
Libyan Conflict and Internationalization of Terrorism in the Sahel Region: The Case of Boko Haram Insurgency in North East, Nigeria

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Abstract. The paper assesses Libyan Conflict and transnationalization of terrorism in the Sahel Region with reference to Boko Haram Insurgency looking at its implications to Nigeria's national security. The threat of transnational terrorism, represented in jihadism can be seen as insurgency on a global scale, a violent campaign aimed at influencing a worldwide audience and encouraging followers through shared ideologies. The study was based on State Fragility theory and the study adopted a qualitative method and employed a case study approach using primary and secondary data to explain transnationalization of terrorism in the Sahel Region. Key Informant Interviews (KII) were used for data collection. KIIs were conducted with twelve (12) stakeholders from different professions. The collated data were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings of the study reveal that Libyan Conflict has destabilized the region with weapons trafficking which was developed there, and has also become a safe haven for jihadi groups threatening the entire peace of the Sahel Region. It also shows that the instability and lawlessness in Libya provided the space for extremist groups to establish training camps as extremist groups have become increasingly interconnected and their cross-border activity is dramatically on the rise since 2011. The study therefore recommends that, Governments in the Sahel Region should diligently thwart the spread of weapons and eliminate the threat posed by terrorist organizations through concerted national, regional, and international cooperation to address the issue of weapons, fighter movements, human trafficking networks, and irregular migration.

Keywords: Libyan Conflict, Internationalization, Terrorism, Sahel Region, Boko Haram Insurgency

Introduction

The threat of transnational terrorism, represented in jihadism, can be seen as insurgency on a global scale, a violent campaign aimed at influencing a worldwide audience and encouraging followers through shared ideologies. Across the world, the existence of militant groups, organized criminal gangs and the nexus between them is not a new phenomenon (Atallah, 2013). In recent times, however, their manifestation and intricate linkages across the world have become apparent. The Conflict in Libya comes in the context of wider unrest throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Those concerns with regard to weapons smuggling and the arrival of foreign fighters in Libya have been continually raised since the fall of Ghaddafi's regime in 2011 by regional actors, who point to them as the main threats to regional security and stability.

However, this only partially reflect the evolution of the security scene in Libya itself. Indeed, while the security situation remains unstable, the collapse of the state in Libya has also led to the development of a new illegal economy, not only in the form of weapons smuggling but also in the form of illegal cross-border transactions, especially illegal immigration/human trafficking and terrorism (Foster-Bowser & Sanders, 2012). Transnationalization of terrorism in the Sahel region orchestrated by Libyan Conflict has overtime led countries in the Sahel region to witnessed a range of domestic problems occasioned by increasing rate of arms smuggling or trafficking of weapons and cross-border terrorism giving impetus to the threats

to national security. Since the commencement of the Libyan uprising and the subsequent overthrow of the Qaddafi regime, the Libyan imbroglio has taken an unfortunate trajectory characterized by the mushrooming of armed groups, proliferation of massive stockpiles of weapons and ammunition.

Africa, and in this case Nigeria, has had its fair share of conflicts. However, terrorism did not begin in Africa or Nigeria but today Africa is worst hit by terrorism as she suffers the greatest casualty figures of violent deaths and losses. The instability in Libya exacerbates the security crises of the already fragile Sahel region as the collapse of Libya has without any doubt increased both the quality and quantity of the weapons at the disposal of jihadists, including 88-millimetre shells. This shows clearly that those jihadists were able to acquire, through their networks of support, large quantities of weapons which have since then been used across the whole Sahelian region (Ukpong, 2017). A region that faces a multitude of challenges and threats ranging from extreme poverty to climate change, draught and frequent food crises, rapid population growth, weak governance, corruption, unresolved internal tensions, violent extremism and radicalization, illicit trafficking and terrorist-linked security threats (Lacher, 2012).

Suffice it to say however, the fallout of these events has been as unpredictable as their direct impacts on Sahel states continued unabated. The Sahel states that are on the frontline of these events face the brunt of their spill over. The Libyan Conflict in particular has unleashed unforeseen consequences on the West African Sahel states—Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Mauritania. Following an inflow of weapons, ammunition, and armed fighters from Libya's 'Islamic Legion' into northern Mali, a dormant Tuareg rebellion was revived, leading Malian government forces to launch an offensive. In recent times, Mali witnessed a military coup and the takeover of northern Mali by armed and Islamist groups in a battle for autonomy. Nigeria has also faced increasing violence by the armed group Boko Haram. Although Niger and Mauritania have not witnessed internal rebellion, they have been forced to open their borders for refugees resulting most recently from the crises in Mali and Cote d'Ivoire (Jean-Pierre, 2021).

