Transnational Cooperation to Combat Boko Haram:
The Multinational Joint Task Force (MJNTF)

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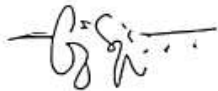Doctor of Public

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ABSTRACT


Transnational Cooperation to Combat Boko Haram: The
Multinational Joint Task Force (MJNTF)


Jude Mutah


Transnational cooperation, particularly in the security sector, has become a platform through which contiguous countries or nations within a subregion collaborate to tackle common security threats or challenges. Against the backdrop of the foregoing, this dissertation examines the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) role in combatting Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin region of Africa. The study employed qualitative research methods, including archival and in-depth subject matter expert interviews with about 50 participants to examine the nature and mechanism of cooperation within the MNJTF, the challenges and successes of the task force. Also, it sought expert opinions on what factors motivate the demise of terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram. The recommendations would serve as a guide for the MNJTF to finding a lasting solution to the Boko Haram crisis in the Lake Chad Basin. Other intuitions, governments, and international organizations in Africa and beyond would also benefit from the recommendations, especially as the world continues to grapple with the question of terrorism.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The last decades have witnessed an increase in the emergence of terrorist groups and activities on the African continent (Feldstein & Feldstein, 2018; Global Terrorism Index, 2020). In Nigeria, for example, Global Terrorism Index (2020) reports that terrorist activities of civilians (such as suicide bombing, attacks against government personnel, and properties including kidnapping], increased by 25% from 2019. Some scholars argue that the spike in terrorist activities results from poor governance factors, such as marginalization, political exclusion, and the lack of social and economic opportunities (Asongu & Nwachukwu, 2017; Feldman, 2009; Monga et al., 2015; Wasike, 2019). Another school of thought posits that terrorists use terrorism to achieve political power, including controlling resources, as witnessed in parts of Africa, including, for example, in northern Nigeria (Kydd & Walter, 2006; Mähler, 2010; Obioha, 2008; Osaghae & Suberu, 2005; Thomas, 2014). Regardless of its motivation, regional terrorism is one of Africa's primary security threats today (Asongu et al., 2019; Ewi & Aning, 2006; Global Terrorism Index, 2020; Lyman & Morrison, 2004; Ploch, 2010). For this reason, this doctoral dissertation research starts from the perspective that terrorism has to do with the unlawful use of violence and intimidation by non-

state security actors against the government and/or civilians in pursuit of political or other goals such as coercing the government to make concessions or concede total defeat. In the same vein, violent extremism involves the beliefs and activities of individuals or groups that support or use violence to attain ideological, spiritual, or political objectives. Thus, violent extremism often includes terrorism.

According to a report published by IHS Markit's Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Center (2016), terrorist attacks and their resultant fatalities augmented by 200% and 750% between 2009 and 2015—a dramatic rise in terrorist attacks on the African continent (IHS, 2016). Between 2012 and 2015, not only did the sum of terrorist occurrences in Africa spike tremendously, but the number of deaths that resulted from such attacks increased cumulatively (Global Terrorism Index, 2015; Kuo, 2017). The UNDP (2017) also drew attention to the fact that between 2011 and 2016, Africa recorded 33,000 terrorism-related deaths, accompanied by connected displacements, economic ruin, and humanitarian disasters (UNDP, 2017) (See Appendix 1 for more details). Due to the factors outlined above, coupled with porous borders that facilitated the easy movement of people and weapons (Comolli, 2015; Dobbins et al., 2019), and because of poor policing or

security, Africa in general, and especially the Lake Chad Basin region, is generally prone to and commonly experiences both inter-state and intra-state forms of terrorism (Hübschle, 2011; Monga et al., 2015b; Ojo, 2020; Okumu, 2011; Otiso, 2011). The ungoverned nature of the Lake Chad Basin provided refuge and resources for Boko Haram and complicated state and regional responses (Dobbins et al., 2019). The terrorist group established safe harbors in the marshy islands of the Lake Chad area around the Republic of Chad, Cameroon, and the notorious Sambisa Forest of Nigeria. The vast and extensive forest has served as Boko Haram's base since 2013 and covers about 23,000 square miles that straddle four states: Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, and Gombe states in Nigeria. The forest is sparingly inhabited, embedded with many trees that hinder effective aerial surveillance, with limited roads and a stony topography that reduces accessibility by land to virtually impossible. The hostile and challenging terrain offers Boko Haram a base to train, radicalize recruits, and launch deadly attacks (Tar & Bala, 2019). "Boko Haram members would hide from Nigerian security forces beyond national borders, or would train in Niger, most famously at a camp in Agwan run by AQIM's forerunner, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat" (Comolli, 2015, pp.111). These factors indicate that the threat of terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin

region is becoming more serious, coupled with deficient efforts put in place to addressing them, as seen in the case of Boko Haram.

The major terrorist group posing a severe threat to human, national, and regional security in Central and West Africa (the primary geographical focus of this research) is the Jama'a Ahl as-Sunna Li-da'wa Waal Jihad terrorist group, commonly referred to as Boko Haram. The group originated in Nigeria in 2002 and has, over the last decade, spread to the other countries of the Lake Chad Basin – Cameroon, Chad, and Niger (Agbiboa, 2013). The nickname "Boko Haram" was used by local communities in Nigeria to describe the group's rhetoric or narratives that Western culture and education are corrupting Islamic culture in Nigeria's northern region and, thus, haram ("forbidden" or "prohibited")(Adibe, 2019; Bertoni et al., 2019; Congressional Research Service, 2018; Onuoha, 2012; Peters, 2014). The original name of the insurgent group, Jama'a Ahl as-Sunna Li-da'wa Waal Jihad, loosely translated to mean "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad." In 2015, Boko Haram's leadership swore allegiance to Islamic State—another terrorist group operating in the Middle East—and retitled itself as the Islamic State West Africa Province

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(ISWAP)(Congressional Research Service, 2018; Mahmood & Ani, 2018; Pham, 2016; Thurston, 2017). However, scholars have commonly referred to the terrorist group as "Boko Haram", translated as "Western education and culture are forbidden." In a nutshell, this research seeks to examine the nature of the threat posed by Boko Haram, institutional structure, success stories of the MNJTF, but also why has the task force not ended Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. First, this chapter examines this dissertation's purpose, geographic focus, and conceptual perspectives before delving into the problem statement, the research rationale, and questions in more detail.

## 1.1 Purpose of Research

This dissertation seeks to understand the role of multinational cooperation in the fight against terrorism, specifically, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in combating Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin, Africa. For about a decade now, four countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad, and Niger, under the auspices of the MNJTF, a regional security regime of about 10,000 troops from these countries, including Benin, tasked with the mandate to eradicate Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin, have been involved in combating the Boko Haram

terrorist group in the Lake Chad Basin area. This research invariably focuses attention on the MNJTF's effort to deal with the problem.

The research's findings provide concrete recommendations to government institutions, such as the MNJTF, confronting terrorism, particularly within Africa and potentially worldwide. It also forms the basis for future research on institutional efforts to combat terrorism, especially as the world grapples with the recent rise in terrorist activities and what it takes to halt terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram. The findings also contribute to the limited scholarly literature on multinational institutions' efforts, such as the MNJTF, to combat terrorism, expressly in Africa.

## 1.2 Geographic Focus and Context

This doctoral research focuses on the geographical area of West and Central Africa, specifically in the Lake Chad Basin. The Lake Chad Basin, also named the Conventional Basin, is in north-central Africa and touches West Africa and covers about 8% of the African continent, including seven countries: Nigeria, Niger, Algeria, Sudan, Central African Republic, Chad, and Cameroon. However, this doctoral dissertation research only includes four riparian countries to Lake Chad: Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, and Chad, because these four

countries are contiguous, found in the areas where Boko Haram exists and operates, and directly affected by the activities of the terrorist group. Also, the Lake area is rich in agriculture, pastoralism, fishing, and other resources, which attracts migrants from across the Sahel. Despite these resources, the Lake Chad Basin people are among the poorest in Africa, coupled with high illiteracy rates (International Crisis Group, 2017; Mahmood & Ani, 2018; UN Security Council, 2018), thus offering Boko Haram the edge to recruit militants to its ranks. The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), the case study for this research, only involves the countries listed above. The map below is a partial map of Africa that provides a snapshot or highlight of the Lake Chad Basin.
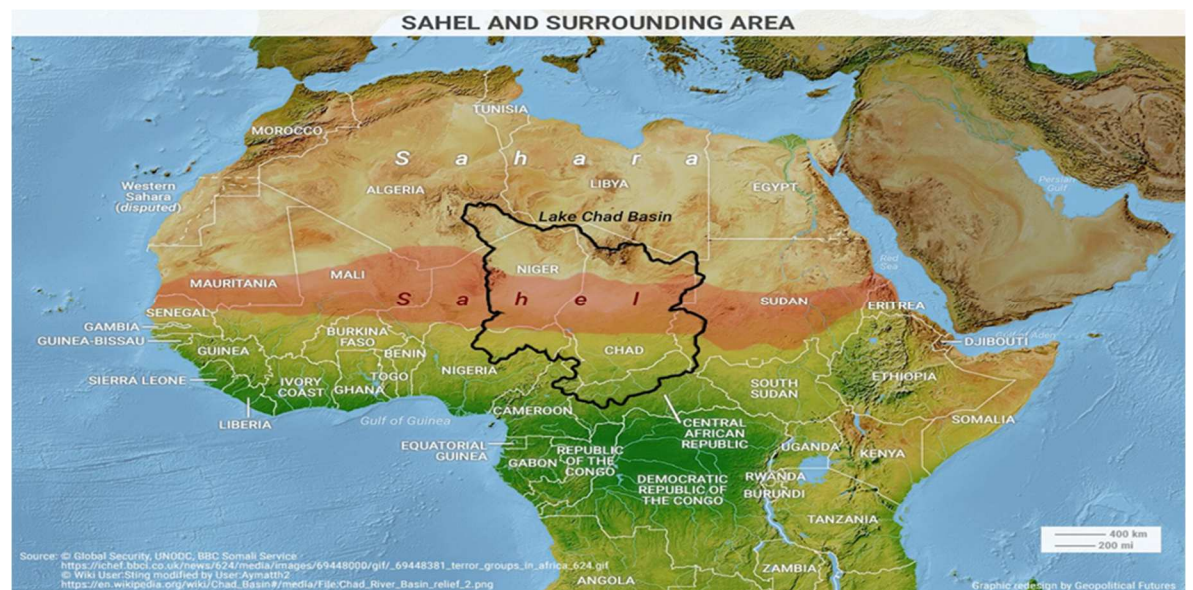


*Partial Map of Africa Showing the Lake Chad Basin*

## 1.3 Conceptual Perspectives

The conceptual clarifications or perspectives define the key concepts crucial to this study: transnational cooperation, complement, coordination (the three Cs); the MNJTF; and terrorism/violent extremism.

### 1.3.1 Transnational Cooperation, Coordination, and Complement

To adequately explore the concept of transnational cooperation in relation to security or threats to safety, the regional security complex theory of Barry Buzan and Ole Waever in their 2003 book – *Regions and powers: The structure of international security* – becomes instrumental. The theory states that in geographic contiguity, where proximity binds several nations, one state's safety depends on the others' security (Buzan et al., 2003). Thus, if one country faces a significant security threat, there is the likelihood that the nearby states will become insecure, sooner or later, hence the need for effective collaboration or cooperation among them to tackle the risks of insecurity. Boko Haram's case is a critical example that originated in Nigeria and was initially considered a Nigerian internal security problem,

but quickly became a regional problem after it spread its activities into the neighboring countries—Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. Buzan and Waever (2003) argue that if the crisis in one country affects the other, there is a likelihood of a unanimous agreement upon the actions to employ. According to Tar and Sunday (2017), alliances between and among states are critical in international relations as they form the basis for combatting a common foe. This thinking guided the LCBC member states affected by Boko Haram to harness their collective efforts against the terrorist. Buzan and Waever's regional security complex theory emphasizes the movement or transformation of security threats from the national to regional levels, and the interdependence is characterized by collective and coordinated actions against common risks. The joint efforts by Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad to confront Boko Haram is a notable example.

*Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary*, as cited in Tar and Sunday (2017), defines transnational cooperation or alliance as "an association (as by treaty) of two or more nations to further their common interests" (p. 3). The dynamic nature of international relations and states' need to pursue and promote their national interest has made coalitions an essential element of global politics (Hollis & Smith, 1990).

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Transnational alliances or cooperation can take various forms (Tar & Sunday, 2017). However, for this dissertation, transnational cooperation is conceptualized to mean coordination and collaboration among the Lake Chad Basin countries, and, more specifically, among the four-member states of the MNJTF regarding resources that include military, finance, logistic, among others, to tackle terrorist groups and Boko Haram in particular. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad, and Niger cooperate, coordinate, and complement each other's efforts to analyze the effectiveness of the MNJTF adequately.

As with "cooperation", defined above, this dissertation developed definitions for "complement" and "coordination" regarding the functionality of the MNJTF. Complement is conceptualized to mean the support that the member states of the MNJTF provide to each other to enhance and ensure the smooth functioning of the task force, especially in the face of attacks by or combat with Boko Haram.

Additionally, coordination means the organization of the various structures of the MNJTF, including the sector headquarters, the ministries involved, and MNJTF's partners, especially around resources and the planning of operations to

enable and ensure smooth functioning of the MNJTF and, of course, its success.

## 1.3.2 The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)

The MNJTF was first established on March 21, 1994, by the Nigerian president at the time, Sani Abacha, and headquartered in Baga, Kukawa Local Government Area, in Nigeria's Borno state. It comprised only Nigerian and Chadian forces, with the primary mandate of curbing banditry, arms smuggling, and contraband goods around the Lake Chad Basin ( Obamamoye, 2017a; Assessing the MNJTF Mission, 2020). The original motivation for setting up the task force was mainly for Nigeria's security interest (Albert, 2017b; Obamamoye, 2017a). However, by 1998, Niger joined the task force, and its mandate was extended to include cross-border security concerns among the three countries.

During the second decade of the 2000s, the proliferation and escalation of terrorist activities perpetrated by Boko Haram in the area prompted decision-makers from the three countries to reverse the force's mandate of dealing with only common cross-border security issues. By April 2012, the MNJTF's mandate expanded to include counterterrorism (Dze-Ngwa, 2018a). Cameroon, not originally a member, joined in

2014 after Boko Haram extended its activities to its northern borders (Oluwadare, 2016; Onuoha & Oyewole, 2018). In January 2015, unfortunately, Boko Haram, through a series of coordinated attacks, overran the MNJTF headquarters in Baga, killing several soldiers and civilians (Audu, 2015; Falode, 2016; International Crisis Group, 2020). As a result, MNJTF soldiers fled; Chad and Niger had to withdraw their troops from Baga officially but continued to partake in the military operations against Boko Haram (Albert, 2017b). This ignited thoughts of relocating the force headquarters.

On January 29, 2015, the African Union (AU) met at its headquarters in Addis Ababa to discuss the expansion of the MNJTF. At the meeting, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union authorized a more energized MNJTF deployment. The expanded mandate focused on preventing Boko Haram's free access in the LCB and increased the number of troops. In addition, the leadership of the MNJTF was transferred to the LCBC. The participants also agreed to move the task force's headquarters from Baga, Nigeria, to N'Djamena, Chad, handing the force's commandership to Nigeria. On May 20, 2015, during a meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs and defense in Niamey, Niger, the MNJTF endorsed the decision to move the

headquarters to Chad's political capital, N'Djamena, under the political leadership of the LCBC.

The present-day MNJTF is a combined multinational regional formation that comprises mostly military units from four countries of the LCBC: Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Chad, and Benin. The MNJTF is "an offensive and stabilization mechanism," with the principal objective of combatting Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin, an area of about 25,000 square kilometers, with 17 million inhabitants. The establishment of the MNJTF under its current form was determined by the LCBC heads of state and governments at an extraordinary summit of the LCBC member states and Benin in Niamey, Niger, on October 7, 2014, approved by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSC AU) on November 25, 2014 (African Union, 2016a; Assanvo, 2016). The worsening security situation in the Lake Chad Basin and related deteriorating humanitarian and developmental effects necessitated the joint military force formation (Karamichalis, 2019; Oluwadare, 2016; Talla, 2020).

The new MNJTF was further structured into four sector headquarters in these cities and countries: Mora, Cameroon—Sector 1; Bagasola, Chad—Sector 2; Baga, Nigeria—Sector 3; and Diffa, Niger—Sector 4(The MNJTF, 2020; African Union,

2016). The primary reason for establishing the sector headquarters was to ease operations and prevent problems around sovereignty. The sectors are headed by a sector commander, and the soldiers from each country report to that country's sector commander. Each country's forces primarily operate within the specified sector, as stipulated in the mandate. Each country only has a 20KM right to pursue Boko Haram militants (only in hot pursuit cases) beyond its borders into the others' territory. Anything beyond this requires express authorization from the MNJTF headquarters in conformity with the MNJTF member states. These have created problems around cooperation and coordination in the task force, as discussed in Chapter 4.

The MNJTF currently has 10,000 soldiers, contributed by the member states, including 3,250 from Nigeria, 3,000 from Chad, about 2500 committed by Cameroon, 1000 from Niger, and 250 soldiers from Benin (CIA, 2021; Albert, 2017). (Although Benin provides soldiers to the MNJTF, it is not directedly affected by the Boko Haram crisis and is not a member of the LCBC. Its decision to participate in the MNJTF is out of goodwill to fellow African countries facing a dilemma). The mandate of the MNJTF stipulates that a Nigerian Force Commander always leads the task force. Its current commander

is Major General Ibrahim Manu Yusuf. A Cameroonian Deputy Commander always assists the Force Commander. Today the MNJTF is charged with the primary mandate to end the Boko Haram insurgency. It has primarily employed military operations, although it has a civilian component. The LCBC has explicitly mandated the new MNJTF to:

"*create a safe and secure environment in the areas affected by the activities of Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, to significantly reduce violence against civilians and other abuses, including sexual- and gender-based violence, in full compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law and the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP); facilitate the implementation of overall stabilization programs by the LCBC Member States and Benin in the affected areas, including the full restoration of state authority and the return of IDPs and refugees; and facilitate, within the limit of its capabilities, humanitarian operations and the delivery of assistance to the affected populations*" (About – MNJTF, 2020).
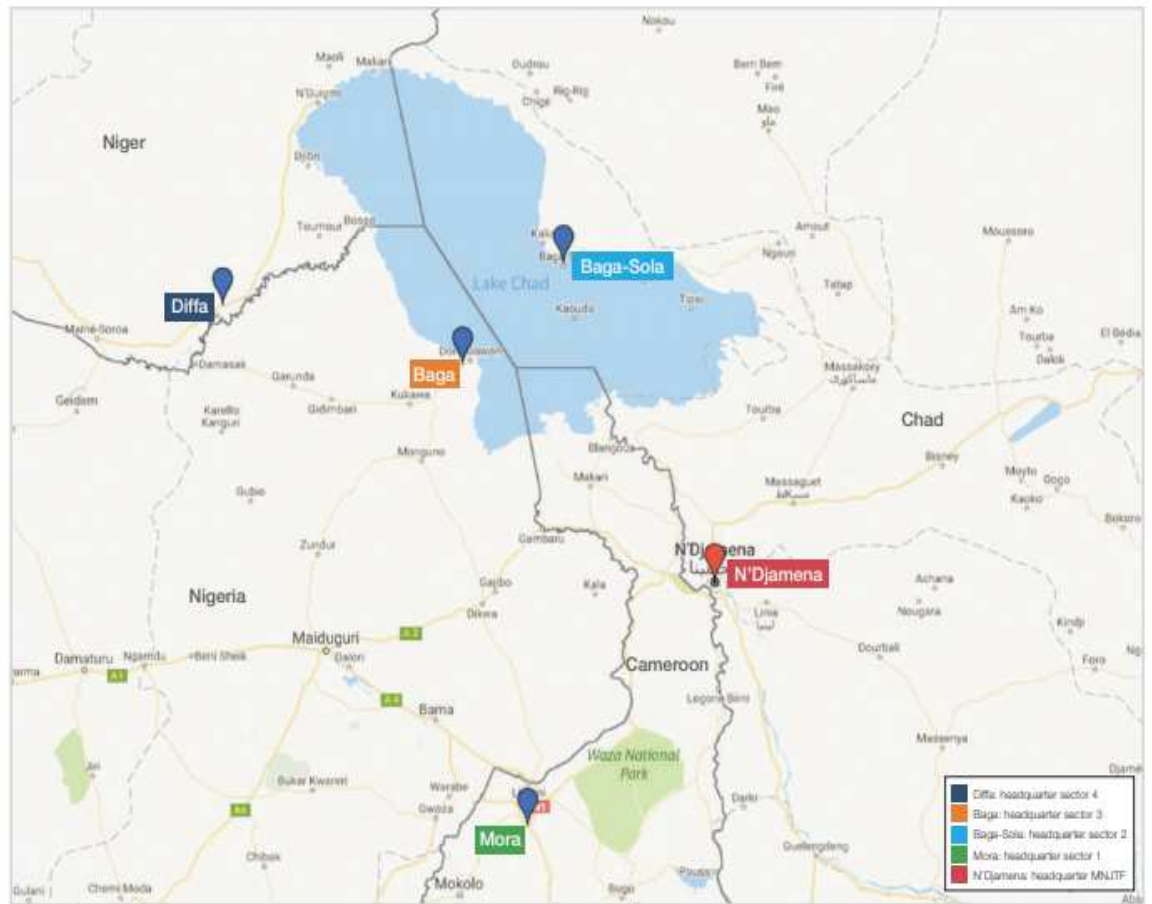
*The Locations of the MNJTF and Sector HQs – Source: ISS*

In 2015, following its authorization by the AU, the MNJTF developed a dynamic regional military response, including joint operations such as Gama Aiki I & II (translated from the Hausa language to mean "finish the job")—one of the most extensive operations by the regional body—against the terrorist group (Atangana, 2018b; Mahmood & Ani, 2018). This response has two primary objectives: 1. To contribute to reestablishing a safe and protected environment in the LCB

areas affected by Boko Haram through increased regional collaboration; and 2. To reinforce the ability of the MNJTF to coordinate, command, and conduct joint multinational operations in the region by providing it with the necessary assets, including infrastructure, communication, and transportation (African Union, 2016b).

