AFRICAN BORDERS, CONFLICT, REGIONAL AND CONTINENTAL INTEGRATION

Border Regions Series

AFRICAN BORDERS, CONFLICT, REGIONAL AND CONTINENTAL INTEGRATION

Edited by
Inocent Moyo and Christopher Changwe Nshimbi

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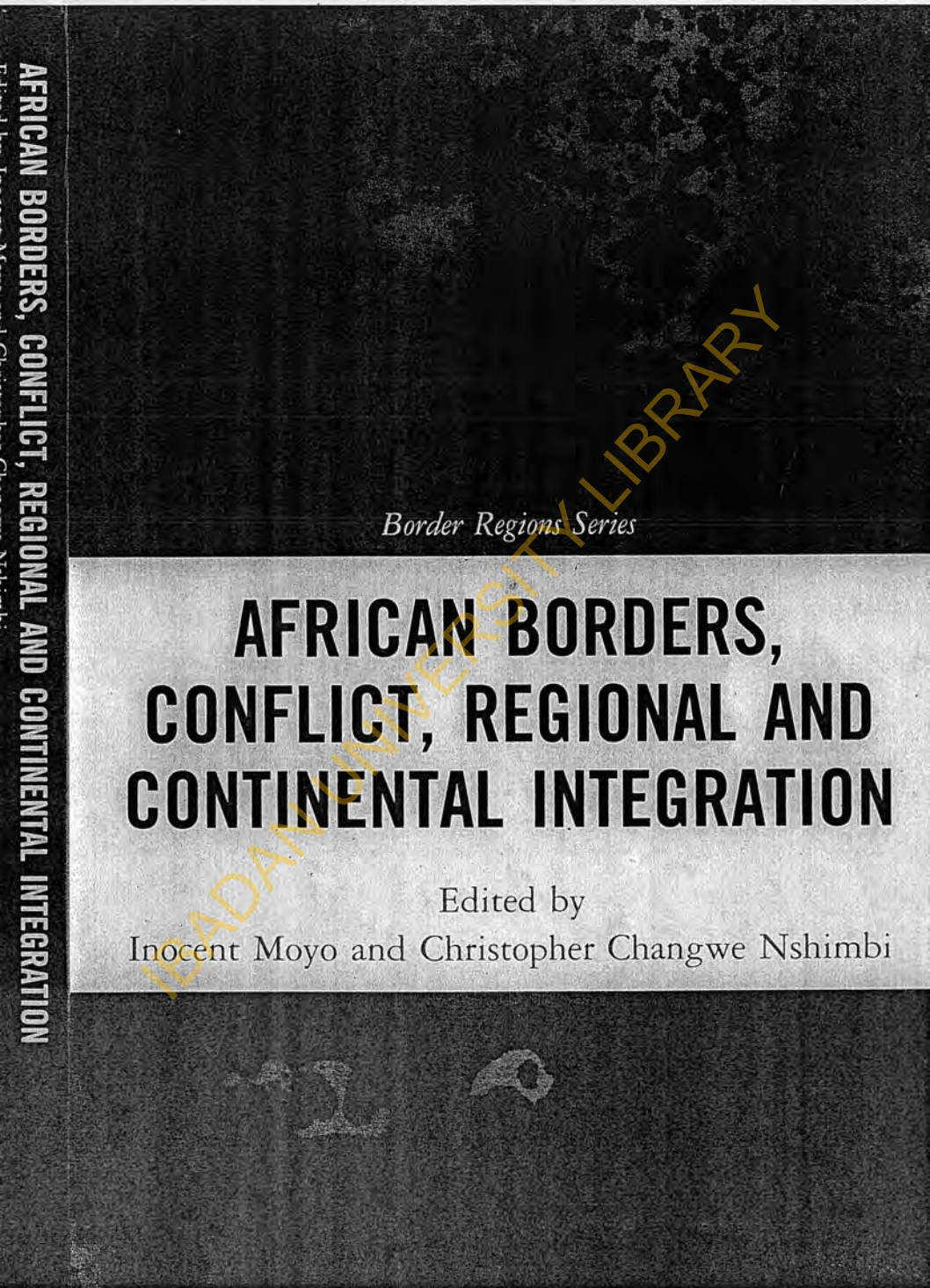

Border Regions Series

Series Editor: **Doris Wastl-Walter**, *University of Bern, Switzerland*

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Introduction

Border security is a trans-national phenomenon particularly in this era of insurgency and global terrorism, which tend to undermine the efforts of security agencies. This comes against the background that, across the millennia, migration or seasonal movements of people have been a significant aspect of the human experience in space and time (Schiller and Salazar, 2012). The significance of well-secured and manned borders cannot be downplayed in the international political system. This is based on the fact that well-manned borders contribute to the making of a modern and functional state. They reflect order and portray the government as capable of ensuring territorial integrity. In fact, well-manned borders would be difficult to reconfigure and cannot experience instabilities the way porous borders do. This claim is informed by the fact that porous borders are routes of illicit activity that sometimes constitutes conventional security threats in states. As a result, border policies have proliferated amongst the comity of nations in recent times to the extent that states have been compelled to review their immigration policies in line with globalisation and current realities confronting humankind. The influx of criminal networks has prompted states to embark on the review of their immigration policies, which are aimed at addressing the problems arising from trans-border activities, some of which can be described as non-conventional security threats.

Although Ekoko (2004) asserts that in most cases, political boundaries are artificial creations by humankind, and that the territories of states have become landmarks that cannot just be redrawn overnight; notwithstanding, Cassese (2016: 2) posits that:

> borders are becoming more "porous" and "malleable": they are crossed, can disappear, grow stronger, advance, retreat and redefine themselves. Borders are, in a word, subject to strong changes, dictated by diverse needs, some in the spirit of closure and some in the spirit of openness (elasticity of borders).

Thus, the reconfiguration that occurs within territories through illicit networks weakens national borders. In particular, this occurs when the openness of borders becomes a source of threat to national security when such routes are utilised by non-state actors for their selfish interests. The transnational networks that proliferate are mobilised for different purposes. Indeed, some transnational networks usually have economic and criminal purposes to the extent that they engage in underground border trade, currency trade and other activities. Most borders in Africa are characterised by different illicit activities that occasion the rush for border crossing for the purpose of transacting business. Such can lead to cross-border risk, which is any undesirable consequence arising from such activities and interactions and can affect states and individuals directly or indirectly. Hence, counterinsurgency is an endeavour that state security providers adopt to enhance human and national security (Ashkenazi, 2013).