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

Thus, it is against this background that Nigeria needs to understand that these transnational interconnected guerrilla groups acting in the whole Sahel region which had overtime threatened its national security due to its proximity to countries in the Sahel region should be a cause for concern. It is sequel to this that the work examines the Libyan Conflict and the internationalization of terrorism in the Sahel region.

Methodology

The study employed a case study design to explain transnationalization of terrorism in the Sahel region, a study of Boko Haram Insurgency. The sources of data were both primary and secondary nature. Data were sourced through primary and secondary source. The primary data was collected by the use of Key Informant Interviews (KII) guides. Secondary data were obtained through desk review of relevant books, peer-reviewed journal articles, published and

unpublished thesis, magazine articles, websites publications and news channels. Due to the nature of the study, more of secondary sources of data than primary sources were employed given the complex character of the fight against terrorism in Nigeria and the attendant threats to national security and the objective of this study.

Transnational Terrorism in Perspective

Transnational terrorism is a “premeditated threatened or actual use of force or violence to attain a political goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation” and when its ramifications transcend national boundaries by means of the nationality of the perpetrators which can be human or institutional victims, as well as the location of the incident or event and the mechanics of its resolution (Mickolus et al., 1989).

Andrew and Michael (2008) identify the parameters for the expansion of transnational terrorism to include the following:

- a. Cross-border businesses, investments and remittances.
- b. Transnational families with members having dual citizenships or some members belong to one country while the other belongs to the other.
- c. Multi-plant firms have branches in different countries.
- d. Migration causing movement of large populations for various reasons.

Transnational terrorism is intimately linked to other violent crimes like money laundering, armed robbery, theft of arts and cultural artifacts, child trafficking, sea piracy, illicit drug trafficking, and fraudulent dealings with foreign exchange. The principal characteristics of these crimes are that they have the potential to spread across national borders and so have been described as (inter-state) crimes; hence, such offenses have an international character (Stenersen, 2008). The assessment of transnational crimes is not limited to cross-border criminal activities but includes crimes whose scope, nature and intensity are composed of cross-border elements as an intrinsic part of inference of the criminal behavior or activity. This means that transnational crimes occur in one country, and the consequences and effect are felt in other nations at different levels.

Transnational concerns could also be viewed from the historical and geographic perspective. During the scramble for Africa in the nineteenth century, European powers set boundaries between many African states arbitrarily. These boundaries divided ethnic groups and created transnational ethnic linkages fostering sub-national ethnic conflicts. Boko Haram's birth in Maiduguri, a city located in the North-eastern corner of Nigeria, bordered by Chad, Niger, and Cameroon, places itself within a predominantly Hausa-speaking population that has linguistic, cultural, and ethnic ties to its neighbours increasing the risk of conflict spill over (Walker, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework utilized in this study is the State Fragility theory. Although scholars within the purview of international relations wrote very little about transnationalization of terrorism, the theory of transnationalization of terrorism in the Sahel region can be situated in the context of State Fragility.

The state fragility theory is often used to explain how states' internal makeups do hinder them from living out their full potentials. It was adopted as the theoretical basis for this research. The proponents of the theory are S.R. Ratner & G.B. Helman (1993), The main thrust of theory is that national environments which cannot project and fulfill critical government roles such as the provision of conducive and enduring economic environments, the establishment and development of credible formal organizations, prevention of violent conflicts, provision of basic needs and safeguarding of the citizens inalienable rights are weak and therefore susceptible to breakdowns (failure). Suffice to say however, the methodology

underpinning the framework is based on three core assumptions of stateness. Authority (A) captures the extent to which a state possesses the ability to enact binding legislation over its population, to exercise coercive force over its sovereign territory, to provide core public goods, and to provide a stable and secure environment for its citizens and communities. Legitimacy (L) describes the extent to which a particular government commands public loyalty and generates domestic support for legislation and policies. Capacity (C) refers to the potential for a state to mobilise and employ resources towards productive ends, similar to the focus on progressive service delivery.

