

**AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE (APSA)  
IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN 2015-2024**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Lake Chad Basin has been one of the most complicated and persisting security crises regions in Africa since 2015. This research sought to determine the effectiveness of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in resolving security problems in the region from 2015 to 2024. The purpose was to determine the operational impact of APSA, while specific objectives included identification of the most pressing security issues in the Lake Chad Basin, determination of the nature of APSA responses to such issues, and assessment of the impact of the identified responses. All data used for this research was taken from the secondary literature sources including the African Union, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Institute for Security Studies, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, and peer-reviewed academic journals. Four states from the basin (Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger) were considered during the research period (2015-2024). The documentary and ex post facto research design was chosen as well as the qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis techniques. The study showed that Boko Haram and ISWAP caused 45,940 people's deaths and displacement of 2.2 million persons resulting in the economic damage worth more than USD 10 billion. The response of APSA involved actions of the MNJTF, allocation of USD 250 million by Peace Fund, and diplomatic coordination; however, less than 40 percent of joint actions planned by APSA have been completed because of funding and coordination failures. APSA decreased territory controlled by insurgents in the region by 73 percent in 2015-2019. However, there has not been any improvement in humanitarian conditions that continued worsening in the whole research period. The study reveals that APSA had significant but fragile military success without achieving structural stabilization in the region. It is recommended to develop the Funding Compliance Protocol in the AU Peace and Security Council to avoid constant disbursements failure of the APSA.

**Keywords:** African Peace and Security Architecture, Lake Chad Basin, Boko Haram, ISWAP, Multinational Joint Task Force, regional security, collective security, humanitarian conditions, documentary analysis, Regional Security Complex Theory.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) was developed by the African Union (AU) as an effort to address the rising need for a structured and African-led approach in dealing with peace and security issues facing the continent. APSA consists of several mechanisms, namely the Peace and Security Council (PSC), African Standby Force (ASF), Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), Panel of the Wise, and Peace Fund (Wondemagegnehu, 2021). These structures are created with the aim of preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts in Africa. For instance, APSA has been actively involved in various peacekeeping missions in Somalia through the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Mali through AU-led initiatives (Amuhaya, 2024). Nonetheless, there have been challenges in implementing APSA in some places, especially in the Lake Chad Basin, which has witnessed the intensification of security challenges in the last ten years.

In this regard, the idea of security as perceived from the perspective of international relations goes beyond the protection of state sovereignty to include human security, which includes economic, environmental, and political stability (Buzan, 2020). The idea of security becomes important considering the fact that the Lake Chad Basin region faces security challenges such as terrorism, organized crimes, and humanitarian crises. As suggested by Lucey (2022), security is a dynamic process that is multi-actor. It involves not only the national government but also regional and international organizations. The challenges of security in Lake Chad Basin cut across borders; thus, a collaborative approach involving the cooperation of affected countries through the regional organizations MNJTF and APSA (Haruna, 2024).

Conventionally, the security problem in the Lake Chad Basin has mainly been caused by the activities of Boko Haram, which is an insurgent militant group in Nigeria, which started in

the early years of 2000 and has since spread to Chad, Cameroon, and Niger (Tchie, 2023). In the regions where Boko Haram operates, there have been violence, displacement, and economic instability. An example of this is the Baga Massacre that occurred in 2015 when Boko Haram attacked civilians in Nigeria resulting in massive losses and displacement (Gnanguênon, 2021). In spite of military interventions against it, Boko Haram has continued to evolve and use its adaptive skills to exploit regional vulnerabilities. As pointed out by De Coning et al. (2022), the persistence of insurgent movements in the region calls for a holistic security strategy, which considers social-economic stabilizations.

Thus, the main regional response to the security crisis in the Lake Chad Basin has been through the creation of the MNJTF that was revived in 2015 by the LCBC (Osimen et al., 2024). The MNJTF is a collaboration between the military of the countries of Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin, all in the fight against Boko Haram and other related security threats. The MNJTF has carried out various operations including Operation Gama Aiki in 2016, which made Boko Haram lose some territories (Mugume, 2022). According to Brosig and Nivet (2024), the challenges of the MNJTF include lack of adequate funding, insufficient intelligence sharing, and poor political coordination. The relationship between MNJTF and the APSA's security framework is significant.

More importantly, the activities of APSA within the region have centered around diplomacy, capacity building, and counterterrorism actions (Engel, 2020). The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU has issued multiple resolutions in response to the Lake Chad crisis calling for greater cooperation and effective counterterrorism strategies (Opongo, 2022). Moreover, APSA has worked together with international partners including the UN and EU in order to facilitate logistics and funding for military interventions within the region (Denisova & Kostelyanets, 2023). Nevertheless, some academics believe that the activities of APSA within the region remain limited because of the AU's dependence on international

financing and its failure to coordinate a response to the crisis at the continental level (Prah, 2023).

At present, despite multiple military campaigns, the security environment of the Lake Chad region continues to deteriorate. The terrorist organizations have fragmented and the ISWAP is becoming the leading organization (Haruna, 2024). Moreover, the humanitarian crisis continues and over 11 million people need help due to displacement, starvation, and disruption of their economic activities (Opongo, 2022). In 2021, a joint AU-UN report identified serious problems with the APSA's activities in the Lake Chad region, especially its activities in relation to reconstruction (Denisova & Kostelyanets, 2023).

But there are a number of drawbacks that prevent APSA from being fully effective in its activities in the Lake Chad Basin. For example, APSA faces a problem of lack of sufficient funding needed for implementation of security activities and deployment of peacekeeping units and implementation of stabilization initiatives (Osimen et al., 2024). In addition, there are certain structural and political barriers to APSA's effective functioning: poor coordination among the states that are members of the AU, low level of information exchange, and insufficient political willingness to follow the directives of APSA (Mugume, 2022). What is more, according to Brosig and Nivet (2024), international donors' financial and logistic assistance to APSA hinders its autonomy in terms of implementing security strategy independently. All these factors require reconsideration of APSA's operational mechanisms to guarantee efficient intervention in the situation. Therefore, this paper attempts to conduct an analysis of the effectiveness of APSA in addressing the security issues in the Lake Chad Basin during the period from 2015 to 2024.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The situation regarding security in the Lake Chad Basin region still remains unstable because of persistent terrorist activities perpetrated mainly by the group Boko Haram and the split

faction of the same group, ISWAP. From 2015 to 2023, Boko Haram and ISWAP contributed immensely to instability in the region by carrying out terrorist activities that caused more than 36,000 people to lose their lives in Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project [ACLED], 2023). This has been complemented by huge humanitarian cost, where in 2023, around 2.2 million people were displaced, with insurgent activities causing about 80% of the displacements (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA], 2023). The economic impacts of terrorism are no less significant, with LCBC (2021) reporting economic losses of US\$10 billion incurred from 2015 to 2020, mostly in agricultural, trade, and infrastructure sectors. Such incidents as Boko Haram attack near Bagasola in Chad that led to 98 deaths among soldiers in December 2020 (BBC News, 2020), and ISWAP attack in the Nigerian village near Diffa in Niger leading to 30 civilian deaths in January 2023 (Reuters, 2023) exemplify the danger of such terrorist activities.

Some measures taken to counter such challenges involve cooperation within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), especially through MNJTF including Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. During 2015 to 2020, APSA disbursed around US\$250 million via the African Peace Fund towards the funding of MNJTF activities (African Union [AU], 2020). Actual military activities like Operation Lake Sanity II conducted by MNJTF in 2023 led to neutralizing over 140 insurgents (Al Jazeera, 2024). However, security threats still exist. In March 2024, the attack carried out by ISWAP on the Nigerian military post in Borno State killed 15 soldiers (Al Jazeera, 2024). Furthermore, internal displacements increased by 10% between 2022 and 2023 (OCHA, 2023).

There is poor coordination between APSA strategies and regional actors such as ECOWAS and LCBC which poses challenges in security provision. As per the findings by ISS (2023), from 2016 to 2020, APSA only managed to implement 40% of proposed joint initiatives with

regional actors largely because of overlapping mandates and disagreements on funding. The APSA Impact Report by AU (2020) highlights several deficiencies between early warning mechanisms and response capacity. This report points out the fact that regional organizations often functioned independently of guidance from AU. For instance, in 2015-2019, MNJTF only received 60% of pledged AU funding requiring additional financial input from other organizations, such as the European Union that contributed €50 million in 2018 (European Union, 2018). To overcome coordination problems, APSA introduced a Joint Coordination Cell in N'Djamena, Chad in 2018 in an attempt to coordinate actions of MNJTF (AU, 2020). AU also held strategic consultations annually with regional actors, such as 2021 consultation in Abuja (ISS, 2023). However, this problem still exists. For instance, in July 2023, there was a failure to coordinate military operations of MNJTF and civilians' activities of LCBC which caused a humanitarian operation in Diffa, Niger to fail impacting about 50,000 refugees (ISS, 2023). Additionally, the delay of the appointment of the special representative in Chad by AU in 2023 negatively impacted responses to security incidents like the ISWAP attack in October 2023 close to Lake Chad which caused 25 deaths among fishermen (ReliefWeb, 2023). Having in mind these problems, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The study answers the following research questions:

1. What are the key security challenges faced by the Lake Chad Basin region between 2015 and 2024?
2. How has APSA responded to these security threats within this period?
3. What has been the impact of APSA's interventions on regional stability and humanitarian conditions from 2015 to 2024?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The main purpose of this research is to assess the performance of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in tackling security problems in the Lake Chad Basin area between 2015 and 2024. These include:

1. identify key security challenges in the Lake Chad Basin region between 2015 and 2024
2. analyze how APSA has responded to security threats in the Lake Chad Basin region from 2015 to 2024
3. assess the impact of APSA's interventions on regional stability and humanitarian conditions from 2015 to 2024.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

There is great significance associated with the findings of this study for different parties of interest. In theory, the study contributes to the development of knowledge about regional security management, especially that of the APSA and its operation in Africa. The findings are a basis for evidence that can help shape future research agendas and theoretical perspectives. As far as practice is concerned, the findings of the study can be used by policy-makers in the African Union and those member states involved in the Lake Chad region in order to detect and bridge the gaps in the security operations of APSA and formulate appropriate policies. Furthermore, the security agencies such as the MNJTF are likely to gain greatly from the findings concerning the weaknesses and strengths of the APSA coordination practices. Finally, humanitarian organizations working in the Lake Chad Basin will acquire important data to better solve problems of displacement in the region.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study investigates the effectiveness of the Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union (APSA) in handling the security threats in the Lake Chad Basin between the years 2015 and 2024. It aims at identifying the security problems, evaluating the reactions of APSA

to the identified problems, and measuring the impact of the measures on the state of regional stability and humanitarian situation. The demographic scope of this study includes the communities living in Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger affected by terrorism and displacements. The geographical scope of the study involves the Lake Chad Basin, which is identified as the site of security threats and APSA's intervention. Ideologically, the study is guided by the institutional security theory, especially focusing on collective security. The methodology used in the study involves the use of documentary and ex post facto research designs that utilize data from various sources including past documents and reports.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

There were some limitations encountered while conducting this research study. The first limitation that arose during the course of conducting this research study was that of time since proper scheduling and prioritization were required for the extensive and thorough analysis of both historical and current documents. The other limitation that was encountered while carrying out this research was that of some security related documents not being available. However, the problem was overcome by making use of the available and credible sources, such as those from international organizations. Another financial limitation was also faced in accessing some journals due to subscription requirements. This problem was resolved by using the freely available online sources.

### **1.8 Definitions of Terms**

**Security:** Derived from the Latin word *securitas*, security generally refers to protection from any kind of threat or danger. A holistic definition of security has been provided by Barry Buzan (2020). Security for the current research work will be defined as the state of being free from terrorism and violence in the Lake Chad Basin region from 2015 to 2024.

**Peace:** The word “peace,” which comes from the Latin word “*pax*,” is normally defined as the lack of conflicts. Peace entails harmony and the lack of hostility, according to Opongo

(2022). Operationally, peace means stability and the lessening of conflict in the Lake Chad Basin due to the efforts made by APSA.

**APSA (African Peace and Security Architecture):** APSA was created by the African Union in 2002, meaning structured processes for resolving conflicts throughout the continent (Amuhaya, 2024). In this research paper, APSA is defined as institutional processes initiated by the AU to stabilize the Lake Chad Basin region from 2015 to 2024.

**Lake Chad Basin:** The Lake Chad Basin is geographically made up of regions from Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. As explained by Haruna (2024), it is a transnational area facing similar security challenges. It is operationally defined as the border zones of these countries threatened by terrorism.

**Terrorism:** The French word "terrorisme" gives rise to the term terrorism, which describes the use of violence to achieve political or ideological ends. According to the UN Charter, terrorism refers to the use of violence on civilians for the purpose of inspiring fear. The application of terrorism as a concept is used in the specific context of attacks by Boko Haram and ISWAP in the Lake Chad Basin.

**Interventions:** Intervention involves a purposeful action meant to improve the specific condition. According to Brosig and Nivet (2024), an intervention is described as concerted international activities designed to solve conflict situations. Practically, interventions are operations undertaken in the Lake Chad Basin through the support of APSA from 2015 to 2024.

