

**THE MULTI NATIONAL JOINT TASK FORCE (MNJTF) AND BOKO
HARAM INSURGENCY IN LAKE CHAD BASIN REGION (2009-2018)**

By

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the factors that propelled the transmutation of Boko Haram activities into trans-border insurgency in Lake Chad Basin region and examined the impact of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in addressing the Boko Haram insurgency. It also determined the challenges faced by the Multinational Joint Task Force in the stabilization of the Lake Chad Basin region. These were with a view to providing information on the factors responsible for the trans-border transmutation of Boko Haram insurgency and the policy for addressing transnational insurgency in Lake Chad Basin region.

The study utilized both the primary and the secondary data. Primary data was generated through the conduct of an in-depth interview. The population for the study comprised of the officials of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Directorate of Military Intelligence (DM), National Defense College (NDC), Nigeria Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Department of International Relations Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies University of Ibadan, and the members of the Civil Society. From the population, 20 respondents were purposively selected for the interviews. Secondary data was obtained from journal articles, books, news reports, seminar papers, government publications and internet materials. Data generated was analyzed using appropriate descriptive and content analysis methods.

The results showed that the factors that propelled the transmutation of Boko Haram activities into trans-border insurgency in Lake Chad Basin Region were due to the Hstrocultural ties of the people, strong religious affiliations of the insurgents, political and development issues, conflict over limited resources, adverse security and porosity of borders of

the states in Lake Chad Basin region. Furthermore, the results discovered that the MNJTF has made impact in the areas of launching transnational attacks against the insurgents, reduction of the persistent terrorist attacks, overall containment of the insurgency, humanitarian intervention, provision of security, de-radicalization of the people and stabilization of the communities affected by the insurgency. The study also identified the challenges faced by the MNJTF in the stabilization of the Lake Chad Basin region as issues of incompatibility among the forces, poor financial and motivational commitments to the forces, improper management of intelligence, ideological orientation of the insurgency, mutual suspicion and conflicts of interests among the states of the MNJTF.

The study concluded that transmutation of Boko Haram activities across Lake Chad Basin region was as a result of strong religion and ideological affiliations of the insurgents and porosity of African borders; which also paved way for the establishment of the MNJTF in the region.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Africa, since mid-20th century has been a victim of ideological clashes and security challenges; ranging from militancy, ethno-religious crisis, political conflict, human and drug trafficking trans-border crimes to terrorism (Usman Tar and Adejo Sunday: 2017: 1). In the 1990s, terrorism became a major threat to the sovereignty of these countries, recording a high level of destruction of lives and property in the horn of Africa, sub-Saharan region and particularly in the Lake Chad Basin region. Before the Boko Haram terror started in July 2009, the Lake Chad region has witnessed several violent conflicts, revolutionary struggles, warlordism and military insurgency stemming largely from the Chadian civil war of the 1980s, followed by armed struggle and factional militias in both Niger and Cameroon that was rooted in lack of political legitimacy, leadership corruption, and political fragmentation which has taken away the confidence of the populace in the credibility of the governments (Onapajo 2013 cited in Usman Tar and Mala Mustapha, 2016: 104). This was accompanied by the terror siege against Africa in general. Many of them were the Mitatsine uprising of the 1980s in Nigeria, Wlayat Faction in West Africa, the Al-Shabaab in Somalia (and other parts of the horn of Africa), al-Qaeda (in Islamic Mghreb) in Algeria and Mali, Tuareg rebellion in the Sahara Desert, Tuaregs of northern Mali in 2007-2009 and the Niger Republic (Abiodun Oluwadare, 2017: 41). In this, the menace of terrorism consistently spread across Africa, eating deep into the foundation of peace and security in the continent. This posed the necessity for the united effort of African countries to effectively curb the threat especially by standing together in the capacity of

intelligence sharing military cooperation and humanitarian intervention for the purpose of addressing the menace of Terrorism

The Boko Haram terrorism that constitutes one of the violent insurgency in the Lake Chad Region can be traced to the activity of an Islamic Cleric known as Mohammed Yusuf who has been a devoted loyalist to the Mitatsine Sect that existed in 1980s. The sect was responsible for the death of thousands of Nigerians in the Northern part of Nigeria (Clawele Albert, 2017: 122). Having originated from the Kanuri ethnic group in Borno state, Mohammed Yusuf was a member of the Izala movement, a radical but non-violent movement, whose ideology was shaped by the rise of Salafi Islam. The growing influence of Salafi ideology made the salafist sect to be more radical than their counterparts, who were Sufi Muslims that formerly dominated Nigerian Islamic beliefs. Through the Salafist Islamic ideologies, Mohammed Yusuf became radical against western education and according to his belief, the western education is a compromise to the Islamic faith and it should be prohibited (Daniel Torbjornsson and Michael Jonsson, 2017: 16)

Yusuf did not pose any threat to the security of Nigeria until 2002 and 2003 when his group started to be identified with different forms of speeches of religious intolerance and antagonism which establishes a volatile atmosphere for religious violence in Nigeria. This brought him to a collision path with the Nigerian state, most especially the government of Borno State. During this time, the state government could not have him imprisoned, even while several cases were brought against him in Nigeria's courts of law. Having escaped this, the Nigeria police took laws into their hands and killed him extrajudicially in 2009 for the belief that this would lead to the end of the movement. But Yusuf was succeeded by a more militant leader,

Abubakar Shekau (also known as Darul Akeem wa Zamunda Ta wheed), who has up to date successfully turned Boko Haram into a terrorist organization (Owale Albert, 2017: 121).

On account of this, Nigeria in July 2009 became victim of terrorist insurgency as the sect came to prominence through diverse attacks against government institutions, security agencies, schools, international institution bases, including the United Nations building and Force Headquarters in Abuja. There were also raids on army barracks and military formations, bombing of churches, mosques, local communities and villages (Peter Mbah and Chikodiri Nwangwu, 2014: 74).

In the wake of 2015, Boko Haram gained international prominence and support through acts of vicious violence, intimidation, and kidnapping fuelled by large number of weapons flows from Libya, Sudan, Egypt and Syria with diverse training and support from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Mourabitoun in Mali. The joint terror activities of AQIM and Boko Haram became pronounced and threatened the borders of Lake Chad Basin and the contiguous areas of the Sahel. As the groups began their activities in Niger, it became clear that AQIM was training and recruiting Boko Haram operatives. In March 2015, Boko Haram declared allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and by the latter half of 2016, the relationship between ISIS and Boko Haram grew stronger. This brings more fears that Boko Haram could become even more threatening to Nigeria and the whole region of the Lake Chad Basin. This is more evident on December 2016, when Boko Haram violence had displaced 2.3 million people within the Lake Chad Region which has tripled the number from 2014, including over 600,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northeastern Nigeria, 109,000 in Niger, 198,900 in Cameroon, and 95,100 in Chad. The International Organization for Migration also reported in

2016, that 85,779 Nigerian refugees had arrived in Cameroon, 7,917 in Chad, and 96,940 in Niger, and they took refuge in some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities. Many refugees in Niger settle in makeshift structures along the single paved road that heads west from Lake Chad (Institutes for Security Studies, 2016). Over the years, the region has also been plagued by scarcity of resources in spite of the erstwhile abundance of natural resources. The region has been stagnated economically and