

Terrorism in North and West Africa: Implications for Regional Stability

1Chibuikwe E Madubuegwu, 2 Chidozie Beneth Obiorah PhD, 3Vincent O Onyia, , 4Nwagbo Samuel N.C, 5Ugwu Kyrian Ibekaku,

1Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka, Anambra State.
cb.obiorah@unzik.edu.ng

2Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka, Anambra State.
totlechi@gmail.com

3Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka, Anambra State.

4Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka, Anambra State.
snc.nwagbo@unizik.edu.ng

5Department of Political Science, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Agbani, Enugu State.
kayhill.services@yahoo.com

Abstract: *Terrorism constitutes a potential threat to African security and development. To explore the intensity and severity of this threat, this paper examines critically the spread and dynamics of Islamic extremism from the North to West Africa. The methodology of the discourse is qualitative design which illuminates the relevance of secondary source of data collection (texts, reports, media scripts and internet articles), textual method of data analysis and systems theoretical framework to argue and establish that the euphoria and turmoil of Islamic fanaticism in North region created fertile ground for explosive extremism in West Africa amid internal insurrectional disturbances. The study also underscored the adverse effects of this ugly development to reveal that over 50 million civil population across Maghreb and Sahel regions are vulnerable to terrorism and \$ 12.5 billion economic impact of terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa while 13 million people in the Lake Chad Basin are currently in need of aid. The discourse further revealed myriad of responses from regional and sub-regional organizations and the West amid obvious daunting challenges. This findings therefore resonates the imperative of inter-regional strategic alliance and response, more commitment on youth advocacy and development, synergized roles with traditional institutions and the Mosque as among the measures suggested to mitigate the tide of terrorism in Africa.*

Keywords: Terrorism, extremism, Maghreb and regional security.

Introduction

Violent extremism has been used as a tool of terror and this has heightened during the modern reign of terror when attacks varied from the use of brute force to kidnapping and hostage-taking (Beary, 2015:579). Similarly, Africa has witnessed 33, 300 fatalities caused by extremism between 2011 and 2016 with related displacement and economic devastation contributing to among the worst humanitarian catastrophes ever seen in the African continent (United Nations Development Programme, 2017:vi). Similarly, Eke and Ezirim (2015) stressed that since the turn of the 21st century, Africa has witnessed an upsurge in violent criminality the dimensions which have now become a major concern to individuals, states and international organisations. The continent has been battling to suppress the flame ignited by the proliferation of extremists and terrorist groups. The rising numbers of terrorist attacks, the multiplicity of terrorist groups in Africa and the growing capacity of some hitherto domestic groups to plan and launch transnational attacks have transformed the threat of terrorism from emerging to serious security challenge in Africa.

African region is undoubtedly bedeviled with explosive terrorism from the myriad offensives of AL Qaeda-linked Islamist movements and networks from North to Sub-Saharan Africa. In this regard, the battle against terrorism has been a challenge Africa has faced long before the international call for a “war against terror” in 2001 which have come to be acknowledged as a watershed moment in international concern with terrorism. These terrorist events did not occur in isolation where terror had previously been an uncomfortable adjunct to anarchism, liberation wars, counter-insurgency campaigns and the battle fields of the cold war, the events of the day propelled terrorism to a new global level. Today, modern terrorism threatens African political, social and economic security, creating a continental dilemma (African Union Report, 2015:5). And, the North and West Africa are vulnerable to this unpleasant development of violent extremism which represents a serious threat to regional peace and stability.

Accordingly, terrorism has plagued the Magherb (North Africa) for decades long before the attack of September 11, forced the United States to respond to AL Qaeda. Before, 2001, however North Africa terrorism was largely contained and localized. Today, Magherb extremists have developed with criminal networks operating locally and globally (Report of Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2016:2). In recent years, the West Africa sub-region has also been faced with a wave of terrorism resulting in

the death of hundreds of people, destruction of properties and displacement of millions (Akanyi, 2019:94). This paper therefore argues that Islamic radicalization and extremism which stem from North Africa in the 90's created fertile ground for violent extremism in West Africa amid domestic challenges of insurrections. This unpleasant prevailing situation has remained a serious threat immersed in adverse implications to regional stability, security and development.

Conceptual Analysis

The term "terrorism" originates from the Latin word *terrere*, meaning "to frighten". It obtained its modern term during the Reign of Terror in France (1793–1794). Since then, modern terrorism has evolved. Four waves of modern terrorism have been identified over the centuries, with the first three being the Anarchist Wave, during the 1800s; the Anti-Colonial Wave, during the 1920s; and the New Left Wave, during the 1960s, founded on radicalism and nationalism. Today, the fourth wave of modern terrorism is considered to be underway. Recognized as the Religious Wave, it is estimated to continue for a further 25 years, with the premise that the world is living in the age of terror founded on religious fundamentalism. The use of religion has justified the acts of terrorist groups worldwide, seeking to establish a New World as expressed by the Islamic State and al-Qaeda. Islam is at the heart of the wave, and has received specific attention; however, that is not to say other religions are exonerated from terrorist activities. Yet, radical Islamic groups have produced the most substantial, deadly and international attacks in the new wave (African Union Report, 2015:14).

Emphatically, the concept of terrorism is replete with varied conceptions from scholars, regional and global inter-governmental organisations and international agencies. To begin, terrorism is commonly understood to refer to acts of violence that target civilians in pursuit of political or ideological aims. However, the international community is yet to adopt a comprehensive definition of terrorism. This is in cognizance of existing declarations, resolutions and universal treaties relating to specific aspects of it which outline varied facts and core elements (UN Report, 2018:5). However, in spite of these concerns in the conceptualization of terrorism, there are seemingly views that illuminate discernible variables on what constitutes "act of terror"

From a global perspective, the United Nations General Assembly in 1994 made a declaration on measures to eliminate international terrorism in its landmark resolution 49/60 which states that "terrorism includes criminal acts to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purpose and that such acts are in circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the consideration of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that may be to justify them". In addition, the United Nations Security Council Resolution, 1566 in 2004 also defined terrorism as "criminal acts against civilians committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury or taking of hostages with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or international organisation to do or to abstain from doing any act" (Report of United Nations High Commission on Human Right, Terrorism and Counter Terrorism, 2018:5).

At the level of Regional Platform, the European Union in Article 1 of the Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism (2002) conceptualized terrorism as certain criminal offences set out in a list comprised largely of serious offenses against persons and properties which given their nature may seriously damage a country or an international organisation committed with the aim of seriously intimidating a population or unduly compelling a Government or International organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act or seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic and social structures of Government or International organisation (Report of European Union on Terrorism, 2016:5). Furthermore, the 1999 Organisation of African Unity, OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating Terrorism, held in Algeria, defined terrorism as;

"any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a state party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to;

i. intimidate, put in fear, force or coerce or induce any government body or institution, the general body or institution, the general public or any segment therefore to do or abstain from doing any act or to adopt or abandon a particular standing point or act according to certain principles.

ii. disrupt any public services, the delivery of any essential service to the public or create a public emergency.

iii any promotion, sponsoring, contribution, attempts, threat, conspiracy, organizing or procurement of any person with the intent to commit any act referred to in paragraph (a),(i), (Report of Organisation of African Unity, 1999:207).

