sect, most observers agree that a 32-year-old charismatic Muslim cleric, Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, established the sect in 2002. The same account states that Yusuf also established a religious complex with a mosque and Islamic boarding school in Maiduguri, Borno. A prayer group called *"Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal Jihad,"* loosely translated from Arabic as "people committed to the propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad" (Chothia, 2011), was part of his legacy towards the development of the sect. Since then the sect has flourished under various names like the Nigerian Taliban, Yusufi yah sect, and Boko Haram. The name "Nigerian Taliban" is a derogatory name

used to disparage the teachings and philosophy of the group. Though the actions and mode of behaviour of the sect are fashioned after those of the Taliban in Afghanistan, there are no accepted facts that they are affiliated (Onuoha, 2010).

The meaning of Boko Haram is literally: "Western education is forbidden." The ideological mission of Boko Haram is not in doubt. It clearly declared that it was to overthrow the Nigerian state and impose a strict Islamic Sharia legal system in Nigeria. It was the conviction of members of the sect that there were so many social vices in Nigeria that only an Islamic legal system was capable of eradicating them. Boko Haram membership was drawn from undergraduates, unemployed graduates, the unemployable, the underemployed, some extreme radical Muslims, and the *Almajiris* (a group of young people, male and female, who search for knowledge at home or in transit and display high moral behavior). The graduates are required to show their loyalty and commitment by burning their degrees as part of their indoctrination, as required by the movement (Njoku, 2011). The followers were, however, not restricted to Nigeria, as foreigners from neighboring countries such as Chad, Cameroon, and Niger also joined.

While there is no doubt that the subregion has witnessed a series of threatening security challenges, the activities of the Islamist sect—Boko Haram—remain unique in all ramifications. The sect has demonstrated an unparalleled impunity of the highest order by openly claiming responsibility for several bombings and sniper activities in northern and central Nigeria, thereby placing the nation at the threshold of disintegration as suspicion and accusations between Muslims and Christians continued to rage. The level of terror and destruction that Boko Haram has unleashed on Nigeria has been devastating. The pattern of Boko Haram's devastation and the destruction arising from it has invariably undermined peace and security, not only in the country but also in the Lake Chad Basin.

Implications of the Insurgency to Subregional Security

Boko Haram's violent conflict in the Lake Chad Basin has continued. There are constant raids and suicide bombings, creating fears and widespread trauma for people and preventing them from assessing basic essential services, and damaging infrastructure. The Lake Chad Basin harbors about 21 million inhabitants from Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. These people are among the world's poorest and most vulnerable. There has been the mind-boggling scenario of food insecurity, and malnutrition has gotten to a critical level (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2016). The territorial integrity of any nation is treated with reverence, and no nation can afford to do otherwise. Without proper security to maintain territorial integrity, every aspect of human endeavor, be it health, environment, food, economy, politics, or the social and or physiological, stands to be greatly affected by the security or insecurity of that nation. In recent times, the Lake Chad security environment has been bogged down with challenging security issues championed by the Boko Haram insurgency. These terror attacks have had negative implications for the socioeconomic and political health, as well as the security, of the Lack Chad region.

The effect of Boko Haram terror on the security of the area cannot be overemphasised. People are now being denied their fundamental human rights and cannot exercise freedom of movement or worship for fear of being attacked by members of the sect. The planting and carrying of explosives has been a common method of the sect. The most dangerous of the activities of Boko Haram is the conscription of young boys and girls, who have been brainwashed to believe that their heaven is assured if they die in the process of "fighting for

Allah." Sometimes they are even put under the influence of dangerous drugs to perform these heinous acts. Boko Haram has created fear in the minds of the people. Churches and mosques were bombed while people were worshipping. The almost simultaneous bomb explosions at St. Theresa's Catholic Church in Madalla, Niger state; Mountain of Fire and Miracles Church in Jos, Plateau state; and Gadaka in Yobe state on Christmas day 2011 are still fresh in memory (Allen and Silver, 2011).

Boko Haram has also put the military to shame and revealed its inadequacies. The security situation became so precarious that the Nigerian leadership became suspicious of the incompetence of their military commanders. This suspicion has led to their regular replacement. The inadequacies and incompetence allegations were validated by Air Chief Marshal Alex Badeh, former Nigerian Chief of Defense Staff (CDS), who was quoted as saying that "the military he headed lacked adequate equipment to fight Boko Haram." Boko Haram has plunged its area of operation into long-time insecurity and danger. Troops of the Nigerian Army have reported cases of mines along the routes frequented by people, which only military engineers have the technical knowledge to breach. It is, however, doubtful if the Nigerian Army engineers have such sophisticated modern equipment. However, the defense spokesman, Major General Chris Olukolade, has denied this allegation. In a report carried by Reuters (Abdallah, 2015), a soldier was quoted as saying, "soldiers have retreated to Bama because of mines. They had been on the road but that made them vulnerable, so they moved to the bush, but there are mines planted there [too]." A member of a local vigilante group, Muhammad Mungonu, corroborated the soldier's statement as he said, "Three of our boys were killed by a landmine as we progressed into Sambisa. We have suspended going farther" (Abdallah, 2015). An additional issue with mines is that even after hostilities have ended, these mines will remain dangerous to the inhabitants of the area. Europe and Asia are still grappling with mine-contaminated environments long after the Second World War. Busé (2000) has contended that:

> Explosives and mines from WWI and WWII still turn up on European and Asian construction sites, backyard gardens, beaches, wildlife preserves and former military training grounds . . . these discoveries are not isolated incidents but are the result of hastily cleared ammunition dumps, training ground, bombings and mine fields from these wars.

Another critical security issue is that hoodlums and other criminal gangs have hijacked the situation to perpetrate their nefarious activities. Kidnapping has increased in the areas affected by the insurgency. The case is assuming a dangerous dimension as criminal gangs have taken advantage of the situation by planting bombs and kidnapping and killing innocent people in the affected areas.

The Boko Haram insurgency has also exposed the security lapses of security outfits in the subregion, especially those involved in information gathering. It has shown that the security agencies are not adequately equipped with enough apparatus to gather information on impending attacks to nip them in the bud. These lapses account for these agencies not being proactive enough to expose planned attacks by the insurgents before they take place. The attacks on institutions such as various police stations and the United Nations building in Abuja, or the kidnapping of the Chibuk girls, were a result of this weakness.

As mentioned earlier, one of the causes of insurgency in Nigeria has been the massive unemployment facing youths, which has provided a ready market for recruitment for the sect in the subregion. Illiteracy compounds the already bad situation, a result of negligence in education from the successive governments of the political elites of that part of West Africa. The situation

has led to the closure of schools and the collapse of business activities in the region. Boko Haram terrorism has resulted in a drastic reduction in economic investment in the subregion. For instance, experts once described former President Goodluck Jonathan's economic reforms as an effort that may yield no result because of the pervasive woes in security in the country. It is pertinent to mention that no serious business organisation will risk coming to invest in a turbulent environment. In the wake of the crisis in the country, many international agencies and countries began to issue travel warnings to their citizens about the dangers involved in visting and doing business in some parts of the country. The government of the United States fired the first shot of warning to its citizens about the risks of going to Nigeria. In particular, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, Abia, Edo, Imo, Jos, Bauchi, Gombe, Yobe, and Borno states, as well as the Gulf of Guinea (Carson, 2012), were identified as hot spots. This situation has had grave consequences for the economic development of the country, as the insurgency has further damaged Nigeria's profile as a desirable destination for investment, travel, tourism, scholarship, and migration.

Furthermore, terrorism in the region has created uncertainty in business activities in the country. Most foreigners willing to invest in Nigeria are now afraid to come to the country for good and sustainable business engagements. The attacks of Boko Haram have caused a severe drought in economic and commercial activities, as business activities are almost at a standstill. Commercial banks now do brisk business, as they have reduced their working duration from eight hours to just three. Awojobi (2014: 144-150), has opined that the frequent bombings and clashes between the insurgents and the security agents have weighed heavily on the commercial and business activities in the region, while many people have fled the area. In some locations, business activities were paralysed. The spate of insecurity trailing the activities of Boko Haram in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria has greatly stressed and imperilled a growing commercial chain that was instrumental in the cooperation and integration process, which was the vision of the founders of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in a fast globalising economic and political order.

The economic impact of terrorism on security is, therefore, multifaceted. Investors naturally evade areas perceived to be a potential source of terrorist attacks. In Borno and Yobe states in the North-East, Nigeria, the people that go to the fish and beans markets have dwindled due to fear of attack by terrorists. Apenda and Tough (2015) noted that farmers who produce onions, rice, maize, livestock, pepper, and fish have all fled the Lake Chad region. Baga market, known for fish trading, has been forced to close for security reasons. The effect of the closure of these markets on food safety is unprecedented as neighbouring states also felt the scarcity of the items, which resulted in the increase of prices of these food items. The strategy of violence of the Boko Haram has also caused the massive displacement of people of large-scale agricultural and fishing communities from their original habitat to other settlements. These displaced people were responsible for the production of essential materials needed for exchange in the international trade relations among the adjacent neighbours in the region (Awodola and Ayuba, 2015).