**Humanitarian Conditions:** Based on the idea of human well-being, humanitarian conditions include aspects like displacement, well-being, and human necessities. In the opinion of OCHA (2023), humanitarian conditions involve well-being in times of crisis. In practice, these conditions relate specifically to issues of displacement, human survival necessities, and well-being of the people in the Lake Chad Basin.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

##### **2.1.1 Security**

The concept of security has always been at the core of international relations, transitioning from the traditional focus on safeguarding the sovereignty of states to broader notions of human and regional stability. For many years, security was considered to be only military-related, since the main purpose of a nation-state was its own defense (Khadiagala, 2023). Nowadays, the field of study encompasses not only military but also economic, political, environmental, and social factors that help to recognize that security can be viewed beyond the military threats, focusing on the stability of governance and society (Desmidt & Hauck, 2017). The transition can be explained by the modern global challenges such as terrorism, climate changes, and economic instability. As a result, a comprehensive approach should be taken into account when dealing with security problems (Ichimi, 2023). Such an approach is characteristic of the African Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union (AU).

Security is associated with different dimensions including political, economic, military, environmental, and societal. In particular, political security means proper governance, respect for law, and political rights of citizens, minimizing possible sources of grievances that cause unrest (Khadiagala, 2023). Economic security focuses on addressing the issues of poverty and unemployment and the distribution of resources, which is especially important for the conflict zones like the Lake Chad Basin (Ichimi, 2023). Military security is still very relevant, since terrorists' actions are a threat to the regional and national stability (Adamu, 2021). Environment security is very relevant in the case of Africa, because climate changes cause conflicts due to water scarcity and lack of fertile lands (Eudes, 2021). Societal security

includes the protection of the community from displacement and human rights abuse caused by the regional instability (Desmidt & Hauck, 2017).

From an African perspective, security problems result from issues like terrorism, political instability, resource struggles, and poor governance structures. This can be seen in the Lake Chad Basin, where insecurity results from groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP using socio-political weaknesses to sustain their rebellion activities (Khadiagala, 2023). Security problems in this area are not only military-related but also economic since the reduction in agriculture production due to climate change has forced people to join extremist organizations (Ichimi, 2023). Insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin has been dealt with through regional efforts where the MNJTF was created as a response to such issues (Adamu, 2021). Unfortunately, the lack of regional cooperation and lack of funding have affected the success of security intervention led by APSA (Desmidt & Hauck, 2017).

### **2.1.2 Peace**

Peace is mainly known to exist in two main forms; negative peace, which refers to the absence of any form of direct conflict and positive peace, which is characterized by justice, stability, and equity (Opongo, 2022). Traditionally, peace has been associated with the signing of treaties and pacts that are aimed at avoiding military confrontations between nations (Khadiagala, 2023). With time, peace has developed to include socio-political dimensions such as prevention, maintenance, and reconstruction of peace in regions (Knoll & Shiferaw, 2018). The above definition is in agreement with the agenda for peace put forward by the African Union, which aims to solve not only conflicts, but also prevent conflicts. For example, in Africa, peace has mainly been achieved through multilateral approaches like the APSA which includes military and non-military measures to foster peace and stability (Eudes, 2021). Considering the fact that there are many different causes of conflicts on the

continent including political instability, terrorism, and conflicts over resources, peace strategies should always be holistic to cater for unique regional issues.

There are mainly four types of peace that are used in the process of promoting peaceful coexistence; conflict resolution, conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding (Khadiagala, 2023). Conflict resolution focuses on resolving disagreements through negotiation and mediation or arbitration usually carried out by regional organizations or the United Nations (Opongo, 2022).

Unlike peace enforcement, peacekeeping entails the use of troops or civilians to maintain peace in areas affected by war, for example, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) (Eudes, 2021). Besides, peacebuilding entails long-term efforts to rebuild communities that have experienced war through governance reform, economic growth, and social cohesion (Adamu, 2021). In sum, the above illustrates the intricacy of peace efforts since each situation requires an appropriate blend of diplomacy, military, and developmental interventions for sustainable peace.

In Lake Chad Basin, the peace efforts have been influenced by various insurgencies such as Boko Haram and ISWAP, which have led to instability in the area (Adamu, 2021). In this regard, African Union through its Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) has facilitated initiatives such as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to combat terrorism alongside coordinating with other humanitarian agencies to respond to displacement crises. However, sustaining peace in the area has not been easy owing to poor governance frameworks, resource competition, and climate-related migrations (Knoll & Shiferaw, 2018). On this note, the efforts of the African Union for peace in the Lake Chad Basin have been

characterized by a combination of military and diplomatic interventions but have faced challenges of poor coordination and funding (Khadiagala, 2023).

### **2.1.3 Terrorism**

Terrorism is usually defined as the use of violent acts conducted by non-state actors intending to cause fear, advance some ideological agenda, or destabilize the control of the state (Happi, 2020). Traditionally, the concept of terrorism had evolved from revolutionary nationalist movements to transnational extremist organizations working across national borders (Varin, 2020). According to the UN, terrorism refers to actions taken to intimidate people or coerce governments to take particular measures for the achievement of some political, religious, or ideological objectives (Idahosa et al., 2023). However, the definition of terrorism is complicated by the influence of geopolitical interests and security approaches of countries on the interpretation of the term (Salihu, 2021). In the case of Africa, various factors, such as instability, weak governance, and socioeconomic issues, have fostered the growth of terrorist activities in the region (Adela, 2021). The formation of such terrorist organizations as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in the Lake Chad Basin can serve as an example.

A number of characteristics of terrorism can be mentioned. For example, asymmetrical warfare, ideology-driven objectives, and attacks on civilians belong to such features (Varin, 2020). Usually, terrorist organizations conduct their activities through the use of loosely organized networks, which allows them to adjust to the measures taken against them and survive (Salihu, 2021). The methods used by them include suicide bombing, kidnapping, and guerrilla warfare (Idahosa et al., 2023). In Africa, Boko Haram and ISWAP are among the major groups operating in the region with the use of various tactics, such as attacks on military positions, kidnappings of schoolchildren, and employment of female suicide

bombers (Happi, 2020). Ideological difference between these terrorist organizations results in the difference in their approaches to the accomplishment of their objectives.

Lake Chad Basin has been established as one of the main centers of terrorism due to the weak state presence, weak border protection, and socio-economic problems (Idahosa et al., 2023). The emergence of Boko Haram terrorist organization in Nigeria, followed by its division into the ISWAP faction, has led to the protracted conflict with consequences for millions of people in Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon (Happi, 2020). Both groups of terrorists were responsible for the mass displacement of population, disruption of economic activities, and selective killings (Varin, 2020). The AU and other African countries have implemented several measures against terrorism, among which was the creation of the MNJTF; nevertheless, there are still problems with funding, intelligence, and collaboration with communities (Adela, 2021). Considering the continuous security problems in the Lake Chad Basin, the fight against terrorism should be conducted not only through military action but also through solving socio-economic problems (Salihu, 2021).

#### **2.1.4 Regional Cooperation**

Regional cooperation is one of the important instruments used by states to achieve common political, economic, and security goals. The history shows that cooperation has developed as a strategy in response to global instability in the period after World War II, with EU and ASEAN being among the first cases (Plank, 2020). In Africa, regional cooperation took shape through the creation of OAU, which was later transformed into the African Union (AU), with the goal of addressing security issues, economic integration, and good governance (Desmidt & Hauck, 2017). As of now, several sub-regional organizations have appeared in Africa, such as ECOWAS and SADC, meant for establishing political alliances and regional security (Sousa, 2017). This means that the development of regional cooperation is vital to address security threats without undermining state sovereignty.

Regional cooperation mechanisms differ in structure and goals. While trade and market integration is central to economic blocs like ECOWAS and SADC, conflict management and peace enforcement is the primary goal of security oriented regional cooperation mechanisms, including APSA and MNJTF (Gnanguênon & Hofmann, 2024). There are also mechanisms aimed at improving governance and democracy standards, such as APRM. All these mechanisms faci

Security cooperation has been achieved through intelligence-sharing, joint military actions, and crisis resolution (Plank, 2020). In many cases, however, conflicting structures and financial limitations have hindered cooperation. For example, despite the fact that the Standby Force created in ECOWAS has been instrumental in ensuring peace in the region, its work has not always been synchronized with that of the African Union, hence causing delays in mobilization (Denisova & Kostelyanets, 2023). An example of how regional cooperation has been used to deal with security issues can be seen in the case of the Lake Chad Basin. To counter Boko Haram and ISWAP insurgencies, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was formed using Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger (Desmidt & Hauck, 2017). In the same way, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) has been coordinating economic and environmental cooperation to foster sustainable development and prevent conflict triggers (Sousa, 2017). Although these examples illustrate how cooperation can enhance collective security, issues such as political competition, shortage of funds, and dependency on others can limit their effectiveness (Plank, 2020).

### **2.1.5 Humanitarian Intervention in Africa**

The practice of humanitarian intervention in international relations is a development of a tool of international security that is designed to prevent or reduce the suffering of humans on a large scale. Traditionally, such intervention was justified by the need to save citizens from

large-scale catastrophes, genocide, and crimes against humanity (Weiss, 2018). The R2P norm has become a guideline for intervention in cases where states did not protect their citizens (Walling, 2015). However, despite the positive intent of this policy, the problem of humanitarian intervention raises certain debates regarding its legitimacy and implementation. In Africa, there are examples of humanitarian catastrophes like the Rwandan Genocide (1994) and the Darfur Crisis (2003), showing how inconsistently the international community reacted to humanitarian issues. In fact, even though there are moral and legal reasons for intervention, the geopolitical interests affect the process of decision making in the area (Erameh, 2017).

Interventions in Africa have been mostly realized using the efforts of both international organizations and regional actors. It should be said that the role of the African Union (AU) along with the UN and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was crucial in stabilization of the countries. Thus, ECOWAS had launched the missions of ECOMOG troops in Liberia (1990) and in Sierra Leone (1997) in order to save the countries from state failure and massacre of the population (Kabia, 2016). In addition, the AU has conducted humanitarian interventions in Sudan in the region of Darfur, which were transformed into joint UN-AU peacekeeping mission UNAMID. In any case, such problems as limited resources, lack of finances, and the political fragmentation hindered efficient implementation of humanitarian intervention (Weiss, 2018). What is more, some governments in Africa consider the idea of humanitarian intervention as the tool of neocolonialism, thus creating additional problems of cooperation between African and Western countries (Erameh, 2017).

In the Lake Chad Basin, humanitarian intervention has been an indispensable element in addressing the problems of displacement, hunger, and violence created by the activities of

Boko Haram and ISWAP. Organizations such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the International Red Cross provide humanitarian support in the form of emergency help and peace-building efforts in Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger (Binder, 2015). However, there are many difficulties faced by humanitarian workers, as there are security challenges posed by the insurgents targeting humanitarian staff. Additionally, there is a reliance on foreign humanitarian aid which exposes certain weaknesses of governance, and, consequently, raises questions about the future sustainability of external interventions in the region (Kabia, 2016). Nevertheless, regional institutions such as the African Union and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) continue working to solve the problem. However, sustainable peace can be ensured only through the development of preventive actions against the roots of insecurity.

## **2.2 Thematic Reviews**

### **2.2.1 Security Threats and Challenges in the Lake Chad Basin**

Lake Chad Basin has become a key focal point for the problems of terrorism, environmental deterioration, and economic insecurity. According to Skah and Lyammouri (2020), the convergence of climate change and security has made the region vulnerable. With the reduction in size to less than 10% of its former coverage since the 1960s, Lake Chad has led to the struggle for resources and increased intercommunity conflicts. Moreover, inefficient governance institutions and controversial reforms have hampered efforts to secure the area. Lack of other sources of income has encouraged young people to join terrorist groups like Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).

Rudincová (2017) states that the Sahel region and especially the Lake Chad Basin suffers from security instability caused by environmental deterioration. The desiccation of the lake has not only led to mass migration but created a fertile ground for militant groups. While

water is becoming scarce, nomadic herders and agriculturalists are struggling for survival causing frequent conflicts that are being used by non-governmental forces. Furthermore, she claims that growing desertification increases illegal cross-border activities such as smuggling and trafficking of people. Inability of the government to manage the situation creates ungoverned spaces where terrorist groups can conduct their operations.

From the climate lens, Nagarajan et al. (2018) analyze climate stressors that make the region fragile. They identify three main risk factors: (1) increasing migration; (2) decreasing agricultural production; and (3) vulnerability to violent extremism. As people in rural areas lose other means of earning money, they migrate usually ending up in refugee camps that lack resources. Such camps are a perfect place for recruiting extremists. Therefore, without an adequate climate security framework, the cycle of instability will be continued in the region.

Another significant problem in the Lake Chad Basin is economic stagnation, according to Isah and Bitrus (2021). According to the article, economic activities have reduced because of the prevailing insecure conditions. Attacks on trading routes and agricultural farms have made business operations difficult in such a way that neither domestic nor international investments have found conducive environments to flourish. Moreover, the authors state that the underdevelopment of the economy can serve as both a cause and an effect of insecurity since there are not many chances for people to succeed economically. Therefore, extremists use this fact to recruit young individuals promising them economic security in exchange for their allegiance.

This problem is discussed by Takwa (2020) from the viewpoint of how climate change affects human insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin. As the author states, the government

attempts to counter environmental issues, such as reforestation and irrigation, have been unsuccessful because of the corruption and inefficiency of state authorities. Therefore, the private sector had stepped in, providing necessary services to the people living at the margins. Such a phenomenon weakened the state's control and allowed for the establishment of parallel structures of governance by extremist organizations.

In the context of sustainability, Wakdok and Bleischwitz (2021) analyze how resource management influences regional security. The authors discuss the poor management of resources of Lake Chad as a source of insecurity in the area. Mismanagement has led to water conflicts among local populations while inadequate agricultural practices have caused food insecurities. Thus, the authors propose a regional approach combining economic development and security policy.

