

Transnational Insurgency and Border Security Challenges in Lake Chad Basin: The Nigerian Perspective

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Abstract

Border security management and defence are crucial to any measure that seeks to check effectively, transnational insurgency and other forms of cross-border criminalities in any part of Africa. However, addressing the issue of porosity of international boundaries, which in most parts allows unhindered movement of people and goods across the boundaries, has become a greater challenge for Lake Chad Basin Countries, especially, Nigeria, Cameroun, Niger and Chad. The fragility of the basin countries security systems and porous borders allowed for armed groups and common banditry to flourish. Thus, these areas have become the routine of Boko Haram terrorist, armed bandits and other criminals along borders. This study, therefore, examines transnational insurgency and border security challenges in Lake Chad basin, focusing on the Nigerian perspective. The study employs both primary and secondary sources of data collection and adopts a descriptive method for analysis. The study establishes the nexus between transnational insurgency

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and border security, while findings reveal that the inability of border security agencies to monitor and defend Nigerian borders are not unconnected to various challenges that are confronting these security agencies in particular, and the general insecurity that enveloped the Lake Chad Basin areas. Recommendations were made based on the findings of this study.

Keywords: Transnational Insurgency, Terrorism, Border security, Lake Chad Basin.

Introduction

Many contemporary insurgencies pitch governments against rebel organisations that span international boundaries, find sanctuaries in neighbouring states and receive support from rival governments. Because the military and police forces of recognised governments must respect international boundaries, militant groups often use border regions to their advantage as they seek safe havens in which to operate. Rebel groups with foreign sanctuaries are quite common as conflicts in Turkey, Colombia, Liberia, India, Sudan, and elsewhere attest (Salehyah, 2010). Current crises in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger have demonstrated the difficulties in confronting transnational terrorist groups, as relations with neighbouring states may pose challenges for security forces. Once transnational insurgents have established themselves on foreign soil, the conflict ceases to be a wholly domestic affair and necessarily draws in regional governments. Traditional counter-insurgency strategies can only go so far in containing the threat as foreign soil is off-limits to security forces. This threatens to change the dynamic of the war against terrorism and lead to an escalatory process which encompasses neighbouring states.

One major obstacle for research on transnational insurgency has been the limited availability of information on this topic. Some host nations welcome foreign insurgent groups into their territories, but often keep this sponsorship secret to avoid diplomatic or military reprisals (Byman *et. al.*, 2001; Salehyan, 2010). Other insurgent groups impose their presence on weak neighbouring states, but the low state capacity that these groups exploit also limits data availability and compromise its quality. The problem

of cross-border militancy has the potential to raise tensions in the region, and even lead to a full-blown war between governments (this as a result of misperception or intelligence failure). At times, states will use coercive bargaining against their neighbours to press them to evict rebel units on their territory. Troop movements along the border, cross-border strikes against rebel bases, and confrontations with the armed forces of the neighbouring state can be used, among other tactics, to increase pressure on the rebel host. Though this is not the case of Nigeria and her Northeastern neighbouring nations. At other times, states may devise cooperative strategies to police their borders and launch joint operations against militant groups. Doing so requires clear lines of communication and effective coordination of military action. Also, states can simply neglect the problem. Rather than confrontations or active cooperation, some states may find that they are unwilling or unable to engage their neighbours and will let the problem fester, perhaps for years. However, the truth remains that gaining an understanding of best and worst practices in dealing with transnational insurgencies is critical for confronting 21st-century militant groups.

The evolution of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), a basin organisation which brings together Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, the Central African Republic and Libya, is worthy of note in this discussion. It was originally set up in 1964 to coordinate access and use of the resources of Lake Chad; however, the region covered by the LCBC has recently been the scene of military cooperation in light of the fight against Boko Haram terrorist group. The Lake Chad Basin countries find themselves encompassing a region of heightened mobility and porous borders under increasing environmental and security pressure. The rise of Boko Haram puts the LCBC at the centre of attention, as the affected states needed a political forum to coordinate joint military efforts and cross-border cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