The Boko Haram insurgency has reportedly forced not less than 1.5 million people out of their homes to seek safety in other parts of the country. Another 150,000 have also taken refuge in neighbouring Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. Although Nigeria ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in Africa on April 17, 2012 (AUCPAIDP, 2012), as of April 2016 the federal cabinet had yet to adopt the policy, despite persistent advocacy on the issue. The IDPs, therefore, continue to live in cramped and unhygienic conditions. The most vulnerable IDPs—the young, older people and those with

disabilities—are most at risk and have been significantly affected by the spread of poliovirus. In 2012, there was a significant reduction in the spread of polio in Nigeria; however, in 2014, Nigeria experienced an increased outbreak of type 2 poliovirus (cVDPV2) with 29 cases across five states. The distribution of these cases are: 14 cases in Borno, 10 cases in Kano, two cases in Yobe, one case in Katsina, and two cases in Jigawa, up from five cases in 2013 (NPHDA, 2015: 4). The increase in the outbreak of this disease followed restricted access to the area for health workers, caused by the fear of being attacked by insurgents. This situation has become a great concern to Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and Niger, which have declared the situation a health emergency that requires quick attention to stem its global spread (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2016).

Apart from the epidemiological disaster confronted by IDPs, they also, in the long run, face severe trauma due to extended stays in unsuitable environments. The result of this can be multi-dimensional. They could become destitute after returning from displaced persons' camps and never go back to normal life. Research on the conditions of IDPs has shown that IDPs are targets of violence or pawns in military conflict and face armed attacks, killings, abductions, injuries, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). All of these effects are a common phenomenon in IDP camps in this area. In addition, Boko Haram's insurgency has drastically affected the tourism industry in the subregion. According to research conducted by Adejoh and Fada (2014), terrorist attacks have reduced the number of tourists visiting the countries affected by terrorism. The report indicated the cancellation of many national and international events in these geopolitical zones. For instance, the Nigerian premier leagues between different clubs within the country faced a setback, as clubs from the southern part of Nigeria were unwilling to go to places like Jigawa, Bauch, and Kano, located in the north, for their matches. The insurgency also led to the cancellation of an international football match between the Nigeria Super Eagles and their Samba Boys counterparts from Brazil in 2012. Nigeria, being a football-loving country, lost much due to these cancellations.

The north east of Nigeria also houses the famous Yankari game reserve and the Mambila Plateau, which used to attract tourists and investors from different parts of the world before Boko Haram's insurgency. These tourist centers have lost a great deal in the wake of Boko Haram, leading to unemployment as employees abandoned their various duty posts for fear of being attacked. In Cameroon, Boko Haram has caused a steady decline in visitors to Waza National Park, Cameroon's largest game reserve. According to Tourism Ministry spokesman Serge Eric Epoune, people used to come in their thousands, but that number has dwindled because people fear for their lives. It has therefore threatened the financial infrastructure of Cameroon (Ngala, 2015). The situation in this subregion has become worrisome; aside from the massive socioeconomic implications, the human cost is unquantifiable. It is, even more, disturbing in an area that is in dire need of development in all facets of human endeavours.

Curbing Insurgency in the Subregion

Nigeria initially saw the Boko Haram insurgency as a strictly internal problem which it thought could be taken care of without external influence. This assertion is not contestable considering the political, economic, military and population of the country. But with large swathes of many territories falling into the hands of the insurgents, Nigeria had no option but to cooperate with the neighboring countries to form the Multi-National Task Force (MNJTF). The activities of the sect prompted the subregion to establish the MNJTF, comprising soldiers from

Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon as granted by the African Union in February 2016. The response of the adjacent countries of Chad, Niger, and Cameroon was spontaneous as they agreed without much persuasion to join in contributing to the MNJTF (Théroux-Bénoni, 2016). The MNJTF, with its headquarters in Ndjamena, has been able to canalize the insurgents and restrict them within the Sambisa forest as the push against them was on all fronts. The present situation sees the fighting deescalating given the successes that the MNJTF has achieved. For instance, the cases of bombing have drastically reduced since the line of supply of the insurgents had been cut. They now lack food and ammunition, and even communication to the outside world seems to have been reduced. Other achievements of the MNJTF include an improvement of the security situation as many of the territories hitherto controlled by the insurgents have been taken back and people are returning home. One achievement is the recent release of 21 Chibok school girls abducted two years ago.

The activities of the region have received a boost from the international community. The United States government in August 2016 offered over $37 million to the Lake Chad Basin for humanitarian assistance. The United Nations Regional Coordinator in assessing the situation said the region would require at least $559 million in the next four months to ease the crisis in the area (Channels Television, October 14, 2016).

