

# LA INSURGENCIA DE BOKO HARAM EN LA REGIÓN NORORIENTAL DE NIGERIA DESDE 2010: UNA PERSPECTIVA TRANSNACIONAL

## THE BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA'S NORTHEAST REGION SINCE 2010: A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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**Resumen:** Este documento proporciona información sobre las perspectivas transnacionales de la insurgencia de Boko Haram en la región noreste de Nigeria desde 2010. Revela que las dimensiones transnacionales de la insurgencia en términos de fronteras porosas, movimiento de personas, tráfico de armas y municiones se propagan del fundamentalismo islámico, y el acceso a la financiación han contribuido a prolongar el conflicto en el noreste. El documento emplea fuentes primarias y secundarias para analizar e interpretar el tema del documento. Utiliza la teoría del transnacionalismo para teorizar y arrojar luz sobre el carácter transnacional de la insurgencia de Boko Haram en la región noreste de Nigeria.

**Palabras clave:** Boko Haram, Nigeria, Nordeste, Terrorismo, Transnacionalismo

**Abstract:** This paper provides insight into the transnational perspectives of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's northeast region since 2010. It reveals that the transnational dimensions of the insurgency in terms of the porous borders, movement of persons, trafficking of arms and ammunition spread of Islamic fundamentalism, and access to funding have contributed to elongating the conflict in the northeast. The paper employs primary and secondary sources to analyze and interpret the subject matter of the paper. It utilizes the theory of transnationalism to theorize and shed light on the transnational character of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's northeast region.

**Keywords:** Boko Haram, Nigeria, Northeast, Terrorism, Transnationalism

## INTRODUCTION

**T**errorism in the last two decades has proved to be one of the major threats to global peace and security. The dastardly attacks of terrorist worldwide, since 9/11 2001, has risen astronomically, likewise, the attendant consequences on its victims, especially the defenceless, comprising women and children. The casualties from terrorist attacks globally in 2017 were estimated at 26,445 deaths from terrorism globally – over the previous decade the average number of annual deaths was 21,000<sup>1</sup>. They further revealed that there was year-to-year variability – over this decade the global death toll ranged from its lowest of 7,827 in 2010 to the highest year of 44,490 in 2014<sup>2</sup>. Although, the data might be contentious in some quarters, however, what is indisputable is the fact that terrorism has led thousands of people across the world to their early graves. The wanton loss of lives occasioned by acts of terrorism globally, the spread of terrorist groups, and the expansion of their networks across states boundaries, revealed the capacity and capability of terrorist organisations to remain resolute in their objectives which is to circumvent the normal political process, instead, rely on threats, violence, and intimidation to terrify civilians and actualize their goal<sup>3</sup>.

Africa like other continents of the world has had its share of terrorism since the turn of the new millennium. In fact, on the eve of the twenty-first century, the continent was rocked by two devastating terrorist attacks at the United States (US) embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salem, Tanzania in August 1998<sup>4</sup>. The simultaneous coordinated bombings orchestrated by Osama bin Laden al-Qaeda terrorist organisation resulted in the death of 224 people (including 12

Americans) and injured 4,574 more<sup>5</sup>. Since the bombing of the US embassies in East Africa in 1998, the continent has been home to several terrorist attacks from terrorist groups domiciled in different parts of the continent. In North Africa, al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) has remained a thorn in the flesh of the government of Algeria since it was created in 2003 as well as other Arab states, in the region, where it maintained cells<sup>6</sup>. Similarly, AQIM has expanded its terrorist activities to include the Sahel region. Some countries located along the Sahel axis such as Mauritanian, Niger, Mali, and Chad have experienced terrorist attacks orchestrated by AQIM<sup>7</sup>.

In the Horn of Africa as well as East and West Africa, different terrorist groups have held sway in the perpetration of their deadly terrorist activities that had resulted in the death of hundreds of lives and the destruction of property. The al Shabaab terrorist group has been responsible for terrorist attacks in the Horn of Africa as well as in East Africa. Al Shabaab has recorded multiple terrorist attacks against the government and people of Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia<sup>8</sup>. In the same vein, al Shabaab claimed responsibility for the 2013 Watergate Mall terrorist attack, in Nairobi, Kenya, that led to the death of 65 people<sup>9</sup>. Uganda, likewise, has been confronted by terrorist attacks orchestrated by Islamic

<sup>1</sup> Ritchie, Hannah, et al., *Terrorism*, 2019, available in: [www.ourworldindata](http://www.ourworldindata) [Consulted on February 12, 2022].

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Sandler, Todd, Arce Daniel, G., "Terrorism", Bjørn Lomborg, In *Global Crises, Global Solutions*, Second Edition, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Atta-Asamoah, Andrews, "Transnational and Domestic Terrorism in Africa Any Linkages? Okumu Wafulu and Botha Anneli", en *Domestic Terrorism in Africa: Defining, Addressing and Understanding its Impact on Human Security*, Pretoria, Institute for Security Studies, 2009, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Helling Eric, Robert, "Otologic Blast Injuries due to the Kenya Embassy Bombing", *Military Medicine*, 169 (2004), p. 872; Blinken J y Antony J., "23rd Commemoration of the August 7th U.S. Embassy Bombings, US Department of State", available in: [www.state.gov/biographies/antony-j-blinken](http://www.state.gov/biographies/antony-j-blinken) [Consulted on March 3, 2022].

<sup>6</sup> Didier, Brice, "The Regionalization of Counter-Terrorism Strategies in the Sahel: the G5 As A Challenge for Transatlantic Relations", *College of Europe Policy Brief*, 10 (2018), p. 2; Roussellier, Jacques, *Terrorism in North Africa and the Sahel: Al-Qa'ida's Franchise or Freelance?* Washington, The Middle East Institute, 2011, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Seteolu, Dele, "Terrorism in the Sahel Region", *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*, 37/3 (2011), p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> Walt der, Ruan van y Solomon, Hussein, "Histories and Spaces of Terrorism in Africa: The Post-9/11 Strategic Challenge of Somalia's al Shabab", *Afro Eurasian Studies*, 3/1 (2014), p. 23; Busher, Joel, "Introduction: Terrorism and Counter-terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa", *Journal of Terrorism Research*, 5/1 (2014), p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Kimunguyi, Patrick, "Terrorism and Counter Terrorism in East Africa", *Global Terrorism Research Centre*, Monash University, European and EU Centre, 2014, p. 12.

State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS), in conjunction with Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). Both extremist groups claimed responsibility for a series of terrorist attacks across Uganda, including Kampala, the capital in 2021, which resulted in the death of many<sup>10</sup>. In West Africa, Boko Haram has been a constant threat to some countries in the Lake Chad region comprising Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad Republic, while Nigeria's northeast region has remained the theatre of the terrorist activities<sup>11</sup>.

Boko Haram, like other terrorist groups across different regions of the world is driven by religious and political motives to establish a caliphate and promote Islamic doctrines, within its areas of operations, with the use of force – this the group has tried to achieve since 2010 in Nigeria's northeast region and the Lake Chad region with an alarming rate in the casualties recorded<sup>12</sup>. It is estimated that over 23,000 civilians have died in the Boko Haram insurgency since it commenced in 2010<sup>13</sup>. Owing to the dastardly nature of Boko Haram operations, the Institute of Economics and Peace in 2014, rated Boko Haram as the world's deadliest violent extremist organisation with an estimated 7,512 casualties that year, representing an increase of 317% from the previous year, surpassing the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)<sup>14</sup>.

