



ANSARU AND ITS ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

**Ekanem Ekanem Asukwo (Ph.D), Nnaji Emmanuel Onyemaechi
and Kefas Iramae Nathaniel**

Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Federal University Wukari,
Taraba State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT: *This study aimed at exploring the dynamics of Ansaru's movement as it affected Lake Chad Basin. The study adopted descriptive design that depended on the Judgmental Sampling technique. Secondary sources (books, journal articles, monographs, conference papers, including internet materials) of data collection were sourced from Nigerian libraries and internet. These documentary materials were subjected to content validation before analyzing the study in the qualitative form. Notwithstanding the fact that frustration-aggression theory has deepened the understanding of the Islamic radicalization in the Lake Chad Basin, Ansaru's insurgency continues unabated. Findings revealed that economic factors, religious ideology and weak institutions triggered the motivation for Ansaru's Islamic radicalization in the Lake Chad Basin. The religious movement has led to insecurity, human rights abuses, humanitarian and economic crisis. Member states of Lake Chad Basin had adopted hard and soft approaches, while the United States, France, United Kingdom, China and Israel had rendered assistance towards mitigating the extremism though with little success. The study recommends good governance, strong institutions, ideological re-orientation and international cooperation as panacea for the Ansaru's Islamic radicalization in the Lake Chad Basin.*

KEYWORDS: Ansaru, Boko Haram, Kanem Bornu, Lake Chad Basin, Islamic radicalization, Frustration aggression, Intervention, Motivation, Insurgency.



INTRODUCTION

Unarguably, Lake Chad Basin is known for Islamic Movement that adopted violent radicalization as its modus operandi. The Lake Chad Basin that stretches from northeastern Nigeria, extends to Lake region of Chad, that comprises Far North Cameroon and finally terminates at the Southern Niger. Historically, it was the former Kanem Bornu Empire (1380-1893) that was balkanized by the colonial masters (Britain, France and Germany) following the 1884 Berlin West Africa Conference (Aftura-Heim & McQuaid, 2015). Eventually, it was also the epicentre of Islamic Movement of 19th century led by Usman Dan Fodio (1802-1812). Usman Dan Fodio's Movement expanded to the Sokoto Caliphate (1804-1903) which is the present northwestern Nigeria and currently headed by Sultan.

Between 1970 and 1980s, Maitatsine (means one who curses) Movement erupted in northwestern Nigeria and extended to the northeast. The Maitatsine Movement that was founded by Mohammed Marwa; a Cameroonian from Far North was a Salafi jihad. Unlike Sunni mode of worshipping which the locals were familiar with, Aftura-Heim and McQuaid (2015) maintained that "the Maitatsine Movement introduced many of the jihad tactics common in Nigeria today, including the mobilization of poor communities against established urban Muslims, the justification of violence against non-Muslims, and the identification with global Islamic Movement" (p. 13).

Again, Boko Haram which is the present monster of the Lake Chad Basin derived its ideology from the Maitatsine Movement. The term Boko means "book" in Hausa and Haram means "forbidden" in Arabic. Taken together, Boko Haram means, "Western education is forbidden" (Wabern, 2016, p. 3). Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of this group, was living in a village (Kelakawa) in Southern Niger Republic where his mother was residing before migrating to Yobe State, and started gathering followers for his Yusufiyya Movement which later metamorphosed into Boko Haram. As Aftura-Heim and McQuaid (2015) stated, the Lake Chad Basin "has a rich tradition as a center of Islamist thought, including fundamentalist and rejectionist strands of Islam" (p.12). Boko Haram rejects the Darwinist theory on the evolution of man as well as big bang theory of the creation of the world. All these ideas are Haram according to Mohammed Yusuf (American Foreign Policy Council, 2013). Wabern (2015) hinted further that:

Boko Haram abrogated to themselves the power of Takfirism which means "excommunication." As a group, they think they can determine who is Muslim and who is not in their judgments, when they say people are not Muslims, it justifies spilling their blood, taking away their properties and their women as war booty. This...justifies killing Christians and killing Muslims who do not practice Islam the way they think it should be practiced. They also use Takfirism to justify abductions (p. 4).

Boko Haram had been a peaceful and local movement within the northern Nigeria until the death of Mohammed Yusuf in July, 2009. Mohammed Yusuf was killed by Nigerian Security forces following a clash between the sect and the Nigerian Police in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State. The sect went underground and later resurfaced in 2010. Instead of following its late masters peaceful approach, it adopted violent radicalization. Onuoha (2014) posited that "it subsequently adopted new violent tactics, such as bombing, targeted assassinations, ambush, drive-by shootings, and slitting of victims throats... [it] has attacked a variety of targets



including security agents, Christians, traditional rulers, politicians, school children and teachers, Islamic scholars, public servants, traders..." (p. 4).

Regrettably, these indiscriminate attacks, especially against fellow Muslim led to the formation of a splinter group, Ansaru in 2011. Barna (2014) explained that "the deaths of innocent Muslims have been a point of contestation within the movement, and are cited as one of the reasons for the official creation of the splinter group known as Ansaru (or in full Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan) or the "Vanguard for the Protection of Muslim in Black Africa" (p. 9). Abubakar Adam Kamar a Cameroonian that resided in Kano led this group while Abubakar Shakaru, succeeded late Mohammad Yusuf as the leader of Boko Haram. International Crisis Group (2014) added that Ansaru became a sophisticated faction of Boko Haram, immediately its founder; Kamar was assassinated in 2012 at his residence in Kano. A prominent member; Khalid al-Barnawi, assumed the position of leadership after the death of Abubakar Kamar. Others in this group include Mamman Nur, Abdullahi Damasak also known as Mohammed Marwan, Abu Sa'ad, Kabiru Sokoto, Babagana (alias Assalafi) among others. "Although seen as independent, it is actually a Boko Haram splinter group comprising mostly its western educated members" (International Crisis Group, 2014, p.22).

It should be recalled that Abu Qaqa, the former Spokesperson of Boko Haram had said, "our objective is to place Nigeria in a difficult position and even destabilize it and replace it with Sharia." Late Qaqa in 2009 further stated that "we have started a Jihad in Nigeria, which no force on earth can stop. The aim is to Islamize Nigeria and ensure the rule of the majority Muslims in the country... also seek to raid Nigeria of any western influence" (Aftura-Heim & McQuaid, 2015, pp. 28-29). In the same vein, Ansaru's main objective "is to overthrow the Nigerian government which is perceived as corrupt and establish an Islamic State with Sharia law and get rid of western influence..." (Barna, 2014, p. 5). Ansaru also seeks for the restoration of the Kanem Bornu Empire, which would be an Islamic caliphate across Northern Nigeria, northern Cameroon, Chad region and southern Niger. Behold, natives of northeastern Nigeria, Far North Cameroon, southern Niger and Chad region share similar identity especially religion and ethnicity. As International Crisis Group (2016) hinted:

Cameroon's Far North is closely related to northeastern Nigeria in historical, religious, commercial, ethnic, socio-cultural and linguistic terms, sharing the Arab, Kanuri and Mandara vernacular languages... The same ethnic group – Kanuri, Glauda, Mandara, Choa Arab – the same families and sometimes the same villages are spread on both sides. Islamic culture is also a common trait, particularly as many Cameroonian study at Nigerian Quranic school... They share a long history including conquest by Usman Dan Fodio... (p. 16).