However, the efficacy of the MNJTF to adequately address Boko Haram is deficient (as discussed extensively in the findings sections, Chapter 4.) This is despite recorded and mostly tactical successes of the task force. For example, in Nigeria, the MNJTF has contained Boko Haram's activities to the vast Sambisa Forest, and Boko Haram's supply lines from neighboring countries have been cut substantially, with some of them negotiating their surrender (Albert 2017). The capacity of Boko Haram to launch suicide attacks on Nigerian cities has been reduced drastically. Also, territories seized by Boko Haram have been recovered, several members of the sect decimated, and hostages released, warranting the Nigerian government to declare many times that Boko is defeated or "technically defeated" (Matfess, 2016; Onapajo, 2017; Idahosa, 2015). The table below demonstrates the institutional architecture of the MNJTF. The LCBC oversees the MNJTF, working closely with the AU, coordinating and

managing partner assistance. The operational section of the MNJTF comprises the MNJTF headquarters, which is supposed to provide overall command, control, and coordination of MNJTF operations that include all the forces from the participating countries to ensure adequate cooperation, complement, as well as coordination among the forces. The operational section also consists of the AU support team in N'Djamena, Chad, providing technical and logistical support to the MNJTF.
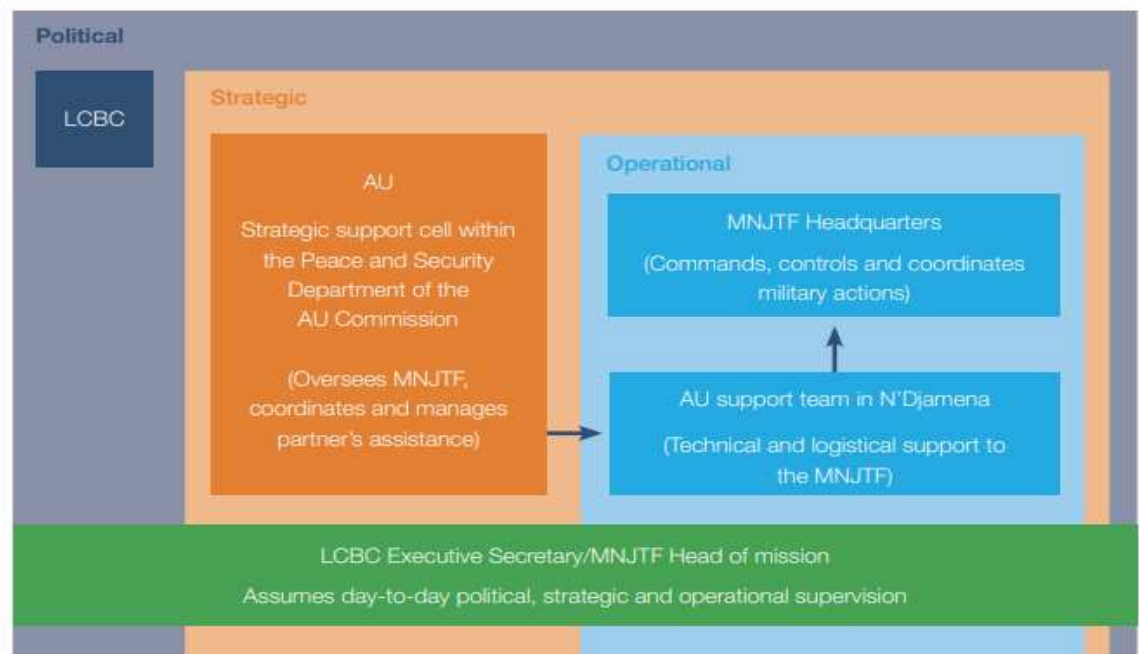


*The Institutional Architecture of the MNJTF – Source: ISS*

For more details about the MNJTF, see Appendix II.

### 1.3.3 Terrorism/Violent Extremism and Transnational Terrorism

The term terrorism first emerged in France during the French revolution of 1789-1794. However, there is not yet a single agreed-upon definition of the concept. Terrorism has been used to mean different things to different people. According to Sheehan (2007), for example, terrorism was once used to refer to the actions of dictators such as Stalin, Hitler, and Pol Pot, but it was also expanded to include attacks by nongovernment entities, such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA), Basque Separatists, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), on governments and the public at large (Sheehan, 2007, pp.31-32).

Furthermore, Title 22 of the US Code on subject matter of the general and permanent laws of the United States defines terrorism as "politically inspired violence committed clandestinely against civilians" ("US Code," n.d.; Ruby, 2002). The Oxford English Dictionary defines a system of terror as "government by intimidation as directed and carried out by the party in power in France during the French Revolution of 1789-94" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989). Thus, both state and non-state actors could be perpetrators of terrorism. Today, scholars and experts of terrorism such

as Hoffman, 2006; Jongman, 1988; Laqueur, 2001; and Schmid, 2004 have counted about 209 definitions of the term. Although each of the descriptions differs from the other, one commonality exists: "terrorism involves violence and the threat of violence" (p.32), regardless of its perpetrator—state actors, non-state actors, or individuals. The difficulty in identifying a universally agreed-upon definition of terrorism is understandable because, as Sheehan argues, what might be observed as terrorism by a group or individual, may not be considered as such by others. This aligns with the saying that "*one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter*".

This dissertation conceptualizes terrorism as the unlawful use of violence and intimidation by non-state and paramilitary security actors against an elected government and/or civilians for the purpose or pursuit of political or other goals, such as coercing the government to make political concessions or concede total defeat. On the other hand, violent extremism involves the beliefs and activities of individuals or groups that support or use violence to attain ideological, spiritual, or political objectives.

Moreover, transnational terrorism occurs when acts of terrorism transcend international boundaries, such as Boko

Haram, which originated in Nigeria but spread to Cameroon, Niger, and Chad; when terrorist activities were planned in one country but executed in another; and also when terrorist groups receive funding from allies in one or more countries. For example, ties between Boko Haram and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) raised concerns about the transnational nature of Boko Haram (Blanchard, 2014). A U.S. Government House Hearing (H.A.S.c. No.113-19) suggests that Boko Haram and AQIM in the Sahel and North Africa share financing, training, and explosive materials (Onuoha & Oyewole, 2018; US Congress House Hearing, 2013b). The relationship between Boko Haram and AQIM provides the opportunity for both groups to improve their fighting techniques and acquire knowledge or intelligence to facilitate attacks, making them more deadly (Chivvis and Liepman, 2013). Argon, 2010; Enders & Sandler, 2011; Sandler, 2014, confirm that transnational terrorism occurs when terrorist acts target foreigners. These also include kidnappings and assassination of a citizen from another country in a host country and bombings directed at one or more foreigners or foreign targets. For example, in 2011, Boko Haram bombed the UN headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria (Chothia, 2012; Onapajo, Uzodike, & Whetho, 2012), and kidnapped the wife of Cameroon's vice prime minister in a

cross-border attack in the northern town of Kolofata in Cameroon (Musa, 2014; France 24, 2014). Thus, transnational terrorism occurs when an occurrence in a venue or source country involves or concerns perpetrators and victims from another country. For example, "the August 2006 plot to use liquid explosives to blow up ten or more transatlantic flights departing the UK for the USA and Canada" (Sandler, 2015, pp.5) constitutes transnational terrorism. The bombing in Kenya and Tanzania of the U.S. embassies in 2006, even though perpetrated by the source countries' denizens, are acts of transnational terrorism for an apparent reason: "embassy's grounds represent foreign soil" (Sandler, 2015, p.5). The transnational dimension of Boko Haram prompted the directly affected countries to work in unison to find a shared solution to the protracted and devastating activities of the terrorist sect in the Lake Chad Basin.

## 1.4 The Problem Statement

The emergence of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin has taken an unprecedented extreme or violent dimension, which drew international attention to the group (Sulaiman, 2018). As mentioned earlier, the international character of the extremist group compelled countries within Africa's Lake Chad Basin sub-region to communally harness their efforts and

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resources via a regional entity, the MNJTF, to tackle the group.

As highlighted earlier, the MNJTF is a combined multinational regional formation that comprises mostly military units from four countries of the Lake Chad Basin region of Africa that suffers the brunt of the Boko Haram insurgency. Despite significant challenges, the task force has recorded remarkable successes, such as degrading Boko Haram, recovering territories captured by the group, and freeing several hostages, discussed in detail in Chapter F4. However, the MNJTF, despite presumed cooperation among the member states, has not been able to defeat Boko Haram. Why? This spurs thinking around what could drive or motivate terrorist groups such as Boko Haram to cease or at least mitigate their activities. The literature on what motivates the moderation or disappearance of terrorist organizations points to various factors, such as their incorporation in the political process, members of the group arrested by the military/police and intelligence agencies (Connable & Libicki, 2010; Cronin, 2011; Jones & Libicki, 2008). For example, the African National Congress (ANC) was designated a terrorist organization in the 1970s for decades but ended up as a lawful political party in South Africa. Nelson

Mandela, its leader, became the president of that country (Chomsky, 2002; Francis, 2010; Goodwin, 2007; Mamdani, 2002; Metz, 1986). A careful assessment of the MNJTF would allow for a better understanding of the challenges it faces in the fight against Boko Haram, especially as Africa and the world at large grapple with learning and understanding the rapidly evolving nature of terrorist groups like Boko Haram, the ramifications of such groups' activities, and what measures or efforts can motivate such groups to cease their activities.

## 1.5 The Research Goal and Questions

This doctoral dissertation's overarching theme examines the role transnational cooperative programs or efforts play in the combat against terrorism through the case study of the mission and actions of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. The study's research perspectives are:

1. To examine the nature and character of threats posed by Boko Haram in the West and Central African region;

2. To explore the challenges faced by the MNJTF in battling Boko Haram;

3. To analyze the institutional structure of the MNJTF, including its command structure, capabilities, and the

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relationship between the four-member states, Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad, and Niger, that deploy joint operations; and

4. To analyze the effectiveness/impact of the response by MNJTF to threats posed by the Boko Haram insurgent group.

5. To explore the factors that drive or motivate the demise/collapse of terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram.

Moreover, this study assesses the cooperation among the nations of the MNJTF in addressing terrorist threats posed by Boko Haram in the Western and Central African countries of Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad within the last decade (2010-2020). It seeks to understand the efforts of the MNJTF, its successes, and the challenges it faces in addressing Boko Haram. Moreover, the study considers the literature on the factors that drive or motivate the demise/collapse of terrorist organizations or mitigate their activities in analyzing the challenges in overcoming Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. The findings provide actionable recommendations for future collaborations and engagements within the MNJTF and other regional bodies, governments, civil society, local and international organizations involved in tackling similar threats on the African continent and beyond. The research questions, therefore, include:

1. What are the nature and mechanisms for cooperation among the member states of the LCBC that make up the MNJTF?

2. What are the challenges faced by the MNJTF, as an organization, in the fight against Boko Haram?

3. How effective has the MNJTF been in the fight against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin?

4. What are the lessons learned by the regional governments and local and international organizations in the context of transnational cooperation in the fight against Boko Haram in particular and terrorism in general?

5. Drawing on the literature on which factors drive the collapse or disappearance of terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram, what is a strategy to eradicate, and not just weaken, Boko Haram to which MJNTF and its major regional and international stakeholders could contribute?

The log frame in Appendix I provides a snapshot of the methodological approach to address the above questions. It outlines the study's overall goal, the primary objectives, and how the study's purposes connect to the planned activities and the resultant outputs and outcomes. The outcomes then connect to the overall goal, which is to understand the mission and actions of the MNJTF in the fight against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin of Africa.

## 1.6 Conclusion

The transnational nature of terrorism and violent extremist activities in Africa underlies the reason for concerted efforts to confront terrorist threats in the region. The MNJTF in the Lake Chad Basin subregion is a prominent example of these collaborative efforts. On the one hand, the MNJTF has scored remarkable military success in the fight against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin.

However, the body has focused predominantly on military interventions with minimal attention to causative factors such as poor governance, politics of exclusion, and limited social and economic opportunities, as stipulated in the original (unpublished) MNJTF's Concept of Operation (CONOPS). The literature reveals that responses to counterterrorism in the Central and West Africa subregions have included mainly intelligence sharing and military intervention. According to International Crisis Group (2020), the AU and the LCBC developed a Regional Stabilization Strategy (AU & LCBC, 2018) for the Lake Chad Basin in 2018, aiming to move counterinsurgency efforts in the area from primarily military campaigns to civilian-led activities. These include political cooperation, improved governance and social contract development/support, effective disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, reinsertion and reintegration of persons

associated with Boko Haram, and education, among others, which address the root causes of the Boko Haram crisis. Unfortunately, the plan is yet to make any headways. The capacity of the MNJTF to address the non-kinetic aspects alleged to cause Boko Haram remains undermined, although even the CONOPS included civilian measures to deal with the insurgency.

While scholars like Feldstein and Feldstein (2018) and Myer (2015), among others, have recognized that a comprehensive toolbox, including aspects of good governance, especially the creation of conditions that dignify all humans—social, political, economic, and cultural situations—should be added to the toolbox of the MNJTF, and its partners, such as the AU, European Union (EU), France, United Kingdom (UK), and the US, these stakeholders are yet to adopt this view. Whereas military intervention is necessary for tackling immediate threats posed to human security by violent extremism or terrorism, an approach recognizing the underlying causes of extreme behaviors that fuel terrorism in the region can more adequately address the threats. Obamamoye (2017) argues that military coercion will undoubtedly achieve the short-run goal of subduing the group, as witnessed during the 1804 Usman Dan Fodio's Jihad (Nmah & Amanambu, 2017; Rasheed, 2012; Willis, 1967) and the Maitatsine sect in the

1970s and 1980s (Hickey, 1984; Isichei, 1987) in northern Nigeria. But measures to meet the longterm goal of eliminating Boko Haram and preventing its reemergence and/or the emergence of another violent terrorist group in the region are essential. The absence of a longterm approach will only incubate terrorism (Council on Foreign Relations, 2011; Newman, 2007; Patrick, 2007) sooner or later. The question that remains unanswered is, why do the stakeholders not understand and commit themselves to these approaches? Why has the MNJTF not been able to eradicate Boko Haram?

Regional cooperation in the fight against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin is limited. Even in instances where partnership does exist, such collaboration includes only a military alliance, which has failed to adequately address both the immediate and longterm threats posed by Boko Haram. Therefore, this study strives to understand a. Why regional cooperation, specifically among the countries of the MNJTF, is limited and b. The reasons behind the inability of the MNJTF to eradicate Boko Haram. The study also seeks to comprehend the degree to which transnational collaboration has been effective in tackling Boko Haram, with particular attention to other factors, such as good governance, the provision of social and economic opportunities, and respect for human rights, among others worthy of consideration in the

attempt to exterminate the terrorist group and to prevent its reemergence.

# Chapter 2: The Methodology of the Study

## 2.1 The Research Method

This doctoral research employs the qualitative method of data collection, focusing on content analysis and in-depth one-on-one interviews to address the research questions: a) To what extent do the member countries of the MNJTF cooperate in combating the threat posed by Boko Haram in Lake Chad Basin? b) What are the challenges faced by the MNJTF in the fight against Boko Haram? c) What is the effectiveness and impact of transnational cooperation in the fight against Boko Haram within the context of the MNJTF? d) What lessons can be learned by the regional governments and local and international organizations within the framework of transnational cooperation (ie, MNJTF) to combat Boko Haram? e) Drawing on the literature on which factors drive the collapse or disappearance of terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram, what is a strategy to eradicate, and not just weaken, Boko Haram, to which MJNTF and its major regional and international stakeholders could contribute?

The unit of analysis for the study includes individuals at the micro/meso and macro levels. At the macro level, retired and active officials of the MNJTF are studied to comprehend Boko Haram's impact and the efforts at addressing

the terrorist group at the regional level, the Lake Chad Basin. At the micro/meso levels, community leaders, politicians, local group leaders, and leaders of domestic and international organizations involved in the fight against Boko Haram are interviewed to get their perspective regarding the role of the MNJTF in tackling Boko Haram. At both levels, the study seeks to understand the impact of the Boko Haram crisis and what the MNJTF and other relevant stakeholders involved in the fight against Boko Haram, such as the UN, AU, and the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), among others, could do better. Literature and documents mainly aimed at examining Boko Haram's impact and its efforts at both levels were analyzed to provide useful recommendations to future efforts to combat Boko Haram and similar groups in Africa and beyond.

The table below demonstrates a snapshot of the levels of analysis, units of study, and interaction levels discussed above.

| Levels of Analysis | Units of Analysis: Individuals | Levels of Interaction |
|---|---|---|
| Micro/Meso | Community leaders, politicians, local group leaders; government ministers; officials of domestic and international organizations | Local communities and government ministries – defense, foreign affairs in Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad, and Nigeria; local and international organizations – Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), UN, AU, AFRICOM |
| Macro | Both civilian and military officials, retired and active | MNJTF (Lake Chad Basin) |

## 2.2 Research Design

During the subject matter expert interviews, the research employs semi-structured questions in an open-ended format. The essential subject matter expert consultations involved conversations with a select group of individuals identified to provide the required information, ideas, and insights regarding a particular issue (Krishna Kumar, 1989, p.1). Kumar (1989) posits that because the data collected

during subject matter expert interviews originates from knowledgeable people, such information and insights are unobtainable through other methods. This study uses semi-structured and open-ended questions to achieve essential perspectives and ideas from the participants during the interviews regarding the effectiveness, challenges, and impact of the MNJTF. According to Babbie (2011), open-ended questions allow the respondents to provide independent answers to the questions asked; in addition, it guards against the bias that might result from suggesting responses to the participants (Reja et al., 2003). To probe the research questions on the cooperation, effectiveness, challenges, and impact of transitional collaboration to tackle Boko Haram, semi-structured, open-ended questions and subquestions regarding each partnership level were asked. For example, "What do you think about the military (or financial, logistical, political) cooperation among the member countries of the MNJTF in the fight against Boko Haram"? "What do you like or what don't you like about this collaboration"? "What advice or recommendations would you provide to the MNJTF to enable it adequately tackle Boko Haram"? "What are the needs for the communities dealing with Boko Haram?". Probing, a technique that social researchers use to solicit additional

information during interviews (Willis, 1999), was employed to elicit more details where needed.

Moreover, to ensure that adequate and well-balanced data is collected, the study included over 50 subject matter expert interviews with retired and active officials of the MNJTF. Community leaders such as chiefs and police officers (within Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad, and the Republic of Niger), whose communities are directly affected by the crisis, were consulted. Local and international organization officials involved in the fight against Boko Haram, such as the AU, UN, AFRICOM, CJTF, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), were interviewed. Given the travel restrictions and health risks posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews occurred virtually, mostly, via Zoom. In instances where network connectivity posed a problem, the questionnaire was shared with the participants for their input. The judgmental and snowballing methods (discussed below) were employed to identify participants for the study, and the virtual data collection strategy gave priority to the participants' preferences. In sum, this study interviewed over fifty participants. The interview questions were carefully structured, worded, and pre-tested (pilot studied / peer-reviewed) with friends and colleagues to ensure

clarity, singleness of purpose, and relevance to the transnational cooperation to tackle Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. During the pre-testing phase, the participants were asked to provide their views and feedback and respond to the questions. The interviews validated the data obtained through content analysis/archival review.

Additionally, to acquire a full understanding of the research topic, the study launched with the content analysis of non-living materials, such as texts in their varied forms, including books, articles, speeches, meeting minutes, memos, reports, newspaper articles, and journals, among others, that are relevant to the research topic. Babbie (2011) defines content analysis as the study of recorded human communications such as books, magazines, newspapers, and speeches. Shulamit Reinharz (1992) presents two primary advantages of content analysis: (1) the data is not interactive and (2) the data exists independent of the research and thus can be considered to have developed more organically, giving the data a unique level of authenticity (Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 228). Other advantages of content analysis include its cost-effectiveness (Babbie 2011, p. 368). This study examined books, newspapers, speeches, memos, websites, and journal articles, with particular attention to terrorism, particularly the Boko Haram extremist group, and

efforts directed at addressing its threats in the Lake Chad Basin by MNJTF.  To achieve this, I made great use of the University of Maryland library system, the Library of Congress, the library of the United States Institute of Peace, and English-language media such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), among others, with a focus on Africa, and particular relevance to the research topic. I also regularly attend, virtually, terrorism and violent extremism events on  Boko Haram that are relevant to Africa in the Washington DC area and beyond to boost my understanding of the subject matter. During data collection, I paid attention to critical contemporary happenings to capture essential developments that inform the research.

## 2.3 Selection of Participants

This study adopts the nonprobability sampling method, specifically, the purposive or judgemental, and snowball sampling, to identify the participants. The study also employs computer systems and in-person library visits (when possible), to identify relevant publications such as books, articles, reports, and newspaper articles related to the research topic. These techniques and the primary reason for

their selection are discussed in more detail in the subsequent paragraphs.

