THE LAKE CHAD REGION'S FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY: IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIA

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Abstract: The Lake Chad Region (LCR), encompassing Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, has been severely impacted by terrorism and insurgency in the past decade. Terrorist groups, particularly Boko Haram, have led to significant disruptions in the lives of the local population, causing the loss of livelihoods and triggering irregular migration. This paper delves into the multifaceted challenges faced by the LCR countries due to these activities, which have resulted in the widespread destruction of lives and property and led to a humanitarian crisis. The movement of victims across borders within the region is a pressing concern, highlighting the need for coordinated efforts to address these challenges effectively.

Keywords: Lake Chad Region, terrorism, insurgency, irregular migration, humanitarian crisis

1.0   Introduction

The Lake Chad Region (LCR) comprising the countries of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria have in the past decade, grappled and continue to grapple with the twin problems of loss of livelihoods and irregular migration foisted on them by the activities of terrorist groups operating in the area. Terrorism and insurgency, which began in Nigeria in 2009 with the activities of Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awatiwal Jihad (people committed to the propagation of the Prophet''s Teachings and Jihad)" movement (JAS), commonly referred to as Boko Haram, expanded to other countries of LCR in 2014, and continue to gain momentum with increased indoctrination and recruitment of adherents across the region. The net effect of these activities has been increased destruction of lives and property, and displacements leading to humanitarian crisis in the region. As aptly observed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR),[4] terrorism and insurgency affects countries of the Lake Chad Basin in similar context resulting in displacements that occasion the movement of victims within and out of each of the affected countries.

The displacements reportedly exposed many, especially women and children to the activities of people smugglers and human traffickers thereby heightening the rate of internal and external trafficking of persons in the Northeastern states of Nigeria.[6]

Statistics indicate that a good number of displaced persons have become refugees in countries around the region. The UNHCR data reveal that the number of Nigerian refugees in Cameroun, Chad and Niger as at 30 April 2020 was 292,194, with a distribution of 162,961 in Niger, 115, 333 in Cameroun and 13, 900 in Chad. According to the International Organization on Migration (IOM), four million, eight hundred and twenty-two, five hundred and seven (4, 822, 507) people have cumulatively been displaced in the Lake Chad region since the insurgency began. This data includes internal displacements and refugees, residing in the various internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugee camps-registered and unregistered established in the affected countries. Unfortunately, these camps became breeding grounds for increased irregular migration owing to poor conditions to which occupants have been subjected.

Irregular migration is a phenomenon that continues to plague countries around the LCR; and is usually triggered by a number of factors- insurgency, socio- economic, cultural, religious, legal, and security, among others. The Climate Diplomacy (CD), the ReliefWeb as well as Action Against Hunger (AAH), among others identified insurgency around the LCR as one of the many factors that make people vulnerable, and force them to migrate-regularly and irregularly. To address these concerns, these organisations recommend a reduction in fragility around the region through deliberate adoption of targeted programmes that seek to remedy the causes of the fragility.

This paper examines terrorism and insurgency as triggers of irregular migration in the LCR. It critically evaluates the concepts of terrorism, insurgency and irregular migration and their interrelationships in the quest to address the problem of irregular migration in the LCR. The paper posits that although countries of the LCR continue to combat terrorism and insurgency with a view to reducing their incidences in the region, prevailing challenges identified in the paper continue to militate against these efforts. The paper therefore makes suitable recommendations towards addressing the increasing incidences of irregular migration in the LCR.

[6]US Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report (USA, Department of State, 2019), 353-355.