The emergence of Boko Haram insurgency in 2009 marked a watershed in Nigeria's political, social and economic history. It took the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) many years to understand the recruitment, membership and factors that sustain the operational efficiency of the Islamist sect. As a result of the insurgency, the upsurge in violence since 2009 made Borno State, Adamawa and Yobe States of Nigeria the hotbeds of Boko Haram insurgency which affects many rural people and those in towns like Maiduguri, Yola, Mubi and Damaturu. Although attacks started in 2011 with many deaths recorded (Mauro, nd), the insurgency by Boko Haram and its resistance strategy increased in scale several months after the declaration of state of emergency on 14 May 2013, precisely in December 2013, when members of the sect coordinated and launched a series of deadly attacks on police stations in Northern cities including Kanama in Yobe State. The attack on immigration offices in January 2012 shows that no security agency has been spared by the group. In September 2013, they had already killed over 50 students of the School of Agriculture, Gujba in Yobe State, while about 49 people were killed in August in an attack on a Mosque and several villages including Konduga and Malari in Borno State (Olojo, 2014). Bama, Buratai and many other towns in Borno State also recorded different casualties.

The significant number of fatalities in the intervention incidents by the government army manifested during their counterinsurgency operations that became more extreme after the imposition of emergency rule to the extent that approximately 185 civilians were killed in a military operation against Boko Haram insurgents in Borno in April 2013 (Afeno, 2014). These military operations were ongoing while the issue of porous borders was not adequately taken care of for improved border security. The media widely reported Boko Haram's video showing the Nigerian pilot it claimed to have beheaded in September 2014 (Gabriel, 2014); and a second video released to mock government's counterinsurgency operations in, which security chiefs claimed the sect's leader Abubakar Shekau was killed. The video revealed that the leader stated "I am alive" (Sulaimon, 2014). Also, the Nigerian Senate on Thursday,

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5 September 2014 approved the $1 billion external loan requested by Pre-
ident Goodluck Jonathan to procure arms for the containment of threat by
nsurgents in the North (Ugonna, 2014; *Premium Times*, 2014). Both the
Nigerian Government and the Boko Haram signed a controversial ceasefire
eported on 17 October 2014, with such terms as suspension of hostilities and
elease of hostages. However, a notable problem is that it is not always clear
whether the insurgent group embraces any planned ceasefire or not due to the
roup's inability to use media to acknowledge accepting the truce. After the
eport, Abadam and Dzur villages were raided by the group (Gabriel, 2014).
he ceasefire violation shows that the sect was not sincerely ready to end its
aily violence in the communities and states on Nigeria's border with
Cameroon. It all shows that the insurgent group cannot be trusted or taken
eriously in any ceasefire. Earlier, on 28 September 2014, the counter-
nsurgency operation received a boost when the Nigerian Defence Head-
uarters disclosed that troops scored a strategic victory against the insurgents
uring the battle of Konduga. Since the kidnapping of Chibok schoolgirls in
April 2014, which placed the community on the global map of insurgency, the
Boko Haram sect continued to launch attacks to the extent that the 2015
Nigerian presidential election was postponed by one month due to the volatile
ature of the region. Before 2015, Boko Haram controlled over 21 Local
Government Areas in Borno State, but the recovery of the Sambisa forest in
016 made the group embark on a recruitment drive (Irabor, 2018). The
February 2018 kidnapping of more than 100 schoolgirls by the insurgent
roup in Dapchi village, Yobe State, is an indication that state security pro-
iders need to rethink their strategy to sustain the success recorded in the
ecovery of Sambisa forest, which limited the sect's operational capacity and
fficiency. Despite the establishment of various joint security operations to
trategically de-radicalise the Boko Haram sect, insurgent violence still scars
ost parts of Nigeria's Northeast due to porous borders.

Against this backdrop, this chapter examines how the porosity of bor-
ers facilitated Boko Haram insurgency, with implications for counter-
nsurgency operations. Apparently, porous borders enable the
omplexities of counterinsurgency, considering how insurgents' safe
avens are strategically located around border communities where win-
ing the hearts and minds of the local population have become a daily
outine to maintain momentum. The porousness of borders has become a
hreat to states, a situation that facilitates conventional and non-conven-
ional security threats such as external aggression, insurgency, organised
rime and trafficking in persons, terrorism, smuggling of arms and var-
ous commodities. With key informant interviews involving scholars and
order experts, some Nigerian soldiers and immigration officers involved
n counterinsurgency operations, and secondary sources, this qualitative
tudy responds to the following questions. Who are the security man-
gers/actors around the borders? Why has insurgency remained difficult
o contain despite border security efforts?

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The problem of insurgents is that most of their objectives or reasons they launch attacks against the state are not realistic and cannot be achieved through violence. This is further complicated by their strategy of attacking both security installations and civilians with impunity as well as the execution of perceived spies or enemies of their ideology. So far, the counterinsurgency makes the security situation in Nigeria's Northeast an international matter. If not checked through timely security rethinking and action, insurgents can continue launching attacks and if successful, re-establish control of some parts of a country's territory and set up parallel systems of government, as was the case in 2014, when the Boko Haram controlled parts of Nigerian territory the size of Luxemburg. In view of this, this chapter argues that proper management of porous borders by relevant authorities and stakeholders will make it easier for Nigeria to overcome the threats posed by insurgents whose capacity to launch attacks on security forces has manifested in their access to sophisticated weapons, and until recently, training and grand strategy around the Sambisa forest and Lake Chad Basin area.

Some conceptual considerations

It is noteworthy that borders are demarcations that delineate state or quasi-state territorial boundaries (Benham, 2010; Amadi, Imoh-ita and Roger, 2015). Borders are marked areas or physical lines that divide two countries and at the same time can serve as ports of entry from one country to another, which usually require policing by immigration and customs officers who demand for documents like visas and passports from migrants (Nail, 2016). The demand for documents indicates that borders are sites that facilitate the socio-spatial differences between states (Houtum, 2005). It has been stated that, while borders are boundaries for some, they are gateways for others (Rumford, 2006 cited in Missbach, 2014). The gateway identity of borders in this regard is usually assumed by individuals who intend to take advantage of borders like asylum seekers, refugees, smugglers, traffickers, insurgents or terrorists whose activities may undermine the sacred nature of the borders. One of the challenges of borders is that not all of them have approved points of entry and that is why some of them are not manned by the security agencies. This explains why some borders are porous and can easily facilitate the migration of different kinds of people into a country.

