TRANSNATIONAL THREATS AND SECURITY GOVERNANCE IN WEST AFRICA: REVISITING THE *BOKO HARAM* TERRORISM AND PATTERNS OF REFUGEE MOVEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is a truism that West Africa is characterized by a high level of migration, and particularly intra-regional migration. In addition, despite growing stability in most countries, the region continues to host thousands of refugees, most of who were forcibly displaced during the conflicts of the 1990s and early 2000s. Recent trends show not only that intra-regional mobility is increasing, compounded by factors such as climate change and environmental degradation, but also that West Africa is a region of destination for migrants and refugees coming from other parts of Africa and the wider world (Makonnen and Loubaki, 2011:5).   Clearly, many West African states have proved to be unable to offer appreciable levels of development to their citizens. Exacerbating this dismal level of economic and human development has been the unstable and often violent politics of the region. Since West African states gained independence from European colonial powers in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the region's political systems have been characterized by repressive authoritarian regimes, military coups and coup attempts, and bloody civil conflict (McGuire, 2010:6). Agreeably a great resource, Africa's rich cultural and religious diversity can be transformed into a potent instrument for community-based peace building to enhance peaceful coexistence rather than its historically dominant perception as a tool for fuelling inter-community mistrust, antagonism, and conflict. In the absence of issue-based political culture in most African democracies, unscrupulous politicians exploit these diversities to win elections and ascend to positions of influence. Majority of political and sectarian violence have thus exploited this diversity to serve parochial and personal interests.

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and is central to the continent's development. The current security situation is of mounting concern both to Nigeria and regional states, including Cameroon and Niger. With Boko Haram's disregard for international borders, as militants have staged attacks in neighbouring Cameroon, the creation of an Islamic State may not be solely contained within Nigeria, but may also affect regions outside the country's borders, including Cameroon. Boko Haram's five-year insurgency has claimed thousands of lives and created a refugee and internal displacement crisis. Nigerians are increasingly forced to seek refuge in neighbouring states to avoid Boko Haram attacks and military campaigns against these insurgents, which in-turn places added strain on the economies and humanitarian services of neighbouring states. The fall of the northeastern region to the insurgents will result in the deaths of thousands and will create humanitarian crisis that will affect the region (See *http://www.msrisk.com/nigeria/boko-harams-threat-northeast-nigeria-addressing-five-year-crisis/*). As noted by Onuoha (2014:1), the implications of Boko Haram insurgency on regional security can be accessed from at least four dimensions, namely: the group's expansion in the form of recruitment, training, equipment and funding; its targeted violent cross-border attacks; transnational consequences of its operations; and a potential erosion of Nigeria's role as the de-facto leader of ECOWAS. With Boko Haram's unprecedented gains in recent months, the group appears to be inching closer to achieving its goal of carving out a strict Islamic state across northern Nigeria. They have killed no fewer than 13,000 innocent people, displaced several others and destroyed hundreds of schools and churches in a wave of terror aimed at carving out an Islamic state in Nigeria. Five years after the emergence of Boko Haram, Nigeria

does not seem to have an effective strategy for dealing with these misguided elements and their deep commitment to waging war against the country and its people (Agekameh, 2014). While the international community has generally responded swiftly and generously to refugee crises over the past half century, in recent years, some worrying trends have begun to emerge. Countries that once generously opened their doors to refugees have been tempted to shut those doors for fear of assuming open-ended responsibilities, of abetting uncontrolled migration and people-smuggling, or of jeopardizing national security. Real and perceived abuses of asylum systems as well as irregular movements, have also made some countries more wary of refugee claimants, and concerned that resources are not being sufficiently focused on those in greatest need (Jastram and Achiron, 2011:6). Sub-Saharan Africa has witnessed significant flows of forced migrants, including internally displaced people and victims of trafficking. However, peace processes in a number of African countries suggest attention needs to be turned urgently towards facilitating sustainable return. This study examines the range of patterns and impacts of refugee movements in West Africa. It provides an in depth understanding of transnational threats within the contemporary interdependent West African states. Also, it suggests how regional integration can be used to mitigate tension and conflict in West Africa. The security governance dimension of this essay is examined within the context of the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS' structure and mandate.

