



Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and Counter Insurgency Operation in Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The mandate of Military and Para-military Joint Task Force (JTF) to restore normalcy in the North-eastern part of Nigeria where Boko-haram insurgency is prevalent, is recently complemented by a vigilante group calls Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) due to some inherent lapses requiring civilian efforts. This study, therefore, assessed the roles and relevance of informal counter insurgency operation in Borno State. It employed qualitative approach in sourcing for its data. Findings revealed that involvement of Civilian Joint Task Force has helped to curb insurgency positively in restoring peace in Borno State. Their impact led to the reduction of destructive activities of the Boko-haram insurgents, protection of lives and properties, arrest and handing over of the suspected insurgents to Police and Military. It was discovered that though the involvement of Civilian Joint Task Force in counter insurgency operation has recorded some effects in Borno state, there is need for adequate training of Civilian Joint Task Force. Governments should design a Para-military training programme for them in order to improve in their performances, and enacting the law that will permit civilians in involving in the counter insurgency operation in Nigeria.

Key words: Civilian joint task force, Counter insurgency, Operation

Introduction

The ability of any society to effectively enforce law and order within its territorial borders is an indication of good governance and positive implementation of social contract among the social elements. While the state that provides citizens security of life and property, its citizens in return obligate to social order and tranquility. Meaning, adequate security is an essential factor of survival for any nation in

terms of protection of lives and properties (Babawale, 2009). In spite of this reality, the civil disorder remains one of the most intractable problems of human society that have inflicted incurable damages on many nation-states (Unugbe, 2011, Bala, 2014). Such incurable damages manifest as ethno-religious riot, arms proliferations and insurgency, amongst others. The phenomenon of insurgencies is not a recent phenomenon

(Adegbite, 2006). Although violence existed in form of raids, tribal wars and rebellion in the traditional African societies; the actions were carried out by individual or groups of individual who were seeking for power, status and influence or trying to register their grievances. However, insurgency-cum-terrorism has always been part of human history from nomadic rebels that brought down the Roman Empire to the internet-savvy plane and exploding Jihadists that triggered America's global war on terror. Insurgent forces are constant factors in the history of warfare and fighting of wars (Boots, 2013). As posited by Metz (2004), although insurgency is seemed to have existed since the beginning of human history, meaning, its level and propensity for mass destruction have acquired more sophistication strategies in the recent time as its negative trend is becoming frequent and devastating even in United States of America, Britain and France. Fighting destructive insurgency is becoming tougher and protracted in nature (Boots, 2013:16).

For example, many African countries witnessed cases of insurgent activities in their post-independence era due to poor socio-economic and political factors resulting into widespread despair and disenchantment of

their populace (Unugbe, 2011). Accusations against their leaders range from corruption, insensitivity and gross ineptitude in governance. Their grievances creates tensing atmosphere for revolts and insurrection everywhere. Disenchanted groups or opposition parties capitalised on this to organize some acts of defiance or other forms of lawlessness. The acts of terrorism perpetrated by insurgent groups such as Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) and Boko-haram sect in Nigeria are clear instances of insurgences induced in Africa.

Statement of Research Problem

Since the beginning of post-independence in 1960, Nigerians have witnessed several internal insecurities and disturbances. Among the crises were Zangon- Kataf, Ife-Modakeke, Aguleri-Umulleri and Tiv-Jukun disturbances as well as current Boko-haram insurgency in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria. The Boko-haram activities have created several security breaches in 2010 having carried out about 56 attacks. The figures get escalated to over 200 in 2014 (Dala, 2014). The Boko-haram sect killed about 15,000 people as at 2015 (Jonathan, 2015).

The calamity gets escalated beyond the capacity of Nigerian Police who has the primary responsibility of maintaining internal security. Inability of Nigerian Police leads to the establishment security agents' composition of a Joint Task Force (JTF) comprising Nigerian Armed Forces and Para-military agencies in Nigeria. Their primary duty is to restore peace and order in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States. The Joint Task Force was also saddled with the responsibility of enforcing emergency rule that was declared on 14th of May 2013. While the JTF has largely succeeded in pushing the insurgent out of Maiduguri metropolis and environs, the poor of knowledge of Maiduguri terrain and crisis of terrorist identity have been identified as part of logistic and operational problems. While adopting guerrilla war strategies against the Nigeria state, the insurgents operate from hidden locations with some unconventional command structures. Realizing the difficulties of identifying Boko-haram members in populace, the local youth known as Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) mobilised support for JTF conventional security efforts in providing adequate security for the populace, most especially, in the areas of providing information on the sect tactics.