The notable attributes of a border are that it divides two counties and regulates the flow of people or things across or away from a frontier. It is non-static and can be readjusted as a result of natural disasters, inter-state conflict, negotiation of territory, juridical repartitions of legal domains, economic reforms that change labour restrictions or trade barriers and production zones (Eselebor, 2010; Nail, 2016; Schnyder, 2017). This non-static attribute manifested in the inter-state territorial dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon in which the International Court of Justice (ICJ), on 10 October 2002, ruled that Bakassi peninsular belongs to Cameroon and readjusted some boundaries

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between the two countries in the Northeastern part of Nigeria (ICJ/603/2002). The foregoing also points to the fact that the sustainability of a border depends on the efforts of government in regulating the activities of people through border management or maintenance.

The notion of counterinsurgency

The threat posed by insurgency endangers the ability of a country to develop and protect itself, and this can escalate if negotiation-focused peace agreement is not signed by the belligerent parties (Imobighe, 2001; Panwar, 2017; Sanchez and Illingworth, 2017). Insurgent troubled states are characterised by negative peace which manifests in state fragility and deployment of security forces. It is based on this need for self-actualisation and existence as a state that counterinsurgency is embarked upon. The US Government *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency* (2012: 1), describes insurgency as "a protracted political-military struggle directed toward subverting or displacing the legitimacy of a constituted government or occupying power and completely or partially controlling the resources of a territory through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations". The report further explains that counterinsurgency refers to "all the measures undertaken by a government to defeat an insurgency, including political, security, legal, economic, development, and psychological activities to create a holistic approach aimed at weakening the insurgents". The foregoing points to the fact that various agencies of the state must be carried along in the measure that is aimed at mobilising human and material resources by stakeholders in the military, paramilitary, ministries and civil society in order to contain an insurgency (Rineheart, 2010). According to Ibrahim, Kale and Muhammad (2016: 56):

> counterinsurgency is a campaign developed in balance along three pillars: security, political and economical, in accordance with Kilcullen's assertion "unity of effort" greatly depending on a shared diagnosis of the problem (i.e. the distributed knowledge of swarm) platforms for collaboration, information sharing and deconfliction.

The essence of unity of effort is to harness the required inter-agency human and material resources in fending off threats from the insurgents. Counterinsurgents can have a mandate to embark on operations under the aegis of a coalition involving different countries, either regional or allies with common interests. At this stage of counterinsurgency, winning the minds and hearts of the populace must be the priority of the government. One of the reasons many insurgent groups target the local population is to intimidate them or punish them for exposing their antics or informing government about their safe havens and modus operandi. Mobilisation, recruitment and remobilisation remain the strength of insurgents (Irabor, 2018). In every counterinsurgency operation, the ultimate goal is to annihilate the insurgent group

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members by every means possible, especially after the insurgents have declined negotiation efforts or windows of opportunity to surrender and embrace amnesty. The government cannot fold its arms and watch the insurgents continue with their campaign of creating a state of anarchy to undermine the rule of law.

Counterinsurgency also involves the recruitment of security operatives (in both the military and paramilitary forces), training, security education, weapons handling, intelligence sharing, communication oversight, grand strategy and proper understanding of military environment/strategic places including the strongholds of insurgents, deployment and redeployment of officers. Every counterinsurgency operation is expected to put a mechanism in place to discourage mutiny, which can downplay the military strategy. A counterinsurgency plan must incorporate offensive, defensive and stability operations in order to defeat the insurgents, establish government control and sustain peacebuilding and order (Albert, 2017). The desired results of these phases of counterinsurgency are difficult to achieve as long as the problem of porous borders is not contained. The fact that successes have been recorded in offensive and defensive operations means neither that the insurgents been totally defeated nor that communities are safe from reprisal attacks by the insurgents.

Idachaba (2017) has identified a source of concern in Africa where he sees strategic coordination as a crucial factor in counterinsurgency operations that is hindered by poor operational and counterinsurgency policies. The nature of a security system that is usually practised through intra-African cooperation in the form of joint security operation is crucial in the protection of territorial integrity of states (Imobighe, 2001). Therefore, in the spirit of a common security system, this security arrangement would equip them with a common front in countering the merchants of violence who are mostly outlaw security providers that have the propensity to promise the local population safety if they do not to open their hearts to the government agencies. As noted elsewhere (Okolie-Osemene, 2016; Okolie-Osemene and Okolie-Osemene, 2017), the activities of non-state armed groups must be checked through timely security sector reforms and the strengthening of the early warning system to make the job of counterinsurgents less complex. This will prevent the occurrence of ugly trends where communities or security forces are taken unawares by insurgents, like the situation in Philippines where Islamic militants and indigenous people's armed groups engage in beheadings and genital mutilation of Filipino soldiers despite government's counterinsurgency efforts (Fabe, 2016). The early warning will reduce the ambush of security forces and night raids in communities by insurgents who leave their targets and victims helpless. Troops have to apply intelligence in their bid to liberate communities and civilians held hostage in order to reduce casualties during operations.

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Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on two theories, namely the political theory of territory and the theory of ungoverned spaces, which emphasise how poor security governance in a territory can facilitate the activities of non-state actors to the detriment of the state security providers, with implications for human and national security. Moore's political theory of territory which identifies groups as crucial stakeholders in territorial right-holding, explores the control over borders and resources within a geographical domain (Moore, 2015). When there is insecurity or contestation, people's moral right of occupancy which gives the basic right to live in a place, or moral entitlement to live there would be threatened (Moore, 2001). The risk of insurgency can displace people. It is noteworthy that ineffectiveness of states is liable to lead to spaces of a territory coming under the control of non-state actors, with implications for the state's territorial right; and any group able to impose order or demonstrate effectiveness could gain territorial right in a given area, which raises the possibility of a "might is right" argument that is contrary to international law (Moore, 2015; Taylor, 2016). Since the border is a territorial issue, this theory is apt because insurgency in Nigeria's context goes beyond criminality to involve the acquisition of territory. In essence, counterinsurgency is aimed at recovering the parts of a country's territory used by the insurgents as a base.

