

# Multinational Joint Task Force and Insurgent Attacks in the Lake Chad Region: Nigeria in Perspective

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**Abstract**— Security has assumed heightened importance in the world today as the rate of criminal activities also increased in scale. This has not only posed a great threat to national development but also to education. This paper examined the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and insurgent attacks in the Lake Chad region, with Nigeria in perspective. The theoretical thrust of the study is the realists' theory. The study adopted ex-post facto research design which is based on already documented evidences. Data were generated from secondary sources, such as textbooks, journals, newspapers, online (internet) publications and conference papers. The result revealed that education has come under serious threat, especially in the Northeast Nigeria. It also showed that insurgent attacks persist despite the formation of MNJTF due to porous borders, policy inconsistency, inadequate funding, lack of commitment, uncoordinated reprisals, poor intelligent gathering, external support and failed governance. However, as the counter terror operations appears to be the panacea for security and return of millions of displaced persons who are living in extremely vulnerable conditions, the paper concludes that there has been persistent insurgent attacks on residents, education and developmental projects. The study recommends amongst others that government should address the persistent insurgent attacks through effective harnessing of the regional resources in the provision of needed funds and sophisticated weaponry for the counter terror operation. This is to avoid the endless wait of aid from international donors. The region's porous borders should be secured by setting up a regional joint border police.

**Keywords**— Development, education, insecurity, insurgency, Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), porous borders.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Security has assumed heightened importance in the world today as the rate of criminal activities also increased in scale. Criminals move across borders unhindered in carrying out attacks and illicit businesses with impunity (Akinyemi, 2013). This has raised concern for pragmatic security policies or programmes to both developed and developing societies, as well as regional and international bodies. The threat or challenges within and across borders have been a central issue and addressing it has become a basic strategic and moral imperative. Over the years, many sovereign nations, particularly in Africa have experienced incessant internal and external attacks, thereby endangering lives and properties, as well posing a serious threat to socio-economic, political stability and region development (Metelits, 2014).

It has been observed that the internal security environment of the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) has deteriorated in recent times. According to Onuoha (2014), while old security threats may have remained or even assumed worrisome dimensions, new ones like the outbreak of the Islamic extremism and

regional terrorism of the Boko Haram sect have emerged. The dramatic rise of the dreaded sect in Nigeria and its expansion into neighboring Cameroon, Chad and Niger has continued to attract policies on how the menace could be addressed. Security Council (2014) argues that terrorism can only be defeated or its threat countered by a sustained and comprehensive approach involving the active participation and collaboration of all stakeholders. Thus, the idea of setting up a regional Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) saddled with the responsibility of curtailing illegal activities of insurgents, such as the Boko Haram, Ansaru Jihadists and as well restore peace and security in the sub-region (Shehu, 2015).

Historically, leaders cooperate on a range of issues, amongst which is security. They continuously engage in policies of working together as a community to manage and resolve violent conflicts either by peaceful negotiations, diplomacy or even confrontation (Ayuba & Okafor, 2015). In 1994, a 23,000 Multinational Joint Force headed by the United States intervened in Haiti and restored the then president Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power and equally pushed out the military junta that had overthrown the government three years earlier (Girard, 2004). This indicates that Multinational Joint Force is not new, but their task or mission could differ. The palpable insecurity in the Lake Chad region occasioned by armed banditry, arms trafficking and border intrusion along Nigeria's border with Chad, Cameroon and Niger necessitate the need for the establishment of MNJTF. According to Adejo (2005), before the establishment, it was easy to see that there was no cross-border cooperation between Nigeria and Cameroon, nor are relations between Nigeria and Chad any better. He observed that there were cases of border incursions where Chadian gendarmes harassed Nigerians living on some Islands in Lake Chad and over 30 border incidents with Cameroon. Consequently, hoodlums and bandits grabbed that loophole in border disunity to steadily unleash terror and proliferate Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) and other illegalities in the country.

