

**GLOBAL TERRORISM AND REGIONAL INSECURITY IN WEST AFRICA: A STUDY OF
ACTIVITIES OF BOKO HARAM IN THE SHAHEL REGION, 2015–2025**

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**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
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ENUGU.**

JULY, 2026

TITLE PAGE

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BY

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**A PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES,
GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY, UGWUOMU NIKE, ENUGU.**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc.), DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,**

**SUPERVISOR:
DR. CHIEDOZIE ALEX OGBONNIA**

JULY, 2026

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project titled “GLOBAL TERRORISM AND REGIONAL INSECURITY IN WEST AFRICA: A STUDY OF ACTIVITIES OF BOKO HARAM IN THE SHAHEL REGION, 2015–2025” was carried out by me in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Godfrey Okoye University, Ugwuomu–Nike, Enugu. It has not been submitted in whole or in part to any other institution for the award of a degree, diploma, or certificate. All sources consulted in the course of this study have been duly acknowledged.

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Date

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research project titled “GLOBAL TERRORISM AND REGIONAL INSECURITY IN WEST AFRICA: A STUDY OF ACTIVITIES OF BOKO HARAM IN THE SHAHEL REGION, 2015–2025” was carried out by Chukwu Chimdalụ Godwin with matriculation number GOU/U22/IRE/665 in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Godfrey Okoye University, Uguomū–Nike, Enugu. The work has been examined and approved as meeting the departmental requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) Degree in Political Science and International Relations

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to God Almighty for His grace, protection, wisdom and strength throughout the period of this study. It is also dedicated to my family for their support, encouragement and prayers.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
AU	African Union
B.Sc.	Bachelor of Science
Boko Haram	Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal–Jihad
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission
LDF	Logical Data Framework
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Terrorism	The planned use of violence by Boko Haram against civilian and military targets in West African countries from 2009 to 2025.
Boko Haram	The insurgent group based in Nigeria and its factions that carried out terrorist attacks across Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad.
Terrorist Attacks	Specific violent incidents carried out by Boko Haram against military installations, civilian populations and infrastructure.
West African Countries	Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad, being the countries most affected by Boko Haram operations in this study.
Security Implications	The effects of Boko Haram attacks on state capacity, territorial control, border security and military operations.
Socio-Economic Effects	The displacement, food insecurity, trade disruption, school closure, health pressure and livelihood loss caused by the insurgency.
Regional Cooperation	Joint arrangements such as the MNJTF, ECOWAS initiatives, AU mechanisms and LCBC coordination used to respond to Boko Haram terrorism.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Because it uses organised violence against civilians to reach political, religious, or ideological aims, Terrorism is a major security challenge for the international community in the 21st century. Solomon (2015) states that terrorism is a type of irregular warfare where non-state actors use unusual methods to confront state power and spread fear across a large population. While Boko Haram has become the most harmful and most enduring threat to regional stability since 2009, Terrorism has appeared in West Africa through several armed groups. Friend (2021) notes that jihadist insurgency in West Africa shows global ideological influence and local grievance patterns that create serious security pressure across borders, affecting many states.

While socio-economic progress across several countries has experienced major disruption, The region has experienced rising terrorist violence that has taken many lives and has forced many people away from their homes. Policymakers, security officials and scholars need a clear understanding of the effects of terrorist attacks on West African countries so that durable solutions can address this cross-border security problem. While it supports an Islamic state under Sharia law, Boko Haram started in North East Nigeria in 2009 as an armed jihadist movement that opposes Western education, secular governance. Stoddard (2019) states that Boko Haram shifted from a local religious group into a well-organised armed group that uses revolutionary warfare methods such as guerrilla attacks, suicide bombings and

territorial control methods.

The ideology of the group combines Salafi jihadist ideas with local anger connected to poverty, political exclusion and public corruption. Kimbartas (2023) examined Boko Haram survival with a revolutionary warfare framework, showing use of flexible strategy, decentralised command design and use of ungoverned areas as main drivers of survival. While a 2016 factional split formed two competing groups known as the Abubakar Shekau faction and the Islamic State West Africa Province or ISWAP, Boko Haram experienced a major organisational shift between 2009 as well as 2025. These factions conducted many attacks that produced wide-scale deaths, damage to infrastructure and wide socio-economic breakdown across the Lake Chad Basin.

The operations of Boko Haram extended beyond the borders of Nigeria, changing a national insurgency into a cross-border security crisis that affects Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Tayimlong (2020) notes that weakness in the Lake Chad Basin developed from poor public infrastructure and socio-economic hardship which Boko Haram used to build cross-border safe zones as well as recruitment networks. The group conducted organised attacks on military bases, civilian settlements and government sites in neighbouring states to display capacity for regional disruption. While pointing to the use of porous borders, ethnic networks and environmental pressures such as Lake Chad water shrinkage that support cross-border movement, Akowe (2022) analysed Boko Haram operations as well as future direction.

Boko Haram carried out high-level attacks in the Far North Region of Cameroon such as the 2014 Kolofata attack and the 2015 Fotokol massacre that killed many civilians as well as soldiers. While these attacks forced states to deploy forces and use

exceptional measures for insurgency control, The group attacked the Diffa Region in Niger as well as the Lake Chad islands under Chad control with similar patterns. The affected West African states and continental bodies created institutional systems for counter-terrorism cooperation as well as collective security as a response to the Boko Haram regional threat. While showing the development of the Multinational Joint Task Force or MNJTF that includes troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Chad and Benin for coordinated military operations against insurgents, Abugbilla (2017) analysed the African Union response to Boko Haram.

The Economic Community of West African States or ECOWAS also developed regional counter-terrorism strategies that include intelligence sharing systems, border security coordination and capacity building programmes. Okunade et al. (2021) maintained that changing insurgency patterns in West Africa need renewed regional security cooperation as the Boko Haram crisis shows. While international partners such as the United States, France and the United Kingdom gave training support, intelligence support as well as humanitarian assistance, The Lake Chad Basin Commission gave diplomatic support among affected states. Institutional limits such as limited resources, sovereignty concerns and coordination strain have weakened regional response performance despite these actions.

The Boko Haram insurgency has created major humanitarian, economic and security damage across West African states across recent years. While showing over 35,000 deaths, destruction of more than 3,600 schools and collapse of health care facilities in North East Nigeria, Amalu (2016) reported Boko Haram impact on human security in Nigeria. The crisis created major displacement with about 2.4 million in an

internal manner displaced persons and many refugees who moved into Cameroon, Niger as well as Chad. Rapanyane and Sethole (2021) examined the terror campaign of Boko Haram from a decolonial view, showing funding channels, mobilisation methods as well as major attacks that disrupted agriculture, trade networks as well as economic activity across the Lake Chad Basin.

The insurgency damaged key infrastructure such as roads, bridges, markets and communication facilities which limited economic development in affected areas to a high degree. While stressing that Boko Haram reduced state authority, lowered public trust in government institutions and moved development resources toward military spending, Okwara (2023) analysed Nigeria national security issues. These combined effects have created a complex humanitarian emergency that needs broad regional response from all affected states. The present study for this reason studies global terrorism and regional insecurity in West Africa through the activities of Boko Haram in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025 because this issue remains active.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

While it has created major humanitarian, economic and political damage across the Lake Chad Basin, The Boko Haram insurgency has remained the most serious security threat to West African countries since 2009. Amalu (2016) notes that the insurgency led to over 35,000 deaths and displacement of about 2.4 million people which created one of the most severe humanitarian crises in Africa. Tayimlong (2020) reported that Boko Haram attacks damaged public infrastructure in a planned pattern. This point includes more than 3,600 schools, many health care facilities, roads and bridges as well as agricultural sites across North East Nigeria as well as neighbouring

states, which placed socio-economic development as well as human security under severe pressure.

The cross-border operations of the group extended beyond Nigeria into Cameroon, Niger and Chad where attacks across boundaries killed many civilians as well as security personnel as shown by massacres in Cameroon Kolofata (2014), Niger Bosso (2016) as well as Chad Lake Chad islands (2015). Akowe (2022) states that Boko Haram uses porous borders, ungoverned spaces and environmental exposure to sustain operations despite wide-scale military pressure from affected states. While Rapanyane and Sethole (2021) reported disruption of agricultural output, trade networks, fishing activity as well as livestock herding across the Lake Chad Basin. This point produced food insecurity, unemployment and economic fall in regions already among the poorest in Africa, The economic cost has in addition been severe.

While ECOWAS, the African Union and the Lake Chad Basin Commission built institutional systems for security cooperation, intelligence exchange as well as humanitarian response coordination, In response, West African states formed the Multinational Joint Task Force with troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Chad as well as Benin so that coordinated counter-insurgency operations could address the crisis. While showing military operations, stronger border security, community engagement programmes and development efforts as key response tools used by governments as well as regional partners, Friend (2021) examined counter-terrorism strategies in West Africa. While Stoddard (2019) shows that rivalry between the Abubakar Shekau faction and ISWAP increased violence as well as made counter-terrorism planning harder, Despite these efforts the insurgency has remained durable. Kimbartas (2023)

examined the long survival of Boko Haram with a revolutionary warfare framework, linking persistence to flexible strategy use, decentralised command design, ideological commitment and exploitation of governance failures in affected areas.

While Okwara (2023) records that Boko Haram still attacks military bases, carries out civilian kidnapping, uses suicide bombing in urban centres and pursues rural territorial control with strong activity in North East Nigeria as well as the Diffa region of Niger, The present security setting remains fragile. Ibrahim (2017) states that the West African jihadist insurgency wave shows interaction among global ideological influence, local context forces and individual motivation patterns which produce problems that reach beyond military solutions as well as require political, economic as well as social intervention at a wide scale. Against this background, critical questions arise on the military security capacity, socio-economic effects and military response dimensions of Boko Haram activities in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025.

1.3 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How have Boko Haram terrorist activities affected the military security capacity of West African states in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025?
2. What are the socio-economic effects of Boko Haram terrorist activities on West African countries in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025?
3. How has the military response of West African states addressed Boko Haram terrorist activities in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine global terrorism and regional

insecurity in West Africa through a study of the activities of Boko Haram in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025. In particular, the study intends to:

1. Analyse how Boko Haram terrorist activities have affected the military security capacity of West African states in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025.