However, the use of civilians as security task force raises some concerns about the legality of their operation. The extent of their loyalty to the security of Nigerian State and relevance security system generated a lot of concerns. There were concerns over the groups training, quality of equipments, command and control structures. The attacks on Civilian Joint Task Force by the insurgents led to huge casualties that raised arguments whether the group should be armed to defend themselves against insurgent onslaught. Another argument was based on the group capabilities and strengths to compliment the military counter insurgency efforts, while some people are calling for the disbandment of the group, regarding it as illegal security organisation.

The objective of this study is to assess the role of the Civilian Joint Task Force in counter insurgency operation by evaluating their achievements, challenges and the relevance of the Civil Force to counter insurgency in the North-eastern Nigeria with specific focus on Borno State situation. The study proffers policy and academic skills that could help the policy makers to know the relevant of CJTF on security management. The findings would be also useful to the commandants of the security agencies currently engaging in counter insurgency operations in Nigeria. The study

employed qualitative approach in sourcing its data.

CJTF is constituted and the essence why it was formed.

Clarification of Concepts

The Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) has been viewed from different conceptual dimensions by different scholars and analysts. Emelia (2005) CJTF can be defined as volunteer group organized to suppress and punish the criminals when the process of law appears inadequate. Although Emelia's definition provides a clue about Civilian Joint Task Force, but it does not inexact appropriate academic discourse on their recruitment? Achia (2013) defines CJTF as a militia force used to intimidate citizens in the guise of providing security for the people. In other words, the Achia's definition sees the CJTF as a group perpetrating evil through the backing of Government. Burrow (2005) defines CJTF as members of organized group that proceed for a finite time with a definite goal because of a failure of established law enforcement system. He further explains that CJTF work for the preservation and betterment of an existing system by corroborating or complementing the efforts of state security agencies to enhance protection of lives and property. Burrow's definition is more apt and comprehensive as it explicitly clarifies how

Hitherto, the counter insurgency has recently drawn different definitions from scholars and peace practitioners. United States Counter Insurgency Guide (2009) defines counter insurgency as "a comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes". Similarly, Mc Cormick (2007) posits that the concept of counter insurgency is logically contingent on insurgents. It involves all measures adopted by the state to suppress an insurgency. Smith (2007) argues that counter insurgency include those actions taken by government forces and their allies in order to overcome insurgency. It is a war among people where the modern military techniques are no longer faced in tangle with the enemies. The perpetrators are nestled within the population. The counter insurgency can be referred as security stability operations.

Insurgency

Insurgency is defined by Merriam (2014) as a condition of revolt against constituted authorities with the primary intention of undermining the security of the state in order to achieve certain goals. Synthesizing this definition reveals that counter insurgency can

be defined as a process whereby the state deployed its security apparatus to prevent tensions and preserve peace. The state will be strategically gathered intelligence information with a view of using such information to counter rebellion... It is inform of warfare requiring application of state or national power against insurgents. Counter insurgence operations always need to change their strategy in order act effectively. Examining the relationship between the Civilian Joint Task Force and Military Counter Insurgency Operation, Samuel (2007) observed that the CJTF should be established as a community policing with a definite goal of securing their community. The outfit is to complement the efforts of state security agencies for the enhancement of live and properties protection. Conversely, Military Counter Insurgency on the other hands includes all measures adopted by the military and non-military personnel to suppress insurgent acts. In other words, it is the process whereby the state deployed its security apparatus to prevent/tackle the tension and preserving peace as well. While Military Counter Insurgency seeks to promote efforts that aimed at protection and preservation of peace and wellbeing of the people, the CJTF are formed most times as a way of community effort to protect its people from a perceived threat. Effective corroboration of the CJTF

with the efforts of conventional security outfit enhances the efficiency and success of counter insurgency. Any betrayal or distrust from CJTF is always having a devastating implication on the counter insurgency operation (Ibrahim, 2010). Therefore, there is for direct relationship between the CJTF and Military Counter Insurgency.