However, as the MNJTF is making efforts to curtail the threats against peace and tranquility in the region, the operation has been characterized by distrust and weak coordination (Observatoire de l'Afrique, 2015). The problem of funding is yet to be resolved as United Nations (UN) is expected to set up fund for the operations. In other words, neither AU nor LCBC was prepared for this challenge as there was no reserved or clear source of funding for this course (Zamfir, 2015). According to Assanvo, A-Abatan & Sawadogo (2016), as Nigeria has contributed over US\$30

million to the MNJTF, other member states have not really invested meaningfully. Aside the troops in the combat operation, Chad and Niger were said to have not redeemed their various financial pledges for the smooth operation of the force (Mac-Leva & Mutum, 2015). Again, the counter fire and uncoordinated destructive reprisals from the troop have instilled fear in the local residents who therefore, instead of cooperating by giving them vital information, appears sealed-lips or hiding the insurgents among them. Thus, without cooperation for adequate intelligent gathering within the communities, winning the war against terror would be difficult (Ukoh, 2013).

The Boko Haram insurgent in Nigeria is one of the deadliest extremist armed groups in the world. According to the Global Terrorist Index (GTI, 2015), the group was responsible for the deaths of over 6,644 people in Nigeria and Cameroon in 2014 alone. Its brutal insurgency has affected every strata of life in Nigeria's northeast, including education and leading to development deficit, which are now the fault line of the conflict (Human Right Watch, 2016). It is in view of these litanies of issues that the paper examines the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and persistent insurgent attacks in the Lake Chad region, especially in Nigeria.

## II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

### *Insecurity*

Security of lives and properties is a dire need for any thriving nation. Without security, a country or region remains exposed to threats and vulnerability (Iregbenu & Uzonwanne, 2015). According to Palme (1992: 9), "there is a correlation between security and survival". Whereas survival is an essential condition, security is viewed as safety, confidence, free from danger, fear, doubt, among others. In other words, the preservation of lives and properties under the atmosphere of stable political and economic thriving atmosphere is attributable to efficient and effective security.

The importance or essence of security therefore cannot be overemphasized. It is obvious that tension (unrest) and economic retardance exists in a country or region where investors are not sure of securing their investments. As they get scared of investing in such a place; unemployment, underdevelopment, and even poverty amongst other negative consequences arises. Therefore these myriads of challenges are as the result of insurgent activities.

Notably, insurgency may be described as the state of revolting against a recognized government or territory that does not reach the proportions of an organised revolutionary government and not recognised as belligerency; an act of social unrest through continued struggle, agitation, conflicts or confrontations like that of Boko Haram, Ansaru, etc. Such activities if not adequately checkmated can jeopardise and crumble noble developmental agendas, especially education.

### *Multinational Joint Task Force*

Concerted counter-cooperative approaches (or multi-joint forces) have been adopted and applied in various places threatened by insecurity. In other words, joint military

alliances or forces like the NATO, UN Peacekeeping, ECOMOG and many others had at one time or the other been charged to restore peace, normalcy as to ensure security of lives and properties. For instance, NATO-Russian relations on military alliance and other cooperation were established in 1991 within the framework of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (later renamed Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council) and were further deepened as Russia joined the partnership for peace programme on June 22, 1994 (Joint Publication, 2017). The Russia-NATO council worked for security issues and joint projects. Amidst international pressure on Gulf Arab states to do more in the fight against Islamic State (ISIS), Saudi Arabia mobilized 34 mainly Muslim nations to join in a new military alliance in the fight against terrorism (Islamic Anti-terrorism, 2015).

Additionally, in an attempt to end the bloody civil war in Liberia, in August 1990, a group of West African nations under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) took the unprecedented step of sending a peacekeeping force into Monrovia. This force, known as the Economic Community Cease-Fire Monitoring Group, (ECOMOG), spent almost three years in Liberia, yet its goal of bringing peace to the country remains elusive (ECOMOG Intervention, 1993). ECOMOG was a formal arrangement for separate armies to work together.

Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) is the combination of security forces of individual nations for the specific purpose of enforcing control and orderliness in a conflict prone area(s) as to restore peace and normalcy. Specifically, the MNJTF in the Lake Chad is a formation that comprises units of the Chadian, Cameroonian, Nigerien and Nigerian armed forces with a Nigerian Brigadier General as the commander (Wikipedia, 2017). It was first organised as a solely Nigerian force in 1994, during the administration of Sani Abacha, to checkmate banditry activities and to facilitate free movement along its northern border (Musa, 2015). In 1998 it was expanded to include units from neighbouring Chad and Niger with the purpose of dealing with common cross-border security issues in the region. As Boko Haram insurgency intensified from 2010, the task of the MNJTF was expanded in April 2012 to encompass counter-terrorism operations. The force was made up of about 8,750 military personnel with the mandate to combat and bring to an end the Boko Haram and other violent extremism in the sub-region (Dze-Ngwa, 2018). From the foregoing, it is clear that the idea of joining national forces towards the course of restoring peace and outmasting social unrest or confrontations is not new.

### *Education*

The education system has come under severe attack of insurgency ravaging north-eastern Nigeria. Some school children have been killed, abducted, forcefully recruited and internally displaced; while others sought for refuge in neighbouring countries (UNICEF, 2015). Throughout 2014 the armed conflict in the region was one of the world's deadliest for children, and education was profoundly affected as a result of attacks on school children, teachers, schools and

other educational facilities (Olamilekan, 2014 in Isokpan, & Durojaye, 2016).

It has been observed that the low level of education and literacy in north east Nigeria have been exacerbated by the Boko Haram insurgency. The group has been identified as one of the factors that facilitate various levels of destruction of educational infrastructure in most locations in northern Nigeria, thus, leading to high level of student's drop-out (Bilyaminu, Baba & Purokayo, 2017). They targeted teachers and schools, with more than 910 schools destroyed between 2009 and 2015, and 1,500 forced to close (Segun, Dele-Adedeji & Donnelly, 2016). In addition, they argue that government security forces used schools for military purposes, further reducing children's right to education. This is as Human Rights Watch's latest report has it that Boko Haram insurgents set classrooms on fire in Northeast Nigeria.

In a study that examined the effect of insurgent activities on basic schools in Borno State, Abdurashed, Onuselogu & Obioma (2015) reported that many school children have been hurt and traumatized by incessant attacks in their schools, especially since the abduction of the Chibok school girls in April, 2014. The pupils became afraid of being kidnapped which has made them to stay away from school in the mostly affected areas. Consequently, many schools in the area have been closed indefinitely while most basic school teachers working in affected areas had escaped death during series of attacks in their communities. This means that majority of teachers are currently displaced, and leading to lack of teachers, which in turn affecting basic education in the region.

#### *Theoretical Framework: Realists Theory*

The proponents of modern realism have been identified to include Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz. Historically the start of modern realism came as a result of the failure of idealism in addressing the 'World War I' which had devastating effects that led to World War II (Jonsson, Hjern & Sandberg, 2008). They claim that conflict was an inevitable way to guarantee security of states through preparation for war. Thus, in the anarchical world, realists prescribe the accumulation of power and military strength to assure state survival, protection of an orderly domestic space and pursuit of legitimate national interests beyond one's territorial boundaries.

The realist theory or realism stem out from the failure or inability of idealism in proffering or giving adequate explanation to international conflicts. That is, its inability to address the First World War, which brokored into the Second World War led social thinkers to propose for realism. The theory has the assumptions that no actor exists above states; and that states are capable of regulating their interactions, by arriving in relations with other states on their own rather than being dictated to them by some higher controlling entity (Walt, 2000).

Realists believe that the world is socially constructed but argues that this is not entirely the case. They construe rather than construct the world. Reality kicks in at some point. Hans Morgenthau (1954) in his book "*Politics among Nations*" outlined six principles of political realism to include;

1. Political Realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature.
2. The main signpost that helps political realism to find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power.
3. Power and interest are variable in content across space and time.
4. Realism maintains that universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states.
5. Political Realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe.
6. The difference, then, between political Realism and other schools of thought is real and it is profound. Intellectually, the political realist maintains the autonomy of the political sphere.