2.0 Understanding the Nature and Characteristics of Terrorism, Insurgency, Migration and Irregular Migration

2.1 Terrorism

Although terrorism has been in existence long before the terrorist bombing that took place in USA in 2011, terrorism is regarded as one of the relatively new crimes confronting the international community generally and Nigeria specifically, having gained prominence since 2011. Despite the unequivocal condemnation of terrorism by the international community, finding a universally acceptable definition remains a challenge. This according to scholars may not be unconnected with the fact that terrorism is normally subjectively construed. For example, Iran is considered a sponsor of terrorism by the United States of America (USA) because it assisted certain entities whose cause it is sympathetic to, but which the United States considers as terrorists. As a result, emphasis is placed not so much on defining terrorism but on acts, which constitute terrorism; and on tackling it‟s financing. At the African regional level, the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating Terrorism define terrorism but enumerates and describe conducts that constitute terrorist acts. They interlude inter alia, acts that violate criminal laws of states and constitute danger to life and wellbeing of people, resources and environment and cause

injury or death to persons or group of persons. The treaty expresses that conducts listed constitute terrorism if they are "calculated or intended to: intimidate, put in fear, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or segment thereof…" At national level, the Nigerian Terrorism (Prevention) Act (TPA), as amended in 2013 by the Terrorism (Prevention) Amendment Act (TPAA), did not define terrorism but simply described acts that qualify as terrorism, following the example of the OAU Convention.

Under the TPA, an act of terrorism is any act, which is done with malice and calculated to unduly compel a government or international organization to do or refrain from doing any act. Beyond legal instruments and laws, The Black's Law Dictionary[27] defines terrorism as: "the use of threat of violence to intimidate or cause panic, especially as a means of affecting political conduct".

Terrorism has both national and international dimensions. While international terrorism refers to the use of or threat of violence that transcends national boundaries with a view to intimidating or harming its targets, the national dimension of terrorism is that which occurs within the territory of a country, such as terrorism against one"s own government. Terrorism in the context of this paper reflects international and national perspectives-the international aspect dealing with terrorism around the LCR and national terrorism dealing with the implications of terrorism in the LCR for Nigeria.

Generally, criminal laws at international and national levels require that for an act to constitute a crime, objective and subjective elements must be present; and in some cases special intent known as dolus specialisas in the case of the crime of genocide under international criminal law.[31]

There are instances when the subjective element can be dispensed with as with cases of strict liability offences or offences committed involuntarily etc. In the context of terrorism, the presence of the subjective element is required as expressly provided under section 1 of TPA, as amended. Under sections 4 of the Nigeria"s Criminal Code (CC) and 36 (12) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN), a conduct cannot be deemed to constitute an offence unless that conduct is specifically defined as a crime and punishment prescribed for it in a law made by the National Assembly (NASS) or the House of Assembly of a State (HoS). In line with these provisions, the TPA was enacted to give effect to the conducts that constitute terrorism in Nigeria and to prescribe punishment for them. The latitude of terrorist offences under the TPA, as amended, is extremely wide; and each conduct constitutes an offence, upon which a person can be tried and punished on conviction as a terrorist offence if committed pursuant to a terrorist objective(s). This means that a single terrorist act can embody several offences, each of which require the presence of the subjective element as expressly provided under section 1 (1) of TPA. Existence of these elements is also a requirement under international law relating to terrorism.

Terrorism is no doubt criminalised in the countries under review under their anti-terrorism laws. As preconditions for recognising an international terrorist act, the objective element of the act must be (a) one that is already criminalised under domestic criminal law such as serious bodily harm, murder kidnapping, etc., (a) transnational in nature, i.e. it must affect more than one state as provided under article 3 of the Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. The subjective element of international terrorism relates to purpose of the act, which includes, instigating fear, etc. so as to blackmail government. Since terrorist acts around the LCR affects more than one state, and relate to acts already criminalised in the criminal laws of the affected countries, it qualifies as international terrorism. To the extent that these terrorists also operate within the territory of each of the affected states, they also qualify as national terrorists. This means that Boko Haram and ISWAP terrorists are

both national and international terrorist groups. As stated below, terrorism in Nigeria is relatively new, becoming prevalent in 2009, and gradually crept to countries around the LCR few years later.

2.2 Insurgency

Insurgency connotes an armed rebellion or hostility against government for political and other reasons. The US Government defines insurgency as:

…a protracted political-military struggle directed toward subverting or displacing the legitimacy of a constituted government or occupying power and completely or partially controlling the resources of a territory through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations.