Therefore, Ansaru promising them caliphate is a gift that can never be jettisoned by them. This promise facilitates easy recruitment from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger. International Crisis Group (2016) confirmed that "Khaled al-Barnawi – who leads the jihadist group, Ansaru, born of Boko Haram in 2012 – reportedly recruited Cameroonians to join the Talibans in Nigeria..." (p. 8). Unlike Boko Haram that operates at the soft targets, Ansaru targets the security operatives, western establishments, Christians and foreign nationals. These are hard targets whose impact would be globally felt. Mamman Nur masterminded the first attack against the United Nations building at Abuja in 2011 while Kabiru Sokoto planned and executed the bombing of Church in Madalla, Niger State at the eve of Christmas Day in 2011. Kidnapping of Chibok girls in 2014 was the handiwork of Khalid al Barnawi and Mamman Nur (Aftura Heim & McQuaid, 2015). Extensively on 19th February, 2013 Ansaru was



responsible for the kidnap of members of Tanguy Moulin-Fournier Family in Dabanga, northern Cameroon. They were released after a ransom of 3.15 million dollars was paid to secure their freedom on 18th April 2013 in Nigeria. On 4th April, 2014, Ansaru abducted 2 Italian priests and 1 Canadian nun in Tchere, Far North Cameroon. They were also released after 2 months in captivity. In the same vein, Ansaru killed 1 Cameroonian soldier and kidnapped 10 Chinese workers at Waza, Far North Cameroon. Regrettably, the whereabouts of these Chinese is still unknown (Onuoha, 2014).

Many other atrocities committed by Ansaru in the Lake Chad Basin could still be cited but the greatest fear is its global link, with which the group is connected. Marc-Antoine (2014) confirmed that “the splinter group, Ansaru...is certainly more aligned with the doctrine of Osama bin Laden. Its targets are more international and its original name was Al-Qaeda in the Lands beyond the Sahel. In 2012, its videos claiming the kidnap and later on, the killing of German hostages in Kano were posted on AQIM’s website” (p. 20). This linkage became possible because of an extension of Abubakar Shekau alliance with international terrorist groups, especially Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al Shabaab in Somalia, Islamic State of Syria (ISS), Taliban of Afghanistan, among others. As Barna (2014) stated, “Shekau...in 2010 officially linked Boko Haram to Al Qaeda and the international jihadi movement. Some of Shekau's speeches and sermons which include threats against the United States are believed to have been written directly by Al-Qaeda” (p. 11). Ansaru adopts the same method of operation, and funding as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and the Movement for the Unity and Jihad in West Africa (Wujoa), especially kidnapping of western nationals. On 21st December 2012, after kidnapping a French man, Francis Colump in Katsina, Nigeria’s Ansaru “warned that it would continue to attack the French government and French citizens until France ends its ban on Islamic veil and its “major role on planned attack on the Islamic State in northern Mali which is virtually the same warning that MUJOA’s and AQIM’s leaders issued to France” (cited in America Foreign Policy Council, 2013, p. 8). In order to protect western interests and secure its nationals in the Lake Chad Basin, in November 2013, Ansaru was listed as a Proscribed Terrorist Organization (PTO) by the United Kingdom Home Office. The United States of America also followed and designated both Ansaru and Boko Haram as Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGTs) Extension of introduction is unnecessary, rather questions that need answers are:

- (i) Which theoretical framework can adequately explain Ansaru’s Islamic radicalization in the Lake Chad Basin?
- (ii) What are the motivating factors for Ansaru’s Islamic radicalization in the Lake Chad Basin?
- (iii) What are the impacts of Ansaru’s Islamic radicalization on the Lake Chad Basin?
- (iv) What are the responses to Ansaru’s Islamic radicalization in the Lake Chad Basin?

This study is structured into six sections. Section one is introduction, while section two deals with theoretical framework. Motivating factors that trigger Ansaru’s Islamic radicalization is section three while the impacts of Ansaru’s Islamic radicalization constitute section four. Section five is responses to Ansaru’s Islamic radicalization. Conclusion and recommendations constitute section six. The last part of the study is references.



MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study on “Ansaru and its Islamic Radicalization in the Lake Chad Basin” has descriptive design that depended on secondary source (books, journal articles, monographs, conference papers, including internet materials) of data collection. The documentary materials were sourced from libraries in Nigeria and internet. They were subjected to content validity before being analyzed qualitatively. The study used a qualitative method, in order to embark on an in-depth study of Ansaru and further expand the frontiers of knowledge on its activities in the Lake Chad Basin. Most importantly, the sources are accessible and verifiable.

Again, the population of the study were drawn from Hausa, Fulani, Kanuri and Arab among other ethnic groups in the Lake Chad Basin. However, the sample of the study focused on Kanuri. The choice of Kanuri, despite the fact that other ethnic groups partake in the insurgency in Lake Chad Basin is judgmental. Most leaders of Boko Haram and Ansaru (Mohammed Yusuf, Abubakar Shekau, Mamman Nur, Kabiru Sokoto, among others) are Kanuri. Apart from the installation of Salafi Islamic ideology, their hope is to restore the former Kanem-Bornu Empire (1380-1893) which had been balkanized into the present four states of the Lake Chad Basin: Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria. Though literature abound on Boko Haram, regrettably, its splinter group, Ansaru attracts little attention. Dearth of scholarly materials on Ansaru gives room for unempirical arguments especially among public commentators. This should be rejected, hence there is hope that this study would support findings and strengthen arguments among public commentators.

FRUSTRATION – AGGRESSION THEORY

In the field of Social Sciences, frustration – aggression theory has been extensively used in explaining conflict situation at both micro and macro level of analysis. The theory came into existence through rigorous studies carried out by Yale University scholars: Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Scars (1939) who opined that “the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression” (p. 1). The term frustration refers to “an interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal-response at its proper time in the behavior sequence” (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer & Scars, 1939, p. 7). Similarly, Newcomb (1968) cited in Breuer and Elson (2017) hinted that “frustration always induces motivation of some kind of aggression which acts as a drive or motive to react, combat or make attack” (p. 7). Again, Freud (1927) in his instinct theory of aggression argued that aggression is inherited and biological in nature. An aggrieved person is expected to express his grievance both overtly and covertly (i.e. outwardly and inwardly). Freud (1927) maintained that “...aggression was a primordial reaction when the individual attempt to obtain pressure or avoid pain was blocked” (Cited in Johan 2010, p. 7). Similarly, McDougall (1946) posited that “...an instinct to engage in combat is activated by any obstruction to the person’s smooth progress towards his or her goal” (cited in Breuer & Elson, 2017, p. 6).

Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Scars (1939) explained further that the possibility of an aggrieved person adopting aggression depends on “(i) the strength of instigation to the frustrated response (ii) the degree of interference with the frustrated response and (iii) the number of frustrated responses to sequence” (cited in Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, 1979, p. 283).