Cross-border armed incursion into Nigeria, although not a daily occurrence, is not a new phenomenon in what constitutes the dynamics of the interstate relationship among Lake Chad Basin countries. Whether it is a mild, isolated case, involving a very few numbers of foreign, overzealous, armed personnel acting on their own or a more direct fullblown attack with the backing of the foreign government, Nigeria has always taken such an issue very seriously. This becomes imperative as no government worth its

salt would allow or permit incursion into its territory by its neighbours without protesting. Border incursion is indeed considered as an act of aggression which undermines a state's territorial integrity. Despite Nigeria's foreign policy thrust of good neighbourliness, she has occasionally suffered these ugly incidence, with virtually all her five neighbours (with exception of Equatorial Guinea with whom Nigeria shares only maritime boundary in the Gulf of Guinea). The availability of a haven across these borders reduces the cost and increases the probability of success for various insurgent activities, allowing transnational rebels to expand their operations in Nigeria.

The Nigerian state has come under severe and unprecedented security challenges in the last two decades. Among the major security threats currently confronting the nation are: cross-border banditry, terrorism and insurgencies. The increasing proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the country cannot be overemphasised, coupled with other criminalities, such as trafficking in humans, trade in illicit drugs, illegal commercial activities, and trade in illicit goods, e.g. import of fake and substandard goods into the country. All the aforementioned have relations with borders. Borders security plays a significant role in ensuring the passage or denial of entrance to humans and goods that come into or exit the country. The insecurity of lives and properties in Nigeria can be ameliorated if people and goods entering the nation, are not properly accounted for.

Though an attempt to define the border in this study faces the challenges and difficulties related to its concomitant perspectives, connotations, and typology. There are varieties of borders, such as administrative, economic, social-cultural, national, international, regional, military, and sub-regional borders. This study sees borders as international demarcating lines or zones between sovereign states. A border is a demarcating line or zones between two or more independent states which may be categorised into sea, air, and land. Sometimes rivers, valleys oceans, and some distinct geographical features are used as demarcating lines of the end and beginning of territories of states (Danfulani, 2014). The security agencies that are saddled with the responsibility to protect borders can do more than they have, with governmental support and novel reorientation of policy posture that guarantees safety and the protection of all and sundry. The security agencies may need to review their mechanism of operation or *modus operandi* in the border areas to ensure result-oriented operations.

This study underscores the imperative of a people-oriented perspective to security. With special reference to international boundaries and borderlands, the study stresses the need for repositioning or rethinking security operations at the borders from a concern for the state to a concern for the people, notably the hitherto downtrodden and structurally marginalised populations in adjacent borderlands of several geographically contiguous neighbouring African states that surround Nigeria. Renewed commitment to border security operations places an equally renewed emphasis on trans-border co-operation and co-development of border regions as critical cornerstone policy issues.

Statement of the Problem

The menace of terrorism and insurgency in Nigeria has been on the increase in the recent past. The activities of the insurgents and bandits across Nigeria have made life extremely difficult for law-abiding citizens who are continually harassed, intimidated, brutalised, maimed and sometimes killed in their encounter with these terrorists. They usually operate with reckless abandon, especially in rural market days in the case of a rural area and on the highways on daily basis. Evidence abounds in Nigerian dailies and other media. The most disturbing about the activities of these groups is their courage in operating even in urban areas in broad daylight, and sometimes cordoning of a whole village which they ransack, seizing every valuable property and cash worth millions of naira (where it is available). They sometimes kidnap and rape women and girls, or kill their husbands in their encounter. The most worrisome of this matter is that most of the perpetrators of these crimes in Nigeria are bandits confirmed to be rebels from warring factions from Chad and Niger Republics who are after arms, ammunition and food for their different groups and cartels. Meanwhile, they collaborate with local criminals and even law-abiding citizens who fear incarceration by these bandits and insurgents. In the course of their operations within the nation, Nigeria, they have successfully recruited many unemployed, idle and criminal minded youths into their extremist and criminal cartels. Meanwhile, border security management in Nigeria is confronted with daunting challenges. The fragility of the basin countries' security systems and porous borders allowed for armed groups and common banditry to flourish. Hence, the increasing cross-border nature of insurgency against

Nigeria and its neighbours. Effective management of the Nigerian borders would have forestalled the entrance of armed bandits and contraband goods into the Nigerian territory. Thus, the negligence of border security and poor border management in Nigeria has largely contributed to the prevalence of cross border crimes and other security threats to the nation. Therefore, the study raises three questions which, in turn, form the basis of the analysis.