Review of Relevant Literature

Various studies have been conducted on security of lives and properties coupled with its nexus of CJTF. Abubakar (2009) notes that security has most significant dimension in conflict in post-colonial Africa, and stresses that security involves meeting of the needs of vulnerable individuals, groups and communities. This agenda is empirical and normative in nature. The individual, most especially, the powerless and vulnerable ones should be primary focus of social security. Such effort should be driven by people's needs, aspirations and their desire to alleviate existential and structural threats and fears. Although, this study discussed the essence of security, it was not however included the roles played by the citizens to protect themselves in the existing mechanism put in place by government.

Collins (2007) emphasized that state is a territorial based entity with a government to rule over its territory. Collins noted states as central actors in the international affairs and considered security as its most important concern. According to Collins, a state must sustain its security against terrorist or any other criminal groups that threaten its peaceful existence. He suggested that obligation must take into consideration the circumstances where state security mechanism becomes ineffective in its counter insurgency. Elaigwu (2013) discovered that since 1999, Nigeria has been experiencing increased number of violent conflict. The country has witnessed emergent of ethnic militias such as Odu's People Congress (OPC), Bakassi Boys, Egbesu and CJTF among others. He observed that the emergent of these groups and their roles in providing security is an indication that the capacity of Nigerian Police Force (NPF) in dealing with the internal security is inadequate.

Zabdi and Adedeji (2005) state that before the emergent of contemporary and western model of conflict management, Africans had efficient cultural mechanisms through which conflict between the groups, communities or even states and kingdoms were settled. According

to Zabdi and Adedeji, conflict resolution stems from the accumulations of the peoples experiences in settling disputes in society through ages, and have been transmitted down from generation to generation. One of such mechanism was the Elders Forum. Another mechanism was ostracism, which means, refusing offenders to have social dealings with a party or parties in a dispute. There was also mechanism of oath taking as a conflict management model in the traditional societies. However, the disadvantages of the models were that the truths may not be immediately established as consequences, or it may fall upon either of the relatives.

Arase (2013) noted that communities in the past sought to maintain communal order and correct or discipline those who have departed from the communally acceptable behaviour. In the pre-colonial Africa and pre-industrial Europe, for instance, control of crime and maintenance of order was fulfilled by collective tasks, and sometimes, through a voluntary community service, on a rotational basis. Today, there has been a shift from collective responsibility to a public policing system owing to colonial experience that creates state power that centralised and monopolised the use of force or coercion

under the sole responsibility of the state. Although the modern day European concept of state policing has continued to exist in Africa, the non-state policing both in communal and commercial never fades out.

In other words, previous studies have not in doubt made some significant contributions in understanding government policies on security management. They discussed the links among the security agents in ensuring security in one way or the other. Some substantially discussed strategies of enhancing security of lives and properties. However, none of them addressed the concept of CJTF and counter insurgency in Nigeria concisely. This study therefore filled the gap.

Theoretical Analysis

Various attempts have been made to provide adequate theoretical understanding of human existence in terms of security. However, the human security theory was adopted by this study. The theory essentially dislodges the state as primary reference of security, and places greater emphasis on interdependency of the state and non-state actors. The theory approach was sighted in Booth (2014) where he advocates a broadened conceptualisation of

security that goes beyond a military determination of threats. The advocates of human security approach stressed explicitly that state must be complimented as primary provider of security, which should encompass input of a wide range of non-state actors, most especially, the civilians -such as individuals, ethnic and community groups, regional, economic blocs, multinational corporations and non-government organization (NGOs). Booth (2014) further argues that human security is ultimate more important than the state security. The critique of human security theory, especially, Barry (1987) continues to emphasises the primacy of the state. Booth sees security encompassing individuals' involvement, groups and non-state organisation participation in counter insurgency operation. The CJTF being a voluntary community organisation supports the state security in ensuring internal security. Security is a collective responsibility, and so, the involvement of CJTF as members of community in a counter insurgency is not out of place.