In other words, the gravity of the deprivation (thwarting) and the frustrated effort towards resolution, including the number of sequences of its occurrence, are the determinant of the rate of aggression. The response to a frustration can take the form of overt or covert aggression. Overt aggression involves open attack while covert aggression requires secret attack on the perpetrator of the frustration. Johan (2010) posited that if the aggressor anticipates punishment, he would operate covertly. In the absence of punishment, he would operate overtly. “To be precise, ...anticipated punishment, which is a primary source of frustration, affects the inhibition of overt aggression...” (Johan 2010, p. 2). Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Scars (1939) extended further that “acts of aggression can be inhibited, especially when their commission would lead to punishment or other undesirable consequences. The expectation of punishment reduces overt aggression, and the greater the certainty and amount of punishment anticipated for an aggressive act, the less likely that act to occur” (p. 10).

Punishment intensifies aggression against the source of frustration, its agents or even self. Whenever the aggression is directed to the source of frustration (instigator) it, therefore, means the aggressor is hitting at the target or source. However, if it is directed towards the agent of the source, it could be described as non-target, hence indirect aggression. It is the indirect aggression that the Yale Scholars described as displacement. Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (1979) added that “...there may occur a displacement of aggression, in which case the individual directs hostility toward someone or something not responsible for the original frustration” (p. 283). Indirect aggression can also happen whenever an individual castigates himself especially in an extreme case like suicide. Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Scars (1939) also maintained that an act of aggression could lead to catharsis, “that is a release of aggressive energy or tension and a reduction in the instigation to aggression” (p. 58). Regrettably, Morlan (1949) argued differently that the expression of an aggressive impulse does not result in catharsis but, on the contrary, “sets up a vicious cycle that leads to further aggression” (p. 1).

Relating frustration-aggression theory to the subject matter, there is no need to exaggerate the fact that, the crux of the Islamic radicalization in the Lake Chad Basin that resulted in wanton killings is demise and balkanization of the old Kanem Bornu Empire into the present Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon. Recalling Mohammed Yusuf’s sermon to his followers in Maiduguri, Barkindo (2016) hinted that “he described decolonization, and the parceling out of the former territories of the Kanem Bornu Empire to Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, as a catastrophe for the Muslims of the region...the collapse of the Empire led directly to corruption in the traditional and religious system” (p. 5). The post-colonial regimes of the Lake Chad Basin that benefited from the balkanization are founded upon western civilization which is a collaboration between Judaeo-Christian, tradition, democracy and western education that marginalize Islamic values. The insurgents, therefore, urged youths in the Lake Chad Basin to resist the earthly governments.

As International Alert (2018) captured it, “...young people...should be slaves only to God and should reject the abusive dominance of men” (p. 36). It is the non-implementation of Sharia and dismantling of the state system in the region, that the call for jihad became necessary. Mohammed Ali, one of the founding members of Ansaru argued that “it was obligatory for members to migrate from “dirty city life and wage a jihad... all pre-conditions had been met... The group had preached sufficiently to convince people to repent and implement Sharia, the call had been refused. Thus, the logical next step was to use violent means to force this implementation” (cited in Bukarti, 2021, p. 28). Furthermore, corruption is the product of bad governance hence, the government of the Lake Chad Basin cannot deliver the dividend of



democracy to its people. Poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment are prevalent in the entire region. In Niger, for instance, “the north (of Tillaberi) has been abandoned by the state, there are no public services, people die of thirst, they drink water from ponds soiled by their own animals” (International Alert, 2018, p. 32). Similarly, in Nigeria, “poverty has been increasing despite relatively strong economic growth; 112.5 million - over 70 percent of the population are classified as poor and absolutely poor... The North East...has the worst poverty rate of the six official “zones” (International Crisis Group, 2014, p. 3). Added to this are the challenges of weak institutions in the Lake Chad Basin. The Nigerian Bar Association had raised concern over corrupt practices in the judiciary, especially bought judgement. Law enforcement agencies, police in particular, have been a corrupt organization and ineffective in operation. “As a result, there appears to be very little trust in the formal justice system” (Aftura-Heim & McQuaid, 2015, p. 22).

In Niger, International Alert (2018) decried that “the drug traffickers are members of parliament and ministers... the corruption which plagues public service provision, shapes the day-to-day relationship between communities and the states and thus fuels frustrations” (p. 31). The region needs cleansing through jihad since, “the abuses for which the state authorities are believed to be responsible have led to frustrations that have been exacerbated by impunity” (International Alert, 2018, p. 30). This frustration led to aggressive attacks in the entire Lake Chad Basin. In September 2012, the insurgent captured Diffa and further extended its aggression on Zinder (Niger) in February 2012 (American Foreign Policy Council, 2013). All these attacks signify aggression caused by bad governance exhibited by governments of the Lake Chad basin. It further confirms that aggression is the outcome of frustration according to Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Scars (1939).

In Cameroon, “since May 2014, 2000 civilians and soldiers have been killed, in addition to more than 1,000 people kidnapped in the far North region” (International Crisis Group, 2017, p.1). Though this aggression could be described as indirect, since it does not target at the state nor its institutions. The insurgents were aware of this, hence they started attacking military base in the region. International Crisis Group (2019) recalled that “their first major independent military operation was the 3rd June 2016 attack on a Nigerien base in Bosso, a town on Lake Chad close to the Nigerian border” (p. 5). States in the Lake Chad Basin have also been involved in indirect attacks at non-targets, especially civilians. As International Crisis Group (2016) captured it, “states have ordered a variety of bans, such as on motorbike taxi services in the countryside, rural markets, the sale of fuel and trade in fish, pepper, cattle and dried meat” (p. 4). This ban complicates the economic condition of the people that know nothing about Ansaru and its cohorts. Members states of Lake Chad Basin have used Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to mete punishment on the insurgent groups operating in the region. Successes had been recorded. Baga which was captured by the insurgent group, regained freedom in January 2015. The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) contingent used both air and ground soldiers to defeat the insurgent in areas like Dikwa, Diffa, Mayo, Fotokol etc. However, this military response has not deterred the group, rather trigger their resolve towards catharsis. In 2017, a Mosque at University of Maiduguri was attacked by Ansaru and Boko Haram. “Shekau justified this violence by stating that un-Islamic activities were taking place in the Mosque” (Mahmood & Ani, 2018, p. 16). This agrees with Morlan’s (1947) assertion that punishment does not deter, rather trigger more retaliations.



Motivating Factors for Ansaru Islamic Radicalism in the Lake Chad Basin

Worthy of note in this study is the fact that Islamist groups (Boko Haram, Ansaru and Islamic State West Africa Province) operating in the Lake Chad Basin, lured Muslim youths into its fold due to the prevailing economic hardship, ideological differences, weak institutions, including deceit for the restorations of Kanem Bornu Empire. As Barkindo (2016) argued that insurgents in the Lake Chad Basin are “...sustained by poverty and inaction on the part of the...government... its survival is enabled by Jihadi-Salafi ideology which demands strict adherence to the sacred texts in their most literal form and an absolute commitment to jihad as a means of creating a state based on Islamic law” (p. 4). Without reservation, poverty is the greatest enemy of the member states (Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger) of the Lake Chad Basin. Though Nigerian government have initiated programmes, such as River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB), Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution Programme (GRP), Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Anchor Borrower Scheme (ABS), N-Power Scheme, Traders Money, among others, Nigerians are still rated as the poorest people in sub-Saharan Africa. It should be recalled that in 2020, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that more than 80 million Nigerians live below the poverty line. “The report added that over half of the population who are multidimensionally poor, cook with dung, wood or charcoal rather than clean energy” (Ojekunle, 2022). In 2022, the same National Bureau of Statistics alerted Nigerians that 133 million people are in abject poverty. The poverty affects those in the local areas more than the urban dwellers. Corroborating the National Bureau of Statistics, Ojekunle (2022) maintained that:

Approximately 70 percent of Nigeria’s population live in rural areas, yet these areas are home to 80 percent of poor people; the intensity of rural poverty is also higher: 42 percent in rural areas compared to 37 percent in urban areas... 65 percent of poor people – 86 million-live in the north, while 35 percent – nearly 47 million – live in the south (p.15).