ECOWAS AND DIMENSIONS OF TRANSNATIONAL THREATS

West Africa is a highly complex region caught between affluence and affliction. The region's states vary in territorial size, colonial history, economic strength, internal cohesion, and external linkages The region is made up of 16 states: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Apart from Mauritania, the remaining states are members of the regional Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) formed in 1975 (Onuoha and Ezirim, 2013). Established originally as a regional organization to essentially promote the economic integration of Member States, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been gradually transformed, under the pressure of political events, into an organization also responsible for finding solutions to armed conflicts and other political crisis which were undermining peace and security within the community space. The 1990 decade saw ECOWAS, spurred by its most powerful member country by far, Nigeria, intervene beyond the conventional diplomatic field by sending thousands of soldiers to try to restore peace in Liberia, then in Sierra Leone and more modestly in Guinea Bissau (Yabi, 2010:6).

In countries spared the scourge of civil wars, unrest is nevertheless spurred on by the opulent extremes of the tiny elite minority compared to the abject poverty of the vast majority, the unjust distribution of profits from abundant natural resources, criminal neglect of the social sector and the environment, endemic corruption, and the perceived discrimination against minorities. Banditry and challenges to state authority in large swathes of territory within ECOWAS are notable, especially in the Niger Delta, northern Niger, and Casamance in Senegal. Disputes over land, water, and chieftaincy have claimed hundreds of lives in low-intensity conflicts in northern Ghana, Mali, and western Côte d'Ivoire, among others. The conflicts have created major human and regional security threats through spillover effects and the export of bad practices that have blighted the region's development perspectives (Musah, 2009:5).

In West Africa, a string of civil wars shattered societies, beginning in Liberia in late 1989 and almost seamlessly encroaching neighbouring Sierra Leone a little more than a year later. At times, Guinea threatened to become involved in this cluster of warfare. While these conflicts ended in 2002–2003, the burden of armed conflict and partition shifted to Côte d'Ivoire between 2003 and 2007, with post-electoral fighting there from 2010 to 2011. The West African nations of Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Mali, Niger, and Congo-Brazzaville also faced army revolts, secessionist movements, and insurrections. At the Horn of Africa, large parts of Somalia have been gripped by clan based warfare and devoid of a national state or government since 1991. After the civil war between the government and southern rebels in Sudan ended with a power-sharing deal in 2003, insurgents in Darfur began their fight for political inclusion (Veit, 2011:18). The flow of arms and combatants, including mercenaries, across porous borders paired with the willingness of regional governments to support insurgent groups against neighbours is a dangerous combination. These transnational threats, which are interrelated and aid one another in terms of operation, shall be briefly discussed here within the context of organised crimes.

Porous Borders

The porous borders of West Africa continue to engender cross-border crime and instability in the sub-region, owing to the lack of an appropriate mechanism for monitoring movements and illegal activities across these borders. In West Africa alone, there are a total of 35 international boundaries characterised by high levels of porosity. This makes them highly vulnerable to threats such as trafficking of people, drugs, small arms and light weapons as well as recent instances of terrorism. Nonetheless, border security issues are not always integrated into national security or economic strategies, and border agencies are usually ill-equipped, ill-trained and poorly resourced (Lamptey, 2013). Some of these activities involve the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons/ammunitions and human beings, especially women and children. Mercenarism and the recruitment and use of child soldiers in armed conflict, trans-national syndicates involved in crimes such as peddling of narcotics, armed robbery and the smuggling of goods are other cross-border related crimes. These cross-border crimes are mostly symptomatic rather than as causes of instability in the sub-region (Addo, 2006:2).

While members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have committed not to import, export or manufacture Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), weapons continue to enter the sub-region due to poor border controls. Studies conducted have shown that between 4 and 5 million ECOWAS citizens ply the highways and frontiers of the Community's territory every month (Lamine, 2006 cited in UN 2014:19). In fact, the threats and challenges posed by organized criminal activities in West Africa have become so pronounced that experts in the field now characterize such groups as representing particular 'African criminal networks' , ACN, (See Aning, IDEA:2009:6).