Successive administrations in Nigeria have made efforts to curtail the terrorist group from inflicting pain and death. To this effect, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua approved the deployment of Nigerian soldiers to Borno state in 2009 to curtail the threat posed by the group to the state and its citizens. It was during that period that Mohammed Yusuf the founder of the group

was captured handed to the police and killed<sup>15</sup>. Likewise, in 2013, the Goodluck Jonathan administration declared a state of emergency in some states (Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe) in the northeastern region of Nigeria rife with Boko Haram attacks on civilians, security agencies, and by extension Nigeria's immediate neighbours. The development resulted in the massive deployment of Nigeria's armed forces to the affected states to enforce the state of emergency and curtailed the terrorist group<sup>16</sup>. Similarly, the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari since 2015 has been contending with the terrorist group up to the present. The Nigerian government has been forced to engage in a multi-national joint task force comprising neighbouring countries of Chad Republic, Cameroon, Niger, and the Benin Republic in her attempt to dislodge Boko Haram from her territory<sup>17</sup>. This notwithstanding, Boko Haram has continued to inflict pain and death on Nigerians residing in the northeast region, resulting in the displacement of families from their homes to take refuge in internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps scattered in different parts of the region; however, Borno state has remained heart of the terrorist group activities<sup>18</sup>.

The Boko Haram insurgency in the northeastern part of Nigeria and by extension into neighbouring countries sharing boundaries with Nigeria have received scholarly attention from local and foreign authors concerning the causes, impact, and efforts to end the protracted conflict, as well as the alliance between Boko Haram, al-Qaeda and ISIS. Olorunfemi Arirabiyi-Ibrahim establishes a discrepancy in governance particularly concerning justice, equity, fairness, and the provision of the basic needs of the people between the government and the electorate in the nor-

<sup>10</sup> Gavi, Michelle, "Kampala Attacks Exacerbate Uncertainty Over Uganda's Future", *Council on Foreign Affairs* (2021), p. 1; "At least three killed in suicide bomb attacks in Uganda capital, Kampala", *The Guardian*, November 16, 2021.

<sup>11</sup> Mantzikos, Ioannis, "Boko Haram Attacks in Nigeria and Neighbouring Countries: A Chronology of Attacks", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 8/6 (2014), p. 78

<sup>12</sup> "Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province", *In Focus 2022*, available in: [www.crsreports.congress.gov](http://www.crsreports.congress.gov) [Consulted on April 2, 2022].

<sup>13</sup> "Council on Foreign Relations", *Nigeria security tracker* (2016), available in: [www.cfr.org](http://www.cfr.org) [Consulted on March 14, 2022].

<sup>14</sup> Institute for Economics & Peace 2016, available in: [www.economicsandpeace.org/reports/](http://www.economicsandpeace.org/reports/) [Consulted on March 13, 2020].

<sup>15</sup> Meagher, Kate, "Beyond Terror: Addressing the Boko Haram Challenge in Nigeria, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF)", *Policy Brief* (2014), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Sergie Aly, Mohammed y Toni, Johnson, "Boko Haram and Ansaru", *Council on Foreign Affairs* (2013), p. 2

<sup>17</sup> Zamfir, Ionel, "African-led Counter-Terrorism Measures against Boko Haram", *At a Glance, European Parliament* (2015), p. 2

<sup>18</sup> Adeyeri James, Olusegun y Aluede A., Jackson, "IDPs of Boko Haram War, Emergency Rehabilitation and Human Rights Practice in Nigeria" en Sabella O. Abidde, *In The Challenges of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa*, Cham: Springer, 2021, p. 150.

theastern states of Nigeria<sup>19</sup>. The development according to the author partly contributed to the outbreak of the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno state and spread to other states in the region. Similarly, the impact of radical Islamic teachings exported from the Middle East has equally featured prominently as one of the major factors that have galvanized the outbreak of terrorism in the northeast region of Nigeria. Thomson Valarie affirms that Boko Haram's marked increase in its capabilities in a very short period has led to speculation that it has joined forces with al-Qaeda groups in Africa<sup>20</sup>. The impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on the lives of the people in the northeast has not escaped the attention of several scholars. Chukwuma Al Okoli and Philip Iortyer in their works attest to the humanitarian suffering experienced by the citizens of the affected states in the northeast<sup>21</sup>. J. O. Abimbola and S. A. Adesote, examine some of the issues and trends that characterized Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast<sup>22</sup>. The authors outline the various attacks perpetrated by the terrorist group from its inception to 2012. Similarly, the various counter-measures initiated by the Nigerian government in collaboration with its neighbours received attention. Omale, Don John O. elaborates on some counter-measures that do not necessarily have to do with the use of force to de-escalate the tension on the ground<sup>23</sup>. Furthermore, the effects of geography, the porous nature of the borders, and their proximity to the Sahel have received considerable among scholars until recently. Jackson A. Aluede *establishes* that the precarious nature of the borders of states in the Lake Chad region enables Boko Haram to receive arms, ammunition, and financial support from

North Africa; and, likewise, to recruit, indoctrinate and train members in their various camps in the Lake Chad region<sup>24</sup>. The alliance between ISIS and Boko Haram that led to the emergence of ISWAP, and subsequently, the split of the union, and the rivalry that ensued between Boko Haram and ISWAP have received considerable attention among scholars in Nigeria and beyond. For instance, Jennifer Ogbogu submits that the alliance may be a prelude to a greater security threat in the West African region<sup>25</sup>. J. Peter Pham concludes that Boko Haram's quest for an alliance with ISIS can be interpreted within the context of Boko Haram's strategic objectives at each stage in its evolution, which are ideological, rhetorical, and operational choices and that the union with ISIS that birthed ISWAP opposed these objectives<sup>26</sup>. On his part, Freedom C. Onuoha reveals some of the reasons that led to the split of ISWAP, and which made Abubakar Shekau, the leader of Boko Haram renege on his allegiance to the leadership of ISIS<sup>27</sup>. Onuoha, went further to discuss the implications the split holds for the region.

However, despite the plethora of literature on the Boko Haram insurgency, there exist gaps that scholars are yet to focus their research lens on to unravel the dimensions and intricacies associated with the protracted conflict. One such gap which is the focus of this paper is the transnational perspective of the insurgency. The transnational perspective in research enterprise shifts the focus of analysis from individual states to a global system influenced by its cross-border dimensions. In other words, transnational perspectives provide a deeper understanding of several globally contingent social, economic, and political processes including social movements, governance and politics, terrorism, political vio-

<sup>19</sup> Arirabiyi-Ibrahim, Olorunfemi, "Boko Haram Terrorist Activities and the Crises of Governance in North Eastern Nigeria" *African Journal for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism*, 4/2 (2013), pp. 12-31.

<sup>20</sup> Thomson, Valarie, "Boko Haram and Islamic Fundamentalism in Nigeria" *Global Security Studies*, 3/3 (2012), pp. 46-60.