Purposive or judgemental sampling is a nonprobability sampling in which the researcher determines the units of analysis based on the judgment about which ones will be the most useful (Babbie, 2011). To effectively study the role of the MNJTF in combating Boko Haram, it is essential to identify critical stakeholders knowledgeable about the issue. This research employed the snowballing approach which Babbie (2011) further defines as a sampling technique in which each person interviewed may be asked to recommend other study subjects. To adequately address the research questions regarding the cooperation, challenges, impact, and effectiveness of transnational coordination among the countries of the MNJTF, it is pertinent to identify the essential personnel within this body that can conveniently speak to the issues at stake. Also, participants in crucial communities in the Far North region of Cameroon, northeast Nigeria, Diffa in Niger, and N'Djamena in Chad that suffer the brunt of the insurgency were identified to partake in the study. The snowballing method is indispensable because the rebellion has displaced at least 2.4 million people from these communities (UNHCR, 2018). Engaging with community leaders in communities directly affected by the crisis is particularly

crucial because it helps answer the fourth research question: What lessons can be learned by the regional governments and local and international organizations in the context of transnational cooperation in the fight against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin? This question generates findings from the local communities and practitioners that would eventually be incorporated by the governments within the MNJTF and regional and international organizations to address Boko Haram in the region. Audio-visual materials, such as recorders, captured this information during the interviews with the interviewees' permission and with anonymity promised. In instances where the recording wasn't permitted, I employed active listening skills—provided feedback in the paraphrased interpretation of what is said by the interviewee for their validation—to capture full and comprehensive notes. Below is my subject matter expert (SME) analysis table, which helped me to identify essential participants:

SME Analysis Table: Transnational Cooperation to Combat Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin - MNJTF

| MNJTF Countries and others | Retired Military & Civilian Officers of the MNJTF | Minister of Foreign Affairs of MNJTF countries | Defense Ministers of MNJTF countries | Active Military & Civilian officer of the MNJTF | Community Leaders in affected communities | In'tl Orgs.: USAID, USIP, DoS, etc. | Active and retired officials of AFRICOM | Active and retired officials of CJTF |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Niger | x | x | x | x | x | | | |
| Nigeria | x | x | x | x | x | | | x |
| Cameroon | x | X | x | x | x | | | |
| Chad | X | x | x | x | x | | | |
| Int'l Actors | | | | | | x | x | |

| Level of Significance | Entities | Rational | Selection Basis |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | UN | Supports the mandate of the MNJTF | Lit. Review |
| 3 | MNJTF | Primary body combatting Boko Haram | Lit. Review |
| 1 | African Union | Supports the mandate of the MNJTF | Lit. Review |
| 2 | CJTF | Primary vigilante group fighting Boko Haram | Lit. Review |
| 3 | Community Leaders | Senior police officers and traditional leaders in communities affected by Boko Haram | Lit. Review |
| 1 | AFRICOM | Supports the mandate of the MNJTF | Lit. Review/Subjective |
| 1 | LCBC | Provide overall policy guidance to the MNJTF | Lit. Review/Subjective |

Key: 3 = High; 2 = Medium; 1 = Low; 0 = Irrelevant; x = Location

Identifying relevant stakeholders or individuals (samples) knowledgeable enough about the issue at stake or those directly affected by the crisis ensured the reliability and validity of the data collected. Moreover, the numerous interviews, conducted primarily in English and Pidgin or West African Creole, served as a platform for data validation as

findings from previous interviews were tested with participants to ensure consistency across the broader research sample.

## 2.4 Case Study Selection Justification

I was born to a Cameroonian father and a Nigerian mother and enjoyed my teenage years growing up in these countries. My father was a Gendarme for the Cameroon government and spent most of his service years in northern Cameroon around the Lake Chad Basin, where Boko Haram is prevalent today. My father's work in the region helped me gain trust and access to interlocutors, especially security officials, who quickly opened up and appeared more willing to talk each time I mentioned that my dad was a gendarme and worked in the area for many years. My parents even met and got married in Kousséri, a city in the Far North Region of Cameroon, bordering Chad, across the Chari River from N'Djamena. As mentioned earlier, the Lake Chad Basin area is rich in agriculture, pastoralism, fishing, and other resources, attracting migrants from across the Sahel. Businesses boomed despite the presence of cross-border banditry and other crimes. The emergence of Boko Haram in the region changed the dynamics, and the once vibrant Basin became a hub for atrocities and threats to human and national security driven

by terrorist activities of Boko Haram. In 2015, Boko Haram emerged as the most lethal terrorist organization globally. Its spread to the other countries of the Lake Chad Basin warranting the four riparian countries to the Lake Chad to harness resources under the auspices of the MNJTF to address the threats posed by the sect in the region.

The MNJTF is a unique kind of formation. It is not a regular peacekeeping mission, like the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). It instead serves as a coordination hub for military efforts against organized crime and the Boko Haram perpetrated terrorism. The formation of the MNJTF was the first time in Africa that countries within a subregion voluntarily decided to harness their resources to confront transnational crimes. With the uprising of Boko Haram in 2009 that saw about 1,000 people killed, the member states relaunched the MNJTF in 2012, increased its operational capacity to 10,000 to tackle the sect in the region. After about six years in which the MNJTF launched a dynamic response, primarily military operations against Boko Haram, I am anxious to understand its successes, challenges and, perhaps, suggest recommendations for improvement, based partly on my experience working for a reputable peace institution.

As a staff of USIP in Washington, DC, I have had the privilege to contribute, participate in and learn from various peacebuilding processes worldwide. "The United States Institute of Peace is a national, nonpartisan, independent Institute, founded by the US Congress in 1984 and dedicated to the proposition that a world without violent conflict is possible, practical, and essential for the US and global security. In conflict zones abroad, the Institute works with local partners to prevent, mitigate, and resolve violent conflict. The Institute pursues its mission by linking research, policy, training, analysis, and direct action to support those working to build a  more peaceful, inclusive world" (United States Institute of Peace, 2019). Focusing on MNJTF allows me both to contribute to the literature on joint international military regimes, while also exploring the MNJTF's efforts against Boko Haram as a case study.

## 2.5 Analysis Plan

The purpose of this dissertation research is descriptive but also explanatory. Babbie (2011) defined descriptive research as the study and reporting a situation or event and attempting to answer questions of what, where, when, and how. On the other hand, explanatory research seeks to explain the "why" question (Babbie, 2011). This is not unlike most

qualitative studies, which often aim for descriptive and explanatory research. To analyze the data collected during the investigation, I identified common patterns that emerge around specific data issues and examine how these models address the broader research questions. The research paid attention to the frequency of the patterns and any deviations from the trends.

Additionally, it captured exciting stories, which shed light on further research questions, warranting the need to revise some of them. The data analysis process occurred throughout the project's life, from the first piece of data collected to the last. This was important because it allowed for time to revise the questions (with my supervisor's approval) when necessary and aid in data validation. The data was coded based on the information—themes, phrases, among others—that emerges as the research was being conducted. Each time data was collected, I processed the information, and immediately recorded the details, highlighting the time, date, and things that stood out from the interaction, thus reducing the data by eliminating useless information. Once the data was carefully categorized, the findings were reviewed and interpreted to focus on answering the research questions before drawing any conclusions. The Nvivo computer program helped transcribe and analyze the data collected

because of its user-friendly nature and compatibility with qualitative data analysis.

Furthermore, this research adopted triangulation to ensure the validity or credibility of the data collected and the study's findings. Heale and Forbes (2013) define triangulation as the use of more than one method of exploring questions. For example, it could be the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. However, it could involve two or more approaches within one method, such as using one-on-one interviews and archival analysis, both of which are mutual approaches to qualitative research. Heale & Forbes (2013)and Natow (2020) argue that triangulation aims to increase sureness or confidence in the study results by validating a proposition using at least two independent measures or approaches.

Therefore, triangulation involves comparing and crosschecking multiple data sources through follow-up interviews with the same people or data collected from people with different perspectives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A combination of the findings from various methods allows for a more comprehensive picture of the results than a single approach would accomplish (Heale & Forbes, 2013). According to Merriam & Tisdell, triangulation is the best-known strategy to shore up internal validity (2016). As indicated

earlier, this project employed two qualitative approaches to data collection: archival reviews and one-on-one interviews. These approaches guaranteed the validity and credibility of the data collected and the findings of the study.

## 2.6 Limitations of the Research

This dissertation research undoubtedly encountered a few hiccups.

First, a study of a military regimen—the MNJTF and how it counters Boko Haram—is sensitive and this affected the research, although to a limited extent. A few soldiers and senior officials rejected my interview requests for fear of reprisal. Other soldiers indicated that they would honor my interview request only after completing their mission with the MNJTF. Efforts to interview active Boko Haram militants were also futile, as a few I attempted to reach through a connection rejected my request due to lack of trust. The insights and contributions of the militants, I believe, would have added another perspective to the findings of this research.

Secondly, I conducted all the interviews for this research remotely. I originally intended to travel to the four member-states of the MNJTF and the headquarters of the AU based out of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. However, given the COVID-19 travel

restrictions, I missed the opportunity to interact in the field directly with the respondents. Field research would have allowed me to capture vital observations and firsthand experience about the happenings on the ground, including the minutiae and intricacies of military operations in the region. To mitigate this challenge, I asked several follow-up questions, inclduing imploring the interviwees to share with me happennings around them during the interviews. I equally observed the demeanor of the respondents closely to get a sense of their surroundings.

Thirdly, many of the soldiers I interviewed were undertaking an operation against Boko Haram in the dreaded Sambissa Forest, Boko Haram's principal hideout, where phone and internet connectivity is deplorable. I had to wait for weekends when the soldiers retreated to the city centers to recuperate for the interviews to take place. Some interviews with respondents in the Lake Chad Basin areas in northern Cameroon ended prematurely because of connectivity problems. I had to follow up with the questions via email, which often took more extended periods for the responses to come back.

In a nutshell, this study employs qualitative research methodologies to include archival reviews of crucial documents, including sensitive government documents, some of them unpublished, and virtual one-on-one interviews with

participants who were carefully selected to answer the research questions.

# Chapter 3: Background Literature Review

## 3.1 Introduction

The literature review explores the concept of terrorism and counterterrorism within the framework of the MNJTF in the Lake Chad Basin of Africa. First, it discusses the evolving nature and manifestations of terrorism on the African continent, especially in the Lake Chad Basin. Second, it reviews the regional strategies to addressing insurgency or violent extremism in the Lake Chad Basin. Third, it examines whether the military response by the MNJTF can address or eradicate the menace of Boko Haram in the region, based on expert opinions on how terrorist groups generally mitigate their activities.

## 3.2 Evolution, Nature and Manifestations of Terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin of Africa

Violent extremism is a fundamental challenge to the Lake Chad Basin governments, warranting Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon to launch a joint military effort to combat it. Connor (2017) argues that "the impact of just one group, Boko Haram, alone on these countries is of unprecedented scale" (p. 5). The World Bank (2017) supports Connor's argument with figures: about fifteen million people have been affected by the insurgency, resulting in over 27,000 deaths and 2.4

million displaced since the uprising started in 2009. As of 2020, the impact of the crisis has continued to expand. Deutsche Welle (2020)reported that over 35,000 people have lost their lives to the insurgency, with 363 civilians killed between January and September 2020 (Ewang, 2020) alone.

Interestingly, Boko Haram is not the first nor even the second insurgency in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin. According to Comolli (2015), insurgents had operated in the Lake Chad Basin since the 19th century, when Usman Dan Fodio led a jihadist movement, using guerilla warfare to assert Fulani supremacy over the Hausas in current-day Nigeria. Briggs (2018) supported Comolli's assertion and further stated that the Maitatsine sect that existed before Boko Haram's formation had a large following by 1992 and amassed about 10,000 more followers after that. The group's founder and leader, Maroua Maitatsine, a Cameroonian from Maroua in northern Cameroon, relocated to Nigeria around 1945 and settled in Nigeria's Kano state as a controversial preacher proclaiming that "karatun boko (Western education) was haram (forbidden)" (Connor, 2017, p.7), repeating Boko Haram's prominent doctrine that Western education and culture are forbidden. One could conveniently argue that Boko Haram drew its rhetoric from earlier groups, especially given that Sheik Abubakar Mahmoud, under whom Boko Haram's first leader,

Mohammed Yusuf studied, was another renowned Muslim that advanced militant Islam in the 1980s, the days of the Maitatsine sect (Daniel Agbiboa, 2013; Aguwa, 1997). However, unlike Maitatsine, Boko Haram was able to capture and control a large swathe of territory. Adesoji (2011)posits that despite the vast difference, including the length of time between the Maitatsine uprising and the Boko Haram insurgency, "the conditions that sustained the rising in the 1980s are relevant to the Boko Haram situation today." Although primarily seen as a Nigerian problem, Boko Haram, like the Maitatsine sect, relied on the deep and expansive political, social, cultural, and economic ties that cut across the Lake Chad Basin to solidify its base and recruit sympathizers to its ranks.

Boko Haram, an Islamic terrorist group, founded by Muhammed Yusuf around 2002 in Borno State, Nigeria (Walker, 2012; Aguwa, 2017), started as a socio-political and religious movement that condemned corruption, poor governance, and the absence of development in northern Nigeria, including youth unemployment and extreme poverty (Aghedo, 2014; Okoro, 2015; Agbiboa, 2015). According to David, Asuelime, and Onapajo, 2015; Olaniyan and Asuelime, 2014; Khan and Cheri, 2016; and Atangana, 2018, fanatic jihadism among the Kanuri people of northeast Nigeria,

massive unemployment, and disappointment over governance are not unrelated to the roots and triggers of Boko Haram's multinational and notorious movement in the Lake Chad Basin. The regional leaders' lukewarm attitudes towards addressing these issues have only compounded and emboldened extremist activities and groups. In Nigeria, for example, the authorities' intransigence to address the factors that drove Boko Haram in the country, especially following the extrajudicial murder of Boko Haram's first leader, Mohammed Yusuf, by Nigerian security forces in 2009, bolstered the group to developed ambitious political goals such as overthrowing the Nigerian government and establishing a presence in neighboring countries ((Buchanan–Clarke & Lekalake, 2016; Thurston, 2016), especially along the borders where government security presence is weak or absent, facilitating the flow of criminal networks and weapons, followed by the adoption of violent tactics by 2011 (Griffin, 2020; International Crisis Group, 2017; Omenma, 2020; Taub, 2017).

According to Collier (2002), there are two baseline factors or theories advanced as the causes of a civil war, which has now extended to other forms of conflict, including insurgencies (Abadie, 2006; Ajide & Alimi, 2021; Godovičová, 2013): "greed" and "grievance." Regarding greed, actors who

join extremist groups do so to better their economic situation. The combatants reflect within themselves the cost/benefit of joining the group or staying out. In areas like the Lake Chad Basin, which is currently among the poorest in Africa, Boko Haram took advantage and provided low-interest loans, foodstuff (often stolen) to desperate people (Brak, 2016; Daouda, 2020; Ewi & Salifu, 2017; Ibrahim & Bala, 2018) to win their sympathy.  Thus, Boko Haram's causes in the Lake Chad Basin connect to several multifaceted factors, entrenched in the interplay of lack of socio-economic resources, social or economic marginalization, among others (Douma, 2006). These factors relate to bad governance, which translates to corruption, and poverty, and have continued to be the key triggers and drivers of extremist activities in the Lake Chad Basin (Daouda, 2020; Downie, 2015; Ibrahim & Bala, 2018;  Mustapha & Hamid, 2019; Okoro, 2014; UN Security Council, 2018). Unfortunately, terrorism further compounds these challenges as it threatens nations' stability, ushering in severe economic hardship and instability that adversely affect innocent civilians (Coats, 2017, pp. 25-26; Jackson, 2007; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011; Sandler & Enders, 2008).

The "grievance" theory, on the other hand, "focuses on ethnic, religious, political divisions and inequality as causes of conflict" (Collier, 2002, p.1). Although Boko Haram

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is said to have started as a socio-political movement (Aghedo, 2014; Okoro, 2015; Agbiboa, 2015), it also advocates for the enforcement of Sharia Law. It believes that the restoration of Islam's purity via Sharia law enforcement would resolve the governance issues in the north and Nigeria at large (Waldek & Jayasekara, 2011; Olanrewaju, Omotoso, & Alabi, 2018). Canci and Odukoya (2016)reiterate that the name Boko Haram is translated from Hausa to mean Western education and culture is sinful. Thus, Boko Haram militants advocate for a government governed by Sharia law instead of a democratic one practiced by the Nigerian government. But it is hard to conclude if Boko Haram is religious or ethnic. Canci and Odukoya further posit that Boko Haram has targeted more Muslims than Christians. It is also more of an ethnic war in northern Nigeria and has mostly remained there (Agbiboa, 2013). Regardless of whether Boko Haram was caused and perpetuated by "greed" or "grievance," there is consensus that perceptions of deprivation exist; thus, comprehensive measures are necessary to end the menace.

However, the governments of the LCBC that constitute the MNJTF have prioritized military responses to address terrorism, and Boko Haram in particular (Human Rights Watch, 2015; Mahmood & Ani, 2018; Tams, 2009; Thorpe, 2019), even as ideas around a civilian option exist in the original Concept

of Operations (CONOPs) (unpublished) of the MNJTF. While these military responses have succeeded in reducing violence and can address direct threats to human security, they have failed to address the socio-economic and political origins of Boko Haram (International Crisis Group, 2017; Kassim & Nwankpa, 2018; Maiangwa et al., 2012; A. R. Mustapha, 2014). On this note, it is crucial to examine the literature on the regional strategy to combat Boko Haram and/or violent extremism in the Lake Chad Basin.

## 3.3 The MNJTF as a Regional Strategy for Combating Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin

Understanding the MNJTF as a regional security strategy in the Lake Chad Basin requires a careful examination of the regional security complex theory by Buzan et al. (2003), which espouses that in geographic contiguity, where juxtaposition binds several nations, the security of one state rests on the other (Buzan et al., 2003), as discussed in Chapter 1. This idea instigated the formation of the multinational joint task force against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. Boko Haram's activities beyond Nigeria, where it originated, and its aggressive presence in Cameroon, Niger, and Chad, with repercussions beyond security to include sabotaging or undermining the economy, education, social relations between

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the state and its citizens, and Nigeria's reputation in the region, meant that a regional cooperative response from the neighboring countries was critical (Comolli, 2015). The result was the emergence of a better-funded MNJTF of about 10,000 troops, mandated by the LCBC and authorized by the AU and deployed in the Lake Chad Basin in 2015 (Kodjo, 2019), which has recorded some tactical successes.

Notably, the MNJTF has efficaciously weakened the capacity of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. Starting in 2015, the MNJTF launched a series of large-scale military operations, including Operation Gama Aiki ("Finish the Job") I&II, to destroy the group's strongholds in the Lake Chad Basin (Assanvo, 2016). The joint operations by the MNJTF forces saw the liberation of crucial border towns such as Damasak, where Boko Haram launched attacks (AU Press Statement, 2016; Reuters, 2016), thus improving relative security in the region (Assanvo, 2016). Assanvo (2016) also argues that the MNJTF's intervention in 2015-2016 led to the killing of about 675 Boko Haram members, the arrest of nearly 566 others, the destruction of roughly 32 training camps and factories where Boko Haram manufactured Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and the freeing of several hostages.

However, about seven years since the reinvigoration of the MNJTF, Boko Haram remains viable in the Lake Chad Basin

(Galeazzi et al., 2017). The terrorist group is currently estimated to have 1500 soldiers (Congressional Research Services, 2018). Since 2015, Boko Haram has launched over 100 attacks on armed forces personnel in the region, often accompanied by confiscations of "millions of rounds of ammunition, thousands of rifles, and assorted firearms, hundreds of military vehicles, including armored tanks, and self-propelled artillery" (Campbell, 2020), among others. Boko Haram thus has continued to exercise irregular attacks in isolated locations, aiming at weak targets such as markets and bus stops (Ezeana, 2018). The inability of the MNJTF to suppress Boko Haram is blamed on several factors.

According to Ezeana (2018), the MNJTF also faces challenges associated with a weak command and control, and financial difficulties, which have hampered its ability to execute its mandate effectively. For example, The MNJTF has barely raised the $700 million needed to cover its costs since inception (Ezeana, 2018). Several scholars argue that military efforts are expensive (Berinsky, 2007; Collier, 2006; Gelpi, 1997; Lalman, 1988), compared to alternative approaches to conflict resolution, such as negotiation and mediation, among others, and cannot address the threats posed by insurgent groups such as Boko Haram (Thurston, 2016) when the root factors that gave rise to the insurgency remain

unresolved (Onuoha, 2014). Indeed, military combat alone will not comprehensively address the threat posed by a group like Boko Haram. So, what would eradicate or perhaps, subdue Boko Haram?

## 3.4 Can the MNJTF End Boko Haram?

In discerning a potential better management or, better still, end of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin, this section explores the literature on how terrorist organizations have generally ended, to guide recommendations to institutions, such as the MNJTF, tasked with a mandate of eradicating terrorist groups such as Boko Haram. The big question is, do terrorist organizations ever end? Although a tricky question to answer, Jones & Libicki (2008) argue that all terrorist organizations eventually end. However, the factors leading to their demise vary. Since 1968, evidence has demonstrated that terrorist groups mostly end based on six factors. These include: political negotiation; the decision to join the political process; the killing of group members by police or intelligence agencies; defeat of the terrorist organization by military forces; economic sanctions against state sponsors of terrorism deprive the terrorist group of sufficient resources to maintain functioning; the splintering of the group; or the group's achievement of its goals (Jones &

Libicki, 2008; Weinberg, 2012). Of course, the fragmentation of a terrorist organization does not signal its end. Instead, it demonstrates the group's willingness to continue fighting under separate groups motivated by the availability of resources such as money or the desire to reach their goals quickly. Cronin (2011) buttressed this assertion by further outlining six patterns that explain the demise of terrorism: "decapitation, negotiation, success, failure, elimination by repression and reorientation into other forms of violence" (p.2). In all the literature reviewed, one thing remained clear: while military intervention is crucial in fighting terrorism, the military response alone has seldom terminated a terrorist organization (Carr, 1996; Crenshaw, 1987; Dolnik, 2002; Hughes, 2011; Sheehan, 2007). The case of terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin is a crucial example. The MNJTF has not succeeded in eradicating Boko Haram. Bakker et al., 2016; Bjorgo & Horgan, 2008; Cronin, 2006; Jones & Libicki, 2008 argue that the transition to the political process is the most common way to end terrorist organizations. But that also depends on the interest of the terrorist organization in joining the political process. Although Boko Haram started as a socio-political movement that wanted good governance (Agbiboa, 2013; David et al., 2015; Downie, 2015; Ibrahim & Bala, 2018), it has not indicated any interest in forming a

political party. Therefore, it remains that the best alternative is engaging the Boko Haram leadership in dialogue and addressing the underlying governance issues that prompted the group in the first place (Abadie, 2006; Adelaja et al., 2018; Feldman, 2009; Thurston, 2016).