Illicit Goods and Human Trafficking

Organized crime in West Africa became an international security concern in the mid-2000s, due to the detection of large cocaine shipments transiting the region on their way to Europe. Assessments conducted by UNODC revealed that a number of transnational organized crime problems pose a threat to stability and development in the region, including oil bunkering, arms trafficking, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, toxic waste dumping, fraudulent medicine, cigarette smuggling, and the looting of natural resources (UNODC, 2013:7). Trans-border criminal activities in the region straddle weak borders into specific geographic locations in

affected countries where state capacity to respond to the threat and challenges posed by these illegal activities is equally weak. The smuggling of goods, especially cocoa, timber, ivory and petroleum products across national borders is most prevalent along the Côte d'Ivoire-Ghana-Togo-Benin-Nigeria and Burkina Faso corridors of the sub-region. Ordinary business men and women, and sometimes rebels and criminal gangs involved in civil wars in the sub-region engage in the smuggling of these and other products. These goods are smuggled in vehicles or on foot, using secret and illegal routes across the borders to evade special regulations, levies or taxes, thereby making more income through the transaction of these products (Addo, 2006:4). The growth of drug trafficking poses new challenges to the region and facilitates the emergence of new types of threats to international security. The danger lies, especially, in the nexus among drug-trafficking cartels, corrupt government officials, and suspected terrorist elements in West Africa. As succinctly put by Cockayne (2011), revenues from global illicit markets for drugs, sex, counterfeited pharmaceuticals and music, cyber fraud, stolen oil, and hostages offer political and military leaders a fast, easy, and relatively cost-free source of funds for their electoral and military campaigns and patronage systems. Political leaders also offer traffickers protection or even access to government services from diplomatic passports to the use of the military for trafficking purposes. It is a win-win situation—or so it seems.

Territories with a history of state neglect and different sources of tensions in particular represent havens for drug traffickers, facilitating these kinds of transnational activities across national and international borders and at times, providing havens for radical groups (Aning and Pokoo, 2014:7). The scope of the human trafficking problem is widespread in West Africa. Child trafficking in particular spreads across eleven of the fifteen Member States of the ECOWAS including Ghana, Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Sierra Leone, the Gambia, and Mali (de Andrés, 2008:210). The drivers of trafficking are basically the demand for labour and the demand for sex. In Africa and in West Africa, it is mainly children and women that are trafficked. Children are trafficked in the region and also between the sub-regions. They are trafficked for labour reasons, very often for the mining industry and also the petroleum industry. There is also trafficking for domestic servant reasons and all kinds of other service reasons, as well as for forced marriage.

Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation

It is also important to point here that West Africa is a showcase of arms proliferation, notably Small Arms Light Weapons (SALW). Vast quantities of arms have flooded the region despite their rampant misuse by state and non-state actors alike. The widespread availability of small arms, especially to abusive actors, poses a major threat to West Africa. There are several reasons why SALW are extreme tools of violence in West Africa. These weapons are cheap and widely available; they are also lightweight, and so can be used by child soldiers, who have played a significant role in major conflicts in West Africa (Keili 2008 cited in Piccolino and Minou, 2014:5). The illicit trade in weapons between Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo is fuelled by more demand by the people for self-protection, as a result of the feeling of insecurity throughout the region. This regional demand is being met by forgers principally in Ghana but also in Togo, whose local revolvers, shot guns and rifle type weapons flood the arms markets of the sub-region (Asoba, and Glokpor, 2014:x).