<sup>21</sup> Al Okoli, Chukwuma, Philip, Iortyer, "Terrorism and Humanitarian Crisis in Nigeria: Insights from Boko Haram Insurgency", *Global Journal of Human-Social Science Political Science*, 14/1 (2014), pp. 1-13.

<sup>22</sup> Abimbola, J. O., Adesote, S. A., "Domestic Terrorism and Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria, Issues and Trends: A Historical Discourse", *Journal of Arts and Contemporary Society*, 4 (2012), pp. 11-29.

<sup>23</sup> Omale O., Don John, "Terrorism and Counter Terrorism in Nigeria: Theoretical Paradigms and Lessons for Public Policy", *Canadian Social Science*, 9/3 (2013), pp. 96-103.

<sup>24</sup> Aluede A., Jackson, "Terrorism in the Lake Chad Region: The Nexus between Land Borders and Expansion of Islamic Fundamentalism in Northeast Nigeria", *Africa insight*, 48/3 (2018), pp. 105-118.

<sup>25</sup> Ogbogu, Jennifer, "Analysing the Threat of Boko Haram and the ISIS Alliance in Nigeria", *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, 7/8 (2015), pp. 16-21.

<sup>26</sup> Pham J., Peter, "How Boko Haram Became the Islamic State's West Africa Province", *The Journal of International Security Affairs* (2016), available in: [www.sgp.fas.org](http://www.sgp.fas.org) [Consulted on May 23, 2023].

<sup>27</sup> Onuoha C., Freedom, "Split in ISIS-Aligned Boko Haram Group" *Report*, Al Jazeera Centre for Studies (2016), pp. 1-8.

lence, and organized crime among others<sup>28</sup>. Consequently, through the lenses of transnationalism, a broader insight, and explanation of some of the processes and actors such as terrorist organisations and their activities across state borders and how they have been able to sustain their attacks, source fund and ammunition, recruit members and the internationalisation of their objectives are unraveled.

The Nigerian northeast region has been the theatre of the Boko Haram insurgency since the second decade of the twenty-first century. The region comprises the following states Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe, and Taraba. Similarly, the region shares a boundary with the Republic of Chad covering 75 kilometers, Cameroon 1700 kilometers, and Niger 1500 kilometers; likewise, some of the following ethnic groups are domiciled in the region namely the Hausa, Kanuri, Mandara<sup>29</sup>.

Based on the foregoing, this paper is a departure from previous attempts by scholars on the Boko Haram insurgency, and the different dimensions (causes, effects, counter-measures, and radical Islam). The paper focuses on the transnational perspective of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's northeast region and how it has contributed to the protracted nature of the conflict between the Nigerian government and the terrorist group. It interrogates the concept of transnationalism, its features, and the nexus between the features of transnationalism and the Boko Haram insurgency and queries the extent to which it has enhanced the terrorist organisation's capability and capacity to engage in a conflict of attrition.

## 1. TRANSNATIONALISM: THEORY AND ORIGIN

Since the last decade of the twentieth century, transnationalism has been on the social science

<sup>28</sup> Williams W., Bradly, "Transnationalism", 2007, available in: [www.globalsocialtheory.org](http://www.globalsocialtheory.org) [Consulted on April 23, 2021]; Schiller, Glick Nina y Salazar B., Noel, "Regimes of Mobility across the Globe", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39/2 (2013), p. 184.

<sup>29</sup> Osuntokun, Akinjide, "Gulliver and the Lilliputians: Nigeria and its Neighbours," en Adebajo, Adekeye y Mustapha, Abdul Raufu, In *Gulliver's Troubles: Nigeria's Foreign Policy After the Cold*, Natal, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008, p. 142; Asiwaju, A.I., *Artificial Boundaries*, An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Lagos Lagos, University of Press, 1984, p. 6.

research agenda<sup>30</sup>. During the period, and after, transnationalism gained momentum and became a major research lens and theory utilised by social scientists, and recently, scholars in the humanities such as historians to enlighten, analyze and provide explanations concerning socio-cultural, economic, and political phenomena that transcend states borders. The concept gained currency in the post-Cold War period, ever since, it has become a major tool for the analysis of multiple ties of individuals, groups, and organisations across states boundaries<sup>31</sup>. As a theory, transnationalism is used to explain, analyse and interrogate the multiple ties and interactions linking people and institutions across national borders of nation-states<sup>32</sup>.

Although, transnationalism gained ascendancy among academia and policy-makers in the 1990s, however, the concept emerged during World War I, 1916, to be precise, in *The Atlantic* (1916), in an essay written by critic and essayist Randolph Bourne, titled *Trans-national America*. Bourne in his essay, canvassed for a transnational America, in other words, a melting pot that would welcome and accept the new wave of immigrants from Europe into the United States, before and during the First World War as the older immigrants that established the United States and fought for her independence<sup>33</sup>. However, it was not until the 1970s that published works began to provide insight into what constitutes transnationalism or transnational relations began to emerge.

<sup>30</sup> Jong De, Sara y Dannecker, Petra, "Connecting and Confronting Transnationalism: Bridging Concepts and Moving Critique", *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 25/5 (2018), p. 493.

<sup>31</sup> Patricia, Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism", *Contemporary European History*, 14/4 (2005); Waldinger, Roger y Fitzgerald, David, "Transnationalism in Question", *American Journal of Sociology*, 109/5 (2004); Bruneau, Michel, "Diasporas, transnational spaces and communities", en Bauböck, Rainer y Faist, Thomas, *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*, Amsterdam, University Press, 2010, p. 178; Embong, Abdul Rahman, "Globalization and Transnational Class Relations: Some Problems of Conceptualization", *Third World Quarterly*, 21/6 (2000); Lugo-Ortiz, et al., "Ethnic Studies in the Age of Transnationalism", *PMLA*, 122/3 (2007).

<sup>32</sup> Trans-nationalism: Social and Human Science, International Migration. Available in: [www.UNESCO.org/new/en/social-and-human-science/themes/international-migration](http://www.UNESCO.org/new/en/social-and-human-science/themes/international-migration) [Consulted on February 12, 2022].

<sup>33</sup> Bourne S, Randolph, "U.S. Trans-national America", *The Atlantic* (1916).

One of the early articles on transnationalism is Nye S. Joseph and Keohane O. Robert's *Transnational Relations and World Politics: An Introduction*<sup>34</sup>. The thrust of Nye and Keohane's argument on transnationalism is that states are by no means the only actors in the world. Invariably, the state no longer holds the exclusive right or preserve as the major actor in the international system, as enshrined in the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648. In other words, the exclusive right of the state has been threatened by new actors engaged in transnational activities (multinational corporations, religious organizations, and international criminal cartels or networks), and, they possess the capacity to crisscross a state border and effect a course in another state in particular, and the international system in general. This notwithstanding, however, Nye and Keohane are quick to point out that though the activities of transnational actors in the international arena have been acknowledged, their impact has not received considerable attention. They affirmed that:

“Although Wolfers and others have pointed out the importance of inter-societal interactions and “transnational actors” in international affairs, the impact of these phenomena on world politics has often been ignored both in policy-oriented writings and in more theoretical works. When they have been recognized, they have often been consigned with the factors mentioned above to the environment of interstate politics, and relatively little attention has been paid to them or their connections with the interstate system”<sup>35</sup>.