Similarly, the 1998 Arab Convention in Cairo, Egypt adopted a resolution on terrorism which defines terrorism, as "an act or threat or violence whatever its motive or purposes that occurs in the advancement of an individual or collective criminal agenda and

seeking to cause damage to the environment or to occupying or seizing them or seeking to jeopardize national resources". In effort to elicit more global and regional attention in collective response against terrorism, the United Nations Security Council recognized the ratification and effective implementation of the universal anti-terrorism instruments as a top priority. On 28th September 2001, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council adopted resolution 1373 (2001) stating explicitly that every act of terrorism constitute a threat to international peace and security and, the "acts, methods and practices of terrorism are contrary to the purposes and principles of United Nations". The resolution therefore requires all states or member countries to:

1. criminalize terrorist acts
2. penalize acts of support for or in preparation of terrorist offences
3. criminalize the financing of terrorism.
4. depoliticize terrorist offences
5. freeze funds of persons who commit or attempt to commit terrorist acts.
6. strengthen international cooperation in criminal matters (Report of United Nations Human Right on Terrorism, 2017:11) .

However, it was argued that UN Security Council Resolution 1373 does not provide a depth definition of what constitute any act of terrorism apparently leaving the task to each country on its own (Aliyu and Buba, 2017:342). In recognition of this gap, the United Nations General Assembly is currently working towards the adoption of comprehensive convention against terrorism which would complement the existing anti-terrorism convention. The 2004 draft Article 2 of United Nations General Assembly underlines the basic fundamentals on what constitute "act of terror". Terrorism is, "unlawfully and intentionally causing, attempting or threatening to cause"

- a. death or serious bodily injury to any person
- b. serious damage to public or private property including a place of public use, a state or government facility, a public transportation system, an infrastructure facility or the environment.
- c. damage to property, places, facilities or systemsresulting or likely to result in major economic loss when the purpose of conduct by its nature is to intimidate a population or to compel a Government or an international organisation to do or abstain from doing an act (United Nations Report on Human Right, Terrorism and Counter Terrorism, 2017:5).

Notably, it is argued that while most member countries of United Nations have adopted declared resolutions on terrorism by these inter-governmental organisations, however there are still divergent views on the status of liberation movement whether to or not include the existence and activities of liberation movement as "act of terrorism"? This indication further underlines the gap in the conception and generalization on what terrorism represents which had subsequently impelled sovereign states to conceptualize and popularize diverse interpretations of what constitutes "act of terror" In this vein, the United States Federal Law defines "terrorism" as any crime that appears or coerce a civilian population to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping. Also, the United Kingdom's Terrorism Act 2000 defines terrorism to include an act designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system". An act of violence is not even necessary under this definition (Benson, 2017:71). In Algeria, Article 876, of the Algerian Panel Code defines a "terrorist act " as any act targeting the state security and national unity, territorial state security and territorial integrity, and the stability and normal functioning of institutions by any action whose objective is to spread terror among the population and create a climate of insecurity through moral or physical assault on people exposing their lives, freedom or security to damage or through damaging their lives, freedom or security to damage or through damaging properties.

A cursory review of these definitions ostensibly illuminates the ambiguities in the definition of terrorism. In collaboration to this view, Anderson (2018:21) remarked that:

The difficulty in defining "terrorism" is agreeing on a basis for determining when the use of violence (directed at whom by whom for what ends) is legitimate therefore the modern definition is inherently controversial. The use of violence for the achievement of political ends is common to state and non-state groups. The majority of definition in use has been written by agencies directly associated with government and is systematically biased to exclude governments from this definition. The contemporary label of terrorism is highly pejorative – it denotes a lack of legitimacy and morality or geo-political agenda.

In similar sense, Okumu and Botha (2007) also argued that the problem of finding an acceptable definition of terrorism stem from the subjectivity with most people perceive the concept and especially the tendency to exclude their own actions from definition of the term. For instance, some Western powers including the US tend to restrict the terms to acts of violence perpetrated by non-state actors to achieve political purpose. They fail to make allowance for those fighting to liberate their territories from foreign occupation and regard them as terrorists.

Arguably, these underlined critics obviously established the fact that act of terror is not exclusively precipitated by non-state actors but also peculiar to state or what is otherwise seen as “state terrorism”. In this regard, Anderson (2018) embellished that state terrorism has been defined as acts of terrorism conducted by governments or terrorism carried out directly by, or encouraged and funded by, an established government of a state (country) or terrorism practiced by a government against its own people or in support of international terrorism. In further credence to Anderson’s assertion on state terrorism, most democratic regimes not only engage in acts of terror across their borders but has in the recent time deliberately display acts of terror against its nationals. It is instructive to note that democratic dictatorships in Africa have over the decades successfully carried out state-sponsored terrorism against their nationals in guise of resisting rebellion. For instance, Rwandan genocide, state repression of Arab Spring in the Magherb countries, are few out of many explosive events in reference to state terrorism in Africa. In a generic sense, act of terror or terrorism is characterized with the following four critical elements as outlined by Imobighe (2007);

- i. Terrorism occurs in an environment of conflict and discord. Hence, it is a product of conflict escalation.
- ii. Terrorism is a violent mode of response to a conflict relationship.
- iii. The target of terrorism is not limited to parties directly involved in the conflict relationship but includes everybody directly or remotely associated with the principal actors or combatants.
- iv. The objective of terrorism is varied and not always political.

In this same vein, Anderson (2018), further remarked that terrorism is often, though not always, defined in terms of four characteristics:

- a. The threat or use of violence.
- b. A political objective; the desire to change the status quo.
- c. The intention to spread fear by committing spectacular public acts.
- d. The intentional targeting of civilians.

In recognition of these definitions and its underlying limitations, terrorism is therefore viewed as acts or actions aimed to challenge the sovereignty of the state with the intent of compelling or ensuring a new order ; or to intimidate and suppress liberty-driven process such as agitations or protest with the intent to create fear of terror among the population. Hence, terrorism is planned and carried out by none-state actors to challenge the government or by the state to coerce its citizens to allegiance.

In a historical sense, the advent of modern terrorism occurred on July 22, 1968. The event was the hijacking of an Israeli EL AL commercial flight enroute to Rome from Tel Aviv by three armed Palestinian terrorists of Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), one of the six groups that constituted the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Hoffman (2006) cited in Agara *e tal* (2017:75). To this extent, Agara *e tal* (2017) further highlight certain fundamentals of July event, 1968 underlying what constitute “act of terror”

- i. The event provided avenue for making bold political statement which was the trading of the passengers for some terrorists imprisoned in Israel.
- ii. The plane was specifically and deliberately targeted because of its symbolic value.
- iii. The terrorists hoped that by so doing they could force their avowed enemy, the State of Israel to enter into negotiations with them despite the Israel’s declaration and policy pronouncements to the contrary. It is hoped that this would afford them the recognition they so wanted.
- iv. Through this symbolic targeting then the terrorists discovered that they had the power to create major media event especially when innocent civilians are involved.