In this chapter, ungoverned territories refer to situations of failing, failed states and poorly controlled land, airspace or maritime borders which require state control (Taylor, 2016). Clunan and Trinkunas (2010) assert that the concept of the ungoverned space is inherent in doctrines on counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, counternarcotics, stabilisation, and reconstruction and peace building. Ungoverned spaces are physical areas which are social, political and economic zones where states do not have effective control, which non-state actors can exploit to avoid state surveillance and undermine state sovereignty (Clunan and Trinkunas, 2010; Raleigh and Dowd, 2013; Taylor, 2016). This weak capacity of states to make representation aggravates national identity crises (Idehen, 2016). Olaniyan (2017: 5) offers more insight into the complexities of ungoverned spaces:

> If spaces are effectively under the control of a functional state, then violent non-state actors (VNSAs) will never have a foundation for their occupation and there will be no basis for competition. Past and present examples of VNSAs successfully occupying a space and establishing some form of government show that these spaces were legitimately ungoverned, otherwise this need would not have been created and subsequently fulfilled. No VNSA can occupy legitimately governed spaces.

The foregoing exposes the weakness or failure of affected states in managing their territories. As a source of risk, the lack of governance over certain spaces also raises concerns over development, including the health, education,

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human rights and economic welfare of affected populations (Hoisington, 2013). This shows that ungoverned spaces aggravate regional and global insecurity with numerous non-state actors contesting state authority, because experience has shown that "non-state actors operating from ungoverned spaces pose challenges to the conventional paradigm of state-centric responses" (Clunan and Trinkunas, 2010: 276). The governance of ungoverned spaces is problematic because security lapses make non-state security providers merge as the alternative stakeholders of security provision.

The existence of an ungoverned space within a territory can simply be described as an ironic situation because a state is supposed to exercise full control within its national borders. Olaniyan (2017) argues that sporadic presence of security forces as a policy response to ungoverned spaces has not been helpful in Nigeria's efforts to address the problem of insecurity. For instance, the Sambisa forest, one of the several forests that constitute the ungoverned space in Nigerian geography, was not easily accessible to the Nigerian security agencies whose reluctance to storm the space has been identified as a product of their inefficiency, sub-standard weaponry and conspiracy (Rufai, 2017). The fact that ungoverned spaces are governed by elements that do not owe allegiance to central authorities of an existing state raises a serious security question (Olaniyan, 2017). This is because traditional or outlaw security providers can fill the gap to the detriment the state authorities. A significant percentage of cattle rustling operations are carried out in ungoverned spaces like unguarded forests, such as the Fagore, Kamuku and Kiyanbana in Northern Nigeria where Boko Haram insurgents capitalised on security lapses to unleash terror on people, including herdsmen (Rufai, 2017).

From the foregoing, it can be said that many porous borders can be described as ungoverned spaces through which insurgents easily execute their nefarious activities. Ungoverned spaces explain why most crime control model strategies in counterinsurgency suffer setback. The gap created by ungoverned spaces motivated safe havens which require counterinsurgency to guarantee security provision across borders. This shows that state authority is either non-existent or weak. This made the Nigerian government to deploy Operation Lafiya Dole in 2016 to establish security presence in ungoverned spaces.

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Border challenges and issues in Nigeria's counterinsurgency operations against insurgents

Cross-border flows and insecurity

Porous borders show how cross-border migration flows affect state interests in various areas of national security, particularly that of state territorial integrity (Adamson, 2006). The border is a phenomenon that relates to the territories of modern states in the international political system, and the manipulation of borders by criminal networks is a pointer that even the authority of states

to control parts of their territories can be threatened. One of the consequences of this development is the existence of "borderless" borders which are now easily accessed by insurgents. These are colonial borders inherited after the independence of many African states which are porous due to poor demarcation, thereby easily facilitating the illicit activities of criminal networks without interdiction (IFRA-Nigeria, 2013).

Given that security governance in such places is usually sporadic, preventing and detecting illegal entry through the border becomes a problem. Panwar (2017: 973) asserts that "non-state armed actors often operate across state borders without state control." Through actions that refuse the border aimed at creating a governed space scenario, contestation becomes more likely between state officials and non-state actors (Key Informant Interview, Melissa Schnyder, 2017). "Borderless" borders are spaces that experience flows or rapid movement of people with little or no stop and check activities; and this portrays a situation where the borderland which marks sides of the boundary between two countries is exposed to immigration crisis and illicit activities due to inadequate immigration. By implication, although there are clearly defined lines dividing the countries, the ungoverned nature of the location rather makes it seem "borderless" with unrestricted or unregulated movements. The eradication of "borderless" borders is therefore the responsibility of the countries that share the borderland.

Porous borders concern immigration in states. Adamson (2006: 166) has noted that "migration and migrants have a long history of being viewed as closely linked to national security concern". This caution cannot be disregarded considering how many states now make policies on how to regulate the movement of people and categorise legal and illegal migrants. By implication, such security concerns have made many states map out measures to strengthen their security sector's capability in countering any threat to territorial integrity by ensuring that the armed forces and the paramilitary are equipped with the needed skills and weapons to secure the territory. This is necessary because any state that does not address the problem of porous borders can have the challenge of state fragility. It demands a state must begin to prioritise migration policy formulation to reduce the possibility of having a contested territory.

The problem of ungoverned spaces has not been addressed by Nigerian policymakers. The persistence of ungoverned spaces continues to expose the weakness of state control (Idehen, 2016). Consequently, insurgents have had strategic advantage over security forces in places like forests around borders due to the inability of troops to hold the areas liberated without losing the communities to insurgents (Albert, 2017). The Boko Haram has benefited from the security lapses that led to the phenomenon of ungoverned spaces across the Lake Chad Basin countries which also contributed to the porous borders as seen in Nigeria's Northeast. The migration route attribute of the states across the Sahel explains why the authority of states is seemingly too distant from the people and the territories that policymakers are expected to

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protect. This environment of neglect is further worsened by arms proliferation which drives illicit trades that create the atmosphere of lawless enclave where other organised crimes like kidnapping and drug trafficking empower or embolden some of the actors to perpetrate the crimes (Weeraratne, 2017; Okolie-Osemene, 2017; Irabor, 2018; Okolie-Osemene, 2018).

Intra-state and inter-state collaboration

Nigeria has become a victim of what some scholars describe as state failure in the Sahel occasioned by lack of official policies for engaging with migrants (Norman, 2016). Consequently, weakness of states sharing borders in the area has been exacerbated by the various factors. These include instability, the collapse of Libyan security institutions, rebellion in Northern Mali by armed Tuareg groups, corruption in Sahel countries, activities of extremist groups, establishment of transnational criminal networks with smuggling routes for trafficking in weapons, drugs and people (Yamamoto, 2013). The porous borders have enhanced the activities of the insurgents more than before when they started their activities against the state. Arguably, Boko Haram insurgency is a reflection of the hollowness within Nigeria's overall security and aggravated by the failure of the state-building project in the country (Hentz and Solomon, 2017). This situation can be attributed to the multiple cleavages in terms of ethnocentrism, regional dynamics, cultural and religious differences. However, the escalation of the insurgency and attendant counter-insurgency has attracted multiple external actors.