- i. What are the causes of transnational terrorism in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the natures of the Nigerian borders?
- iii. What is the nexus between transnational terrorism and border security management?

Conceptual Analysis

Transnational Insurgency

Insurgency is a protracted political-military struggle directed toward subverting or displacing the legitimacy of a constituted government or occupying power, leading to the complete or partial control of the resources of a territory through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organisations. The common denominator for most insurgent groups is their objective of gaining control of a population or a particular territory, including its resources. The *US Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency* defines insurgency as

a protracted political-military activity directed toward completely or partially controlling the resources of a country through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organisations. Insurgent activity (including guerrilla warfare; terrorism; and political mobilisation, for example, propaganda, recruitment, front and covert party organisation, and international activity) is designed to weaken government control and legitimacy while increasing insurgent control and legitimacy.

Transnational insurgent groups such as guerrilla movements and terrorist organisations move across national boundaries for sanctuary and aid to unleash violent attacks on people in power and other subjects that they identify as enemies. These groups may take a variety of forms as fractions of nationalist or separatist movements based on nationality factors or

premised on a given ideology. Salehyan, (2010) refers to them as rebels across borders, or transnational rebels, that influence international relations, often causing hostile interstate relations and evoking different diplomatic responses ranging from revenge and alliance formation to collective security measures. Once rebels cross borders, they cease to be problems for internal affairs and, therefore, necessarily draw in different countries (Stanland, 2005; Salehyan, 2010:6).

The survival of transnational insurgents is attributable in large part to foreign sanctuaries, diasporas, and porous borders through which they rebuild and replace their human power. Especially helpful to insurgents on the run, is a neighbouring state that is either sympathetic towards their course or is unable to effectively control its borders. According to Stanland (2005), when insurgents fail to successfully defend and govern territories in the face of hot government counterinsurgent operations, they find new ways to maintain political and military power that may be located in a neighbouring state. Sanctuaries in neighbouring states can provide a haven for training and organising tasks that would be difficult inside the actual combat zone. In escaping the daily pressures of basic survival looming in their home territory, insurgent groups may even eventually resemble professional military organisations (Salehyan, 2009; Stanland, 2005). Salehyan (2010) observes that once transnational insurgents establish themselves in foreign soil, the conflict ceases to be wholly domestic and necessarily draws in neighbouring governments. Transnational insurgents generate conflicts between states because a neighbouring state may normally employ the tactic of supporting its neighbours' insurgent movements as a means of undermining the neighbour's foreign enemies and rival neighbours; this action in turn, empowers insurgents as an alternative to the direct use of force. Some states use coercive bargaining against their neighbours to press for the eviction of insurgents of their territory. This coercive diplomacy often involves troop deployment along the border, launching cross border strikes against rebel bases and at times, confrontation with the armed forces of the rebel host country as a means of increasing pressure on the rebel host to take action (Salehyan, 2005:8).

Causes of Transnational Terrorism in Nigeria

The causes of terrorism in Nigeria, in particular, and Africa, in general, are located in the contradictions of the domestic political economy and the asymmetrical nature of the international system. For the former, these include poor governance epitomised by systemic corruption, rising poverty, unemployment, inequality and the near-total collapse of social services and infrastructural facilities (Omotola, 2006). Contradictions of the domestic political economy include the transformation of identity politics in the unhealthy competition for power, the struggle for resource control and balanced federalism, porous land and maritime borders, increased proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs), growth of Almajiri population, the existence of radical Islamic sects, poor security situation awareness or consciousness, and an ineffectual national security system (Onuoha, 2011).

The free flow of arms in Nigeria generally has contributed both to the increase in the number of violent conflicts in the country and also their intensity. These arms are sourced from within West Africa and also from world supply of arms through the collaboration of Nigerians and foreigners. The proximity of Nigeria's land and sea borders of some of the conflict zones has aggravated this trend. The illicit proliferation of arms and their impact on security in the country, in general, are serious. In many cities in Nigeria, gangs of young people that are suffering economic and social exclusion (but with access to small arms) are renegotiating social, economic and political space through violence. The situation in some of the conflict zones, such as Plateau, Borno and Niger States as well as some of the states in the Niger Delta region present good opportunities for the recruitment of these youths as members of ethnic militias or even as common mercenaries, especially by politicians and religious fundamentalists (Adetula, 2011: 150).