Furthermore, for terrorist organizations for whom a change to or engagement with the political process is unlikely, policing is the next standard route to achieve their ultimate demise. Why? Jones and Libicki (2008) posits that the police and intelligence services have better training and information to infiltrate and disrupt terrorist establishments than do the military. The police, for example, is the primary arm of the government concerned with internal security. The police and intelligence agencies maintain their presence in local cities, towns, and villages. Thus, they possess a better understanding of the threat in the local surroundings. But that might not be the case in the Lake Chad Basin. There are communities, for example, where Boko Haram operates, in the Lake Chad Basin, especially in Nigeria, where the police are either absent, because there are not enough police officers to deploy, or not trusted because of their human rights abuses against citizens (Campbell, 2017; Dudley, 2013; Last, 2008). These are compounded by a high level of corruption in the police force, partly due to poor selection

and training, inadequate pay, and poor education. According to Human Rights Watch (2010), "…high-level police officials embezzle staggering sums of public funds meant to cover basic police operations. Senior police officers also enforce a perverse system of "returns" in which rank-and-file officers are compelled to pay up the chain of command a share of the money they extort from the public. Those charged with police oversight, discipline, and reform have for years failed to take effective action, thereby reinforcing impunity for police officers of all ranks who regularly perpetrate crimes against the citizens they are mandated to protect" (p.2).

Moreover, some terrorist groups end because they achieved their goal or attain victory. Good examples are "*the Irgun Zvai Leumi in Israel, the Ethniki Organisis Kyprion Agoniston (EOKA) in Cyprus, and the National Liberation Front in Algeria*" (Jones & Libicki, 2008, p. 14). While terrorism is abhorred and never condoned, these examples provide convincing evidence that terrorism could also bring about political change.

Other factors, such as religion and the size of the group, determine its fate. It is almost impossible or takes a long time to eliminate religious terrorist groups (Cronin, 2006; Jones & Libicki, 2008), perhaps because of the preachings conveniently passed on from one generation to

another in church settings. This is also true for groups with large sizes. Terrorist organizations with over ten thousand members are likely to persist and succeed than groups with fewer members (Daxecker & Hess, 2012; Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2013). However, there are terrorist groups that have lived for many years but have far fewer than 10,000 members. In Colombia, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) emerged in 1964, and as of 2013, it had estimated forces of about 1,380–3000 (Zapata, 2003; Zimmering, 2009). Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin is currently estimated to have 1500 soldiers (Congressional Research Services, 2018). These two have continued to perpetrate terrorist activities.

In a nutshell, several factors explain the demise of terrorist organizations. One key takeaway from the literature review on how terrorist organizations end, which relates to the subject of this study, the MNJTF, is that military intervention alone has rarely terminated terrorist organizations. However, military force is a crucial component of any successful counterterror strategy (Posen, 2001). For Jones & Libicki (2008), the military is instrumental in capturing and killing key members of a terrorist organization. The military force could also be employed against states that sponsor terrorists to undermine the group's support base, including strikes and standoff weapons

against terrorists. Even unsuccessful military offensive actions could cause terrorist units to stay on the move constantly, reducing their ability to plan, organize, or even rest.

According to Cronin (2006), military force has hastened the decline or end of a few terrorist organizations, such as the 19th Century Russian group Narodnaya Volya, Peru's Shining Path, and the Turkish-based Kurdistan Workers Party. Moreover, military force was crucial in America's response and invasion of Afghanistan following the September 11 attacks by Al Qaeda in the United States (Sheehan, 2007; Laub, 2014; Butt, 2019; Hamilton, 2004). However, to effectively end terrorism and prevent its resurgence, the underlying factors that drove it in the first place, which often boils down to destructive governance issues, must be adequately addressed (Adebayo et al., 2016; Agbiboa, 2015b; Downie, 2015; Sheehan, 2007). The same speaks to the Boko Haram conflict in the Lake Chad Basin of Africa and is corroborated by this study's findings, presented in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of this dissertation research. The results are offered in three main categories: 1)the nature and mechanisms of cooperation among the MNJTF member states; 2)the challenges and successes of the MNJTF; and 3)concludes with expert opinions on what motivates or drives terrorist organizations to tame or mitigate their activities to provide concrete recommendations to the MNJTF and similar institutions involved in the combat against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin and beyond.

### 4.2 The Nature and Mechanisms for Cooperation among Member States of the MNJTF

The MNJTF is an offensive and stabilization machinery of the LCBC. Its objective is to combat Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin area, which straddles primarily four-member countries of the commission (Agbiboa, 2017a; Tar & Ayegba, 2021; Tar & Mustapha, 2017). Revamped in 2012 (Agbiboa, 2017), however, its current structure was determined by the heads of state and government of the LCBC during a conference of the LCBC member states in Niamey, Niger, in October 2014 (Agbiboa, 2017; Assanvo, 2016; Tar & Mustapha, 2017). The African Union Peace and Security Council

(AUPSC) activated and endorsed it in November 2014 (African Union Press Statement, 2014), prompting the first MNJTF mandate on Boko Haram in the LCB on January 29, 2015, which has since been renewed annually (Kodjo, 2019; Assanvo, 2016).

Since its authorization by the AU in 2015 (African Union, 2016b, 2018; Coning et al., 2016; Coning, 2017; Ewi & Aning, 2006), the MNJTF has strived to coordinate counterinsurgency exertions in response to a regional threat posed by Boko Haram, in Africa's Lake Chad Basin (African Union, 2016b; Albert, 2017a; Karamichalis, 2019). The MNJTF's mandate comprised conducting military operations and patrols to prevent Boko Haram's expansion; stopping the transfer of weapons and logistics to the group; pursuing and freeing captives (African Union, 2015). The MNJTF was also tasked with specific actions around human rights, intelligence, media, and information (*unpublished MNJTF Concept of Operations – CONOPS, 2015*). However, the MNJTF has solely relied on a concerted military approach in combating Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin (Dieng, 2019; Dze-Ngwa, 2018b; Obamamoye, 2017b; Tar & Sunday, 2017). The ambitious scope of the MNJTF mandate, the scale of operations, and the tasks involved elevated concerns around the task forces' capability to employ tangible and practical actions (Assanvo, 2016). Nevertheless, increased regional cooperation occurred in the

early days of the MNJTF. The force engaged in battle at the beginning of 2016 when large-scale but short actions occurred under significant operations, including Operation Arrow Five in February 2016, Operation Tentacule in March 2016, and in May 2016. Other operations followed, including Operation *Gama Aiki* (Finish the Job) I & II, launched by the MNJTF around June 2016 and later in 2017, with the primary purpose of destroying Boko Haram's strongholds around Lake Chad (Cannon & Iyekekpolo, 2018; Iwuoha, 2019; Mahmood & Ani, 2018; Shettima Bukar Kullima et al., 2020; Tar & Bala, 2019).

Several reports and interviews confirmed that the presence and actions of the MNJTF in the first half of 2016 improved security in the Lake Chad Basin region (Agbiboa, 2017b). Numerous Boko Haram militants were neutralized, many others arrested, many of Boko Haram's training camps and factories that manufactured improvised explosive devices were destroyed, and captives were freed (Albert, 2017a; Bappah, 2016; Falode, 2016; Mahmood & Ani, 2018; Obamamoye, 2017c). Obamamoye (2017a)confirmed that the regional task force has "weakened Boko Haram's capability, fatality, and geographical area of operations" (p.434). In the words of two respondents, "the effort to mobilize multiple militaries to work together in the Lake Chad Basin had some significant impacts at the time when Boko Haram was a nuisance" and, "without the MNJTF,

the atrocities of Boko Haram would be a lot worse." However, Boko Haram is a resilient and adaptive group. For example, the group has faced several occurrences of factional leadership skirmishes, such as the one in 2012 around the group's ideology and strategy, resulting in the emergence of another faction: the Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan, commonly called Ansaru, and, of course, the 2016 split resulting in the Abubakar Shekau and the Abu Musab al-Barnawi factions. The fact that these were all followed by a surge in incursions and attacks by the sect (Akum et al., 2019) only point to Boko Haram's ability to bounce back and advance its mission, even in the face of extreme challenges (Dobbins et al., 2019). Such resilience and adaptability, coupled with other factors, constrained the task force's ability to consolidate some of these early efforts and achievements (Ager et al., 2015; Asfura-Heim & McQuaid, 2015; Comolli, 2015; Lekunze, 2019). These include, among others, improper coordination within the MNJTF, the irregular leadership and command structure of the task force, and the influence of former colonial powers, especially France. The MNJTF's Concept of Operations (CONOPS), and the strained relationships between individual member states, among other factors, have also affected the functionality of the MNJTF, as discussed in the subsequent sections.

## a. Early Day Cooperation within the MNJTF

Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad, and Niger chose to enter into a formal agreement governing cooperation among themselves because of heavy pressure from the devastating effects of terrorism in the region. The strategic goal was to tackle the growing terrorist activities perpetrated by Boko Haram in Lake Chad Basin, affecting all of them. The result was the MNJTF, "a product of delicate political consensus among these countries, who had various standpoints on the threat's nature and what the force would do to counter it" (International Crisis Group, 2020, p. 4). For example, the other MNJTF countries saw Boko Haram as a Nigerian, rather than a regional problem, and resisted the formation of a more integrated force, but instead resorted to sectors within each member state's borders (Azzarone, 2020; International Crisis Group, 2020). In 2014, the MNJTF reinforced its base in Baga, Borno State, Nigeria, along the coasts of Lake Chad, and each country contributed troops (Amao, 2020; Maza et al., 2020; Mbah & Nwangwu, 2014). The intelligence chiefs from all four countries met in Yaoundé, Cameroon's political capital, in 2014, and in Paris, France, two months later to work out the new task force's intricacies (Botha, 2020; Dieng, 2019; Obamamoye, 2016; Tar & Bala, 2019). The member states also started imploring for and secured international support for

the regional body (Besheer, 2017). Their efforts redoubled when several Boko Haram militants were captured at its base in Baga in January 2015. But Boko Haram exerted steep violence and overran the Baga base. The MNJTF headquarters' loss met a devastating blow to the MNJTF forces and saw Cameroon's President Paul Biya in a rare appeal for international partners' support (Moki, 2015).

France, the US, and the UK provided (and per interviews have continued to provide) bilateral aid, and regional cooperation more or less advanced during that period but more on a bilateral basis (Duruji et al., 2019; Obamamoye, 2017c; Popovski & Maiangwa, 2016; Tar & Bala, 2019). Between 2016 and 2018, the MNJTF launched a series of short operations, including Gama Aiki (Finish the Job) I in 2016, Gama Aiki II in 2017, and Amni Faka (Peace at All Costs) in 2018, with each operation lasting about three months (Anthony, 2018; Dze-Ngwa, 2018c; Hickie et al., 2018; Kullima et al., 2020). Several active and retired MNJTF officials confirmed that Chad sent soldiers to an MNJTF mission to help Cameroon secure its northwest border for six months, often conducting offensives deep into Nigeria's Borno State via Cameroon and Niger against the militants. Nigerien forces also supported and participated in the offensives. The operations comprised concurrent and supportive military efforts by soldiers from

all four sectors of the MNJTF (Dze-Ngwa, 2018b). Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari's election in 2015 added impetus as he prioritized cooperation and visited all four of the members of the MNJTF, plus Benin. According to one respondent, the Nigerian president's effort "boosted the soldiers' morale" and won support among otherwise skeptical leaders in the other MNJTF countries' political capitals (International Crisis Group, 2020). As mentioned earlier, the operations recorded successes such as securing the freedom of captives held by Boko Haram, freed up areas occupied by the terrorist group, and caused several militants of Boko Haram to defect (Dze-Ngwa, 2018a).

b. Nigeria's Lukewarm Attitude Affected Cooperation within the MNJTF

The military gains discussed above proved hard to consolidate; the efforts at cooperation regressed over time, driven by, among other things, Nigeria's subsequent and unexpected lukewarm attitude toward the MNJTF. Although Boko Haram currently affects all the four riparian countries of Lake Chad, the terrorist group stemmed from Nigeria. A respondent posits that "85% of the insurgency is still within the Nigerian territory." Many anticipated that Nigeria would reinforce its efforts and adopt proactive measures, including mobilizing resources and the other MNJTF member states to

tackle the insurgency. However, the Nigerian government unexpectedly instead demonstrated little or no commitment to the MNJTF and to crushing the rebellion. "The lack of commitment by the Nigerian government to leverage the MNJTF to end the insurgency weakened the morale of the MNJTF soldiers. It even explains why adequate military contributions from the member states have dwindled," a respondent argued. Another respondent lamented that the MNJTF does not present like a multinational force. "It looks rather like a bilateral sort of agreement with each nation pursuing its kind of mission— we don't see much of joint efforts; people around here will talk about the Nigerian army, and perhaps, once in a while, mention that Chadian or Cameroonian soldiers chased Boko Haram militants into Nigeria from across the borders." There were even instances where, for example, an operation would occur in Niger without coordination with efforts in Chad and Nigeria. The Nigerian MNJTF soldiers would also engage in multiple operations that did not include crossborder blocking elsewhere in the region, to prevent Boko Haram militants from evading the MNJTF soldiers. Instead, Nigeria has resorted to the hasty declaration of defeat against Boko Haram after operations.

For example, between 2015 and 2016, when MNJTF offensives forced over 200 Boko Haram militants to surrender,

killed many Boko Haram combatants, seized weapons and ammunition, and destroyed Boko Haram's training camps, Nigeria hastily pronounced victory. President Buhari declared that Nigeria has "technically" won the war against Boko Haram (Buchanan-Clarke & Knoope, 2017; Iwuoha, 2020; Thurston, 2017). Nigerian Colonel Usman Sani professed that Nigeria has "dealt with Boko Haram" (Assanvo, 2016). Dze-Ngwa, 2018, argues that "these declarations may have been true, but interestingly hasty as the trappings of the extremist group remain visible and telling" (p.17). Moreover, Nigeria even attempted to prevent further operations within its territory by fellow MNJTF soldiers. A respondent recounted that, "one time when Idris Deby, Chad's President, deployed Chadian MNJTF soldiers into Nigeria to crush the insurgents, Nigeria raised an alarm; the soldiers withdrew." Other soldiers corroborated this assertion: one emphasized that "the MNJTF soldiers from Cameroon were ready to clear the Sambisa Forest in 2018, but the Nigerian government ordered them to withdraw to Cameroon and wait for a new arrangement" (Nigeria's place in MJNTF's command structure is discussed below). Several soldiers from the various member countries argued that cooperation among soldiers from the member countries, even in the face of an operation, remains wanting, as interoperability, among other things, is not

encouraged (there is also no evidence that MNJTF key partners such as the United States, United kingdom, and France encouraged collaboration among the MNJTF member states), because of Nigeria's unwillingness to collaborate, compounded by the irregular leadership and command structure of the MNJTF.

c. Leadership, Operation, and Command Structure of the MNJTF

The original MNJTF's Concept of Operation (CONOPS), developed in 2015 (unpublished), stipulated that the force commander's position would rotate among the member states. Nigeria later rejected the idea and seized the authority to appoint the force commander in exchange for active support and Nigeria's participation in the MNJTF (International Crisis Group, 2020), positing that "a changing leadership could hamper the counter-insurgency effort" (France24, 2015). Nigeria has maintained the direction of the MNJTF since formation, just as for the LCBC, always headed by a Nigerian who is nominated by Abuja. Nigeria has always wanted to retain ownership and wield its leadership in any efforts to combat Boko Haram (Théroux-Bénoni, 2015), thus holding the power to prevent foreign forces' presence on its national territory to solve a problem Nigeria believes is internal (Fessy, 2015). Nigeria's desire to protect its territorial integrity is also

demonstrated in how the MNJTF operates alongside the other countries.

Practically, the MNJTF mandate is limited to securing the member states' borders to ensure that Boko Haram's access and ability to use the borders to launch attacks is constrained (Agbiboa, 2017b; Obamamoye, 2016). The expectation is that, once the border areas are secured, each country would then purge Boko Haram from its territory or sector. And if the terrorists attempted to escape to the neighboring countries, they would meet with the MNJTF forces stationed at the borders, who would crush them (Albert, 2017a). Findings from interviews with several active and former generals and colonels of the MNJTF revealed that such an arrangement exists within the MNJTF because, unlike a classical peace support operation with a mandate and forces co-opted in a pool and commanded by a force commander, the MNJTF is a loose and highly decentralized organization. Although a force commander heads the MNJTF, the various countries have a firm grip on and control their own soldiers. The task force structure is such that the different member-countries host a sector headquarters in the individual countries. Although the MNJTF has its overall headquarters in N'Djamena, Chad, the force commander does not have absolute coordinative power because the forces still receive orders

from their sector commanders and countries' authorities. So, rather than being hierarchical, the MNJTF operates more on a lateral structure. Even when joint operations are planned, one respondent posits that the force commander only develops a plan or concept of operations, and the sector headquarters and member countries decide whether to pursue it. The force commander has no leverage over how the different sectors react in executing the operation's orders. A retired general lamented that "coordination is ad hoc, improvised and a matter of choice, not a priority," which affects coordination and collaboration of the task force.

Another soldier further argued that coordination (although rare) led by the force commander has mostly succeeded on a bilateral basis when, for example, Nigeria's sector commander reaches out directly to Cameroon's or Niger's sector commander (sometimes via text messaging) to plan a joint operation. Even with that, if the bilateral requests for cooperation succeed, the soldiers have a limited right of pursuit into the other country's territory, as seen in operations Gama Aiki and Yancin Tafki (Hausa for Lasting Freedom)(Hickie et al., 2018). A former general who led a sector headquarters in 2017 and 2018 lamented that "the effective coordination of the MNJTF forces is not easy" and

has tremendously affected the task force's performance (Alli, 2013; Henneberg & Plank, 2020; Tar & Sunday, 2017).

Moreover, the other countries of the MNJTF still see the Boko Haram question as a purely Nigerian problem, reinforced by the MNJTF CONOPs that allocated various sectors, each within the borders of the members' states, to ensure that Boko Haram stays in Nigeria and not cross over to the territory of the other states (Afzal, 2020; Dieng, 2019; Happi, 2020; International Crisis Group, 2016). Boko Haram originated from Nigeria and has conducted most of its activities in Nigeria. The MNJTF soldiers from the other countries are more interested in protecting their borders from the encroachment of the terrorists from Nigeria, a former sector commander of the MNJTF maintained. Thus, no allegiance is paid to the task force structure but instead to the borders' limits and their countries' capitals. Another Western soldier, familiar with the MNJTF and its daily operations, confirms that "the force commander of the MNJTF develops a plan, and then must persuade the national governments to support it and commit their forces. It is hard to determine if the MNJTF forces operate under the MNJTF orders or national orders." In a nutshell, the MNJTF appears as a multinational device, but it is an assembly of national military contingents, each operating, in principle, on its

territory, under the command of the sector commander and national authorities. This configuration is justified by the relative mistrust between MNJTF countries and exacerbated by the alleged states' desire to maintain their sovereignty, as discussed in the challenges section below. One could argue that this poor leadership and weak operational structure is rooted in the MNJTF's Concept of Operation (CONOPS).

d. The MNJTF's Concept of Operations (CONOPS)

On February 23, 2015, the MNJTF adopted its first CONOPS. The unpublished document outlined, among others, the mission, zones of operation, strategy, and logistics structures of the task force. It also detailed the command, control, and coordination mechanisms, including its composition and strength of the soldiers (10,000). The headquarters was assigned to N'Djamena, Chad, while Nigeria retained command of the force and the task force authorized for the initial twelve months (Casola, 2020; International Crisis Group, 2020). Regrettably, this research found out that some of the critical drawbacks of the MNJTF today originated from the CONOPS. For example, the CONOPS defined the operational area of the MNJTF that covers Lake Chad and extends along the border between Nigeria and Niger. However, the arrangement ignored hefty regions, especially along the boundaries between Cameroon and Nigeria, and enormous swathes in Borno

state, Nigeria (International Crisis Group, 2020). During interviews in December 2020, a community leader laments that "there are places in Borno state where Boko Haram exists, but there is no military presence. There are no police or civilian authorities present," which has continued to raise concerns (including corruption in the military, as discussed below) about Nigeria's willingness to address the Boko Haram insurgency, discussed earlier.

Moreover, the CONOPS partitioned the sphere of operations into four sectors. Each of the four countries of the MNJTF hosts a sector and a headquarters (Agbiboa, 2017b; Dieng, 2019; Happi, 2020; Talla, 2020). The CONOPS also gave each sector a standing right of hot pursuit of about 25 kilometers over the borders. Therefore, the MNJTF soldiers only protect a territory within their country. Several respondents see this as a significant problem.

In many instances where the forces from one sector chased Boko Haram into the neighboring state, there are usually no soldiers on the other side to pick up the combat and necessarily neutralize the militants. Thus, Boko Haram regroups and continues to perpetuate its activities in the region. The MNJTF member states have shelved the original plans for a more integrated force and cross-border sectors and opted for sectors entirely within each country, "aiming

to avoid legal and political complications that may have arisen from permanent cross-border deployments and to reassure Nigeria that such deployments into its territory would be limited" (International Crisis Group, 2020 p.7). An MNJTF soldier from Niger, during an interview in January 2021, laments that "whenever we chase the Boko Haram fighters into Nigeria within the designated 25 kilometers, we expect that Nigerian soldiers would be on standby to take over, but most times they are not; our efforts [were] wasted." The operational principles that established the MNJTF do not afford a reliable platform for the soldiers to act across borders. Boko Haram takes advantage of this principle, which has hampered the task force's functionality; "it weakens our morale" and "inhibits the key goal of the MNJTF, which is to clear the insurgency in the area," other respondents lamented.   The MNJTF also has several external partners, primarily former colonial powers, who have undoubtedly provided tangible support to the regional military regimen. However, often than not, the linkage of the MNJTF with former colonial powers has undermined internal cooperation within the task force. These former colonial and other Western powers such as the United States have not adequately encouraged cooperation and collaboration of the MNJTF forces.

e. Influence of Former Colonial Powers and Cultural Differences

Nigeria is a former British colony; Cameroon, Chad, and Niger are former French colonies. These countries receive bilateral support in training, equipment, and other resources from the former colonialists to combat Boko Haram. While it might seem appealing, the bilateral linkages between the affected countries and the former colonialists and other Western forces have negatively impacted the war against Boko Haram in terms of challenges associated with interoperability of weapons and equipment within the task force. Nigeria, for example, is more inclined to the British system in terms of tactics, procedures, and principles. This is the same for Cameroon, Chad, and Niger with France. The interoperability challenges have affected coordination and cooperation within the MNJTF. During a joint exercise, Unified Focus, at the Douala, Cameroon, Naval Base in 2017, the MNJTF and its military partners worldwide came together to practice collaborative planning and coordination using scripted scenarios. U.S. Maj. Aaron Smith insisted that one of the exercise goals was to work "together on this specific problem set to take and help refine our collective interoperability, that would allow smooth interoperability between the MNJTF, and its multinational military" (Capt. Welch interview, 2017)

partners. However, coordination within the MNJTF has remained hampered because troops of the MNJTF member states, driven by the unwillingness by the soldiers and their governments to coordinate and cooperate among themselves, continue to use "equipment and systems that may not be interoperable, thus, making the organization more of a loose coalition of the willing" (Adesoji, 2019, pp.14; Comolli, 2015).