2. Assess the socio-economic effects of Boko Haram terrorist activities on West African countries in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025.

3. Examine the military response of West African states to Boko Haram terrorist activities in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this study will benefit many different groups with an interest in addressing terrorism and regional security problems in West Africa. The theoretical parts of the study support academic scholarship with an expansion of the literature on cross-border terrorism, regional security dynamics and insurgency impacts in developing regions so that empirical evidence supports clearer understanding of the way that non-state armed groups create instability in multiple countries at the same time. The practical needs of policymakers and government officials in West African countries will benefit from a full analysis of the effects of Boko Haram to allow evidence-based development of counter-terrorism strategies, resource allocation choices as well as regional cooperation systems for solving identified security, economic as well as humanitarian challenges. Regional organisations such as ECOWAS, the African Union and the Lake Chad Basin Commission will gain insight into the value of current institutional responses to allow for improvements in coordination mechanisms, intelligence sharing protocols as well as collective security

arrangements for counter-insurgency operations. Humanitarian organisations and development agencies will in addition benefit from an understanding of the socio-economic dimensions of the impact of Boko Haram to guide focused efforts for displaced populations, infrastructure reconstruction programmes as well as community resilience efforts in affected regions.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The present study examines global terrorism and regional insecurity in West Africa through the activities of Boko Haram in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025 with attention to military security capacity, socio-economic effects as well as military response. Because these countries have experienced the strongest direct effects from the cross-border operations and insurgent activities of Boko Haram within the Lake Chad Basin as well as wider Sahel security environment, The geographic focus of the study focuses on Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger as well as Chad. Because 2015 marks a major period of renewed regional military cooperation under the MNJTF while 2025 gives a recent end point to assess long-term effects and assess sustained regional responses, The timeframe of 2015 to 2025 was selected. This research adopts documentary and ex post facto research designs to examine secondary data from notes, academic studies as well as statistics to measure the impacts of Boko Haram activities on West African countries in the Sahel region.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The present study faced some limitations in the research process yet each one was managed through planned adjustments. The full nature of checking Boko Haram activities across the selected period of 2015 to 2025 in four countries required

extensive data gathering and analysis within short research timelines, the response was a structured research schedule with a priority on ordered data gathering as well as focused analytical systems to ensure good use of available time, Constraints on time created a challenge. An absence of full data caused another limitation about classified military operations, unreported attacks in remote areas and gaps in governmental documentation of casualties as well as economic losses yet this challenge was addressed through multiple secondary sources such as academic studies, international organisation notes as well as media documentation to build the best evidence base possible. Funding limits limited access to certain premium databases and restricted governmental notes but this was fixed by strong use of open-access academic repositories, university library resources as well as public institutional documents that gave adequate data for detailed analysis.

1.8 Operational Definitions of Terms

While Friend (2021) describes it as irregular warfare by non-state actors, Terrorism – Solomon (2015) defines terrorism as deliberate violence against civilians to reach political objectives. In this study, terrorism means the planned use of violence by Boko Haram, including bombings, shootings and kidnappings against civilian as well as military targets in West African countries in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025.

While Kimbartas (2023) calls it a revolutionary warfare movement, Boko Haram – Stoddard (2019) describes Boko Haram as a jihadist insurgent organisation. In this study, Boko Haram means the insurgent group based in Nigeria and its factions that have conducted terrorist activities across Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger as well as Chad from 2015 to 2025.

Terrorist Attacks – In this study, terrorist attacks point to specific violent incidents by Boko Haram against military installations, civilian populations and infrastructure targets in West African countries during the study period.

Because these four nations are the ones most impacted by the cross-border operations of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel security environment from 2015 to 2025, **West African Countries** – In this study, West African countries means Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger as well as Chad.

Security Implications – Buzan et al. (2015) discuss security implications as effects that affect state capacity to guard populations and keep territorial integrity. In this study, security implications cover military casualties, territorial control challenges, border security threats and weakening of state authority due to Boko Haram attacks in West African countries.

Socio-Economic Effects – In this study, socio-economic effects means displacement of populations, destruction of infrastructure, disruption of agriculture and trade, along with unemployment as well as damage to education as well as healthcare systems caused by Boko Haram terrorism in affected West African countries.

Regional Cooperation – Buzan and Wæver (2003) explain regional cooperation as joint arrangements among states near each other to address shared challenges. In this study, regional cooperation means the Multinational Joint Task Force, ECOWAS initiatives, African Union mechanisms and Lake Chad Basin Commission coordination efforts created to fight Boko Haram terrorism from 2015 to 2025.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Terrorism

Because many academic views reflect political, ideological and methodological factors, Terrorism is one of the most debated concepts in international relations as well as security studies. Solomon (2015) defines terrorism as organised violence by non-state actors against civilian populations in order to reach political, religious, or ideological aims through broad fear and intimidation. Because weaker actors use unusual methods so they challenge state authority and create psychological effects that extend beyond the direct physical damage from attacks, This definition emphasises an asymmetric pattern of violence. While arguing that jihadist groups such as Boko Haram join global ideological narratives with local anger so they defend violent campaigns against secular governments and Western influence, Friend (2021) locates terrorism within a broader framework of insurgency as well as irregular warfare in North as well as West Africa.

While the cross-border type applies to the study of Boko Haram operations across multiple West African countries, the literature separates forms of terrorism such as state-sponsored terrorism, domestic terrorism and cross-border terrorism. While this mix creates problems for counter-terrorism strategies that focus only on military responses, Ibrahim (2017) maintains that jihadist insurgency in West Africa shows mixed motives that include religious ideology, political exclusion, economic hardship and historical anger. Yet this view has limits. Stoddard (2019) maintains that

terrorist organisations are rational actors that use violence as a strategic tool to reach defined aims that include territorial control, resource gain, ideological spread and state disruption. Instead than as actors driven through one path of religious passion. The present study maintains that both ideological drive and rational calculation shape Boko Haram behaviour, which means that effective counter-terrorism must address both the stated beliefs as well as the material conditions that sustain the group.

2.1.2 Insurgency

While they seek to overturn or reshape an existing political order through prolonged conflict that uses state weakness and public grievance, Insurgency is a type of irregular warfare where organised non-state groups run long violent campaigns. While arguing that groups such as Boko Haram use Maoist strategies of territorial control, population mobilisation, guerrilla tactics and step-by-step escalation from small attacks to conventional military operations against state forces, Stoddard (2019) studies insurgency through revolutionary warfare thinking. While current insurgencies show factors such as division, factional competition, cross-border networks and ideological blending that combines religious, ethnic as well as political motivations, the idea of insurgency has changed across time since older theories arose during mid-20th century struggles.

While showing flexible choices such as spread-out command structures, use of ungoverned areas, organised violence against civilians to show state inability and ideological teaching to keep fighter commitment despite military setbacks, Kimbartas (2023) studies Boko Haram survival through revolutionary warfare thinking. The outcome of insurgencies rests on interaction among insurgent capability, state counter

-insurgency strength, population allegiance, external support networks and environmental factors that enable or limit irregular warfare across long timeframes. This matters for the study because it shows that military defeat alone cannot end the Boko Haram insurgency and that attention to structural conditions is important for durable settlement.

2.1.3 Regional Security

Regional security means collective arrangements where neighbouring states align policy, share intelligence, combine military resources and build institutional systems in order to address shared threats that cross borders as well as demand joint action beyond the capacity of one state. While shared risk grows from closeness and spillover from conflicts that begin in one state as well as affect neighbouring states, Buzan as well as Wæver (2003) explain regional security through Regional Security Complex Theory. This point states that security dynamics within a region reflect patterns of amity or hostility among states. Because Boko Haram operations in North East Nigeria create threats for Cameroon, Niger and Chad through cross-border attacks, refugee flows, economic disruption as well as challenges to state authority that require coordinated regional response, The Lake Chad Basin is a clear regional security complex.

Regional security cooperation in West Africa is seen in the Multinational Joint Task Force, ECOWAS counter-terrorism systems, African Union peace and security architecture as well as Lake Chad Basin Commission coordination mechanisms that support intelligence sharing, joint military operations, border security improvement as well as a shared counter-insurgency strategy. Because sovereignty concerns restrict

information sharing while resource limits reduce operational capacity and political disagreement shapes strategy priorities, while coordination difficulty follows from different military security capacity, institutional culture as well as national interest, Regional security cooperation still faces continuing problems. The present study recognises that regional security is both a necessary and a strongly debated goal, which means that results must be assessed against realistic standards of what cooperation can achieve.

2.1.4 Transnational Terrorism

Cross-border terrorism means terrorist activity that crosses state borders through organisational structure, operational planning, attack execution, recruitment networks, financing mechanisms, or ideological connection across more than one country; effective responses need international cooperation. Abugbilla (2017) examines Boko Haram as a cross-border security threat that needs African Union response beyond national counter-insurgency action, showing how the group built cross-border sanctuaries in the Far North Region of Cameroon, the Diffa Region of Niger and the Lake Chad islands of Chad in order to escape military pressure as well as attack several countries at the same time. Tayimlong (2020) states how Boko Haram cross-border operations use Lake Chad Basin environmental conditions that include shrinking water levels which create ungoverned islands, porous borders with limited state presence and ethnic communities with kinship networks across states that support movement, recruitment as well as logistics.

Because terrorists use jurisdiction boundaries, legal limits on cross-border operations and coordination limits among sovereign states so they can run operations

beyond single-state counter-terrorism capacity, Cross-border terrorism creates special problems for state security forces that operate on national structures. The idea of cross-border terrorism shows that security threats extend beyond in a territorial manner bounded sovereignty so they require regional and international cooperation mechanisms, joint military operations as well as coordinated development efforts to address the underlying causes as well as operational capacity of groups that operate across several national jurisdictions. Is this always true? Not in an entire manner. Kimbartas (2023) shows that some aspects of Boko Haram operations remain local in character, which means cross-border framing must not overlook the domestic political conditions that sustain the group within Nigeria itself.