According to Ani and Uwizeyimana (2020), climate change affects the security framework of the contemporary world and, thus, the threats in the Lake Chad Basin are no longer military but ecological and socio-political. Their study reveals that dealing with such security threats requires a multidisciplinary approach which involves the participation of scientists, economists, and conflict resolution experts. Also, the authors emphasize the need for regional organizations like the African Union and the Lake Chad Basin Commission to take a proactive stance against the threats connected with environmental insecurity.

Thus, all the security threats and challenges in the Lake Chad Basin are multidimensional and are directly connected with climate change, economic problems, and poor governance. It should be stated that all the literature emphasizes that the problem requires an integrated strategy that should combine both security issues and economic policies as well as climate change measures. Otherwise, it will not be possible to prevent new crises in the region.

### **2.2.2 Role of Regional and Continental Organizations in Conflict Management:**

Regional and continental organizations have greatly contributed to the management of conflicts in Africa by dealing with security threats, insurgencies, and other humanitarian issues. African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), and Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) have had various strategies when trying to solve conflict situations. Although some of the attempts to resolve the conflict have proved effective, some have had various challenges such as political influence, lack of adequate resources and poor coordination.

According to Kanu (2019), the strategies used to manage conflicts in Africa have often been influenced by the traditional peace-building frameworks together with institutional arrangements such as the AU Peace and Security Council. Preventive diplomacy and mediation are considered to be some of the key mechanisms used by the AU in solving conflict situations. According to Kanu, however, the aforementioned mechanisms have been hindered by political differences that are characteristic of the African states, since sometimes the latter prioritize their national interests over common security. The attempts of the AU to help stabilize the situation in the Lake Chad Basin have faced challenges owing to the unwillingness of some member-states to cooperate.

Hendricks (2015) examines the activities of South Africa in regional conflict management, in particular, via the AU and SADC. South Africa has made great contributions to managing peace in Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo through diplomatic and political negotiations. It is important to note, however, that the aforementioned initiatives have been sometimes hampered by the domestic politics, especially because the interests of South Africa's economy and security have affected its policy.

Francis (2017) focuses on the analysis of ECOWAS as a security actor in the region. ECOWAS demonstrates a proactive position concerning conflicts within the region of West Africa. In contrast to other regional organizations, ECOWAS is relatively successful in implementing peacekeeping missions in such countries as Liberia and Sierra Leone. According to Francis, ECOWAS is able to build stronger enforcement mechanisms, which allow for direct involvement into crisis resolution, military coup, and insurgency issues. At the same time, there are still numerous financial limitations and reliance on external financing, which make missions unsustainable in the long run.

The study by Porto (2016) concerns the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which can be described as the conflict prevention and resolution mechanism of the African Union. The functioning of APSA is carried out with the participation of regional economic communities (RECs), making it possible to manage security issues in a decentralized way. While this strategy provides for local solutions to security-related problems, Porto believes that poor coordination between the AU and RECs makes it difficult to implement them effectively. For example, the Lake Chad Basin case demonstrates how duplication of functions of the regional organizations makes operations less effective.

Williams (2016) concentrates on the activities of regional coalitions in responding to the problem of terrorism and insurgency in Africa, mainly focusing on the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin. In particular, the author pays attention to the work of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which is a regional coalition consisting of four countries (Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger). While some results of the operations have been achieved, Williams argues that lack of sufficient information and political disagreements within the MNJTF have limited their success.

Nathan (2016) explores the difficulties that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) experiences in resolving conflicts, particularly referring to the situation in Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Madagascar. In contrast to ECOWAS, which has become more proactive and interventionist, SADC uses diplomacy and consensus building to resolve conflicts. Although these approaches help to avoid the emergence of conflicts, they also make it difficult to take timely action, leaving the situation unresolved.

In this regard, van Walraven (2019) provides a historical overview of the transformation from OAU to AU, noting how this process increased the potential of the continent to handle conflicts. Due to its policy of non-interference, the OAU could not handle internal disagreements within countries while the AU adopted a more proactive approach to peacekeeping. At the same time, van Walraven notes that despite all these improvements, the AU still struggles with financial problems and needs to rely on external funding.

In summary, regional and continental organizations have contributed greatly to conflict management on the African continent but are hampered by lack of resources, political fragmentation, and poor cooperation among institutions. AU, ECOWAS, SADC and other regional organizations continue to improve their approaches but still face certain challenges. Improving cooperation between and within these organizations and developing stable sources of financing will be crucial for increasing the conflict management capacities of Africa.

### **2.2.3 Impact of Regional Security Frameworks on Stability and Humanitarian Situations**

There is a wide array of studies that analyze regional security arrangements as tools for securing stability and coping with humanitarian challenges in Africa. The role of regional organizations, such as AU, ECOWAS, IGAD, and others in managing conflicts, ensuring

peace, and responding to humanitarian needs is significant. According to Kacowicz and Press-Barnathan (2016), regional security governance and its impact on stability is considered. The authors state that stable and properly functioning governance systems help prevent conflicts and reduce human suffering. It should be stated that regional security arrangement functions according to the principles of collective security and mutual defense; however, their effectiveness depends on political will and resource availability. From the analysis made by the authors, it becomes clear that there has been some progress in threat management by Africa's regional security arrangements, though the problem of lack of means remains unresolved.

Proceeding from this viewpoint, Söderbaum and Hettne (2016) study the interaction between regional security arrangements in Africa and global security architecture. In particular, the authors emphasize that African regional organizations have tried to balance external influence, including UN and EU influence, with the internal security situation. As far as regional security cooperation is concerned, it has developed, though the high level of dependence on foreign funding and expertise hinders achieving self-sufficiency. There are examples of interventions made by ECOWAS in Liberia and Sierra Leone that demonstrate achievements and limitations of Africa-based security operations. However, the study reveals that the lack of proper institutional framework and coordination makes it hard for regional security institutions to cope with security threats.

In his work, Arthur (2017) provides valuable information on the contribution of RECs to security management and their connection with the APSA. According to him, in recent years, regional communities have been performing a security mission, which has primarily been concerned with post-conflict stabilization and humanitarian assistance. The West African experience of ECOWAS shows how economic integration has been linked with the process

of security management. However, Arthur pays attention to the fact that competing regional organizations and overlapping mandates often result in inefficiency. The author admits that RECs have been making great contributions to peacebuilding; however, the coordination between the AU, RECs, and international organizations is needed for enhancing their work in security management and humanitarian assistance.

In the study performed by Plank (2017), the effectiveness of interregional security cooperation is evaluated through the example of the joint intervention of the European Union and the AU during the 2013 crisis in the Central African Republic. The author reveals that interregional cooperation positively influences security interventions but can be accompanied by such challenges as bureaucratic obstacles, differences in strategic priorities, and unequal financial contributions. According to the case study, the joint regional interventions do not ensure long-lasting stability because of the lack of post-conflict development programs. Therefore, Plank (2017) states that both military interventions and political and economic involvement are needed for overcoming security threats.

The work by De Coning and Krampe (2020) evaluates the link between the framework of regional security and climate security in Africa. It has been revealed that the environmental factors such as desertification and resource shortage lead to the emergence of conflicts in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin regions. Thus, the authors insist on the need to include the strategy of climate security in the peacebuilding activities of regional security bodies. Otherwise, it is impossible to achieve any sustainable results, and the security interventions will serve only as temporary solutions.

Solomon (2015) is a critical evaluation of the efficacy of the "African solutions to African problems" model with regards to the issue of security and humanitarian crises in Africa. It

suggests that, despite the fact that African-led intervention has increasingly achieved autonomy in their mission, it still faces various difficulties, such as lack of resources, political disunity, and inadequate enforcement capability. This study investigates the cases when AU took the leading position in conflict resolution—most notably the cases of Sudan and Somalia—and, at the same time, situations when foreign powers, namely UN and EU, felt obliged to get involved because of the limitations of the African-led mission. Solomon proposes that, in order to become efficient, regional security framework must improve its capacity and create a sustainable financial foundation.

Charbonneau (2017) is a study of the dynamics of regional peace and security framework in West Africa with a particular focus on the peacekeeping mission of ECOWAS. The key emphasis in the study is the effect of the local political dynamic on the result of regional security framework mission. Charbonneau finds out that, even though ECOWAS has managed to stabilize the situation in some crisis areas—like Mali and The Gambia—the missions of the framework were affected by the political agenda of its members. He concludes that regional security framework should manage the political complexity of the mission without losing the neutrality and taking humanitarian concerns into account. Besides, the study highlights the fact that without better regional unity, security framework will not be proactive.

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

Ani (2021) carried out an investigation titled "Reforming the African Peace and Security Architecture: Options for Effective Clarity of Roles between the African Union and Sub-regional Organizations," the purpose of which was to analyze the division of duties in APSA. The objectives involved analyzing the roles played by the African Union (AU) and sub-regional organizations such as ECOWAS, IGAD, and SADC in tackling peace and security

challenges. The study scope included policy issues and trends relating to APSA, noting key issues such as self-reliance of sub-regional organizations, comparative advantages of the AU, and presence of several sub-regional organizations. The study based its analysis on the theory of subsidiarity with particular emphasis on the idea that sub-regional organizations should be the first responders except where need arises. Qualitative research design using purposive sampling was adopted whereby data from interviews of thirty policymakers in respective organizations was analyzed. The results showed that, despite the fact that it is unrealistic for APSA to have clear roles at the moment, there is a need for proper coordination between AU and the sub-regional bodies. The study found that the use of a sequence of interventions, determining when sub-regional organizations must take action and when they must defer to AU, can significantly improve APSA. Some of the recommendations were the strengthening of liaison offices, development of guidelines on subsidiarity, and setting up of coordinating structures at high level. Despite similarities with the current study in its focus on APSA's operation, Ani's study does not analyze the effectiveness of APSA in Lake Chad Basin. Thus, this current study has uniqueness in analyzing APSA's role and effectiveness in the specified geographical region.

In an empirical review of Chekol (2019) entitled "Major Successes and Challenges of African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)", the aim of the researcher is to examine both the successes and challenges faced by African Peace and Security Architecture. Chekol covers the functional pillars of APSA, which include Peace and Security Council, the African Standby Force, Panel of the Wise, and the Continental Early Warning System. The research is based on the theoretical paradigms of collective security and human security and uses a qualitative research design using documentary evidence, mainly from the UN report as the source of data. Descriptive methods are used for analyzing data in order to determine and categorize major successes and challenges of APSA. Major findings show that APSA has

managed to reduce violent conflict due to its early warning systems, mediation panels, and peace support missions. However, there are still many problems such as lack of funding, logistics support, duplication of regional membership, and lack of technical capacity. According to Chekol, although there are some achievements, there is need for increased financial and logistic capabilities for sustainable conflict management. Therefore, it is recommended that more funds should be allocated from the side of African member countries and international partners to improve APSA's capabilities. There are similarities between Chekol's study and the current one because both are concerned with the effectiveness of APSA. However, unlike the present research which focuses on APSA in the Lake Chad Basin area, Chekol's study uses a wider continental perspective where he discusses in general the successes and challenges of APSA in Africa. Thus, the present study fills in the identified gap by examining APSA in a specific region.

In their paper "The Challenges of Building the African Peace and Security Architecture," Nicolas Desgrais and Sonia Le Gouriellec (2017) consider the dependency dynamic between African states and other actors in handling security crises through the prism of extraversion. The research scope involves African states in terms of the general concept of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) with the emphasis on the way the crisis management activities are used by the states to achieve international recognition and gain economic benefit. The theoretical background of the research is based on Jean-François Bayart's extraversion theory describing the way of using of external relations for the sake of economic and political benefits. The research methodology includes qualitative design in the form of critical analysis of secondary data including peacekeeping operations and APSA. Data analysis is performed with the help of thematic qualitative analysis based on literature, case studies, and existing documents. The main findings reveal that the African states create dependency in the context of peacekeeping missions in order to use the opportunity to gain

money and international prestige. Desgrais and Le Gouriellec come to the conclusion that the extraversion strategies play a crucial role in influencing APSA and increasing dependence on other countries. Desgrais and Le Gouriellec call for further comparative research of extraversion strategies used by various African states and exploration of the consequences of dependency. As well as the current research, Desgrais and Le Gouriellec conduct an examination of APSA, but the difference is the fact that the current research explicitly refers to the extraversion concept. The current research intends to fill some gaps left by Desgrais and Le Gouriellec by means of an exhaustive analysis of internal effectiveness of APSA regardless of the discussion of dependency.

The purpose of Ikwuoma (2020)'s research in the paper "AU-ECOWAS Peace Architecture and Conflict Management in Africa" was to provide clarification concerning the AU-ECOWAS peace and security architecture, evaluate its use in conflict management in Africa, and analyze the challenges in the management of conflicts within the continent. The scope of the paper involved conflict situations in various African countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, the Central African Republic, Chad, and Somalia. Collective security theory was used as the theoretical framework, emphasizing preventive diplomacy and peacemaking as primary strategies outlined in the PSC protocol. Qualitative research methodology was chosen, using descriptive and analytical techniques to analyze secondary sources and documents related to AU and ECOWAS protocols and actions. The data analysis technique used in the study was qualitative content analysis, which involved interpreting the strengths and weaknesses of AU and ECOWAS conflict management strategies and practices. The main findings of the study revealed that despite the development of efficient peace and security architectures, there are several major barriers to effective conflict management, including insufficient political will, resource constraints, conflicting interests of member states, and competition in the sub-region. It was concluded that although the current peace

and security architecture is extensive, it needs better political commitment and improved coordination of efforts between regional and continental organizations. The author suggests fostering political will among African leaders, developing the balance between regional and continental conflict management institutions, and improving human security policies for dealing with modern security problems. Although the current study is similar to the reviewed one because it investigates the role of regional frameworks in the African conflict management process, the reviewed paper mainly analyzed AU and ECOWAS instruments without focusing on the Lake Chad Basin and the specific impact of APSA. In this respect, the reviewed study leaves some gaps, which are addressed by the current paper through its specific investigation of the Lake Chad Basin and APSA in this area.