In their report, Rice & Patrick (2008) cited in the Pardee Papers of March (2010) conclude that state weakness is directly related to poverty, with the evidence that poor countries anywhere in the world display such symptoms that characterize weak states. According to them, Poverty fuels and sustains civil strife, which slowly but steadily diminishes states' strengths. (Rice and Patrick (2008), while taking note of this say that strength or weakness is directly a product of how much ability a state has to cater for essential public goods such as economic opportunities, protection from threats, accountability in governance. This framework develops the argument that transnational terrorism activities are the outcome of causes at three levels of analysis, as articulated. However, the causal relationship is conditioned by state fragility, with different aspects of state fragility magnifying the causal effects and facilitating the practical emergence of transnational terrorism. Evidence supports the argument that most terrorist organization emerged in highly fragile states (e.g., al-Shabaab in Somalia; al-Qaeda in Afghanistan; AQAP in Yemen; IS in Iraq and Syria, and Boko Haram in Nigeria, Niger, and Chad). Thus, they emerged in countries in which sovereign states fell short in at least two out of the three measures of stateness. Lack of authority, in particular, is the most determinant aspect of state fragility which persisted in almost all cases of the rise of terrorist organization. Poor legitimacy, particularly when twinned with lack of authority, becomes another decisive condition for the emergence of terrorist organization.

However, two main criticisms of this notion exist according to Carter et al. one, the potential of abuse of the category of state fragility, legitimizing external intervention at the expense of the local agency; two, the analytical utility of the categorization effort itself is disputed, with the state-centric grouping together of a wide range of diverse. The examination of their theoretical underpinnings lends support to the critical view that most existing approaches are undermined by a lack of solid theoretical foundations, which leads to confusion between causes, symptoms and outcomes of state fragility. With increasing military deployments and aid investments in states affected by localized conflict, upheaval, and humanitarian crises, there has been a convergence of policy interventions in fragile states. And yet, the complexity of state fragility has not lent itself to easy analysis or response. While it is true that weak or failed states are everywhere in the world, the African continent is in particular noted for this, a situation that has caused many observers to believe that it is mainly an African issue (Englebert & Tull, 2008). Unarguably, the entire continent is surrounded by weak nations but West Africa nations are more especially so which clearly reflects in their incapacity project to actualize meaningful national development goals.

The State Fragility theory was relevant to the research because it helped to explain how Sahelian States' internal characteristics have stopped them from living up to the demands of such status especially in their failure to make and implement drastic policies to curb trans-border crime. In furtherance, the research established nexuses between and the situation in the sub region. Transnational terrorism poses a major problem because it expands the reach of violent extremism and complicates the efforts of an effective response, in a fragile region where regional cooperation is limited by mistrust, limited strategic capacity, and governance related challenges. The delay in creating a Multinational Joint Task Force and some restrictions by the Nigerian government to neighboring countries like Chad, limiting its response only to

particular areas of the border constitutes a big challenge for an effective response to the threat and its potential for territorial expansion. Boko Haram aims at establishing an Islamic caliphate in Nigeria, which may extend to ungoverned spaces around border countries where this sect has gained some grounds in positioning itself and more also the fact that Boko Haram had hitherto gained control of 14 of the 776 local government areas in Northern Nigeria (Walker, 2012), had overtime shown how fragile Nigeria state is.

Nigeria's security interest covers all the strategic factors that affect the country's development, including law and order, developmental efforts, political and social stability, trade and economic development, relations with other countries, etc. Thus, any appreciation of the implication of threats for Nigeria's national security should consider socio-economic systems both at the national and regional levels. These socio-economic systems produce the political culture that provides and limits the environment for conceptualization as well as the actualization of threats. For instance, the increased involvement of some West African migrants in organized criminal activities has been attributed to the failure of the state in their home countries. The failure of the state to deliver public goods to the citizenry has led, in several instances, to a "flight from the state". The people in response have resorted to exercising new forms of sovereignty that bypass and challenge the state system even where they have to resort to illegitimate means of livelihood including crime. A common pattern is the emergence of criminal networks whose activities transcend national borders. For example, many of the heavily armed gangs of criminals in north-eastern Nigeria that have been "attacking road travellers and settlements in Nigeria" are believed to be former rebels in Chad and Niger, "who turned to crime following the collapse of their political cause".