2.1.5 Humanitarian Crisis

Humanitarian crisis describes situations where large-scale human suffering comes from armed conflict, natural disaster, or political instability, whilst the situation includes mass displacement, deaths, destruction of vital infrastructure, collapse of basic services, food insecurity and threats to human dignity that go beyond local coping capacity and require outside assistance for survival and recovery. Amalu (2016) records the effect of Boko Haram insurgency on human security in Nigeria whilst identifying over 35,000 deaths, displacement of about 2.4 million people, destruction of more than 3,600 schools, collapse of health facilities and disruption of agriculture that produced one of the most severe humanitarian situations in Africa which required wide international relief operations. Tayimlong (2020) studies humanitarian aspects of

fragility and insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin whilst stressing that planned violence against civilians, destruction of productive infrastructure and community displacement produce linked crises that include malnutrition, disease outbreaks, education disruption and breakdown of social ties across affected areas.

2.2 Thematic Review

2.2.1 Effects of Boko Haram Attacks on the Military Capacity of West African States

Abugbilla (2017) studied the African Union response to the Boko Haram crisis, showing that the insurgency caused major battlefield defeats for the Nigerian Armed Forces. This pattern crossed outside Nigeria, reaching Cameroonian military units, Nigerien security forces and Chadian troops sent into the Lake Chad Basin. The research pointed to complex insurgent tactics that included sudden ambushes on military convoys along key routes, planned assaults on isolated military outposts in remote areas and suicide bombing operations against security installations. These guerrilla warfare methods used local terrain knowledge to cause casualties that damaged troop morale, whilst placing heavy pressure on national defence budgets across affected states. So what? The damage to military security capacity across multiple states shows that Boko Haram posed an existential threat not only to civilians but to the institutional integrity of national security forces, which weakened state legitimacy and created demand for regional military cooperation.

Akowe (2022) examined Boko Haram operation patterns and future direction, reporting organised assaults on military bases across North East Nigeria with attention to Borno, Yobe as well as Adamawa states as well as these attacks created major military casualties. During these raids, insurgents seized military assets that included

armoured vehicles, heavy weapons and ammunition as well as this outcome raised their combat capacity. This research reported a change in military response away from regular territorial recovery campaigns toward counter-insurgency methods with intelligence collection, community engagement and targeted operations against insurgent leadership, although these changes faced limits that included limited training capacity, equipment shortages as well as coordination problems among multinational forces. Who else? Because each faction wanted to display operational capacity through major strikes on military targets. This point made the security picture more complex and harder to address with a single counter-insurgency approach, Stoddard (2019) supports this by showing that the 2016 factional split between the Abubakar Shekau faction as well as ISWAP raised violence against security forces.

Friend (2021) examined counter-terrorism strategies in West Africa, showing that affected states used emergency security steps that included deployment of additional military units to border regions and development of civilian vigilante groups that supported state security forces. Governments built military installations in areas with weak governance and declared states of emergency with strict curfews as well as movement restrictions in high-risk zones. The research presented mixed outcomes from these security responses since some operations recovered territory from Boko Haram, whereas other operations caused civilian casualties and human rights abuses that deepened local hostility as well as weakened counter-insurgency aims. Is it always true that more military deployment improves security outcomes? No. Okunade et al. (2021) show that forceful security responses created new complaints that insurgents used for recruitment, which means that security gains at the operational

level can produce political losses at the political level.

Because security infrastructure development across the region remained weak, Tayimlong (2020) examined weakness and insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin, showing major limitations on military responses. While weak communication networks reduced coordination among field teams and limited intelligence collection in remote areas as well as equipment shortages weakened sustained counter-insurgency capacity, The research showed how poor road networks reduced troop movement. In addition, troops faced difficult environmental conditions that included dense forests, swamplands and seasonal flooding. These conditions supported insurgent concealment as well as movement. Kimbartas (2023) adds that Boko Haram used planned retreat during periods of intense pressure by moving under heavy military force into ungoverned spaces where state forces lacked capacity or willingness to pursue them. The group rebuilt strength in these safe zones before launching renewed attacks against the state and this pattern showed sustained insurgent capacity despite short-term territorial recovery by counter-insurgency forces.

2.2.2 Socio-Economic Effects of Boko Haram Attacks on West African Countries

Rapanyane and Sethole (2021) looked at the terror campaign of Boko Haram in a detailed way to show the destruction of economic infrastructure. This research identifies damage to markets, agricultural sites, fishing areas, transport lines and business places that stopped daily work in the Lake Chad Basin region. The group hit economic infrastructure with clear intent to lower state power and show weakness of government regarding the protection of people. This plan caused fear in a wide way to limit trade and caused economic anger that helped the group recruit new members.

Amalu (2016) examined the effect on human security in Nigeria, showing that the fighting ruined roads for travel to regional markets and the group burned crop storage places with much damage as well as killed or stole livestock from herders. Attacks on fishing towns near Lake Chad caused food problems and economic pain for people who depend on farming as well as fishing to live.

Akowe (2022) examined the operations of Boko Haram to find that economic effects went beyond direct damage to include long-term issues from the movement of skilled workers. Because financial groups closed branches in conflict zones, Capital moved out of the area with speed as firms moved to safe places and credit systems failed. Broken supply chains stopped links between far rural places and national markets. Because broken roads stopped the transport of agricultural goods to markets, while ruined schools stopped education opportunities needed for human capital development and broken healthcare sites lowered health status as well as labour supply for economic recovery, The research showed that infrastructure damage caused linked economic effects. Who else? Because this area had poor roads, low electricity access, few health sites and little school infrastructure that got worse with the destruction by insurgents, Tayimlong (2020) adds that attacks on infrastructure by Boko Haram reflected long-standing underdevelopment.

Friend (2021) examined economic results of terror in West Africa, showing that conflict zones faced large economic losses seen in lower farm output. This research showed lower trade volume, more unemployed people, high poverty rates and poor living standards that undid years of gradual growth. These issues caused needs that were too big for the government or international groups to fix in a good way. The work

showed that economic trouble caused additional effects like more hunger in children or pregnant women and more sickness as health access fell. Fewer children went to school because families put survival needs over learning, while mental trauma from violence caused long-term development problems. Stoddard (2019) looked at insurgent plans to show that the economic war of Boko Haram used taxes on work in areas under their control and took money from shops, traders as well as farm towns to fund their operations. Is it always true that economic disruption weakens insurgencies? No. Stoddard (2019) shows that Boko Haram used economic control over border trade to build financial capacity, which means economic disruption can in some cases strengthen insurgent funding while it weakens the state.

Tayimlong (2020) looked at population movement in the Lake Chad Basin, showing that violence of Boko Haram forced about 2.4 million people to move. Hundreds of thousands ran across borders to Cameroon, Niger and Chad to make a huge displacement crisis in Africa. While mental trauma from violence and risks of abuse such as forced joining of the group or trafficking hurt vulnerable people, The study found that movement caused humanitarian issues like family separation, loss of work as well as school disruption for children. While crowds increased disease spread and lack of work created a need for aid with little hope for self-support, Amalu (2016) examined human security impacts to show that displaced groups in camps faced weak shelter, limited food supplies as well as little clean water. The socio-economic destruction caused by Boko Haram was not accidental but formed part of a planned strategy to expose state failure and to create the conditions in which the group could present itself as a different source of order, protection as well as resource distribution.

2.2.3 Military Response of West African States to Boko Haram Terrorism

Abugbilla (2017) conducted a study on the African Union response to Boko Haram, showing how the Multinational Joint Task Force or MNJTF formed with troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Chad and Benin for joint cross-border counter-insurgency against a cross-border threat. Because Boko Haram relied on cross-border movement which made separate national responses weak, The research showed that isolated state action produced limited impact. This research explained that the MNJTF served as evidence of regional acceptance that Boko Haram was a shared security threat that required collective military action and that this approach depended on intelligence sharing, joint operational planning as well as coordinated strategy that exceeded national efforts limited by jurisdiction borders as well as sovereignty concerns. So what? Because it shows that West African states recognised the limits of national action and chose collective response despite the political costs of sharing sovereignty over military decisions, The development of the MNJTF marks an important moment in African security cooperation.

Okunade et al. (2021) assessed regional security cooperation, reporting that the MNJTF conducted joint military operations that targeted Boko Haram sanctuaries in border areas and coordinated intelligence collection to trace insurgent movement across states. Unified command structures supported operational alignment inside the multinational force and cross-border pursuit protocols were created for cases where insurgents escaped pressure in one state by shifting activity across international lines. Friend (2021) analysed counter-terrorism strategies in West Africa, showing that regional military cooperation faced major limits connected to uneven military security

capacity among participating states, language differences between Francophone and Anglophone forces, leadership competition inside the MNJTF structure as well as limited resources that slowed operational speed during extended campaigns. Yet the same study reported that the MNJTF achieved major outcomes that included recapture of territory, pressure across several fronts that reduced insurgent capability and intelligence sharing that improved regional knowledge of insurgent networks.

Tayimlong (2020) analysed regional dynamics in the Lake Chad Basin, showing that effective military cooperation required attention to governance weakness and linked lasting progress to reduced socio-economic grievance as well as smaller development gap because those conditions shaped insurgency pathways. This research suggested that a military-centred approach without investment in governance, economic development and social services would not deliver a lasting solution to Boko Haram linked security challenges across the region. Who else? Abugbilla (2017) supports this by showing that continental coordination from the African Union gave political legitimacy to regional military operations and stressed that counter-terrorism must respect human rights as well as work on underlying causes instead of military force alone. Is it always true that regional cooperation is more effective than national action? Only under clear conditions. Kimbartas (2023) shows that faction rivalry within Boko Haram increased response complexity, which means that regional forces must understand the internal divisions of the group to design responses that address separate factions instead of treating Boko Haram as a single organisation with one command structure and one stable operational style.

2.3 Theoretical Review

2.3.1 Regional Security Complex Theory

Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver developed Regional Security Complex Theory to show that regional security trends depend on connected relations of friendship or hostility among states. Because events in one state create spillover effects for neighbouring states without permission or control, The approach states that geographic proximity produces security interdependence in a direct form. Buzan and Wæver (2003) argue that a regional security complex forms when closeness makes it impossible for states to treat security as separate from neighbours as well as threats as well as weak points cross state borders through processes such as cross-border insurgency, refugee movement, economic disruption, or instability that spreads across a region. The theory sets out core structures that include boundary lines that define regional reach, an anarchical order among sovereign states, power distribution which concerns how power is distributed among regional actors and social views of friendship or hostility that shape security expectations.