It is imperative to state that transnationalism and all that was associated with it in its formative years focus on political and economic phenomena. Works on transnational relations during the period revealed how non-governmental (non-state actors) organisations in business, labour, and many other fields encroach upon the state's prerogatives and escape government control, likewise, also, they exposed how the networks of contacts and transactions among non-governmental actors threatened to undermine state sovereignty in some important areas and questions the adequacy of the state-centric

<sup>34</sup> Nye S, Joseph y Keohane O., Robert, “*Transnational Relations and World Politics: An Introduction*”, *International Organization*, 25/3 (1971), p. 329

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

model of international relations<sup>36</sup>. The development prompted scholars to probe more into the activities of transnational actors all in an attempt to broaden the tool of analysis, on the scope, definitions, perspective, and impact on the international system.

## 2. TRANSNATIONALISM: DEFINITION & DISCOURSE

Transnationalism as a concept and phenomenon is seen from different perspectives across various disciplines. However, the definitions agreed that the concept provides insight and explanations to the multi-ties or processes of individuals, groups, and organizations whose activities transcend the state's boundaries with varying degrees of impact. Nye S. Joseph and Keohane O. Robert defined transnational relations as the movement of tangible or intangible items across state boundaries when at least one actor is not an agent of a government or an international organization<sup>37</sup>. This definition interprets transnationalism as the movement of humans and immaterial objects across the borders of nation-states with little or no control by government agencies. More importantly, the definition reveals the growing economic activities of individuals, groups, and multinational corporations across national frontiers of states, a development that reached its crescendo in the 1990s, tagged by some as globalization. Similarly, it is imperative to state that transnationalism was used primarily to describe a political and economic phenomenon, namely the global reorganisation of the production process, portraying it as an inexorable structural-economic transformation beyond and outside human practices and agency<sup>38</sup>.

Still, on the definition of transnationalism, Nina Glick Schiller et al. defined it as the ‘processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of residence’<sup>39</sup>. According to this definition, transnationalism explains the activities of immi-

<sup>36</sup> Bennett A., Leroy, *International Organisation: Principles and Issues*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1995, p. 265.

<sup>37</sup> Nye S, Joseph, and Keohane O, Robert, “*Transnational Relations and...*”, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

<sup>38</sup> Jong De, Sara y Dannecker, Petra, “*Connecting and Confronting...*”, *op. cit.*, p. 493.

<sup>39</sup> Schiller Nina, Glick, Basch, Linda y Blanc-Szanton, Cristina, “*Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration*”, *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*, 654/1 (1992), p. 1.

grants who crisscrossed their national borders to another country for socio-cultural and economic reasons. Likewise, also, the definition has been corroborated by many others particularly; works in sociology, anthropology, and geography to explain factors and drivers behind the upsurge of migrants across state borders as well as their activities in their new place of abode<sup>40</sup>.

Studies on transnationalism have attracted scholarly attention among academia and policy-makers. This is because the concept has become a veritable tool of analysis among researchers, and, likewise, enables policy-makers in decision-making regarding issues on transnational relations between neighbouring states. In the same vein, there has been a profusion of scholarly works on the subject in recent times aimed at addressing the subject matter of transnationalism, its scope, interdisciplinary reach, and perspectives<sup>41</sup>. Similarly, scholars have tried to differentiate between the earlier dimension of the concept from later conceptions as well as other branches associated with the subject such as sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, and recent history.

As the concept of transnationalism continues to expand in scope and reach, historians, likewise have embraced the concept to broaden their analysis of events of the past, examine comparative historical phenomena as well as enriched, historicised, and expand their historical research on broader issues. This process of writing history is known as transnational history. The definition of transnational history shares similarities with the definitions of the social sciences such as political science, anthropology, economics, and sociology – which has to do with activities that concern man that flows across a state's borders. In the words of Akira Iriye transnational history refers to the movements and forces that cut

across national borders<sup>42</sup>. These forces or movement covers people, ideas, words, capital, might, and institutions.

### 3. BOKO HARAM: AN OVERVIEW

The Boko Haram terrorist organisation was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002. Yusuf was a former pupil of Mohammed Ali, a renowned Islamic cleric in northern Nigeria. Unlike, his master, Mohammed Yusuf was an adherent of the Salafist Islamic school of thought, which upheld a radical and militant approach to Islam<sup>43</sup>. The radical posture of Mohammed Yusuf and his followers led to several clashes between the group and security agencies. Another dimension of Mohammed Yusuf's preaching was his opposition to 'Western Education.' This he tagged as sinful<sup>44</sup>.

Several factors accounted for the outbreak of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's northeast region; however, these factors have been dealt with extensively in the literature by Nigerians and foreign scholars, and therefore would not be examined by the present paper. Nevertheless, the paper would shed light briefly, on the stained political relationship between Mohammed Yusuf and Ali Modu Sheriff, the then Governor of Borno state, at the time Boko Haram became a major threat in Borno state. The former Governor of Borno State Ali Modu Sheriff for political reasons wooed Mohammed Yusuf to his side, in an attempt to win the governorship election in the state in 2007. After the election things fell apart between them. The agreement reached by both parties before the election soon collapse because of irreconcilable differences<sup>45</sup>. The fallout in the relations between the government of Borno State and the leader of Boko Haram created tension in the state. Following repeated clashes between the group and policemen in Borno State compelled the Governor of the state to seek federal government assistance to dislodge the sect. In 2009, President Umaru Musa Yar 'Adua approved the deployment of soldiers

<sup>40</sup> Bauböck, Rainer, "Towards a Political Theory of Migrant Transnationalism", *The International Migration Review*, 37/3 (2003); Kostovicova, Denisa y Basic, Natalija, "Transnationalism in the Balkans: The Emergence, Nature and Impact of Cross-National Linkages on an Enlarged and Enlarging Europe", *Contemporary European History*, 14/4 (2005).

<sup>41</sup> Briggs, Laura, McCormick, Gladys y Way J., "Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis", *American Quarterly*, 60/3 (2008), p. 628; Struck, Bernhard, Ferris, Kate y Revel, Jacques, "Introduction: Space and Scale in Transnational History", *The International History Review*, 33/4 (2011), p. 575.

<sup>42</sup> Iriye, Akira, "Transnational History", *Contemporary European History*, 13/2 (2004), p. 13.

<sup>43</sup> Ogege Omadjohwoefe, Sam, "Insecurity and Sustainable Development: The Boko Haram Debacle in Nigeria", *American International Journal of Social Science*, 2/7 (2013), p. 83.

<sup>44</sup> World Almanac of Islam, "Boko Haram", *American Foreign Policy Council* (2014).

<sup>45</sup> International Crisis Group, "Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency", *Crisis Group Africa Brief*, 2167 (2014), pp. 11-12.

to the state, in the ensuing conflict between the group and security agencies several members of the sect were arrested, and those that engaged security forces fell victim to the gunshot of soldiers, and many fled to neighbouring countries, including Abubakar Shekau who succeeded Mohammed Yusuf<sup>46</sup>. It was during this period; that Mohammed Yusuf was caught and arrested. He was handed over to the police, who eventually killed him.