Writers such as Moore and Metz also gave their perspectives on insurgency as a concept and highlight its hybrid features by portraying insurgency as prolonged violent conflict wherein one or more groups seek to violently change existing socio-political order and establish one which is amenable to their ideology or goals. Boko Haram ideology, which abhors western education, and their continued struggle to destroy the political structures in the countries around the LCR, perfectly fit into the US Government definition of insurgency, as well as, these writer"s perspectives

Generally, insurgencies differ and each is unique in some aspects even though several commonalities exist among them. For example, all insurgencies have similar objectives; adopt similar tactics and share similar trajectory of development. In the same vein, insurgencies share the characteristics of posing immeasurable threat to security through "violent political struggle for control of resources and power"; and undermining the rule of law, human rights principles and good governance. More critical is the fact that they all stimulate the vulnerability of people who are already vulnerable like women and children and trigger migration-regular and irregular. According to a report by the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (NIALS), "the dynamics of Nigeria"s peace and security landscape changed with the emergence of Boko Haram. This is also true of other countries around the Lake Chad region as witnessed by the spate of attacks on civilian populations, police and military posts in Cameroun, Chad and Niger. The highlighted characteristics of insurgency show that the activity embodies rebellion, social disruption, and sustained violence. More generally, insurgents usually adopt guerrilla style warfare, which makes it extremely difficult for government to overcome.

2.3 Migration/Irregular Migration

Migration simply means movement from one place to another; and constitutes an essential aspect of human life. Aided by advancement in information and communication technology as well as the forces of globalization, migration across the world generally and specifically within the LCR, has been enhanced; and its benefits in terms of significant contribution to the development of societies is universally acknowledged.

Migration may be regular or irregular. While regular migration is lawful, irregular migration is unlawful and may be embarked upon voluntarily or involuntarily. Irregular migration according to the IOM is the "movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the state of origin, transit, or destination. "As a concept, irregular migration is often associated with the problem of lack of clarity of meaning as there is no universally accepted meaning; and the term is often used interchangeably with "illegal migration". This is despite the fact that "illegal migration" is increasingly used in relation to the crimes of human trafficking and people smuggling. Be that as it may, the European Commission (EC) and the IOM respectively define irregular migration as: movement of persons to a new place of residence outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries; and as movement of people that takes

place outside regulatory norm of the sending, transit and receiving countries respectively. Kuschminde highlights three main routes of irregular migration to be:

Entering a country without proper authority, either through clandestine entry or with forged documents; entering with authorization but overstaying that authorization; or deliberately abusing asylum system.

According to IOM, the meaning of the concept is country specific depending on whether it is a source/sending or destination/receiving country. For example, destination countries would normally view irregular migration as "entry, stay or work in a country without the necessary authorization or documents required under immigration regulations". For the sending country, irregular migration relates purely to the "irregularity" associated with people crossing "international boundary without passport or travel document or do not fulfill the administrative requirements for leaving the country".

Generally, Border States of the EU are more affected by the influx of irregular migrants. For example, research shows that in recent years countries such as Greece and Italy, received the largest numbers of irregular migrants. The situation forced Italy to prioritize burden-sharing" and migration in general on the EU agenda because of the lopsided number of irregular migrants the country receives and the lack of resources to address tackle the problem. Also, the inability of Greece to cope with influx of irregular migrants as a result of the economic meltdown, the European Court of Human Rights in December 2011 ruled that migrants could not be returned to Greece under the Dublin II regulation due to the over burdening of the asylum system and poor conditions for asylum seekers in Greece. Until now, Greece has not done much to improve living conditions in the camps giving rise to "children attempting suicide" in one of the camps according to a BBC report.