Overview of Libyan Conflict and Transnationalization of Terrorism in the Sahel Region

The Conflict in Libya started with peaceful demonstrations on 15 February 2011 but quickly turned into an internal conflict after street protests were violently suppressed by the Government. The international community, including the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union and the League of Arab States launched several diplomatic initiatives in a bid to bring the Conflict to a quick end (Campbell, 2016). Those efforts were unsuccessful in preventing an escalation of the Conflict, bringing Libya to the verge of a major humanitarian catastrophe, especially in the eastern parts of the country. While the impact of the Conflict reverberated across the world, such neighbouring countries as Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Tunisia bore the brunt of the challenges that emerged as a result of the Conflict. In a relatively short period of time, the Governments of these countries, especially those in the Sahel region, had to contend with the influx of hundreds of thousands of traumatized and impoverished returnees as well as the inflow of unspecified and unquantifiable numbers of arms and ammunition from the Libyan arsenal. Although the volume and the impact of the returnee population differ from one country to the other, the influx clearly has the potential to further exacerbate an already precarious and tenuous situation. In addition, these countries are directly threatened by an impending food security and nutrition Conflict that further exacerbate and negatively affect the political, social and economic situation in the region (Campbell, 2016).

The poor social, economic and political environment in the Sahel make it a fertile breeding ground for the penetration and development of terrorist groups and other armed or criminal groups that seek to profit from the increasingly chaotic conditions in the region. Since its founding in 2007, the Algerian-run Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has been a key actor in the Sahel-Saharan region. Following Algeria's fight to contain it, AQIM developed networks in the Sahara, cooperating with smuggling rings in the region. The AQIM has so far been weakened by deep internal rivalries, and has in the past largely partnered with criminal

groups in the Sahel rather than with ideologically ambitious local Salafi movements. With increasing instability in the Sahel, particularly in Mali and Niger, the threat of expansion and increased consolidation of the group in the Sahel-Sahara is an issue of concern. (Yamamoto, 2013).

In reality the collapse of Libya in 2011 accelerated a process of disintegration of the Sahel that had started in the early 2000s, when the then Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), which became AQIM, established itself in northern Mali and then started attacking the weak regional states, including Mauritania, Mali and Niger. They also took tens of Western hostages who were released in exchange for ransoms. By 2011, experts estimated that hostage takings had generated over 160 million euros in revenues for AQIM, making it the richest armed non-state actor in the region. Furthermore, AQIM got itself involved in all kinds of trafficking in the region, establishing solid relations with the local mafias and generating additional sources of revenues for itself. AQIM also established a policy of rapprochement with local jihad organizations and leaders including Boko Haram. Finally, AQIM had established solid relations with the local populations through an intelligent strategy of socialization by helping the local marginalized people and establishing alliances through marriages. By 2011, AQIM was not only the richest non-state armed actor in the region, it was also the strongest, with an estimated force of more than 1,200 well-armed men entrenched in the Sahel. All this took place in the context of the decomposition of the Malian state in northern regions (Yamamoto, 2013).

Extent to which Boko Haram Insurgency is Influenced by Transnationalization of Terrorism in the Sahel Region

The extent of Boko Haram's transnationalization can be largely understood by recognizing its reactive nature. As opined by scholars, Boko Haram is a product of many domestic and international factors, reacting to the environment of disparity by advocating against the government and eventually turning to violence as a result of confrontation with the government in 2009. For this reason, Boko Haram uses its fight against the government as a sufficient condition to implicate others as enemies of the group. This understanding indicates that potential international targets are not necessarily safe either if they are involved in the domestic conflict. Transnational terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda through their activities have transformed international security dimensions and discourse. And as a result, Carter et al. (2021) suggest that "the presence of a common driver suggests that any war on transnational terrorism requires some international collective action." According to them, this is the potent weapon to contain the phenomenon of terrorism. Thus, the audacity of Boko Haram grew with the proliferation of weapons in the Sahara-Sahel region. The porous borders in Borno and Yobe States, which are the strongholds of the sect made it possible for Boko Haram to smuggle arms into Nigeria.