The realist view has had a large impact on international relations, and has always found international politics distinctive because of anarchy, meaning the absence of any ultimate power and any authority over states; when it comes to international politics there is little rule. The realist claim is that the absence of rule makes power, autonomy, the international political system, and its structure significantly different from domestic politics, with anarchy making international security relations particularly system driven.

The nature of this system with its pressures and constraints, are the main factors in determining the security goals and relations, in a way the security agenda of the national governments. In that aspect it is that they are more important factors than their domestic character, the qualities of their leaders and political systems, their ideological preoccupations, or their decision-making processes, hence it is so that foreign policy as such is in large a rational response to external necessities (Collins, 2007).

In this context, multinational joint task force as an instrument of state for enforcing order and security has a great influence to member states of the Lake Chad. Through its commitment and dealings, it is believed that the regional security of the Lake Chad would be enhanced. In other words, by the virtue of less or non-challant attitude or even compromise due to corruption the security challenges facing the region could be worsened. One of its major assumptions that states must arrive at relations with other states on their own rather than being dictated to them by some higher controlling entity seem to be suffering defeat as we have seen the acclaimed world powers (like the U.S, Britain, France etc.) dictating and directing the Lake Chad states on how best to go about tackling their internal security challenges. It is also on this premiss that we could see that the sub-region is still waiting for fund or support from the international community to be able to effectively fund the MNJTF.

From the discourse so far, realists theory has tried in explaining why there is prevalent atmosphere of insecurity and perceived failure of state agents (MNJTF); even gives appreciable insights on why rebel groups (insurgents) are springing up to destabilize the states.

**III. REASONS INSURGENT ATTACKS PERSIST DESPITE THE FORMATION OF MNJTF**

*Porous Borders:* Border has been described as the first line of defence against terrorism and the last line of a nation’s territorial integrity (Spencer in Onuoha, 2013). The Lake Chad in particular and African borders in general has been characterized as being porous and threatening to socio-economic and political spheres of the region (Addo, 2006). Nigeria has been identified as having porous borders on both land and sea edges, allowing in-flow of arms smuggling from a variety of war-torn countries in Africa and beyond (Keili, 2008). Due to the sheer size of some countries in the Lake Chad region, border control or security has continued to be difficult.

Despite efforts of cross-border security agencies, the vast land and maritime borders of Lake Chad region are still porous, allowing illicit arms trafficking and banditry activities (Yacubu, Stohl & Tuttle in Okeke & Oji, 2014). Nigeria has 770 km of shared land border with the Republic of Benin to the west, about 1500 km with Niger to the north, 1700 km with Cameroon to the east, 90 km with the Republic of Chad to the north-east and 850 km maritime border on the Atlantic Ocean (Malam, 2014). Thus, the country has 1,497 irregular and 84 regular entry points, making it one of the countries with porous borders in West Africa (Ukoh, 2013). Most of these border areas are either in mountainous or jungle areas (Onuoha, 2013). As a result insurgents are penetrating at will in carrying out co-ordinated attacks unhindered. Onuoha (2014b) noted that about four Boko Haram insurgents were arrested on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013 in Cameroon and in early 2014 another two were caught in the Borno-Niger border lines. He argues that with the high level of porous land and maritime borders coupled with ineffectual security system, small arms and light weapons proliferation has grown by leaps and bounds, thus exacerbating security challenges in the region.

In February 2012, Nigerian government deported over 7,000 illegal immigrants, mostly Chadians and Nigeriens. Some were suspected terrorists accused of increasing the Boko Haram threat, while others were said to be inciting radical views (International Crisis Group, 2014). During police interrogation, Yusuf (former leader of Boko Haram) was alleged to provide information on the flow of weapons to the sect from among others, private sources in Niger, Cameroon and Chad (Funteh & Azieh, 2015). They stress that BH members easily travel to these neighbouring countries owing to the porous borders and shared ethnicity, like the dominant

Kanuri which constitutes a regional ethnic group that straddles the border lines. As a result, security experts agree that the Boko Haram insurgency would have been curtailed or defeated if not for the nation’s porous borders (Ukoh, 2013). This is in view that the porosity of the borders is contributing to the persistent security challenges in the country due to unrestrained influx of illegal immigrants and SALWs.