As earlier noted, modern terrorism is a religious wave of extremism. It is therefore argued that religious terrorists have anti-modern goals of returning society to an idealized version of the past and are therefore necessarily anti-democratic and anti-progressive. They have come to hate secular government with almost transcendent passion, dreamed of revolutionary changes that

would establish a godly social order in the rubble of what the citizens of most secular societies have regarded as modern, egalitarian democracies (Juergensmeyer, 2003:232) cited in Agbiboa and Maiangwa(2018:65). It is also suggested that religious terrorists employ a kind of violence against the state in firm belief that such act is sacramental act or divine duty executed in direct response to theological demands (Hoffman, 2006:88) cited in Agbiboa and Maiangwa (2018:66). In addition, Agbiboa and Maiangwa (2018) stressed that religious terrorists have the capacity to evoke total commitment and fanaticism from their members; they are characterized by the suspension of doubts and end –justifies the means view of the world.

Invariably, the regions of North and West Africa are grappling with measures to stem the tide of Islamic extremism. In this vein, Ricardo and Harch (2006), revealed that between 2005 to 2006, there are at least three serious threats in West Africa and the Sahel. First, the emergence of radical Al Qaeda-linked Islamic elements in Nigeria and Niger. Secondly, the existence of terrorist-financing networks involved in the purchase and sale of diamonds in Sierra-Leone, Liberia and Democratic Republic of Congo. Proceedings from the sale of these blood diamonds are used to fund Hizbullah, the Afwaji al Muquwamah al Lubnaiyyah (AMAL), or Lebanese Resistance Detachment and AL Qaeda operations. Thirdly, the migration of the AL Qaeda linked Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) from Southern Algeria to Eastern Mauritania, Northern Mali, Northern Niger and Northern Chad which indicates their intent to establish safe haven outside Algeria.

Today, the current situation is unprecedented and alarming with heavy destruction of lives and economies across the regions of the black continent. In reference to Global Terrorism Index Report (2015), four terrorist groups, ISIL, Boko Haram in West Africa, Taliban and AL Qaeda are the world deadliest terrorist groups. It was observed that in 2015, Boko Haram, a terrorist group in Nigeria, was responsible for 5, 478 deaths. And, five countries with highest impact of terrorism in 2015 were Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria. In other words, Nigeria is third (3) among the countries with highest impact of terrorism across the world. Also, the countries in North and West Africa in global terrorism ranking in 2015 includes: Egypt (9), Libya (10), Cameroon (11), Niger (16), Democratic Republic of Congo (17), Sudan (18), Mali (25), Chad (25), Tunisian (35), Morocco (95), Ghana (106), Liberia (110), Algeria (42) and Senegal (64). (Report of Global Economic Impact of Terrorism, GEIT, 2016:16). This report and recent regional Terrorism reports has continue to elicit serious concerns among scholars, states, security experts and development practitioners including the West on the safety and development of Africa in the next 50 years.

Theoretical Analysis

Systems framework is adopted to establish the scientific analysis of intensity, spread and implications of sub–regional extremism on the continent. Systems theory is a theory of behavioural research and analysis in social sciences which however traced its methodological evolution to General Systems theory in natural sciences. Hara Das and Choudhury (1997) remarked that the concept of General System theory can be traced back to the natural sciences. The writings of Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, a biologist in the 1920's. Ever since then the General System analysis have been of considerably important. It was after the Second World War that a number of writers in various disciplines began to write about the need for unification of sciences– a concept which lay at the root of general systems theory. They made search for a body of concepts leading to unity of organisation to studies undertaken in various disciplines. Therefore, a general system theory could emerge which might keep each discipline to understand its problems better. This line of thinking gained momentum by the mid– fifties.

Invariably, Madubuegwu and Okafor (2017) therefore stressed that the imperative of systems theoretical perspective in political analysis is underlined in the affinity between political science and other social science disciplines (interdisciplinary research) as exemplified in David's Easton's political system framework, Gabriel Almond's structural functionalism and respective treaties of Harold Lasswell and Samuel Huntington. A system is a basic concept of systems theory. What does systems represents? Gauba (2003) embellished Dahl's definition of system as a collection of elements that interact in some way with one another. Also, Madubuegwu and Okafor (2017) conceived it as a set of interrelated parts. In a broad sense, Terhemba (2013) highlight the following attributes which a system can be identified:

1. A system is composed of a set of units that are interrelated and identical. A system consists of units, which are sufficiently alike to form a set and these parts must be sufficiently inter–dependent in such way that a change in one causes a change in the other.
2. Each of these parts performs important functions, which sustains the system and ensures its survival.
3. The units of the system operate within the boundary and this boundary is what makes out the transactions within the system and between the system and its environment.
4. A system shows a structure, which is a pattern of relationship made up of component units. This relationship too is subject to adjustment as results of the changing state of inter–units transaction. For example, if one part of the system is affected the other parts are also affected and therefore there is a tendency for other parts to adjust.

5. A system has a goal towards which it works. The commonest being self– preservation or resistance.

From this reflective attributes, Madubuegwu and Okafor (2017) outlined the following basic assumptions:

- a. A whole (that is system) made up of various units, parts or sub– systems.
- b. Each sub system is further divided into units.
- c. Functions and boundaries define the distinctiveness of these units or sub–systems of the system.
- d. A network of relation and communication among the units which express the interrelationship and cohesion of the system.
- e. The dysfunctionality or disarticulation of a particular unit or sub–system affects other units or sub–system depends on the nature and trends of the relation existing between units or sub–systems.
- f. The cohesion and disintegration of the system depend on the nature and trends of the relation existing between units or sub–systems.

Arguably, system framework is fraught with methodological limitations. Accordingly, Hara Das and Choudhury (1997) stressed that the systems approach is broad framework for political analysis to take note of the complex psychological aspects of the interaction of function. The question concerning pattern, maintenance, stability, regulation, can be studied by utilizing this approach. It is however very difficult to study political aspects of such matters as perception, expectation, and formation or cognition etc through this approach. The systems analysis beside limitations remains empirically relevant to the logic and analysis of this discourse.