Boko Haram's relative success and transition from a rag tag group to a cross-border terror organisation has been partly facilitated by the reinforced linkages of terrorist groups like, Al-Shabbab and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Boko Haram, an Islamic terrorist had in recent times extends its attack to countries outside Nigeria, which include Niger, Chad and Cameroon, these attacks are made manifest as it is believed to have links to AQIM and reportedly also obtained weapons from Libya. According to a UN report (2011), some governments believed that Boko Haram is also active in Niger and its militants from Nigeria and Chad were trained in AQIM camps in Mali in 2011. Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo said that the toppling of the long-time Libyan dictator, the events in Mali and the US consulate attacks in Libya are all interlinked and added that the Libyan civil war produced many uncontrolled trained and armed militants who continue to fuel violence in the region, including the atrocities committed by Boko Haram in Nigeria.

To further buttress the extent to which Boko Haram insurgency is influenced by Transnationalization of Terrorism in the Sahel Region based on interviews with the respondents, The KII study participants shared their experience through their responses;

Given Nigeria's porous borders, there are good reasons to believe that Boko Haram's insurgency is influenced by the transnationalization of terrorism. Because there is not necessarily a contradiction between Boko Haram's focus on domestic issues and his transnational connections. Boko Haram is very likely to receive funding, training and recruits from neighbouring countries, but its rhetoric and targets remain focused on Nigeria. Cross-border trade means Boko Haram could easily fall victim to the transnationalization of terrorism in the Sahel region... (KII respondent, 2023).

The transnational aspects of Boko Haram also contribute to furthering conflict and instability outside Nigeria. This is particularly evident in the case of recruitment, where we have seen that Boko Haram fighters are traveling out of Nigeria to join Islamist rebels fighting French and African forces in Mali. This could, in turn, lead to a strengthening of Boko Haram, if members who have been in Mali return to Nigeria with new skills and combat experience, as well as possible ideological inspiration from the more globally and deadly oriented jihadists which they have fought alongside... (KII respondent, 2023).

The truth is that Boko Haram has expanded its operations to Nigeria's neighbouring countries, particularly Chad and Cameroon. Moreover, based on some of the arrests we have made so far, we can prove that a small percentage of Boko Haram's leaders were either foreign-born or had travelled outside Nigeria for extended periods of time. And that's what makes them strong and even brave enough to attack military installations across the country and in the Sahel... (KII respondent, 2023).

The above assertions by the KII respondents further corroborate the claims by Olzak (2022), who used terrorist group ideology to understand targeting, noted, "Terrorists are rarely mindless or indiscriminate in their attacks, although they may appear to be observers who have not examined their ideological beliefs." Drake's observation, highlighting the link between terrorist ideology and targeting, remains an applicable tool to understand the connection between Boko Haram's ideology and its transnationalisation. The fact that the weapons seized from Boko Haram often are of foreign origin indicates that transnational transactions constitute an important source of weapons for Boko Haram. That Boko Haram does in fact benefit from widespread availability of arms smuggled into Nigeria from Libya and elsewhere is probable, as many of the weapons that have been seized in raids on the group camps are reported to be of foreign origin (KII, 2023). Based on the information above, it appears plausible that the recycling of small arms and light weapons have helped creating an enabling environment for transnationalization of Boko Haram activities, as large quantities of weapons smuggled into Nigeria make weapons cheaper and more easily accessible for members of the group. While it is clear that foreigners are not in majority in Boko Haram, there are several indications that Boko Haram has recruited some of its militants from neighbouring countries. There are some non-Nigerians among the known leaders of the group: Mamman Nur, who was believed to be second in command to late Abubakar Shekau, is from Chad, and Abubakar Kilakam and Ali Jalingo, two of the architects behind major attacks in the north eastern Borno State, are said to be from Niger.

Kehinde (2023) revealed that the situation of Nigeria's porous borders, which serve as conduits for illicit transnational traffic of small arms and light weapons and drugs, is further exacerbated by the limited presence of security and law enforcement officials. If they are present, they are poorly equipped, poorly paid, poorly trained and sometimes compromised or

recruited to do the bid of the insurgents. It was also widely reported on accounts of current and former U.S. officials and arms experts that most of Boko Haram weapons were either stolen from Nigerian military stocks or purchased from the thriving Central African arms black market, owing to the insurgents' source of weaponry, its sophistication, and sheer number. The news report further credited a statement to a former US Ambassador in Nigeria - John Campbell, admitting that: "There are hints that sympathizers in the Nigerian Army will deliberately leave doors of armouries unlocked for Boko Haram". Akowe (2022) concluded that the array of small and automatic weapons, grenades, mortars, mines and car bombs "is all Boko Haram's insurgents used in carrying out their brand of terrorism. Consequently, the fact that Boko Haram appears focused on objectives and attacks within Nigeria does not, a priori, make the perspective of transnationalism less relevant for understanding the group. Rather, the extent of Boko Haram's transnational connections is an empirical question, to which we now turn.