Civilian Joint Task Force and Counter Insurgency in Borno State

Borno State is located in the North-eastern part of Nigeria having been created in 1976 with

the capital in Maiduguri. The state is situated within the range of the larger parts of Chad Basin. It shares geographical boundaries with the Republics of Niger in the North, Chad in the North-east and Cameroun in the East. Within the geographical configuration of Nigeria, Borno State is bounded by Adamawa State in the South, Gombe State in the West and Yobe State in the North-West. From its slogan of "home of peace" when it was created in 1976, it is ironically today remained one of the volatile cities in Nigeria and epicenter of Nigeria North-east insurgency crises due to Boko-haram terror activities. In other words, several towns and villages in Borno State have been under insurgent's control that has aim of establishing Islamic Caliphate. Frequent bombing and clashes with the security agents by Boko-haram weigh down economy situation in Borno State. Due to insurgency, many businesses and enterprises relocate to neighbouring states. The banks and schools were also remained closed for sometimes due to incessant attacks of Boko-haram.

The mode of operation of insurgents later changed from mere confrontation with the security agencies to total terrorist acts, owing to their linkages with global terrorist sects, most especially, al-Qaida network which gives

Boko-haram insurgents regular training. The sect uses high caliber-precision weapons, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and armed teenager for its selected targets and attacks. The sect has overtime established local and foreign sources of arms and ammunition supply as well as acquiring technical skills in weapon handling and production of IEDs (Danjibo, 2014). Another emerging trend in its strategic combat operation is the use of suicide bombers with some maximum impacts on their targets, and thus causing serious threats to Nigerian national security. The sect's targets have graduated from attacks on security posts and Banks to high profile targets like the United Nations building in Abuja and Police Force Headquarters.

The activities of Boko-haram pose serious threats to religious, economic and social centres. The sect attacks on churches and mosques were almost resulted into intra and inter-religious polarisation and conflict in Nigeria, most especially among the Muslims and Christians. The general atmosphere of insecurity created by Boko-haram activities has impacted negatively on socio-economy and paralyzing business activities in all the affected areas. At least 36 Public and Private

Schools were set ablaze in some coordinated attacks launched by Boko-haram in 2009 (Trifunov, 2012). Over 200 girls were kidnapped in April 2014 from Chibok Secondary School in Borno State (Human Right Watch, 2015). The action forced about 10,000 pupils and students out of schools.

As a result of ceaseless insurgency attacks on security agencies and their destructive activities, the Federal Government of Nigeria imposed a state of emergency on Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States in May, 2013 (Jonathan, 2013). On 15 May 2013, a Military joint Task force (JTF) began an "Operation Safety (OP) in the three states. Establishment of JTF prompts some youths, hunters and vigilante groups (out of their sheer patriotism) to start assisting JTF on counter insurgency operation by giving vital intelligence and collaboration efforts with JTF in conducting house to house search for Boko-haram members. The group is later named "Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)". The CJTF members under the leadership of Lawan Jafar were 42 youths, within the ages of 18 and 40. Today, they are over 1,000 members (Lawal, 2013). The CJTF is organised into five levels of commands, namely: Borno Command is the Head Office of the CJTF and coordinates all other zones.

There is a Zonal Command controlling at most six local government areas and their Area Commands that control each local government area. There is also a local command that is saddled with the responsibility of patrolling communities that are prone to incessant attacks. With the above command structure, the CJTF has been able to confront insurgents in their battle fields.

The Achievement of Civilian Joint Task Force in Borno State

Evidently, Boko-haram sect attacks its targets with sophisticated weapons including the use of IEDs bikes and Helix van with heavy guns mounted on them. Nevertheless, the CJTF have been succeeding in repelling their attacks. In November 2013, a contingent of CJTF repelled insurgents at Dawashi Village in Kukawa Local Government Area of Borno State and killing about 25 insurgents despite their lack of counter insurgency combat proficiency and expertise. They have helped to arrest about 120 insurgents who had escaped after attack on Giwa barracks in 2010 (Lawal, 2013). The members of CJTF also conduct "stop and search" operation in Maiduguri. The CJTF employed the use of knives, machetes, cutlass, dane-gun and other crude weapons to rid their neighbourhood (Jafar, 2014). Their

members transport themselves on bikes. Poor logistics, feeding and communication impeded their operations. The CJTF has been credited for a relative improved security environment in Borno State for reducing insurgency where its attacks were frequent. They have made a notable contribution on counter insurgency in Borno State. The volunteer force guards community and checkmates activities of insurgents in many areas. They provide protection for government infrastructures such as hospitals, schools including private buildings. They protect children, women and aged people who are vulnerable to insurgent attacks. The CJTF helps to protect lives and properties in their counter insurgency operations.