The free movement of people has become a burden to communities that have unmanned borders, which brings to the fore the perception of "borderless" borders. It is evident that Nigeria's porous borders with countries like Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Benin Republic greatly aided insecurity, considering the porous nature of land borders encouraged by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) free movement of persons, goods and services (Ayegba, 2016). This is why inter-state cooperation is necessary because there are times when insurgents in crisis-ridden states intermingle with refugees in receiving countries with the aim of perpetrating nefarious acts, like a situation where fleeing rebels from Chad crossed into Nigeria (Ate, 2001; Albert, 2017). Consequently, until such persons are arrested, the town where they reside can become another hotbed of violence or insecurity. That is why many refugees must be screened for illegal arms while immigration and customs officials also need to embark on stop and search operations around border communities, forests and other isolated areas that may offer insurgents a safe haven to operate.

At the initial stages of the insurgency, the Nigerian government adopted a self-reliant strategy to curbing it but when it escalated, it became obvious that this was no longer a national security threat. Many efforts have been put in by different actors namely Joint Task Force (JTF), Nigeria Police Force (NPF), the Department of State Security (DSS), Nigerian Customs Service (NCS),

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Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA). These agencies enforced the government's crime control model of national security. According to Animasawun (2013: 401), the JTF adopted stop and search operations, door to door security searches for weapons and sometimes killing of suspected insurgents as strategies for insurgent containment. Such approaches aimed at apprehending notorious members of the Boko Haram would have psychological effects on the people in the Northern region. Unfortunately, the government's initiative in fixing different price tags for relevant information from residents of Northern Nigeria to facilitate the arrest of Boko Haram leaders declared wanted could not de-escalate the violence.

The aim of countering these merchants of violence is to end humanitarian crisis, enhance food security and protect the vulnerable residents especially aged persons, women, children, disabled persons, IDPs (internationally displaced persons) and refugees. It is noteworthy that the activity of insurgents across the border has brought businesses to a halt in most parts of the Northeast that are near the borders. A Cameroonian who lives in a community near the border between Nigeria and Cameroon informed the author that life has not been the same since the escalation of insurgent violence and that starvation has been the order of the day due to inadequate food supplies from Nigerian communities ravaged by Boko Haram. It is evident that insurgency hinders social justice. Equating the movement of people across borders with crime has motivated mobility policies and programmes that are sometimes discriminatory to reduce movements of people, particularly in an era when porous borders and buoyancy of some economies relative to neighbouring countries attracts migrants from less developed countries (Oshita, 2010; Abram et al., 2017).

Prior to 2014, the weapons and bullet proof vests used by security forces did not help save the situation as some insurgents had weapons superior to those of the counterinsurgents. Security forces were shocked when residents mocked them (Interview with Immigration Officer in Borno State, 2016). The foregoing explains why the government had to source modern weapons across the world to enhance its security provision. For instance, in 2017, the Federal Government purchased Super Tucano A-29, an agile, propeller-driven plane with reconnaissance, surveillance and attack capabilities; and it is expected that the newly acquired 12 ground attack aircrafts (with sophisticated targeting gear) at the cost of $600m (*Premium Times*, 2017), will aid the counterinsurgency.

The extreme cross-border violence by Boko Haram also made member states of ECOWAS engage in intelligence sharing to frustrate the activities of insurgents, and their counterterrorism strategy that incorporates strengthening and harmonising their legal frameworks for a safer region (Clottey, 2015). During the fiftieth session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government in December 2016, they proposed the creation of a special solidarity fund aimed at assisting those affected by terror attacks and demanded

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the international community's support in the reconstruction of the Northeast communities ravaged by Boko Haram. It is noteworthy that, with the advent of armed conflicts and insurgencies, ECOWAS became a regional organisation that expanded its core objectives of economic integration to incorporate a security mandate. This was aimed at collaborating for a peaceful region in order to protect the territorial integrity of member states. By implication, non-state armed groups would find it difficult to establish safe havens in member states' territory because insecurity in any country in West Africa will eventually affect the others. This is the main reason why West African nations must establish joint security operations against insurgents with their counterparts in Central Africa. Such collaboration has good neighbourliness and multilateral relations value.

There are notable shortcomings in the security arrangement that involves the JTF. According to Nwozor (2013: 23):

> The setting up of Joint Task Forces is a de facto declaration of a state of emergency. Joint Task Forces have different rules of engagement, which are outside the normal operational boundaries of regular security agencies. Their mandate is a quasi-empowerment to engage in war. The code names often associated with specific Joint Task Force operations underscore its direction and strategy. Generally, the strategies of Joint Task Forces are anchored in their ad hoc composition and non-allegiance to any specific security agency. Their driving philosophy is shaped by the mindset that only superior force can tackle insecurity.

Today, the understanding between Nigeria and her neighbours that are members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission has yielded positive results as the presence of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) makes it problematic for fugitive insurgents. Albert (2017) underscores the significance of Operation Gama Aiki by the Nigerian Air Force in finishing the job of routing the insurgents in the direction of the border with Niger and Chad where MNJTF troops are strategically positioned for action.

Porous borders made it difficult for the government to control the shipment of weapons and the movement of criminal elements (Shalangwa, 2013; Guéret, 2017; Albert, 2017; Weeraratne, 2017; Irabor, 2018) who infiltrated the security market. This automatically empowered the insurgents as merchants of violence who became the drivers of trans-border risks with their transnational networks, funding a growing number of sympathisers in various communities. The challenge of insurgency exacerbated by porous borders was also identified by then President of Nigeria, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan who raised alarm in 2012 that his cabinet and the security sector may have gradually been infiltrated by some sponsors and sympathisers of the Boko Haram insurgent group (Premium Times, 2012a). It is believed that this conspiracy frustrated most policies initiated to nip insecurity in the bud. Obviously, this was one of the reasons why the insurgency became difficult to

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contain despite various security operations and establishment of new barracks in the Northeast. Even taming the sources of Boko Haram's funding and weaponry became difficult despite their heavy deployment, aerial bombardment and discovery of some Boko Haram camps and bomb factories in the Northeastern enclave.