To elicit the theoretical relevance of systems framework in this discourse, it is argued that Africa represents a system of sovereign countries clustered in north, south, west and east of the continent. Hence, there is persistent relation and interaction among sovereign states in effort to strengthen and sustain equilibrium of regional cohesion, security and development. However, this lofty systemic ideal is today threatened by the unabated spread of Islamic extremism and terrorism. Hence, domestic restiveness in a nation–state often snowballed into sub–regional terrorism and spread unabatedly to other regions undermining regional security and stability in credence to the logics of system analysis–dysfunctionality or disarticulation of a particular unit or sub–system affects other units or sub–systems. In other words, the violent extremism of the North and West Africa has over the decades and years created unprecedented terror, anxiety and fear in the continent. Furthermore, it is also instructive to note that this unpleasant regional development can be mitigated through systemic approach to underscore the relevance of inter–state, sub– regional and regional coordinated responses against Islamic extremism and terrorism

The Spread of Islamic Extremism from North to West Africa: Underlying Causes and Implications.

Basically, the North and West Africa has over the decades remained the flash points for terrorism in the black continent. Accordingly, Aaing and Abdallah (2013) stressed that the North and West Africa have been identified as important sites of Islamist radicalization. And, the vulnerability of the continent to terrorism has been attributed to the threat of Islamic movement and extremism (Umar, 2019:124).

The North Africa encompasses the states of Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) together with Egypt with exception of Mauritania, this group of states lies on the Northern littoral of the African continent between Mediterranean sea to the North and Sahara to the South (Claire 2008:1). In reference to the West Africa, it is made up of independent sovereign countries which include Benin Republic, Burkina– Faso, Cape Verde, Cote–Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea–Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. A number of these countries like Mali, Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Burkina Faso and Cote d Ivoire have in the recent years experienced terrorist attacks (Akanji, 2019:95). It is also noted that the phenomenon of terrorism is more pronounced in Nigeria and Mali than any other country in the sub–region, as both countries are homes to some notorious terrorist groups in the world. While Nigeria is home to Boko Haram, Mali houses AQIM, Ansar Dine, MOJWA etc (Boas, 2009; George 2012; UN Report 2012).

Succinctly, it has been suggested by scholars and observers that Islamic extremism is invariably responsible for the intensity and spread of terrorism across the two volatile regions. Hence, the Report of Governance, Social Development and Humanitarian Conflict (2013) indicates that the Islamic circle of the North and West include Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco stretching

to West Africa countries such as Mali, Niger, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Conakry, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, and arguably Nigeria, Cote Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Benin, Togo, and Liberia have substantial Muslim population. Hence, the proportional percentages of its young persons are vulnerable to radicalization and extremism particularly in failed states. Accordingly, British Department for International Development, DFID indicates that failed and fragile states in Africa are today home to more than 900 million people, half of whom live in severe poverty. This poses a significant threat to international security as such states offer a safe haven for illicit trade, drugs-production and weapons-smuggling. Corruption presents an endemic problem and the global result is likely to be regional spill over the effects of conflict, terrorism and a failure to manage epidemic diseases. A high proportion of such countries are to be found in Africa. Highly fragile African States are the following:

- i. Central African Republic
- ii. Chad
- iii. Congo (DRC)
- iv. Somalia
- v. Sudan

Those displaying signs of fragility are:

- a. Burundi
- b. Congo
- c. Eritrea
- d. Ethiopia
- e. Guinea-Bissau
- f. Liberia
- g. Nigeria
- h. Sao Thome and Principe
- i. Sierra Leone
- k. Zimbabwe (Worcester, 2015:2)

Emphatically, it was argued that modern terrorism emanate from North and spread to other sub–regions of the continent. Algeria represents the cradle of Maghreb extremism. In this regard, the Report of Center for Strategic and International Studies (2015) stressed that before 2001, however, North African terrorism was largely contained and localized. In many ways, the origins of modern terrorism and extremism in the Maghreb sprouted from the violent anti-colonial struggles which convulsed the region in the twentieth century, most importantly in Algeria and Libya. In an explicit sense, Algerian government at post–independence displaced the prominent role of France and French culture by a concerted effort at Arabization and Islamization thereby inadvertently supporting a national Islamist awakening. Algeria government recruited several hundreds of young Algerians to fight the Jihad (holy war) in Afghanistan which was considered as a prelude to Jihad against the Algerian government (Anneli, 2008:27). North Africans returned from the war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union in the 1980s and continued fighting, this time against their home governments and the West. These returning North African “Afghans” found willing allies among graduates of Salaf schools funded by Gulf Arab states. The combination of seasoned fighters and puritanical religious ideology created an explosive environment for extremism and violence (The Report of Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2015:3).

Basically, Cilliers (2015:3), aptly established the spread of terrorism from Maghreb (North Africa) to Sub –Sahara nay West Africa:

Domestic uprisings in Algeria led to the formation of radical Groupe Islamique Arme (Armed Islamic Group, GIA) against the Algerian government. In spite of democratic reforms and, presidential election in 1995 and parliamentary election in 1997, the armed Islamic Group, GIA continued its campaign of terror. The brutality of this terrorist group even against fellow Muslims in Algeria and high level of civilian casualties led to internal squabbles which consequently led to its split in 1998. And, the outcome of this development led to the emergence of Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, GSPC, another terrorist organisation. As part of its strategy to expand regionally, the GSPC established a training base in 2004 at the Tibesi Mountains in Northern Chad for new members from Chad, Sudan, Libya, Mali, and Mauritania. Subsequently, there was intense engagement, interaction and coordination between the GSPC and Al Qaeda under the facilitation of Bin Laden. This development made Washington to raise a red alert that Al Qaeda was stretching its networks from Somalia to Mauritania through the Maghreb. However, the success of President Bourtesflika's 2005 Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation in Algeria forced the GSPC, terrorist group to adapt. On 23rd January, 2007, the GSPC announced that it had changed its name to Al –Qaeda in the Land of Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) reflecting its open support for Al –Qaeda. This development consequently led to series of change in AQIM offensive strategies. The terrorist group increased its suicide attacks which led to a large increase in casualties. The GSPC presently known as AQIM had also expanded its operation to South of Mali. And ever since then, it has remained active in Libya, Tunisia, Niger and Mauritania.

In another perspective to terrorism in Maghreb and West Africa, some scholars have argued that domestic socio-economic challenges and political upheavals spurred violent extremism in most armed conflict-infected countries in the regions. In this regard, Agbioboa and Maiangwa (2016) stressed that militant Islam is the religious ideology that drives groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria. The relative deprivation theory cannot be simply wished away in the Boko Haram narrative. To begin with, northern Nigeria, especially the north-east, presents an ample example of impoverishment as demonstrated by widespread poverty, unemployment, infrastructural decay, and environmental stress. All these factors, while not directly the cause of the Boko Haram terrorism, nonetheless foot soldiers foster a permissive environment for Boko Haram's operations. Despite Nigeria's economic growth in recent times, poverty and income inequality are high in the country. Similarly, the extent of poverty and inequality in the north has led several analysts and organisations to argue that socio-economic deprivation is the main factor behind Boko Haram's campaign of violence in northern Nigeria (OECD 2013; Mustapha 2012; Kukah 2012; Agbioboa and Maiangwa 2013; HRW 2012). Kwaja (2011), for example, argues that 'religious dimensions of the conflict have been misconstrued as the primary driver of violence when, in fact, disenfranchisement and inequality are the root causes' (see also Mustapha 2012; Kukah 2012) cited in Agbioboa and Maiangwa(2016:75).