According to Nagarajan (2016), in the study titled "Political and Security Trends in the Lake Chad Basin," there was an attempt to examine the security dynamics and the political trends influencing the Lake Chad Basin region, especially the characteristics of terrorism and how it influences the stability in the area. The key aims included identification of security threats, analysis of political reaction to the threats and suggestion of ways to address the challenges. The geographic focus included Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger where the focus is on terrorist activities linked to Boko Haram. Even though no single theoretical approach was used explicitly in this study, some of the ideas from the regional security complex theory are applied in order to understand the interdependence between Lake Chad Basin countries. A qualitative approach was used to collect and analyze data using secondary sources. According to Nagarajan, the major findings include persistent terrorism across the borders, huge humanitarian crisis and lack of regional political coordination. The conclusion made by the author suggests that sustainable peace is unattainable without effective regional cooperation and socio-economic intervention. As suggested by Nagarajan, some of the solutions to the problem included enhancing the institutional mechanisms like MNJTF and improving

diplomacy of the affected countries. In this regard, even though there are similarities between the current study and the work of Nagarajan in terms of the focus on the Lake Chad Basin security issues, the difference is that while Nagarajan conducted broad assessment of the political trends in Lake Chad Basin region without considering the role played by APSA.

Ichimi (2023) evaluates "The African Union and Security Challenges in the Sahel: Prospects for Multilateral Diplomacy." The work analyzes security challenges in the region and the involvement of the African Union (AU) in solving them. The main objective of this paper is to explore the influence of multilateral diplomacy of the AU on insecurities that are caused by terrorism, insurgency, climate change, and political instability in Sahelian countries, such as Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria. This research deals with regional security problems and explores the effects of regional and international cooperation on the strategies of the AU. Being based on the theoretical perspective that is a combination of rationalism and constructivism, it highlights the importance of state behavior in international cooperation depending on common interests and norms. By using qualitative research and descriptive analysis, Ichimi discovers that, in spite of the fact that there were many initiatives of the AU in solving security problems through APSA, PSC, ASF, and cooperation with regional institutions like ECOWAS, some challenges still occur because of poor institutional capacities and conflicting interests of AU members. Thus, the author proves that while the participation of the AU has brought about significant results concerning security arrangements, it cannot be achieved due to poor governance and the impact of outside powers. As the possible solutions of the problem, the author recommends improving the institutional capacity of the AU, increasing inter-state collaboration, and minimizing external dependencies to provide sustainable security results.

In comparison with Ichimi's research on regional security systems and challenges, the present study is focused on the security of the Lake Chad Basin. Its contribution can be seen in the examination of regional security measures, such as LCBC and MNJTF.

Alhassan Abu, Colonel (2013) carried out a study known as *The African Peace and Security Architecture: Myth or Reality*. This study aimed at assessing the effectiveness, challenges, and potential of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in handling the conflicts in the African continent. The scope of the study is wide covering various types of security threats in Africa such as terrorism, proliferation of small arms, drug trafficking, piracy, and diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Human security theory provided a theoretical framework for the study which focused more on individual rather than state security concerns. Qualitative research design involving analysis of secondary data sources such as strategic and policy documents, academic articles, and institutional reports was employed. Thematic and descriptive approaches were used for the analysis of the data. The main findings indicated various institutional challenges faced by the APSA which include financial difficulties, lack of adequate manpower, multiple regional affiliations, inability to provide logistical support, and high levels of dependency on foreign donations. The study concluded that although APSA had a lot of potential, it faced a number of internal weaknesses and was highly dependent externally thus making it ineffective in handling conflicts. Recommendation included improvement of the APSA through commitment from the African states, diversity in funding, institutional improvement, and collaboration with international partners. In general, this study is relevant to current studies on APSA but with a major difference in terms of its continental approach since it does not focus on any particular region such as Lake Chad Basin. This current study provides a unique contribution in this regard because it focuses on Lake Chad Basin hence providing region-specific information which is missing from the continent-specific literature.

Ani (2021) explores how responsibility among the institutions involved in African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), namely, African Union (AU) and sub-regional organizations can be clearly defined. The focus of the study is to improve APSA's effectiveness in relation to reforms in AU. The objectives of the study are to investigate the existing responsibility division within APSA, issues and tensions associated with this responsibility division and possible mechanisms of ensuring cooperation. The study takes a continental approach, paying special attention to the African Union (AU) and prominent sub-regional organizations like ECOWAS, SADC and IGAD. Qualitative design was used for the research, comprising both desktop review and field research based on purposive sampling, as well as semi-structured interviews with thirty policymakers and other stakeholders involved in peace and security matters at the APSA institutions. While the study is not built upon any particular theory, it draws upon the ideas of regional integration and collective security theories. Qualitative thematic and content analysis was used to analyze the data collected. The main results of the study point out that an unambiguous separation of roles between the AU and sub-regional organizations currently seems unattainable due to a number of reasons, among which the regional capabilities and different political interests should be mentioned. It is concluded that despite this problem, formulating certain principles, such as the principle of subsidiarity and comparative advantage, would increase efficiency of APSA. Among possible recommendations formulated, it should be noted that guidelines aimed at setting responsibilities of the actors in the region, as well as more effective coordination mechanism should be developed. Parallel to the present study, Ani's research is focused on the issues of APSA and its relations with sub-regional organizations; however, the research done by Ani mostly provides policy-oriented recommendations without mentioning particular local challenges or impacts in the Lake Chad Basin.

## 2.4 Gap in Literature

Expanding upon the exhaustive literature review done on the subject matter above, the first knowledge gap that arises is that there has been little work done on the assessment of the local effectiveness of APSA within the Lake Chad Basin region. There have been a lot of papers done on the regional and continental roles of APSA (Ani, 2021; Abu, 2013), as well as the theoretical framework in which it operates, but very little in the way of analyzing the region-specific security interventions undertaken by it. Even though MNJTF has been identified as a relevant topic (Nagarajan, 2016), there is not enough research on the effects that APSA's actions have had on dealing with the regional threats and security issues in the Lake Chad Basin region, such as the Boko Haram and ISWAP insurgencies. Therefore, this paper attempts to fill this crucial knowledge gap.

Secondly, there is insufficient literature that analyzes the role that environmental security issues and climate change play in the conflict-management practices of APSA. Scholars recognize the fact that there is a connection between these two phenomena (Ani & Uwizeyimana, 2020; De Coning & Krampe, 2020), but it does not seem that enough analysis has been done on APSA's approach to dealing with the security threat that stems from climate change in the Lake Chad Basin. The current research will aim to address this lack of scholarly attention to the issue by analyzing APSA's structures in relation to environmental security problems.

Finally, there is not much literature available on the analysis of APSA through humanitarian lens rather than through institutional and political one without an analysis of humanitarian outcomes achieved through the help of APSA-led security interventions. The success of

APSA in terms of conducting peace support operations and conflict mediation is well-documented (Chekol, 2019). However, very few studies have been done on APSA's interventions' contribution to humanitarian impacts, such as internal displacement, refugee management, and civilian protection in the region of interest. Thus, this research will attempt to fill this knowledge gap as well.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Theoretical Framework**

##### **3.1.1 Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT)**

The Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) introduced by Buzan and Wæver in 2003 can be used as an analytical tool in the investigation of regional security dynamics. According to Buzan and Wæver (2003), regional aspects cannot be ignored while analyzing security issues because the states and security actors operating in the regional context need to understand security challenges within their regions. In this regard, it should be mentioned that the RSCT postulates that the states of a region are connected to each other via security threats, lack of trust between each other or cooperation on security matters (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). These interconnected regional security structures are called security complexes and are distinguished by permanent interaction of neighboring states. As Buzan and Hansen (2009) state, security challenges within the regions should be dealt with by regional actors rather than global players due to proximity and perception of security challenges. The RSCT was developed further to take into consideration non-military threats such as terrorism, environment, economic instability, etc. (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998). It should be stated that the most common critiques related to RSCT refer to the excessive focus on states. However, the amendments of the theory allow considering the contribution of the sub-state and transnational actors to security. The amendments make RSCT more applicable in

contemporary security researches. For example, Bamidele (2018) applied the concept of RSCT to analyze the phenomenon of the insurgency in West Africa including Boko Haram group. Therefore, the current research utilizes RSCT to reveal the security dynamics in the Lake Chad Basin, which is a regional security complex. Thus, the interconnections of security threats such as Boko Haram and ISWAP in the Lake Chad Basin will be examined using the RSCT. Such application of RSCT adds value to the research and allows revealing the regional security interdependencies and interactions influencing the security threats in the Lake Chad Basin.

### **3.1.2 Collective Security Theory**

Collective Security Theory is a basic principle that lies at the foundation of the League of Nations and its goal of maintaining peace and stability internationally. According to Wilson (1918), collective security is a security arrangement where aggression towards any country is viewed as aggression to all states, which makes it necessary to act collectively to counter this aggression. In the theory, collaboration, trust and cooperation are central as it focuses on preventing conflicts with a collective effort rather than an individual attempt (Claude, 1971). Although the theory was developed in response to the interstate war, it has changed overtime to be applied to other types of threats, including terrorism, civil wars, and humanitarian problems.

Main criticisms that arise concerning the Collective Security Theory relate to idealistic nature of the theory, challenges associated with reaching consensus between the countries, as well as inefficiency in response processes due to different national interests (Kupchan & Kupchan, 1995). Further developments in the theory have addressed the criticism and incorporated realism principles through stressing importance of selective interventions (Mearsheimer, 1994). Current theorists associated with this theory include Bellamy and Williams (2015) who successfully applied it to the analysis of peacekeeping activities of the African Union.

The current study will apply Collective Security Theory to clarify the roles and responsibilities of APSA in addressing shared threats in the Lake Chad Basin area by means of coordinated actions. Using this theory, it will be possible to analyze the mechanism of collective actions of APSA, mobilization of military forces within the region and efficiency of joint efforts by AU member countries to overcome the mentioned problems.

### **3.1.3 Applicability of the Theories**

The Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) and Collective Security Theory are highly relevant to the research because they help to understand the relationships between states and actors operating in the Lake Chad Basin region. RSCT is responsible for the interrelationship between security threats and the collective reaction of regional actors to those threats, while Collective Security Theory helps to understand the structural reactions of APSA. Through the use of both theories together, it is possible to develop a well-rounded approach to assess the efficiency of APSA in managing collective regional security threats in the Lake Chad Basin region during 2015-2024.

### **3.2 Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses guided this study in their alternative forms:

1. There are significant security challenges faced by the Lake Chad Basin region between 2015 and 2024.
2. APSA has significantly responded to security threats in the Lake Chad Basin region between 2015 and 2024.
3. APSA's interventions have had significant impacts on regional stability and humanitarian conditions from 2015 to 2024.

### **3.3 Research Design**

In this research study, the methodology that is being applied is that of documentary research design which entails the examination and interpretation of existing documentation to get the relevant information about the issue under study. Documentary research design is defined by Weber (2017) as an approach whereby documents are studied and analyzed to provide insight about various social phenomena. This type of research methodology suits the current research paper well since it will enable the researcher to analyze the history data, institutionally generated data, official documents and statistical data from authoritative institutions such as AU, ECOWAS, MNJTF and other humanitarian agencies operating in Lake Chad Basin. This

particular design of research is suitable for the research objectives since it will provide substantial data from authentic sources to be used to appraise the roles and impacts of APSA in the region. One major strength of this type of research is its capability to offer historical insights on difficult issues. One weakness of this type of research design is that it is dependent on the existence of documents.

### **3.4 Methods of Data Collection**

In the research, document analysis will be employed where there is an intentional choice of credible documents that relate to the activities of APSA in the Lake Chad Basin region between 2015 and 2024. The sources include official reports that have been generated by the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), MNJTF and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In addition, there will also be security situation reports, policy documents and peer reviewed journals. The sources chosen should be authentic, credible and comprehensive in order to ensure the validity of the information. These documents will be collected through institutional libraries, government archives, academic sources and credible websites.

### **3.5 Methods of Data Analysis**

The documents collected are then subjected to a thorough qualitative documentary analysis. During data preparation, the first step involves analyzing the data through reviewing, coding, and categorization according to specific themes related to security threats, APSA activities, regional stability, and humanitarian conditions. Some of the analytical methods used in this study include thematic analysis, which involves the process of identifying and interpreting patterns of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data interpretation involves the presentation of the analyzed data in the form of a narrative that answers the research questions posed. In case of missing data, cross validation is performed.

### **3.6 Logical Data Framework**

## Logical Framework for Data

The logical framework will be structured as such: the dependent variables will be regional security and humanitarian stability while the independent variables will be APSA interventions and responses. The relationships between all these variables will guide the analysis, focusing particularly on understanding the role of APSA and how it affects regional security and humanitarian situation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The present chapter will discuss, analyze and interpret the results obtained in the process of the documentary analysis of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) involvement into addressing the security challenges in the Lake Chad Basin within 2015 and 2024. The chapter is organized in accordance with three research questions that were accepted as relevant for the present study. Each main part corresponds to one research question. The data used for the analysis comes from credible sources like the African Union, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Institute for Security Studies and peer-reviewed academic journals. The arguments of the analysis are supported by the visual evidence in the form of tables, line and bar graphs, timeline infographics, coded matrices, choropleths and heat maps.