However, since 2015, the number of migrants seeking to enter into Europe from Africa has reduced significantly from 221, 454 in 2015 to 10,495 as at May 2018. This is largely attributable to responses from receiving countries to irregular migration such as reforming immigration laws, promoting the return of migrants in irregular situation to their home countries, implementing regularization programmes, bilateral agreements, among others. For example, EU countries entered into deportation agreements with Sudan; and made a deal with Niger, which led to a crackdown on smuggling in the Western Sahara. Despite this decline in irregular migration, the consequences remain huge: First, EU countries continue to bicker over who should take responsibility for new migrants- whether the border states like Greece and Italy or the wealthier states like Germany, Secondly, EU countries continue to struggle to absorb an estimated 1.8 million people that arrived by sea since 2014, Thirdly, a rise in public anxiety arising from fear of terrorism; and Fourthly, the challenge around process in terms of how to accommodate asylum seekers awaiting the outcome of their cases, how to integrate them into the economy/society or how to deport them.

These issues necessitated a meeting on migration of EU leaders for purposes of inter alia, unbundling a clear migration policy for the region.

As the IOM rightly observed, there is no "one size fits all" policy to tackle irregular migration. Countries are at liberty to adopt measures that they consider efficacious taking their peculiarities into consideration.. However, such measures must not only be comprehensive, but also embody the "rights-based approaches that address the root causes of irregular migration, especially those related to labour market demands".

3.0   Incidences of Terrorism, Insurgency and Irregular Migration in the Lake Chad Region

The prevalence of terrorism/insurgency as a trigger for migration around the Lake Chad Region is well documented by writers and other sources, including governments and international organisations. As already

noted above, terrorist activities of Boko Haram sect began in northeastern Nigeria before expanding to other parts of the LCR. Mohammed Yusuf, a Muslim cleric, founded the Boko Haram sect in 2002. The group started as a religious group with very strong ideological standpoint, which is moored on (a) resistance to everything western-education, political philosophy, which they abhor for being blasphemous, oppressive and inherently wicked. According to them, western education and political principles/structures only engender amd entrench poverty, unemployment, social injustice and corruption, among others; and orchestrate extreme drive not only to supplant the existing government, but also to establish and implement Sharia law as an applicable justice system in the entire country. The death of Yusuf while in custody of Nigerian security authorities in 2009 stirred up unprecedented violence in Maiduguri, a state in the northeast and effectively established a violent resistance that the government has battled to contain more than ten years after. Abubakar Shekau, who succeeded the late Yusuf, reinforced the sect‟s operational capabilities, taking insurgency to a new level with increased attacks against law enforcement operatives and civilians.

At the beginning, the group‟s operations were limited to northeastern Nigeria. However, they began to interact with international terrorist cells such as the Somali militant group known as Al-Shabaab, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJIWA) so as to receive support-financially and in capacity building. These interactions and express declaration of support for other terrorist cells led to the spread of Boko Haram activities beyond Nigeria to countries around the LCR in 2014. This move enabled the sect to capture large territories resulting in the declaration of a caliphate in August 2014. The year 2015 is significant in the insurgency narratives for the following reasons: (a) according to reports an estimated territory spanning 51,800 square kilometers was under the control of Boko Haram; (b) Boko Haram declared its loyalty to the Islamic State and became the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP); and (c) the activation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), a coalition of forces from Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria to engage the insurgents in the LCR.

Nonetheless, the sect continued to launch attacks around the LCR. For instance, between May and August 2016, Boko Haram reportedly launched several deadly attacks against communities in and around the LCR such as Adamawa, Borno and Yobe in Nigeria, Diffa in Niger, and Lac Province in Chad.[81] Other raids were launched into Niger around the same period with several girls kidnapped around the border communities.

These attacks occasioned multiple displacements as inhabitants of the affected communities fled their homes and remained constantly moved from place to place in search of safety and livelihoods.

The situation exacerbated as minors were forced to move around unaccompanied by adult family members because their parents had either been killed or abducted by terrorist thereby rendering them susceptible to smuggling and trafficking of young children and girls internally or externally. The deplorable conditions under which displaced people live in the IDPs and refugee camps only make them more vulnerable to people smuggling and trafficking.