Lack of quality education and the presence of mostly Islamic education in the northern part of Nigeria have provided ready-made foot soldiers for Boko Haram which in effect have emboldened it to continue their campaign of terror. Robison, Crenshaw, and Jenkins (2006) argue that "formal educational systems, particularly those that are not balanced by a dynamic economy and strong civil society may provide recruiting grounds for radical causes." The lack of quality education, poor economy and almost no

presence of civil society in Nigeria have been catalysts for not only terrorism but also all other forms of criminal behaviour.

Governance failure is the main factor implicated in the rising incidence of terrorism in Nigeria (Onuoha, 2011). Governance failure is indexed by the manifest incapacity of public institutions to deliver critical public goods, such as water, electricity, roads, healthcare, job opportunities and security. The average Nigerian lacks access to these basic services that are important to lead a healthy, satisfying and productive life in a society. This contributes to the emergence of a largely frustrated population, that are mainly youths (Onuoha, 2011). It is imperative to know that lack of sufficient public resources is not the challenge in this case but widespread corruption, especially in the public sector, which compounds other governance and development deficits bedeviling Nigeria. Imobighe (2003) brought home the argument of Robison, Crenshaw, and Jenkins (2006), when he argues that “some politicians and ‘conflict merchants’ take advantage of the huge pool of poverty and unemployment by recruiting and arming such people in pursuit of selfish political interests.” Once more Robison, Crenshaw, and Jenkins (2006) drummed home the need for governance and not a government in every country, since “repressive states, especially those that combine; hard repression (coercive violence) with claims to popular responsiveness are likely to incite dissident terrorism’.” The unjustified coercive violence unleashed on the members of Boko Haram which culminated in the death of their leader Mohammed Yusuf was one of the catalysts for the war they are waging against Nigeria.

Aghedo and Osumah (2012) gave a summary of the factors that have emboldened Boko Haram when they argued that Boko Haram’s success could be attributed to their having foreign backing, the ineffectiveness of the military, and support from politicians and Islamic clerics. Another significant factor that has assisted Boko Haram, whose members are mostly Hausas and Kanuris (both tribes are among the major ethnic groups in Niger, Nigeria and Chad), is the presence of aliens in the northern parts of Nigeria, who share the same ethnicity and religions with northern Nigerians but are not nationals of Nigeria. Thus, the porous nature of the borders in the northern parts of Nigeria assisted in part by the cultural affinity the Nigerian Hausas have with their counterparts in other Lake Chad Basin countries that share the same border with Nigeria, have made it possible

for Boko Haram terrorist cartel to cross the borders at will and carry out their activities without worries.

Border Management Issues in Nigeria

Border security is a factor of border management. Borders as opined by Osimen, *et. al.* (2017), is a security issue for all governments. Border security management in Nigeria is poor. Osimen, *et. al.* (2017) observe that border security and the management of borders in ways that promote national security has generally been given low priority in Africa and Nigeria, in particular, compared to the security provided for political elites and their assets in the national capitals and other urban areas far removed from the borders. Supporting this view, Ukase (2015), notes that national security is, in turn, equated to state security, while state security is viewed as the security of those who occupy public office. Ibeanu and Momoh (2008: 8) argue that rarely is national security viewed as the welfare and happiness of the citizens, neither is security viewed as “community security”, “societal security” nor securing the “common good”. The authors opine that security is viewed in purely state-centric and military terms and not in social and development terms; it is perceived as the maintenance of state sovereignty, not in the context of common humanity and promoting the welfare of the people (Ibeanu and Momoh, 2015). The work of these authors lends credence to the negligence of border security and poor border management in Nigeria which, in turn, has largely contributed to the prevalence of crossborder crimes and other security threats in Nigeria.

Now, it is imperative to identify and note the role of agencies that are saddled with border protection responsibilities. For instance, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) and the Nigerian Customs Services (NCS) are constitutionally charged in Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution and other Acts of Parliament with the task of manning and monitoring the entry, and exits of goods and persons in Nigeria. NCS was established in 1959 through the Customs and Exercise Act CAP C45 and amended in 1979, while NIS was set up by an Act of Parliament CAP 171 LFN of 1963. The NIS handles matters relating to entry and exits of persons and papers related to residency and duration of stay of aliens in the country. It also scrutinises travelling documents of Nigerians exiting to other countries to ascertain the validity of their visas and other travelling documents. The NCS is saddled with

responsibilities relating to checking entry and exits of goods and determining their legality or otherwise. It confiscates contraband and tax goods placed under non-essential goods. The deadly terror activities of Boko Haram Jihadists and the preponderance of cross-border criminalities have added Special Task Forces of Nigeria Army (NA), Nigeria Air Force, State Security Services (SSS), and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) to forces overseeing Nigeria's borders.