Aligning with the above submissions, Nigeria in past two decades and currently has been grappling with challenges of weak state institutions and failed governance occasioned with extreme hunger and poverty. At the beginning of Boko Haram onslaught against the Nigeria state in 2009, the data from the National Bureau of Statistics revealed that Nigeria's income inequality worsen by Gini Coefficient 0.447 in 2010 as against 0.04296 in 2004 in spite of stable economic growth. In reference to geo-political zones, the North-East (Boko Haram location) was high in income inequality in the country by Gini Coefficient of 0.4468 followed by South-East 0.4442 and South-South by 0.434 in 2010 occasioned with high unemployment rates (Report of National Planning Commission, 2011:26). These situations are not only peculiar to Nigeria but also in neighboring volatile West African states. In this regard, terrorism in Mali is closely linked to radical Islamic groups. Although Islam is the dominant religion in Mali, the spread of radical Islamic groups in the country was made possible by interrelated factors. The first was chronic poverty and food shortage, caused by the government's poor management of the economy and increasing desertification in the country. This, over a period of time, created a group of disgruntled, unemployed youth that were vulnerable to religious manipulation and radicalization. (Bossuyt 2016; George 2012; Boas 2009).

Beyond the ripples of the economy, governance dictatorship also exacerbates terrorism as seen in North Africa countries. As noted, the history of authoritarianism has been identified as key contributing factor in the development of some radical movement citing evidence from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. It was further revealed that authoritarian political climate was fully entrenched in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. Hence, the political context of these various Northern African countries has provided opportunities for radical Islamist elements to organize and promote their doctrines (Storm, 2016; and Mark 2013: 11).

In addition to the triggers of terrorism, religious fanaticism and social injustice are critical to incite insurrectional activities against the sovereignty of the state. Accordingly, Chiluwa, *et al* (2020) remarked that religious extremism defined as the expression of extreme or violent actions or jihad on the basis of particular interpretations or understanding of religious teaching or scripture, especially the Koran as referenced in Islamist extremists/terrorist groups in West Africa and Somalia as referenced in Boko Haram of Nigeria, Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) of Mali, etc. Africa is known as a religious continent with people of extreme spirituality that cut across three predominant religious families – traditional religion, Islam and Christianity, each of which is present in large numbers. As highlighted above, religious extremism has been used to describe any faith-induced action that is a deliberate attempt to inflict harm on others. On the other hand, social injustice as regards lopsided distribution of critical infrastructures and resources occasioned with incessant incidence of banditries created avenue for torrents of anger and

regional nationalism which had in the recent years led to emergence of extremist movements to challenge the state. This is the current situation in South– Eastern Nigeria.

Again, the Arab spring that swept across the Maghreb and Middle East, also contributed to Islamic radicalization and extremism. It was revealed that Tunisia experienced series of strikes and protest in year leading up to the self immolation of a poor Tunisian fruit seller, Mohammed Bouazizi on 17 December 2010. In tense and volatile atmosphere, Bouazizi act of supreme desperation and frustration ignited a raging wild fire. Tunisians from all walks of life took to street in rolling mass action that forced President Ben Ali to flee to Saudi Arabia within a matter of weeks. This was start of Arab Spring. The Arab Spring offered hope that countries in North Africa and Middle East could follow a more enlightened pathway. Five years later these dreams have faded. Instead, the Arab Spring opened up space for the expansion of the Islamic state from Iraq to Syria and has destabilized large parts of Maghreb. The result is a tight connection between violent extremists in the interlinked nomadic regions available in Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Libya and Mali (Report of Institute for Security Studies, 2015: 7). The Arab awakening however led to the proliferation of armed groups in control of various territories of Libya. The following are leading terrorist groups in North and West Africa.

i. AL–Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

AL–Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is an Algeria – linked Sunni Muslim Jihadist group originally formed in 1998. It operates mainly in the Northern Coastal areas of Algeria as well as parts of the desert regions of southern Algeria and the Sahel. AQIM's aim is to overthrow the Algerian government and institute an Islamic state. With approximately 1000 members in Algeria, the group also receives support from members of Chad, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria and Tunisia. Most recently, the group has claimed responsibility for attacks in Mali and Burkina Faso (African Union Report, 2015).

ii. Boko Haram and Islamic States of West Africa Province

In West Africa, the Islamic militant group referred to as Boko Haram has become infamous for attacking schools, police stations, military institutions, religious houses and civilian since 2009 (Sergie and Johnson, 2015). Boko Haram which loosely translated means, “western education is forbidden” – is a Nigeria–based terrorist group that seeks to overthrow the current Nigerian government and replace it with a regime based on Islamic law (BBC Monitoring, 2013). Boko Haram was founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf, a Muslim Cleric in Maidugari (Northeastern, Nigeria). Boko Haram is a nick name for “Jama’ atu, Ahlis Sunna Lidds’ awati Wal Jihad”, meaning people committed to the propagation of the Prophet’s Teaching and Jihad”. They began armed uprising in June 2009 when they claimed that they are fighting corruption but their main aim was to Islamize the entire northern states of Nigeria (Chiluwa, *et al*, 2020: 2). In reference to the history of its founder and campaign of violence, Campbell (2014) stressed that Mohammed Yusuf, a charismatic Preacher organized his community in the city of Maiduguri, around 2003. It sought to establish God’s kingdom on earth by isolating itself from wider society. Although, the movement was hostile to Nigerian state and rejected western education as non–Islamic, it remained generally non–violent until 2009. In that year, there were altercations over local issues that were later manipulated by local politicians which resulted in Yusuf ordering a direct attack on the state to which the security forces responded brutally. During the suppression of the uprising, the police murdered Yusuf. And; several hundreds of its followers were extra judicially killed. The movement went underground; re emerged in 2010 under the dreaded deputy leader, Abubakar Shekau.