Before the killing of Yusuf Mohammed in 2009, his terrorist organisation had established a foothold in three states, (Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe) out of the six in the northeast, as well as evolved satellite cells in other states and neighboring countries, sharing borders with Nigeria<sup>47</sup>. The members of the terrorist group were predominantly the poor, though some wealthy individuals were sympathetic to their course. These individuals financed their activities. However, following the killing of the leader of the group, several of its members were arrested, while others escaped to neighbouring countries. The fleeing members re-emerged in 2010, having initially relocated to the border areas between Nigeria and her immediate neighbors in the northeast borderlands, from where they began to launch attacks against the Nigerian state.

#### 4. TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE AN INROAD TO THE BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY

As already stated in the paper, a transnational perspective in research enterprise shifts the focus of analysis from individual states to a global system influenced by cross-border dynamics. The focus of the analysis dwells on material and immaterial flow that crisscrosses state borders. Similarly, the material and immaterial flow are orchestrated by transnational actors that are constantly engaged in cross-border activities of various kinds such as trade and commerce, religious activities, movement of ideas, transnational cartels or criminal groups as well as terrorist groups between different states<sup>48</sup>. Boko Haram the focus of the paper has been engaging the Nigerian state in a protracted insurgency that has dragged on for years. The Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's northeast region started as an

<sup>46</sup> Arirabiyi-Ibrahim, Olorunfemi, "Boko Haram Terrorist...", op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>47</sup> Aluede A., Jackson, "Terrorism in the...", op. cit., p. 111.

<sup>48</sup> Briggs, Laura, McCormick, Gladys y Way, J., "Transnationalism: A Category...", op. cit., p. 628.

internal insurrection by the terrorist group, first against the governments of some states in the northeast namely, Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa. After the killing of Mohammed Yusuf in 2009, the conflict became a national conflict between the group and the Nigerian state, thereafter, the theatre of conflict spread to cover the northeast region, with a spillover effect in the federal capital territory (Abuja) and other states in the northern region of the country and neighbouring countries<sup>49</sup>.

The Boko Haram insurgency took a new dimension in 2010, in what would be referred to as a transnational perspective on terrorism. This notwithstanding, the Boko Haram insurgency was not the first recorded act of transnational terrorism, as there have been examples of transnational terrorism in other parts of the world<sup>50</sup>. However, the Nigerian example provided policy-makers and security experts with the platform to analyse and re-examine the concept of transnationalism and its perspective on terrorism concerning the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria's northeast region. The re-emergence of the terrorist group from their hide-out was strengthened by the establishment of a transnational connection or relations with other terrorist groups in the Sahel, North Africa, and the Middle East, which was facilitated by the porous borders linking Nigeria with her immediate neighbours<sup>51</sup>. The connection opened a new phase in the insurgency between Boko Haram and the Nigerian state, and more especially it reinvigorated the terrorist group, in terms of securing arms and ammunition, sourcing fighters, funding, and external collaboration that gave them global recognition that they long desired. Furthermore, another, dimension of Boko Haram activities in Nigeria's northeast region and by extension the country's immediate neighbours were the short-lived alliance between Boko Haram and ISIS in 2015. The alliance gave birthed the Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP). Although

<sup>49</sup> Mantzikos, Ioannis, "Boko Haram Attacks...", op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>50</sup> Enders, Walter y Sandler, Todd, 'Distribution of Transnational Terrorism among Countries', by Income Class and Geography after 9/11, *International Studies Quarterly*, 50/2 (2006); Enders, Walter, Sandler, Todd y Gaibullov, Khusrav, "Domestic versus transnational terrorism: Data, decomposition, and dynamics", *Journal of Peace Research*, 48/3 (2011).

<sup>51</sup> Ogbogu, Jennifer, "Analyzing the Threat of Boko Haram and the ISIS Alliance in Nigeria", *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyse*, 7/8 (2015), p. 17.



the alliance duration was short-lived, it, however, created new threats and challenges for Nigeria and fellow countries that comprise the Lake Chad Basin. The various transnational perspectives on Boko Haram are examined below.

## 5. POROUS BORDER

The porous nature of Nigeria's borders with her immediate neighbors has influenced relations between them since independence. As events have shown over the years development in the borderlands between Nigeria and her proximate neighbors has been characterized by periods of cooperation and tension. During the period of tension, events in the borderlands were characterized by the encroachment of foreign soldiers into Nigeria territories, movement of cross-border bandits, the Bakassi border disputes, boundary demarcation issues, border closure caused by smuggling of contraband, and trafficking of arms and ammunitions, and recent in time, the activities of terrorists among others<sup>52</sup>. On the other hand, the period of cooperation witnessed efforts to promote cross-border cooperation through cross-border conferences and workshops, the creation of joint border commissions as well as the formation of a joint border task force to police the borders<sup>53</sup>.

Nigeria's borders with her immediate neighbours were the creation of the British, French, and German colonial masters during the colonial

period<sup>54</sup>. The borderlands were created without the consent of the people, in many ways accounting for some of the border and ethnic challenges witnessed in Nigeria's borderlands with her immediate neighbors – common feature of Nigeria's northeast borderlands, which existed in other borderlands across Africa, is their porous nature<sup>55</sup>. The porosity of the continent's borders has been exploited by cross-border criminal groups and in recent times by terrorist groups.

The vastness of African borders coupled with rough terrains, inadequate security personnel, and mountainous landscape had made the borderlands difficult to patrol<sup>56</sup>. Furthermore, several states in the continent lacked the security manpower to effectively police their respective borderlands. Unfortunately, in some cases, the security personnel connived with cross-border criminal groups to perpetrate crimes across the border<sup>57</sup>. In Nigeria's northeast region, the porous nature of the borderland has contributed to the transnational perspective of the Boko Haram insurgency in the region. Before the outbreak of the Boko Haram insurgency in the region, some of the states in the region were confronted by the threat of armed banditry from neighbouring countries namely Niger, Chad, and the Sahel region<sup>58</sup>. The threat of banditry on the lives and property of the people compelled the Nigerian government to deploy soldiers to the region to curtail and expel these bandits from the borderlands. In the same way, the bandits exploited the porous border to rob the people of the northeast of their livestock and belongings; likewise, members of Boko Haram who re-emerged in 2010

<sup>52</sup> Aluede A., Jackson, "Smuggling across the Nigeria-Benin Border and Its Effect on Economic Development", en Akinyele, Rufus y Dietz, Ton, *Crime, Law and Society in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Stephen Ellis*, Leiden, Brill, 2019, p. 70; Aluede A., Jackson, "Border relations in Africa and the Impact on Nation Building: A study of Nigeria and Her Limitrophe Neighbours since the 1960s", *African Journal of Governance and Development*, 6/1 (2017), p. 17; Ibrahim Bukar, Abba, "The Activities of Armed Banditry", en Ate E., Bassey y Akinterinwa A. Bola, *Cross-Border Armed Banditry in the North East: Issues in National Security and Nigeria's Relations with its Immediate Neighbours*, Lagos, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), 2011, p. 2; Ate E, Bassey, "Introduction: Issues in Nigeria's Security Relations with its Immediate Neighbours", en Ate E., Bassey y Akinterinwa A. Bola, In *Nigeria and Its Immediate Neighbours: Constraints and Prospects of Sub-region Security in the 1990s*, Lagos, The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) 1992, p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> Asiwaju, A.I., *Cross-Border Cooperation: Sub-Regional Integration and National Development*, Imeko, African Regional Institute, 2014, pp. 1- 2.