The involvement of bodies without mandate in borders management was necessitated by the desire to complement paramilitary forces charged with managing the country's borders to secure the country from terror and crime. The Nigeria Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) also screen travellers and their goods to ensure that banned substances are not allowed to come in or go out of the country. The Nigeria Police Force helps in maintaining law and order; it also has stations along the borders. Whilst some of these security apparatuses are empowered to arrest, others are empowered to prosecute migrants or immigrants that cross the red line of the law through illegal entry or importation of contraband goods. Meanwhile, there is a constant routine check of all the legal entry points erected by the government. The security agencies at the borders are expected to patrol the long porous borders in an attempt to keep faith with legal frameworks that established them and duties assigned by the Nigerian constitution.

Despite the efforts of security agencies, Nigeria still faces daunting challenges in the management of its borders. One of the issues identified in the border security management is unhealthy inter-agency rivalry and lack of cooperation and information sharing between and among the security agencies. Rivalry breeds mutual distrust and hinders effective inter-agency operations among the security operatives in Nigeria's borders management. It is not uncommon also to notice an intra-agency rivalry (i.e. between officers of the same agency). Adekanye (1998) notes that intra/inter-agency rivalry seems to be more entrenched and glaring in Nigeria, where gaffers tend to place self-aggrandisement ahead of national interest. Omoigui (2006) opines that agency rivalry is a state of competition, contention or emulation that exists within and between agencies for something of perceived value to the contending interest. This could be tangible or intangible recognition and other perceived "benefits to self-esteem" which can be positive (goodnatured) or negative (associated with injurious consequences; for

instance, the inability to cooperate optimally in support of national defence and security objectives).

Lack of adequately trained personnel and equipment to effectively discharge duties has been identified among the problems and challenges facing the agencies in border security management. A country's border management system becomes poor and ineffective when it encompasses the problem of inadequate personnel, patrol vehicles, surveillance helicopters and equipment as well as neglect or non-functioning of intelligence services (Musa, 2013). For instance, the NIS and NCS are saddled with obsolete working tools and gadgets that fall short of the global trend. There is no denying the fact that they still move around in old trucks that are not roadworthy much less plying difficult and dangerous terrains in pursuit of trans-borders criminals cutting corners to evade them and the law (Danfulani, 2014). The NIS still faces the problem of inadequate or lack of surveillance cameras, speed boats, body scanners, helicopters, motorbikes, automatic rifles, and communication gadgets. In addition, very easy and cheap means of transportations like donkeys, patrol dogs and bicycles are scarce commodities among these security organisations.

Lack of proper border demarcation between Nigeria and neighbouring countries is one major challenge that has further compounded the issue of border security (see Asiwaju, 1984). However, these poorly demarcated borders have contributed to the porosity of borders, which have made border security management a herculean task for border security agencies.

Some perceive the porosity of land borders as dangerous to security but, for the borderland communities, being able to cross borders is an essential part of their social, economic, and cultural uniqueness that inform their identity and sustain their livelihoods (Osimen *et. al.*, 2017). Meanwhile, this has made the borders and border communities ungoverned space for border security agencies. As noted earlier, there are less than a hundred legal routes aside from over one thousand five hundred (1,500) illegal routes to and from Nigeria. These routes make it easy for terrorists and criminal elements to enter or exit the country at will. Coupled with some of the challenges aforementioned, it becomes unthinkable that border security would capture all persons and goods that enter or exit the country.