Incidentally, the northern part of Nigeria is the epicenter of Islamic fundamentalists. The synergy between poverty and radicalism had been established by known scholars (Vittori, 2009; Patterson, 2015; Brown, 2007; Fatima, 2017). Nigeria is a wealthy state, but Nigerians are poor due to bad governance. The International Crisis Group (2014) argued that “poverty is a product of bad governance...the federal government has been borrowing for recurrent consumption, not in investment in development... for many, the name of the game has been spending, imputing and looting” (p. 3). International Crisis Group (2014) posited further that over 70 percent of the population are classified as poor and absolutely poor. Sokoto State in the North West has the highest poverty rate (86.4 percent). Niger State in North Central, the lowest (43 percent). The North East Boko Haram’s main operational field, has the worst poverty rate of the six official zones” (p. 4).

Added to this is the fact that there is a disparity in the distribution of common wealth to the federating units that constitute Nigeria. Since 1999, northern elements have been complaining that the poverty which north has been enmeshed, is manmade. The southern states, especially Niger Delta (Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Delta, Bayelsa, Ondo, Edo, Cross-river, Abia and Imo) that are benefiting from 13 percent derivation from the commonwealth of our patrimony is a deprivation to the northern states. As Aftura-Heim and McQuaid (2015) put it, “economic disparities between the north and the rest of the country are stark. Seventy-two (72) percent of



the northerners live in poverty, compared to 27 percent of southerners and 35 percent in the Niger Delta... poverty and lack of services affecting the northern Muslim population have caused an intense resentment of the political status quo and have fueled extremist and rejectionist thinking” (p. 16). Similarly, since the state is poor, unemployment must surely increase among Muslim youths that have graduated with good degrees from tertiary institutions within and outside Nigeria but have no employment opportunities.

Few industries that were operating in the north have collapsed, and the Nigerian state has no plan to resuscitate them. Those youths that are lucky to work in government establishments are children of the elites. Graduates from poor homes are roaming streets begging for survival. “Frustration and disaffection have driven many young northerners to join “self-help” ethnic or religious groups, some of which...are hostile to the state” (Aftura-Heim & McQuaid, 2015, p. 17). Since nature abhor vacuum, the extremist groups (Boko Haram, Ansaru and Islamic State West Africa Province) provide them with succor. As Steinberg and Weber (2015) affirmed that:

...promises of social advancement represent important reasons for joining the armed struggle... young people who experience initial success, such as a state school qualification developed high expectations of state and society that are then often disappointed... Many school-leavers see no opportunity to marry and found families... Colliding with reality... Jihadist organizations offer them an attractive alternative that addresses historical and personal traumas such as colonialism, repression, and displacement... permit the fighting “Muhajid” to perceive himself as a hero (p.9).

In Cameroon, the narrative is not different. Far North region, the epicenter of the insurgency, is the most neglected region in the state. The people of that region are disconnected from the state, hence good road network, effective telecommunication facilities, good hospitals and schools are absent. Government of President Paul Biya does not care about them, thereby subjecting them to the shackle of poverty. International Crisis Group (2016) decried that “...with 74.3 percent of the population living below poverty line – compared with a national average of 37.5 percent – the Far North is Cameroon’s poorest region. Vulnerabilities are higher in rural areas, particularly in the localities on the border with Nigeria, ... Fotokol, Kolofata and Mayo Moskota districts...” (p. 4).

Girard (2022) highlighted poverty ravaged Sahelian state, Niger. Niger is one of the poorest countries in the Lake Chad Basin. It should be recalled that in 2021, United Nations described Niger as a least developed country of the world. Niger is closely followed by Central Africa Republic, Chad, Burundi and South Sudan. It has a population of about 24.21 million people; regrettably about 3.8 million people survive through humanitarian assistance while 42.9% of Nigeriens live in abject poverty and earn less than 1.90 dollar per day. According to Girard (2022), “20 percent of Nigeriens cannot meet basic daily food and nutrition needs... “peace” is a relative word in Niger... poverty in Niger is overwhelmingly female, with girls and women representing an estimated 75% of the Nigeriens living below the poverty line” (p. 5). Expectedly, unemployment in Niger is also high. Few that have attempted schools are not gainfully employed. In an exclusive interview with a community leader (name withheld) in Tillaberi, International Alert (2018) was informed by the interviewee that unemployment was the major problem of the community. There is no job for the young people. The only option left for their survival is joining armed groups. International Alert (2018) explained further that “the majority of young people... don’t have jobs, a lot of them do nothing. They have nothing



and they are really poor. That is what motivates some of them to turn to the armed groups and the organized crimes... violent extremism is an idea that appeals to young unemployed people” (p. 28).

Furthermore, religious difference between the Salafi and the Sunni lured Muslim youths in the Lake Chad Basin into violent radicalization. Traditionally, Sunni is the strand of Islam that many Muslim in the Lake Chad Basin Practice. Sunni is like Orthodox Churches (Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian, Catholic) which adherents are conservative in nature. They are not radical, hence associate with everybody irrespective of faith. Unlike Sunni, Salafi are like Pentecostal churches (Living Faith, Deeper Life, Chosen, Christ Embassy among others) whose mission is to reject the conservative doctrine.

International Alert (2018) highlighted further that “the Salafist Movements are viewed as rationalist, as they enable young people to free themselves from the social norms and hierarchies that constrain them” (p. 36). The Salafists are against western education whose foundation originated from Judaeo-Christian tradition. Doctrinally, Christians are said to have tried to turn Jesus into God and this is shirk or idolatry – associating another god with Allah” (Barkindo, 2016, p. 6). The Islamist groups deployed their preachers (“al-Jannah Tabbas” meaning “paradise is certain”) to propagate the message of salvation throughout the entire Lake Chad Basin. The followers of Ansaru have to reject state authority, rebel against law enforcement and embark on jihad as instructed in Quran. “The only thing that will stop them (the Nigerian government and Christians) from insulting the prophet or killing Muslims is jihad... (but) we must first and foremost embark upon preaching for Islamic reforms. Then, we will have to be patient until we acquire power” (Bukarti, 2021, p. 25). Ansaru and Boko Haram ran religious classes for members in the Lake Chad Basin. According to Olojo (2013), “many poor families and unemployed youths from northern Nigeria as well as neighboring countries such as Niger, Chad and Cameroon, enrolled in Yusuf’s religious complex, which included a Mosque and school used for ideological propagation” (p. 3). The ideology of the Islamic fundamentalists (Boko Haram, Ansaru, and Islamic State of West African Province) is anchored on strict adherence and belief in Quran and the Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Mohammed), including their interpretations as sanctioned by Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyyah, a 14th century scholar who was an extremist of Salafis group. Aftura-Heim and McQuaid (2015) explained further that “Taymiyya believed that Muslim communities were made to suffer because their leaders were not true to the faith. He preached that it was necessary to engage in active jihad (or holy war) in order to defend the Ummah (global community of Muslims) and spread the faith, and that a leader who did not enforce Sharia law completely, and wage active jihad against infidels, was unfit to rule” (p. 30).