The uncontrollable circulation of weapons has a great destabilizing effect for those countries where it is observed. Civil conflicts, organized crime and terrorist activities are enabled by the illegal access to firepower that they would otherwise not be able to acquire. Destabilization has a bi-directional connection with illegal arms trade. In countries that have recently suffered

major political unrest or the collapse of the state's supervisory mechanisms, SALW depots of the military are exposed to theft by criminals or corrupted military officials (UN, 2014:6). The inflow and circulation of arms, particularly small arms and light weapons, in the region has clearly contributed to the increased conflict and abuses against civilians by governments and armed groups. It also has facilitated the formation of new armed groups and the use of ill-disciplined fighters, including mercenaries (HRW, 2003:9). Given ineffectual national security systems, porous borders, and growing demand for arms by criminals and militants, cartels specialising in arms trafficking have devised methods for concealing and conveniently trafficking arms across borders in West Africa. The audacity of militants operating in West Africa grew with the proliferation of weapons in the Sahara-Sahel region following the destabilisation of Libya. Libyan arms first obtained by AQIM and other mercenaries have been transferred to groups such as Ansar Dine, Boko Haram and MUJAO, emboldening and enabling them to mount more deadly attacks (Onuoha and Ezirim, 2013).

Recruitment of Mercenaries and Child Soldiers

Various scholars have noted the changing nature of modern warfare, in which wars are fought less and less by regular armies and in which civilians are more and more the targets of violence. Children are caught in the middle of these trends. Child soldiering is a challenge to existing moral norms and regulations that guides the conduct of modern warfare. The reintegration of child soldiers and post conflict reconstruction and peace-building are practical issues that confront war-torn countries. However, post-war conflict management expressed by the international community and sub-regional peace providers had concentrated only on the concern for child soldiers and their atrocities without an effective programme of post conflict reconstruction and peace building (see Santa Barbara, cited in Egbe, 2014:344). Mercenaries in particular routinely commit abuses against, and often terrorize civilians. The use of such forces has been witnessed in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. Many of these fighters hire out their services in conflict after conflict (Misol 2004 cited in Piccolino and Minou, 2014:5).

It has been noted that the longer a conflict continues the more likely children are forcibly recruited because of shortage of adult soldiers. Children are also often recruited because they are believed to have special qualities, like obedience, they do not compete with the leadership; are quick, invisible, fearless, and mainly cheap. The availability of lightweight, easy to use and low cost small arms also contributes to the use of children as combatants. These 'small arms' are popular with government forces and nongovernmental groups, the police and civilians and can be used and transported by children as young as nine years old. The trade in these arms is largely unregulated and embargoes are often not respected. (Peters, 2005:2). The cross-border recruitment and operation of the terrorist groups within the sub-region also has security implications. It points to attempts by the al-Qaeda terrorist network and its affiliates to spread their operational and human resource base within Africa, and establish a coordinating point in West Africa. This is ultimately aimed at spreading Islamic extremism and global jihadist movements. Yet, it appears the demand for child soldiers is not likely to disappear in the near future, especially as they use weapons that are steadily becoming easier to handle.

***BOKO HARAM* TERRORISM and REFUGEE MOVEMENTS in the SUB-REGION**

It is a fundamental fact that the Boko Haram insurgents have literally taken control of some parts of Nigeria. Sacred places like churches, mosques and schools are targets of violent

attacks. Even army formations and police stations are highly vulnerable. Even fortresses like the Presidential Villa and the National Assembly have had to adopt desperate measures to stave off imminent attacks from the dreaded *Boko Haram* sect. In other parts of the country, news of broad day light robbery, in a very horrendous manner -considering the sophisticated weapons with which these young men and women are armed- has become routine. Official documents released by the National Emergency Management Agency indicate that over three million Nigerians have been displaced either through insurgency or natural disasters. The import of this would be appreciated if one considers the fact that this category of Nigerians is more than the population of Sao Tome and Principe, Djibouti, Comoros, Cape Verde, Seychelles and Malta put together. Boko Haram has been evolving in northeastern Nigeria for over a decade. An extremely violent Islamist movement, it has in 2014 entered a new transitional phase. The inability of Nigeria's armed forces to obstruct its onslaught, combined with a higher international profile, have lent it a confidence and ambition that appear to have prompted increasingly strategic behaviour, alongside its ongoing indiscriminate and widespread attacks against civilian and state targets (- See more at: http://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/nigerias-interminable-insurgency-addressing-boko-haram-crisis#sthash.5DSytb0g.dpuf).