Another issue of concern in the ongoing discourse and the one that has serious implications for national security is the abandonment of border

communities by governments. Most of these communities appear to have been disconnected from the Nigerian nation, as one could hardly find primary schools, medical/health centres and other essential institutions there. There is also lack of infrastructural facilities, such as good road networks, pipeborne water and electricity among others. Tahir (2011) observes that, to these communities, Nigeria is truly a mere geographical expression since their contact with government is largely through taxation and the state instruments of coercion- the armed forces. There are no roads and other infrastructural developments. This scenario gives them a very little stake in the system or, at worse, they turn against the state being the main means through which they can have access to national cake. Also, border communities tend to be multilingual; thus, facilitating communication with communities across the borderlines. There is a greater flow of information coming to them regarding the activities of bandits and criminals along the borders, yet they may choose to collaborate with the criminals and be less inclined to volunteer information on them to security agencies.

Other challenges facing security agencies, as identified by scholars in the field of security management, contribute to insecurity in Nigeria. Among these are: the overall ideology/attitude of the services, where such postings are seen as opportunities to feather one's nest, which, in turn, encourages the practice of making returns to superior officers- an act of corruption and lack of patriotism. Others include: lack of coordination of overlapping responsibilities and infighting among the different services; lack of cooperation within and between departments of agencies; an inadequate system of reward and welfare for members of the services leading to poor motivation among border personnel; lack of political will and commitment of resources to effectively manage the borders; and apparent lack of a system of consultation, co-ordination and information gathering from border communities (Tahir 2011, Osimen *et al*, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

This study employs the Rational Choice Theory as the framework for this discussion. The rational choice theory helps us to understand the action and inaction of an insurgent group. Following the work of Becker (1968), the academic literature has understood insurgent groups as rational actors who make decisions (such as whether to rebel or not, when and where to strike,

etc.) after carefully weighing costs and benefits (Kalyvas, 2006; Weinstein, 2007). From this perspective, we expect rebel groups to avoid actions that are likely to have a high cost, such as the seizure of weapons or the loss of operatives. These negative outcomes not only reduce the insurgents' resources but may allow counterinsurgents to acquire valuable information on the group's members and activities. They can also reduce group morale and popular support. Hence, a decrease in the probability of a negative outcome should lead to an increase in the overall level of insurgent activity (Berman *et. al.*, 2011).

One way in which insurgent groups can reduce the risks associated with their actions is by moving their operations outside of the target state, as governments face potentially high costs for unauthorised counterinsurgency activities within another country's territory (Salehyan, 2009). These costs range from economic and diplomatic sanctions to a heightened risk of inter-state war (Salehyan, 2008a). Thus, insurgent groups that can operate on foreign soil can potentially set themselves beyond the reach of the target state's military and the judiciary. Naturally, the extent to which an international border protects insurgents depends on the behaviour of the host state. To become transnational, a rebel group must find either a weak neighbour who is unable to repel it or a welcoming one who is unwilling to do so (Salehyan, 2007). The discussion above suggests that the expansion of insurgents and bandits from the neighbouring states of Niger and Chad into Nigeria provides good examples of "welcoming" and "weak" host nations. Buttressing this fact, Byman *et. al.* (2001) report that 59% of active insurgent groups after the end of the cold war have relied critically on support from foreign states, often neighbouring ones that have provided sanctuary.

Lindsay (1962) notes that access to foreign territory can have a profound effect in an irregular conflict, as it allows insurgents to better prepare and execute their actions. Across the border, rebels can safely train operatives until it is optimal to act and, by crossing back, they can evade opposition forces after an action has taken place. For instance, it was reported that bandits killed 16 people in separate attacks on remote villages in northern Nigeria's Katsina State, an area wracked by cattle-rustling and kidnappings. Gunmen on motorcycles separately stormed the Dantakuri, Tsayau, Barza and Zakka villages late on Sunday 18th through Monday 19th August, 2019,

shooting residents and stealing cattle. It should be noted that these communities near the border with Niger, have been repeatedly attacked by bandits. The bandits maintain camps in Rugu forest which straddles Katsina, Zamfara, Kaduna and Niger States

The dreaded Rugu Forest, spanning over 220km cutting across the Niger Republic to a substantial part of Nigeria has for long been a source of livelihood for nomads. But, over time, it has now become a den of criminals, and a nogo area for many. The forest cuts across seven Katsina State local governments, namely Jibia, Safana, Batsari, Danmusa, Sabuwa, Dandume, and Faskari, and the bandits occupying it have made life unbearable for locals, who say hundreds have been killed, and many women raped, just as cattle worth billions of naira were lost. The government and security operatives offered an amnesty programme for the criminals, which reduced the attacks. But recently, a resurgence of banditry in the area is becoming a source of worry, with many attributing it to a crossover from the embattled Zamfara axis. Hardly a day goes by without any reported killing, kidnapping, or attack on people living in the forest's vicinity (Daily Trust, 10 November 2018).