Today Boko Haram has evolved into one of the world deadliest Islamic armed groups. Since 2016, an Islamic State (IS)–affiliated splinter factor, the Islamic States West Africa Province (IS–WA, aka ISIS–WA or ISWAP) has surpassed Boko Haram in size and capacity and now ranks among IS’s most active affiliates. Boko Haram and IS–WA have proven resilient despite military pressure (Congressional Research Service, 2021:1). Recently in May, 2021, the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISIS affiliate in West Africa) attacked and dislodged Boko Haram in an incident that led to deaths of some its members including the leader, Abubakar Shekau. This development though strange to many observers may further lead escalation of hostilities in the Lake Chad Basin.

iii. AL–Murabitun

AL–Murabitun, a terrorist group that seeks to “unite all Muslims from the Nile to the Atlantic in Jihad against Westerners” and “liberate Mali from France”, was formed when Veteran Jihadist Mokhtar Belmokhtar merged his AL–Tawhid Wal Jihad in West Africa (TWJWA) in August 2013. The group’s merger formalized close relationship between two most active terrorist groups in North and West Africa. The two groups organized various attacks against Westerners in North Africa and West Africa prior to their merger including January 2013 attack on Amenas Gas Facility in Algeria that killed nearly 40 Westerners, and joint offensives in May 2013 in Niger, simultaneously targeting a French uranium mine and Nigerian military barracks (UN Report, 2016).

iv. The Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa

The movement for unity and Jihad in West Africa, MUJAO is a Malian Jihadist group that was formed in 2011. The aim is to gain control of major Malian Towns and impose harsh Sharia laws. It has also taken responsibility for the kidnapping of European aid workers in Nigeria which serve as a means of funding for the group. In 2012, MUJAO together with AQIM and Ansar Dine (another Islamist group in Mali) took control of the Malian cities of Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. As a result of a French intervention in 2013, MUJAO lost control of these Towns but it continues to launch attacks from the camps in the desert (African Union Report, 2015).

v. Ansar Al-Sharia

The group emerged in Libya following the Arab Spring in 2011 and operated in Benghazi. Ansar al-Sharia, which means “Partisans of Islamic Law” described as an Islamist militant group, has a presence in several countries. Its aim is to implement strict Sharia law across Libya as well as to remove US and western influences in the country. It has been accused of playing a role in the Benghazi attacks that led to the bombing of the US Consulate and the killing of the US ambassador to Libya in September 2012. However, it denied involvement in these attacks. It remains a dreaded terrorist group in abductions and suicide bombings (African Union Report, 2015, and Chiluba, *et al*, 2020).

vi. Ansaru

Ansaru is a splinter group of Boko Haram. Its base is in Kano and Kaduna and, the English translation of its name is, “Vanguards for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa” Its leadership is obscure, Abu Usama AL Ansari is frequently identified as its leader but little other his name is known. Its spokesman claim that the group split from Boko Haram because of the latter’s frequent killing of Muslims. Ansaru avoids Muslim casualties and instead actively attacks Christian churches and government officials. Ansaru introduced tactics commonly associated with the Sahel unknown in West Africa, such as Kidnappings and suicide bombers including female bombers. The group had links with radical Islamist groups in Algeria and Mali but it is unlikely that it takes directives from them outside Nigeria, Chad and Niger. Currently, there is evidence of tactical cooperation between Ansaru and Boko Haram and it is possible that they have reunited. For instance, Chibok School girls kidnapping has the flavor of Ansaru but Shekau claimed responsibility (Campbell, 2014:2).

Beyond the onslaught of these formal terrorist groups, it was also reported that Fulani extremists were responsible for 26 percent of terror-related deaths in Nigeria at 325 fatalities. The Fulani do not constitute a single terrorist group. However, certain deaths within the ongoing conflict between the Pastoralists and the nomadic Fulani have been categorized as terrorism and attributed to extremist elements within the Fulani. This categorization is reflective of terrorism used as a tactic within ongoing conflict. There are an estimated 14 million Fulani in Nigeria with substantial population also seen in Guinea, Senegal, Mali and Cameroon. The majority of terrorist activity related to Fulani extremists occurred in states of Kaduna, Plateau and Benue in Nigeria. Kaduna recorded a 77 percent increase in terror-related deaths of 111 attacks attributed to Fulani extremists (Report of Global Terrorist Index, 2020: 21). Today, the civilian casualties in Northern Nigeria have increased rapidly with accelerated fatalities from Fulani Herdsmen. For instance, since December to April, 2021, there has been incessant killings and abductions in most states in Northern Nigeria.

Undoubtedly, the presence of these terrorist groups and other extreme Islamist movements has over the years created and sustained an atmosphere of terror, fear and anxiety in the continent. The onslaught of these radical Islamist groups against civilian population and the state has led to loss of thousands of lives and destruction of properties worth billions of dollars occasioned with proliferation of ID camps grappling to provide shelter for millions of internally displaced civil population feeling from unabated killings and abductions. Currently, over 10 million civil populations in restive conflict cities in the two regions are vulnerable to terrorist attacks.

Similarly, in reference to recent findings on global terrorism, the report of Global Terrorism Index (2020), indicated that in 2019, deaths from terrorism fell for the fifth consecutive year, after peaking in 2014. The total number of deaths fell by 15.5 percent. The fall in deaths was mirrored by a reduction in the impact of terrorism. The largest fall in the impact of terrorism in 2018, a 22.4 percent decrease from the prior year. However, Afghanistan which recorded 1,654 fewer deaths from terrorism in 2018, a 22.4 percent decrease from the prior year. However, Afghanistan remains the country most impacted by terrorism after overtaking Iraq in 2018. Nigeria recorded the second largest reduction in death from terrorism in 2019 with the number falling from 2,043 to 1,245 (39.1 percent reduction) which were mainly due to a fall in terrorism deaths attributed to Fulani extremists. This reduction occurred despite a small increase in deaths attributed to Boko Haram, which has been the most active terrorist group in country over the past decade. Deaths from terrorism in Nigeria are now 83 percent lower than their peak in 2014.

Subsequently, since COVID– 19 was declared as a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation, WHO in March, 2020, data suggested a decline in both incidents and deaths from terrorism across the regions of the world. However, the COVID– 19 pandemic presented new and distinct counter terrorism challenges. In particular, the increase of government deficits caused by increased public spending during the pandemic will likely have a negative impact on counter– terrorism budgets. This may result in reduction of international assistance for counter–terrorism operation in North Africa and Sub–Saharan Africa (Report of United Nations Development Programme, 2020:3). In assessing socio–economic impacts of terrorism in Africa continent, it is observed that economic impact of terrorism varies substantially between regions. In 2019, 86 percent of the global economic impact of terrorism was recorded in three regions (Sub–Saharan Africa, South Asia and North Africa). The Sub–Saharan Africa and South Asia recorded the highest economic impact at \$ 12. 5 and \$ 6 billion respectively (Report of Global Institute of Economics and Peace, 2020:18).

Table 1: The Ten Most Affected Countries by Economic Cost of Terrorism in 2019.

Country	Economic Cost of Terrorism as Percentage of GDP	Global Terrorism Index 2020 Rank
Afghanistan	16.7%	1
Syria	3.4%	4
Nigeria	2.4%	3
Burkina Faso	1.9%	12
Mali	1.9%	11
NSomalia	1.2%	5
Central Africa Republic	0.9%	17

Source: Adapted from Global Institute for Economics and Peace,(2020:23)

No doubt, prevailing insecurity crisis of terrorism in Africa has been intermittently challenged by myriad of responses from countries under siege, regional and global levels of engagements amid challenges. It therefore becomes pertinent to appraise responses to terrorism in African continent.

