

Terrorism in Nigeria and Her Neighbours

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Abstract

Good neighbourliness is no doubt a key policy in managing inter-state relations in the international relations. It developed out of the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty of states in international law. In recent years, terrorism has become a game of domestic and international politics with implications for peace, security and good governance. Nigeria lies between five francophone countries with geo strategic, identity and security implications. This ipso facto connotes the idea of a split of ethno religious groups originally bounded in historical empires but now exist within the borders of colonially separated states. The recent link and cooperation between the Boko Haram sect and other notorious terrorist groups like Isis (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), al Qaeda, and ISWA (Islamic State of West Africa), have internationalized their activities and spread their tentacles into the shores of Nigeria's neighbouring states like Niger, Cameroon and Chad. This paper argues that terrorism has become a significant setback for global relations and development, considering the good neighbourliness policy which is meant to foster good relationships among states in the international community. This work relies on secondary materials and employs descriptive and analytic methods in analyzing the data for the study.

Keywords

international relations;
terrorism; security
challenge; West Africa;
Nigeria



I. Introduction

Adu and Osadola (2018) posit that all the five contagious border neighbours of Nigeria are former French colonies. However, three out of these five neighbours are directly affected in the ongoing war against terrorism; Niger, Cameroon and Chad. Nigeria's land borders with both Niger and Cameroon covers a distance of about 1,497 and 1,690kms respectively while that of Lake Chad Basin is 87 kilometers. Cameroon gained independence in the year 1960, only a few months earlier than Nigeria, while Chad also became independent in August 1960, with about 200 ethnic groups (Adu and Osadola, 2018).

These essential border neighbours of Nigeria accommodate mostly nomadic Fulani Islamic populace, that offer basic suburbs with Nigeria's eight states in the northern district, in particular Sokoto, Katsina, Jigawa, Yobe, Borno, Adamawa, Taraba and Gombe (Adu and Osadola, 2018). Akpomera and Omoyibo, (2013) opine that the cross - border activities are characterized in certain push and pull factors. As indicated by Alli, (2011: 140) the push factors comprising of the local conditions in Chad, Niger and Cameroon incorporate the extreme financial separation that slows down reasonable improvement, enduring dry season, starvation, political precariousness, social and ethnic clashes and close crumple of state control of assets and foundations, and also the survival weight on quick and more distant family individuals. The pull factors to Nigeria are basically

financial prospects, sustenance, security, religious and social fondness and affinities with Nigerians and political opportunity (Osadola, 2012).

Terrorism as a concept became trendier in the international community since the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States of America. Afterwards, there have been several carefully planned and effected attacks on various, countries, foreign embassies, and governments in almost all parts of the world (Herdi & Rusyd. 2021). It has become a game of domestic and international politics with severe implications for peace, security, and good governance. Terrorism has marred the peaceful relationships that existed among nations in the international system as well as intergroup relations in the domestic politics (Adu and Osadola, 2022).

Notable terrorist groups in the West African region include:

1. Boko Haram; which operates mostly in the Northern part of Nigeria, Northern Cameroon, Niger, Chad and Northern tip of Central African Republic with the motive of maintaining the classical Islam, and negating western civilization in line with the Usman Dan Fodio's Jihad;
2. AQIM, which operates in Northern Mali, and some part of Mauritania by kidnapping and assassinating Western tourists, UN aid workers and even Mauritanian soldiers.
3. The Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), a notable terrorist group that backed the Tuareg National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad's (MINLA) takeover of Mali's leadership in 2012; and
4. The Janjawee of Southern Sudan.

However, for the purpose of this research, more emphasis will be laid on Boko Haram due to its vast effect on Nigeria and her borderline neighbours.