The LCR witnessed a further rise in terrorist activities and insurgency operations from early November 2018, with rebels belonging to ISWAP and Boko Haram launching offensives and raids to weaken military strength and seize territories in a renewed attempt to establish an Islamic state in the LCR. The attacks, particularly those by ISWAP recorded considerable success which resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians. Other raids were also launched into Niger around the same period where girls around the border communities were kidnapped. ISWAP also attacked Baga, marauding the military base and destroying the MNJTF headquarters

and naval base set on fire. While the Nigerian military fought to retake Baga, the Niger Armed Forces launched an offensive, which recorded more success, while targeting the Islands on Lake Chad and the areas along Yobe River at the Niger-Nigeria border in December 2018. The Niger army and Air Force launched offensives via land and air. The Cameroonian armed forces also mobilised their troops in the north to counter the Islamic rebels. In the specific context of Chad, there was increased confrontation between insurgents and the Chadian army, with the confrontations escalating from 7 in 2018 to 21 in 2019, with ISWAP over-running dozens of army bases, killing several soldiers in 2019.

Over a decade since the emergence of insurgency in Nigeria, and later the LCR, the MNJTF and the Nigerian military are yet to contain it. This is despite responses-legal, military, international cooperation etc. For example, on 23 March 2020, the insurgents reportedly launched a convoluted attack on Chadian troops stationed at a base in Bohoma in which 98 Chadian soldiers were killed, several others wounded and army vehicles destroyed by the insurgents. This was reminiscent of improvements to Boko Haram's combat intelligence capabilities considering that the Chadian army is reputed to be a superior regional force. The attacks followed years of insurgency waged by Boko Haram and its offshoot, ISWAP in the LCR. After the March 2020 attack, the Chadian President (now late), Idriss Derby joined frontline operations of the Chadian army to launch an offensive against Boko Haram and ISWAP on 23 March 2020. This was in a bid to clear the insurgents from the Chadian territory. Additionally, the Nigerian army continues to launch offensives against the Boko Haram and ISWAP, leading to the neutralisation of some of their bases. However, the terrorists/insurgents are yet to be completely eradicated.

Indeed, the formation of the MNJTF was one of the most crucial collaborative efforts against insurgency in the LCR. With support from governments of the affected countries and the European Union, the MNJTF is able to maintain sustained offensive against the insurgents. Support from governments is all encompassingfinancial, military, logistics, etc. while that of the EU is financial. For example, the EU gave a 50 million EUR funding to the MNJTF to cover the period 1 July 2016- 31 December 2019.

The funds were given to the African Union Commission to support the MNJTF towards its effort to tackle increasing regionalization of Boko Haram threat. On their part, the governments of the affected countries reaffirmed their commitment to the Abuja Action Statement on civilian protection in the Lake Chad Basin region of January 2019.

The agreement comprises a series of actions to enhance protection and respond to the most urgent needs of refugees, internally displaced persons and other affected populations. This is as the region continues to experience humanitarian crisis arising from internal displacements due to terrorism and insurgency. Humanitarian crisis around the region has also acted as push for people to migrate irregularly from one country in the region to another, example, from Nigeria to Cameroon and vice versa, and then to other countries outside the region, particularly Europe and Americas through dangerous routes. Report from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa on Projects in Nigeria states that Nigeria "is the first country of origin of irregular migration towards Europe;[97] and that this is occasioned by crisis which has led to the displacement of about 2.2 million people, in addition to the country's fragile socio-economic and food context. This situation is also true of several countries in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, including countries under focus where irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking, corruption and transnational organized crime is prevalent due to inadequate government presence because of security challenges. In the August edition of its monthly migration data dashboard, the IOM observed that, the Lake Chad Basin continue to face complex crisis caused by a number of factors including

conflict with insurgents and terrorists. It states further that the number of displacements in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria was estimated at 4, 994,349 as of 21 August 2020. The severe conditions under which displaced persons live only make them more determined to embark on dangerous migration routes such as the Sahara Desert, Mediterranean sea to Europe and other parts of the world; and across officially closed borders to get into Nigeria.