Appraisal of Responses to Terrorism in North and West Africa

Violent extremism in North and West Africa has over the decades and years elicited series of interventions to militate against its propensity, intensity, spread and impact. These responses are embellished in legislations, military and institutional mechanisms at the level of state, sub regional and regional platforms. These efforts were further reinforced by the interventions of the United States, France and United Nations on the premise that Islamic extremism in North and West Africa represents a potential threat to the interest of the West in the region and global peace and security. Accordingly, Center For Strategic Studies (2010) documents that there are a number of tools used by United States to provide assistance for regional allies in the fight against terrorism, and co-operation which has expanded to include intelligence sharing, law enforcement and border security, information operations, and efforts to address the local socioeconomic conditions that terrorists seek to exploit. The most notable program is the multi- agency Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partner-ship (TSCTP). The Defense Department, AFRICOM, State Department, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) all participate in the TSCTP with the aim of strengthening the military capabilities of Sahel states and facilitating cooperation between those states and Maghreb governments in the fight against terrorism. While the State Department and USAID focus on development and education. In addition, the U.S. military is supporting the NATO-led Operation Active Endeavour, a Mediterranean naval operation aimed at preventing the movement of terrorists and weapons between North Africa and Europe. Beyond multilateral efforts, the United States also has on-going bilateral programs with regional governments. The Antiterrorism Assistance Program (ATA) provides counter-terrorism training to police forces, and the United States spent over \$500,000 in specialized training for nearly 90 Moroccan and Libyan police officers in the last fiscal year.

The proliferation of armed Islamist groups at the exit of Arab spring in Maghreb created new realities and challenges in the counter-terrorism efforts by United States and her Western Allies. These realities accelerated more strategic responses from the US whose interest and investment are potentially threatened by the ceaseless onslaught of the Islamist armed groups in the Maghreb countries. In West Africa, the presence of the West and United Nations intervention to curb Islamist extremism is also felt as noted by Campbell (2014) who stressed that U.S. and British governments designated Boko Haram and Ansaru as terrorist organisations in 2013, while the United Nations designated Boko Haram as al-Qaeda affiliate in 2014. In the aftermath of the Chibok schoolgirls' kidnapping a number of Western countries offered to help Nigeria to find and liberate the captives. In sustained effort to respond more efficiently to Boko Haram and IS-WA offensives, the United States has provided counter terrorism and other security assistance to governments in the region and obligated more than \$ 2.3 billion for the Lake Chad Basin humanitarian response in 2015. As of

mid-2020, nearly 13 million people required some form of aid in Lake Chad Basin region and over three million people were displaced according to United Nations estimates (The Report of Congressional Research Service, 2021:3).

At the level of sub-regional intervention, the Economic Community of West African states, ECOWAS has demonstrated reasonable scale of commitment and vigor amid daunting challenges in its counter-terrorism responses as embellished in its protocols, coordinated military engagement and collaboration with the West and United Nations. In this vein, Anita (2018) noted that ECOWAS collaborated with the AU, UN and other major partners to mobilize and deploy the UN-authorized Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which replaced AFISMA. Also, ECOWAS has demonstrated interest in the challenges faced by the Sahel countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad and Mauritania by developing an ECOWAS Sahel strategy, which aimed at finding solutions to cross-border terrorism and developmental challenges in the area. The ECOWAS Sahel strategy has however achieved little, in that threats of terrorism in the area have continued, thereby necessitating the formation by the Group of Five Sahel States (the G5 Sahel) of the G5 Sahel Force (also known as Force Conjointe du G5 Sahel- 'FC-G5S'), a UN/AU-endorsed cross-border joint military force to combat terrorism and trans-national organized crime.

In similar sense, Akanji (2019) remarked that in combating terrorism, ECOWAS, as an institution, has collaborated with state and non-state actors regionally and internationally. Regionally, ECOWAS has been a platform for collaborations for member states to develop and implement counter-terrorism measures as seen below:

i. In 2006, heads of states and governments of ECOWAS deliberated on the rising cases of terrorism and money laundering in the region and directed all member states to enact laws to accommodate the revised Anti-Money Laundering and Combat Financing of Terrorism protocol with development partners such as the UN, EU, African Union (AU), World Bank and many countries within and outside of Africa. For example, ECOWAS entered into a multi-year (2015–2019) security and development agreement with the US government in 2015. The agreement focused on strengthening democratic institutions, enhancing trade and investment as well as peace and security, including Trans-saharan Counterterrorism Partnership.

ii. Similarly, ECOWAS is also regional partner of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), a committee created by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005) to enhance the ability of UN member states to prevent terrorist acts within and outside their borders, and the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), established to implement CTC's policy decisions and conduct expert assessments of UN member states on counterterrorism.

iii. In line with the partnership, ECOWAS has developed a number of measures, including the establishment of counterterrorism institutions and instruments. A notable counterterrorism institution established by ECOWAS is the Inter-governmental Action Group against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing in West Africa (GIABA). ECOWAS established GIABA on 10 December 1999, as an institution to combat money laundering but expanded its mandate to include combating terrorism financing in 2006 in view of the growing terrorism in the region and the role that illicit money (money laundered) plays in fostering it. Thus, GIABA was mandated to ensure that member states of ECOWAS recognise, adopt and implement international AML/CFT measures for the purpose of ensuring the security, integrity and stability of the region's financial system.

iv. Apart from GIABA, which focuses on combating terrorism financing, ECOWAS has also conceived some other counterterrorism mechanisms. These include ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Coordination Bureau (ECOCTB); ECOWAS Arrest Warrant (ECOWARRANT); ECOWAS Black List of Terrorist and Criminal Networks (ECOLIST); ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Training Centre; and Counter-Terrorism Technical Assistance Directory. These mechanisms were created in February 2013 through the adoption of the ECOWAS Political Declaration and Common Position against Terrorism, which contained ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Implementation Plan. The ECOWAS Declaration was hinged on giving effect to regional, continental and international counterterrorism instruments and to provide a common operational framework for actions to combat terrorism in West Africa.

To further underscore the collaborative efforts of sovereign states in the fight against Islamic extremism and insurgency in West Africa, it was reported that in 2013 to 2015, Boko Haram mounted an offensive in which it came to assert control over extensive territory in North-East Nigeria and carried out its first large attacks in adjacent areas of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. A subsequent regional campaign led by Chadian forces recaptured much of the self-declared state prompting Boko Haram to revert to asymmetric attacks and increasingly target Nigeria's neighbors. Ensuring Chadian-led regional offensives have periodically disrupted militant stronghold and supply lines but Nigerian government has consistently struggled to restore stability in these zones. Since a surge in attacks on Nigerian security forces in 2018, the Nigerian military has concentrated troops in Urban "super camps" ceding control over highways and rural areas and limiting humanitarian access and civilian protection beyond select garrison Towns. Again regional military coordination has improved with 2014 activation of African Union-authorized Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) comprising troops from Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon and Chad. Meanwhile, Nigerian and Cameroonian authorities have since encouraged the emergence of local vigilante groups that added military effort through intelligence gathering and patrolling. In 2016,

the Nigerian government launched Operation Safe Corridor, a de-radicalization program for ex-combats (Report of Congressional Research Service, 2021:1).