Terrorism is a common and insidious act that takes place as often as possible in our societies with the sole aim of inflicting harms, structural destruction, and death (Udema, 2013). The relative peace enjoyed by Nigeria and her neighbour came to a sudden stop since 2009 when terrorism and attacks has suddenly become a serious challenge. It is however important to note that the Nigeria society, before the beginning of the large scale killing embarked upon by the Boko Haram sect, was engulfed by terrible acts of kidnapping and pipelines destruction by the Niger Delta militants (Guitta and Simcox, 2014: 6-7).

Terrorism has not only stained the image of Nigeria in the international community; it has also affected the bond between Nigeria and her neighbours in the West African sub region. The repercussion of these damaging relationships caused by an augmented trend of terrorism and security challenge is not only the focus of this paper but also the effects of terrorism on their economic and political growth.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Conceptual Review

There are several scholarly definitions of Terrorism that might depict different meaning and understanding of the concept. This however has made the indepth consideration of the concept a more bourgeois and confusing research voyage in recent times (Whitaker, 2010).

According to Minteh and Perry, the terms "terrorist" and "terrorism" were invented by the French government during the "Reign of Terror" in 1795, when revolutionaries protested the government's acts (Minteh & Perry, 2012/2013). According to Adu & Osadola (2022), terrorism is a form of warfare that includes a target of violence...includes a

state of chronic fear...mobilization for a desire or publicity target. Terrorism is linked to war crimes committed during peacetime, and war crimes are included in the scope of terrorism. The use or threat of using violence, political motive, causing fear and panic, and threat are the most common elements of understanding terrorism (Minteh and Perry, 2013). When it comes to describing terrorism, there are two general elements: violence or the threat of violence, against people, and behaviour/acts designed to force or threaten a community into taking action. Terrorism is characterized as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to threaten or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any part thereof, in order to achieve political or social objectives" (Adu & Osadola, 2022). Terrorism can occur by inspiration and imitation alone, not by direction. Hate speech and oral inciting of violence are the key motivational factor to it. Furthermore, it is believed that doctrine and psychological beliefs dictate terrorism (Crenshaw, 2005). Terrorism, according to the FBI, is characterized as the use of unlawful force or violence against people or property in order to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any part thereof, in order to achieve a political or social goal (Chinwoku, 2007).

In international law, the ideals of territorial integrity and equality of states gave rise to good neighborliness. As a result, it is a crucial concept for ensuring the peaceful coexistence of states in the international community (Asiwaju, 2011:230-231). The exercise of full sovereignty's intrinsic state rights is only possible if the principle of good neighbourliness is upheld in interstate relations. Violations of the principle may, in effect, lead to serious confrontations or military conflicts, especially between contiguous states (Fawole, 2003).

The impact of border relations between a country and the other could be either positive or otherwise. Countries involved could benefit from trade relations as well as inter-state policies; they could also become victims of one's domestic problem. The principle of good neighbourliness is meant to play a vital role within the legal order of relations between nations in the world. In a broader form, "good neighbourliness" is a preventive measure, as well as a vital tool in resolving conflicts and also maintaining peaceful co-existence among border-nations (David & Ugochukwu, 2016).

According to Ogunbadejo, the idea of "good neighbourliness" has been transmuted into numerous legal themes. Its evolution can be traced from the Roman maxim of *sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas* (1979/1980: 748) in property law to the concept of good neighbourliness or 'no damage' in international law, which prohibits a state from using its territory to harm other states, and its precise meaning in International Environmental law. In EU foreign relations law, the term "good neighbourliness" has taken on a life of its own. It first appeared in the context of the accession process in 1994. The so-called "Essen condition" was used as an additional accession condition to the Copenhagen criterion, though it was not applied consistently or universally (Ihonvbere, 1991: 514-515). "Good neighbourliness policy" has been a cardinal guiding principle of Nigerian foreign policy, especially since the civil war.