Besides the interoperability concerns, France, for example, has maintained a firmer grip on its former colonies and even influences key internal policies in its former territories to preserve its interests (Krupova & Cech, 2020; Staniland, 1987; Stein, 2013; Vallin, 2015). France has substantial control over its former African colonies' finances, foreign policy, and military, including in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. Several respondents, generals, colonels, and political officials, during interviews in December 2020 and January 2021 confirmed that "until this day, French military advisers sit in the ministries of defense in Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. It is only in the interest of France that adequate cooperation would exist in the MNJTF." Another former general argued that "France instigated the relocation of the MNJTF headquarters from Nigeria to Chad because it wanted full, unrestricted access to the task force,

including control and access to intelligence, that would be impossible otherwise if the headquarters stayed in Nigeria."

While colonialism does not formally exist, the legacy of French ties with its former colonies continues to influence Francophone Africa policy via the French language, the legal system, administration, and education. France employs the indigenous bilateral cooperation system to mount advantaged ties with its former colonies in Africa in culture, natural resources, security, defense, and even a common currency (Lavallée & Lochard, 2019; Vallin, 2015; Yates, 2018). Linkages with former colonial masters continue to impact how African countries cooperate on common issues, particularly the MNJTF against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin.

Along the same lines of foreign influence in the MNJTF member states' internal affairs, some MNJTF members remain suspicious of some Western states' support to other MNJTF member states. During interviews in January, another senior military officer lamented that "France and the U.S. have continued to deploy significant resources in Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, without providing similar support to Nigeria, which is the hub of Boko Haram activities. These actions by the superpowers are viewed with suspicion" and only buttress Nigeria's hesitance to commit to the MNJTF fully.

Moreover, language differences raise another concern, as Nigeria is the only English-speaking country compared to the other three predominantly French speakers. According to interviews with MNJTF soldiers, the linkages to former colonial powers and the associated language challenges have affected the MNJTF soldiers' effectiveness even on the battlefield. "During confrontations, sometimes we have only one soldier that is fluent in English and French. This person serves as the translator; however, translation and understanding are slow in the face of a heated fight." The effect is that the soldiers' morale and ability to confront the enemy with confidence is diminished. The irregular mechanism and nature of cooperation within the MNJTF have only compounded the numerous challenges the regional body faces in its struggle against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin.

## 4.3 Challenges Faced by the MNJTF in the Combat Against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin

Several more challenges confront the MNJTF, which affects the task force from attaining its mandate. These evolve around inadequate funding, Boko Haram's origin, the nature of the combat, accusations of human rights violations, lack of trust among member states of the MNJTF, the command

and control structure of the task force, and cultural barriers within the MNJTF, among others, as carefully examined serially below.

a. Lack of Funding and AU Bureaucracy

Inadequate funding is a significant challenge that has hampered the functionality of the MNJTF from the time it was reinvigorated (Assanvo, 2016; Duke et al., 2017; Kerins & Mouaha-Bell, 2018; Tar & Sunday, 2017). The financial cost of the MNJTF is borne by the member states, with Nigeria contributing the most. During interviews in December 2020 and January 2021, several respondents confirmed that while the MNJTF gets financial support from the EU and AU, it is insufficient and sporadic. Until today, the MNJTF has yet to raise the initial budget requirement of about $700 million (Assanvo, 2016). The member states have struggled to meet their financial obligations or pledges to the MNJTF, partly justified because these states confront other internal challenges that constrain their budgets. For example, Nigeria struggles with several ongoing crises, such as the farmer/herder crisis in the Middle Belt, a secessionist movement in the southeast, and oil-related conflicts in the south (Collier & Hoeffler, 2011; Harnischfeger, 2019; Ibeanu, 1999; Muhammed et al., 2015; Ojukwu & Olaifa, 2011; Okoli & Atelhe, 2014; Tamuno, 1970). Cameroon and Chad face security

challenges at their borders with the Central African Republic and both host refugees fleeing the ongoing war in that country (Boutellis, 2013; Ciglenečki et al., 2011; Coldiron et al., 2017; Comolli, 2015; Mutah, 2018; Parmar et al., 2012). Cameroon also battles a secessionist struggle in the northwest and southwest of the country (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997; Pietrzak, 2013). Thus, these countries are financially stretched too thin, affecting the MNJTF, which generally lacks resources and logistics, and relies on help from goodwill partners.

Moreover, even when funding becomes available, it takes a longer time to reach the operation centers because it has to pass through the AU's rigorous auditing procedures, as all funds from MNJTF partners such as the EU must pass through the AU, which applies its measures to manage procurements and funds disbursement to the MNJTF (Assanvo, 2016; Dobbins et al., 2019; European Union Statement, 2017; Tar & Sunday, 2017). A respondent familiar with the AU procurement process concerning the MNJTF confirmed during the interviews that

"the extremely convoluted and slow process to get the available funding from the AU to the Lake Chad Basin Commission, to the MNJTF civilian financial chief, and finally to the MNJTF HQ and then to the troops at the

sectors, is the biggest problem that all aspects of the MNJTF face."

High levels of corruption compound the financial challenges of the MNJTF.

According to Duke et al. (2017), the Nigerian armed forces, for example, are deeply corrupted, as manifested in various facets, including the "stealing of defense appropriations, the purchases of substandard weaponry, creation of fake defense contracts, and the unavailability of logistical support for and desertion of soldiers in the frontline" (p.3). Interviews with subject matter experts confirmed that Nigerian authorities had swindled funds intended to fight Boko Haram, leaving the soldiers helpless in the face of a dangerous enemy. According to a respondent, left with weapons that unmatched Boko Haram's, "the soldiers of the MNJTF are known to have fled attacks by the terrorist group." Another respondent lamented that "the war against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin presents a sweet opportunity for senior military officers in Nigeria to make a fortune for themselves." These inappropriate behaviors have weakened the morals of the soldiers and the capability of the MNJTF. Albert (2017) argues that "a security community that cannot

fund itself is not a strong and sustainable entity" (p. 131) because "finances are the nerve of all wars; without funding, you have limited leverage over the activities of peace support operations," another respondent concludes.

b. Boko Haram—a Nigerian Issue

Cameroon, Niger, and Chad still see the Boko Haram crisis as a purely Nigerian problem and have mostly focused on protecting their borders from Boko Haram encroachment (Albert, 2017c; Felix, 2015; International Crisis Group, 2016). Nigeria has also rebuffed offers by forces from the other MNJTF countries to penetrate its territory to pursue Boko Haram. According to Felix (2015)and Comolli (2015), "Chad's offer to join a Nigerian offensive to capture Baga, site of one of Boko Haram's worst atrocities, was rejected." Thus, the deficiency in defeating Boko Haram is blamed on the Nigerian government, as a respondent decried that the "Nigerian government has not taken responsibility for the situation," even as about 80% of Boko Haram's attacks currently occur in Nigeria (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2020; Statista, 2021). The CONOPS of the MNJTF only reinforces this challenge by establishing sector headquarters and defining areas where soldiers in each country should conduct their operations with only a limited right of pursuit for up to 25 kilometers into the other

country. Thus, defending the borders is the soldiers' priority, not exploring appropriate avenues for cooperation to meet the task force's mandate: eradicating Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin.

c. Asymmetric Warfare and Human Rights Violations

The war against Boko Haram is asymmetric, embedded with gross human rights abuses that affect the task force's functionality and credibility.    The MNJTF soldiers have been reprimanded for human rights abuses in the Lake Chad Basin, where they combat the Boko Haram terrorist group. According to Human Right Watch (2015), between 2014 and 2015, attacks on civilians by security forces and armed groups caused thousands of deaths in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Niger. A Western soldier familiar with the operations of the MNJTF confirmed that "although the MNJTF forces receive human rights and humanitarian law training, there is a tendency to disregard the principles in the face of heated battles, mostly when Boko Haram murders fellow soldiers." Under such instances, civilians suffer the brunt of the conflict as some soldiers tend to resort to indiscriminate shooting. Under the guise of combating Boko Haram, the abuses committed by security forces only reinforce the sect's appeal among denizens in Nigeria and beyond (Human Rights Watch, 2015). According to Council on Foreign Relations (2016), Boko Haram

enjoys widespread support in Nigeria: "It is counterintuitive to witness popular support for a movement that brags about (and films) its grisly beheadings, makes use of female and child suicide bombers and has contributed to some three million internally displaced persons in Nigeria and hundreds of thousands of refugees in adjacent countries" (para.1). A 2015 poll by the Pew Research Center indicated that one in five Nigerian Muslims supports Boko Haram (Poushter et al., 2015). By the same token, another 2014 Pew poll revealed that 10% of Nigerians are inclined to Boko Haram (Pew Research Center et al., 2014). For a population of about 200 million, 10% is a considerable number—perhaps millions.

Because the Boko Haram warfare is asymmetric in nature, "it is hard to prove if the person killed is a Boko Haram militant," a former senior official of the MNJTF explains. This makes the operations against Boko Haram difficult because "the people within the communities where Boko Haram exists feel mistreated and offended and refuse to provide the community backing that is crucial for the success of an asymmetric war," another MNJTF soldier laments. Yet a respondent argues that "if you cannot win the minds of the communities, you're moving into a blind alley, without adequate information to face the enemy." Under such circumstances, the MNJTF soldiers are vulnerable to Boko

Haram, especially as the soldiers are unfamiliar with the cultures, local languages, and terrain in the communities within which they operate. Many of the soldiers deployed in the Lake Chad Basin to combat Boko Haram under the MNJTF come from different parts of the countries involved. During interviews, many of the soldiers recounted that they came from either the southern parts of Cameroon or Nigeria or the north of Chad. These areas are far away from the Lake Chad Basin and have fueled the existent distrust among the MNJTF soldiers.

d. Lack of Trust among the Member States

The lack of confidence and trust among the member states of the MNJTF has hampered effective coordination within the task force. There exists a persistent mutual suspicion between members of the coalition due to ancient border conflicts. Cameroon and Nigeria have a long-standing disagreement over who owns the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsular at their borders in the south, which has led to military encounters between the two countries, with several lives lost (Aghemelo & Ibhasebhor, 2006; Anyu, 2007; Baye, 2010; Sama & Johnson-Ross, n.d.; Tarlebbea et al., 2010). While Cameroon got a favorable judgment from the International Court of Justice in 1994, the Nigerian senate in 2007 rejected the verdict, arguing that the ICJ ruling was contrary to the

Nigerian constitution (Aghemelo & Ibhasebhor, 2006). In the same vein, all Nigerian regimes, including present-day President Buhari's, have had some form of conflict with Chad. Nigeria and Chad have clashed over islands in Lake Chad, blaming their former colonial masters for the poor demarcation of boundaries (Ani & Ojakorotu, 2018; May & Massey, 1998; Omede, 2006; Sarch, 2001). Between 1978 and 1983, a civil war in Chad affected trade with Nigeria, and Chad emboldened encroachment into Nigeria by both Chadian rebels and refugees. The war also allowed a massive influx of arms and ammunition into Chad from France, coupled with the fact that Chad received support from the late Mohammad Ghadafi of Libya, who never was a friend of Nigeria (Adefuye, 1984; Azevedo, 2005; Joffe, 1982; Mays, 2002; Rondos, 1985). Uncomfortable with its neighbors being so armed, Nigeria has been suspicious of Chad up to the present (Albert, 2017a; Matfess, 2016). The Republic of Niger defense officials have accused Nigerian soldiers of fleeing Boko Haram and not standing up to the group and accused the other states of not doing enough to prevent Boko Haram from using their territories as safe havens. Cameroon, Niger, and Chad have been blamed for not containing Boko Haram within their borders, resulting in colossal refugee flows that have damaged their economies (Comolli, 2015). These disagreements

have undermined the ability of the various troops to build trust, which, in turn, has hindered practical cooperation among the MNJTF member states (Assanvo, 2016; Atangana, 2018) and the soldiers at the battlefront. An MNJTF soldier recounted that even on the battlefield, the soldiers from the different countries do not exchange ideas: "Nigerian soldiers fight on their own in their vehicles, so do Cameroon's and Niger's soldiers." The lack of cooperation resulting from the MNJTF states' mistrust worsened because there is no single chain of command within the MNJTF. The soldiers report to the sector commanders and political authorities in their countries.

e. Irregular Leadership Structure

Since its inception, the MNJTF has rotated force commanders who have been Nigerians, assisted by Cameroonian deputies and Chadian Chief of staff. However, the MNJTF leadership has no coordinative power of the forces, affecting how the soldiers work together. Apart from the MNJTF headquartered in N'Djamena, Chad, each member state has a headquarter within its boundaries, headed by a sector commander, to whom the MNJTF soldiers from that country report. The MNJTF is generally not commanded by the force commander as in an orthodox peace support mission. Instead, it is a loose and decentralized organization, and the

countries involved have a solid grip on their soldiers, who receive orders from and report to the sector commanders in their countries. The MNJTF leadership structure is thus more bilateral and not horizontal. According to a respondent, because of the lack of a "single chain of command...the soldiers go back to their commanders in their various countries" to decide if they should engage the other forces. Country coordination among the MNJTF forces "is more of an exception than a rule" (Galeazzi et al., 2017).

## f. Poor Upkeep and Training and Low Morale of the MNJTF Soldiers

During the interviews, several soldiers lamented the degrading experience with both the MNJTF and their governments in the origin countries. One MNJTF soldier participating in the 2021 operation Fire Down complained that "since we got here, we have not accessed our salaries, even the stipend that the MNJTF promised us—there is no incentive." It also appears that even adequate feeding for the soldiers is a problem: "The food we have, we brought them from home. Hunger is one of the main problems we face. Even when food is provided to us, the quality is deplorable, and it gets to us late, sometimes at noon for breakfast." These issues weaken the soldiers' morale, breeds despair, and, under such circumstances, they have no choice but to resort to draconian

strategies for survival. "I have witnessed soldiers sell their uniforms and other military gear to buy food," another soldier wails. As Murlin (1918) argues, the most desirable status, physical and mental, for an army is "well-muscled men with fighting spirit—and that meant plenty of good food" (p. 2). As with poor upkeep, the soldiers' training and overall morale are low.

The troops' morale, especially within the regular army units, is low. While some suffer from "the fatigue of war, and logistical problems" (Crisis Group International, 2018, p. 4), others feel that the officers mistreat them, especially regarding promotions, which causes frustration among the soldiers, resulting in less engagement. The MNJTF soldiers who believe that deployment with the task force means additional bonus payment as paid to UN Mission officers, such as in the Central African Republic, are irritated, blaming senior military officers for misappropriating their bonuses (Crisis Group International, 2018). In reality, each member state of the MNJTF (not the MNJTF as an institution) is responsible for paying and equipping its troops. According to a Western soldier who participated in MNJTF operations in the Lake Chad Basin, "the MNJTF is a coordination hub; it relies on contributions from member states, which is the fundamental difference from the United Nations missions which sets up its

logistical operations; the MNJTF does not have the wherewithal to support the troops."

Again, the same officer, confirmed by other soldiers on the ground, lamented that the Sambisa Forest, for example, where Boko Haram currently hides, is " a difficult terrain resembling the vast open sets of *Lord of the Rings*; it is hard to hold vast areas with limited troops; the MNJTF has about 10,000 men, and they get used up quickly and beyond their strengths." What is needed under such circumstances are amphibious/riverine and aviation capabilities, including helicopters and light and fast river craft and amphibious, tracked vehicles, but the MNJTF lacks these, hampering the combat against Boko Haram. The skillset of the soldiers also called for concern. A Western soldier familiar with the operations of the MNJTF decried that "basic military skills that would not be unknown in the Roman Army in 55 BC" are outright ignored in the MNJTF. MNJTF soldiers carry AK47s not calibrated, cleaned and perhaps, accurate for only up to 50 meters, do not dig trenches, and do not have mortars or backup plans. Boko Haram, on the contrary, has sophisticated weapons that are sometimes accurate for up to 300 or 400 meters, including drones (Searcey, 2019). Security operatives have intercepted tons of weapons in northeast Nigeria, including rocket launchers, anti-aircraft missiles, and AK47 rifles,

making their way into Nigeria from Mali and Libya. Boko Haram also gets some of its weapons from Chad and sympathetic members of the Nigerian military (UNODC, 2020; Windrem, 2014a), and sometimes from government armories because "the back gate was left unlocked" (Windrem, 2014b). As far as funding is concerned, Boko Haram raises finances through kidnapping for ransom and imposition of tax levies in local communities in the Lake Chad Basin. It also gets funding from outside the country, including from the United Arab Emirates. In late 2020, a court in Abu Dhabi sentenced six Nigerians for funding Boko Haram. Between 2015 and 2016 alone, these individuals remitted about $800,000 to Nigeria to benefit the terrorist group, Boko Haram (VOA, 2020). These challenges weaken the morale of the MNJTF soldiers and make them feeble in the face of a dangerous enemy.

g. Human Rights Violations by MNJTF Member States Affect Support to the Task Force

Human rights abuses have further marred the combat against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad area. The MNJTF member states have a history of horrible human rights violations, which limits the kind of support they can get from international partners such as the United States. In 1997, the United States Congress introduced the Leahy Law, which prohibits the U.S. government from assisting states with

records of human rights violations(U.S. State Department, 2021). With Nigeria's history of human rights abuses, which have continued to date, U.S. security support for Nigeria is constrained.  Human rights abuses have also emerged in the other countries that caused the U.S. to pull back some security assistance. In Cameroon, for example, the U.S. government in 2019 "terminated [by means of]sanction the designation of Cameroon as a beneficiary under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) because Cameroon failed to address concerns regarding persistent human rights violations committed by security forces" (Allegrozzi, 2019; Amnesty International, 2019; Bowden, 2019; Watts et al., 2018). The U.S. Congress also put on hold at least "$17 million in security aid, including funds for radars, four defender-class patrol boats, nine armored vehicles, training programs for C-130 airplanes and helicopters, and the withdrawal of an offer for Cameroon to be a candidate for the [National Guard] State Partnership Program" (Browne & Hansler, 2019, para.2). These challenges have undermined the MNJTF's ability to accomplish its mandate—eradicating Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin.

## h. Security Forces' Brutality against Boko Haram Reinforces the Group's Growing Animosity and Violence against the State

Much of the literature reviewed argued that the extrajudicial killings of Boko Haram's founder, Mohammed Yusuf, including other police abuses such as torture, arbitrary arrest, and persecution against members of the sect, "were the catalyst event that served to foment preexisting animosities toward state security forces" (Agbiboa, 2013; Obamamoye, 2017; Atangana, 2018). In 2010, Abubakar Shekau, who succeeded Yusuf, announced in a video that he had assumed the group's leadership and vowed to avenge his boss and other Boko Haram members. In his word, "you have seen what the security forces have done to us; you now understand why we must fight them." The bombings of police stations and the UN headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, in June and August 2011, respectively, followed (Agbiboa, 2013). Abubakar Shekau's statement, corroborated by other studies (cited above), is self-explanatory that the heavy hand of the Nigerian security authorities caused Boko Haram's violence. Also, the heavy-handed Nigerian response has helped cause Boko Haram, which was initially nonviolent, to become violent (Agbiboa, 2014; Kulungu, 2019; Pérouse de Montclos, 2014; Rosenberger, 2021; U.S. Congress House Hearing, 2013a).

Guns Alone Cannot End Boko Haram

A key attribute of the MNJTF, grounded in its mandate, is military deployment and raids to eradicate Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. The spike in terrorist activities across the globe in the twenty-first century, despite massive military deployments, both unilaterally and multilaterally, is indicative of the fact that "no military force can eradicate today's violent extremism" (Obamamoye, 2017c; Sheehan, 2007; Assanvo, 2016; International Crisis Group, 2017), including Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. To adequately address terrorism and Boko Haram, in particular, renowned scholars and practitioners of security studies have argued that, in the age of ideological war, there are restrictions to what the application of force alone can do and what it cannot accomplish (Assanvo, 2016; Obamamoye, 2017c). The literature reviewed, and subject matter expert interviews showed that one major challenge that has prevented the MNJTF from eradicating Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin is the absence of a soft component—a political solution that addresses the root causes—in its strategy that is relevant in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. A respondent emphasized that "...the dynamic nature of the Boko Haram...means the MNJTF and partners must be dynamic in their response" as well. Another respondent buttressed this

assertion: "The military strategy of the MNJTF must be supplemented by the effective operationalization of the police, civilian, administrative components, and robust development interventions in the Lake Chad Basin, bearing in mind that soldiers do not win wars; they win battles." Thus, the struggle against Boko Haram requires a comprehensive approach, and cases worldwide have shown that military force alone rarely eradicates terrorism.