*Policy Inconsistency:* According Mac-Leva and Mutum (2015), foreign Technical Advisers (TAs) (mercenaries) that helped former President Goodluck Jonathan’s regime to retake 22 local government areas and clear insurgents’ strongholds in six weeks before the general elections had air power and technical know-how advantages against the sect; hence the success was recorded. As their contract expired in June 2015, it was not renewed by the present Buhari led administration and they left with their surveillance drones that enabled them to survey targets before launching attacks. They noted that upon departure of the TAs, not only that the Nigerian soldiers were unable to handle many of the weaponries they used, but also lack the technical know-how on how to repair and maintain these weapons. Thus, Nigeria lost that advantage over insurgents as the Tas departed.

*Inadequate Funding:* The importance of funding in the fight against terror cannot be overemphasized. Abdullahi (2015) noted that the key challenge facing the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) presently is to find the funds to finance and sustain the on-going war against terror and at the same time implement the necessary infrastructure for sustainable socio-economic growth for wealth creation, poverty alleviation, good health care, education, food security and protection or preservation of the rich and diverse ecosystem. According to Shamsudeem (2014), lack of sources of generating adequate funds to tackle security challenges posed by insurgency groups, especially the Boko Haram is a frustrating factor in West Africa. He argues that most of the member countries involved in the joint coalition of the task force have not contributed reasonably to mobilize counter attacks to the sect. Interestingly, the coalition troops were supposed to start operations on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 but were dogged by lack of funding and political will (Desmaze, 2015). It could be said that the involved countries are trying to be cautious of how they expend considering various internal issues of development, unemployment and many others ravaging or confronting them, especially the Lake encroachment and its implication to agricultural development. However, Table 1 shows the quantum of funds so far given to the MNJTF;

TABLE 1. Quantum of Funds made Available to the MNJTF from 2010-2015

Donors	Cameroon		Chad		Niger		Nigeria		US		EU		UK		CEN-SAD		Total
	M	\$	M	\$	M	\$	M	\$	M	\$	M	\$	M	\$	M	\$	
10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	-	-	-	-	-	-	Feb.	1m	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1m
14	Nov.	1.2m	-	-	-	-	Aug.	9m	-	-	-	-	March	2m	-	-	12.2m
15	-	-	-	-	-	-	June	21m	June	5m	-	-	Sept.	1.5m	April	1.5m	29m
Total	-	1.2m	-	-	-	-	-	31m	-	5m	-	-	-	3.5m	-	1.5m	42.2m

Sources: Assanvo, A-Abatan & Sawadogo (2016); Umar (2013); Mac-Leva & Mutum (2015)

M = Month

\$ = Amount given in US dollars.

Yrs (20..): Years in 2000s (2010-2015).

It can be seen from the Table that the MNJTF has barely received around \$42.2m out of the proposed \$700m take-off fund on the fight against insurgency in the Lake Chad region. It is obvious that fund was not made available to the MNJTF on inauguration, but until February, 2013 that only Nigeria which was perceived by other Lake Chad nations to be the most affected nation released \$1m for a start. It is also clear that aside Cameroon that had managed to release \$1.2m in November 2014, other LC nations appears to have not contributed any fund. However, Mac-Leva & Mutum (2015) noted that Chad and Niger have only contributed with its troops in the combat operation; hence, Abdullahi (2015) argues that the LCBC is yet to resolve the challenge of sourcing for finance that will sustain the war against terror in the subregion. Arguably, this lack of specified source of financing the MNJTF and late release of the initial take-off one million dollars by only Nigeria in 2013 could explain why the period of 2010 to 2013 experienced repeated insurgent attacks that led to loss of many lives and properties worth millions of dollars. Again, the Table shows that in 2014, Nigeria again released \$9m, the United Kingdom (UK) gave \$2m in March of same year, and in 2015, as the United States (US) released \$5m to the taskforce, the Community of Sahelo-Sahara States (CEN-SAD) gave \$1.5m in support of the fight, and later the Nigerian government gave \$21m, making it about 31 million dollars released so far out of the 100 million dollars it pledged in support of the MNJTF operations. According to Assanvo, A-Abatan & Sawadogo (2016), EU have not redeemed about 50 million euros it pledged in support of the counter insurgents and the issue of pledging without fulfilling therefore appears to be the greatest frustration to realizing fund for the MNJTF smooth operations. Having revealed this and considering over one billion dollars needed to effectively curtail or defeat insurgent activities in the sub-region; this paper argues that the quantum of fund provided so far is insufficient. Not until adequate fund is made available there may be reoccurring tides of insurgent attacks in the Lake Chad region, especially Nigeria.