Regrettably, the unwillingness as well as the unfaithfulness of the leaders of the Lake Chad Basin manifest in weak institutions that prevail in the entire region. In 2013, Justice Mariam Aloma, the former Chief Judge of the Nigerian Supreme Court lamented the steady decline in funding of the judicial arm of government. Citing Chief Justice Mariam Aloma, Bamgboye (2013) hinted that “statistics have shown that, funding from the federal government has witnessed a steady decline since 2010 from N95 billion to N85 billion in 2011, then N75 billion in 2012, and dropped again in the 2013 budget to N67 billion. Similarly, the former Chairman of Nigerian Bar Association, Okey Wali, also raised an alarm in 2014 overbought judgment and described judicial officials as “danger to democracy” (International Crisis Group, 2014, p. 5). All this happened due to poor funding of the judiciary.



The security agencies in Nigeria are also complaining bitterly about funding. According to the International Crisis Group (2014), “security agencies suffer from underfunding as well as misuse and misapplication of financial resources without accountability for diversion... many security operatives resort to self-help” (p. 5). The self-help here refers to nothing but bribe through intimidation including collaboration with criminals. In Niger, International Alert (2018) decried that “the legitimacy of institutions has declined substantially due to widespread poor governance, as evidenced by among other things, the numerous cases of corruption, illegal trafficking and misuse of financial resources” (p. 30). True believers like Mohammad Yusuf, Abubakar Shekau, Mamman Nur, Kabiru Sokoto, among others cannot continue to endure and live peacefully with this sinful society (Lake Chad Basin). “Yusuf felt he was now prepared to confront the governments. He had radicalized enough followers who were ready to sacrifice their lives and property...” (Bukarti, 2021, p. 29).

Furthermore, this confrontation could only be fruitful if the caliphate of Kanem Bornu Empire is restored. The Lake Chad Basin was the epicenter of Kanem Bornu Empire that comprised North Eastern Nigeria, Southern Niger, Far North Cameroon and Western Chad. This Empire was balkanized by the colonial master into the present Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad. It was ruled by emperor who used sharia law as its guiding principle. Despite the fact that this empire had disintegrated, the fundamentalists in the Lake Chad Basin hope to resuscitate it through jihad. The jihadists see the governments of the Lake Chad Basin as the beneficiary of the disintegration. Barkindo (2016) hinted further that the “narrative contends that the state built on the ruins of the Kanem-Bornu Empire brought nothing but corruption, immorality, inequality, injustice and neglect... True Muslims are exhorted not to live and work under a secular government and to forcibly replace it with an Islamic one” (pp. 7-8). Many Kanuris that hear this Kanem Bornu narrative including the bad governance that is existing in the Lake Chad Basin become attracted to the Salafist ideology and disenchanting with the states. As Asfura-Heim and McQuaid (2015) confirmed, “Boko Haram uses the Kanuri Empire narrative and the group’s disenfranchisement to recruit new members” (p. 10).

Impact Analysis of Ansaru’s Islamic Radicalization on the Lake Chad Basin

Since the emergency of Ansaru in 2012, as a splinter group of Boko Haram, the sect has inflicted series of pains on the member states of Lake Chad Basin. It has claimed responsibility on high profile attacks on the security agencies of the region. The security agencies, on the other hand, have embarked on counter attacks on the insurgent group, thereby leading to spillover of insecurity from the Lake Chad Basin to other regions of the member states. In Nigeria, for instance, the crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, has resulted in forceful migration of herdsmen from the region to the Middle Belt zone, including Southern Nigeria. International Crisis Group (2018) restated that “insecurity in many northern states, due to insurgency in the North East and under-reported rural banditry and cattle rustling in other areas has...driven herders southward” (p. 4). Regrettably, most of these herders are members of the insurgent groups who have fled the war zone in the North East, but disguise as pastoralist in the Middle Belt and Southern region of Nigeria. The National Security Adviser to President Muhammadu Buhari, Major General Babagana Monguno (rtd) attributed the massacre of innocent civilians in the Middle Belt to the Islamist groups (Boko Haram, Ansaru and Islamic State West Africa Province), who have fled North East. International Crisis Group (2017) added that “easy access to small arms, including assault rifles, makes the situation more dangerous. Weapons come from various sources, some local, others from black markets across West and Central Africa, including... Libya’s looted stockpiles” (p. 6).



The disguised herdsmen use sophisticated weapons and rain havoc on the locals without mercy. This reminds the researchers the ugly incidents that led to the death of 81 people in Benue State on 1st January 2018. Fulani herdsmen embarked on coordinated attacks that happened simultaneously in Logo, Guma and Ukum Local Government of Benue State, Nigeria. Crisis between disguised herdsmen and Bachama youths in Adamawa State, between 4th to 17th January 2018, also resulted in the death of about 124 people. International Crisis Group (2018) warned further that “dozen more have been killed... since then, including over 70 who lost their lives... in violence between Fulani herders and Yandang farmers in Lau Local Government Area” (p. 3) of Taraba State. It should be recalled that the cordial relationship between Fulani herders and local farmers of the Middle Belt region predated the crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, therefore, the present massacre could not be sincerely attributed to the “real Fulani.” As Wilson (1984) stated, “Fulbe herders also exchanged some of the animal products they produced with farmers for grain, thus supplementing the diets of each respective group” (cited in Davidheiser & Luna, 2013, p. 50). Hence, this interdependence created “symbiotic relationship between pastoral and settled agricultural systems” based on certain commonality of interest” (World Bank Overseas Evaluation Department, 1994, cited in Davidheiser & Luna, 2013, p. 80).

Therefore, the current crisis between farmers and herders is strange, even though Okwor (2016) has maintained that “the escalation of the crisis... has made many Nigerians and international observers including the United States to consider Fulani herdsmen as the most dangerous group in Nigeria after Boko Haram group” (p. 10). The fact is that presently, there is no difference between Fulani herdsmen and Boko Haram. Okwor (2016) is wrong, the present violent Fulani that is tormenting the Middle Belt region of Nigeria is Boko Haram and its splinter groups as earlier stated by Major General Monguno (rtd), National Security Adviser to President Muhammadu Buhari. By extension, International Crisis Group (2020) added that “some criminal gangs fleeing security operations in the North have also moved to the Middle and Southern states, posing additional security problems for affected communities and the governing authorities” (p. 18).