Thousands of Nigerians are escaping the deadly threat posed by the terrorist group Boko Haram and fleeing into neighbouring Chad, Niger and Cameroon as the crisis in neighboring Nigeria deepens. The Minawao (in Cameroon) refugee camp, for instance, was as at November 2014, hosting 16,282 refugees, with the population having nearly tripled in size in the past two months, according to UN estimates. The camp capacity is estimated at 35,000 people and further expansions are underway to accommodate the refugees already registered for transfer from the border, as well as possible additional new arrivals (UN, 2014). The effects of Boko Haram are not only felt within the state of Nigeria, but in surrounding countries as well. They have become a part of the vast radical movement across the Middle East and Africa spreading Islamic extremism through the use of terror. This expansion has become an issue of combating jihad terrorism and the links between these organizations. After 2009, members of Boko Haram were arrested in the state of Adamawa, Nigeria after which they admitted to training with members of the Taliban in Afghanistan. They have further developed connections with al Qaeda through their North African branch, known as AQIM, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. They are also believed to be associated with Al Shabaab, a Somali based al Qaeda affiliate. The established relations between AQIM as well as Al Shabaab are creating a transcontinental front, from eastern and northern Africa to the south west of Somalia (McFall, 2014).

The last five years have exhibited an obvious increase in Boko Haram's use of force through tactical weapons development. However the funding for such developments remains fairly elusive. The advances that have been taken could not have been accomplished without significant financial assistance. In 2013, the abduction of a French family in Cameroon, prompted Cameroonian and French officials to transfer $3 million to Boko Haram in ransom money, along with the release of sixteen prisoners held in Cameroon. In exchange, the family was safely released (CNN World, 12 May 2014 cited in McFall, 2014). The Malian and Ivorian political crises have resulted in the biggest number of refugees in the region. But brewing insecurity could mean that they will be unable to return home any time soon as armed groups remain a threat to West Africa. In Nigeria, Islamist groups have targeted civilians, and are now hiding in neighbouring Niger and Cameroon. In Mali, even though the United Nations mission is providing military support, the Movement for Unity Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA) Islamists remains a threat and there have been a number of bomb explosions. Côte d'Ivoire too has faced insecurity. While the country recovers from its post-electoral crisis that resulted in

over 3,000 deaths between 2010 and 2011, refugees are slow to return from Ghana, Togo and Liberia. There are now 93,738 refugees, mostly in Liberia, Togo and Ghana, and 24,000 Ivorian internally displaced persons (IDPs), according to the (UNHCR)(quoted by Boisvert, 2014). The magnitude of refugee influx in African countries in recent years has generated concern throughout the world. Widely perceived as an unprecedented crisis, these flows have produced a mixture of humanitarian concern of the millions of people forced into exile and fear for the potential threat to the social, economic and political stability of host states caused by streams of unwanted newcomers (Atim, 2013). Thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons currently face bleak options in the West African sub-region. Many are faced with the unacceptable choice of remaining in conflict zones where they risk an array of atrocities by abusive armed forces, or seeking refuge in camps where again, they may be subjected to forced recruitment and abuses by governments and abusive insurgencies alike (HRW,2003:7). Most of the conflicts in the region have spill-over effects, with considerable cross-border fighting taking place; a situation which can be attributed to the porous nature of borders. Refugee movement in the West Africa region occurs in the context of regional instability and intensified political manoeuvring, where the governments of both host and sending countries have a variety of political, security and economic interests at stake (Opaye, 2005:10).

Although studies have differentiated refugees from economic migrants, in West Africa refugee movements is caused by both economic and political factors and the same factors determine their incorporation into the host economy. Kweka (2007:22) argues that similarities between refugees and international labor migration exist both in terms of causes of their movements as a result of introduction of SAP and in terms of how they seek their means of survival. Understanding the changing nature of the refugees in Africa and their pressing needs reveals that a new set of durable solutions is required, that take into account multiple causes of their movement and changes over time. The crisis in the north-east of Nigeria has led to the flight of more than 100,000 people to Niger since May 2013 (both Nigerian refugees and citizens of Niger), according to the local authorities, as well as 2,700 refugees to Chad. According to Cameroonian authorities, some 13,000 Nigerian refugees crossed from Adamawa state after insurgents attacked and captured the town of Mubi in late October 2014. The refugees fled to the towns of Guider and Gashiga in the North region of Cameroon and to Bourha, Mogode and Boukoula in the Far North," (UNHCR, November 11, 2014).