*Lack of Commitment:* It has been observed that due to selfish interest into the regional pact, there is lack of total commitment to the fight against terror in the sub-region. It would be recalled that Nigeria had in November 2011 shut its border with Cameroon, as the French nation was not showing enough commitment in policing her own side of the border appropriately. Although the border was reopened in February 2012 after top ECOWAS military meeting in Abidjan that urged Cameroon to step up its cooperation with Nigeria. Despite the renewed agreement for both countries to adequately secure its borders, how insurgents are gaining easy movements into both countries to launch successful attacks indicates there is security compromise and lack of commitment (or will power). Perhaps, due to bribery and corruption that characterized the region.

It is usually said that 'who wears the shoe knows where it pinches'. As such, having her name and reputation at stake in

the comity of nations, Nigeria appears more committed in the fight against terror in the sub-region than its neighbours. Cameroon was allegedly joined the task force in order to secure its borders and boost economic development. Ukoh (2013) noted with dismay that Cameroon is not providing the expected support despite the possible economic gains from cooperating in curbing the threat. Perhaps, it is on this note that a Nigerian blogger and national security analyst said that the MNJTF had collapsed and frowned at massive trust deficit on all sides, especially among the national forces (Dan'Iyan, 2015).

*Uncoordinated Reprisals:* The counter-terrorism effort of the government through the troops has been challenged by both domestic and international humanitarian agencies. There are series of criticisms by human rights/international organizations and some western nations over the casualties of the anti-terror activities (Onapajo, 2013). He noted that in 2012, Amnesty International and National; Human Rights Commission separately raised concern over the unlawful killings, dragnet arrests, arbitrary and unlawful detentions, extortion and intimidation which has led to great deal of migration of residents out of the affected areas. The MNJTF whose mandate is to create a secured environment, restore state authority and facilitate humanitarian assistance in the affected areas are taking a blunderbuss approach with its violent searches for insurgents (Smith, 2012). He stressed that the JTF soldiers are drawn from national forces, often having few cultural and linguistic affinities with local people, who see themselves as under military siege.

According to Musa (2013), local residents in northeastern Nigeria have severally accused the taskforce of inhumane treatment and abuse of human rights. He pointed that a raid in Maiduguri, Borno state capital, after the killing of a military officer by the extremists saw soldiers kill at least 30 civilians and set fire across a neighborhood. Burnt bodies of goats and cattle were allegedly littered the streets and survived residents packed out and deserted their homes in fear. Thus, making the residents perceive the taskforce in bad light (as enemies) and possibly ally with the insurgents in unleashing coordinated attacks on the force and states.

*Poor Intelligent Gathering:* The frustration of uncoordinated reprisals is often predicated on insufficient or poor intelligence. Clearly, the Nigerian government and most other concerned nations are still struggling to acquire adequate knowledge of its common enemies. Onapajo (2013) argues that seven years after the emergence of the Boko Haram phenomenon, the Nigerian government still perceives the group as faceless and unidentifiable. He noted that former president Goodluck Jonathan repeatedly classified the group as 'faceless and ghost'. It could also be argued that this perception transcends even into the present Buhari's administration. Obviously this explains why the war against terror has not been won; as it is only when one properly identifies his enemy that he will be able to strategize appropriately with the right counter-approach.