According to Ezeanyika and Ubah (2012), an arms trade expert, William M. Hartung argues that conflicts in Africa have attracted arms deal and the influx of arms to different parts of North, West and Central Africa that have proximity with Nigeria. Hence, in linking the flourishing arms market in Africa to the strengthening of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria as a challenge of the nation's territorial integrity and national security, he admitted that the proliferation of arms has become a matter of concern owing to the facts that subsist thus: "It's one conflict after another. Because of the nature of the conflict the concentration of conflicts, the black market in Central Africa is more vibrant than other places" (Garuba, 2010).

Effects of Transnationalization of Boko Haram Insurgency on Nigeria's National Security

By examining the characteristics of a transnational terrorist organization, one can deduce the potentially greater threat an organization of this kind may represent to a given country in comparison to an organization that is confined to clear national borders. Transnational terrorist organizations usually benefit from complex operational and recruitment abilities such as decentralized operational networks. These networks often operate in multiple countries and by members from a variety of cultural and national backgrounds. As this characteristic may prevent focusing resources on a specific area or community, countries may find it especially difficult to tackle this kind of organizations. The insurgency in the Sahel especially by Boko Haram has precipitated huge insecurity in the region. The country has been hit severally by acts of terrorism.

Furthermore, it was propounded that the degree of arms proliferation and possession of arms and ammunition during Libya uprising open to acquisition by terrorist groups like Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and sold to Boko Haram in Nigeria have made the matter worse. In other words, the growing insurgency in the Sahel has dire consequence for Nigeria national security as it promotes transnational crimes such as drug and human trafficking as well as proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The impact of this insecurity on Nigeria is enormous not just in terms of human suffering and loss of livelihood, lives and property, but also in terms of the frustration it has meted on the nation's macro-economic arrangement which attests to Alemika et al' (2013) postulation that organized crimes weaken government capacity by leeching away resources, capacity and legitimacy required for the sustenance of democracy. Hence, Ogbodo and Mieseigha (2013), declare that trans-national crimes war against nations' financial sectors which are vital to economic growth by diverting public resources and encouraging criminality which slows down economic growth and distorts external economic sectors.

Terrorism brings violence and instability, can limit freedom of movement and access to employment and educational opportunities, degrades the quality of life and threatens the basic

rights of people, including the right to life and security. Terrorism represents a threat to security and stability and can undermine economic and social development. Similarly, transnational organized crime in diverse areas threatens peace and security and undermines the economic and social development of societies around the world. The effects of protracted heinous crimes such as robbery, murder, terrorism, kidnapping, human and drug trafficking etc for Nigeria popularly believed to be the giant of Africa and the most populous black nations of the world is grave (Kolapo, 2006). The effects of transnationalization of Boko Haram insurgency on Nigeria's national security can have security, economic and social dimensions. Security is the foundation of everything ever desired by man. It takes security for the aspiration and dreams of citizens to be actualized. In fact, in the absence of security, every other thing becomes secondary (Bohm and Haley, 1997). Furthermore, it is only when there is adequate security that there can be peace and without peace, people live in fear, not able to go about their legitimate duties. This ensures that life and events become grossly unpredictable.

Another major risk posed to the country by Boko Haram is the defamation of the nation's character. Morgentau (1949) describes the national character as those fundamental intellectual and moral characteristics which are expressed at all levels of thoughts and deeds, giving every nation an unmistakable distinctiveness. Boko Haram insurgency portray Nigeria in bad light and create an erroneous impression that the country is incapable of maintaining security and providing for their citizens especially in terms of employment and social welfare.