<sup>54</sup> Aluede A., Jackson, *Nigeria's Foreign Policy and Trans Border Crime: A Historical Analysis of the Nigeria-Benin Border, 1960 – 2013*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, submitted to the Department of History and Strategic Studies, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria, 2017b, p. 136.

<sup>55</sup> Ikome Nguendi, Francis, *Africa's International Borders as Potential Sources of Conflict and Future Threats to Peace and Security*, Pretoria, Institute for Security Studies 2012, p. 9.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Aluede A., Jackson, "Nigeria's Foreign Policy...", *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>58</sup> Adamawa State Boundary Affairs, "Cross-Border Crimes and Armed Banditry: Boundary Demarcation and Control Management", en Ate E., Bassey y Akinterinwa A. Bola, *Cross-Border Armed Banditry in the North East: Issues in National Security and Nigeria's Relations with its Immediate Neighbours*, Lagos, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), 2011, p. 30.

took advantage of the porous borders of the region with neighbouring countries to relaunch and attack their victims and targets. The porosity of the borderlands of Nigeria's northeast region is worsened by the several unmanned border outlets within the border region that serves as a passage for licit and illicit activities of various kinds<sup>59</sup>. It is therefore imperative to state that the porous borders and the ease of movement in Nigeria's northeast borderlands facilitated and sustained the Boko Haram insurgency against the Nigerian state.

The porosity of Nigeria's northeast borderlands with her immediate neighbours and the inadequacy of security personnel to police the border areas enabled the terrorist group to launch their attacks from their hideout in the mountainous border areas between Nigeria and Chad, Niger and Cameroon as well as the Sambisa forest in Borno state<sup>60</sup>. The porosity of the borderlands in Nigeria's northeast region with the country's immediate neighbors, likewise, served to maintain the transnational link between Boko Haram and other terrorist groups; she had established relations, in the Sahel region, North Africa, and the Middle East<sup>61</sup>. Furthermore, Boko Haram from its hideouts in the borderlands explored the porosity of the borders – close to the Nigeria-Niger borderlands – to carry out deadly attacks in some of these locations that include Zinder Diffa, and Ngagam in Niger, Niguel, Fotokol, Zourou, and Ngaoundere in northern Cameroon, Baga and other border communities between Nigeria and Chad namely Hadjer Lamis, Lac provinces, Gwoza and Damboa<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>59</sup> Asiwaju, A.I., "Borders, Crimes and Criminality: The North-Eastern Nigerian Experience in Comparative Focus", en Ate E., Basse y Akinterinwa A, Bola, *Cross-Border Armed Banditry in the North East: Issues in National Security and Nigeria's Relations with its Immediate Neighbours*, Lagos, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), 2011, p. 29-32.

<sup>60</sup> Ioannis, Mantzikos, "Boko Haram Attacks in Nigeria and Neighbouring Countries: A Chronology of Attacks", *World Almanac of Islam*, 78 (2014).

<sup>61</sup> Onuoha C., Freedom, *A Danger not to Nigeria Alone – Boko Haram's Transnational Reach and Regional Responses*, Abuja, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, 2014, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup> Campbell, John, "An Anatomy of the Boko Haram Insurgency: U.S. Policy to Counter Nigeria's Boko Haram", *Council on Foreign Relations* (2014), p. 10; UNDP, "Conflict Analysis in the Lake Chad Basin 2020-2021: Trends, Developments and Implications for Peace and Stability", *United Nations Development Programme* (2022), p. 6.

## 6. GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF NIGERIA'S NORTHEAST REGION ALONG THE SAHEL

The strategic location of Nigeria's northeast borderlands along the Sahel region in many ways has influenced her history dating back to the precolonial era. Some of the major empires and kingdoms that emerged in the region such as Kanem-Borno and Hausa's states were centre of trade during the trans-Saharan trade era<sup>63</sup>. Likewise, the Sahel has been a melting pot of ideas and the spread of Islam between North Africa and the Sudanic zone of West and by extension parts of Central Africa. The Sahel region runs 3862k, (2,400 miles) from the Atlantic Ocean, in the west to the Red Sea in the east and covers an area of 3,053,200) square kilometers<sup>64</sup>. In post-independent Africa, the following countries are located along the Sahel region namely Algeria, Southern Mauritania, Senegal, Northern Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, Sudan, Darfur, Northern, and Eritrea<sup>65</sup>.

The Sahel is an amalgam of different ethnic nationalities (Hausas, Kanuri, Wolof, Tuareg, Fulani, Berbers, and Mandel) among others dwelling in the respective states<sup>66</sup>. The Sahel region is dominated by Muslims. Unfortunately, the Sahel region since the last decade of the twentieth century has witnessed a transformation characterised by violent conflicts, the proliferation of transnational criminal groups, and the spread of terrorist organisations<sup>67</sup>. Several reasons have been attributed to the development, which many summarized as the destabilizing factors associated with the region.

The destabilizing factors according to Mehdi Taje include the fragility of states in the region, internal power struggles, growing militarisation, rapid population growth, a general climate of insecurity that fuels the trafficking of all kinds,

<sup>63</sup> Mabogunje, A.L., "Historical Geography: Economic Aspects", en Zerbo, J.K.I., *UNESCO General History of Africa: Methodology and African Prehistory*, London, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1992, p. 335.

<sup>64</sup> Seteolu, Dele, "Terrorism in the...", op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Mabogunje, Akin, "The Land and Peoples of West Africa", in J.F. Ade, Ajayi and Michael Crowther, *History of West Africa*, London, Longman Group Ltd, 1971, p. 11.

<sup>67</sup> Boutellis, Arthur, et al., *Investing in Peace and the Prevention of Violence in West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara: Conversations on the Secretary General's Plan of Action*, New York, International Peace Institute, 2016, pp. 2-5.

and lastly various foreign interventions aimed at gaining a toe-hold in this strategic corridor and taking control of its wealth<sup>68</sup>. For instance, the outbreak of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's northeast region was partly, due to the destabilizing factors in some states in the region, particularly, because of the disenchantment in the socio-economic and political circles. Furthermore, the destabilizing factors are exacerbated by the rise of terrorist activities fueled by the spread of radical Islamic teachings from the Middle East and North Africa. The development has contributed to the increase and expansion of the number of terrorist groups operating in the region such as AQIM, ISIS, Boko Haram, and ISWAP. Similarly, these terrorist groups have claimed responsibility for deadly coordinated attacks in some countries located within the Sahel region namely Mali, Mauritania, Algeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria<sup>69</sup>. It is instructive to state that the Sahel region has served as a buffer zone for these terrorist groups thanks to its geographical landscape of open vastness, which had well been exploited by the terrorists to launch their attacks. Furthermore, the Sahel region has functioned as a haven for the terrorist groups operating in the region to unify strategies and collaborate in inflicting pain and death on their enemies<sup>70</sup>. The re-emergence of Boko Haram, following the death of their leader, was owed partly to the support they had received from other terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda initially and later ISIS operating in the Sahel region and North Africa. The geographical location of Nigeria's northeast region along the Sahel region and the support, the terrorist group had received from other terrorists operating in the Sahel region in terms of funding has contributed to the transnational perspective of the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeastern part of Nigeria<sup>71</sup>.