*External Support:* It has been noted that the local insurgents are drawing their livewire and support from international terror groups. According to ECOWAS Counter Terrorism

(2015), extremist activities and groups are on the rise across Africa as renowned global terror groups, including ISIS and al-Qaeda affiliates continue to overtake local insurgent organizations and transform them into regional and international threats. In an effort to expand their terror acts, some sophisticated extremist elements that have evolved out of the member states of ECOWAS joined forces with foreign groups, absorbed smaller ones or become an arm of a foreign group to perpetuate violence. Following multiple attacks in its stronghold Northeast Nigeria, ISIS affiliate Boko Haram claimed responsibility of multiple attacks in Abuja, as well as Niger and Chad in October 2015 (Martel, 2015; Weiss, 2015).

In the views of Funteh and Azieh (2015), insurgents in the Lake Chad region like the Boko Haram and Ansaru are showing to receive support from jihadists in Algeria, Yemen, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. According to them, even in Cameroon, it is a common believe that Boko Haram were able to carry out successive attacks due to their collaboration with local militias in the country. The group does not exist in isolation as they try to show link with other terrorist organizations (Bamgbose, 2013:132-134; Ogaba, 2011). They cited the American Government's declarative close ties of Abubakar Shekau, Abubakar Kambar and Khalid Al-Barmawi (the three leaders of Boko Haram) with Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Obayuwana (2011) and Bamgbose (2013) noted that in March 2010, Al Qaeda confessed of helping Nigerian extremists with training and weapons to confront the Nigerian state. The group was quoted to have said thus "we are ready to train your people in weapons and give you whatever support we can in men, arms and ammunitions to enable defend our people in Nigeria".

Furthermore, between 2000 and 2002 Osama bin Laden issued two audio messages calling on Nigerian and other West-African Muslims to wage jihad and establish an Islamic State. His interest dated from his 1992-1996 stay in Sudan, where he was reportedly met Mohammed Ali, a Nigerian from Maiduguri studying at the Islamic University in Khartoum, who later became his disciple and was trained in Afghanistan. As he returned home in 2002 and began funding religious activities of Salafi groups that were unaware of the plan, Mohammed Yusuf and others were allegedly the earlier major beneficiaries of his teachings (ICG, 2014). Thus, it reported that the Boko Haram members have links with Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban. This was in view of the aftermath of the June 2009 insurrection that 30 members were arrested in Adamawa State and returned to Maiduguri, where they reportedly admitted having received training and financial support in Afghanistan. AQIM militia was said to have made financial resources, military arsenals and training facilities available. During his police interrogation, Yusuf (the former leader of Boko Haram) reportedly provided information on the flow of weapons to the sect from, among others, private sources in Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Iraq (Funte & Azieh, 2015; ICG, 2014). The regional and most especially Nigerian military believe that the sect has significant transnational links. On 27th September 2012, the former Chief of Army Staff Lt.-General Azubike Ihejirika said it was funded and equipped from abroad. He cited, as evidence, the types of

weapons and communication equipment insurgents' uses, as well as the expertise it displays with IEDs. Senior security officers from Cameroon and Chad also worry about the ungoverned territories along Nigeria's borders with Niger and Chad (Onuoha, 2014b; ICG, 2014).

Barnawi, the leader of Ansaru Jihadists was reportedly said to have earned 50 million naira (\$325,000) as his share of €11 million paid to AQIM for release of French hostages he participated in kidnapping. Trying to forge an alliance, he donated 40 million naira (\$265,000) to Boko Haram's Shekau. On the 29th of November 2012, Shekau posted a 39-minute video on the extremist websites saluting global jihadists and expressing Boko Haram's solidarity with al-Qaeda and its leaders – a radical departure from the group's domestic focus. This brought Boko Haram and Ansaru closer, a rapprochement solidified by Shekau's decision to make Babagana Assalafi, Barnawi's closest disciple, his deputy. Due to his close links to AQIM, Barnawi allegedly became its channel for the supply of funds and weapons to both Ansaru and Boko Haram (ICG, 2014).