2.2 Literature Review

Omede and Omede (2015) opines that insecurity is not an hassle that affects Nigeria alone; It affects a lot of countries around the globe, but then, it is very important that the nation is safe and secured to enable economic growth and development in the nation. This according to them is because foreign investors are attracted to countries that are peaceful, while the local investors carry out their operations hitch free with little or no tensions and apprehensions (Omede and Omede, 2015). Their study further assesses Nigeria's terrorism and Insecurity issues, and suggested moral, values and religious education as solutions. It

also discusses the important role of security in the infrastructural, technological and industrial development of nations like Nigeria with highlighted cases and causes of Insecurity.

Obviously, terrorism and Insecurity will keep destroying the economic, technological, and industrial advancement of most nations and notably the developing nations of West Africa. This explains why Nigerians now live their lives in fear and suspicion. Investors are scared away because of the unstable financial situation of the country while educational institutions aren't left out as they are greatly affected too.

Onuoha (2014) posit that the Nigeria that was known for its role and intervention to reinstate peace and security in states combating conflicts in West Africa now needs the support of the international community to help calm terrorist attacks in her own territory. Quite a number of articles about the group focus on its pernicious out turn from a political and social view. Nonetheless, such studies do not address that aside the terrible killings and loss of properties, the attacks by Boko Haram adds up to become a major threat to the region's security state. Hence, it explains that whilst Boko Haram has become a local group that constitutes an alarming threat to peace and security in West Africa, it evaluates the regional security implications of the existence and operations of the terrorists in four categories (Onuoha, 2014).

Terrorism by the Boko Haram sect has become a subject of interest to a good number of academic consciousnesses in recent years. Okoro's (2014) article is contrast to the popular view made known by studies that has incriminated Islam in the exposure and violence of the revolt. Okoro's study opens our eyes to see beyond the strategic role the Islamic religion, it posits that terrorism is effectuated by our governance crisis, including penetrative corruption, uprising in youth unemployment, and poverty (Okoro, 2014). It further unraveled the government's weaknesses, but proffered good governance as solution. The study didn't go further with explanations on how good governance will bring an immediate halt to the damages done by terrorism. However, it has enough depth on the origin of the Boko Haram sect, and addresses how the nation's borders are poorly managed which permits illicit transnational arms trafficking in the country by this terrorist.

Imhonopi and Urim (2016) are of the opinion that there seems to be an unbending line between security and development, and why terrorist attacks might be the reason the country's industrial development will be tough, as its political solidity is periled. The article posits that a multi-stakeholder imperative had become inescapable to face this problem hastily.

The study assessed the continuity of terrorism in Nigeria as it holds back industrial development, but particularly further looked into the role of the government, private sector, faith and international community in opposing the terror beast. The study outlined how the sub-regional, regional and international bodies can help fight terrorism in Africa. They concluded that development cannot take place where there's insecurity to combat with, and explains that the various defects of the state might have instigated and unceasing terrorism, it is salient that the government accepts the demand by interest groups within the nation to hold a very serious national discussion (Imhonopi and Urim, 2016).

III. Results and Discussion

3.1 Viral Dimensions and Consequences of Terrorism

One of the dimensions of terrorism in Nigeria is the psychological/Social dimension. Terrorism in this area sets up fear, distress and trauma among people or survivors. It has been noted that there were mass exodus of people from the North Eastern part of Nigeria

where most of these brutal attacks are being carried out. In places of residence, they often live in fears of attack by terrorists. Due to the indiscriminate pattern of attack adopted by the sect, both the government and security agents live in perpetual fear (David & Ugochukwu, 2016).

Secondary schools in Northern Nigeria have been shut arising from abductions and alleged preceding sales of school girls by the terrorist groups. This abductions isn't limited to the jurisdictions of the Boko Haram sect, it is now an act carried out by sub-lets of Boko Haram under the guise of banditry (Udema, 2013). Bandit is used in this context as a catch-all term to describe numerous groups that have carried out wicked attacks on local communities, leading to the death of many people. Part of their tactics include kidnapping of vulnerable citizens like students and travellers with the intention of releasing them on random payment. In recent times, Zamfara, Niger and Kaduna communities have suffered in the hands of this new dimension of terrorism called banditry. It is however important to note that this new dimension is limited to Nigeria (Northern region).