## 7. STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

The protracted nature of the Boko Haram insurgency and the difficulty of the Nigerian govern-

ment and her immediate neighbours to curtail the terrorist group has been worsened by the strategic alliances between Boko Haram and other terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIS which have aided Boko Haram in many ways. The re-emergence of Boko Haram in 2010, after the killing of its leader Yusuf Mohammed, in 2009 was linked to the alliance between the terrorist group and al-Qaeda<sup>72</sup>. Abubakar Shekau, the successor to Yusuf Mohammed, 2010 reached out to al-Qaeda for assistance and swore allegiance to its leadership. In return, the al-Qaeda leadership not only welcomed Boko Haram to its fold but supported Boko Haram with weapons, and logistics, as well as about USD 77, 000<sup>73</sup>. The support received from al-Qaeda enabled Boko Haram to re-launch and engaged in a protracted insurgency against the Nigerian state, and her proximate neighbours in the northeast borderlands. But, the reprehensible terrorist activities of Boko Haram under Shekau leadership, especially, the killing of Muslim civilians, led to the dissolution of the al-Qaeda/Boko Haram union in 2011, culminating in a split of Boko Haram and Ansaru. The Ansaru group remained loyal to al-Qaeda<sup>74</sup>.

As part of measures to curtail Boko Haram, in 2012, countries in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) established the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in April 2012 and upgraded it in 2015<sup>75</sup>. However, following the progress made by the MNJTF forced Abubakar Shekau the leader of Boko Haram to request an alliance with ISIS having lost swaths of territory to the MNJTF<sup>76</sup>. In a space of a week the request of the then Boko Haram leader was granted by Abu Bakri al-Baghdadi, the then-leader of ISIS. The alliance birthed Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP), under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau – the alliance worsen the already precarious region. ISWAP under the Abubakar Shekau leadership carried out deadly acts of terror of killings, assassinations, suicide bombings, and Kidnapping of both Muslims and non-Muslims in the Lake Chad region, the development further compe-

<sup>68</sup> Taje, Mehdi, "West African Challenges: Vulnerabilities and Factors of Insecurity in the Sahel and West Africa Club", *OECD*, 2010, p. 3.

<sup>69</sup> Seteolu, Dele, "Terrorism in the...", *op.cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>70</sup> Boukhars, Anouar, "Corridors of Militancy: the Sahel-Sahara Border Regions", *FRIDE Policy Brief*, 206 (2015), pp. 2-4.

<sup>71</sup> Zenn, Jacob, "Demystifying al-Qaida in Nigeria: Cases from Boko Haram's Founding, Launch of Jihad and Suicide Bombings", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 11/6 (2017), p. 173.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>73</sup> Bukarti, Bulama, "It's A Bit Tricky: Exploring ISIS'S with Boko Haram Ties", *Nexus Report*, Program on Extremism at George Washington University 2017, p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Zenn, Jacob, y Weiss, Caleb, "Ansaru Resurgent", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 15/5 (2021), p. 48.

<sup>75</sup> Albert, Isaac Olawale, "Rethinking the Functionality of the Multinational Joint Task Force in Managing the Boko Haram Crisis in the Lake Chad Basin" *Africa Development*, 42/3 (2017), p. 119.

<sup>76</sup> Bukarti, Bulama, "It's A Bit...", *op. cit.*, p. 4.

lled families to flee their homes to IDP camps in the region<sup>77</sup>.

However, owing to internal squabbles, the alliance collapsed, after, a year, leading to a split<sup>78</sup>. Some members of ISWAP were opposed to the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, regarding the manner he was conducting the affairs of the organisation, especially, the killings of fellow Muslims. The Boko Haram faction led by Abubakar Shekau moved out of the alliance, while ISWAP remained an affiliate or franchise of ISIS. The split led both terrorist groups to jostle for power and territory in Nigeria's northeast, and the Lake Chad region until Abubakar Shekau committed suicide to avoid being captured by ISWAP fighters in 2021<sup>79</sup>. Following the killing of Abubakar Shekau, the remnants of Boko Haram have continued in the insurgency against Nigeria and its neighbours in the Lake Chad region. The short-lived alliance has enabled ISIS to penetrate the Lake Chad region, through its ISWAP affiliate, thereby, compelling the Nigerian military and her immediate neighbours to engage in both terrorist groups on different fronts. The development no doubt has been made possible by the transnational phenomenon of non-state actors' ability to transverse state's borders by exploiting the porosity of the borders.

## 8. EASE IN SOURCING FIGHTERS, ARMS, AND AMMUNITION

Boko Haram has been able to sustain the insurgency against the Nigerian state and her neighbours partly to the ease with which it has been able to source fighters as well as arms and ammunition – smuggled through the Middle East and North Africa and across the Sahel region to the terrorist hideouts and base in the mountainous regions, as well as the Sambisa forest in Borno state and satellite centres across the northeast borderlands<sup>80</sup>. Boko Haram and other terrorist groups operating in the Sahel region profited enormously during the 'Arab Spring' in North Africa in securing weapons of war of va-

rious kinds and sizes<sup>81</sup>. This was during and after the fall of Muammar Gaddafi of Libya and the pillage of the Libyan armory of such weapons namely pump-action guns, rifles, AK-47s, RPGs, G3 rifles, double-barrel guns, and improvised explosive devices (IED) by rival groups contending for power in Libya<sup>82</sup>. Boko Haram and other terrorist groups secured sophisticated weapons from weapon dealers and transnational actors involved in the smuggling of arms and ammunition in the Sahel region.

Similarly, the geographical location and the porous borders of Nigeria's northeast region along the Sahel region have enabled the terrorist group to source and train its fighters. It is interesting to note that some of Boko Haram's fighters were mercenaries who had fought in Libya and Mali<sup>83</sup>. The ease in the movement in the region has enabled the terrorist group to secure experienced fighters indoctrinated into the philosophy of terrorism from across the Sahel region and those who had been involved in the Arab Spring in Libya to fight on her side. The development no doubt has given credence to the transnational perspective outlook of the Boko Haram insurgency.

## 9. INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE INSURGENCY

The internationalization of Boko Haram activities has been influenced by the nature of the attacks perpetrated by the terrorist group since 2010. Before this period, the terrorist group engaged in several clashes with the police force and prison officials in Borno and Yobe states in particular<sup>84</sup>. These clashes did not receive much international awareness as they were considered local issues caused by socio-economic and political contradictions that have plagued the African continent in general and Nigeria's northeast region in particular. Likewise, the terrorist group before 2010 lacked a well-coordinated strategy to carry out its attacks. Instead, Boko Haram jihadists relied on a hit-and-run to harass, intimidate and oppress their targets, in some occasions, they

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Onuoha C., Freedom, "Split in ISIS-Aligned...", op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> CNN, "ISWAP militant group says Nigeria's Boko Haram leader is dead", 2021.