Furthermore, Ansaru, Boko Haram and Islamic States West Africa Province have carried out series of human rights abuses in the entire Lake Chad Basin. In 2015, the United Nations’ Secretary-General Annual Report in the Lake Chad Basin reported that the insurgents recruited or use child soldiers, killed or maimed children, engaged in attacks on schools and hospitals, including abduction of children. According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (2016),

Between 2009 and 2015, 910 schools were reportedly destroyed and another 1,500 schools were forced to close. By early 2016, more than 950,000 children were reported to have fled the violence with little or no access to education. The insurgents were reported to have murdered more than 600 teachers in northern Nigeria between 2009 and October 2015, while another 19,000 teachers are reported to have fled due to the violence (p. 4).

In the Far North Cameroon, Kanuri ethnic group has been isolated from other ethnic groups (Shuwa, Arabs, Fulani and Kapsiki) in the region. They are being seen as dangerous group that needs not to be associated with. Their women give birth to dangerous species that devour others, hence require exclusion. International Crisis Group (2016) maintained that “this conflict has had an impact on inter-communal dynamics, leading to the stigmatization of the Kanuri...The Kanuri have been harassed by the security forces... Kanuri women, suspected of



being suicide bombers, have been closely monitored” (p. 20). Women, generally, have been the worst victims of the Islamic radicalization in the Lake Chad Basin. Mamman Nur, the mastermind of the Chibok girl’s episode in 2014 was aimed at ending women education, and restricting them to marital life in line with Quranic order. Abubakar Shekau rather used Chibok girls to bargain for the release of senior Boko Haram members and members of his family that were in government custody in Nigeria. This brought disagreement between the two leaders. As International Crisis Group (2016) argued, “Mamman Nur, a Boko Haram splinter faction leader, criticized Shekau of betraying his promise to marry the Chibok girls to sect members” (p. 8). The fact is that women were not permitted to be given equal rights like men in the caliphate. They are to listen to men who are mandated to teach them Quran. Women are frequently abused, free to be used as suicide bombers as well as sex slaves. Regrettably, security forces that ought to free the women from captivity are ironically abusing them, irrespective of their plights. International Crisis Group (2016) maintained further that, “suspects, including women and children in a separate section, are reportedly still held in Giwa Barracks in Maiduguri” (p. 13). International Amnesty (2015) also reported extensive human rights abuses in the Giwa Barracks that ranges from torture, starvation to thousands of deaths (cited in Wabern, 2016).

Again, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (2016) hinted further that:

Of particular concern are extrajudicial executions reported to have been carried out by members of the security forces as well as the deaths and inhuman treatment of civilian detainees, including children, who are suspected of collaborating with the insurgent... Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)...have also been accused of widespread abuses, including extrajudicial killings and recruitment of children (p.4).

In addition, Ansaru Islamic radicalization has led to humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad Basin. Expectedly, the massive displacement caused by the movement has affected the entire Lake Chad Basin. Wabern (2016) had recorded that the insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin had led to displacement of about 1.9 million people. The estimate, further indicated that, Borno State hosts 1.6 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Yobe State 144,000 IDPs, Adamawa State 135,000 IDPs, Cameroon 44,800 refugees, Chad 15,000 refugees while Niger hosts about 105,000 refugees. This statistic might not be reliable due to the fact that most Internally Displaced Persons and refugees do not register with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) nor United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR). They are hosted in communities by friends and relatives. As stated by Humanitarian Response Plan (2016), “NEMA in conjunction with the State Emergency Management Agencies (SEMAs), currently manages 22 IDPs camps in the northeast. The majority of IDPs live in informal settlements within host communities. Many of them are hosted by private individuals who opened their homes to IDPs in an impressive solidarity effort” (p. 2). However, the condition of the displaced persons remains the same. They are all living in a deplorable condition. The United Nations Security Council reiterated “deep concern over the dire humanitarian situation caused by the activities of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin region” (UNHCR, 2016, p. 4). On 28th July 2016, UNHCR (2016) added that “...conditions in some locations where IDPs have settled are so severe that several persons die each day from hunger and illness” (p. 5). This death came as a result of the inability of the government to provide the necessary things that make life worthy of living. The starvation, illnesses, insecurity and unhygienic environment displaced persons are exposed to, remain with them forever. As Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria (2015) stated:



Almost 75% of the affected people do not have access to health care... Primary Health Centres have been overwhelmed by the recent influxes of IDPs. 80% of the displaced people do not have sustainable access to water sanitation and hygiene. Poor hygiene behaviours are contributing to outbreaks of water-borne diseases, increase in mortality and morbidity. Lack of adequate emergency sanitation facilities also place individuals particularly women and children at increased risk of protection issues (p. 1).

The above report came from special assessment from Borno, Yobe and Adamawa IDPs camps. In Far North Cameroon, the situation is not different. Apart from the inhumane condition which the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees experienced in Minawao, Logone and Chari camps, their children were denied access to western education. OCHA (2015) recalled “around 120 schools were forced to close in 10 districts of the Far North in the 2014-2015 academic year. Some 33,163 children (43 percent girls) are out of school... and more than 29,000 students risk losing the entire school year” (p. 3).

Similarly, Ansaru movement and its Islamic radicalization has plunder the economy of the entire Lake Chad Basin. Unarguably, food insecurity that accompanied the crisis would require years to overcome. This is a region that depends on agriculture (farming, fishing and herding). In Nigeria, for instance, 40 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from agriculture, and 70 percent of the entire workforce are employed in that sector. The story is not different in Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Farming communities in the Lake Chad Basin cultivate similar crops, such as grains (sorghum, millet and rice), legumes (cowpeas and groundnuts), vegetables (tomatoes, onions and peppers) including cotton. Herders in the Lake Chad Basin supply Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon daily beef while fishermen from the region are dependable allies for food ingredients. Regrettably, the Islamic radicalization has led to forceful displacement of these agriculturalists (farmers, herders and fishermen), thereby creating food insecurity in the entire region. Few people that remain are forced by the Ansaru terrorist to pay security tax. This payment led to increase in prices of their produce. Even Kimenyi et al. (2014) equally confirmed that “the conflict has caused a sharp and substantial increase in prices for key northern agricultural crop exports to the rest of Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon” (p. 17). In the same vein, Ansaru’s Islamic radicalization has exacerbated poverty situation in Far North Cameroon. This is a region that has been neglected by the Cameroonian government hence lack basic amenities for good living. The destruction of few government presences (schools, hospital, water supply) and above all road blocks has rendered the Far North region vulnerable to multipoverty dimension. As International Crisis Group (2017) captured it:

Before Boko Haram’s arrival, the Far North was already Cameroon’s poorest region, with 74 percent of the population living below the poverty line, compared to an average of 37.5 percent in the country as a whole. This situation has been exacerbated by the conflict and, now more than ever, the Far North is perceived by the authorities and donors as a region requiring aid rather than an area offering economic opportunities (p. 4).

The tourism industry in Cameroon has also been affected. Far North region has been the epicenter of tourism in Cameroon. Tourists prefer Far North Cameroon to Southern Cameroon for their holiday. Their presence has boost economic activities and create revenue to the government of Cameroon. Regrettably, the tourists are the target for ransom, by Boko Haram and Ansaru. International Crisis Group (2017) explained further that, “before the arrival of Boko Haram, the Far North was considered Cameroon’s most beautiful region... Waza and



Rumsiki were both popular destinations; providing a boost to local handcraft production. But since the conflict erupted... European countries and the United States have issued strongly worded travel advice warning citizens against visiting the area” (p. 5).