*MNJTF Response to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin – Source ISS*

Consider, for example, following the September 11 attacks by Al Qaeda on U.S. territories, a coalition of military forces, led by the U.S. government, invaded Afghanistan, with the primary goal of toppling the Taliban government, which had offered habitat to terrorists, and dismantling Al Qaeda networks, among others (Hassan &

Hammond, 2011). While the mission succeeded in overthrowing the Taliban government and killing Osama Bin Laden and other high-level terrorists, the war on terror continues. Insurgency, terrorist attacks, and threats in Afghanistan and beyond have persisted for two decades, and Al Qaeda networks, including its ideology, have extended to different parts of the world (Aly et al., 2015; El-Said, 2015), including in Africa, although ISIS's physical caliphate in the Levant has ended (International Crisis Group, 2021). This situation is analogous to the situation in the Lake Chad Basin, especially in Nigeria, where the history of insurgency has a similar pattern, originating from governance challenges from the era of Usman Dan Fodio's rebellion in the 1800s to the Maitatsine sect in the 1970s and 1980s, and today's Boko Haram. The military failed to quell these insurgencies because, as Iyekekpolo (2016) argues, the underlying factors have remained unaddressed. Even when non-kinetic initiatives have been adopted, they're usually short-lived. For example, "Stability and Demobilization, Disarmament, Reintegration (DDR) conferences, which tried to write a comprehensive multinational policy to govern the areas of the Lake Chad Basin where Boko Haram thrives, were a major step in the right direction, but never lived up to their potential," a respondent complained. Very little attention is paid to non-

kinetic efforts to combat Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. However, the MNJTF has scored pockets of successes worth presenting.

## 4.4 The Effectiveness of the MNJTF Against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin

The MNJTF has achieved two major successes. First, it provides a platform for regional armies to work together against a common enemy; second, it has weakened Boko Haram's capability, reduced fatalities by the group, and contained it to a particular region, as discussed in detail below.

### a. A Successful African Experiment

The concept of the MNJTF is unique on the African continent. It provided Africa the opportunity to put to the test the ability of forces from different countries to pursue a joint mission. According to a retired senior military official familiar with the formation of the MNJTF, "the task force's founding fathers intentionally did not want the AU to own the mechanism because they preferred an entirely subregional body with only the countries affected by the menace of Boko Haram." With this, the soldiers would have a sense of belonging and be committed to eradicating the terrorist group and not motivated by other interests. The MNJTF hybrid served as an experiment for Africa, especially

as the AU considers developing continental peace support operations through subregional task forces in the continent. From that perspective, a respondent argues that the MNJTF has been successful: "The task force sustained itself before strategic partners like the European Union and African Union intervened." The MNJTF was initiated by the MNJTF member states around 2012 and sustained itself until it was endorsed by the AU in 2015, permitting the body to solicit external support from donors who were initially skeptical about dealing directly with a purely military organization that does not yet have the backing of any regional organization. The MNJTF then was mandated by the LCBC. One AU expert stationed in the liaison office in N'Djamena, Chad, indicated that "...because this kind of operation, as a norm, must receive some endorsement or 'blessing' from a regional body to make it acceptable to the international community, the AU had to authorize the MNJTF." The AU's endorsement placed it in a better position to receive and manage donor resources for the MNJTF, a loose and disjointed organization made up of troops from different states, not fully integrated.

The AU is currently MNJTF's leading partner, and all funds from external sources pass through the AU to get to the MNJTF. The AU's endorsement opened funding doors for the MNJTF. However, the funds are sporadic and make planning

challenging. As discussed earlier, the AU also has a complicated procurement system embedded with bureaucratic bottlenecks and red tape that often slows the delivery of the funds to the MNJTF. The MNJTF has managed to shoulder the financial burden while awaiting delayed resources from the AU. Imagine that the MNJTF was AU-owned, and funds are not available in time: "Boko Haram would take advantage and mercilessly perpetuate its activities in the Lake Chad Basin," a respondent warned. Thanks to the MNJTF, it is the first time African soldiers interact among themselves, exemplifying a semblance of coordination against a common enemy. The MNJTF presents an opportunity for friendship, confidence, and trust-building among soldiers from Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad, and Niger, countries with a history of mistrust against each other over resources and border conflicts.

Moreover, the ability to operate across the border militarily in Africa is uncommon. Thus, to have a framework that allows joint cross border operations, albeit limited under the auspices of the MNJTF, is crucial for Africa. Albert (2017) argues that the MNJTF "provides practical space for the application of the mantra of African solution to African problems" (p. 126). "The effort to mobilize multiple militaries to work together in the Lake Chad Basin had significant impacts at the time when Boko Haram was a

nuisance" and, "without the MNJTF, the atrocities of Boko Haram would be a lot worse," other senior military and political officials postulated.

b. Boko Haram Diminished and Contained

The MNJTF has dislodged Boko Haram from their strongholds, except for the Sambisa Forest, and freed many hostages kidnapped by the group (Humanitarian Practice Network, 2017; Tar & Sunday, 2017). Boko Haram has now resorted to mostly unconventional warfare tactics such as hit and run, suicide bombing, and mine planting. It is unable to undertake conventional attacks against the Nigerian security forces as it did in the past. The MNJTF has succeeded in neutralizing several Boko Haram fighters, destroyed camps owned by the sect, and reclaimed over 80% of territories seized by Boko Haram (Atangana, 2018a). Boko Haram's activities have remained in the Lake Chad Basin, particularly around the Sambisa Forest in the northeast, Nigeria, where it still holds pockets of territories and from which it undertakes sporadic attacks against security forces, often affecting residents. For example, on March 3, 2021, Boko Haram assailants murdered four police officers, two civilian militiamen, and wounded 50 civilians during an attack on a military base in Damboa along the fringes of the Sambisa Forest in northeast Nigeria (Aljazeera, 2021). However, its

original intention of orchestrating attacks in southern Nigeria in cities like Lagos and Port Harcourt, and other parts of Nigeria has not materialized. According to a respondent, "the emergence of the current MNJTF influenced a massive drop in the activities of Boko Haram," and "they don't occupy the kind of territory they occupied before." According to the Global Conflict Tracker (2021), since 2014 and 2015, the period that Boko Haram recorded a peak in violence, the number of casualties attributed to the group has dropped drastically, thanks to the combined military forces from Cameroon, Niger, Chad, and Benin, under the auspices of the MNJTF. In Nigeria alone, between 2011 and 2015, fatalities from Boko Haram activities rose sharply from under a thousand in 2011 to about nine thousand deaths in 2015, but since then, the numbers have continued to drop considerably. From 2016 to 2019, the number of casualties went from about three thousand to less than a thousand. The number of attacks also reduced tremendously. From 2011 to 2015, the number of attacks increased sharply from one hundred to about four hundred. Between 2016 and 2019, however, the attacks dropped from around two hundred to under a hundred in Nigeria alone (ACLED Data, 2019). Boko Haram is alive and continues to perpetuate its activities in the Lake Chad Basin. The nature and mechanism of cooperation and the task force's challenges and

successes have presented the stakeholders with crucial lessons that could be instrumental in strengthening the task force and steering it toward achieving its mandate. With these challenges and successes of the MNJTF, one is compelled to reflect on how Boko Haram would eventually end or be reduced to a manageable level. The MNJTF has weakened and contained Boko Haram, but can it end Boko Haram? This dissertation research conducted a detailed review of existing studies and also sought expert opinions on factors that are likely to motivate the demise of a terrorist group like Boko Haram. The discoveries presented below would inform decisions by institutions, governments, and intergovernmental organizations confronted with terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin and beyond.

## 4.5 Expert Opinions about What Drives the Collapse of Terrorist Organizations Such as Boko Haram

Cronin (2011) and Jones & Libicki (2008) are widely recognized experts on how terrorism ends. In their seminal books, corroborated by interviews with various subject matter experts, several factors could motivate the demise of a terrorist organization. For over six years, the military efforts by the MNJTF to end Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin have not accomplished the mandate. The lessons learned could become applicable and helpful for the MNJTF and its member

state governments as they grapple with the Boko Haram situation in the Lake Chad Basin. The experts agreed that political negotiation, community policing, and intelligence are the primary ways of ending terrorism. Other less common reasons why terrorist groups end worth discussing include military force and goal achievement or victory. Four main factors, and how they apply to the Boko Haram situation in the Lake Chad Basin, are examined below.

## Perspective #1: Political Negotiation

According to Jones & Libicki (2008), most terrorist groups that have halted or declined their activities did so by pursuing a political process to achieve their goals. But this also depends on the extent of the group's goals: groups with narrower goals, such as regime, policy, or territorial change, are likely to end via a political settlement. But a group like Boko Haram aims to overthrow the secular Nigerian state and found an Islamic state with the firm implementation of Islamic law (Council on Foreign Relations, 2018). Even with such an extreme stance, negotiation with Boko Haram seems feasible. The Nigerian government had negotiated with Boko Haram to release the schoolgirls captured in Chibok, northeast Nigeria, in 2014. While attempts at negotiation with Boko Haram had often failed, Solomon (2017) argued that the negotiation over the schoolgirls perhaps succeeded

because the talks were low-key and secret, and included international partners such as the Swiss government and the International Community of the Red Cross, working together with local intermediaries such as Barrister Zannah Mustapha, a human rights activist and lawyer. Alterman (1999) posits that while governments are usually reluctant to negotiate with terrorist organizations, talks may be the only avenue to resolve some enduring conflicts, including those involving terrorist activities. Interviews in December 2020 and January 2021 with experts on the topic also revealed that a political process is the best way to addressing terrorism. According to one expert, "all of the indications are that you meet these groups, you talk with them, and then you get some agreement not to kill people anymore, and you give them some political consideration." Another expert confirms that negotiation is the best way out of terrorism, and even when it doesn't seem to work, "it's always worth continuing to try."

But one also understands why governments might not want to negotiate with terrorists. Cronin (2011) makes a strong argument that "the idea of negotiating with groups that deliberately kill civilians to advance their political goals is repulsive to most people" (p.35). A respondent even questioned: what would it look like for Boko Haram, for example, after committing such mayhem in the Lake Chad Basin,

especially in Nigeria, to join the political process and maybe own a political party? While it might sound rational to show firmness after a terrorist attack, ignoring any engagement with the perpetrators in hopes that it contributes to the safety of probable future victims by eliminating enticements for future attacks and showing the terrorist that their activities do not pay (Wilkinson, 1986; Lapan & Sandler, 1988), in fact

virtually all...governments facing terrorist campaigns have been forced to negotiate at some point (as mentioned above, Boko Haram and the Nigerian government had engaged in negotiations before for the release of hostages, leading one to believe that the duo could also negotiate an end to the conflict), and many have even made concessions (Cronin, 2011, p.35).

An example would be the Irish Republican Army (IRA) (Wallenfeldt, 2020). Cronin (2011) again argues that wise governments approach negotiations as a means to manage terrorist violence over the long term, while a group declines and ceases to exist for other reasons. After terrorist groups survive past five or six years, it is not clear that refusing to talk with them shortens their campaigns any more than entering into negotiations prolongs them" (pp. 35-36).

However, political negotiations with terrorist groups have resulted in groups ending their activities in various ways, including, among others, joining the political process of a country, forming a political party, and even taking over the government.

During the interviews, several subject matter experts cited the African National Congress (ANC) of Nelson Mandela in South Africa, villainized for decades. The ANC turned to terrorism in the 1960s, and its leader, Nelson Mandela, was imprisoned for acts of terrorism from 1964 to 1990, when the ANC became a formal political actor in South Africa. According to Mamdani (2002), the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa revealed that the ANC was one of the highest perpetrators of violence during the apartheid struggles in South Africa. The United States listed the ANC party as a foreign terrorist organization until 2008 (Cronin, 2011; LaFree & Dugan, 2007; Leggett, 2005; Lyman & Morrison, 2004b). However, the ANC became a political party and won power with Nelson Mandela as the first president of South Africa after apartheid in 1994. During the interviews, a senior conflict analyst argued that "obviously, I'm not going to put the ANC in the same category as Boko Haram. But the ANC was blacklisted as a terrorist group for a long time, but then it ended becoming the government in South Africa."

Another senior expert on terrorism during interviews in December 2020 supported the idea that Boko Haram does not match the ANC: "The ANC's vision for governing was very different from Boko Haram's. If Boko Haram achieves its goal, governance would be a nightmare for the people of northeastern Nigeria," he lamented. Unlike the ANC, Boko Haram quickly devolved into a loot-seeking group of bandits, with no one defending them openly. On the other hand, in large numbers, Black South Africans and many South African regime critics believed that the ANC was making credible political and normative claims (Clarke & Bassett, 2016; Ottaway, 1991; Westhuizen, 2004). Mandela, except in the eyes of the apartheid regime, seemed from very early on a different actor from the likes of Boko Haram's leaders.

Jones & Libicki (2008) further provided other examples of political settlements between governments and terrorist organizations. Following the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in 1998, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) ended its activities after negotiations with the UK and the Republic of Ireland. The agreement addressed vital governance issues and detailed measures concerning constitutional changes and security (Woodwell, 2005). In Mozambique, the Resistencia Nacional Mozambicana – Mozambican National Resistance – (RENAMO)in 1992 signed a peace deal with the government, including a

ceasefire, disarmament, demobilization, and multi-party elections. The RENAMO even won 112 seats in the National Assembly in the 1994 elections (Alden, 2001). During the interviews, respondents provided several other examples of political settlements between a government and liberation era parties that fall into much the same boat: they were international pariahs until the politics changed. The Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) in Zimbabwe and the Israeli Zionist militant group, the Irgun Zvai Le'umi (Irgun), were once listed as terrorist organizations but joined the political process, and people like Menachim Begin of Israel, the former leader of the Irgun who became Prime Minister, are only one example among many.

Regarding Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin, the MNJTF and the governments involved have primarily employed military force to end Boko Haram. The Nigerian government had negotiated with the terrorist group to release captives, such as when Boko Haram kidnapped about 300 schoolgirls in northeast Nigeria in 2014 (Council on Foreign Relations, 2018; Nwankpa, 2017; Olofinbiyi, 2020). However, there is no credible evidence that the negotiations have included any efforts at ceasefire talks, as discussions have focused on victims as cash-cows with dialogues mainly revolving around the ransom's size and nature. In agreement with a respondent,

it is worth the efforts to negotiate a ceasefire with Boko Haram, but community policing and intelligence is another approach that has proven effective in ending terrorist activities.

## Perspective #2: Community Policing and Intelligence

The police force is the government's primary arm responsible for internal security (Trinquier, 2006). Good intelligence coupled with well-trained police can easily penetrate and disrupt terrorist organizations. Thus, Jones & Libicki (2008) argue that " the mission of the police and other security forces should be to eliminate the terrorist organization, including the command structure, the terrorists' logistical, financial and political support from the midst of the population" for conflicts like Boko Haram's that are asymmetric in nature. Hoffman (2006) supported this finding and argued that for policing to succeed in eradicating terrorism, law enforcement officers are obliged to establish strong cooperation with the community where the terrorist perpetuate their activities, including with elected officials, traditional authorities, civil servants, and business people, among others, to gain their buy-in and assistance. While this sounds promising, it remains challenging for countries with a centralized policing system controlled by the national capital. The Nigerian police

force, for example, is strictly centralized, with recruitment and deployment managed directly from the federal capital, Abuja (Addullahi & Dantani, 2016; Agboga, 2021; Hills, 2012; Ikedinma, 2018). It is the same thing for the other three MNJTF countries. A respondent lamented that there are areas in the Lake Chad Basin with no military presence, not to mention a presence of the police or civil/administrative authorities: this makes the fight against Boko Haram challenging. Even in areas where the police and administrative authorities are present, corruption is endemic. The Nigerian police is perceived widely as the most corrupt institution in Nigeria (Agbiboa, 2015). Transparency International once labeled Cameroon as the most corrupt country globally and the police force as the most corrupt institution in the country (Lederman et al., 2005; Vubo, 2014).

However, a decent policing system is crucial to ending terrorism, which could also take the form of "developing anti-terrorism legislation that involved criminalizing activities necessary for terrorist organizations to function such as raising money or open recruitment" (Jones & Libicki, 2008. p.27). During interviews in December 2020, a North American senior terrorism expert supported this assertion:

that government should demystify terrorist organizations and transition them into simple criminal gangs where law enforcement and the judiciary become central and deal with them accordingly. When you designate a group like Boko Haram a terrorist organization, you elevate its status, and terrorists love it because they feel like heroes fighting powerful militaries. When you militarize it, you glamorize it, and it is just completely the wrong way.

 An example of a terrorist group ended by policing and intelligence is Japan's Aum Shinrikyo, founded in 1984 by Shoko Asahara and responsible for the 1995 Tokyo subway sarin attack and the Matsumoto sarin attack the year before (Keim et al., 2001; Olson, 1999; Reader, 2000). In subsequent years after the 1995 attack, the Japanese police and intelligence officers conducted one of the largest manhunts in the nation's history. By 1997 the terrorist group suffered bankruptcy and ended; its leadership structure was dismantled, and the leaders were jailed. Aum Shinrikyo changed its name to Aleph and terminated terrorist activities (Jones & Libicki, 2008). The efforts of the Japanese police and intelligence officials were crucial to ending the terrorist organization. Through widespread surveillance and penetration of the group, Japanese authorities conducted hundreds of arrests. The nation also adopted a range of legal measures that crippled

Aum Shinrikyo's financial base and discredited its ideology, leading to mass defection of militants and sympathizers (Cameron, 1999; Olson, 1999; Rosenau, 2001; Sprinzak, 1998). For example, in conjunction with the victims of the 1995 attacks, Japan's government requested that Aum's assets be frozen and succeeded under a bankruptcy law later that year. The 1952 Anti-Subversive Activities Law that prevented Aum from recruiting, fundraising, training followers, or publishing materials that promote the group's beliefs was also strictly applied, and that was how the terrorist group ended. In concurrence with Sprinzak (1998), Aum's fate demonstrates the ability of law enforcement to avert devilish efforts of similar groups such as Boko Haram to preempt further atrocities to innocent citizens. However, unlike Boko Haram, a much larger group that hides in ungoverned spaces in the Sambisa Forest, Aum was a much smaller group of 1,500 members (Fletcher, 2012; Gunaratna, 2018) in Japan's urban areas where police officers regularly patrolled. Japan has a relatively diminutive wilderness and no porous borders that could allow AUM to move back and forth as Boko Haram does in the Lake Chad Basin. A community leader and a general that led operations against Boko Haram confirmed during the interviews that there are areas in the Lake Chad Basin where security is absent:

These Lake Chad Basin countries cannot monitor all parts of the country. For example, Mallamfatori [in Nigeria's northeast] is the most advanced area where you find the Nigerian troops; after that, there are places where Boko freely moves and exists because there are no police or military forces present. Also, the naval capability of all four countries of the MNJTF is weak, and Boko Haram has started implanting improvised electronic devices (IEDs) in water.

In summary, a well-reformed police force in conjunction with adequately trained intelligence officials in the Lake Chad Basin could work closely with the military power to end Boko Haram.

## Perspective #3: The Military Force

Employing military force is another approach to taking out a terrorist organization, but it also depends on the group's size and the conflict's nature in general. Within the last two centuries, states worldwide have used force to stamp out terrorism at home or abroad. Cronin (2011) argues that "it is much harder to think of states that did not use repression than those that did. It is a basic human instinct to fight fire with fire, force with force, and terror with terrifying responses" (pp. 115). Also, force is the only thing that some extremist groups respond to, but how successful is

the use of force is another question. Jones & Libicki (2008)argue that while seven percent of terrorist groups since 1968 ended because of military force, only 25% of terrorist groups strong enough to conduct an insurgency ended because of military force since 1968. However, there are limits to the use of military force against terrorist groups. It is easy to deploy large conventional military forces against bigger than smaller terrorist groups. Military force is also more effective against large insurgent groups, but police and intelligence services are crucial in any of these cases (Jones & Libicki, 2008; Posen, 2001). In Sierra Leone, the military succeeded in defeating the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), thanks to help from the UK, which deployed over four thousand soldiers and an aircraft carrier in 2000. The military response was pivotal in routing the RUF forces and stabilizing the country (Connaughton, 2001; Hoffman, 2004; Roberson, 2014). As discussed throughout this dissertation, the military forces of the MNJTF in the Lake Chad Basin have struggled to end Boko Haram. It is more evident that while military force is crucial when human and national security is threatened, a more robust and comprehensive approach that includes dialogue, adequate policing, and intelligence are vital to ending terrorism.

### Perspective #4: Victory: Goals Achieved

In rare cases, terrorist groups ended because they accomplished their goals. Unfortunately, terrorism has been employed from time to time to attain admirable aims such as the quest for freedom or self-determination of an oppressed people (Carley & Peace, 1996; Franck & Rodley, 1973; Macfarlane, 1990). Groups that have engaged in terrorism for such purposes have ultimately gained legitimacy over time. But that doesn't mean terrorism, primarily when it targets civilians, is good. Cronin (2011) argues that "recognizing that terrorism sometimes succeeds does not legitimize the tactic and may even be a necessary step toward reducing and eliminating it. On the other hand, denying it is wishful thinking and an impediment to objective analysis," (p.73). According to Jones & Libicki (2008), about 10% of terrorist groups that ended since 1968 did so because they achieved their goals.

Good examples already mentioned above include the ANC in South Africa and the Israeli Irgun. However, as Jones & Libicki (2008) argue, groups with narrower goals such as policy change are more likely to succeed than those with broader goals such as altering the social order. The ANC was more concerned with ending apartheid, a racial segregation system, or discrimination against Black South Africans. Boko

Haram in the Lake Chad Basin is more interested in overthrowing the democratic system of governance in Nigeria and the current Nigerian government to institutionalize Sharia law in the federation and beyond. That is too broad a goal, and achieving it is a Herculean task, meaning Boko Haram might never succeed. Therefore, employing military response, dialogue, policing, and efforts to address the root causes might help end the menace.

In conclusion, Chapter 4 discusses the findings of this dissertation research. It examines the nature and mechanism of cooperation among the MNJTF states before delving into the challenges that plague the MNJTF. It looked at the successes of the task force and explored expert opinions on factors that generally drive terrorist organizations to end their activities which could inform efforts by the MNJTF and governments of the Lake Chad Basin in their attempt to bring a definitive end to the Boko Haram activities in the Lake Chad Basin. The findings will guide recommendations I develop for three main parties: 1) the MNJTF; 2) the member states of the task force; and 3) partners of the MNJTF, discussed in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusion

This final chapter provides targeted recommendations that could go a long way in supporting the MNJTF and other stakeholders to find a lasting solution to the Boko Haram terrorist activities in the Lake Chad Basin. To effectively address Boko Haram, the MNJTF, member states, and partners must revisit the current strategy, recognizing that solo military action is insufficient to end an insurgency initially driven by governance failures. Furthermore, the member states of the MNJTF must understand the importance of good cooperation and coordination, keeping in mind that their collective will and commitment are crucial to eradicating Boko Haram in the region. These ideas and more are elaborated upon below accordingly, starting with the MNJTF and members, including the LCBC more broadly, and concludes with the MNJTF partners.