Another contribution of CJTF is provision of useful information, for instance, on 13 March 2014; Nigerian Army was able to attack biggest Boko-haram Camp at the Sambisa Forest near Lake Chad through information provided by CJTF. In order to keep military, police and security agencies abreast of statutory roles of protecting people; CJTF submits its monthly surveillance operational reports to the security agencies nearest to their area of command. This no doubt, CJTF has complimented intelligence gathering capability

of the security agencies. Nevertheless, they have also recorded about 100 casualties. They are facing series of challenges in counter insurgency operations in Borno State.

Challenges of CJTF in Countering Insurgency in Borno State

There are many challenges inhibiting the performance of CJTF as a credible counter insurgency outfit in Borno State. Some of these challenges are legal status of CJTF, poor training and skills, logistic problem, combat professionalism and observation of the rules of engagement. In other words, within the legal framework of Nigeria, the 1999 constitution (as amended) of section 14(2) (b) states that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government, and to this end, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is enshrined in the Police Act of 1979 of section 4 to be saddled with the responsibility of Nigeria’s ISOs. This gives Police legal backing to prevent and detect crime, apprehend offenders, preserve law and order, protect life and property and enforce laws and regulations. Consequently, the same Federal Government, drawing its legal backing from the 1999 Constitution section 217(2) (c) as amended, to suppress insurrections has instituted JTF to complement the role of

Police. Although the mandate of the JTF in Borno State is being complemented by the CJTF with a commendable input, the CJTF involvement in counter insurgency operation does not have legal backing, because, such duties are not enshrined in Nigerian Constitution. The level of insurgency perpetrated by Boko-haram could only be defeated with trained security outfit that has sufficient level of combat professionalism entailing basic military training in drills, discipline, procedure, small arm handling, dress regulation, divisional duties, and physical education, among others. The CJTF was voluntarily and hurriedly formed by the community youths drawn from Okada riders, carpenters, bricklayers, unemployed youth, hunters, and vigilante youth to repel incessant attacks of Boko-haram without having sufficient military training prior to their emergent. They lack reasonable combat readiness to confront insurgency activities. Another challenging issue confronting the optimal utilisation of CJTF in counter insurgency operation is inadequate knowledge of members and rule of engagement in warfare (ROE) which thus makes them to commit war crime and guilty a times. In 2013, about 99 CJTF members were arrested in connection with the unauthorized attacks on the suspected

Boko-haram members in Baga area of Borno State (Ahmed, 2014).

Similarly, between January and April 2014, 21 CJTF were arrested for unlawful execution of suspects under their custody (Adaji, 2014). Weak logistic support is another challenging issue confronting their operations. The CJTF counter insurgency operation in Borno-State is seriously impended by logistic problems. Till now, members of CJTF Force bear only crude weapons such as bow and arrow, machetes, spears, and sticks, among others to confront insurgents. The CJTF embarks on patrols mainly on foot, and sometimes with one or two vehicles. The scale of logistic support available to CJTF is inadequate compares to insurgent logistics that are much more equipped in weaponry and logistics. The activities of insurgents are very audacious and fluid. To counter such attacks, the CJTF needs secured lines of communication with the military and other security agencies. All these hinder role played by CJTF Force in counter insurgency in Borno State. Since they lack rules of engagement, the CJTF at times harass and intimidate innocent citizens, and thus grossly violate people's fundamental rights, which raises questions on their rules of engagement and operational procedure.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The CJTF has made significant impact in counter insurgency operations in Borno State since inception of its operations against Boko-haram insurgents in 2013. The effort of Civilian Joint Task Force has been relatively improved human security in Maiduguri, the capital city of Borno State and its environ. The study established that positive relationship exist between the CJTF and Military in counter insurgency operations. The study identified legal issue, training, ill-equipment and logistics inhibitions as challenges undermine CJTF efforts in countering insurgents. It is on this note that the paper recommends that:

- a. the Federal Government should enact law of formally involving CJTF in counter insurgency operations in

Nigeria. Their funding should come from both the Federal and state governments in order to be able protected the communities under threat effectively;

- b. Government should design a paramilitary training programme for the members of CJTF;
- c. the Federal Government that controls all the conventional security apparatus should provide a by-law to guide the activities of CJTF; and
- d. more logistic supports should be provided by Governments and private individuals for a smooth operation of CJTF against insurgents.

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