The factor responsible for the psychological strength and strategic advantage of the insurgents has been underscored by Lewis (2016) who asserts that insurgent group formation occurs in secrecy and in poorly monitored areas. And these are mostly areas such as mountains, valleys, forests, caves, uncompleted or abandoned buildings, among others, that are not easily accessible by state security providers. Forests are often used by criminal groups (including insurgents) as cover from which to launch attacks and as a defence against invasions (Olaniyan, 2017), such as that experienced when Camp Zero was invaded in December 2016 by the state security providers who are counterinsurgents.

The fact that most of the camps established by the two factions of the insurgents, Camp Zero and Camp Abuja, which aid netwar (a group's coordination of attacks without a precise central control command) against the government, are near Nigeria's border with Cameroon, with foothold advantage in the forests (Albert, 2017), should remind security agencies of the need to establish permanent presence in these locations even after the end of insurgency. This remains a necessity given that the destruction of Camp Zero in 2016 by the Rangers, senior battalion of the JTF (Key Informant Interview, 2018), which the Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau was using as his office, has not ended the insurgency unlike in civil wars where the taking over of a capital city or government house signifies victory or the end of hostilities.

The insurgency has contributed to the destruction of properties worth millions of dollars. Many bridges, homes, security posts, motor parks, markets and even schools have been damaged with bombs and other improvised explosive materials. A soldier even confirmed that when they recaptured most villages, the areas were already deserted, and they met nobody until two to three days later, when some villagers returned (Key Informant Interview, 2018). It is not disputable that insurgent violence has caused frustration by the security forces as a military jet mistakenly bombarded the Bama town's barracks and IDP camps on different occasions in a bid to rout the insurgents. This is caused by the conventional nature of the counterinsurgency compared to insurgents' adoption of guerrilla tactics, suicide bombings, kidnappings, hijacking and roadside shootings, among others.

The insurgents' activities, particularly ambush of soldiers and the destruction of various military installations, also contributed to the frustrations that motivated mutinies aimed at bringing to public knowledge, the suffering of troops. For instance, the counterinsurgency has the following unit risk factors: (a) high incidence of soldier and civilian deaths occurring in the same area of operation and over a short period of time; (b) the existence of enemies

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indistinguishable from innocent civilians (Sharma, Ratman and Madhusudhan, 2016). Mutinies recorded since the inception of counterinsurgency have occurred because sending soldiers to fight the insurgents with inadequate weapons is synonymous with sending them to die (Ibeh, 2014; Omorotionmwan, 2017). This exposed poor military strategy in countering the insurgents, with implications for military values of discipline, loyalty and respect. Key informants involved in the counterinsurgency also confirmed their poor morale to the authors while conducting this study. According to Amao and Maiangwa (2017), the crossing of the border to Cameroon after an encounter with Boko Haram insurgents by over 400 Nigerian soldiers pointed to the problem of poor morale and poor-quality equipment for the troops. Moreover, the crossing of border communities made Cameroonian troops disarm the soldiers, although they maintained it was not intentional. Considering their sensitivity to spatial and territorial positioning, the tactical withdrawal that made them enter Cameroonian territory was done for safety in order to remobilise (Key Informant Interview, 2018; Okolie-Osemene, 2018). The poor equipping of the soldiers falls short of notable principles of counterinsurgency doctrine. Properly equipping them would have aided the operational needs of security forces involved in the operations.

It is on record that earlier on in 2012, Nigeria had already established bilateral cooperation with Cameroon in order to contain the Boko Haram monster through the signing of Trans-border Security Committee to engender the necessary political will in countering trans-border crimes (*Premium Times*, 2012b). The agreement yielded results as both countries initiated more meetings, particularly the bilateral meeting held in July 2017 between Nigerian military officers and their Cameroonian counterparts aimed at collaborating to curb the presence of insurgents around border communities (Olanrewaju, 2017).

For many decades, most parts of the Lake Chad Basin which now host insurgents have recorded population growth, budgetary problems of the states, structural adjustments, urbanisation, the crisis in pastoralist societies (notably the Fulani) and the influx of automatic weapons and battle-hardened men from vanquished armies in Niger's and Chad's wars (International Crisis Group, 2017). With automatic weapons at the disposal of insurgents, it is difficult preventing attacks on communities most of which do not have adequate protection of state security forces. The period between 2014 and 2016 witnessed the launch of multiple attacks on communities around the Lake Chad Basin due to the displacement of insurgents. The spatial nature of Boko Haram fighters has shown that insurgent violence is not restricted to only one geographical location and can easily spread from a town/country of origin to others. According to Pérouse de Montclos (2016: 2) a notable phase of recruitment was the "spatial expansion of attacks after the launch of an international coalition made up of Nigerian, Nigerien, Chadian and Cameroonian armies in 2015". As seen from the foregoing, it suffices to assert that apart from insisting on engaging residents and examining the moral qualities

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of interested youth, strengthening the membership criteria and initiating efficient means of screening will improve the reputation of vigilantes and prevent infiltration of the groups by fugitive Boko Haram members who may want to find out their strategies. Addressing the insider factor problem will enhance community safety.

Vigilantism, insecurity and border communities

Vigilantism in Nigeria consists of support for extra-judicial ways of getting rid of the inconvenient acts through the use of vigilantes which are social organisations of private citizens set up to suppress deviance in the community (Kowalewski, 1991; Sundar, 2010). For some time now, vigilantes have been very effective in disrupting the ability of Boko Haram to execute attacks (Stevenson, 2015). Their ability to fend off threats from the insurgents has positioned them as security providers. Vigilantism in the Lake Chad Basin (shared by Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon) is anchored on collaborative strategies of stakeholders to address insecurity from the root. Vigilante groups are beneficial to the people around Lake Chad because they are instrumental in the identification and tracking down of the merchants of violence who are not only the drivers of insecurity but also the enemies of the local population. They also have the capacity to map out the safe havens of the criminals, insurgents or bandits who utilise ungoverned spaces to unleash attacks on communities. Vigilantes can identify hiding or fleeing insurgents and criminals who may want to mix with people in the community. Their knowledge of the Lake Chad Basin terrain positions them to easily conduct a search operation to expose the safe haven of criminals on the one hand and the places where arms or kidnapped victims are hidden on the other hand. In fact, engaging vigilantes in the task of monitoring movements makes it easier for strange persons to be identified. As groups that work for the safety of community members, vigilantes in the Lake Chad Basin area have made it less frustrating for people to build community resilience, considering the increased capacity to cope with risks of insecurity.