Impact of Refugees on the West African Sub-Region

There is little doubt that the probability of conflict in any given country does not depend only on its own individual attributes and great power politics, but also on the regional setting. A whole series of studies has shown that violent conflicts tend to cluster in space and time, and that countries bordering on scenes of conflict face a higher risk of instability and even civil war (Esty et al. 1995, Ward and Gleditsch 2002, Goldstone et al.2003 cited in Vorrath and Krebs, 2009:3). The human costs of civil war and state persecution may not be entirely borne by the warring country only, but may create significant externalities, or spillover effects, for other countries/communities. The problems associated with refugees may not be restricted to a particular border area but may have spillover effects on the internal security situation of a region (Atim, 2013).

Available literature on refugees portrays largely a rather negative perception on their role in socio-economic development of countries of origin and asylum. Traditionally, refugees are associated with all kinds of societal and environmental evils, such a: arms and drugs trafficking, violations of human rights, especially against women and children, disease epidemics, and

environmental degradation among many others (Ayiemba, 2009). Developing countries that host refugees for protracted periods experience long-term economic, social, political, and environmental impacts. From the moment of arrival, refugees may compete with local citizens for scarce resources such as water, food, housing, and medical services. Their presence increases the demands for education, health services, infrastructure such as water supply, sanitation, and transportation, and also in some cases, for natural resources such as grazing and firewood. The impacts of the refugee presence are both positive and negative (UNHCR, 2004 cited in Gomez, et al, 2011:2). According to Whitaker (2003:213), a reading of the literature suggests that refugee flows can contribute to the spread of conflict in two main ways. The first is when a refugee influx alters the balance of power in the host state, by changing the country's ethnic composition, for example, or affecting access to resources. This process of diffusion, as termed by Lake and Rothchild (1998 cited in Whitaker, 2003:213), can generate violence in the host country. If the process is left unchecked, according to some analysts, the conflict can eventually engulf an entire region. The second way the literature suggests that refugee flows can contribute to the spread of violence is through a process of escalation that brings new belligerents into the conflict. This could include intervention by the host government in the conflict or the use of its territory by combatants for mobilization and attacks back into their home country.

All the threats earlier highlighted in this essay constitute security challenges that underscore vulnerability and the necessity for regional stability. Importantly, these threats extend beyond traditional security concerns to address new security challenges with implications for both political stability and economic livelihoods. While the capacity of the host countries to absorb all the refugees is constrained by the ailing economic situations, a longer term and economically viable solution to the refugee problem has not been put in place. Refugees arrive in the camps with nothing and it is costly for host countries and aid givers in the long term to continue providing food, shelter and clothing. However, skilled and experienced refugees who have managed to move into these countries' interior regions have been able to engage in various economic activities. Therefore, there is a possibility then that skills can be harnessed in these camps and aid can be channeled to engage refugees in economic activity such as building infrastructure in the affected cities and increase staffing in the government provided services (Kamau, 2011).

Meanwhile, the spread of Ebola in Guinea, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone and until recently Nigeria, has already killed 3,000 people. The outbreak is having dramatic consequences on social and economic activities in West Africa, and some borders have been closed. Many farmers no longer tend their fields in affected areas, where prices have soared. According to the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, quarantine measures, particularly in Liberia and Guinea, prevent refugees from leaving the camps in search of livelihood activities to complement the limited food basket, making them more dependent on assistance. In this situation, adequate food supplies will be critical for preventing and combating malnutrition. The problem of internal displacement has not been given the same level of international attention as the problem of refugees, i.e. the externally displaced. When circumstance and duration of displacement are considered, a bleaker picture emerges. Loss of dignity and diminished hope associated with prolonged displacement can erode self-confidence and optimism—predispositions that are vital for self-reliance and self-organization. Moreover, the impact of extensive societal trauma associated with gruesome massacres often witnessed by displaced people (internal and external) can hardly be fully assessed. Resettlement can also be hazardous and rife with insecurity, including insecurity stemming from landmines and other unexploded devices (Sawyer, 2003). The mass abduction of the schoolgirls and unrelenting