To further buttress on the effect of transnationalization of Boko Haram insurgency on Nigeria's national security, The KII study participants shared their experience through their responses;

Boko Haram transnationalization has precipitated huge insecurity in the region. There is an established fact that Nigerian citizens especially in the north now live in perpetual fear as Boko Haram Insurgency has now ingrained fear in the psyche of the people. Another effect can be deduced from the rising spate of herdsmen/ farmers conflicts and banditry that have claimed hundreds of lives in States such as Benue, Kaduna, Nassarawa, Plateau, Katsina, Zamfara and Sokoto among others which have been linked to the Boko Haram insurgency... (KII respondent, 2023).

Boko haram transnationalization in the Sahel has severe consequence for Nigeria national security. This is because Nigerian army is finding it difficult to end the war. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria today had made the insurgents to become so strong to the extent of launching attacks on military formations and we have now seen how their attacks have been extended to other states in Nigeria which today underline the worsening security situation in the country occasioned by a plethora of factors such as underdevelopment, bad governance, unsecured border and twisted religious ideologies among others... (KII respondent, 2023).

These violent activities have obvious negative effects on society and its populace. Economically, Socially, and otherwise, a country threatened by insurgency is stifled, and withheld from growth, and runs the risk of becoming a failed state if the threat persists. Nigeria has experienced some of these effects. When a nation faces a constant threat of insurgency and terrorism, the growth and development of that nation are stifled... (KII respondent, 2023).

The social, religious, economic, and educational activity is hindered, as that nation's people live in constant dread and fear of terrorist attacks, and so, are unable to go about their civic duties. In the northern part of Nigeria especially, the freedom of movement of those in the region is reduced because of the activities of the Boko Haram sect, and so, economic, social, religious, and educational

activities do not have their usual free flow, and thus, development is hindered ... (KII respondent, 2023).

Suffice it to say however, the implication is that Nigeria is not safe due to cross-border population and its attendant economic activities, cross-border crossing and immigration, ineffective border control and the porosity of Nigerian borders which is a challenge to Nigeria national security and boundary questions. In the north-east, the borders Nigeria shares with Cameroun, Niger and Chad stretch over 1,690, 1,497 and 87 kilometers respectively. The porosity of the Nigerian borders is the main factor encouraging the proliferation of illegal arms and insurgencies in the country.

Strategies toward Addressing the Security Implications of the Rising Phenomenon of Transnationalization of Terrorism in the Sahel Region

From the viewpoint of counterterrorism, counterespionage, and law enforcement authorities, the porous borders of states have historically presented rare opportunities to detect and intercept adversaries, who are forced to surface at this point and engage with governmental authorities. When terrorist adversaries' transit official access points they must take measures to conceal themselves that provide governments and their security partners with opportunities to detect and disrupt them.

The federal government has responded to combating the terrorist activities of Boko Haram. One of the strategies of the federal government is the militarization of states designated as terrorist haven as military have been deployed to combat the insurgency. However, the effectiveness of this militarization strategy has left much to be desired. This becomes evident in the fact that the activities of Boko Haram have drastically reduced, terrorist activities of Boko Haram seem to have been degraded in Borno, Yobe, Adamawa and other states in northern Nigeria.

However, consequently in 2004 referring to the Sahel Zone, the International Conflict Group went as far as to charge the Department of Defence (DoD) of creating a threat where none existed. Additionally, a study from a Finnish think tank stated that in the competition for scarce resources the Department of State identified terrorism as problems in the region in order to attract funds. While, Theresa Whelan, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs, called the program a little bit of a band aid approach. Supporting this claim Prof. A.M. Okolie & Nnamani K.E in their United States' Tran-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Partnership and Management of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria, 2005-2015 submitted that, the counter-terrorism strategies adopted by the US led Trans Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership has not achieved its core goals (Okolie & Nnamani, 2016).

The Sahel Strategy confronts major challenges in terms of the complexity of the region, the divergent approaches of key players to Mali's Conflict, and the EU's slow pace of adjustment to the new realities on the ground. Whilst the Sahel Strategy hinges on improved regional cooperation to make a real difference, it has papered over the widening regional cracks, particularly since the Libya conflict. Meaningful cooperation among local and international actors in the Sahel is now arguably at the lowest it has been in recent decades. This situation is not helped by the EU's failure to link the strategy to existing regional initiatives or explicitly complement them. Fragmented regional responses to challenges in the Sahel are therefore compounded by European as well as regional actors' actions.