The view above illustrates the strategic advantage that insurgent groups obtain from access to a foreign territory as well as the high human cost from additional insurgent activity. It also highlights how this advantage is circumscribed to targets located relatively near the border. If the insurgents penetrate deeper into the target state, they are more likely to be attacked by government forces, both before and after the actions have taken place. Thus, rebels' ability to exploit access to foreign territory has a limited geographic scope. This feature sets it apart from other forms of foreign influence, like the provision of weapons or funding, as those resources can be delivered and employed in areas far from the border (Mart'ínez, 2016). The abductions of Chibok and Dapchi Girls in April 2014 and February 2018 respectively lent credence to the fact that access to foreign territory allows insurgents to better prepare and execute their actions. In its briefing, the International Crisis Group reports that "whatever the case, the kidnapers

were able to travel, in a convoy of several vehicles, across an arid expanse with sparse vegetation, apparently close to 200km from their bases around Lake Chad, seize more than a hundred Dapchi girls and return unhindered. These facts in themselves are an indictment of the government's security provisions" (International Crisis Group, April 2018).

The Nexus between Transnational Terrorism and Border Security Management in Nigeria

The world has become a "global village" accompanied by daunting challenges and these have affected effective border management among nations. In other words, globalisation has made it possible for criminals and even terrorists to move across the borders unhindered to carry out activities that are inimical to a nation's development and survival. Border security and monitoring have assumed heightened importance in the world today as the rate of criminal activities and international terrorism has increased in scale, especially since the end of the cold war and in the wake of globalisation (Akinyemi, 2013:1). Advancement in telecommunications, transportation and technology has also facilitated international terrorism across national borders. Border incursions and security threats have continued to be recorded at Nigeria's borders in recent years owing to the activities of the terrorist group known as Boko Haram and other criminal cartels. Centralised control of a state's territory remains a basic characteristic of the nation-state. Hence, its demand for boundaries and boundary maintenance are insatiable. For one thing, boundaries mark off the area of jurisdiction vis-à-vis other states. They are also required for internal differentiation and delineation into several levels and units of sub-national administration (Asiwaju, 1990, p. 111).

A generally accepted definition of territory holds that territory is a defended area. A border is a demarcating line or zones between two or more independent states, which may be categorised into the sea, air, and land. Sometimes rivers, valleys oceans, and some distinct geographical features are used as demarcating lines of the end and beginning of territories of states. (Danfulani, 2014). Thus, these demarcating lines or zones are defended areas. Therefore, the establishment of security forces that will play the role of manning, monitoring and defending these borders are essential, and as such, been given priority by nation-states. Suffice to say that the

issue of border security is dominated by the porosity of the border itself. This, in turn, has resulted in all sorts of cross-border or trans-border criminal activities, such as human trafficking, smuggling, drug trafficking, terrorism, armed robbery, money laundry and illicit arms trafficking. It is imperative to note that one of the basic duties of government everywhere in the world is the maintenance of its territorial integrity and the protection of the state from external aggression. Put differently, it is the sacred duty of governments to ensure that the state is secured with her borders. If a state cannot regulate what passes through its border, it cannot control what happens within it. Thus, within the context of the above discourse, the study emphasises the role of the Nigerian government and its agencies in border security management.

Traditionally, the NIS and NCS are bodies which are constitutionally charged in Nigeria's 1999 Constitution and other Acts of Parliament with the task of manning and monitoring the entry, and exits of goods and persons in Nigeria. However, the deadly terror activities of Boko Haram Jihadists and the preponderance of cross-border criminalities have added Special Task Forces of Nigeria Army (NA), Nigeria Air Force, State Security Services (SSS), and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) to forces overseeing Nigeria's borders. The involvement of bodies without a traditional mandate in borders management was necessitated by the desire to complement paramilitary forces charged with managing the country's borders to secure the country from terror and crime. Despite the role and the efforts of the aforementioned agencies and the Joint Task Force (JTF), to combat transnational criminal activities of Boko Haram terrorist sect and cross-border banditry, yet, the menace of terrorism continues to rear its ugly head in the Nigerian nation.