attacks on civilians has served to highlight the security and geopolitical threat Boko Haram poses to Nigeria and the wider region. The scale of the internal displacement it has provoked should also be cause for the most serious concern. According to NEMA figures, Boko Haram's recent surge in violent attacks on civilians and the army's response forced at least 25, 0000 people to flee their homes between May 2013, when the state of emergency was imposed, and March 2014. Borno has been the worst-affected affected state with 111,000 IDPs, followed by Yobe with 76,000 and Adamawa with 67,000.This is a decrease of 40,000 since the end of 2013, when NEMA reported 290 000 IDPs in this region, but it is believed to be result of secondary displacement to neighbouring states such as Bauchi and Gombe rather than IDPs returning to their homes. Many of those fleeing Boko Haram's violence have made for the bustling cities of the south, mirroring the migration of others seeking economic opportunities there. IDPs have joined economic migrants in the slums and satellite towns around large cities, most notably Abuja (IDMC, 2014). Citing Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) describes the ripple effect of Boko Haram's violence in a recent briefing in which it has identified three emerging patterns of displacement: "The first is of internally displaced people (IDPs) fleeing to the south of the country in the footsteps of economic migrants. The second is of people fleeing from rural to urban areas within their states, and the third is of the secondary displacement of both IDPs and host communities who move once again when their resources have been depleted" (NRC cited in Goitom, 2014:12).

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

It has been affirmed that credible governance and security institutions are required, both nationally and regionally, to collaborate and fight the ongoing transnational criminal activities across the sub-region. Any positive change would, first and foremost, have to come from member states. Their commitment and determination, facilitated by the regional body, as well as international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs), would go a long way toward minimizing identified threats. Also, effective responses to these threats would have to be guided by the implementation of inclusive democratic governance policies, based on practices geared toward the equitable distribution of state wealth and resources, respect for the rule of law and human rights, and the assurance of transparency and accountability in the application of international instruments, strategies, and mechanisms. This would prevent problems of marginalization, exclusion, nepotism, corruption, and authoritarianism (Addo, 2013).

Strengthening of the EWOWAS small arms moratorium is needed. Specifically, it should be expanded to encompass all weapons categories, developed into an information-exchange mechanism, and made binding. Further efforts are needed to ensure that arms exporters comply with the moratorium, which could be facilitated through full participation in the proposed information exchange. Also, measures to address the uncontrolled spread of weapons in the sub-region and continued embargo violations, such as through the strengthening of the ECOWAS small arms moratorium, and the prosecution of sanctions violators should be promoted (HRW, 2003:10). ECOWAS stands to make greater progress in security regionalism if the members can show a strong commitment to implementing the ECOWAS security architecture and other related treaties and protocols. International donors and stakeholders can support the regional body by expanding technical cooperation and capacity-building in areas crucial to security capability and regional development (Omeje, 2013:10). The consolidation of peace, democracy, promotion of good governance and the entrenchment of democratic values are critical to meaningful economic and sustainable development. The chequered

political history and instability that has characterized the region for so long can be traced to the absence of good governance, democracy and the rule of law. The need to mainstream conflict prevention into stabilization and post conflict-interventions and improvement in the mechanism to manage multiple tasks efficiently and effectively are desirable objectives (Essien, 2013:2). Thus, Democratic countries have been discovered to be less conflict-prone. As affirmed by Siegle (2004:2), there are a number of reasons why democracies do a better job at conflict avoidance. Governments based on respect for human rights and the rule of law have a stronger basis for resolving their differences in a non-violent, legal, and morally defensible manner. Democratic leaders and the societies that elected them are also accustomed to balancing multiple and competing interests. They accept the inevitability of disagreement and the need for non-violent compromise. Autocratic leaders, in contrast, are more likely to have learned their political skills in environments that reward the use of coercion to resolve disputes. These qualities seem to be of particular value to democratic leaders in ethnically diverse societies – typical of much of Africa.