Friend (2021) applies this framework to West Africa to show that Boko Haram operations created security interdependence among Lake Chad Basin states. The insurgency in Nigeria produced direct security threats for Cameroon, Niger and Chad through cross-border attacks, refugee flows as well as economic disruption that required joint responses beyond national counter-terrorism limits. The value of this theory to the study rests on its framework that states why the rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria affected neighbouring states with a chain that could not be contained. Proximity generated security interdependence because insurgent action in one state created effects for neighbours despite domestic political preference or isolated

counter-terrorism capacity without coordinated planning. While reducing attention to how groups such as Boko Haram exploit regional structure or control state relations under sovereignty constraints, Critics maintain that Regional Security Complex Theory treats non-state actor power in a limited way within regional security analysis, placing state-centred focus at the centre. The present study accepts this criticism and uses Securitization Theory alongside Regional Security Complex Theory to include this gap.

2.3.2 Securitization Theory

The Copenhagen School of security studies developed Securitization Theory to show that security is built through social processes of public speech. While success rests on public acceptance of the threat claim, Political actors claim that referent objects face survival threats that justify exceptional measures beyond ordinary political process. Buzan et al. (2015) argue that securitization requires actors who make the threat claim, referent objects positioned as threatened and audiences who accept the issue as a security matter. The theory emphasises that security is not a fixed condition based on material threat capacity alone, but is a relational process where political actors construct issues as security threats and through convincing language seek audience approval for extraordinary measures such as military operations, emergency declarations, or rights restrictions as well as resource shifts justified by stated threat.

This theory states how West African governments framed Boko Haram as an existential threat to state survival, territorial integrity and population security. This framing justified exceptional counter-terrorism steps such as military operations in civilian areas, emergency rule or movement restriction and budget changes from

development toward security. Because civilian targeting provided evidence that supported government threat claims and increased public acceptance of exceptional measures, Okunade et al. (2021) show that Boko Haram attacks strengthened this framing. Critics note that the European roots of the theory can limit application in non-Western settings and reduce attention to local security processes. Critics in addition raise concerns on whether securitization represents necessary protection or a practice that limits democratic governance and human rights through emergency powers grounded in constructed threats. Because Regional Security Complex Theory states the structural conditions that caused Boko Haram to become a regional crisis, while Securitization Theory states the political processes through. This point West African states responded to and framed that crisis in ways that shaped their counter-terrorism choices, This study uses the two theories together.

2.4 Summary of Literature and Gap

The literature review shows that Boko Haram has created major security damage, socio-economic loss and humanitarian crisis across West African states through cross-border operations that use governance weakness, porous borders as well as regional coordination gaps. Regional responses such as the MNJTF and related institutional frames show awareness that joint action is needed, although execution faces funding limits as well as sovereignty pressure points as shown by Abugbilla (2017) as well as Friend (2021). Although the literature gives strong detail on impacts, key gaps remain. One gap is a low level of empirical work that tests effects across all affected West African states at the same time instead of a Nigeria-centred focus. Another gap is the weak level of ordered assessment of regional cooperation

performance beyond descriptive accounts of institutional design. A further gap links to long-term socio-economic recovery needs for conflict-affected people and places that suffered long insurgent violence as well as mass displacement. The present study addresses these gaps by applying Regional Security Complex Theory and Securitization Theory together as a paired analytical framework that captures both the structural as well as the political dimensions of the Boko Haram crisis across the affected region.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The present study rests on Regional Security Complex Theory by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, alongside Securitization Theory, to offer a broad analytical framework. The Regional Security Complex Theory approach states how Boko Haram terrorist attacks in Nigeria produced security interdependence and spillover effects across nearby West African countries. Because threats in one country may produce spillover effects for neighbouring states, The theory states that geographic proximity increases the possibility of security interdependence. This occurs through processes such as cross-border insurgency, refugee flows and economic disruptions that extend beyond national boundaries. These impacts may occur without regard for the specific wishes or distinct capabilities of individual states as shown by Buzan and Wæver (2003).

The Securitization Theory approach supports the framework by explaining how governments in the region presented Boko Haram as an existential security threat that justified emergency counter-terrorism responses and regional security arrangements. Because one states the regional spread of the crisis, while the other states the political framing that shaped state responses, The two theories are for this reason useful. Because it fits the cross-border nature of Boko Haram attacks and the need for collective response among Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger as well as Chad, Even so, Regional Security Complex Theory is adopted as the main theory for this study.

3.1.1 Regional Security Complex Theory

The Regional Security Complex Theory approach rests on Barry Buzan and Ole

Wæver in their work *Regions as well as Powers: The Structure of International Security*. This approach views security dynamics as structured in a regional way instead of as global or national phenomena alone. It states that security interdependence among close states creates regional security complexes where actors cannot treat their security as separate from neighbouring states. This is because threats may move across borders through insurgent movement, refugee flows, economic disruption and other spillover effects as shown by Buzan as well as Wæver (2003). The main parts of the theory include boundary lines for regional reach, an anarchical order among sovereign states, power distribution in the distribution of power among regional actors and social views of friendship or hostility that shape security expectations.

Modern scholars such as Friend (2021) have used the theory to explain West African security dynamics and the way Boko Haram operations created security interdependence among Lake Chad Basin countries. Because Boko Haram began as a Nigerian insurgency but later affected Cameroon, Niger and Chad through attacks across borders, refugee flows as well as insurgent sanctuary establishment, The theory is relevant to this study. It for this reason provides a clear structure for explaining why regional cooperation became necessary and why individual national responses could not in full solve the security problem.

3.1.2 Securitization Theory

The Securitization Theory approach was developed by the Copenhagen School of security studies. The theory states that an issue becomes a security matter when political actors present it as an existential threat and the relevant audience accepts that presentation. Buzan et al. (2015) explain that securitization involves securitizing

actors, referent objects and audiences that accept the claim that an issue requires urgent as well as exceptional action. The theory for this reason shows that security is not as a single issue about material threat but in addition about political interpretation, public framing and acceptance of exceptional measures.

This theory helps the study to understand how West African governments framed Boko Haram terrorism as a threat to state survival, territorial integrity and public safety. Such framing justified military operations, emergency rules, movement restrictions and shifts in public resources toward counter-terrorism. Because it states the political language and policy choices used by states in responding to Boko Haram, In this study, Securitization Theory remains a supporting framework. Because it states in a direct way the regional spread and cross-border effects of Boko Haram attacks, Regional Security Complex Theory remains the adopted theory.

3.1.3 Applicability of the Adopted Theory

Because it states how Boko Haram terrorist attacks shifted from a national Nigerian problem into a regional security concern affecting multiple West African countries, Regional Security Complex Theory is used for this study. Because Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad share geographic proximity as well as are connected through border communities, trade routes, refugee movement as well as security issues within the Lake Chad Basin, The theory applies to the study. Because neighbouring states faced military pressure, displacement, economic disruption and border insecurity, When Boko Haram attacks occurred in one country, the effects were not confined to that country.

The theory in addition states why affected West African states created and

supported the Multinational Joint Task Force to plan counter-terrorism operations together. Because insurgents used border areas and limited state presence to sustain their operations, Boko Haram activities showed that no single state could solve the problem alone. The Regional Security Complex Theory approach for this reason gives this study a solid basis for analysing global terrorism and regional insecurity in West Africa through the activities of Boko Haram in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025, with special importance in relation to military security capacity, socio-economic effects as well as collective military response.

3.2 Hypotheses

The following alternative hypotheses guide this study:

H₁: Boko Haram terrorist activities have significantly affected the military security capacity of West African states in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025.

H₂: Boko Haram terrorist activities have significant socio-economic effects on West African countries in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025.

H₃: The military response of West African states has significantly addressed Boko Haram terrorist activities in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025.

3.3 Research Design

The present study adopts ex post facto and documentary research designs in order to examine global terrorism as well as regional insecurity in West Africa through the activities of Boko Haram in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025. While allowing the researcher to answer research questions in a clear order, Research design means the general plan that links the theoretical framework with data gathering and analysis steps. Because the study deals with events that have already occurred and cannot be

controlled or changed by the researcher, the ex post facto design is suitable. Because the work relies on available documents, notes, books, journals and institutional records that contain information about Boko Haram activities as well as regional insecurity in West Africa, The documentary design is in addition suitable.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

The present study uses documentary analysis as the main data gathering method through the review of secondary sources such as academic journal articles, books, governmental notes, international organisation publications, statistical databases and institutional documents that explain Boko Haram activities as well as regional insecurity in West African countries in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025. While scholarly books provide theoretical foundations and evidence support for interpretation of patterns, The documents include peer-reviewed journal articles from credible academic sources that report Boko Haram operations as well as effects. While governmental statistics on casualties and displacement come from ministries as well as security agencies of affected countries, The sources in addition include United Nations as well as African Union notes that record humanitarian outcomes as well as regional responses. Additional materials include research publications from institutions such as the Lake Chad Basin Commission and ECOWAS that provide a regional view on insecurity as well as cooperation efforts. While direct connection to the research questions remains important for focus on military security capacity, socio-economic outcomes and military response against Boko Haram terrorism in West Africa as outlined by Bryman (2016), The selection standards include publication from 2015 to 2025 to support current relevance as well as peer-review status to support

academic quality for academic sources as well as institutional reliability for notes as well as statistics from recognised governmental as well as international bodies.

3.5 Methods of Data Analysis

The present study applies content analysis and thematic analysis in order to examine documentary evidence as well as to draw out patterns that address research questions on Boko Haram effects on West African countries as well as regional cooperation responses. Data preparation involves arranging collected documents into thematic groups that match research objectives which include security implications, socio-economic effects and regional cooperation issues. While coded information enters analysis matrices that support comparison across sources and identification of patterns, contradictions as well as evidence gaps, The preparation stage in addition involves coding relevant sections using analytical categories drawn from the theoretical framework as well as research questions. While triangulation supports checking through checking across evidence from different documentary sources as outlined by Krippendorff (2019), Analytical techniques include thematic analysis. This point identifies repeated trends across sources regarding Boko Haram impacts and regional responses as well as comparative analysis in order to assess differences across affected West African countries. While results appear through descriptive discussion supported by documentary evidence and the interpretation stage links empirical findings to Regional Security Complex Theory as well as Securitization Theory claims on security interdependence as well as regional cooperation, Interpretation involves linking findings to the research questions as well as the theoretical framework.