The failure or inability of the border security agencies to monitor and defend Nigeria's borders are not far-fetched. Some of the challenges that are confronting these agencies as discussed above include unhealthy interagency rivalry and lack of cooperation and information-sharing between and among the security agencies; lack of adequately trained personnel and equipment to effectively discharge duties; lack of proper border demarcation between Nigeria and neighbouring countries; the porosity of the land borders; the abandonment of border communities by governments; lack of coordination of overlapping responsibilities and infighting among the different services;

lack of cooperation within and between departments of agencies; an inadequate system of reward and welfare for members of the services/ poor motivation among border personnel; lack of political will and commitment of resources to effectively manage the borders; and apparent lack of a system of consultation, co-ordination and information gathering from borders communities (Tahir 2011, Osimen *et. al.*, 2017).

Proper management of borders becomes a necessity for national security. In other words, cross-border terrorism intensifies where borders are not properly managed or controlled. The Nigerian experience shows that the porous nature of parts of the borders which allows free movement of criminals (terrorists) of neighbouring countries has remained a national challenge. As Jawal (2002:406–426) argues that the major problem in combating cross-border terrorism is that all border crimes occur in an organised manner. The population residing in the border areas is either dependent on the kingpins or are scared to speak against such criminals. This happens due to the indifferent attitude of the administration where some of them are also a part of the nexus. Cross-border mobility has increased among countries over the years with its concomitant challenges. Individuals cross the border, not just at the physical perimeter of a country but also at airports or seaports. Proper regulation of borders therefore requires monitoring of all forms of crossings by various forms of transportation. Computer technology and globalisation have facilitated this massive movement of people across borders. Unfortunately, terrorists now cash in under this development to carry out their nefarious activities. The growth of international terrorists whose targets often lie outside the terrorists' home country has placed enhanced emphasis on border control ever since the events of 11 September 2001 (Alozie, 2015).

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study investigates transnational insurgency and border security challenges in Lake Chad Basin. Transnational insurgency and cross border criminal activities in Nigeria, just as it is in other Lake Chad Basin countries such as Chad and Niger Republics, have resulted in series of attacks, huge loss of lives and property as well as an increase in the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) across these states. The Nigerian experience, especially in the last two decades, shows the weaknesses of the Nigerian

border security management and the threat lack of proper border security management poses to national security. The awareness of the situation in Lake Chad Basin countries, that find themselves encompassing a region of heightened mobility and porous borders under increasing environmental and security pressure, ought to be an opportunity to tightening border security in the affected areas, and not a disadvantage to security measures.

However, the inability of the Nigerian border security agencies to effectively monitor and defend Nigerian borders are blamed on several factors as discussed in this study. It suffices to conclude that proper management of borders becomes a necessity for national security. In other words, crossborder terrorism intensifies where borders are not properly managed or controlled.

Given the above, the following recommendations are made:

- i. There is a need for greater cooperation between Nigerian border law enforcement agents and their counterparts across the boundaries. This view, as supported by Dahiru (2011:16); Tahir (2011:51); and Danfulani (2014), constitutes a major strategy that will foster unity and also help to increase the efficiency of border security agencies across borders. Tahir (2011) suggests a review of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) protocols should include, if not already included, arrangements on cooperation on security and supply of vital information similar to what obtains among European Community member countries where crime in one country is treated as a crime against all.
- ii. The government must take active and effective measures against primary terrorist enemies such as Boko Haram and Al Qaeda and Islamic State in West Africa, and certain other violent extremist groups whose activities also pose a serious and continuing threat to the nation. The government must attack these terrorists and their capacity to operate effectively at home and abroad. However, this will require the use of all elements of national power, to deny or neutralise what the terrorists need to operate and survive. These may include, blocking or neutralizing many avenues which terrorists exploit to develop and acquire weapons, including through state sponsors, theft or capture, and black-market purchases.

- iii. Governments must pay urgent attention to the needs of the border communities. We have noted in this study that the provision of infrastructure and developmental projects in the affected areas are nothing to write home about. The government must give these communities a sense of belonging and therefore become stakeholders in the affairs of the nation. These may involve the employment of the able-bodied persons in the affected areas into the security services and consequently deploying them to their communities, which are familiar terrains, as their duty posts. This will help the security agencies in identifying strangers and criminals who are not members of such communities.

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