Responses to Ansaru’s Islamic Radicalization in the Lake Chad Basin

Arguably, member states of Lake Chad Basin did not respond adequately to the Islamic radicalization in the region. After years of radicalization, the Nigerian government decided to intervene in 2009, through a kinetic approach. The kinetic (hard) approach that helped in eliminating Maitatsine Movement in 1980s, assisted in neutralizing the ring leader of Boko Haram, Muhammed Yusuf, in August, 2009. Unfortunately, time has changed and the insurgent has developed sophisticated network that helped in resisting the kinetic approach. In May 2013, former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe State. The Federal Government also set up a Joint Task Force (JTF), that comprised about 8,000 soldiers, including police and other security agencies. “While the JTF initially succeeded in killing hundreds of militants and sympathizers, and has pushed them out of major urban centers, the... group has proven to be highly resilient and...has managed to expand its attacks” (Aftura-Heim & Mcquaid, 2015, p. 46). President Goodluck Jonathan also decided to adopt a soft approach, through the inauguration of the Presidential Committee on Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of Security Challenges in the North. This Committee started work in 2013; headed by the former National Security Adviser, Mohammed Sambo Dasuki. “However to date, the government’s half-hearted efforts to address northern grievances have made little progress.” (Aftura-Heim & Mcquaid, 2015, p. 46). In the same vein, local communities in the north eastern Nigeria decided to confront the insurgents through the formation of Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). Members of the group were given stipend by the state government. Any of them that died at the battle field was to be assisted financially by the state. In 2014, the Civilian Joint Task Force assisted Nigerian military in wiping out insurgents from Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State.

Regrettably, residents complained bitterly that the Civilian Joint Task Force has committed human rights abuses and could eventually become another source of insecurity (International Crisis Group, 2016). President Muhammadu Buhari, who succeeded former President Goodluck Jonathan in 2015, inherited a series of security challenges. International Crisis Group (2016) maintained that the president “...is facing a resurgent rebellion in the Niger Delta, separatist agitation in the southeast, and increasing violence in the Middle Belt, including recent clashes between pastoralists and farmers over land and water, as well as a severe economic and budgetary crisis” (p. 3).

Despite this, President Muhammadu Buhari initiated the idea of Victim Support Fund (VSF), as a humanitarian response to assist displaced persons in the northeast. In July 2015, the Presidential Committee on North-East Intervention (PCNI) was also initiated by the President. The Presidential Committee on the North-East Intervention was mandated to coordinate both domestic and international assistance to victims of insurgency. Added to this, the National Assembly has passed into law a bill establishing North East Development Commission (NEDC). The North East Development Commission is mandated to rehabilitate the devastated areas. Its funding is derived from the Federation Account Allocation Committee. Furthermore, Cameroon perceived Boko Haram and its splinter groups as an internal problem of Nigerian state. However, immediately Maroua was attacked by a suicide bomber in July 2015, the Cameroonian Government responded with security outfits to tackle the Islamic militant groups.



Operation Alpha and Operation Emergence were established and commanded by Rapid Intervention Brigade. The two operations had about 8,500 troops stationed in the Far North Cameroon. According to International Crisis Group (2016) the strategies adopted by the military include:

...adoption of new administrative and security measures such as bans on the full face veil (burqa), on public gatherings and on the use of motorbikes, the imposition of a 6pm closing time for bars, numerous inspections and searches, the monitoring or even closure of Mosques and the arrest of supposedly radical Imams and the reinforcement of police and gendarmerie manpower for intelligence assignments (p. 24).

Like Nigeria, vigilante groups also assisted Cameroonian military to fight the insurgents in the Far North region. They provide local intelligence and also identify members and sympathizers of the Islamic militants to the security agencies. The International Crisis Group (2016) hinted further that “they have foiled about fifteen suicide attacks and helped to secure the arrest of about 100 Boko Haram members. In 2016, they became involved in some army operations against the jihadist group...” (p. 23). Local communities in the Far North Cameroon (Fotokol, Kolofata, Mayo etc) where the Internally Displaced Persons are accommodated are equally helpful. They have provided succor to the needy and share in the plight of the vulnerable ones. As the International Crisis Group (2017) maintained, “as of today, most of the 220,000 displaced persons in the Far North have been given accommodation and supported by host families. Those originally from the Far North and now living in Yaounde and other cities in the south have also come to the assistance of their families” (p. 6). In June, 2014, President Paul Biya announced an emergency plan for the development of the Far North region, with a sum of FCFA 78.8 billion (\$135 million). In March 2015, the government further announced another emergency plan for the construction of schools and hospitals in the Far North region with a sum of FCFA 5.3 billion (\$9 million). “Besides the government initiatives, the President has made donations to the population of the Far North. The South of the country has also provided FCFA 2.5 billion (4.2 million) in support for the region as well as food supplies” (International Crisis Group, 2016, p. 26).

Regrettably, regional cooperation was absent at the initial stage of the crisis. Each state was accusing one another of cross border incursion. The Nigerian Government was skeptical about the sincerity of the Chadian Government towards the elimination of the Islamic groups in the region. The International Crisis Group (2016) even added that “at the start of the crisis, Cameroon was wary of bilateral or sub-regional initiatives and in 2012, it did not grant cross border hot pursuit rights to Nigeria” (p. 27). The insurgents took advantage of the internal disagreement of the member states to extend aggression beyond expectation. This existed until 2015, when the member states of Lake Chad Basin decided to resuscitate its moribund Multinational Joint Task Force of 1998. Member states (Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon) including Benin Republic decided to contribute 8,700 soldiers to fight the dreaded sect. In terms of distribution, Nigeria contributed 3,250, Chad: 3,000, Cameroon: 950, Niger: 750 and Benin Republic: 750. However, Tull and Weber (2015) lamented that “the greatest obstacle to the task force's functionality is the lack of a political consensus on a common approach” (p. 3).

Foreign countries (France, Britain, United States, China and Israel) have responded adequately to the Islamic radicalization in the Lake Chad Basin. France for instance, under the leadership of Francois Holland had established Operation Barkhane” whose mandate included Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon in 2014. N’Djamena, the capital of Chad was chosen as military



base of the security outfit. It should be recalled that former President of France, Francois Holland and former Prime Minister of United Kingdom David Cameron had several meeting with the Head of States of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger on 17th May in Paris as well as 12th June, 2014 in London. “The Paris summit’s outcome was a joint declaration of war... as well as plans for better information sharing and cross-border cooperation” (Barna, 2014, p. 21).