3.10 Logical Data Framework

Research Question	Hypothesis	Major Variables of the Hypothesis : Independent (X) and Dependent (Y)	Empirical Indicators of Variables	Method of Data Collection	Source of Data	Method of Data Analysis
How have Boko Haram terrorist activities affected the military security capacity of West African states in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025?	H ₁ : Boko Haram terrorist activities have significantly affected the military security capacity of West African states in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025.	X: Boko Haram terrorist activities Y: Military security capacity of West African states in the Sahel region	Attack frequency, military casualties, equipment loss, troop deployment, territorial control and border security pressure	Documentary analysis	Academic journals, government reports, AU, UN, MNJTF and security publications	Content analysis and thematic analysis
What are the socio-economic effects of Boko Haram terrorist activities on West African countries in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025?	H ₂ : Boko Haram terrorist activities have significant socio-economic effects on West African countries in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025.	X: Boko Haram terrorist activities Y: Socio-economic effects	Displacement, unemployment, food insecurity, infrastructure destruction, trade disruption and school closure	Documentary analysis	Academic journals, humanitarian reports, UN, World Bank and institutional data	Content analysis and thematic analysis

How has the military response of West African states addressed Boko Haram terrorist activities in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025?	H ₃ : The military response of West African states has significantly addressed Boko Haram terrorist activities in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025.	X: Boko Haram terrorist activities Y: Military response of West African states	MNJTF operations, troop deployment, intelligence sharing, border patrols and counter-insurgency strategies	Documentary analysis	Government reports, AU, ECOWAS, LCBC, MNJTF records and academic studies	Content analysis and thematic analysis
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CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The chapter sets out and examines the findings of the study on global terrorism as well as regional insecurity in West Africa through the activities of Boko Haram in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025. The chapter follows the approved research questions and hypotheses. It uses documentary evidence from official notes and academic sources. The analysis is organised under three main themes. The first theme deals with military security capacity. The second theme deals with socio economic effects. The third theme deals with military response. Tables and figures are used to clarify the evidence. The visual material includes timelines, graphs, matrices, maps in coded format and dashboards. These tools help to show change over time and country differences. The chapter in addition uses Regional Security Complex Theory as the main guide. This theory helps explain why a security problem that started in Nigeria later affected Cameroon, Niger and Chad. The discussion uses simple academic language. It avoids claims without evidence. It in addition examines the three hypotheses through content analysis, thematic analysis and comparison of documentary evidence.

4.1 Hypothesis One: Boko Haram Terrorist Attacks and the Military Capacity of West African States.

4.1 Hypothesis One: Boko Haram Terrorist Activities and the Military Security Capacity of West African States in the Sahel Region.

4.1.1 Pattern of Boko Haram Attacks on Military Targets in the Sahel Region

Table 4.1 Selected Boko Haram military pressure and response milestones in the Sahel region

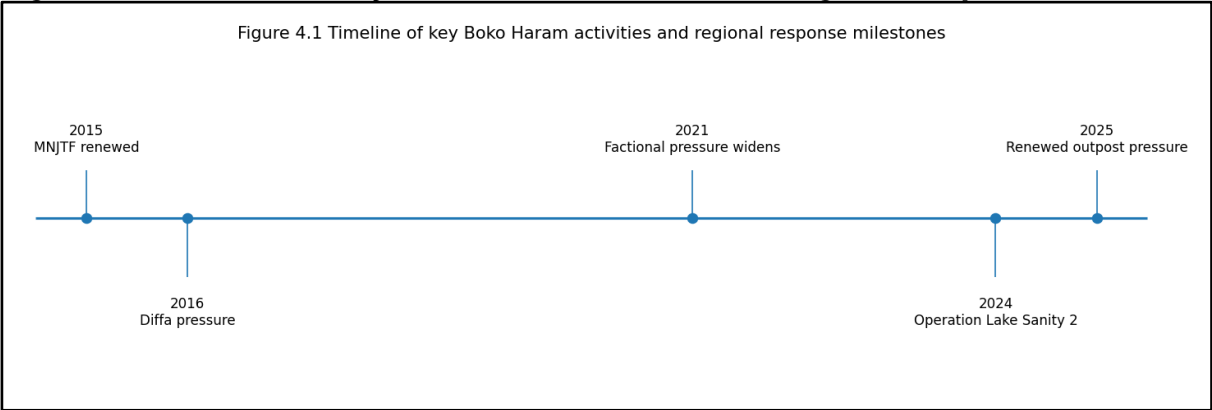
Year	Area	Documented event	Military meaning	Source
2015	Nigeria Cameroon Niger Chad	Affected states renewed joint action through the MNJTF.	National responses were no longer enough and regional military cooperation became central.	African Union 2024; Global Centre for R2P 2025
2016	Niger	The Diffa axis became a major pressure point.	Niger increased emergency military and border measures.	Akowe 2022; UNDP 2024
2019	Lake Chad Basin	Boko Haram and ISWAP pressure continued across military and civilian locations.	Security forces faced continuing operational and intelligence burdens.	Stoddard 2019; Tayimlong 2020
2021	Lake Chad Basin	Boko Haram and ISWAP rivalry widened.	Military planners faced factional and operational complexity.	Kimbartas 2023; Stoddard 2019
2023	Lake Chad Basin	Reports continued to identify insurgency pressure and weak governance in affected communities.	Military response still required stabilisation and civilian recovery support.	Neethling 2023; Okwara 2023
2024	Lake Chad Basin	Operation Lake Sanity 2 was commended by AU LCBC and MNJTF partners.	Joint operations degraded the group but did not end the threat.	African Union 2024
2025	Lake Chad Basin	Reports noted renewed pressure on isolated military outposts.	Border forces remained exposed in under-resourced areas.	ISS Africa 2025; Reuters 2024

Source: Compiled from African Union (2024), Global Centre for the Responsibility to

Protect (2025), ISS Africa (2025), Kimbartas (2023), Stoddard (2019), Tayimlong (2020), UNDP (2024).

Table 4.1 Selected Boko Haram military pressure and response milestones in the Sahel region

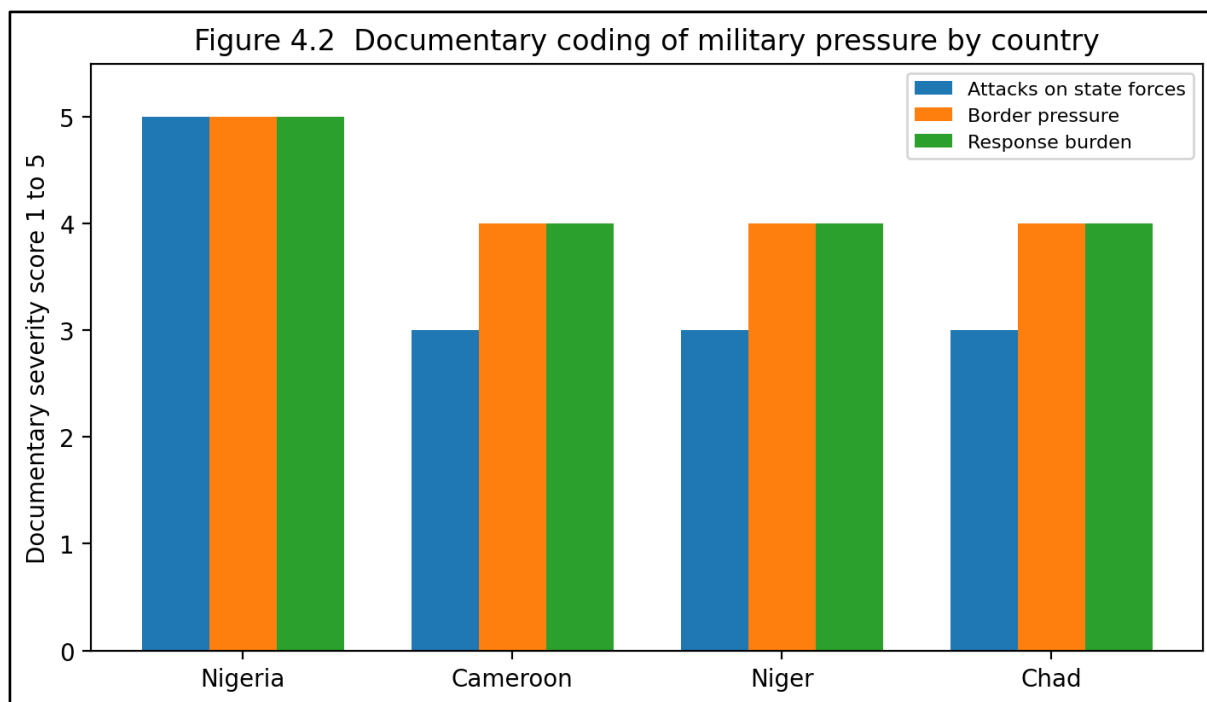
Figure 4.1 Timeline of key Boko Haram activities and regional response milestones



Source: Compiled from African Union (2024), Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (2025), Kimbartas (2023), Stoddard (2019), and UNDP (2024).

Figure 4.1 Timeline of key Boko Haram activities and regional response milestones

Figure 4.2 Documentary coding of military pressure by country

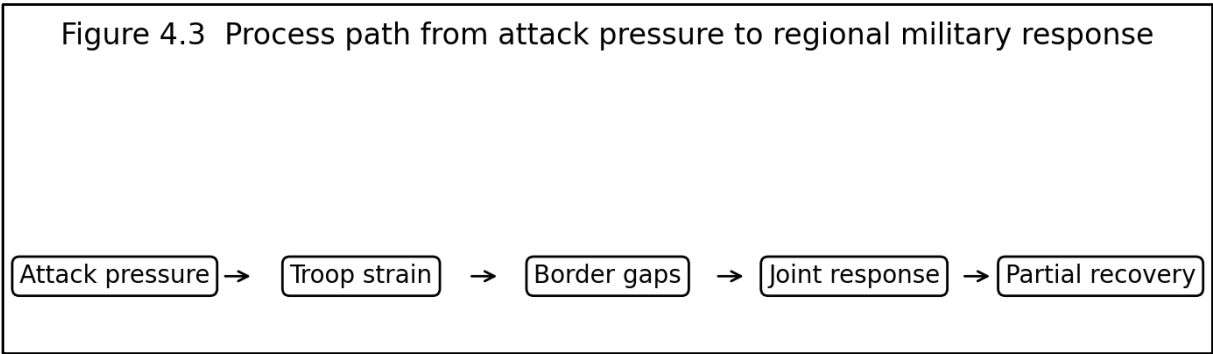


Source: Author coded from African Union (2024), ISS Africa (2025), UNDP (2024), and UNIDIR and ISS (2024). Scale: 1 means low documentary evidence and 5 means high documentary evidence.