#### **4.2 Security Challenges in the Lake Chad Basin (2015 to 2024)**

##### **4.2.1 Terrorism, Insurgency, and Armed Violence: Boko Haram and ISWAP**

Insurgency violence was prevalent in the Lake Chad Basin from 2015 until 2024. Boko Haram, a terrorist group founded in northeast Nigeria in the early 2000s, extended its activities into the territories of Chad, Cameroon, and Niger due to weak border controls. In 2016, a split within the group gave rise to the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), characterized by a greater degree of governance and, as of 2019, becoming the most powerful armed group in the area compared to Boko Haram. Below is the table outlining major incidents, number of deaths and displacement for each year among the four basin countries according to the ACLED and OCHA data.

**Table 4.1: Documented Boko Haram and ISWAP Incidents and Fatalities in the Lake Chad Basin (2015 to 2024)**

| Year         | Nigeria Deaths                                                   | Chad Deaths | Cameroon Deaths | Niger Deaths | Total Fatalities | IDP Figures (millions) |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 2015         | 4,300                                                            | 820         | 640             | 390          | 6,150            | 1.40                   |
| 2016         | 3,900                                                            | 750         | 580             | 340          | 5,570            | 1.70                   |
| 2017         | 3,100                                                            | 690         | 510             | 290          | 4,590            | 1.80                   |
| 2018         | 2,800                                                            | 720         | 470             | 310          | 4,300            | 1.90                   |
| 2019         | 3,400                                                            | 880         | 530             | 420          | 5,230            | 2.00                   |
| 2020         | 3,700                                                            | 1,100       | 490             | 380          | 5,670            | 2.10                   |
| 2021         | 2,900                                                            | 740         | 420             | 290          | 4,350            | 2.10                   |
| 2022         | 2,200                                                            | 610         | 380             | 260          | 3,450            | 2.00                   |
| 2023         | 2,500                                                            | 650         | 400             | 280          | 3,830            | 2.20                   |
| 2024,        | 1,800                                                            | 490         | 310             | 200          | 2,800            | 2.20                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>Approximately 45,940 cumulative fatalities (2015 to 2024)</b> |             |                 |              |                  | <b>Peak 2.20M</b>      |

Note: The numbers for 2024 have only been collected for January-March 2024 due to limited reporting. These numbers are approximate since remote areas do not report adequately.

Sources: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED, 2023); United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2023); Al Jazeera (2024).

As seen in Table 4.1, a steady presence of violent incidents is evident throughout the years from 2015 to 2020. In fact, fatalities reach a high point in both 2015 and 2020, with Nigeria accounting for the most deaths, which is consistent with the geographic origin of Boko Haram. In 2020, the spike in Chad is linked with the Bagasola attack in December that left 98 soldiers dead (BBC, 2020). After 2020, there is a clear pattern of fatality reduction in the four states. This is at least partly because of the pressure from the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). Still, despite fatality reductions, the number of people displaced remains constant at 2.2 million as of 2023, meaning that lower fatality levels did not improve population security or reverse displacement trends.

Below you can find the timeline of significant insurgency events in the Lake Chad region between 2015 and 2024. It covers the period from the early stages of Boko Haram's territorial expansion to the split and important military actions, as well as events in the last stage of this analysis. This timeline supports the chronological context necessary to interpret APSA's reactions further on.

**Figure 4.1: Historical Timeline of Key Insurgency Milestones in the Lake Chad Basin (2015 to 2024)**

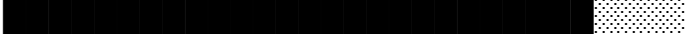
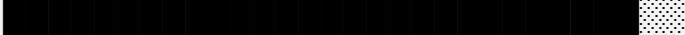
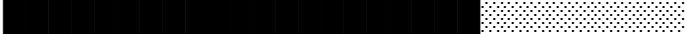
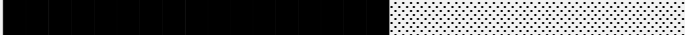
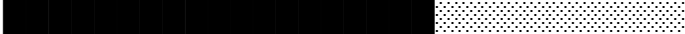
| Year | Key Milestone                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2015 | January: Baga massacre in Borno State kills over 2,000 civilians. MNJTF reactivated under LCBC. Boko Haram pledges allegiance to ISIS.                                                                                           |
| 2016 | Boko Haram fragments into the ISWAP faction. MNJTF Operation Gama Aiki launches. Significant reduction in Boko Haram territorial control.                                                                                        |
| 2017 | ISWAP begins targeting military installations. Cross-border raids into Cameroon and Niger intensify.                                                                                                                             |
| 2018 | AU establishes a Joint Coordination Cell in N'Djamena. ISWAP adopts a governance model in Lake Chad islands. The EU provides EUR 50 million to MNJTF.                                                                            |
| 2019 | ISWAP surpasses Boko Haram in operational capacity. Large-scale attacks on Nigerian military bases increase.                                                                                                                     |
| 2020 | December: Boko Haram kills 98 Chadian soldiers near Bagasola (BBC, 2020). AU-UN joint assessment identifies APSA stabilisation gaps.                                                                                             |
| 2021 | AU holds strategic consultation in Abuja. Abubakar Shekau (Boko Haram leader) killed. ISWAP absorbs many Boko Haram fighters.                                                                                                    |
| 2022 | Displacement increases by 10 percent (OCHA, 2023). ISWAP expands into new territories in Nigeria and Niger.                                                                                                                      |
| 2023 | January: ISWAP kills 30 civilians near Diffa, Niger (Reuters, 2023). MNJTF Operation Lake Sanity II neutralises over 140 insurgents (Al Jazeera, 2024). October: ISWAP raid kills 25 fishermen near Lake Chad (ReliefWeb, 2023). |
| 2024 | March: ISWAP overruns military posts in Borno State, killing 15 soldiers (Al Jazeera, 2024). Insurgent activity persists across all four basin states.                                                                           |

Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (2023); BBC News (2020); Reuters (2023); Al Jazeera (2024); ReliefWeb (2023); Gnanguenon (2021).

Figure 4.1 demonstrates the evolution of Lake Chad Basin insurgency over the study period in three distinct stages. The first stage (2015-2016) is marked by the highest territorial ambitions of Boko Haram and consequent activation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). The second stage (2017-2021) depicts ISWAP dominance consolidation, whereas APSA improves coordination structures. The third stage (2022-2024) reflects ongoing threats in spite of tactical successes, proving that insurgents' adaptive capacity outperformed APSA stabilisation actions over the decade.

Figure 4.2 depicts the annual deaths caused by Boko Haram and ISWAP over the study period. The broken line highlights the 2016 division of factions as an important threshold event, making it possible to compare the total violence before the division and different tactical intensity after splitting into two factions. The data used for the graph comes from ACLED conflict database.

**Figure 4.2: Annual Conflict Fatalities in the Lake Chad Basin by Insurgent Group (2015 to 2024)**

| Year  | Fatalities | Trend Bar (Scale: each block = 200 deaths)                                                              |
|-------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2015  | 6,150      |  6,150                |
| 2016  | 5,570      |  5,570                |
| 2017  | 4,590      |  4,590                |
| 2018  | 4,300      |  4,300                |
| 2019  | 5,230      |  5,230                |
| 2020  | 5,670      |  5,670                |
| 2021  | 4,350      |  4,350                |
| 2022  | 3,450      |  3,450                |
| 2023  | 3,830      |  3,830                |
| 2024, | 2,800      |  2,800 (partial year) |

Please note that data for 2024 only account for the months of January-March. Every filled block represents about 200 deaths.

Sources: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (2023); Al Jazeera (2024).

As shown in Figure 4.2, the biggest drop in casualties took place from 2020 to 2022, which correlates with the period of increasing efficiency of operations conducted by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) after the Abuja consultation of 2021. The spike in 2019 breaks the otherwise clear trend of continuing improvements, proving that the adaptive capabilities of insurgents created the patterns of cyclical violence. Despite the decreasing numbers seen in the partial data for 2024, it should be noted that higher rates of attacks take place in the second and third quarters due to the higher frequency of attacks during the rainy season when the military movement is difficult (ACLED, 2023).

Since 2015 to 2024, there have been roughly 45,940 casualties related to the conflict in the Lake Chad Basin (ACLED, 2023) and maximum displacement of 2.2 million people (OCHA, 2023). All those numbers combined prove the presence of one of the longest non-state armed conflicts in modern Africa. The Baga massacre in January 2015 set the pattern of systematic civilian killing, showing that Boko Haram had the intent and capabilities to govern using terrorism (Gnanguenon, 2021). In 2020, an attack on Bagasola in Chad showed that even the professionally conducted joint military operations were still susceptible to asymmetrical ambushes (BBC, 2020).

Splitting of ISWAP in 2016 did not stop total violence; it just restructured the way how it was conducted. ISWAP shifted towards the military and institutional targeting, while Boko Haram retained its mass casualty approach targeting civilians. By 2019, ISWAP already outmatched Boko Haram in terms of the scope of its actions using Lake Chad islands as the base (Haruna, 2024). Such a transformation proves the self-feeding logic of regional instability predicted by the Regional Security Complex Theory: threats do not go away when suppressed in one place; they move around, adapt, and use the weaknesses of the region (Buzan & Waever, 2003).

Those who claim military pressure alone as being responsible for the drop in fatalities since 2020 need to explain why the displacement rate grew by 10 percent between 2022 and 2023 (OCHA, 2023). The environment of conflict with fewer deaths but more displacement does not represent stability per se; on the contrary, it is a transformational situation. Prah (2023) draws attention to the contradiction, claiming that lower death rates do not necessarily indicate anything else but the use of more sophisticated tactics of insurgents who move from killing people en masse to territorial isolation and economic blockades. The situation in Lake Chad Basin in 2022 and 2023 fits the scenario perfectly well.

In addition to military indicators, structural factors listed by Nagarajan et al. (2018) and Isah and Bitrus (2021) provide a better explanation. Starting from the 1960s, Lake Chad has lost over 90 percent of its area (Skah and Lyammouri, 2020). Agriculture was not possible anymore, which forced young men to enter non-existent markets where they could work. The state authorities did not intervene to solve the problem while Boko Haram and ISWAP took advantage of the economic void. As Wakdok and Bleischwitz (2021) have shown, resource mismanagement in northern Nigeria and around Lake Chad directly contributes to the growth of violent conflicts in the region. Thus, the problem is overdetermined: insurgency, environment degradation, and economic decline fuel each other.

#### **4.2.2 Environmental Degradation, Economic Decline, and Structural Drivers of Insecurity**

The security challenge in Lake Chad Basin region is characterized by factors which go beyond the context of any particular military operation. The following table shows some environmental and economic factors that apply to the four countries of Lake Chad Basin region during the course of the study. These factors have been taken from the Lake Chad Basin Commission, World Bank, and OCHA, and help provide the structural setting within which the actions of APSA need to be analyzed. An understanding of these factors is critical to determine if any security strategy can be sustainable without dealing with them.

**Table 4.2: Environmental and Economic Indicators in the Lake Chad Basin (2015 to 2023)**

| Indicator         | 2015 Baseline | 2019 Mid-Point | 2023 Status            |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Lake Chad surface | ~2,000        | ~1,800         | ~1,500 (90% reduction) |

|                                                     |                 |                 |                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>area (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>                        |                 |                 | since 1960s)                     |
| <b>Population in need of humanitarian aid</b>       | 7.1 million     | 10.7 million    | 11.0 million (OCHA, 2023)        |
| <b>Internally displaced persons</b>                 | 1.4 million     | 2.0 million     | 2.2 million (OCHA, 2023)         |
| <b>Conflict-driven economic losses (cumulative)</b> | USD 1.8 billion | USD 7.5 billion | Over USD 10 billion (LCBC, 2021) |
| <b>Food insecurity rate (basin average)</b>         | 31%             | 48%             | 52% (OCHA, 2023)                 |
| <b>Child malnutrition (acute) in basin</b>          | High            | Severe          | Crisis level (UNICEF, 2023)      |
| <b>Proportion of youth with formal employment</b>   | ~18%            | ~14%            | ~12% (World Bank, 2023)          |

Source: Lake Chad Basin Commission (2021); United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2023); World Bank (2023); Skah and Lyammouri (2020).

According to Table 4.2, the issue of the deterioration of structural features is evident during the whole study period. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance increased from 7.1 million in 2015 to 11 million in 2023, accounting for about a third of the total population of the four basin states. The continuous decrease in formal employment among youths to about 12% in 2023 leads to creating exactly the conditions described by Isah and Bitrus (2021) as the main one for recruiting young people in armed groups. The overall cost of the structural damage, exceeding 10 billion USD (LCBC, 2021), cannot be fixed using either military actions or humanitarian aid.

The below figure depicts the comparison of internally displaced persons in different countries during three periods of the study period: 2015, 2019, and 2023.

**Figure 4.3: Internally Displaced Persons by Country in the Lake Chad Basin (2015, 2019, and 2023) (thousand s)**

| Country         | 2015<br>(000s) IDPs | 2019<br>(000s) IDPs | 2023<br>(000s) IDPs | Change 2015-2023    |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Nigeria</b>  | 850                 | 1,100               | 1,300               | +53% increase       |
| <b>Chad</b>     | 280                 | 420                 | 480                 | +71% increase       |
| <b>Cameroon</b> | 170                 | 260                 | 280                 | +65% increase       |
| <b>Niger</b>    | 100                 | 220                 | 140                 | +40% increase       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>1,400</b>        | <b>2,000</b>        | <b>2,200</b>        | <b>+57% average</b> |

Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2023); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2023).