However, the challenges facing vigilantes are numerous. Gunmen use tricycles and motorcycles to attack and abduct people. Also, some soldiers do not trust the vigilante members despite their involvement in counter-insurgency (Key Informant Interview, 2018).

Vigilante members are now exposed to hazards due to the corrosive nature of the Lake Chad Basin (Buchanan-Clarke and Knoope, 2017). The fact that their relatives and families are already at the risk of internal displacement and hunger makes it impossible for them to relax as criminals already have the perception that vigilantism is a waste of time. Taking the battle to their enemies will help prevent looting. The informal nature of the vigilantes makes it difficult for them to have the type of health provision and quality of life that the security forces working for states within the Lake Chad Basin Commission do. This means that the survival of their families if they die while on

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duty can be threatened despite the efforts they put into ensuring community resilience in this era of insecurity. Of course, the Adamawa and Borno State Governments have been helpful in motivating the vigilantes especially in areas of equipping them with needed weapons, information sharing and training to defend their communities.

Vigilantes have a pressing task of discovering locations that insurgents and other criminal gangs use as safe havens to launch attacks on communities and security forces. The hundreds of casualties recorded by vigilantes in different communities around Lake Chad (Kindzeka, 2015; Musa, 2016; Okolie-Osemene, 2017) show the risky nature of their task. In fact, most of them have been active in resisting attacks by thwarting the offensive tactics of the enemies of the people. The targets of vigilantes are not only insurgents, but armed bandits, cattle rustlers and looters who benefit from the displacement of people during insurgent violence (Cropley, 2017; Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme, 2017). It then means that the targets vigilantes seem to respond to are multiple. The advent of insurgency and other criminal activities escalated the internal displacement and refugee problems which were not the attributes of daily life in the communities in the Lake Chad Basin, especially as a show of force between security forces and insurgents began.

The vigilantes have gradually advanced from using cutlasses, locally made guns/dane guns, daggers and other less sophisticated weapons to the use of modern firearms in response to the quality of the equipment of criminals and insurgents. The endorsement of vigilantes by some state governments has given vigilantism a moral boost as the idea is seen as a child of necessity as far as security around border communities is concerned (Key Informant Interview, 2017). The gradual recognition of vigilantes by some policymakers and the need to equip them with modern weapons to match the fire power of non-state armed groups has made them get support with modern firearms in order to complement the efforts of the security agencies already collaborating with neighbouring countries to block insurgents' routes across the borders used for heat and run attacks.

The insurgency caused by Boko Haram is a source of kidnapping of school girls and politicians in most parts of the region. The prevalence of extreme violence in communities made life brutish and motivated villages to adopt a self-help approach to human security. But the vigilantes have been facing the challenge of countering the insurgents whose operational strategies create fear in communities during the day and night. The vigilantes becoming security providers brought misery to communities in their bid to target the merchants of violence who carry out reprisals. This has been worsened by their use of weapons that do not match the sophisticated weapons used by the insurgents. Unfortunately, their effort is classified as informal legitimate violence which only complements the efforts of security forces. For the vigilantes, establishing footprints across all the communities affected by insurgency to reduce the scale of violence is a challenge as far as manning major roads to communities

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is concerned (Interview with Yake who now works with Search for Common Grounds, in Yola, 2017; Pérouse de Montclos, 2016).

An aspect of containing the insecurity occasioned by the insurgency in the Northeast is the remarkable initiative by the Nigerian military which embarked on an operation to win the hearts and minds of the people in Yobe, Adamawa and Borno through local militias known as *Kato da Gora* based on their knowledge of the terrain as well as their determination to eradicate safe havens of insurgents (Pérouse de Montclos, 2016). This is regarded as a civil-military collaboration to nip insecurity in the bud in the form of community based neighbourhood watch. It is also based on the fact that until the safe havens of insurgents are uncovered, every counterinsurgency or security restructuring will be futile. A notable challenge to winning hearts and minds is the incidents of human rights violations by the military as well as deaths caused by the bombings and gun violence targeting communities by insurgents who easily escape through some porous borders (Albert, 2017; Ahmad, 2018; Key Informant Interview, 2018). Although the Force Commander of the MNJTF, Major General Irabor has confirmed that the strength of Boko Haram is now limited to forests and islands, some border communities are still insecure, and this made the MNJTF consider policing the Lake Chad waterways to prevent the insurgents from regrouping in ungoverned spaces (Irabor, 2018).

To an extent, the strict adherence to human rights standards and ethical standards provided by the just war theory has prevented the military from destroying civilian populated areas suspected of harbouring some fugitive insurgents, with care usually taken by security forces to protect civilians (Albert, 2017). This does not mean that there is no killing of innocent citizens in the attempt to get rid of insurgents in communities. In fact, in January 2017, the Nigerian Air Force mistakenly bombed an IDPs' camp located in Rann, Borno State which is a border community towards Cameroon, after suspecting that insurgents were planning to regroup in Kala Balga Local Government. By the end of the bombing, hundreds of people including aid workers and IDPs had died (Joel and Akioye, 2017). The excuse that they received an intelligence report that insurgents were regrouping was not enough to embark on bombing without any attempt to either initiate surveillance or use ground forces to save lives. Even if the insurgents were disguised as IDPs, was there no better option than bombing the camp? This negates the mandate of a state security provider. This Operation Lafiya Dole's strategy of fighting the enemy from a distance had a lot of human costs with implications for Nigeria's human rights record. The images of the dead evoke memories of unprofessionalism and lack of intelligence, coordination or team work in Nigeria's security sector. It exposes the military's poor grand strategy as far as weapons handling is concerned.

The counterinsurgency in the Northeast has produced two groups of people, namely, those that are happy with the soldiers and the ones that have some of their children as Boko Haram members (Key Informant Interview,

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2018). In terms of deployment length, over staying is affecting the mentality of most soldiers involved in the counterinsurgency to the extent that they are now very aggressive to each other (Key Informant Interview, 2018). This has been worsened by the fact that the long duration of deployment has separated soldiers from families (Archana and Kumar, 2016). Addressing this becomes critical to prevent misconduct behaviours by troops such as intoxication, suicide, desertion, mutiny and malingering, among others (Sharma, Ratman and Madhusudhan, 2016).

One may want to ask the question why it has become difficult to stop insurgents within and outside Nigeria where they operate from, despite various inter-state efforts to counter their activities. The reasons are not far-fetched considering how governments and other actors pay lip service to addressing the problem of unmanned borders where illicit activities take place. Nigeria's case shows that the actors involved in counterinsurgency did not have a grasp of how the insurgents operated until the insurgents had already taken advantage of the porous borders through which they brought in arms into the country.