Figure 4.2 does not claim to be a raw attack count. It is a documentary severity score based on repeated themes in official and scholarly sources. Nigeria received the highest score because the insurgency began in its North East zone and continued to

put pressure on its army. Cameroon, Niger and Chad also show high border pressure because their affected zones sit around Lake Chad. The response burden is high across the four countries because the MNJTF depends on them for troops territory and intelligence. The figure helps the chapter compare countries without pretending that all states faced equal pressure.

Figure 4.3 Process path from attack pressure to regional military response



Source: Author constructed from the approved theoretical framework and documentary evidence from African Union (2024), Friend (2021), Okunade et al. (2021), and UNDP (2024).

Figure 4.3 Process path from attack pressure to regional military response

Because they made states defend larger territories with limited resources (Abugbilla, 2017; UNDP, 2024), Boko Haram attacks affected military security capacity. The affected states had to protect towns, villages, roads, border posts, and military

formations at the same time. Nigeria faced the greatest pressure because the insurgency started in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States (Solomon, 2015; UNDP, 2024). While Niger faced strong pressure in the Diffa Region and Chad around the Lake Chad islands (Tayimlong, 2020; Akowe, 2022), Cameroon experienced attacks in the Far North Region. The shared location of these pressure points shows why the crisis became a regional security challenge (Buzan & Wæver, 2003).

Evidence in the document from Table 4.1 shows that attacks on state forces changed military planning and operation priorities (African Union, 2024; Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2025). Armed groups did not need to defeat the armies of the region in regular warfare; Instead, they needed no more than to make border areas insecure and force governments to assign more resources to security operations (Friend, 2021). This weakened governments ability to focus on development programmes and made troop rotation, supply movement, as well as intelligence collection more difficult (Kimbartas, 2023). While losing control for a period over parts of its territory, which shows the type of military strain observed in this study (Stoddard, 2019), a state may retain a functioning military institution.

Evidence in the document in addition shows that military pressure crossed state borders. Because threats can with ease spread across contiguous geographic spaces (Buzan & Wæver, 2003), Regional Security Complex Theory explains this pattern by arguing that neighbouring states share security effects. Because Boko Haram used border communities and limited state presence around the Lake Chad Basin (Okunade et al., 2021; UNDP, 2024), The theory is with special importance relevant to this study.

As a result, attack pressure in one country generated population movements, insecurity, and military response requirements in neighbouring states, changing a Nigerian crisis into a wider West African security concern (Tayimlong, 2020; African Union, 2024).

It would be wrong to suggest that Boko Haram weakened all affected military forces in the same way. Nigeria experienced direct battlefield pressure and repeated internal deployments, whereas Cameroon, Niger, as well as Chad faced as their main task border insecurity as well as cross-border insurgent movements (Abugbilla, 2017; Tayimlong, 2020). Although their experiences differed, all four countries faced a common challenge: they could not separate their national security from the activities of insurgents operating in neighbouring territories. This interdependence shows the need for the establishment and strengthening of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) (African Union, 2024; Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2025).

Evidence in the document does not prove the argument that Boko Haram destroyed the military institutions of West African states. The affected states continued to conduct military operations and recovered some territories (African Union, 2024). The African Union report on Operation Lake Sanity II shows that joint military forces degraded Boko Haram and other terrorist groups across parts of the MNJTF operational area (African Union, 2024). Even so, these gains did not remove the need for sustained military operations. A better conclusion is that Boko Haram lowered the efficiency with which affected states performed routine defence functions by requiring emergency deployments and redirecting public resources as well as attention toward security

issues (Friend, 2021; UNDP, 2024).

The challenge became more difficult by the evolution of the insurgent movement. The 2016 factional split and the emergence of the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) made the threat harder to counter (Kimbartas, 2023). Military strategies designed for a single insurgent organization became less effective when confronted with multiple factions working under different command structures and tactical methods (Stoddard, 2019). This states why the security challenge persisted despite repeated military operations. State responses had to contend not as a single issue with attacks but in addition with changing tactics, leadership structures, and operational environments. This long pressure constituted one of the most significant effects on military security capacity (Kimbartas, 2023; ISS Africa, 2025).

The findings from this section for this reason show that Boko Haram terrorist activities to a significant degree affected the military security capacity of West African states in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025. These effects were seen in pressures on military bases, troop deployments, border control operations, defence expenditure, intelligence planning and regional cooperation arrangements. Because the affected states had to adjust their military posture and rely more heavily on multinational security arrangements, the evidence supports the first hypothesis.

4.1.2 Troop Deployment Defence Burden and Border Security

This section presents the second set of military evidence. It focuses on the steps adopted by affected states in response to the pressures created by Boko Haram attacks (African Union, 2024; UNDP, 2024). Evidence in the document is organised

around troop deployment, border control, intelligence collection, and regional military cooperation, which have become central parts of counterterrorism efforts in the Lake Chad Basin (Okunade et al., 2021; Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2025). The discussion in addition shows that military security capacity cannot be assessed by only troop strength. Instead, it includes the ability of states to coordinate with neighbouring countries, share intelligence, secure borders, and protect civilian populations from insurgent threats (Friend, 2021; Buzan & Wæver, 2003). The table shows country-level indicators and links them to established response mechanisms across the region. It further highlights the role of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which emerged as the main military framework for coordinated action against Boko Haram and ISWAP within the Lake Chad Basin (African Union, 2024; Kimbartas, 2023). Through this structure, member states enhanced operational coordination, intelligence sharing, and cross-border military operations aimed at containing the insurgency as well as improving regional security (ISS Africa, 2025; UNDP, 2024).

Table 4.2 Military security capacity indicators and response burden by affected state

State	Main affected area	Response pattern	Capacity burden	MNJTF role
Nigeria	North East Nigeria	Heavy internal deployment and repeated operations	High pressure on troop rotation equipment and intelligence	Central troop contributor and host of major operations
Cameroon	Far North Region	Border deployment and emergency security measures	Pressure on rural border protection and local intelligence	Active troop contributor
Niger	Diffa Region	Border control	Pressure	Active but

		and counter insurgency measures	worsened by political and regional changes	politically strained contributor
Chad	Lake Chad islands and western zone	Mobile forces and cross border security action	Strong military role but cooperation concerns persisted	Key troop contributor with withdrawal threats in 2024
Benin	Support role	Contribution to MNJTF structure	Lower direct pressure than riparian states	Institutional support within MNJTF

Source: Compiled from African Union (2024), Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (2025), Reuters (2024), Reuters (2025), and UNDP (2024).

Table 4.2 Military security capacity indicators and response burden by affected state

Table 4.3 Documentary evidence matrix for military security capacity

Indicator	Documentary pattern	Evidence strength	Interpretation
Attack frequency	Repeated attacks in Nigeria and cross border zones	High	Shows operational pressure on state forces
Border insecurity	Movement through Lake Chad Basin routes	High	Explains why regional response became necessary
Troop deployment	Emergency and joint deployment across affected states	High	Shows redirection of military resources
Civilian harm risk	Military action and insurgent activity affected civilian zones	Medium	Shows limits of military only response
Territorial recovery	Some territories recovered through joint operations	Medium	Shows partial success but not full victory
Factional survival	Boko Haram and ISWAP remained active after major operations	High	Shows limits of military security capacity and planning

Source: Author thematic coding from Abugbilla (2017), African Union (2024), Friend (2021), ISS Africa (2025), Kimbartas (2023), and UNIDIR and ISS (2024).

Table 4.3 changes the documentary material into a basic coding matrix. The strongest support appears under attack pressure* border insecurity* troop deployment and factional survival. The table presents evidence in a balanced form. Some territorial recovery came from military operations. The continued activity of Boko Haram and ISWAP shows that the response did not end the threat. This balance helps the study avoid claims with exaggeration. It allows the argument that military security capacity was affected to a significant degree while the affected states retained capacity for response in some areas.

The military burden created by Boko Haram attacks appeared in troop deployment and border security operations. Nigeria had to keep wide security operations across the

North-East region. Cameroon* Niger and Chad began to treat their border areas as active security zones with sustained military presence (African Union, 2024; UNDP, 2024). This pressure changed the normal role of armed forces in those states. Personnel meant for other defence duties were drawn into counterinsurgency and internal security operations under heavy strain (Friend, 2021; Kimbartas, 2023). In this context the insurgency became a long-term problem for military planning and resource allocation across the region (ISS Africa, 2025).

Border security gained high importance because Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) used the Lake Chad Basin as a strategic movement route. The area contains communities with long-standing social* cultural* and economic ties across national boundaries (Tayimlong, 2020; UNDP, 2024). In periods of peace these links support normal contact. Insurgent groups used the same networks to move fighters* weapons* supplies and information across borders (Abugbilla, 2017; Kimbartas, 2023). Regular national border control systems lacked enough strength for this pattern. Since insecurity in one state could spread to neighbouring countries with little difficulty (Buzan & Wæver, 2003) regional cooperation became necessary.

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) developed as a practical response to this shared security pressure. The force joined Nigeria* Cameroon* Niger* Chad as well as Benin. It received support from the African Union as well as the Lake Chad Basin Commission (African Union, 2024; Okunade et al., 2021). Through its creation the Lake Chad Basin became a regional matter for military security capacity rather than a concern limited to one state. The threat crossed national boundaries (Buzan & Wæver,

2003). For that reason states could no longer treat their borders as isolated security spaces. The African Union report on Operation Lake Sanity II records notable MNJTF operational gains against Boko Haram and ISWAP. The same evidence shows another point. Effective multinational operations require sustained funding* political commitment* mutual trust and coordination among participating states (African Union, 2024; Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2025).

Important limitations remained. Higher troop deployment does not bring better security outcomes in every case. In places with weak accountability systems heavy military presence can create fear and mistrust among civilian populations (Okunade et al., 2021). Long security operations can redirect government resources away from key sectors such as education* healthcare and post-conflict recovery programmes (AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024). For this reason military security capacity should be judged beyond battlefield success. Assessment must include wider social and developmental effects. A strategy that recovers territory without public trust can create serious new openings for renewed insurgent activity (UNDP, 2024).