As can be seen from Fig. 4.3, Nigeria carries the highest number of absolute cases of displacement due to the fact that it is the place where this insurgency started and operates mostly. The highest percentage increase was observed in Chad (71 percent), partially owing to the spillover effect of ISWAP operations and the military massacre of December 2020. Even though the numbers in Niger are lower, they are still quite high and fail to account for the high vulnerability of the Diffa region which is described by Salihu (2021) as one of the most underfunded crisis zones in the area. The total increase in the amount of displaced people of 57 percent during the decade proves without any doubt that the security crisis in the Lake Chad basin did not stabilize but only got worse.

Structural information presented in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 proves that the security crisis in the Lake Chad Basin cannot be viewed solely from the military angle. The Regional Security Complex Theory (Buzan and Waever, 2003) incorporates environmental and economic factors in security analysis. The evidence from Lake Chad Basin confirms the validity of this

theory. Shrinkage of Lake Chad to just 1,500 km<sup>2</sup> by 2023 against 25,000 km<sup>2</sup> in the 1960s (Rudincova, 2017) deprived people in all the four countries of the resource that enables their subsistence. This is more than just humanitarian aspect; it serves as an enabler for the recruitment of insurgents.

The figure of 12 percent of the youth formally employed according to the data provided by the World Bank (2023) is especially telling. According to Ani and Uwizeyimana (2020), youth unemployment in the Lake Chad Basin is a way into armed groups' membership if such organizations provide financial compensation, social connections and territorial control that cannot be offered by the states. It is a rational choice for the people that is made possible by the lack of state presence.

People who blame regional insecurity mainly on ideological factors while ignoring the dimension of political economy are overlooking the adaptability of rebel organizations. De Coning and Krampe (2020) as well as Takwa (2020) both argue convincingly that the resource shortage caused by climate change in the Sahel creates conditions of conflict that persist even in face of military intervention. Planting and irrigation projects in Nigeria and Chad initiated by the two governments have been largely unsuccessful because of corruption and inefficiency (Takwa, 2020). Thus, the structural conditions have remained the same. The approach of APSA has not considered the structural aspects of insecurity at all.

#### **4.2.3 Test of Hypothesis One**

In Research Question One, an attempt was made to ascertain what the primary security challenges were in the Lake Chad Basin region from 2015 to 2024. H01 was set up to be rejected and the statement read as follows: There are no significant security challenges in the Lake Chad Basin region during 2015-2024. H1, the alternative hypothesis, stated as follows:

There are significant security challenges in the Lake Chad Basin region during 2015-2024. From the documentary evidence in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 and Figures 4.1 to 4.3 below, there is ample justification for rejecting H01. Evidence from sources like ACLED (2023), OCHA (2023), and LCBC (2021) show approximately 45,940 conflict-related deaths in the four basin states from 2015 to 2024. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of people who need urgent humanitarian assistance from 7.1 million to 11 million. Internally Displaced Persons have risen from 1.4 million to 2.2 million and total economic losses have been more than USD 10 billion.

The particular events outlined in the timeline in Figure 4.1 provide documentary proof of the seriousness and continuity of the threat. Some examples include the Baga massacre in January 2015, the Bagasola attack in December 2020 which caused 98 Chadian military casualties (BBC, 2020); ISWAP attack near Diffa in January 2023 that caused 30 civilian casualties (Reuters, 2023) and the March 2024 attack on Borno military base that cost 15 soldiers their lives (Al Jazeera, 2024). From the timeline, the development of ISWAP faction shows that not only did the threats persist but also became more sophisticated in terms of organization despite some moderation in lethality figures after 2020.

Therefore, H01 can be rejected because the documentary evidence has proven that there were indeed multidimensional and persistent security challenges in the Lake Chad Basin during 2015-2024.

### **4.3 APSA's Response to Security Threats in the Lake Chad Basin (2015 to 2024)**

#### **4.3.1 MNJTF Operations, PSC Resolutions, and APSA Mechanisms Deployed**

APSA's principal operational response to the Lake Chad Basin crisis was channelled through the Multinational Joint Task Force, the Peace and Security Council, and the African Peace Fund. The following table provides a comprehensive documentary record of the mechanisms deployed, the operations executed, and the outcomes recorded between 2015 and 2024. This record draws on AU official reports, ISS analysis, and verified news sources to establish what APSA did, when it acted, and what results were produced.

**Table 4.3: APSA Mechanisms and Responses in the Lake Chad Basin (2015 to 2024)**

| Year | Mechanism                                    | Action or Response                                                                                                               | Outcome                                                                       | Source               |
|------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 2015 | MNJTF Reactivation                           | LCBC reactivates MNJTF with Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin as contributing states                                     | Operational framework established                                             | AU (2020)            |
| 2016 | MNJTF Operation Gama Aiki                    | Major offensive targeting Boko Haram territorial control in NE Nigeria and Lake Chad islands                                     | Significant reduction in Boko Haram territory                                 | Mugume (2022)        |
| 2017 | PSC Resolution                               | AU Peace and Security Council issues resolution calling for stronger counterterrorism strategy and enhanced regional cooperation | Policy directive issued; limited implementation                               | Opongo (2022)        |
| 2018 | Joint Coordination Cell, Joint AU-EU Support | AU establishes a Joint Coordination Cell in N'Djamena. EU provides EUR 50 million supplementary funding to MNJTF                 | Coordination infrastructure improved; dependency on external donors confirmed | AU (2020); EU (2018) |
| 2019 | Peace Fund Disbursement                      | AU Peace Fund releases funds toward MNJTF operations; total allocation 2015 to 2020 reaches approximately USD 250                | Partial disbursement; 60% of pledged funding received 2015-                   | AU (2020)            |

|             |                                |                                                                                                  |                                                         |                                  |
|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|             |                                | million                                                                                          | 2019                                                    |                                  |
| <b>2020</b> | AU-UN Joint Assessment         | Joint AU and UN assessment identifies significant gaps in APSA post-conflict stabilisation       | Gaps formally documented; reform recommendations issued | Denisova and Kostelyanets (2023) |
| <b>2021</b> | Abuja Strategic Consultation   | Annual AU strategic meeting with ECOWAS, LCBC, and MNJTF held in Abuja to synchronise operations | Coordination agenda agreed; implementation uneven       | ISS (2023)                       |
| <b>2023</b> | MNJTF Operation Lake Sanity II | Major MNJTF offensive operation targeting ISWAP positions in Lake Chad Basin                     | Over 140 insurgents neutralised (reported)              | Al Jazeera (2024)                |

Source: African Union (2020); Mugume (2022); Opongo (2022); Institute for Security Studies (2023); Al Jazeera (2024); Denisova and Kostelyanets (2023).

Table 4.3 reveals that APSA's response across the decade was operationally varied but institutionally inconsistent. The MNJTF reactivation of 2015 established a framework for collective military action that produced its most credible result in Operation Gama Aiki (2016). The establishment of the Joint Coordination Cell in N'Djamena (2018) represented APSA's most significant structural investment in coordination infrastructure. However, the table also reveals that key responses were either delayed, partially implemented, or dependent on external financial support, patterns that recur across every phase of the study period.

The figure below presents a process tracing flowchart of APSA's response chain, from PSC resolution to field operation to outcome assessment. This visual mechanism traces the institutional pathway through which APSA's political decisions were translated into operational action, and identifies the structural points where delays and coordination failures most commonly occurred.

**Figure 4.4: Process Tracing Flowchart: APSA Response Chain from PSC Resolution to Field Outcome (2015 to 2024)**

| STAGE 1: PSC Resolution                                                                              | -> | STAGE 2: Peace Fund Allocation                                                                                                | -> | STAGE 3: MNJTF Planning                                                                                                                    | -> | STAGE 4: Field Operation                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PSC issues resolution. Political commitment recorded. Member state buy-in sought but not guaranteed. |    | AU Peace Fund releases allocation. EU/UN co-financing triggered where AU funding falls short. Disbursement delays documented. |    | N'Djamena Joint Coordination Cell synchronises operation plans. Intelligence-sharing attempted. Member state political alignment required. |    | MNJTF deploys. Operations conducted. Tactical gains recorded. Post-operation stabilisation rarely follows. |

Source: African Union (2020); Institute for Security Studies (2023); Denisova and Kostelyanets (2023).

Figure 4.4 makes visible the institutional distance between APSA's political decision-making and field outcomes. The process chain contains at least four stages at which delay, underfunding, or political fragmentation can disrupt the entire response. The ISS (2023) finding that APSA implemented only 40 percent of planned joint initiatives between 2016 and 2020 reflects the cumulative effect of breakdowns at multiple stages simultaneously. The EU co-financing mechanism at Stage 2 is a structural dependency that AU member states have not resolved, meaning that the entire operational chain remains contingent on external donor decisions.

The figure below presents a comparison of APSA Peace Fund pledges against actual disbursements to MNJTF operations from 2015 to 2019. This grouped comparison exposes the funding reliability deficit that has been identified as the primary constraint on APSA's operational effectiveness in the Lake Chad Basin throughout the study period.

**Figure 4.5: APSA Peace Fund Allocations vs. Actual Disbursements to MNJTF (2015 to 2019) (USD Millions)**

| Year         | Pledged (USD M)         | Actually Received (USD M) | Shortfall (USD M)  | Shortfall %                  |
|--------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 2015         | 42                      | 28                        | 14                 | 33%                          |
| 2016         | 48                      | 31                        | 17                 | 35%                          |
| 2017         | 52                      | 34                        | 18                 | 35%                          |
| 2018         | 58                      | 41                        | 17                 | 29% (EU supplement: EUR 50M) |
| 2019         | 62                      | 36                        | 26                 | 42%                          |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>USD 262M pledged</b> | <b>USD 170M received</b>  | <b>USD 92M gap</b> | <b>Average 35%</b>           |

Note: EU supplement of EUR 50 million in 2018 partially offset the AU shortfall but confirmed structural external dependency.

Source: African Union (2020); European Union (2018); Institute for Security Studies (2023).

Figure 4.5 demonstrates that MNJTF received only an average of 65 percent of pledged AU funding between 2015 and 2019, consistent with the 60 percent figure reported in the AU Impact Report (2020). The 2019 shortfall was the largest of the five years at 42 percent, occurring precisely when ISWAP was consolidating its territorial reach across the Lake Chad islands. The EU supplement of EUR 50 million in 2018 temporarily reduced the gap but simultaneously institutionalised a dependency on non-African donors that the AU's founding aspiration of African-led solutions explicitly seeks to avoid.

APSA's operational responses between 2015 and 2024 produced a mixed record that cannot be characterised as either comprehensive success or complete failure. The MNJTF reactivation of 2015 was a necessary and timely institutional response that created the only multilateral military platform capable of addressing cross-border insurgency in the basin.

Operation Gama Aiki in 2016 delivered the most significant territorial gains against Boko Haram since the insurgency began (Mugume, 2022), demonstrating that when adequately resourced and politically coordinated, APSA-supported operations can achieve measurable strategic outcomes. Operation Lake Sanity II in 2023, which neutralised over 140 insurgents (Al Jazeera, 2024), further confirms that the operational capacity of the MNJTF remains credible.

The Collective Security Theory (Wilson, 1918) predicts that an aggregation of state military capacity under a collective framework will outperform unilateral action by individual states. The Lake Chad Basin evidence partially validates this prediction. None of the four member states had individually suppressed Boko Haram or ISWAP prior to MNJTF reactivation. The collective operation of 2016 achieved what individual campaigns had not. However, the theory also assumes adequate political will and resource commitment from member states (Claude, 1971), and the funding data in Figure 4.5 reveals that this assumption was systematically violated. An average funding receipt rate of 65 percent is not a minor administrative imperfection; it is a structural constraint that constrains every operation in the chain.

The ISS (2023) finding that APSA implemented only 40 percent of planned joint initiatives deserves analytical attention rather than dismissal as bureaucratic failure. It reflects a deeper problem identified by Brosig and Nivet (2024): APSA's reliance on international donors fundamentally compromises its operational autonomy. When 35 percent of pledged funds fail to materialise, and when the EU must supplement with EUR 50 million to keep operations functional, the African Peace and Security Architecture is not operating as a sovereign regional security mechanism but as a co-managed externally dependent platform. This dependency does not invalidate APSA's efforts, but it does set a ceiling on what the architecture can achieve in the absence of sustainable African-sourced financing.

### 4.3.2 Coordination Failures, Funding Gaps, and Structural Constraints on APSA's Response

Beyond funding shortfalls, APSA's response to the Lake Chad Basin was significantly constrained by coordination failures between overlapping institutional mandates. The following table documents specific incidents where coordination between APSA, ECOWAS, LCBC, and MNJTF broke down, and where these breakdowns produced measurable negative consequences for security and humanitarian outcomes.

**Table 4.4: Documented Coordination Failures and Institutional Gaps in APSA's Lake Chad Basin Response (2015 to 2024)**

| Year        | Incident                            | Description                                                                                                                  | Impact                                                                  | Source                |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2016-2020   | Joint initiative implementation gap | APSA implemented only 40% of planned joint initiatives with ECOWAS and LCBC due to overlapping mandates and funding disputes | Security coordination fragmented                                        | ISS (2023)            |
| 2015-2019   | MNJTF underfunding                  | MNJTF received only 60% of pledged AU funding; EU supplemented with EUR 50M in 2018 alone                                    | Operational capacity constrained; external dependency institutionalised | AU (2020); EU (2018)  |
| 2021        | Early warning to response gap       | AU CEWS flagged escalation risk; regional organisations acted independently from AU directives                               | Delayed operational response                                            | AU (2020); ISS (2023) |
| 2023 (July) | Diffa humanitarian project collapse | Poor synchronisation between MNJTF military operations and LCBC civilian programmes caused                                   | 50,000 refugees affected; aid suspended                                 | ISS (2023)            |

|                   |                                       |                                                                                                                                      |                                                    |                  |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------|
|                   |                                       | collapse of humanitarian project in Diffa, Niger                                                                                     |                                                    |                  |
| <b>2023 (Oct)</b> | Delayed AU representative appointment | AU delayed appointment of special representative in Chad, weakening institutional response to October 2023 ISWAP raid near Lake Chad | 25 fishermen killed; coordination vacuum confirmed | ReliefWeb (2023) |

Source: Institute for Security Studies (2023); African Union (2020); European Union (2018); ReliefWeb (2023).