<sup>80</sup> Ogbogu, Jennifer, "Analyzing the Threat of Boko Haram and the ISIS Alliance in Nigeria", *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyse*, 7/8 (2015), p. 17; Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>81</sup> Allansson, Marie, et al., *Armaments, Disarmament and International Security SIPRI Year Book*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 49.

<sup>82</sup> Asare, S.O., *Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in West Africa: Routes and Illegal Arms Caches bet ween Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria*, Abuja, Friedrich-Eber t-Stiftung, 2014, pp. 12–25.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Abimbola, J.O, y Adesote, S.A., "Domestic Terrorism and...", op. cit., p. 12.

shot sporadically from 'okada' (local slang for motorcycle) at their targets—both civilians and police officers—before speeding away<sup>85</sup>. The majority of the terrorist group then employed crude weaponry such as clubs, machetes, Molotov cocktails, knives, swords, and locally made guns against their enemies. However, the re-emergence of the terrorist group in 2010, witnessed a new approach in their attacks influenced by the establishment of a transnational link with terrorist groups namely al-Qaeda and ISIS, the acquisition of sophisticated weapons and well-trained fighters, and their exploitation of the porous borders in Nigeria's north region<sup>86</sup>.

The post-Yusuf Mohammed era witnessed Boko Haram engaged in suicide bombings in strategic places such as markets, schools, churches, mosques, and military formations, as well as using young girls for suicide bombings<sup>87</sup>. Similarly, the terrorist group employed improvised explosive devices (IED), to attack the Nigerian military through hit-and-run tactics as well as attacking neighbouring countries assisting the Nigerian government in tackling the terrorist group<sup>88</sup>. In 2014 and 2018, respectively, the terrorist kidnapped school pupils of Chibok and Dapchi as part of their approaches to gaining international recognition. The Chibok and Dapchi schoolgirls kidnapping and other terrorist activities of the group have internationalized the insurgency in the northeast region<sup>89</sup>. This act of terror has further enhanced the terrorist group as one of the deadliest terrorist organisations in the world. The internationalization of the Boko Haram insurgency has enabled the terrorist organization to draw the world's attention to its capability, capacity to sustain a protracted conflict, likewise, proving to the world that its course is justifiable and that they have the support of other terrorist groups in the Sahel, North Africa, and the Middle East.

<sup>85</sup> Human Right Watch, *Spiraling Violence: Boko Haram Attacks and Security Force Abuses in Nigeria*, 2012, p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> Falode James, Adewumi, "Countering the Boko Haram Group in Nigeria: The Relevance of Hybrid Doctrine", *Small Wars Journal* (2016), p. 47.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> CNN, "Boko Haram Fast...", op. cit.

<sup>89</sup> International Crisis Group, "Preventing Boko Haram Abduction of Schoolchildren in Nigeria", *Crisis Group Africa Brief*, 137 (2018), p. 1.

## 10. TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE IMPACT ON THE BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY

An examination of the Boko Haram insurgency through the lenses of a transnational perspective not only provides insight into the dimensions of cross-border flows and those involved, but, equally, reveals how it has strengthened these actors, individuals, or groups in the actualization of their objectives across the borders. Similarly, the establishment of transnational relations between Boko Haram, al-Qaeda, and ISIS not only embolden them, after the killing of Mohammed Yusuf in 2009, but served as the catalyst for the resurgence of the group in 2010. The transnational partnership enabled Boko Haram to receive aid in the form of arms and ammunition, finance, logistic support, and trained fighters.' The support received by Boko Haram from these terrorist groups was facilitated by the porous nature of the borderlands of Nigeria's northeast region. The porosity of the borderland made it possible for the movement of arms and ammunition, fighters, and other logistics that have aided an effective communication network between Boko Haram and these terrorist groups. Furthermore, the transnational perspective reveals the escalation and unprecedented increase in the number of deaths resulting from Boko Haram attacks in the northeast region. This is owed to the transnational collaboration in sourcing arms and ammunition, fighters, logistics, and others.

Similarly, the inability of the Nigerian government, to curtail the threat by posed the terrorist group on Nigerians residing in the northeast region, despite, championing the formation of a military joint task force with neighbouring countries is linked to the transnational character of the insurgency. This is because, as long as Boko Haram maintained its transnational collaboration with terrorists in the Sahel region and North Africa, it will be difficult to dislodge nor win the conflict against the terrorist group.

## CONCLUSION

The present article has analysed the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's northeast region from the purview of a transnational perspective. In other words, it interrogates the extent to which the theory and phenomenon of transnationalism have influenced, if not determined the trajectory of the Boko Haram insurgency between the Nigerian government and fellow countries of the Lake Chad region, on one hand, the Boko Ha-

ram terrorist on the other. The paper sheds light briefly on the origin of the group and the fallout between its founder Mohammed Yusuf, and the then-governor of Borno State Ali Modu Sheriff. It went further to reveal the factors that led to their disagreement and the consequences it had on the state, more especially, how, it sowed the seed of the Boko Haram insurgency following the killing of the founder of Boko Haram.

However, unlike, other works on the Boko Haram insurgency, the present work interrogates the Boko Haram insurgency through the lens of transnationalism. It establishes that the transnational perspective provides insight into the resurgence of the terrorist group in 2010, following the creation of a symbiotic relationship and alliances between Boko Haram, al-Qaeda, ISIS, and other terrorist groups operating in the Sahel region and North Africa. The alliances between Boko Haram and al Qaeda, as well as ISIS enabled Boko Haram to source arms and ammunition, fighters, finance, and logistics thanks to the porosity of Nigeria's borderlands and its proximity to the Sahel region, North Africa, and the Middle East. The resultant effect of the symbiotic relationship between Boko Haram and these terrorist groups is the unprecedented record in the number of deaths inflicted by the terrorist group and the refugee crisis that emanated causing hundreds, if not thousands of families to flee their homes to IDP camps located in different locations in Nigeria's northeast region, and other locations in the Lake Chad regions.

Unfortunately, however, efforts to curtail Boko Haram activities by the Nigerian government and her neighbours through the MNJTF operations have been dismal, and equally call to question the strategies, tactics, and policy direction of the military hierarchy of the MNJTF saddled with the task of eliminating the terrorist group from their borderlands. This is despite, the fact that huge financial resources, especially, from the Nigerian government have been committed to dislodging the terrorist group from its territory and that of her neighbours. concerning this development, the paper uncovered a lacuna between theory and policy-making concerning the Boko Haram insurgency, especially among Nigeria's military experts and her immediate neighbours. The failure of the military experts to interrogate critically through theory the various policy directions, strategies, and tactics used against the terrorist group, would have been able to dissect whether or not to continue or change their

approach. Furthermore, the military experts and policy-makers from the Lake Chad region are yet to come to terms with the phenomenon of transnationalism and how they can manage the phenomenon to reduce its impact from actors, such as Boko Haram engaged in it.

The paper, therefore, recommends that a well-articulated strategy involving Nigeria and her immediate neighbours that examine the strength and weaknesses of transnationalism be formulated that would alter the dynamic of the insurgency in favour of Nigeria and her immediate neighbours. Likewise, the Nigerian government and its neighbours should constantly re-examine their border security architecture to strengthen areas of flaws.

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