Adisa (2012) in Funteh and Azieh (2015) also revealed that the group known as Al- Muntada Trust Fund with headquarters in the United Kingdom is financially assisting the sect, as well as the Islamic World Society with headquarters in Saudi Arabia. In a statement released on June 15th 2011, Boko Haram revealed its ties with the Somali based terror group, Al-Shabaab, boasting that Nigeria's security agencies were unable to match the training they acquired in Somalia. According to Onuoha (2014b), suicide bombings which occurred after this statement, including the bombing of the Police Headquarters in Abuja shortly afterwards proved that members of the group benefited from a training on employment of suicide bombings.

*Politics and Failed Governance:* The ugly trend and easy recruitment of younger people into militia groups may be attributed to failed governance in providing job opportunities to the teaming unemployed youths in the region. In Nigeria for instance, Briggs and George in Okafor and Oddih (2010) traced the Niger Delta militants' oil violence to soaring youth unemployment in the region. They noted that recruitment by the militias became the only way for young men, especially university graduates struggling to make a living. Consequently, Okafor and Oddih submit that it is difficult to convince a child who has been drilled in militia tactics and mentality to intermingle freely with the enemy's side (the government, whom they believe constrained or failed them) no matter the time lag.

It is therefore pertinent to state that there is an intricate link between politics, poor leadership and violence. Politics in Africa is largely driven by money, thus degenerate to poor governance or leadership. Elected officials are hardly accountable to citizens. The well-connected exercise undue influence according to the strength of their purse and the strings they can pull. As a result the various factions of political, economic or business, traditional and religious elites have been drawn into a political economy driven by huge revenues from oil and other abundant resources, implicating in wide-scale and systemic corruption (ICG, 2014). Thus, the

economically deprived and unprivileged majority keep expressing their aggression through violence and criminality.

In other words, the barbaric, crude and uncivilized nature of African politics is a factor that worth exacerbating insecurity in the Lake Chad region. Here, politics is approached as a 'do-or-die affair'. The political stake is incredibly high, making politicians desperate in the struggle to win. This often leads to the recruitment of specialists of violence such as cultists, gangsters and thugs to attain and retain in power. In some cases, these specialists are compensated with sensitive elective or appointive offices; leading to gross ineptitude or recrudescence of political warfare, further exacerbating governance failure (Onuoha, 2014). This goes a long way to explaining the violent brand of Nigerian politics, usually painted with blood and money. Onuoha therefore posits that the incredible logic becomes more money in politics, more SALWs; and more SALWs in politics, more blood spilling. Furthermore, Ojatorotu and Okeke-Uzodike (2006) noted that often those non state actors used in gaining entrance into corridor of power are not rewarded and the arms given to them not retrieved after the elections, thus leaving them frustrated. With the unrecoverable weapons in their hands, they usually re-strategise and launch attacks on the state and its institutions in a sort of revenge to the unpaid or unfulfilled agreement by their political godfathers that used and dumped them.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The persistent threat posed by insurgent groups in the Lake Chad Basin makes the MNJTF ever more relevant. However, as the counter terror operations appears to be the panacea for security and return of millions of displaced persons who are living in extremely vulnerable conditions, the paper concludes that there has been persistent insurgent attacks on residents, education and developmental projects. This indicates that much more needs to be done to effectively secure and stabilise the affected areas, especially the North-east Nigeria.

#### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for possible policy implementations;

1. The government of LCBC should address the persistent insurgent attacks through effective harnessing of the regional resources in the provision of needed funds and sophisticated weaponry for the counter operation. This is to avoid the endless wait for aid from international donors.
2. The military command should promote love among the taskforce as to enhance trust and commitment. This is in consideration of the adage that says 'united we stand and divided we fall'. The officers should be made to appreciate the assignment in the best interest of the region than perceiving it as a fight for a particular nation.
3. There should be adequate intelligent gathering and coordination to exterminate external support and profiteering of illegal sale or supply of arms.
4. The region's porous borders should be secured by setting up a regional joint border police. This can be achieved through sending of the forces to technologically advanced

societies for proper border control training and enacting of laws that would sanction compromise of any sort.

5. Government should provide adequate security apparatus at schools, especially in North East Nigeria. This will not only enhance the return of the students and teachers, but also promote sense of safety to parents and residents in the areas.

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