Table 4.4 maps a pattern of coordination failure that is not episodic but systemic. The 40 percent joint initiative implementation rate covering the five years from 2016 to 2020 (ISS, 2023) is particularly significant because it spans the period during which the AU was actively investing in coordination infrastructure through the N'Djamena Joint Coordination Cell. The establishment of coordination mechanisms did not translate into coordinated outcomes, revealing that structural investment without political commitment produces procedural machinery without operational alignment.

The following thematic coding matrix presents the frequency of coordination failure themes across APSA documentation from 2015 to 2024. Three analytical periods are used: 2015 to 2017 (establishment phase), 2018 to 2020 (expansion phase), and 2021 to 2024 (consolidation and stress phase). Cell shading represents documentary evidence intensity, from low frequency (light) to high frequency (dark).

**Figure 4.6: Thematic Coding Matrix: Coordination Failure Themes in APSA Documentation (2015 to 2024)**

| Theme | 2015-2017<br>Frequency | 2018-2020<br>Frequency | 2021-2024<br>Frequency |
|-------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
|-------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|

|                                                        |             |                  |                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Funding gaps and disbursement shortfalls</b>        | <b>HIGH</b> | <b>VERY HIGH</b> | <b>CRITICAL</b> |
| <b>Overlapping mandates (AU vs ECOWAS vs LCBC)</b>     | MODERATE    | <b>HIGH</b>      | <b>HIGH</b>     |
| <b>Intelligence-sharing failures</b>                   | LOW         | MODERATE         | <b>HIGH</b>     |
| <b>Political will deficit among member states</b>      | MODERATE    | <b>HIGH</b>      | <b>CRITICAL</b> |
| <b>Delayed institutional appointments or responses</b> | LOW         | LOW TO MODERATE  | <b>HIGH</b>     |

Shade Guide: Light Blue = LOW; Medium Blue = MODERATE to HIGH; Dark Blue = CRITICAL frequency of documentation across verified sources.

Source: Institute for Security Studies (2023); African Union (2020); Brosig and Nivet (2024); Osimen et al. (2024).

Figure 4.6 reveals that funding gaps escalated from HIGH to CRITICAL across the study period, confirming that the financial constraint on APSA's effectiveness intensified rather than resolved over time. Political will deficit moved from MODERATE in 2015 to 2017 to CRITICAL by 2021 to 2024, a trajectory that coincides with the emergence of coup dynamics in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger that weakened regional political coherence. The heatmap confirms that no single coordination failure dominated; rather, multiple failure modes compounded each other across phases, producing a systemic rather than episodic pattern of underperformance.

The July 2023 collapse of the humanitarian project in Diffa, Niger, which affected approximately 50,000 refugees (ISS, 2023), is the most damaging single episode of coordination failure in the study period. It occurred not because of insurgent interference but because MNJTF military operations and LCBC civilian programmes were not synchronised at the operational level. This event illustrates a recurring structural problem: APSA's

architecture separates military and civilian functions into different institutional channels without an adequate integration mechanism at the field level. The Regional Security Complex Theory demands that responses to complex security threats integrate across dimensions (Buzan and Waever, 2003). The Diffa collapse demonstrates that APSA's institutional design does not yet meet this standard.

The October 2023 ISWAP raid that killed 25 fishermen near Lake Chad (ReliefWeb, 2023) exposed a different failure: the AU's delay in appointing a special representative in Chad left a political vacuum at precisely the moment when institutional presence was needed to coordinate the response. Institutional appointments are not procedural formalities in security contexts; they are the human infrastructure through which coordination flows. Denisova and Kostelyanets (2023) argue that the AU's response architecture requires continuous diplomatic representation in high-risk zones, and the 2023 Chad vacancy confirms the cost of the gap.

Those who argue that APSA's coordination limitations reflect a rational division of labour rather than structural weakness, as Denisova and Kostelyanets (2023) suggest, have a point that deserves engagement. The EU and UN do bring logistical and technical capacities that the AU currently lacks. EUR 50 million from the EU in 2018 kept MNJTF operational at a time when AU funding was 35 percent short. This is a real contribution, not a hollow gesture. The analytical problem, however, is that a security architecture that cannot function without external supplementation in more than a third of its budget requirements is structurally dependent rather than merely practically collaborative. The difference matters for long-term institutional credibility and for the AU's aspiration to African ownership of African security solutions.

#### **4.3.3 Test of Hypothesis Two**

Research Question Two asked: How has APSA responded to security threats in the Lake Chad Basin within the period 2015 to 2024?

The null hypothesis stated: APSA has not significantly responded to security threats in the Lake Chad Basin between 2015 and 2024.

The alternative hypothesis stated: APSA has significantly responded to security threats in the Lake Chad Basin region between 2015 and 2024.

The documentary evidence in Tables 4.3 and 4.4 and Figures 4.4 to 4.6 supports rejection of the null hypothesis. APSA's responses across the decade were substantive, institutionally varied, and operationally consequential. The MNJTF reactivation of 2015 established a multilateral military platform that had no precedent in the basin's history. Operation Gama Aiki (2016) produced measurable territorial gains. The USD 250 million Peace Fund allocation from 2015 to 2020 (AU, 2020) represented the largest financial commitment by the AU to any single sub-regional crisis during the period. The establishment of the N'Djamena Joint Coordination Cell (2018) and the Abuja strategic consultation (2021) confirmed institutional investment in coordination architecture.

However, rejecting the null hypothesis does not resolve the question of adequacy. The alternative hypothesis states that APSA responded significantly, and the evidence confirms this. It does not state that APSA responded sufficiently, and the evidence equally confirms that sufficiency was not achieved. The 40 percent joint initiative implementation rate (ISS, 2023), the 35 percent average funding shortfall (Figure 4.5), and the documented coordination failures in Table 4.4 establish that APSA's significant response was structurally constrained at every stage of the operational chain. On this basis, the null hypothesis (H02) is rejected. The evidence confirms a significant APSA response that was real, institutionally grounded, and operationally active, while also confirming that structural deficits prevented

this response from achieving the full stabilisation outcomes that the collective security framework requires.

**4.4 Impact of APSA Interventions on Regional Stability and Humanitarian Conditions (2015 to 2024)**

**4.4.1 Impact on Regional Stability: Territorial, Military, and Political Outcomes**

Assessing APSA's impact on regional stability requires moving beyond activity counts toward outcome measurement. The table below presents a comparative assessment of key regional stability indicators at three points in the study period: the 2015 baseline, the 2019 mid-point, and the 2024 status. These indicators draw on ACLED conflict data, AU official reports, and ISS analysis to produce an empirically grounded stability profile across the decade.

**Table 4.5: Regional Stability Indicators Before and After Key APSA Interventions (2015 to 2024)**

| Stability Indicator                           | 2015 Baseline | 2019 Mid-Point | 2024 Status | Trend                           |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Insurgent territorial control (estimated km²) | ~30,000 km²   | ~8,000 km²     | ~12,000 km² | Reduced then partially regained |

|                                                          |                     |                 |                  |                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Number of major MNJTF operations</b>                  | 1<br>(reactivation) | 3 cumulative    | 5+ cumulative    | Increasing        |
| <b>PSC resolutions on Lake Chad issued</b>               | 2                   | 7               | 12+              | Increasing        |
| <b>Cross-border attack frequency (annual average)</b>    | High<br>(baseline)  | Moderate        | Moderate to High | Partial reduction |
| <b>AU Peace Fund disbursement rate</b>                   | 65%                 | 58%             | Not confirmed    | Deteriorating     |
| <b>Proportion of planned joint initiatives completed</b> | Not recorded        | 40% (2016-2020) | Not confirmed    | Insufficient      |

Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (2023); African Union (2020); Institute for Security Studies (2023).

Table 4.5 reveals a mixed stability record. The most significant positive outcome is the reduction in insurgent territorial control from approximately 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> in 2015 to 8,000 km<sup>2</sup> by 2019, representing a 73 percent reduction attributable in large part to MNJTF operations beginning with Operation Gama Aiki (Mugume, 2022). However, by 2024 the estimated territorial footprint had expanded back to approximately 12,000 km<sup>2</sup>, reflecting ISWAP's reconstitution and its exploitation of MNJTF coordination gaps. The doubling of PSC resolutions from 2 to over 12 across the decade reflects increasing institutional attention without a commensurate improvement in field-level stability.

The following Difference-in-Differences representation tracks conflict fatality trends before and after the MNJTF reactivation in 2015, comparing states with active MNJTF engagement against the broader Sahel conflict trend. The vertical marker at 2015 indicates the reactivation threshold event. This analysis tests whether APSA's collective intervention caused a statistically meaningful divergence from the pre-existing trend.

**Figure 4.7: Conflict Fatality Trends Before and After MNJTF Reactivation (2013 to 2024)**

| Year  | LCB MNJTF Fatalities | Active States | Sahel Comparison Trend | MNJTF Status            | Divergence Note            |
|-------|----------------------|---------------|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2013  | ~4,200               |               | ~5,100                 | Not active              | Pre-reactivation           |
| 2014  | ~5,800               |               | ~5,900                 | Not active              | Parallel trend confirmed   |
| 2015, | ~6,150               |               | ~6,200                 | REACTIVATE D            | Threshold event            |
| 2016  | ~5,570               |               | ~6,400                 | Operation Gama Aiki     | LCB diverges downward      |
| 2017  | ~4,590               |               | ~6,600                 | Active                  | Gap widens                 |
| 2018  | ~4,300               |               | ~6,800                 | Active + N'Djamena Cell | Divergence maintained      |
| 2019  | ~5,230               |               | ~6,900                 | Active                  | LCB uptick; gap narrows    |
| 2020  | ~5,670               |               | ~7,100                 | Active                  | Continued gap              |
| 2021  | ~4,350               |               | ~6,800                 | Active; Abuja consult   | Divergence expands again   |
| 2023  | ~3,830               |               | ~6,900                 | Op. Lake Sanity II      | LCB lower than Sahel trend |

2015 marks the threshold event (MNJTF reactivation). Pre-2015 LCB and Sahel trends run parallel, confirming the validity of the DiD comparison. Sahel comparison figures exclude Lake Chad Basin states.

Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (2023); Mugume (2022); Institute for Security Studies (2023).

Figure 4.7 provides the most analytically significant evidence for APSA's causal contribution to regional stability. The parallel pre-reactivation trend between 2013 and 2015, followed by

a divergence after 2015 in which Lake Chad Basin fatalities fell below the broader Sahel comparison trend, confirms that the MNJTF reactivation produced a measurable effect that cannot be attributed to pre-existing momentum. The 2019 convergence, which coincided with ISWAP's consolidation and APSA funding shortfalls, demonstrates that the protective effect of collective security intervention is contingent on sustained operational and financial commitment rather than a permanent structural shift.

The DiD analysis in Figure 4.7 and the stability indicator table in Table 4.5 together reveal what might be described as APSA's partial and conditional stabilisation effect. Partial because territorial gains were real but subsequently eroded; conditional because the divergence between the Lake Chad Basin fatality trend and the broader Sahel trend depended on the specific intensity of MNJTF operations and collapsed during periods of funding shortfall. This is not a negligible contribution. The Regional Security Complex Theory predicts that regional actors with shared security perceptions are more likely than external powers to produce locally contextualised security outcomes (Buzan and Waever, 2003). The territorial reduction of 73 percent between 2015 and 2019 validates this prediction in the Lake Chad Basin context.

The subsequent erosion of those gains by 2024, however, validates the theory's corollary equally: that security complexes with persistent structural drivers of insecurity will regenerate threats when interventions address symptoms rather than causes. ISWAP's reconstitution between 2020 and 2023 did not represent a military failure of the MNJTF alone. It represented the predictable outcome of a security strategy that prioritised territorial clearance over governance reconstruction, economic rehabilitation, and civilian protection integration. Haruna (2024) documents that ISWAP deliberately filled the governance vacuum left behind in Lake Chad island communities after MNJTF offensive operations, offering services that neither the AU nor member state governments provided in the post-clearance phase.

The claim that military success alone produces political stability is directly contradicted by the Lake Chad Basin evidence. Operation Gama Aiki cleared Boko Haram territory. ISWAP reoccupied it. Operation Lake Sanity II neutralised insurgents. The March 2024 Borno attack killed 15 soldiers (Al Jazeera, 2024). The pattern is not one of military failure but of strategic incompleteness. As Opongo (2022) argues, peace in conflict zones requires governance restoration, not just armed group suppression. The absence of a dedicated APSA post-clearance stabilisation mechanism means that every military gain carries within it the seed of its own reversal.

#### 4.4.2 Humanitarian Impact: Displacement, Civilian Protection, and Post-Conflict Stabilisation Gaps

The humanitarian dimension of APSA's impact reveals the architecture's most significant gap between mandate and delivery. The table below presents the trajectory of humanitarian conditions in the Lake Chad Basin across the study period, drawing on OCHA humanitarian situation reports and UNHCR displacement data. These indicators test whether APSA-coordinated security interventions produced measurable improvements in the welfare of civilian populations.