4.0 Implications for Nigeria

4.1 Combating Terrorism and insurgency

As already noted, since 2009 when insurgency began in Nigeria, the country has adopted different counter-insurgency options as responses. Such responses include military, legal and counter-insurgency initiatives/programmes. Following a military response, Nigeria responded to insurgency by enacting the Terrorism Prevention Act (TPA) 2011 as amended in 2013; developed a National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in 2014 as revised in 2016, and established a Counter-Terrorism Centre to coordinate national counter terrorism efforts. To enhance counter-insurgency efforts, government also committed to sustaining a "Whole-of-Government approach", which they seek to achieve through strong "inter-agency platforms and mechanisms at strategic and operational levels"

This according to government is not only to fulfill its counter-insurgency mandate, but also to continue to promote "international cooperation and collaboration". In that regard, the focal point is to be in partnership with national and international information technology companies in a bid to "counter violent extremism narratives online".[106]The Nigerian State was stronger in 2019 because the country was able to significantly incapacitate the insurgents. This according to government was achieved through "valiant efforts of the armed forces, security agencies and other Nigerians" in partnership with international allies such as the MJTF partnership comprising Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria.

Indeed, the threat of Boko Haram was not given the desired response by government from the outset, as it was perceived as a hype that would fizzle out with time. Apart from that, the Boko Haram sect was seen as a religious group; therefore, the military lacked cooperation from the civilian population, especially human rights groups that kept emphasising the constitutional right of persons to freedom of thought, conscience and religion as guaranteed under section 38 of the 1999 CFRN, as amended. Other challenges-socio-economic, military capability and technology, geographical, and corruption, which have militated against the counter-insurgency fight, are highlighted below:

a) Geographical challenges: Geographical location of the Sambisa forest, which became the domain of the Boko Haram, is not only vast and poorly managed by the government at all levels, but was also abandoned for several years, hence the Boko Haram insurgents, decided to leverage it for use as safe haven. Having occupied the forest for several years, they enjoy the distinct advantage of knowledge of and familiarity with the forest over the military personnel fighting the insurgents there. According to reports, the topography of the forest makes it difficult for soldiers to access, as it is thickly shrubbed and mountainous. One of the reasons for creating the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) was to assist the military in navigating the Sambisa forest since members are drawn from the locals who are also familiar with the forest.

b) Corruption: The fight against insurgency has stretched for over ten years with no end in sight. The long drawn war is largely attributable to the endemic problem of corruption. Over the years, funds allotted to anti-insurgency fight-procurement of arms, operatives welfare, and logistics, etc., have allegedly been looted resulting in the incarceration of the former National Security Adviser (NSA), Dasuki, and the posthumous conviction of

the former Chief of Defence Staff, late Air Marshall Alex Bade, who allegedly embezzled $20M meant for counterinsurgency and other military logistics, among others. Because of this, the military lack the necessary weapons and suffer poor welfare resulting in low morale amongst the troops. This is against the backdrop of allegations that the insurgents are better equipped with more sophisticated weapons.

Furthermore, notwithstanding the important role of border communities in preserving human and national security, they have, without exception, been generally neglected for decades; and this constitutes a serious threat. Credence is lent to this assertion by studies on Nigeria border communities to the effect that they are generally characterised by poverty, unemployment and trans-border criminality, poor or non-existent social and physical infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, electricity, roads, etc. The result is divided loyalty to the country in favour of the neighbouring countries, which exposes Nigerian borders to insecurity, including Boko Haram; hence many locals in the border communities around the northeast supported them in exchange for some favours.

A major consequence of porous borders is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs), which often find their way into wrongs hands, and aid insurgency and other violent crimes and criminals.

c)   Socio-economic challenges: over the years, local communities around the Sambisa forest have reportedly helped Boko Haram for one reason or the other. These locals supply Boko Haram with agricultural produce, fuel, etc. and act as informants in return to being allowed to remain in their communities to farm and trade. They would normally withhold information about Boko Haram hideout from the military due to distrust of government. This situation is made possible by poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and lack of opportunities, which remain unaddressed by government over the years. It does not help that displaced persons-in IDPs and communities are not well catered for. Because of this, several IDPs have reportedly returned to their communities preferring to die in their homes than in the camps.