Politically, terrorism has reduced the political benefits of the citizens at the federal and state levels. The security units of these countries now carry the larger part of the national budget, whereby, increasing the poverty rate of citizens who weren't directly affected by it. The affected states have also continued to suffer social exclusion in the scheme of things with consequences of both the present and the future generations. This have furthered marred the image Nigeria at the diplomatic front having made the terrorists watch list of the United Nations (UN) and the United States of America (USA). The American government had advised her citizens not to visit or do businesses in some states in Nigeria like Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states (Majekodunmi, 2015).

Economically, security in Nigeria has been immediate and multifaceted. To start with, investors stay away from hard hit or target states which are potential source of terrorist activities thereby suffering investments that would benefit the economy of a state or region. For instance, the fish market in Borno and the Beans market in Yobe is an example of business transaction are as which has been subsequently affected by the terrorist attack. Since the Genesis of the attack on the market, people now hardly engage in trading activities in the affected areas. Even when a few traders dare to engage in those market activities, the scared and already traumatized market population hardly goes there to perform business transaction (Majekodunmi, 2015).

Terrorism has profound consequences on the health of affected populations in Nigeria. Women's reproductive health for instance is one of the health dimensions adversely affected by terrorism. They go through gender-based violence which encompasses sexual harassment and molestation in form of rape, repressive forces, abuse etc. The result of this is unwanted pregnancies. Most times, the pregnant ones have poor or no access to maternal care, as terrorism lead to loss of reproductive healthcare services due to its deteriorating impact on health infrastructure which are totally destroyed or incapacitated from effective functioning (David & Ugochukwu, 2016).

3.2 Regional Responses to Terrorism in Nigeria and her Neighbours

As at 2014, Cameroon remains Nigeria's most affected neighbour in the war against terrorism (Guitta and Simcox, 2014: 15). Chad, Niger, Benin and Central African Republic were also not left out in the effect of terrorism, however, Niger, Chad and Cameroon are the Nigeria's neighbours most affected by the tactics and dimensions of terrorism; most especially, Boko Haram.

Terrorism posed a serious threat to peace, security and development in Nigeria and her neighbours. ECOWAS and the international community acknowledged the dangerous

nature of terrorism and its resultant effect on the economic, social and political growth of the states. For instance, the incessant attacks by Boko Haram in the North-east have prompted a swift migration of a lot of herders and businesses from the region to other regions. These migrations resulted in the illegal settlements established by herds-men in the forest of other states in the southern part of Nigeria. Thus, kidnapping, farm vandalism and other criminal activities have increased in the southern parts of Nigeria (Omede & Omede, 2015).

Given the serious threat posed by Boko Haram to French interests in West and Central Africa, the French president convened a security summit with a select group of African leaders in Paris in 2014. The presidents of Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, as well as delegates from the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union, attended the summit. The summit's aim was to explore methods for dealing with Boko Haram and other terrorist groups in West and Central Africa's security threat (Onuoha, 2014: 9).

In 2013, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a political declaration and a shared stance against terrorism at the regional level. This declaration included a regional counter-terrorism policy and an action plan to aid member states in their fight against terrorism. This policy aims to make regional counter-terrorism initiatives easier to enforce, as well as provide a shared operational structure for community-wide efforts to deter and eliminate terrorism and related crimes (Onuoha, 2014: 10).

The ECOWAS policy, according to Onuoha (2014), aims to:

1. Improve collaboration among member states;
2. Strengthen national and regional capacities to identify, discourage, intercept, and prevent terrorism;
3. Promote a criminal justice approach;
4. Prevent and fight violent and religious extremism; and
5. Harmonize responses and promote regional and international cooperation on terrorism.