Beside these efforts, there were Anti-terrorist legislations domesticated in Maghreb region and West Africa countries to criminalize terrorism and protect civil population. Unfortunately, the menace of Islamic extremism and terrorism has accelerated in the recent time.

Conclusion and Recommendations

North and West Africa are regions that are undoubtedly endemic in torrents of terrorism with unprecedented adverse effects on the development and security of the continent. From the conceptual analysis, it is observed that “terrorism” as a concept is yet to assume a universally acclaimed definition to underscore its discernible attributes beyond the prejudices of sovereign states and inter-governmental organisations. It is further established that Islamic extremism of Algerian state infected the Maghreb and spread across West Africa countries of Mali and Mauritania while failed governance and recessive economy occasioned with Islamic radicalization led to the emergence of dreaded Boko Haram in Nigeria whose onslaught created crises of insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin and neighboring countries. Hence, the UN, AU, US and ECOWAS responses to Islamic extremism and terrorism is overwhelming amid challenges.

Acknowledging the import of systemic analysis, this discourse suggests more commitment from Maghreb and ECOWAS countries in collective and strategic response against terrorism. In addition, inter-sub regional alliance is also instructive to complement the efforts of African Union and United Nations in stemming the tide of Islamic extremism in the continent.

Furthermore, the governments in these regions should prioritize on youth employment and entrepreneurship development. This measure shall indeed redirect the energy and drive of over 50 million young people in these regions to productive and enterprising ventures critical to national development. Similarly, campaign of national reconciliation and amnesty for these terrorists is also advocated to bring peace and development to Maghreb and Sahel regions of African continent. Again, effective mechanism of social rehabilitation programme for the repentant terrorists is also suggested to stem the tide of religious radicalization.

The governments of these regions should also synergize with the Mosque and rural traditional authorities in youth sensitization and advocacy against extremism and violence. This is instructive for the mind, orientation and conduct of youths in these vulnerable areas. In another perspective, the governments of these regions should also ensure strict regulation of its borders with neighboring countries against arms and bandits infiltration. Hence, the need for concert efforts to track terrorism financing channels in effective checks of extremism and violence sponsorship.

Finally, governments across North and West Africa should ensure liberal democracy in transition to power, entrench equity in the distribution of social infrastructures and services, and implement public policies that stimulate growth in the economy in realization of the expectations of national development. This is imperative for stability and development of every nation-state.

References

- Akanji, O (2019). Sub-Regional Security Challenges: ECOWAS and the War on Terrorism in West Africa. *Sage Journal*
- Anderson (2018). Terrorism and Responses: Global Perspective. *Journal of European Review* 45(23)
- Agara, T, Luqman, S and Ajisebiyawo (2017). Al Qaeda and the Internationalisation of Terrorism in Africa: The Case of Boko Haram in Nigeria. *Studies in Politics and Society Journal* 5 (1).
- Aliyu and Buba (2017). Assessing Government Fight Against Terrorism in Africa. *Journal of African Studies* 62(39).
- Agbibo, D and Maiangwa, B (2016). Nigeria United in Grief; Divided in Response: Religious Terrorism, Boko Haram and the Dynamics of State Response. *African Journal Review*, Vol 10(8).
- Anneli, B (2006). *Politics and Terrorism: An Assessment of the Origin and Threat of Terrorism in Egypt*. ISSR Paper.
- Anneli, B (2008). *Terrorism in the Maghreb*. Institute for Security Studies.
- African Union (2014). Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa at the Peace and Security Council 455th Meeting at the level of Heads of States and Government.
- African Union (2015). *The African Union Counter Terrorism Framework* (internet) Available from <http://www.peace.org>.
- Beary, V (2015). *Terrorism in Africa: Do Islamist's on the Continent Threaten the West*. CQ

Research.

- Botha, A (2008). Challenges in Understanding Terrorism in Africa: A Human Security Perspective. *African Security Review*.
- Chiluwa, L, Chimuanya, L and Ajiboye, E (2020). Communicating Religious Extremism in West Africa. *African Journal Review, Vol 4 (8)*
- Cilliers, J (2015). *Violent Islamist Extremism and Terror in West Africa*. Institute for Security Studies, ISIS.
- Claire, S (2008). *North Africa: New Challenges, Old Regimes and Regional Security*. African Program Working Paper Series.
- Cinar, B (2009). *The Root Causes of Terrorism*. METU Studies in Development
- Campbell, J (2014). *Boko Haram : Origins, Challenges and Responses*. Norwegian Peace building Resource Centre.
- Caire, S (2008). *North Africa: New Challenges, Old Regimes and Regional Security*. African Program Working Paper Service.
- Dave, H (2018). *Terrorism: The Cankerworm of the 21st Century*. Paris. Institute of Research and Diplomacy.
- Eke, O and Ezirim, G (2015). Terrorism and National Security: Constructing Socio-Economic Dynamics in Nigeria. *Studies in Politics and Society Journal Vol 3(1)*.
- Ricardo, L and Hrach, G (2006). *Political Islam in West Africa and the Sahel*. Military Review
- Okumu, W and Botha, A (2007). *Domestic Terrorism in Africa: Defining, Addressing and Understanding its Impact on Human Security*. Institute for Security Studies.
- Storm, C (2005). The Persistence of Authoritarianism as a Source of Radicalization in North Africa. *Journal of International Affairs (85) 5*.
- The Report of Center for Strategic and International Studies (2010). *Dynamics of North Africa Terrorism*. Middle East Program
- The Report of Congressional Service (2010) Boko Haram and Islamic State of West Africa.
- The Report of United Nations Development Programme (2017). *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment*. Regional Bureau for Africa.
- The Report of Global Terrorism Index (2017). *Measuring Impact of Terrorism*. Institute for Economics and Peace
- The Report of Global Terrorism Index (2020). *Measuring Impact of Terrorism*. Institute for Economics and Peace
- The Report of Governance, Social Development and Humanitarian Conflict, ,(2013). *Islamic Radicalization in North and West Africa: Drivers and Approaches to Tackle Governance, Social Development and Humanitarian Conflict*. GSDRC.
- The Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Terrorism and Counter – Terrorism.
- The Report of African Union High Level Retreat of Special Envoys and Mediators on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa held on 21st to 22nd October, 2015 in Windhoek, Namibia.
- The Report of United Nations (2017) *Human Right on Terrorism*. United Nations.
- The Performance Report on Nigerian Economy (2011), National Planning Commission. Abuja.
- The Report of Organisation of African Unity (1999) Terrorism. O.A.U.
- UNDP Report (2017). *Journey to Extremism in Africa*. New York : United Nations Development Programme, Bureau for African Region.
- Worcester, M (2016). *Combating Terrorism in Africa*. Institute for Strategic Politick – S i t t e r
- Wolf, A (2013). An Islamist Renaissance, Religion and Politics in Post-Revolutionary Tunisia. *The Journal of North Africa Studies 18 (4)*.