Similarly, Ekanem (2018) highlighted that the United Kingdom had sent a special force to assist the Nigerian military in rescuing Christopher McManus, a Briton in Katsina State Nigeria, though the mission was not successful. “China too, has been assisting Nigeria, especially in the area of supply of military weapons and aircraft while Israel had sent military experts to Nigeria for the search of the abducted Chibok girls in 2014” (Ekanem, 2018, p. 162). The United States of America has been a reliable partner in the fight against terrorist organizations in the Lake Chad Basin. “The US designated both Boko Haram and Ansaru as terrorist organizations in November 2013 and Boko Haram was proscribed under the UK Terrorism Law in 2013” (Barna, 2014, p. 21). The United States assistance to the Lake Chad Basin can be compared to none. The Congressional Research Service (2022) added that:

From 2015 to 2020, US Africa Command maintained an intelligence. Surveillance and reconnaissance operation in northern Cameroon involving up to 300 US personnel... from 2014 to 2020, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) administered a program in Nigeria to help counter extremist recruitment and reintegrate... Between FY 2014 and FY 2020... the State Department and USAID provided roughly \$2.3 billion in humanitarian assistance for the Lake Chad region, most of it for Nigeria (p.2).

Regrettably, human rights abuses perpetrated by the government forces contradict United States’ “Leahy Law” that prohibit assistance to foreign military that violate civilians’ rights. Congressional Research Service (2022) recalled that “in 2017, it frozen a planned sale of 12 A-29 Super Tucano aircraft to Nigeria, after a Nigerian jet bombed a displacement camp... In Cameroon, the State Department withheld nearly \$18 million in planned security assistance in 2019 amid mounting concerns over the conduct of Cameroon’s military...” (p. 2).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This rigorous study has established the fact that the remote causes of Ansaru’s Islamic radicalization in the Lake Chad Basin focus on economic factors, ideological reason, weak institutions and above all, the deceit on the restoration of Kanem Bornu Empire. The Islamic uprising has led to insecurity, human rights abuses, humanitarian and economic crises. Members states of the Lake Chad Basin have adopted both hard and soft approaches toward mitigating the violent extremist groups from the region. Regionally, they have resuscitated the moribund Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) since 2015. Foreign powers, especially United States, United Kingdom, Israel, China, including France have rendered humanitarian assistance as well as security cooperation to the region. Regrettably, atrocities committed by the insurgent groups (Ansaru, Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province) continue unabated. Though public commentators in the region have argued that Ansaru has been defeated through regional corporations, the fact is that insurgents with ideological motives never reduce. Al Shabaab is presently tormenting Somalia and Kenya despite the fact that African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) ended their nightmare since 2016: possibility



of Ansaru's regrouping is undoubtful. Daily Maverick Africa (2022) confirmed that "there are three worrying signs of Ansaru's resurgence: its increased link to abductions and banditry, its connections to other violent extremist groups and the ability to win over local communities with "hearts and minds' Campaign" (p. 1). It should be recalled that throughout 2022, the entire North West and Middle Belt zone of Nigeria have been characterized by banditry and kidnapping. The Nigerian security agencies find it difficult to attribute these mayhems to Boko Haram or Islamic State West Africa Province. A reasonable person must think towards Ansaru, since they often sourced their income from kidnapping. In order to avert a full blown atrocities not only in Nigeria but the entire Lake Chad Basin, the study recommends:

(i) Good Governance

There is no argument that states in the Lake Chad Basin has failed its people. The poverty rates have skyrocketed while unemployment is normal among youths from the region. In Nigeria, the government of President Muhammadu Buhari had initiated programs such as N'Power, Traders Money, Anchor Borrowers Scheme among others with hope to mitigate poverty and create job opportunities for the teeming youths. Regrettably, the implementation of these programs benefits the rich at the expense of the poor. The aftermath of corrupt practices in Nigerian government is the recent report by National Bureau of Statistics which alerted the world that in 2022, 133 million Nigerians out of a total population of 200 million are in multi-dimensional poverty. Good governance has no option, it is high time for leaders in the Lake Chad Basin to tackle poverty headlong and create job opportunities for teeming youth. This assertion corroborates the opinion of International Alert (2018) which hinted that "an absence of economic grievances and securing access to employment represents a sufficient condition to guarantee the resilience of young people in the face of violent extremism" (p. 29).

(ii) Strong Institutions

Unarguably, the legitimacy of governments in the Lake Chad Basin is dwindling on a daily basis due to weak institutions that have been bedeviled by corruption. The former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan claimed in January 2012 that Boko Haram members were in his cabinet (Aftura-Heim & McQuaid, 2015). In 2022, Isa Pantami, the current Minister of Communication and Digital Economy was alleged by civil society groups, as a sympathizer of Boko Haram in Nigeria. International Crisis Group (2017) accused Cameroonian military of cooperating with Boko Haram. Military in the Cameroon has been selling weapons and ammunition to the terrorist organization. Security agencies in Cameroon refuse to comment on this allegation till date. In 2022, Kuje Prison in Abuja, where a founding member of Ansaru, Kabiru Sokoto and other high profile terrorist leaders were imprisoned was invaded and destroyed by terrorist groups. Kabiru Sokoto and his cohorts had easy exit from government net, without explanation from the regime in power. The fact is that the fight against insurgency can never be won in the midst of corruption. As International Alert (2018) noted, the violent extremists have taken advantage of these failings to criticize "bad governance" and "corruption" by the state, in turn inciting communities to rebel and embrace an alternative political and social model, inspired by the Sharia" (p. 30). In order to dissuade youths from joining or sympathizing with the violent groups, the government must fight corruption through strengthening of its institutions, especially police and judiciary.



(iii) Ideological Reorientation

Undoubtedly, Islam is a religion of peace. It is a sacrilege to shed innocent blood. The Sunni sect which Muslim in the Lake Chad Basin are familiar with, has nothing to do with violent radicalization. Violent radicalization is associated with Salafi sect who import its ideology from Middle East. They are not comfortable with even fellow Muslims from Sunni sect. Salafi regards their non-members as infidels that worth nothing but death. The burden of ideological re-orientation lies on the Islamic clergies and scholars to educate Muslim youths in particular and the general public that Quran holds different opinion. Those that kill in the name of “Allah” are the real sinners. Their dwelling place is in hell. As Patterson (2015) stated, “Islam is on the track of increasing radicalization... and groups linked to Al-Qaeda ad Al-Shabaab pose a significant and growing threats... to persons and interests in the country” (p.22). Therefore, Islamic clergies and scholars have roles to play in ideological re-orientation among the public. They should not only condemn the atrocities perpetrated by these groups, but should be bold enough to confront Salafi doctrine while preaching in their different Mosques.

(iv) International Cooperation

Member states of Lake Chad Basin should continue to cooperate with one another. They should assist one another not only in the security dimension alone, but in the humanitarian needs as well. Their borders should be free from refugees from member states and the military fighting the insurgent should have right of entry and exit without diplomatic protocol. Most importantly, Ansaru, and other Islamic sects in the Lake Chad Basin has direct linkage with Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, Taliban, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb operating outside the region. Therefore, it is imperative for them to extend invitation to foreign powers (United States, United Kingdom, China, Israel, France and Germany) to intervene. There is no shame saying the fact that the current war against terrorism in Lake Chad Basin would continue unabated unless international community intervene. Presently, there is a lot of propaganda, the reality is that the insurgents are proving stronger. Nigeria, the leader of the region must wake up and take responsibility in this direction. As the International Crisis Group (2014) equally advised, “Nigeria should intensify relations with the Lake Chad countries and continue to build security ties and networks with others” (p. 45).

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