4.2   **Addressing Irregular Migration**

Curbing irregular migration into and out of Nigeria remains one of the major challenges facing the government. Statistics on migration in Africa shows that a large population of African migrants to Europe, America and other parts of world are Nigerians, many of who migrate illegally or irregularly. Irregular migration, people smuggling and human trafficking are known to be on the rise despite government‟s regulatory, administrative and policy efforts to stem this tide. Although, there are pockets of legal provisions that address migrant smuggling; and a National Policy with focus on migration-legal, illegal and irregular, these instruments are limited in application, hence their inability to effectively address the problem; and (b) poor governance and policy failures in addressing the root causes of people smuggling engenders illicit smuggling of migrants into and out of Nigeria. Regulatory and policy outcomes in the area of combating irregular migration in Nigeria reveal a failure due to severe challenges: ineffective law enforcement, bad governance occasioning corruption and other vices, lack of accurate data, lack of political will, among others, some of which are highlighted below:

a)   Ineffective law enforcement: The conclusions that law enforcement is a major challenge arises from the fact that several initiatives-legal, institutional, policy, economic, and administrative, to address incidences of irregular migration exists. Yet, the problem continues, hence experts[128] have concluded that ineffective law enforcement is one of

the major challenges. This is because ending impunity for perpetrators is normally a glaring outcome of many factors, one of which is effective enforcement, which would serve as deterrence to others.[129]

b)   Inadequate knowledge about the Enormity of Irregular Migration: currently, the situation of irregular migration is such that authorities adopt and implement measures on the basis of conjecture due to lack or inadequacy of accurate data.[130] For any initiative to be successful, it must be measured against the real or actual threat.

c)   Bad governance occasioning corruption: it is not a secret that Nigeria has been bedeviled with bad governance for decades. Lack of transparency and accountability mechanisms in governance and the fact that looters are never held accountable for their actions has fueled corruption. To fight corruption, Nigeria signed up to international and regional anti-corruption frameworks-United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCC),[131] African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption[132] (AUCCC) and adopted domestic anti-corruption measures-legal institutional and policy to try to stem the tide. However, although there seems to be a measure of success in the current government''s effort, it is not yet uhuru as corruption, especially petty corruption remains pervasive.

d)   Poverty and illiteracy: the phenomena of illiteracy and poverty in the country are palpable. Statistics depicts the deplorable state of Nigerians in terms of poverty and illiteracy.[133] As a result, stories of greener pasture outside Nigeria are believable. Beyond belief, Nigerians are literally caught between the devil and deep blue sea. They therefore opt to die trying to leave the country through irregular migration, than to stay in the country and die of poverty, starvation and diseases.

e)   Socio-Cultural Practices: some socio-cultural practices have the potential to aid irregular migration. For example, in some communities, parents actually consent to sending their teenage daughters abroad through illegal means with the expectation that such children will eventually earn money to support them and other members of the family. As such they do all they can to circumvent government policies and regulations that seek to prevent irregular migration. There is also the problem of child marriage and the practice of traditional child placement, which encourages „house girl/boy" syndrome. Beyond this, the vulnerability of displaced persons enhances irregular migration, due to government''s lack of political will to effectively address the problem by adequately catering to displaced persons and or refugees.

f)   Lack of economic opportunities: according to National Bureau of Statistics, over 13   million youths are unemployed as at the 2nd Quarter of 2020. The result is the quest by the youths to migrate whether regularly or irregularly.

g)   Inadequate Funding: The problem of inadequate funding for anti-irregular migration programmes is as prevalent as it is endemic. There is virtually no law enforcement or policy formulation/implementation agency that is not faced with inadequate funding,[134] making it difficult for them to adopt measures or engage in proactive operations.