To further buttress on the strategies that can be adopted toward addressing the security implications of the rising phenomenon of transnationalization of terrorism, The KII study participants shared their experience through their responses;

The Nigerian Military have been actively involved in counter-terrorism, and several measures have been taken to combat insurgency, most especially in recent years with the threat of the Boko Haram. There was also the special

training and deployment of the antiterrorism combat squad to the affected areas in the northern region of the country to curb weapon trafficking and insurgent activities. The federal government had also acquired and developed military hardware and weaponry for the nation's armed forces, while there were also steps taken towards international collaborations with the nation's military, as well as authority is given to fellow African countries – Chad, Niger, and Cameroon to deploy troops on Nigerian soil to help combat terrorist activities... **(KII respondent, 2023).**

With the established fact that the political instability in Libya continues to fuel terrorism in the Sahel, West and Central African regions and with regard to strategy been adopted to curb this menace, Nigeria is not left out of the equation as the Nigerian Army is fighting to rid the country of Boko Haram, banditry, kidnapping, herder/farmer clashes and insurgency. However, the military is making meaningful progress with the support of friendly countries in the Sahel Region... **(KII respondent, 2023).**

To further corroborate on the aforementioned claims to curb the menace of transnationalization of terrorism across the Sahel Region;

“Former President Muhammadu Buhari has, rightly, called on the countries in the West African sub-region and those in the Sahel, rocked by security challenges, to team up to confront the menace. The former Nigerian President spoke in Abuja during his tenure when he received the new Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mr Mahamat Saleh Annadif, a Chadian. Stressing the need for the countries to work concertedly, the former President said: “You are our neighbour. You have vast experience on matters affecting the Sahel, having served for five years in Mali. I hope you will get the countries to work together to confront the issues affecting them.” Describing the problems as “enormous,” the President said that Boko Haram has exacted heavy tolls in terms of lives and resources in Nigeria and some neighbouring countries, while Mali has a large swathe of its territory occupied by militants. “I hope under the auspices of UNOWAS, you will help get the problems sorted out,” the President hoped while arguing that most of the Conflict situations in the areas have to do with the instability in Libya” (Radio Nigeria, 2021).

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the Libyan Conflict had negative impact on Africa, especially the Sahel region. With increased proliferation of arms and mercenaries joining rebel groups, Nigeria has had its own share of the Conflict as it has exacerbated the Boko Haram Insurgency. Boko Haram is also embedded in what international security agencies term the “arc of instability,” stretching across Saharan and Sahelian Africa from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. It is feared that this area of unsecured borders and general un-governability will become a breeding-ground for Sahel and Sahara-based salafi-jihadi groups. Due to the proximity of some extremist groups in this region and their similar ideology, it is feared that their collaboration would result in the ability to launch globally threatening terrorist attacks. Adding to this “perfect storm” was the collapse of Gaddafi's Libya, unleashing a catalysing regional arms trade, and the vacuum of governance in Northern Mali. Trans-border terrorism and crimes also constitute real threats to Nigeria's national security.

In conclusion, since Boko Haram has become internationalized and broken into cells in different countries sharing borders with Nigeria, its members will continue to make incursions into Nigeria. Not only will they continue to unleash despicable acts of violence on the citizens, but their activities will also affect Nigeria's international image. It is not in doubt that the inflow of small arms and light weapons has influenced the proliferation of militant groups in the country. Base on the findings, the study recommended the following;

- Governments in the Sahel region should diligently thwart the spread of weapons and eliminate the threat posed by terrorist organizations through concerted national, regional, and international cooperation to address the issue of weapons, fighter movements, human trafficking networks, and irregular migration.
- Nigeria government should as a matter of urgency cut off completely the support lines of Boko Haram and other related terrorist groups rendering them vulnerable to invasion and attack.
- Given the transnational character of the Boko Haram Conflict, the Nigerian government also needs to strengthen coordination with countries in the Sahel region.
- Foresight and political will must drive the urgent implementation of Nigeria's Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.
- Counterterrorism is a war, and wars are won with strategies. Nigerian military should re-define its strategies and put in place to combat the threat of insurgency. The battle against terrorism is a long drawn, but not impossible one. With clearly devised strategies, terrorism can finally be brought to an end in Nigeria.

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