### The MNJTF and the Member States

### Recommendation #1: Improve Intelligence Sharing and Planning

The MNJTF benefits from intelligence from external partners such as the United States, France, and the United Kingdom. While this is helpful and appreciated, however, the MNJTF needs to conduct its intelligence, which must be fused

via an efficient center in a timely fashion. The national governments should upgrade the intelligence infrastructure and capabilities of the MNJTF, including the acquisition of excellent and compatible communication equipment, to acquire intelligence and not mostly rely on information passed down from, for example, the US-Africa Command headquarters in Germany. The Boko Haram warfare is asymmetric in nature, as the militants reside in the communities within the population, and better information gathering, sharing, and analysis are critical to trap them. It should be a primary concern and focus for the MNJTF member states if defeating Boko Haram is a fundamental goal. Good intelligence gathering and sharing, which include infiltrating the ranks and files of Boko Haram, both internally and externally, would help curb the sect's sources of funding, arms, medical supplies, and even its underground supporters.

To achieve this, Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad, and Niger must have the flexibility and capability to determine the kind of information or intelligence they need. Rather than have information passed through the partner headquarters before trickling back to Africa, the MNJTF head office in Chad should be equipped to gather and analyze data from the national capitals and field offices for crucial cross-border engagements and operational preparation. This would also mean

reinforcing staff's capacity concerned with information gathering/sharing and analysis at the various sector headquarters by designing and implementing tailored training to improve operations, including language training to enhance internal communication and comprehension. As the finding of this study indicates, cross-border operations and planning are primarily informal and not mandatory. The national governments of the MNJTF member states should allow their militaries to share operational planning in detail and more regularly with the MNJTF headquarters in Chad, with the understanding that certain information must be preserved for security reasons.

## Recommendation #2: Enhance Civilian-Military Relations and Protect Human Rights

To win the support or backing of the communities where Boko Haram exists, the MNJTF soldiers must build good relationships with the communities and respect the denizens' human rights. Evidence exists that army atrocities against local populations in the Lake Chad Basin pushed the locals to prefer Boko Haram's presence to that of the soldiers. A community leader during interviews in December 2020 argued that "the people in this area find themselves between the deep blue sea and the devil. So, who do you follow? Do you go

along with the deep blue sea or follow the devil? Of course, the lesser evil is what the people want to follow, and Boko Haram has always presented itself to the people as a kind of lesser evil that you want to follow. If the issues of human rights are not addressed, we may have to be fighting this insurgency for a long period because people would prefer to align with Boko Haram." So the national governments and the MNJTF soldiers must take human rights and international humanitarian law training and implementation seriously. This might include providing adequate training and shifting the incentives by informing the soldiers that the goal is to protect people's rights more than killing a terrorist. Without such messages, they might keep doing the same.

By the same token, the forces must rethink their civil-military activities to bring the civilian population to adhere to the military doctrine and get vital information critical for an asymmetric war (which is a battle of the mind.) The MJTF must explore alternatives measures to restore hope and trust between the soldiers and local populations against Boko Haram. Such actions would include, among others, the recruitment of local soldiers with high proficiency in the local languages who can establish collaboration with the communities and identify families whose relatives joined Boko

Haram, and perhaps engage them in some conversation that could result in the militants defecting the terrorist group. "As long as the MNJTF countries believe that only the military will solve this thing [Boko Haram], they miss making sure that they reach out to those who are displaced and affected; if the soldiers treat them well, then they can be informants to the military," a retired colonel concluded.

## Recommendation #3: Develop and Disseminate Counterideology Messages against Boko Haram's Ideology

The Boko Haram warfare is ideological and requires a superior ideology to counter it. The counter ideology should re-orientate and recapture people's minds, thereby winning control over the Lake Chad Basin population where Boko Haram operates. Counter-ideology messages dealing with Boko Haram would disentangle Islam from the act of terror by reorienting extreme jihadists from the belief that Islam endorses terror. A solid counter-ideology is also instrumental in the rehabilitation and reintegration of detained terrorists or extremists (Abdullah, 2017).

## Recommendation #4: Fund the Struggle against Boko Haram

As Albert (2017) rightly argues, "a security community that cannot fund itself is not a strong and sustainable entity" (p. 131). A former MNJTF commander also reiterated

the importance of funding for the MNJTF: "To sustain the force means continuous funding, which also translates into equipment, especially communication gear that is user-friendly to ensure interoperability" among the soldiers. The member states of the MNJTF, plus other stakeholders, should commit resources to fund the MNJTF. The UN Secretary-General, for example, should support and encourage the establishment of the proposed Trust Fund for the sustenance of operations and mobilize the necessary international financial and logistical support for the MNJTF (United Nations, 2015). The establishment of the Trust Fund will address the economic challenges faced by the MNJTF, not only in terms of sophisticated equipment and gear but also an assurance that the soldiers are well-kept and -fed, which is crucial to boosting their morale.

Furthermore, the MNJTF member states and partners should respect their pledges of material, financial, and technical assistance to strengthen their functioning capacity. One senior military official opined that African leaders of the Lake Chad Basin countries and Africa more broadly must develop the political will to tackle the Boko Haram problem in the region. According to him, "there's no reason for Africans to go begging cap-in-hand for money from the European Union with

the conditionalities associated with those finances.  If it were to fund political parties to maintain themselves in power, the money would come out. But when it comes to security reasons, as long as their power is not threatened, that's not their problem. So the leaders' political will is key to the MNJTF's success" because political will translates to adequate funding for the task force. The MNJTF member states should consistently define practical and acceptable ways to raise resources and fund the military organization.

Moreover, the bottleneck involved with moving funds from the AU to the MNJTF should be streamlined to facilitate quick transfer of funds to the appropriate sectors.  However, it is essential to reiterate that part of the resources should be directed at initiatives that encourage and support good governance, as the military approach is not the only remedy for terrorism, because it cannot address the underlying factors that drive terrorism.

## Recommendation #5: Consider Non-kinetic Initiatives, Including Improved Governance

While military actions are required to handle immediate threats to human security, the importance of non-kinetic initiatives should not be underestimated. The MNJTF and the member states' governments should recognize that military

intervention alone cannot address Boko Haram, whose origin relates to poor governance in the region. The military is crucial to attenuate the capacity of Boko Haram and prepare the ground for political decisions to prevail. However, it is not the endgame. Resources should also be directed to transform governance issues, such as corruption, marginalization, and lack of socioeconomic opportunities, which provide a fertile ground for Boko Haram to thrive. With several years of experience in the Lake Chad area, a retired senior military official confirmed that the government's absence in many places in the region is palpable.

Having operated around those areas for decades, I found out that those are usually rural communities. And there is a complete absence of governance in those areas. And once there is a vacuum created because of the absence of governance or government presence, groups such as Boko Haram emerge and take over control because nature abhors a vacuum. The poverty level around those areas is intense, which itself is the precursor to revolution and rebellion. There is a need for the Lake Chad Basin countries to provide governance at all levels.

Regarding corruption, one respondent argued that it is "the greatest threat to national security in many African

countries," which must be tackled vehemently. While it is hard to end corruption completely, sanctions against corrupt officials must prevail to ensure that government resources directed to combat Boko Haram are indeed used for that purpose. Sanctions would help deter potentially corrupt officials and help stabilize the region. Such non-kinetic initiatives would complement military efforts and comprehensively transform the root causes and resultant effects of terrorism, particularly Boko Haram's threats to human and national security.

Many ideas on addressing the governance challenges in the Lake Chad Basin and Africa more broadly already exist. The regional strategy for stabilizing, recovery, and the resilience of Boko Haram-affected areas in the Lake Chad Basin is one of them. Based on nine pillars, the plan is a product of extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders both in Africa and beyond. It aims to "re-establish a common approach and an inclusive framework for all stakeholders to support a timely, coordinated, and effective transition from stabilization to early recovery and the resumption of the stalled development process in the regions" (AU & LCBC, 2018, p.5). Another Western soldier familiar with the MNJTF also reiterated that efforts such as the "the stability and

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) conference initiated by the Governor of Diffa, in Niger in 2017 to 2018, [which was intended] to write a comprehensive multinational policy to govern the areas affected by Boko Haram," should be encouraged and supported by the Lake Chad Basin governments, including relevant external stakeholders.

## Recommendation #6: Leverage the Agricultural Potential of the Area

The Lake Chad Basin is rich in agricultural diversity and resources. If adequately harnessed, the farm production would be pretty high to feed the region and Africa more broadly. During interviews in January 2021, a community leader confirmed that Lake Chad, if well harnessed, "can provide fish to all of West Africa." Although the Lake Chad Basin is shrinking due to climatic conditions, "initial efforts by the Lake Chad Basin countries to pipe water from the Obangui River in the Central African Republic into the lake should not be shelved," another official reiterated. Reclaiming the lake would provide livelihood and a better economy for the Lake Chad Basin countries, thereby restoring peace and security in that area once more. In a nutshell, all citizens should have access to adequate safety, welfare, development, and commerce, even in the remotest communities.

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Such efforts will promote fraternalism and encourage the denizens to resist the urge to join or support Boko Haram.

## Recommendation #7: Adequate Coordination is Mandatory

The member nations of the MNJTF should see Boko Haram as a common threat that only collaborative efforts can address adequately. Coordination among them should be seen as a rule and not an exception, as it would offer quicker reaction times and extra flexibility, and thus efficiency in their efforts against the common enemy. Achieving adequate and comprehensive coordination would include several reforms, including the institution of a single chain of command that would bypass the current numerous diplomatic and military consultations involved in the planning, preparing for, and implementing collective actions by the joint forces. The CONOPs should be revisited to provide complete coordination authority to the MNJTF commander. During the interviews in January 2021, a senior conflict resolution expert stated the need to rotate the commander position among the various MNJTF member states. Also, the 25 kilometer right of pursuit should be redefined, allowing the soldiers more flexibility while respecting the sovereignty of the nations involved. According to him, "I think they [MNJTF]should appoint a non-Nigerian as the head at some point; it would be a symbol. It is also

important to appoint someone from the other countries" as well from time to time. Such a move would demonstrate Nigeria's political will to address a problem that originated in Nigeria, and most of the attacks still occur there.

Adequate coordination also means strengthening the capacity of the LCBC to oversee the operations of the MNJTF. A respondent who participated in the deliberations and formation of the MNJTF argued that the LCBC "lacks the capacity [both political and operational] to oversee the MNJTF." The member states of the LCBC and the MNJTF should support the secretariat of the LCBC by providing enough funding, strengthening the skills of the staff around planning, financial, information and communication management while ensuring that the performance of the executive secretariat is evaluated regularly alongside the objectives of the commission to ensure transparency.

Furthermore, the lack of trust among the member nations of the MNJTF has jeopardized the body's efficiency. The Lake Chad Basin states should improve their relations to enable smooth working relationships when they must confront the common enemy jointly. While Boko Haram started in Nigeria, it has spread to the other countries in the region, thus becoming a regional issue. The mistrust relating to ancient issues

should be dropped, or else Boko Haram will continue to take advantage of the differences among these countries to perpetuate its atrocious activities in the area. Distrust among the MNJTF member states would imply all efforts to combat Boko Haram as a unit will prove futile because of poor coordination arising from the lack of trust among governments whose citizens are friendlier to each other than their governments are to each other. As one community leader reiterated: "The Kanuri people are all around the Lake Chad area. You have them in Nigeria, in Chad, in Niger, and then the Fulani people are in Cameroon, in Maiduguri, Nigeria. A lot of other things bind the people of this area together. There also have to be friendly relations among the countries of the MNJTF."

## Recommendation #8: Adopt Attractive Reintegration Measures

The national governments of the MNJTF should adopt attractive reintegration measures that would incentivize Boko Haram militants to defect, thereby weakening the terrorist groups. A senior expert working on the DDR program for Boko Haram returnees in Nigeria and Cameroon decried the mistreatment of the former militants. Usually, "the professional training, jobs, and financial resources promised are nonexistent. Instead, the returnee Boko Haram militants

are locked up in DDR camps in the name of deradicalization," the expert laments. Another community leader in northeastern Nigeria reiterated that Boko Haram leadership "sends members of the group to declare themselves to the DDR centers, to see and report back on the kind of support that government provides ex-fighters." As of 2018, about 1800 Boko Haram affiliates, mostly women, have reintegrated into the communities via this process and serve as potential informants to Boko Haram. Most of their male counterparts have not left the DRR centers after the deradicalization and rehabilitation process because of fear of severe reprisals from the host communities and militias (Felbab-Brown, 2018). The member states of the MNJTF should ensure that the DDR programs for Boko Haram returnees are strong enough to convince more defection from the group. The senior expert also posits that "traditional authorities in the Lake Chad area have contributed to eradicating Boko by providing forgiveness through the Quran to those willing to withdraw from the sect and reintegrate into the community." Such initiatives may seem minuscule but are critical and should be supported and encouraged by the authorities. The authorities should also consider similar alternatives for non-Muslim Boko Haram fighters. A solid DDR program would help stabilize the region. According to Akum and Samuel (2020), the defection

from Boko Haram to rehabilitation programs is dangerous because failed escape is tantamount to death. Thus, the MNJTF and member states must ensure that any DDR program has a due process that guarantees safety and appropriate reintegration.

## Recommendation #9: Consider Dialogue with Boko Haram

After over a decade of combating Boko Haram, it is evident that the military power alone cannot end the group's atrocities. The Lake Chad Basin authorities should consider dialogue with the group to cease its activities and end the war as they have done to release hostages. Military combat is costly: billions of dollars, backed by logistical and intelligence support from wealthy Western partners, have been invested in the war against Boko Haram. However, the terrorist group has killed over 30,000 people and counting. The recent massacre of over a hundred farmers in November 2020 in Borno state, Nigeria (France24, 2020; *Washington Post*, 2020) and about 93 Chadian soldiers in March 2020 (Aljazeera, 2020; BBC, 2020; T*he Guardian*, 2020) by Boko Haram raises concerns about the security response and brings up the need to consider dialogue as an alternate strategy (Mahdi, 2020). The authorities should refrain from viewing dialogue as a sign of weakness or ceding victory to Boko Haram. The Boko Haram war has caused wanton harm to the civilian populations in the

region and disrupted economic and normal day-to-day livelihood. The national governments should prioritize and see dialogue as a possible strategy to salvage human life and prevent the further destruction of properties in the region.

## The Partners of the MNJTF

In this section, I will offer some recommendations to the strategic partners of the MNJTF, including the African Union, the United Nations, and the United States, France, and the United Kingdom.

1. The African Union

### Recommendation #1: Improve the AU Procurement Procedures

The AU provided the crucial endorsement that the MNJTF needed to access external resources. It contributed equipment, including C3IS, ISR, Air Mobility capabilities, and vehicles. Moreover, the AU has sponsored donor conferences, unsuccessfully petitioned the UN to routinize and prioritize sustainable funding for the MNJTF, and coordinates international contributions for the MNJTF (AU Peace & Security Council, 2019; Dobbins et al., 2019). Accordingly, the resources that MNJTF partners, such as the European Union, the US, UK, France, Norway, and others, donate to the task force passes through the AU, believed to have a functional and transparent procurement process. However, the

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procurement mechanism of the AU has hiccups that need redress. Dobbins et al. (2019) argue that "significant amounts of promised contributions [to the MNJTF], remained trapped in the AU's bureaucratic procurement and disbursement process, (pp.205). Also, a former colonel lamented that the "bottlenecks and red tape in the AU administration and financial procurement procedures have resulted in delays. Frequently, some of the resources end up not used because of these delays." The International Crisis Group (2020) corroborates this assertion: "Even today, some EU funding remains unspent. Though the European Union money started reaching the MNJTF in 2017, the EU has had to extend twice its deadline for spending the funds due to delays..." (p.19). Thus, to adequately support the MNJTF and steer it towards achieving its goal, the AU should streamline the complicated procedures concerned with moving resources to the MNJTF headquarters to facilitate the rapid transmission of funds to the appropriate sectors. The AU could support the LCBC to institute a robust, functional and transparent procurement system that would bypass AU's complicated procurement process. This will go a long way to provide succor to an organization that generally lacks funding.

Recommendation #2: Encourage Collaboration among the MNJTF Member States and Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law

The AU, as the central African regional institution and an umbrella organization for the MNJTF troop-contributing countries, should help the nations agree on crucial issues affecting the functioning of the MNJTF, such as sustainable funding, by ensuring the timely remittance of financial pledges and dues by the member states. Also, the AU should work closely with the MNJTF and member states to ensure adequate compliance with international human rights and humanitarian principles, including proper monitoring, reporting, and addressing any allegations of human rights violations. Any soldiers found wanting of human rights abuses should be held accountable. During interviews in December 2020, an AU officer suggested an ideal way to ensure strict adherence to human rights principles by the MNJTF forces: "the AU should deploy officers to the various sectors of the MNJTF so that reported violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are properly investigated by the focal person to avoid distorted or misrepresented information, which could undermine the efforts of the MNJTF." The focal person would also ensure that the soldiers continue to receive human rights and other training on conduct and

discipline to manage civilians' protection during combat. The strict observance of these principles would boost the civil-military relationships, build trust with local communities, and gather critical information to identify and decimate Boko Haram militants in the region.

2. The United Nations

Recommendation #1: Coordinate and Support the Implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery, and Resilience of the Lake Chad Basin

In 2015, the UN Security Council condemned in solid terms the terrorist activities, including the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, perpetrated by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. It urged the regional institutions such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the African Union Commission to adopt a comprehensive strategy to deal with Boko Haram in the region, emphasizing that any adopted approach must adequately respect human rights and international humanitarian laws. The UN also announced the formation of the MNJTF, ready to launch operations in the area (United Nations, 2015). While the MNJTF began its work and has recorded operational successes against

Boko Haram, a comprehensive approach that addresses the underlying causes of Boko Haram has mainly been ignored. Six years later, with thousands killed and millions of people displaced, there is no better time than now for the UN to leverage its position on the global stage to ensure that Boko Haram is addressed once and for all. Several initiatives exist that provide a framework for a comprehensive redress of the Boko Haram crisis that the UN support can build on. The adoption of the regional strategy to stabilize and recover areas affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin, developed in consultation with the UN, is one example (AU & LCBC, 2018). Since its adoption in 2018, the strategy is yet to make any meaningful headway. The UN should work more closely with and mobilize the LCBC, the AU, the MNJTF, and member states to coordinate the implementation of the strategy to achieve desired stabilization, transition to recovery, and the resumption of stalled development in the region, all widely accepted as processes that can successfully mitigate terrorism in the area. While humanitarian assistance to refugees and IDPs is lauded, only lasting solutions can bring a faithful and long-term smile to the faces of the displaced.

Recommendation #2: Support the Establishment of the Proposed Trust Fund against Boko Haram

One of the critical challenges discussed in Chapter 4 that has hampered the functionality of the MNJTF is the question of funding. A 2015 draft UN resolution by Chad, Nigeria, and Cameroon asked the secretary-general to establish a trust fund, managed by the LCBC, supervised by the AU, with member states encouraged to contribute to the fund (Nichols, 2015). However, it did not happen, and the call remains vital. As mentioned earlier, establishing such a fund by an international authority, such as the UN, would guaranty sustained operations by mobilizing the necessary international financial and logistical support for the MNJTF (United Nations, 2015). The trust fund would facilitate the address of the underlying causes of Boko Haram, the purchase of sophisticated equipment and gear, provide adequate feeding for the soldiers, and thus, boost their morale.

3. United States, United Kingdom, and France: Synergize for Efficiency and Accountability

The MNJTF, either directly or through bilateral relations between the national governments and Western powers such as France, the UK, and the USA, has benefited from material, financial, and technical/tactical support in combatting Boko Haram. While the help thus far is appreciated, some synergy on the part of these powers would yield a

significant impact on the ground. Rather than provide ad hoc support to the MNJTF and member states, these Western powers should collaborate more to provide interoperable equipment, training, and technical and financial support sustainably, even just within a given timeframe. Such consistency would enable the MNJTF to consolidate the gains it has achieved over time. As one terrorism expert, several frontline soldiers, and senior military officials confirmed during the interviews, "a little support can go a long way" if there is proper follow-through and consistency. Another senior terrorism analyst familiar with MNJTF and the support it gets from Western partners corroborated this assertion. Interviewed in December 2020, he argued that "the broader issue is a lack of consistency across the board: for example, the US government would give it [MNJTF] so much money or so much support or would do coordinating training with member countries, one year and then the following year, they wouldn't. That is the same with the EU and France," meaning there is no coordination on which country gives what support, for what purpose, and for how long. Synergy among the Western partners, especially those that contribute quite a chunk to the MNJTF's mission, such as the US, France, and the UK, would yield more tangible results and ensure maximal use of the ever-limited resources. These states must also ensure that

any support to the MNJTF is attached to a key deliverable. For example, it should not be a matter of "the US has $50 million to spend on counterterrorism training and decides to give it to the MNJTF or the defense attaché in Abuja, who claims there is a need to train the MNJTF soldiers" a senior Western respondent said. When resources and support are tagged to output/outcome, accountability and efficient resource management become inevitable. Each of these countries has unique influences in the Lake Chad Basin and the MNJTF countries, which they should leverage to encourage and ensure good cooperation and coordination in the MNJTF.

As indicated earlier, France, for example, has a substantial influence on its former territories' affairs and direct key internal policies. France has significant control over its former African colonies' finances, foreign policy, and military, including Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. France should leverage these opportunities to promote the practical functionality of the MNJTF. As several respondents highlighted during the interviews, "it is only in the interest of France that adequate cooperation would exist in the MNJTF." France should grab this opportunity to salvage the MNJTF, the Lake Chad Basin, and the African continent from the menace of terrorism.

The United States, on the other hand, remains a reliable counterterrorism partner with Africa. Between 2015 and 2017, the United States provided a total of $363 million to the MNJTF. The US has offered tremendous operational support to the MNJTF through drone deployment from its bases in Niger and Cameroon (Casola, 2020). For an organization that lacks adequate funding, the United States should take advantage of its operational and financial prowess to tie continuous support to the MNJTF to good cooperation among forces and the member states of the task force.