According to Onuoha, the ECOWAS Political Declaration and Common Position lack a soft approach that would emphasize the provision of state facilities, humanitarian assistance, and citizen security as steps to deter insurgent appeal.

However in recent times, some neighbouring countries who had suffered immensely from the menace of terrorism; especially Boko Haram moved from quiet containment approach to a more active confrontation. For instance, Cameroon and Niger have increased cross-border attacks on Boko Haram. Chad has also stepped up efforts to combat the insurgency's activities by stationing jets and soldiers at strategic locations (Onuoha, 2014: 11).

In the early years of Boko Haram insurgency, the Nigerian government perceived it as an internal issue that requires no external input. This view by the Nigerian government was based on the military, political, economic, and numerical strength of the country. This notion however changed when several deadly attacks were carried out by the insurgent, leading to the falling of military territories and communities. This prompted Nigeria to cooperate with the neighboring countries in forming a Multi-National Task Force (MNJTF) in 2016 (Adu and Osadola, 2018).

3.3 International Responses to Terrorism in Nigeria And Her Neighbours

The international respect accorded to a country is mostly derived from the country's status in diverse areas such as education, security, national policy, and the likes. It goes without saying that development in other sectors of a nation, to a large extent, depends on the security and peace that exists in the nation (Adeleye & Osadola, 2022). This is because

with the presence of rancor and war, a nation's development is delayed and/or destroyed. For instance, during the civil war in Nigeria that lasted for 30 months 30 days, lots of infrastructures were vandalized. The government after the war had to concentrate on reconstructing under the leadership of Yakubu Gowon. In agreement, Chuku et al (2017) have this to say about the adverse effect of terrorism on a country's development:

“First, terrorism has a direct effect on the economy through the destruction of human and physical capital. Second, terrorism is likely to induce counter-terrorism expenditure, thereby diverting expenditure from production-related activities to defense related activities, which are generally considered to be less productive”.

War is not the only form of insecurity in a nation. Rotimi and Fashagba in *“Understanding Government and Politics in Nigeria”* have opined that in a country like Nigeria, one of the major insecurity utterly ruining its international face is terrorism. Such irredentist group include Oodua People Congress (OPC), Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign States of Biafra (MASSOB), Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) among many others that employed terror tactics in their agitation, but none has been as daring as the Boko Haram, which emerged visibly in 2009 (Adu and Osadola, 2018). They go further to say that the activities of Boko Haram of recent has posed the greatest security challenge to the country and finally destroyed the myth that Nigerians are not terrorists. Since the rise of terrorists' attacks in the country in 2009, the country's image has since been diminishing in the international community. In fact, even within the country, the responses to terrorism by inhabitants of unaffected areas have been negative (Chinwokwu, 2013). It has restricted movement and businesses to some parts of Nigeria for fear of dear life. It has also caused segregation and relegation in the ethnic aspect, and political rumours in the political business. This is in addition to the immeasurable psychological pain and losses it has left people with.

As there are reactions within Nigeria, so also, there are international reaction to the terrorists' attacks disturbing the peace and safety of the nation. Apart from the very fact that the international image of Nigeria has been gradually diminishing, it has also attracted international responses by different countries that have interests in Nigeria and by international organizations such as the EU and UN. According to the Human Rights and Democracy Report in 2013, using Nigeria as a case study, they are more concerned about the Nigerian government's response to threats from Boko Haram. The response has resulted to allegations of human rights violations by the security forces. These violations include demolition of homes, and killings and torture, for which there is a widespread of impunity. The report reads:

“While we recognize that the Nigerian government has both a right and responsibility to defend its people from terrorism, it must ensure that its response respects human rights, and that those involved in human rights abuses are brought to justice. We have raised our concerns at the highest levels of the Nigerian government and called on them to take action” (Adeleye & Osadola, 2022).