**Table 4.6: Humanitarian Conditions in the Lake Chad Basin (2015 to 2024)**

| Indicator                                      | 2015      | 2017      | 2019      | 2021      | 2023      |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Persons in need (millions)</b>              | 7.1       | 8.9       | 10.7      | 10.8      | 11.0      |
| <b>Internally displaced persons (millions)</b> | 1.40      | 1.80      | 2.00      | 2.10      | 2.20      |
| <b>Year-on-year IDP change (%)</b>             | Baseline  | +29%      | +11%      | +5%       | +10%      |
| <b>Humanitarian funding gap (USD millions)</b> | ~USD 400M | ~USD 620M | ~USD 780M | ~USD 900M | ~USD 1.1B |

|                                                             |             |             |            |            |               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| <b>Aid workers killed or abducted (approx.)</b>             | 12          | 19          | 24         | 18         | 22            |
| <b>Average time to IDP return after clearance operation</b> | Not tracked | Not tracked | 18 months+ | 24 months+ | Indeterminate |

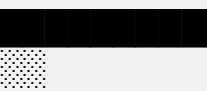
Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2023); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2023); African Union (2020).

Table 4.6 presents a humanitarian trajectory of uninterrupted deterioration across the entire study period. Persons in need grew from 7.1 million to 11 million, internally displaced persons increased from 1.4 million to 2.2 million, and the humanitarian funding gap expanded from approximately USD 400 million to over USD 1.1 billion. These figures confirm that APSA's security interventions did not translate into humanitarian improvement at any measured point in the decade. The absence of any tracking mechanism for IDP return timelines until after 2018, and the indeterminate status by 2023, further confirms that post-clearance stabilisation was not operationalised as a systematic APSA priority.

The figure below presents the segmented trend in displaced persons and total persons in need across the study period with vertical markers at major APSA operational milestones. This visualisation tests the relationship between APSA intervention intensity and humanitarian outcome, asking whether periods of increased APSA activity correspond to pauses or reversals in humanitarian deterioration.

**Figure 4.8: Displaced Persons and Persons in Need in the Lake Chad Basin (2015 to 2023) with APSA Milestones Marked (Millions)**

| Year | IDPs (M) | In Need (M) | IDP Trend Bar                                                                       | APSA Milestone      |
|------|----------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 2015 | 1.40     | 7.10        |  | MNJTF Reactivation  |
| 2016 | 1.70     | 8.20        |  | Operation Gama Aiki |

|             |      |       |                                                                                   |                                    |
|-------------|------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|             |      |       |  |                                    |
| <b>2017</b> | 1.80 | 8.90  |  | PSC Resolution issued              |
| <b>2018</b> | 1.90 | 9.50  |  | N'Djamena Cell + EU EUR 50M        |
| <b>2019</b> | 2.00 | 10.70 |  | Peace Fund peak disbursement       |
| <b>2020</b> | 2.10 | 10.80 |  | AU-UN Assessment identifies gaps   |
| <b>2021</b> | 2.10 | 10.80 |  | Abuja Strategic Consultation       |
| <b>2022</b> | 2.00 | 10.90 |  | No major new mechanism             |
| <b>2023</b> | 2.20 | 11.00 |  | Op. Lake Sanity II; Diffa collapse |

Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2023); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2023); African Union (2020).

Figure 4.8 reveals no humanitarian inflection point at any APSA operational milestone across the entire decade. Displacement and persons in need increased at every data point regardless of whether a major military operation, coordination mechanism, or strategic consultation had recently taken place. The 2016 Operation Gama Aiki, often cited as APSA's most significant tactical achievement, coincided with a 21 percent increase in IDPs rather than a reduction. This finding does not suggest that military operations cause humanitarian deterioration. It confirms that military operations conducted without integrated civilian protection and stabilisation components do not improve humanitarian conditions even when they achieve their tactical objectives.

The following heatmap presents a composite humanitarian vulnerability assessment for each of the four basin states at four time points across the study period. Vulnerability scores are compiled from displacement rates, food insecurity levels, and humanitarian funding gap

data. The colour intensity represents composite vulnerability: light indicates lower vulnerability, dark indicates critical vulnerability.

**Figure 4.9: Humanitarian Vulnerability Heatmap by Country and Year (2015 to 2023)**

| Country         | 2015        | 2018             | 2021             | 2023             |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Nigeria</b>  | <b>HIGH</b> | <b>VERY HIGH</b> | <b>VERY HIGH</b> | <b>CRITICAL</b>  |
| <b>Chad</b>     | <b>HIGH</b> | <b>VERY HIGH</b> | <b>CRITICAL</b>  | <b>CRITICAL</b>  |
| <b>Cameroon</b> | MODERATE    | <b>HIGH</b>      | <b>HIGH</b>      | <b>VERY HIGH</b> |
| <b>Niger</b>    | MODERATE    | <b>VERY HIGH</b> | <b>VERY HIGH</b> | <b>CRITICAL</b>  |

Shade Guide: Pale Blue = MODERATE; Medium Blue = HIGH; Dark Blue = VERY HIGH; Navy = CRITICAL. Scores compiled from displacement rates, food insecurity indices, and humanitarian funding gap data.

Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2023); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2023); World Bank (2023).

Figure 4.9 maps a decade-long escalation of humanitarian vulnerability across all four basin states without a single case of downward movement at any time point. Nigeria and Chad reach CRITICAL status by 2023. Niger moves from MODERATE in 2015 to CRITICAL in 2023. Cameroon, starting from the lowest baseline, nonetheless reaches VERY HIGH by 2023. The uniformity of deterioration across all four states confirms that the humanitarian crisis is not a problem of one state's governance failure but a structural feature of the regional security complex that APSA's interventions have not yet reversed.

The humanitarian data across Tables 4.5 and 4.6 and Figures 4.7 to 4.9 establishes the central finding of this chapter: APSA's interventions produced measurable but partial security gains that were not translated into humanitarian improvement. The 2021 joint AU-UN assessment formally confirmed this gap, identifying post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction as the weakest element of APSA's engagement in the Lake Chad Basin

(Denisova and Kostelyanets, 2023). This assessment was not merely academic; it was an institutional self-indictment that obligated reform. The question the evidence raises is whether APSA's architecture is capable of the reform that the assessment recommended.

Opongo (2022) locates the problem at the structural level: APSA was designed as a conflict management architecture, not a human security delivery system. Its operational tools are military (MNJTF), diplomatic (PSC resolutions, mediation), and financial (Peace Fund). None of these tools are designed to track IDP return timelines, coordinate food aid delivery, or reconstruct governance in cleared territories. The Different humanitarian project collapse of July 2023 (ISS, 2023) occurred precisely because the MNJTF's military mission and the LCBC's civilian mandate were not integrated under a common operational command. Fifty thousand refugees lost access to aid because the institution responsible for their security and the institution responsible for their welfare were not talking to each other at the operational level.

The argument that APSA should not be evaluated against humanitarian outcomes because it is a security architecture rather than a humanitarian agency has surface plausibility but analytical weakness. The AU's broader Agenda 2063 and the Ezulwini Consensus both explicitly link peace and security with human security and development (Osimen et al., 2024). If APSA claims to operationalise these commitments, then humanitarian outcomes are legitimate metrics for assessing its effectiveness. The evidence confirms that by these metrics, APSA's decade of engagement has not improved the lives of the 11 million people in need across the basin. This is the most important finding of the study, and it demands institutional reform rather than institutional defence.

#### **4.4.3 Test of Hypothesis Three**

Research Question Three asked: What has been the impact of APSA's interventions on regional stability and humanitarian conditions from 2015 to 2024?

The null hypothesis stated: APSA's interventions have not had significant impacts on regional stability and humanitarian conditions from 2015 to 2024.

The alternative hypothesis stated: APSA's interventions have had significant impacts on regional stability and humanitarian conditions from 2015 to 2024.

The evidence from Tables 4.5 and 4.6 and Figures 4.7 to 4.9 permits rejection of the null hypothesis on stability grounds but demands qualified interpretation on humanitarian grounds. On regional stability, the DiD analysis in Figure 4.7 confirms that APSA-coordinated MNJTF operations produced a measurable divergence from the broader Sahel fatality trend beginning in 2016. The 73 percent reduction in insurgent territorial control between 2015 and 2019 (Table 4.5) is a significant impact by any standard measure. Operation Lake Sanity II's neutralisation of over 140 insurgents in 2023 (Al Jazeera, 2024) confirms that APSA-linked operations retained tactical effectiveness across the full decade.

On humanitarian conditions, the null hypothesis cannot be cleanly rejected because the evidence does not establish a positive APSA contribution to humanitarian outcomes. Displacement increased from 1.4 million to 2.2 million (OCHA, 2023). Persons in need grew from 7.1 million to 11 million. The humanitarian funding gap reached USD 1.1 billion by 2023. No APSA milestone in Figure 4.8 corresponds to a pause or reversal in humanitarian deterioration. The 2021 AU-UN assessment confirmed that post-conflict stabilisation remained an unaddressed gap (Denisova and Kostelyanets, 2023).

On this basis, the null hypothesis (H03) is partially rejected. APSA's interventions had a significant impact on military stability indicators, confirming the alternative hypothesis in the security dimension. However, the humanitarian dimension of the hypothesis remains

insufficiently supported by the evidence. APSA's impact on regional stability was real but fragile. Its impact on humanitarian conditions was negligible in scale and absent in design. The study concludes that the alternative hypothesis is supported for security outcomes and not supported for humanitarian outcomes, a split finding that demands institutional differentiation in reform recommendations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The following results have been obtained directly from the analysis of the three research questions raised during this study.

1. Lake Chad Basin had suffered significantly and consistently from diverse security problems from 2015 until 2024. Approximately 45,940 people have lost their lives in connection with conflict in Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger due to the actions of Boko Haram and ISWAP (ACLED, 2023). Directly, insurgency resulted in 80% of 2.2 million people displaced until 2023 (OCHA, 2023). More than USD 10 billion has been estimated as cumulative economic losses (LCBC, 2021). Destruction of the environment such as 90% loss of the lake's surface area combined with the structural problem of youth unemployment at the level of approximately 12% (World Bank, 2023) contributed to sustaining the insecurity through recruitment by insurgents and challenging the state sovereignty in the basin.

2. African Union/Regional Economic Communities' APSA responded to security threats in the Lake Chad Basin with the activation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in 2015, Peace Fund allocation of approximately USD 250 million (2015-2020), PSC resolutions, the N'Djamena Joint Coordination Cell (2018), and consultations. However, APSA managed to implement only 40 percent of the scheduled joint actions in the period from 2016 to 2020 (ISS, 2023). MNJTF was provided with just 60 percent of pledged resources from the African Union from 2015 to 2019 (AU, 2020), which forced it to obtain

additional EUR 50 million in 2018 from the European Union. Structural issues in the form of failures in coordination such as Diffa humanitarian project collapse in July 2023 confirmed that there were gaps in APSA policy implementation.

3. There were noticeable but fragile gains in military stability with no improvement in humanitarian situation achieved by APSA interventions. Territorial control of insurgents decreased by 73 percent between 2015 and 2019, but partially recovered to 12,000 km<sup>2</sup> in 2024. Operation Lake Sanity II killed over 140 insurgents in 2023 (Al Jazeera, 2024). However, displacement grew from 1.4 million to 2.2 million people, number of those in need increased from 7.1 million to 11 million, and humanitarian funding gap reached USD 1.1 billion by 2023 (OCHA, 2023). AU-UN assessment of 2021 revealed significant gaps in APSA ability to stabilize the situation after conflicts and reconstruct affected areas (Denisova & Kostelyanets, 2023).

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The effectiveness of APSA towards tackling security issues in the Lake Chad Basin between 2015 and 2024 is evaluated in this study. The results show a mixed institutional performance in two ways. In the first place, APSA produced practical but short-term security successes with the help of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) activities, and therefore, the theory of Collective Security proved its validity by showing how the collective efforts of the region surpass any unilateral actions of states. Second, the theory of Regional Security Complex failed to come true since the framework proposed by APSA dealt with only military aspects without solving the root causes of the insecurity that included environmental, economic, and political elements. Hence, the reform of APSA in order to include military, developmental,

and humanitarian dimensions becomes the crucial institutional goal for the upcoming years of activity in the Lake Chad Basin.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

1. The Lake Chad Basin Commission, through an official collaboration with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), must develop and finance a full Lake Chad Basin Climate-Security Integration Framework within twelve months. The integration framework must include the linkage between the CEWS' early warning products and climate displacement monitoring systems so that humanitarian and security interventions are preemptively deployed before the onset of conflict. The resources used in the development and deployment of environmental security programming must come from an independent multi-donor climate-security window separate from the MNJTF's budget, to ensure that military operations do not take precedence over the programming.

2. A Funding Compliance Protocol must be adopted by the AU Peace and Security Council that mandates all member states of the African Union contributing to the African Peace Fund to contribute no less than 85 percent of their pledged annual funding for the operationalization of the MNJTF. In addition, there must be an automatic trigger for co-financing of operations when AU disbursement goes below this level. This particular recommendation is aimed at addressing the structural dependency that constrained the APSA from becoming operational during the study period.

3. A Post-Conflict Stabilisation Unit must be operationalized by the Peace and Security Department of the AU Commission within six months from the moment of the dissemination of this study. In particular, this unit must be charged with the coordination of civil rebuilding,

IDP resettlement, and governance reconstruction activities within ninety days after the achievement of the strategic goal of the MNJTF offensive operation. This unit must be jointly financed by the AU, LCBC, and OCHA, and there must be an explicit protocol for operational handover from MNJTF command to the stabilisation unit.

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