The document shows that military security capacity was shaped by changes in the insurgent threat during the full period under review. The split inside Boko Haram and the rise of ISWAP created operational uncertainty as well as complexity for security forces (Kimbartas, 2023; Stoddard, 2019). Strategies built for one insurgent organization lost strength when several factions used different tactics* leadership structures and community relationships (ISS Africa, 2025). This change raised the value of intelligence collection and reduced the value of conventional military operations. As a result regional security strategies needed flexibility with local

governance* stabilization programmes and livelihood recovery initiatives (UNIDIR & ISS, 2024; AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024).

The cases of Chad and Niger show how political dynamics shape military responses. The threat from Chad to leave the MNJTF in 2024 and the shift in Niger regional security posture in 2025 show how cooperation can weaken when national interests change (Reuters, 2024; Reuters, 2025). These problems do not reduce the importance of the MNJTF. They show that successful regional security cooperation depends on political will as well as sustained commitment from participating states (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2025). Regional Security Complex Theory gives a useful explanation for this problem. The theory stresses that neighbouring states are connected through shared threats while they pursue distinct national interests (Buzan & Wæver, 2003).

The evidence confirms that Boko Haram activities affected the military security capacity of West African states in the Sahel region to a significant degree. The effects appear through higher troop deployments* wider border-security duties* stronger intelligence demands* equipment pressure and the need for multinational coordination. For this reason the documentary evidence supports the first hypothesis.

4.2 Hypothesis Two: Socio Economic Effects of Boko Haram Terrorist Attacks on West African Countries

4.2.1 Displacement Humanitarian Crisis and Social Service Collapse

The second research question examines the socio-economic effects of Boko Haram terrorist attacks on West African countries. Because displacement, food insecurity, and the collapse of important social services represent some of the most clear as well as

measurable effects of the crisis (OCHA, 2025; UNIDIR & ISS, 2024), This section begins with humanitarian indicators. The table draws on official and institutional sources to show the regional size of these impacts across the Lake Chad Basin. Because these countries make up the core area affected by Boko Haram activities and for this reason provide the most relevant evidence for assessing the humanitarian effects of the insurgency (AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024; OCHA, 2025), It focuses on Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, as well as Chad. The figures that follow are not presented as isolated numbers; instead they are used to support a wider interpretation of how terrorist attacks deepened existing social weaknesses, disrupted livelihoods, reduced community resilience, and made everyday life with rising frequency difficult for households in affected communities (Refugees International, 2023; Tayimlong, 2020). In addition, the evidence highlights how prolonged insecurity contributed to widespread displacement, worse living conditions, and growing humanitarian needs throughout the region (FAO, 2017; UNHCR, 2025).

Table 4.4 Humanitarian and social effects in the Lake Chad Basin

Indicator	Documented evidence	Source
Regional displacement	More than 2.9 million people remained displaced as of May 2025.	OCHA 2025
Nigeria displacement	Nigeria remained the most affected with about 2.1 million displaced persons in the North East.	OCHA 2025
Earlier displacement level	About 2.4 million people were displaced in the Lake Chad Basin in 2017.	FAO 2017
Food insecurity	Food insecurity affected 4.6 million people in Nigeria 1.2 million in Cameroon 0.3 million in Chad and 0.1 million in	OCHA 2025

	Niger in the crisis zone.	
Humanitarian need	UNIDIR and ISS reported 11.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance across Nigeria, Chad Niger and Cameroon.	UNIDIR and ISS 2024
Social service pressure	Conflict and fragility affected rule of law, social cohesion, livelihood and basic services.	AfDB LCBC and UNDP 2024

Source: Compiled from AfDB, LCBC and UNDP (2024), FAO (2017), OCHA (2025), and UNIDIR and ISS (2024).

Table 4.4 shows that the socio economic effect of Boko Haram is not limited to direct damage. The crisis created displacement and humanitarian need across the Lake Chad Basin. Nigeria remained the most affected country but Cameroon, Niger and Chad also carried large social burdens. The food insecurity figures show how security problems became livelihood problems. The table also supports a wider point. Terrorist attacks did not work alone. They entered an area that already faced poverty, weak services and climate stress. The crisis then made these old problems more severe.

Figure 4.4 Food insecurity in Boko Haram affected Lake Chad Basin areas 2025

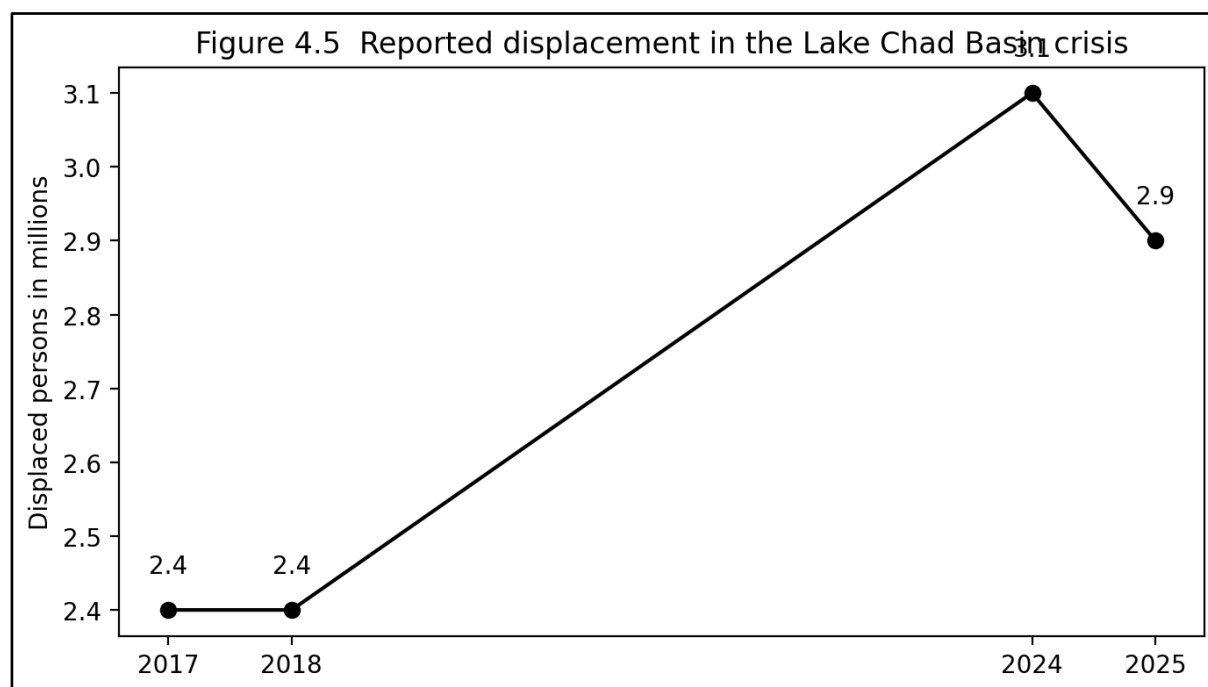
4.2 Hypothesis Two: Socio Economic Effects of Boko Haram Terrorist Activities on West African Countries in the Sahel Region

Source: Adapted from OCHA Lake Chad Basin Humanitarian Snapshot June 2025 as cited in Sahel Research Group (2025).

Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of food insecurity in the affected zones. Nigeria has the highest figure because the North East remains the centre of the crisis. Cameroon also has a serious burden in its Far North Region. Chad and Niger record lower figures in this specific data set but their affected communities still face heavy

stress. The figure is important because it converts the security problem into a livelihood question. A household that cannot farm, trade fish or move safely becomes food insecure. This means the effect of terrorist attacks extends beyond the battlefield.

Figure 4.5 Reported displacement in the Lake Chad Basin crisis

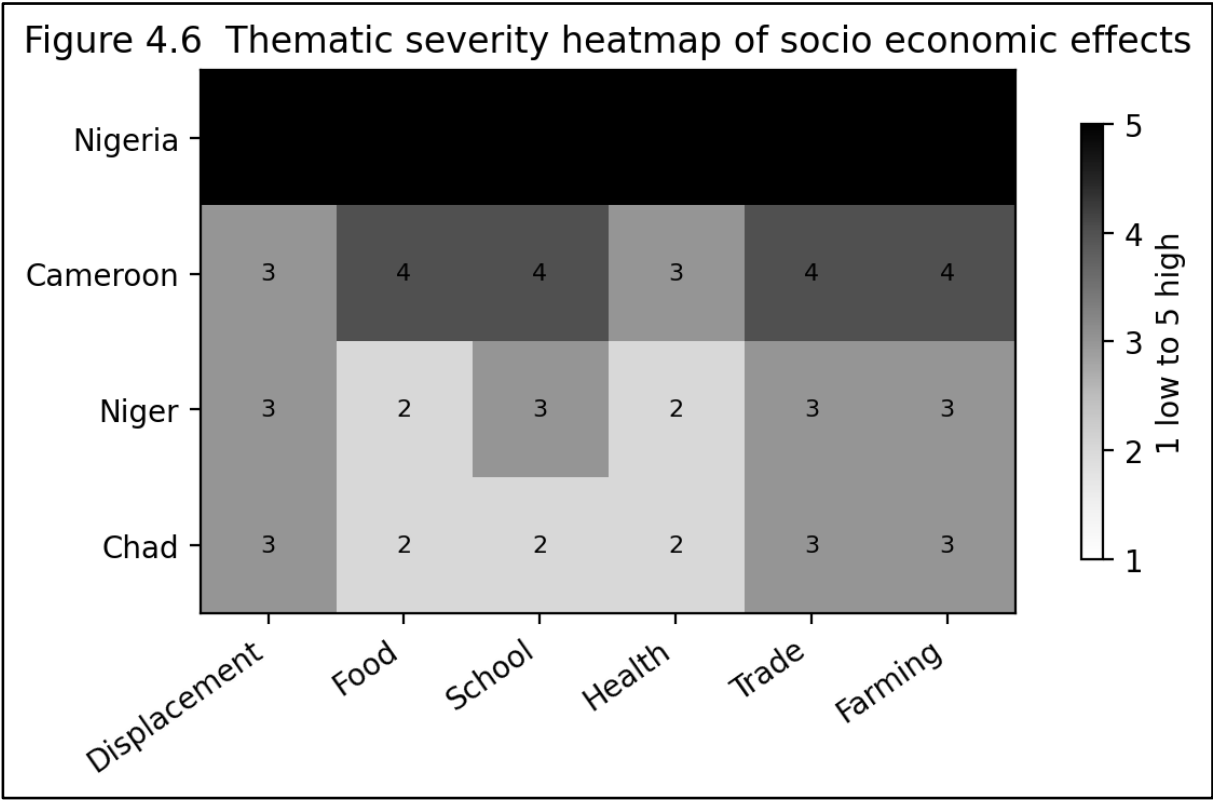


Source: Compiled from FAO (2017), OCHA (2018), OCHA (2025), and UNHCR (2025).