5.0 Recommendations

The research brought to the fore a number of challenges which have militated against successful elimination of the insurgents operating around the LCR. In addition to intergovernmental cooperation vide MNJTF against the insurgents the following recommendations are proffered.

i.   It is obvious that the socio-economic conditions that give rise to insurgency also combine with insurgency to entrench irregular migration and also impede effective curbing of irregular migration. Therefore, there is need for government to address these socio-economic conditions.

Government can start by mainstreaming relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[135]particularly Goals 1 and 2,[136] into policy, to achieve a sustainable future free from hunger and poverty.

Interuniversitaire sur le risqué, les politiques economiques et l'emploi (CIRPEE), Working Paper 06-38, Quebec QC, Canada, pp. 10-17.

[128]Okogbule, N. S; An Appraisal of the Legal and Institutional Framework of for Combating Corruption in Nigeria (2006), Journal of Financial Crime, vol.13, No. 1, pp. 92-106@ p. 92

[129]US Department of State; Trafficking in Persons Report (US Department of State 2019), 355-356, <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2019/> accessed 10 May 2020.

[130] IOM, World Migration Report (Switzerland: International Office for Migration, 2020) available at, <http://pubications.iom.int> accessed 22 May 2020.

[131] United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC); UN Doc A/58/422; adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 31 October 2003 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. It entered into force on December 14, 2005, in accordance with article 68 (1).

[132] The AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption was adopted by the heads of state at the African Union Summit held in Maputo on July 11 2003. It entered into force into force on August 5, 2006. See African Human Security Initiatives; Anti Corruption Cluster, <www.africanreview.org/project1corrupt.php> accessed 10 January 2020.

[133] National Bureau of Statistics, n.119

[134] See USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report (United States, US Department of State, 2019), 353-356; and also, UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons (New York: United Nations, 2018), 81-83.

ii. As insurgency and persistent armed attacks around the LCR is preventing millions of displaced persons from returning to their communities and homes, there is need (a) to find lasting solutions, which can effectively deliver basic services and livelihoods; and (b) promote an early shift towards self-sufficiency.

iii. The programmes that strengthen protection of civilians, especially women and girls, should be embarked upon. The programmes should focus on preventing sexual and gender-based violence and enhance support to survivors. This is important as women and girls face high risks of sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse by armed groups, people smugglers/human traffickers as well as law enforcement operatives.

iv. Transparency and accountability measures should be initiated as part of anti-corruption fight in the counterinsurgency camp. This is to ensure that funds meant for counter-insurgency operations are utilised for that purpose, while mismanagement is met with appropriate punishment.

v. Given the enormity of irregular migration flows from the LCR to Europe and other parts of the world, the European Union in partnership with the IOM is already doing a lot in the Sahel and LCR, working closely with these countries to support them in their efforts to achieve security, peace and stability. These organisations also identified that "demographic pressure, institutional weaknesses and governance, weak social and economic infrastructures, environmental stress and insufficient resilience to food and nutrition crises" also trigger displacement and occasion irregular migration. Therefore, it is recommended that countries under focus should make concerted effort to address these challenges.

6.0 Conclusion

Terrorism and insurgency in the LCR and its impact on the lives and livelihood of the civilian population in the region has led to IDPs and refugee status of many arising from the displacement of millions around the LCR. A case in point is Chad, which has come under persistent attacks from the insurgents since 2015 leading to the displacement of over 170,000 in Lac Province of Chad alone.[137]According to UNHCR unrelenting violence and its impact on the lives of millions of people across the LCR mean that many families and communities continue to move from place to place, making them, especially the women and children more vulnerable to people smuggling and human trafficking.[138] Generally, factors that trigger irregular migration are interrelated. For example, it is undeniable that factors such as bad governance, weak institutional structure, poverty, lack of economic opportunities and corruption, among others account for emergence of insurgency in the first place. In the same vein, these factors combine with insurgency to force displacements that make people to flee conflict, or seek new economic opportunities to build a better life. All of these have serious implications for Nigeria; and calls for the country to urgently adopt measures geared towards addressing terrorism, insurgency and the enumerated factors that give rise to irregular migration.

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