The dispersal of the group is a complicating factor in counterinsurgency. The spread of insurgency to neighbouring countries is a manifestation of dispersal and fragmentation of the Boko Haram sect by the counterinsurgency, which has complicated attempts by the sect to maintain momentum in border communities around the Northeast region of Nigeria. Although the attack on their base at Sambisa was a threat as it made the future of the group bleak, destroying their artillery pieces remains a task that must be accomplished to guarantee victory. For the insurgents, it is apparent that the more they spread and gain influence in some communities, the more their sympathisers identify with them and complicate efforts aimed at routing them. Counterinsurgents face more challenges fighting insurgents when they are found in more than one community or state than when they operate in different towns across the borders of neighbouring states. The insurgency has made the communities around border areas experience human insecurity with attendant fatalities arising from the reprisal attacks on the residents who are now targeted by the insurgents in their bid to either establish their influence or attack security forces.

In terms of some security measures to tame the insurgency, the insurgency has necessitated the closure of Nigerian borders with some countries around the Lake Chad Basin. But it should be noted that closing already manned borders is no solution to the insurgency but priority must be given to various unmanned borders most of which are yet to be identified by the security forces. The International Refugee Rights Initiative observed in 2011 that African governments should not close their borders in order to refuse refugees admission, but emphasised the need for the African Union to examine the factors which cause civil conflicts, with a view to elaborate Comprehensive Plan Action for tackling the root causes of refugee flows and other displacements. It is evident that border closure or stringent security measures around

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national borders are aimed at preventing the influx of criminal groups and individuals that may easily become available tools in the hands of insurgents and recruited as fighters in volatile areas. In the case of the Northeast, the armed conflict has already created humanitarian crisis.

Porosity of borders undermines counterinsurgency operations in the Northeast as most insurgents easily launch attacks on troops and escape through the communities around borders most of which are unmanned, with implications for the control of arms. As part of the counterinsurgency strategy, arms control is critical to success. National Arms Control Strategy is apt, as scholars argue that "the strengthening of border security arrangement through enhanced intra and inter-state collaboration among security and intelligent agencies in the air, maritime and land border areas is vital in eradicating small arms" (Ani and Onyebukwa, 2016: 439). This is based on the fact that insurgency is aided by arms. The need to boost counterinsurgency and enhance border security led to presidential approval for the establishment of an operational base for the Nigerian Navy in Lake Chad Basin. This latest policy option by government aimed at taming the border insecurity demonstrates the strategic significance of the area to maintenance of Nigeria's territorial integrity considering how insurgents can exploit any security lapses if the area is not adequately policed. In fact, it should be noted that improving border security demands proper monitoring of maritime activities. The activities of insurgents who take advantage of porous borders have affected social cohesion around most parts of Nigeria's Northeast and neighbouring Niger, Chad and Cameroon with impact on sustainable livelihoods. Consequently, the Lake Chad Basin has remained a hotbed of extreme violence. This has aggravated the humanitarian crisis that affects vulnerable groups. The rising insecurity in this part of the country is a threat to human safety.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the relationship between porous borders and insurgency which now affects Nigeria. Fuelled by the existence of ungoverned spaces, insurgency is a source of state fragility due to associated anarchy and extreme violence. With the political theory of territory and theory of ungoverned spaces which explain a relationship between groups and struggle for space in a geographical domain, the chapter has shown how the situation created unusual security concerns in the country with spillover effects in neighbouring countries that have their borders linking Nigeria. The actors of security and insecurity across the borders are the government and insurgents respectively. Border porosity has made counterinsurgency more difficult and challenging than expected considering the capacity of insurgents to coordinate attacks with sophisticated weapons, regroup and enter communities in border areas without much confrontation.

The withdrawal of insurgents and temporary stability in volatile areas should not be mistaken for victory against them. On the contrary, an area

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that has been liberated by counterinsurgency forces still needs a lot of security provision to avoid creating a vacuum. So far, some insurgents still launch attacks through Nigerian borders with Niger, Chad and Cameroon. Until insurgents are forced to surrender, are disarmed and are arrested or even killed, the insurgency is far from ending. This chapter maintains that porous borders made it possible for insurgents to infiltrate many communities to the extent that the insurgency has now become geopolitical and regional. The insurgency executed by Boko Haram can be contained by strengthening and sustaining Nigeria's surveillance efforts at the borders rather than by appointing only individuals that are regarded as efficient without a strong institutional approach to the problem. Based on the foregoing, there is no need for security chiefs to announce that victory is in sight within weeks or months.

The success of bilateral cooperation between Nigeria and Cameroon depends on these countries' ability to implement the components of the agreement they signed aimed at enhancing border security in defence of their territorial integrity. Taking the counterinsurgency beyond communities and cities to the borders is very critical to the success of the joint security operations. This is because the border areas are routes used by insurgents to transport weapons and fighters. Consequently, the idea of pushing the insurgents towards the border communities without properly clearing the border areas to guarantee territorial integrity of neighbouring states should be examined for a change of strategy particularly in setting up more mobile military and paramilitary checkpoints across the border areas.

The insurgency that was facilitated by porous borders has necessitated a community-based approach that must involve winning the people to the side of security operatives loyal to government. It is believed that through winning hearts and minds, military operations will gain the confidence of the local population as regards human security orientated military professionalism, and draw the people closer to the side of security forces. This would complicate the possibility of insurgents cooperating with idle youths to penetrate communities. The issue of winning hearts would be a mirage if the security forces do not demonstrate their readiness to work for the people, especially in more volatile areas. Achieving this will also require adequate protection of the local population from reprisal attacks by the insurgents for offering to work with the security agencies.

Enhanced border security will boost government's defensive and stability operations in communities that have been ravaged by insurgency since 2009. The earlier security operatives begin to identify the unmanned borders where insurgents gain entry into most villages in the Northeast, the safer the country's borderlines will be as far as routing insurgents is concerned. If achieved, the issue of insurgents establishing camps in border communities will become a thing of the past with appreciable impact on the prospects of counter-insurgency operations aimed at achieving the goal of protecting Nigeria's territorial integrity. It is therefore suggested that trans-border co-operations

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through a collaborative security management strategy should be prioritised by state security providers in their bid to make the borders safer zones. Also, apart from setting up insurgency emergency response systems around the border communities, it is timely for the government to encourage informal initiatives and engage with communities to counter incidences of insurgency and crime.

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