In 2015, the United Kingdom supported the MNJTF by providing vehicles, power generating equipment, rough terrain motorcycles, and communication equipment. In early 2021, the MNJTF met with the United Kingdom government to explore possible additional support from the United Kingdom government to advance the MNJTF's efforts to degrade and eradicate Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin (DefenceWeb, 2021). Six years since the UK first provided support to the MNJTF, Boko Haram, although weakened, remains viable. As indicated earlier, poor cooperation and coordination are some of the critical factors affecting the success of the MNJTF. As the MNJTF and UK government explore avenues of further cooperation, the UK government should ensure that any

additional support to the MNJTF should be based on adequate coordination and collaboration between the forces and the member states of the task force. If these recommendations are considered, the MNJTF would be on a correct path to achieving its mission—ending Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin.

In a nutshell, transnational cooperation, particularly in the security sector, has become a platform through which contiguous countries or nations within a subregion collaborate to tackle common security threats or challenges. This dissertation examines the role of transnational cooperation in combatting Boko Haram, particularly the MNJTF's mission and actions in the Lake Chad Basin region of Africa.

While the MNJTF has recorded strides in the fight against Boko Haram, the terrorist group remains active and continues to undertake attacks against civilians and government institutions in the area. To effectively address Boko Haram, the MNJTF, its members, and other partners must collaborate adequately on various fronts. Mainly, the inability of the MNJTF to terminate Boko Haram could be blamed on several factors, including its overreliance on military actions while ignoring the underlying governance challenges, such as corruption, political exclusion, and inadequate or lack of

socio-economic opportunities for the denizens. While military intervention is required to address the immediate threat to human and national security in the short run, any long-term initiative to tackle terrorism, including Boko Haram, must understand and strive to transform the driving factors behind the terrorist activities. Several examples from around the world, including the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and the history of insurgency in Nigeria, have demonstrated that military efforts alone rarely address terrorism, whose underlying causes are more or less related to aspects of poor governance. While numerous studies have suggested that governance challenges must be addressed to end insecurity in the region and Africa more broadly, governments are yet to take any meaningful steps in that direction.

Appendices

Appendix I: Terrorist occurrences and related deaths in Africa (2012 – 2016)

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About   Data   Resource Library   Analysis

**NO HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE: THE EXPANSION OF BOKO HARAM'S ACTIVITY OUTSIDE OF NIGERIA IN 2019**

Since emerging in Borno State in North East Nigeria in 2009, the vast majority of Boko Haram's violent activities have been concentrated in Nigeria. In the ten years the group has been active, more than 70% of violent events associated with the group and 80% of the associated reported fatalities have taken place in Nigeria. This pattern appears to be shifting in 2019, as more of Boko Haram's violent activities are occurring outside of Nigeria. In 2019 to date, only half (50.4%) of violent activities associated with Boko Haram (both the Shekau and Barnawi factions) have been in Nigeria (see ACLED, 10 April 2019 for discussion of these separate factions). **Unlike previous instances in which Boko Haram engaged in significant activity outside of Nigeria, the 2019 expansion of Boko Haram's violent activities into neighboring countries, and the types of violence it is engaging in, allude to a resilient and resourceful insurgency.** Increasing violence associated with Boko Haram in Niger, Chad, and Cameroon has dire implications for the humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad Basin and stabilization efforts in the region.

## Boko Haram in Niger, Chad, and Cameroon

Boko Haram first expanded outside of Nigeria in 2012, when it was involved in two violent events in Cameroon and Chad. The event in Chad was a skirmish between Nigerian military forces and militants involved in a smuggling operation;  the event in Cameroon was an attack launched by the militants on a border town in which no Cameroonian nationals were among the 15 reported fatalities. Nigerians remained the primary opponents in these events. By 2013, however, these cross-border operations were focused on non-Nigerian targets; in June 2013, for example, Boko Haram militants attacked a prison in Niamey, Niger, which resulted in three reported fatalities and three injured prison guards. Though Boko Haram has continuously engaged in cross-border operations since 2012, the majority of violent events involving the group (nearly 72%) and associated reported fatalities (81) have remained in Nigeria (see graph below).

**Violent Events and Reported Fatalities Involving Boko Haram by County and Year (January 1, 2009 - May 11, 2019)**
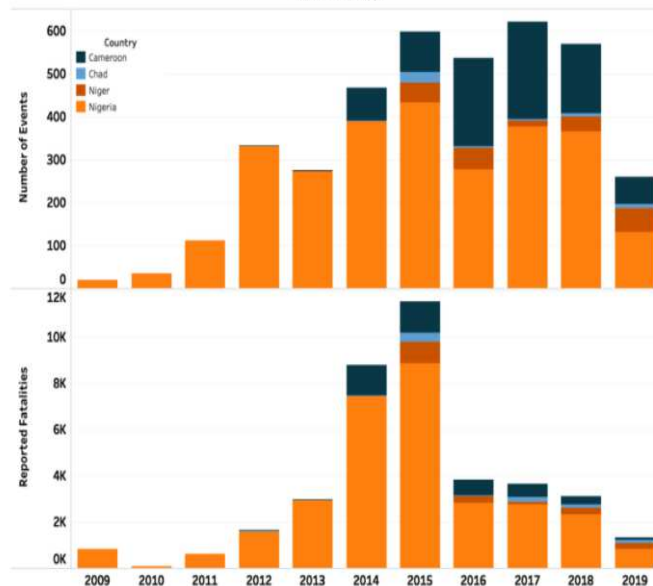


As Boko Haram has continued to engage in operations in Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, different patterns of violence have developed in each country. 52% of events involving the group in Nigeria are battles and 30% are violence against civilians.  Whereas in Chad, nearly 60% of the violent events associated with Boko Haram have been battles; in Cameroon the proportion is just less than 40%; and in Niger it is 48%. In Niger and Cameroon, Boko Haram is engaged in proportionally more violence against civilians (39% and 41%, respectively). This pattern may be a function of Chad's more robust security sector and the proximity of the Chadian capital (N'djamena) to the conflict, as compared to the capitals of Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon, which makes confining Boko Haram a more acute problem for the Chadian state.

So far in 2019, nearly half of all violent events involving the group have occurred outside of Nigeria – a proportion that is unusually high for the group. Boko Haram's geographic pattern of activity in 2019 thus far resembles 2016, when almost 48% of the group's activities where outside of Nigeria.

## 2016 Redux?

The 2016 geographic expansion came in the face of a renewed military effort that successfully dislodged the group from its territorial holdings in North East Nigeria (BBC, December 24, 2016). As demonstrated below, the surge in Boko Haram's activity outside of Nigeria in 2019 came after a number of clashes with the Nigerian military between December 2018 – February 2019. This pressure, like in 2016, may have incentivized Boko Haram to shift its activities beyond Nigeria's borders.

## Violent Activity Involving Boko Haram by Type of Event and Location (January 1, 2016 - May 11, 2019)
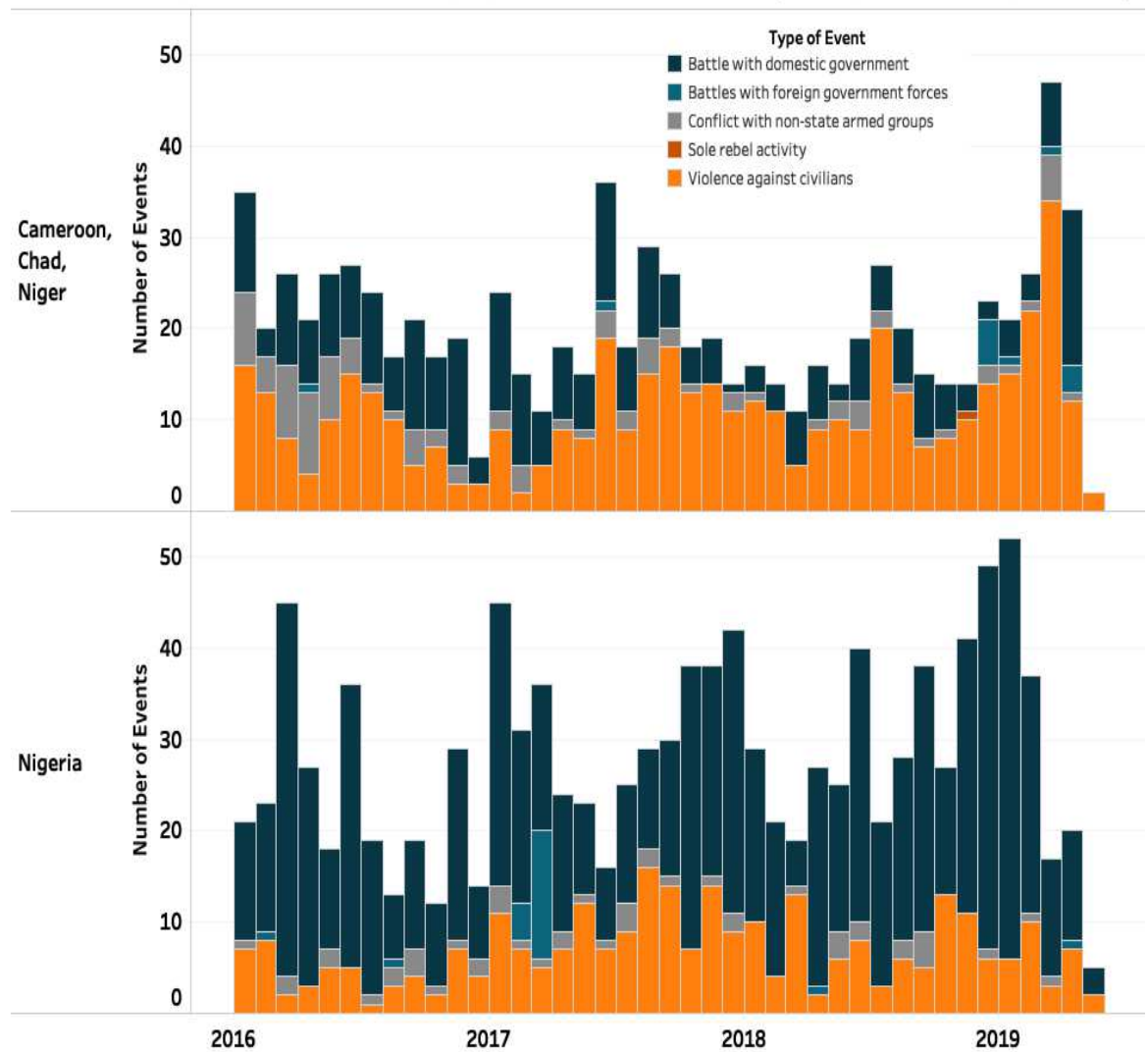


The composition of Boko Haram's operations outside of Nigeria are significantly different between the group's 2016 and 2019 geographic exp[...] events in 2016 were comprised of violence against civilians and 29% were battles with government forces; in 2019, 64% are violence against c[...] are battles with government forces. Violence against civilians may be a strategy adopted by the insurgents to maintain an operational presen[...] without bearing the risk that comes with confronting state security forces. The prevalence of violence against civilians, as compared to clashe[...] forces, suggests that Boko Haram is in greater control of where and when it engages in violent activities in 2019 than in 2016. This strategy ma[...] whether the violence against civilians is being adopted in response to degraded insurgent capacity (Wood 2010) or because Boko Haram is th[...] armed group in the area and is less reliant on civilian support (Dowd 2019). This prevalence of violence against civilians in recent months also[...] state response to Boko Haram's activities outside of Nigeria.

Of particular note is the prevalence of abductions outside of Nigeria. In 2019 the number of abductions outside of Nigeria (16) has already su[...] number of such events in 2016 (14); abductions account for nearly 19% of the violence against civilian events outside of Nigeria in 2019 thus f[...]

**Violent Events Involving Boko Haram by Type of Event and Year**

| 2016 (January 1, 2016 - December 31, 2016) | 2019 (January 1, 2019 - May 11, 2019) |

Event Type
- Explosions/Remote violence
- Violence against civilians
- Battles

Number of Events
- 1
- 5
- 10
- 15
- 20

151
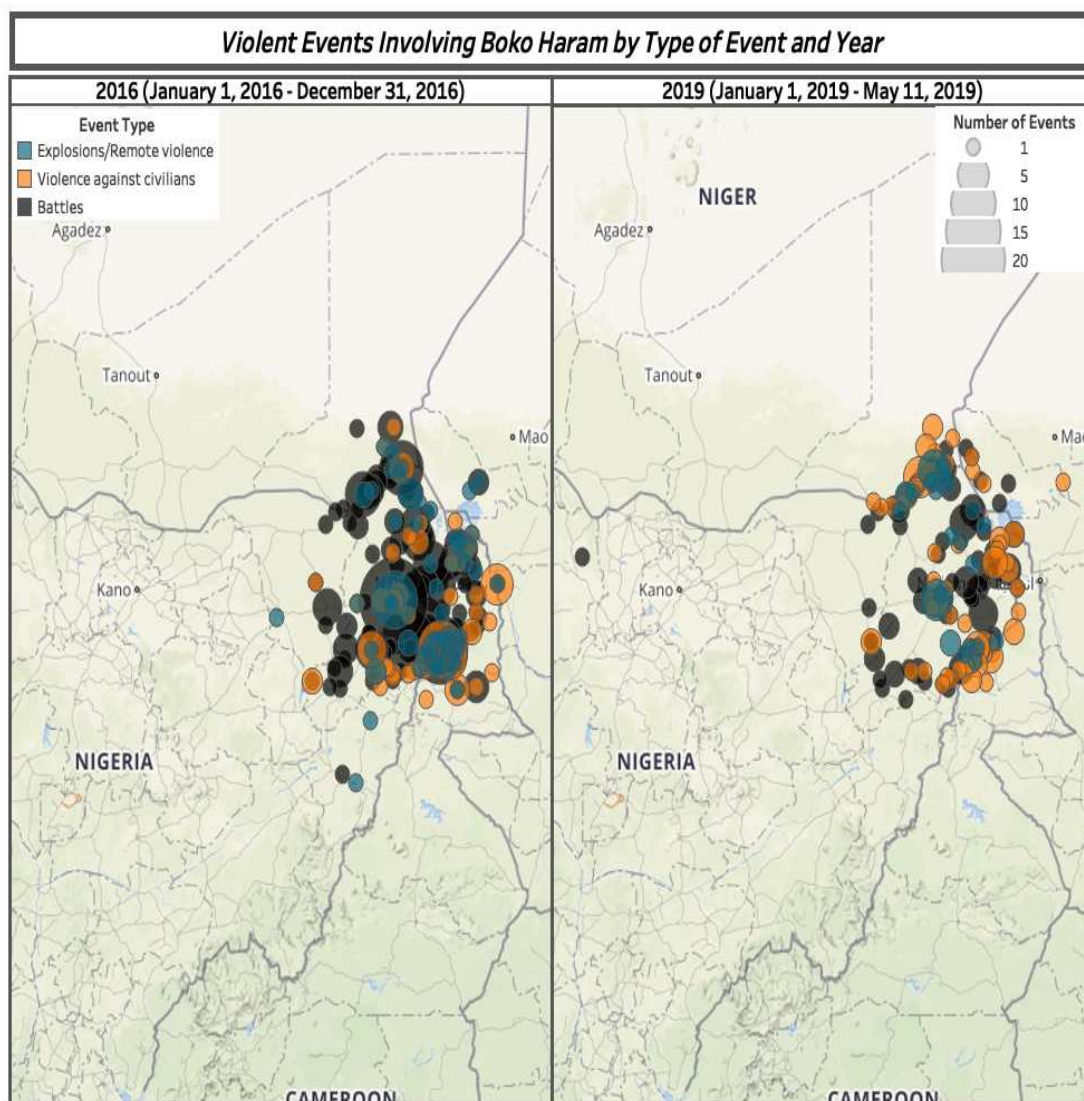
It may be that Boko Haram is using violence against civilians in response to competition with other armed groups (Raleigh 2012). Some have suggested that there is factional competition within Boko Haram, pitting the faction lead by Barnawi (and reportedly backed by the Islamic State) against the faction lead by Shekau (Mahmood and Ani 2018). There have only been two reported instances in 2019 thus far, however, of clashes between Barnawi and Shekau's factions. It seems likely, then, that Boko Haram is engaging in kidnappings to bolster its ranks, and contribute to an atmosphere of pervasive insecurity, and is engaging in attacks on civilians to create new frontlines in the conflict (Raleigh 2012).

## Conclusion

A significant proportion of Boko Haram's violent activities in 2019 thus far have taken place outside of Nigeria. Though the last time we saw such a geographic expansion it was in response to an effective military offensive, the prevalence of operations outside of Nigeria in 2019 does not signal insurgent weakness. Rather, Boko Haram appears to be exploiting porous border and security gaps in neighboring countries to advance its interests and bolster its ranks. Though Boko Haram's spread into neighboring countries in both 2016 and 2019 followed an increase in the number of battles between the rebels and the Nigerian military, in 2019, this shift has placed civilians directly into the line of fire. Despite surface-level similarities between event trends in 2016 and today, these two periods are actually exhibit very different patterns of violence, with a less significant state response to Boko Haram's activities outside of Nigeria – and as such, the results can be expected to diverge dramatically in the coming months.

**The African Peace Facility**

FACTSHEET

# MULTI-NATIONAL JOINT TASK FORCE (MNJTF) against Boko Haram

## OVERVIEW

| | |
|---|---|
| When? | 1/07/2016 – 31/12/2019 |
| Where? | Lake Chad basin (region bordering Niger, Chad, Nigeria and Cameroon) |
| How much? | EUR 50 million |
| With whom? | African Union Commission |
| Why? | Increasing regionalisation of Boko Haram threat |
| How? | Support a Multi-National Joint Task Force against Boko Haram |

Appendix II Cont.: More details about the MNJTF

## OBJECTIVES

- Contributing to restoring a safe and secure environment in the areas of the Lake Chad basin that are affected by Boko Haram, through increased regional cooperation.
- Reinforcing the ability of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to coordinate, command and conduct joint multinational operations in the region by providing it with the necessary assets (infrastructure, communication, transportation, etc.) to do so.

## POLITICAL CONTEXT

**Stabilizing the areas reclaimed from Boko Haram**

**2014**
Established by the Lake Chad Basin Commission in 1998 to fight highway banditry and other cross-border crime, the MNJTF was reactivated and authorised by the African Union to conduct combat operations against Boko Haram, intercept trafficked weapons, free hostages and encourage defections.

**2015**
- Attacks of MNJTF headquarters in Baga (Nigeria) by Boko Haram militants led to a new political impetus for the expansion of the MNJTF: more troops, expansion of mandate, relocation of the headquarters to N'Djamena, Chad.
- The European Council concludes that 'The increasing regionalisation of Boko Haram's threat requires a collective and comprehensive response to defeat terrorism in full respect of human right'

**2016**
- Agreement between the European Commission and the AU Commission.
- Although Boko Haram's insurgency continues to drive terrorism threat in the region, MNJTF operations have resulted in considerable progress in the fight against the extremists and helped diminish their combat capacity.

## APF FUNDING

**EUR 50 million**

- **Used for:**
  - Personnel costs: 22%
  - Operational/logistical costs: 78%

## BENEFICIARIES

- The MNJTF (10,000 uniformed elements).
- African Union Commission.
- Populations of the Lake Chad Basin.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**2.5 million IDP** (internally displaced people) and **250,000 refugees** requiring assistance

- **7,500** military and non-military personnel.

- **Military response to an ever-changing threat:** The MNJTF is designed to respond to transnational terrorism and to embed regional peace and security. However the acute humanitarian situation calls for an approach that goes beyond military intervention.

- **The APF's contribution to the MNJTF is part of a broader EU strategy to support resilience, stabilisation and economic recovery in the region:**
  - Humanitarian assistance
  - Emergency Trust Fund
  - Stabilisation funding
  - National and regional programmes

  Over EUR 700 million

- **MNJTF headquarters:** N'Djamena (Chad).

- **The Force is structured in four sectors:**

| Mora | Bagasola | Diffa | Baga |
|------|----------|-------|------|
| **(Cameroon)** | **(Chad)** | **(Niger)** | **(Nigeria)** |

- **Other Stakeholders:**

  - **Benin** deployed an additional 150 soldiers.

  - In-kind support to the individual MNJTF Troop Contributing Countries from **France** and the **US.**

  - £5 million from the **UK** channelled through the AUC.

## Appendix III: Project Logframe

**Project Title:** An Assessment of Transnational Cooperation to Combat the Boko Haram Terrorist Group in the Lake Chad Basin - Africa: A Study of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)

**Goal:** To Understand the Mission and Actions of the MNJTF in the Fight Against Boko Haram

**Method:** Qualitative - Archival Review and One-On-One Interviews

| Objective 1: To examine the nature and character of threats posed by Boko Haram in the West and Central African region | Objective 2: To explore the challenges faced by the MNJTF in battling Boko Haram | Objective 3: To analyze the effectiveness/impact of the response by MNJTF to threats posed by the Boko Haram insurgent group; |
|---|---|---|
| Activity: Conduct interviews with retired officers, both civilian and military who served with the MNJTF; Conduct desk; Conduct interviews with community leaders in areas affected by Boko Haram | Activity: Conduct one-on-one interviews with officials - retired and active officer - of the MNJTF; Conduct one-on-one interviews with minister of defense in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger; | Activity: conduct one-on-one interviews with community leaders in areas most affacted by Boko Haram, political leaders in Cameroonj, Nigeria, Chad and Niger, current and former officers of the |
| Output: Gather relevant information related to the nature and character of threat posed by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin | Output: Gather first hand information regarding the challenges faced by the MNJTF in the fight against Boko Haram | Output: Gather releveant information related to the effectiveness and impact of the MNJTF in the fights against Boko Haram. |
| Outcome: Understand the nature and character of threat posed by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin | Outcome: Understand the challenges faced by the MNJTF in the fight against Boko Haram; provide policy reccommendation to the MNJTF and other stakeholders involved the fight | Outcome:Understand the effectiveness of the MNJTF in the fight against Boko Haram; provide policy reccommendation to relevant stakeholders involved in the fight against Boko Haram |

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