Boko Haram attacks on Nigerian educational institutions were also highlighted in a 2013 Amnesty International report. Schools have been demolished, and students have been kidnapped. Furthermore, according to a 2013 study by the International Criminal Court,

“there is a fair basis to conclude that crimes against humanity, including acts of murder and persecution attributed to Boko Haram, have been committed in Nigeria.”

The Guardian Newspaper reported on the 5th of December 2018 that the Global Terrorism Index for 2018 identified Nigeria as one of the top five countries affected by terrorism in terms of death rate. The Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Terrorism Index is based on data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). In 2017, the number of people killed by terrorism in the world increased from 1832 to 1,532. The decrease comes after a 63% drop in deaths in Nigeria the previous year and a 34% drop in 2015 (Chinwokwu, 2013).

The UNODC's Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB) has been mandated by the UN General Assembly to provide legislative assistance on nineteen universal legal instruments against terrorism and other related aspects since 2003, according to an assessment study by the evaluation team of the UNODC's Independent Evaluation Unit. From November 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015, the project “Nigeria-EU-UNODC-CTED Partnership on Strengthening Criminal Justice Responses for Multidimensional Security (Terrorism)” offered capacity building assistance to improve Nigeria's criminal justice response to terrorism (Omede & Omede, 2015).

The fight against Boko Haram has also involved neighbouring countries and African Union forces. Countries such as Cameroon, Chad, and Niger have deployed military troops “as part of a multinational force authorized by the African Union” (Campbell, 2014). This is to help the Nigerian military retake much of the territory claimed by Boko Haram and subside the rate of violent activities by the group.

In an online article publication in Council on Foreign Relations titled “*Nigeria's Battle with Boko Haram*”, Claire Felter (2018) explained that:

The rest of the world has also offered assistance to the relief of Africa. The U.S. classified Boko Haram as a terrorist group in 2013, but at the same time, it has consistently been unwilling to give arms and training to the Nigerian government because of an unclear counter-terrorism policy and claims. Following the girls' abductions in Chibok, France, UK, and the United States government offered additional resources and logistical support. By early 2016, American assistance in combating Boko Haram came to \$400 million. For his part, Presidential administration of Donald Trump expedited a nearly \$600 million sale of Super Tucano military aircraft to Nigeria in order to finance their counter-terrorism efforts in 2018. In the UN Security Council's eyes, the insurgency had been dealt with, as it considered, by means of the fact that they put economic sanctions and an arms embargo on the country in 2014.

On the other hand, the insurgency has frightened foreign investors away from Nigeria, where it joins a list of threats that includes other insurgent groups that threaten oil facilities in the Niger Delta. Since 2011, foreign investment inflows to the nation have plunged, dropping from nearly \$9 billion in 2011 to \$3.5 billion in 2017. By and large, the responses received from international organizations and African and non-African countries has been in form response from Nigeria's plea for help and also voluntarily, to uphold international integrity. From international organizations, the responses have been to maintain peace and solidarity, and to also caution the Nigerian government to avoid violation of human rights even while countering terrorism

(Okoro, 2014). Terrorist activities in the country have been all however, even with the additional international efforts. This has left many wondering if the unyielding nature of peace restoration comes from problems within Nigeria or a call for better international intervention.

IV. Conclusion

Ethnicity and identity politics made terrorism a more complex phenomenon in Nigerian for instance. Although most recent attacks carried out by the Boko Haram insurgency are limited to the North eastern states, it is imperative to note that the effects of these attacks go beyond them. Neighbouring countries like Chad, Niger and Cameroon continue to suffer from the systemic attacks too. The economy of the Lake Chad Basin has been severely affected by terrorism. Insecurity has been heightened in the sub-region as the extremist pulled up their deadly attacks in the area. The insurgency has halted the once booming economy and peaceful co-existence of the people of the area and replaced it with death, kidnapping for ransom, and underdevelopment.

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