Almost irrespective of the exact definition of democracy, it is expected to bring about more accountable, legitimate and transparent government. Since citizens are consulted on a regular basis and institutionalised checks and balances are in place in democratic regimes, the assumption is that the outbreak of violent conflict or war becomes less likely, especially between established democracies. Thus, policy makers have increasingly promoted democratisation and, in the case of development policy, introduced measures of conditionality concerning good governance, rule of law and the respect for human rights. The underlying assumption is that security as well as (economic) development can only be preserved in the context of a democratic system (Vorrath and Krebs, 2009:4-5). For ECOWAS, it has shown its determination to increasingly guide its Member States through new political and institutional standards aimed at promoting peace, security and stability in the region by formulating the "Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts, Peacekeeping and Security". Adopted by the Heads of States and Government on 21st December 2001, the Supplementary Protocol is meant to complement that of 20th December 1999 on "internal crisis prevention, democracy, and good governance, rule of law and individual rights" and bring the necessary improvements to the Mechanism.

Ending war or conflicts especially in West Africa has been quite a challenge due to its complex multi-causal factors, multiple actors and the nature of the conflict; often contributing to prolonging the conflict. For Nigeria- the base of the *Boko Haram* insurgency, Waddington (2014) contends that the challenge in combating terrorism is complex. The organisation's leadership and organisational structure has been difficult to profile. At times, Boko Haram has appeared to be little more than an ideological umbrella organisation for a range of criminal and anti-government sub-groups. At other times, it has shown a more coherent structure. Because it is difficult to make sense of how the group operates, it is difficult to decisively or proactively attack it. With pressure mounting before the February 2015 election, President Goodluck Jonathan, desperate to show progress against Boko Haram, has repeatedly reshuffled his military command, leaving units uncoordinated and unsure of themselves. Discipline and training are not a panacea for the defeat of Boko Haram, but they are desperately needed in the Nigerian military as at least a starting point. More importantly, Nigeria needs to embrace the regional character of the fight against Boko Haram. The military needs to encourage coordination with regional neighbours in order to execute cross-border operations, as well as to start sharing intelligence if the fight is indeed beginning to shift into a transnational insurgency. The Nigerian government needs to audit its external and internal resources; both

diplomatic and human. It is noteworthy, firstly that the national security team appeared not to have laid a strong foundation for the prosecution of the war against insurgents by a poor reading of the crisis.   It ought to have a good hang on the external dimension to the crisis. The African Union and ECOWAS are strategic multilateral institutions that the government should have tapped right from the inception. Government stands to harness their intelligence resources and their goodwill in fending off supplies to the insurgents; after all, the arms being used are supplied through land and air corridors of neighbouring countries (The Guardian, November 12, 2014).

For refugees, Passarelli (2009:7) highlights Resettlement, Local Integration and Voluntary Repatriation as durable solutions for persons in need of protection. The status of a refugee is a temporary one; it is a provisional response to an immediate problem which needs to be solved. Voluntary repatriation to the country of origin occurs when the situation and the factors which forced the refugees to flee and to seek asylum in another country are no longer there, so the refugees can go back home feeling safe and regain their lives. Unfortunately this option is not possible for every refugee; sometimes what they have been through is so deeply rooted in their minds that going back to their country of origin is not an option anymore. Local integration takes place when refugees are able to integrate in the country of asylum. As the situation in the country of origin cannot always be solved in the short run, and the foreseeable future might remain so dim that settling in the country of asylum becomes a better option. In some countries, refugees are able to integrate themselves because the host country provides them with access to services and access to the labour market or to land, while in others they remain confined to camps where they depend on assistance from the international community.

Resettlement is often confused with repatriation or return, while in reality it is the movement of refugees from the country of first asylum, where for several reasons local integration is not possible, to a third country where they can rebuild their lives. Sometimes when refugees' lives are at risk, resettlement to a safe country is the only way to protect persecuted or endangered people – for example, they might be denied basic human rights in their country of refuge. Resettlement may also be used for survivors of torture, injured and traumatised refugees who are unable to obtain treatment in their country of refuge.

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