Panacea for Insurgency in the Subregion

It is a fact of history that development thrives in a peaceful environment. Consequently, all hands must be on deck to ensure peace and stem the tide of Boko Haram's terrorism from Nigeria and her neighbors. It is quite evident that this subregion has not fared well in its quest for an industrial and technological breakthrough since independence, and this has forced these nations to rely on importation for virtually everything; terrorism will only worsen the situation. Consequently, it is necessary for governments at all levels to create an enabling environment for investment and industrial growth by ensuring the security of lives and property in the country.

Boko Haram terrorism, which has created palpable fear and a meaningful sense of insecurity in the polity and undermined the country's growth and development, should be tackled with all seriousness by the government. Security agencies, especially those concerned with intelligence gathering and analysis, must be empowered, motivated, and adequately mobilized to combat criminality and insecurity.

Also, effective legislation that will adequately punish offenders and deter potential criminals must be put in place. A situation where criminals are offered amnesty and put on bumper payroll will not only undermine security but also encourage more people to enter into criminality with the expectations of amnesty and consequent monthly remunerations from the government, just for being repentant criminals. An example of this is the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme and the proposed offer of amnesty to Boko Haram insurgents (Adebayo, 2014). The government can, however, do better by providing social amenities.

There should be proper coordination of border patrol, and efficient regulation of the influx of immigrants among the member nations of the Lake Chad Basin into their countries to forestall the recruitment into criminal gangs. The Lake Chad Basin governments should, as a matter of urgency, conduct a credible national population census and national identity registration to ensure that their nationals are easily identified anywhere they go.

There is the need for the government to embark on poverty alleviation programs that will impact positively on the lives of the people. The improved physical, social, and psychological quality of life of a society and its members, both in a domestic setting and within the larger regional and global system, will give the citizens a deeper sense of patriotism. Accordingly, the government must introduce elements that have the capacity to provide the citizens with economic, social, and political conditions that would ensure happiness and relative prosperity. Security awareness should be made inclusive. There should be a massive orientation of all citizens, regardless of their level of education, to be aware of the importance of the security of the country and ensure they place it above any personal interests. The tranquillity and well-being of any society are necessary components of national security.

The devastating decline of youth unemployment is an issue that needs to be critically addressed by the governments of these nations. The generation of employment for the teeming population is a critical problem that requires the urgent attention of the government, vigorously and aggressively pursued. The engagement of unemployed youths would automatically result in depletion in the number of youths always readily available for recruitment into various criminal gangs. The inference is that the reduction of youth unemployment will translate to a reduction in crime and engender national sustainable development. Youths are an important segment of the society, who should be encouraged to channel their energies into productive ventures that can lead to national development by being positively engaged in the system and discouraged from activities that could be detrimental to the growth of the country. Therefore, every action taken towards youth employment is a step towards crime reduction, as well as towards national development.

Governments of the Lake Chad Basin Area must eschew corruption in the fight against criminality and insecurity. Overzealous government officials should not squander security budgets both at state and federal levels, but rather adequately utilize funds for combating security challenges. The citizens regularly paying their taxes and fulfilling other state obligations should be well compensated and protected by the state agencies responsible for such tasks. To this extent, the current charges against the former National Security Adviser (NSA) to the government of Nigeria for involvement in a scandal focusing on the mismanagement of money meant for procurement of weapons for fighting the insurgency should not be swept under the carpet.

There must be sincerity on the part of government functionaries to ensure judicious use of funds meant for the security of lives and property. The government must address critically and pragmatically the issue of the *Almajiris* in the subregion. However, in recent times they have become street urchins and a menace to society. It should be reformed to make the children in the system useful to both themselves and society when they grow older. To this end, education must be given priority, aggressively pursued, and made compulsory for all children, including the physically challenged.

Conclusion

The economy of the Lake Chad Basin has been adversely affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. Insecurity has been heightened in the subregion as the Islamists scaled up their deadly attacks in the area. The insurgency has hampered the once thriving economy and peaceful coexistence of the people of the area. It has significantly changed the financial structure of the Lake Chad Basin as so much is committed to fighting the insurgency. The subregion has

however improved on their cooperation to enhance the security in the area with the formation of the MNJTF to fight the insurgents.

There is need to improve on mutual intelligence that would builds trust among the governments of the subregion and could efficiently improve the lives of the people. There is the need for an inclusive dialogue that will involve all clans and ethnic groups on security and stability in the subregion. The Lake Chad Basin nations, especially Nigeria, need to do more to ensure good life for its people. Winning the war against the Boko Haram insurgency therefore requires more than military action but providing social amenities that can make life meaningful to the people. If governments in this subregion take advantage of the vast human and material resources, both military and non-military, financial and social, the Lake Chad Basin will soon become a bastion of hope.

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