Figure 4.5 presents displacement as a long term social effect. The figures show that displacement remained high across different years. The movement from 2.4 million in 2017 and 2018 to above 3 million by late 2024 shows that the crisis did not

fade quickly. The decrease to more than 2.9 million in 2025 does not mean the problem ended. It means that displacement remained at emergency level. The figure helps the study show that Boko Haram attacks created repeated and prolonged movement of people. This movement affected family life, work schooling, health access and community stability.

Figure 4.6 Thematic severity heatmap of socio economic effects



Source: Author coded from AfDB, LCBC and UNDP (2024), OCHA (2025), Tayimlong

(2020), and UNIDIR and ISS (2024).

Figure 4.6 summarises the severity of socio economic effects by country and sector. Nigeria receives the highest coding because it carries the largest direct impact. Cameroon, Niger and Chad also record serious effects in displacement, food security trade and farming. The heatmap is a thematic tool rather than a raw statistical table. It helps compare patterns across countries. It also shows that the socio economic burden is not one single problem. It is a cluster of linked problems that move from insecurity to livelihood loss and from livelihood loss to humanitarian need.

Because they disrupted the daily systems that communities depend upon for survival (FAO, 2017; OCHA, 2025), Boko Haram attacks produced serious socio-economic effects. Continuing insecurity forced people to abandon farms, villages, roads, schools, and markets, which weakened both economic productivity as well as social stability (AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024). Displacement became one of the most visible effects of the conflict. Families who fled their homes on many occasions lost access to land, income, property, and community support networks, creating many humanitarian needs at the same time, including food, shelter, water, healthcare, as well as protection services (UNHCR, 2025; Refugees International, 2023).

Evidence in the document on food insecurity shows how terrorism can evolve into a wider economic crisis. While traders face difficulty moving goods through conflict-affected areas (FAO, 2017; OCHA, 2025), Farmers are unable to farm or harvest crops when agricultural lands and transport routes become unsafe. In the same way, fishers and herders lose access to fishing grounds, water sources, as well as grazing areas

when armed groups restrict movement or occupy key locations (AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024). These disruptions reduce household incomes and food availability, increase market prices, as well as deepen existing poverty levels throughout affected communities (UNDP, 2024; FAO, 2017). As a result, food insecurity remains one of the most significant socio-economic effects of the Boko Haram insurgency.

Education and healthcare systems in addition suffer when insecurity becomes widespread. Because staff, students, and patients can no longer travel with safety (UNICEF, 2024; OCHA, 2025), Some schools as well as health facilities have been destroyed, while others have ceased operations. These disruptions affect not as a single issue current living conditions but in addition future development chances. While communities deprived of healthcare services become with rising frequency open to disease, malnutrition, psychological trauma, and preventable deaths (UNICEF, 2024; WHO, 2024), Children who lose access to education for extended periods face reduced opportunities in the job market. Because they in a direct way affect human capital development and general social welfare, such effects are socio-economic in nature.

Evidence in the document should not be interpreted in a simple way. Before the escalation of Boko Haram violence, the Lake Chad Basin already experienced major challenges, including widespread poverty, weak infrastructure, environmental decline, and climate-related pressures (AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024; UNDP, 2024). For this reason, terrorism did not create all socio-economic problems from the beginning. Instead, it intensified pre-existing vulnerabilities and to a significant degree made recovery work difficult (Refugees International, 2023). While at the same time showing

weaknesses in governance and service delivery across affected communities (UNDP, 2024), the strongest interpretation is that Boko Haram transformed existing structural weaknesses into a wide humanitarian emergency.

Because it demonstrates the prolonged nature of the crisis, the displacement trend is of special importance. Unlike short emergencies, the Lake Chad Basin conflict generated displacement patterns that persisted across multiple years of humanitarian reporting (UNHCR, 2025; OCHA, 2025). In addition, many returning households continued to face insecurity, inadequate public services, and limited economic opportunities. As a result, return in physical terms to a place of origin cannot be interpreted by default as evidence of successful recovery. Individuals may return home while still lacking access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and personal security (Refugees International, 2023; UNHCR, 2025).

The Regional Security Complex Theory approach in addition provides a helpful framework for understanding these issues. The socio-economic effects of the conflict crossed state borders through refugee movements, trade disruptions, and expanding humanitarian needs (Buzan & Wæver, 2003; Tayimlong, 2020). Cameroon, Niger, and Chad did not observe a crisis occurring in Nigeria; they received displaced populations, experienced pressure on local services, as well as became participants in regional humanitarian as well as security responses (UNHCR, 2025; AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024). The population movement, goods, and insecurity transformed the conflict into a regional socio-economic challenge, supporting the argument that security threats among neighbouring states on many occasions generate shared human as well as

developmental effects (Buzan & Wæver, 2003; Okunade et al., 2021).

This section for this reason confirms that Boko Haram attacks had significant socio-economic effects on West African countries. These effects include displacement, food insecurity, livelihood losses, service disruption, and damage to critical infrastructure (OCHA, 2025; FAO, 2017). Although the impact was most severe in Nigeria, its effects extended into Cameroon, Niger, and Chad through connected economic, social, as well as humanitarian systems (UNHCR, 2025; AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024). Evidence in the document further demonstrates that the crisis interacted with pre-existing poverty, weak governance structures, and developmental challenges. For this reason, the main finding is not that Boko Haram alone created every hardship in the region, but instead that the insurgency to a significant degree worsened the socio-economic conditions of an already weak and exposed regional environment (UNDP, 2024; Okunade et al., 2021).

4.2.2 Effects on Trade Agriculture Employment and Infrastructure

The next evidence section focuses on livelihood and infrastructure. The attacks of Boko Haram affected local production and market systems. This matters because agriculture fishing herding trade and transport are the usual income sources for many communities in the Lake Chad Basin. The table arranges the effects by sector. It in addition links each effect to the countries and sources where the issue is discussed. The purpose is to show how a security crisis becomes a development crisis. This is necessary because the study does not as a single issue measure deaths or attacks. It measures the larger cost to society.

Table 4.5 Sector based socio economic effects of Boko Haram attacks

Sector	Main effect	Area affected	Source
Agriculture	Farm abandonment crop loss and unsafe rural access	Nigeria Cameroon Niger Chad	Tayimlong 2020; OCHA 2025
Trade	Market disruption closed routes and lower cross border exchange	Nigeria Cameroon Niger Chad	Rapanyane and Sethole 2021; UNDP 2024
Fishing and livestock	Reduced access to Lake Chad livelihoods and movement limits	Lake Chad border communities	UNDP 2024; Refugees International 2023
Education	School closure fear of movement and learning loss	North East Nigeria and neighbouring affected zones	Amalu 2016; OCHA 2025
Health	Pressure on health centres disease risk and weak access	Displaced and host communities	UNHCR 2025; OCHA 2025
Infrastructure	Damage to roads bridges markets and basic public assets	Mainly Nigeria and border zones	Tayimlong 2020; Akowe 2022

Source: Compiled from Akowe (2022), Amalu (2016), OCHA (2025), Rapanyane and Sethole (2021), Refugees International (2023), Tayimlong (2020), and UNDP (2024).

Table 4.5 shows that the economic effects were wide. Agriculture and trade were the most visible because insecurity stops movement and production. Fishing and livestock were also affected because many communities depend on Lake Chad and cross border routes. Education and health are included because they shape labour capacity and future welfare. Infrastructure damage also matters because roads, bridges and markets connect local economies. The table therefore supports the argument that Boko Haram attacks produced a development crisis. The crisis reduced income and weakened the public systems that allow recovery.

Table 4.6 Rival explanations for socio economic decline in the Lake Chad Basin

Explanation	Evidence level	Meaning	Decision
Boko Haram attacks	Strong evidence	Directly caused displacement and disrupted services.	Accepted as a main cause
Climate stress	Strong evidence	Environmental pressure affected water farming and livelihoods.	Accepted as a contributing cause
Old poverty	Strong evidence	The region was poor before the crisis.	Accepted as a structural cause
Weak governance	Strong evidence	Weak state services allowed insurgent influence to grow.	Accepted as an enabling cause
Regional trade weakness	Moderate evidence	Trade systems were fragile and easily disrupted.	Accepted as a secondary cause

Source: Author synthesis from AfDB, LCBC and UNDP (2024), Refugees International (2023), Tayimlong (2020), and UNIDIR and ISS (2024).

Table 4.6 prevents a weak conclusion. It shows that Boko Haram was not the only reason for socio economic decline. Climate stress, old poverty, weak governance and fragile trade systems also mattered. Yet Boko Haram attacks turned these

weaknesses into urgent crisis conditions. The table therefore supports a balanced interpretation. The study should not blame terrorism for every problem in the Lake Chad Basin. It should show that terrorism was a major shock that made long standing hardship worse and blocked recovery in many places.

Boko Haram affected trade and agriculture by making movement unsafe across many parts of the Lake Chad Basin. Rural households in the affected areas depend to a large degree on farming, fishing, herding, and small-scale trade for their livelihoods (FAO, 2017; AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024). These economic activities require stable access to land, water resources, transport routes, and local markets. When attacks make roads unsafe and communities unstable, local economic activity falls to a significant degree (OCHA, 2025; UNDP, 2024). Traders may cease transporting goods, farmers may abandon cultivated land, and herders may lose access to traditional grazing routes as well as water sources (FAO, 2017; Refugees International, 2023). These disruptions reduce production levels, limit market involvement, and reduce household income throughout affected communities (AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024).

Infrastructure destruction further increased the economic cost of the crisis. Roads, bridges, and other public facilities connect communities to markets, schools, healthcare centres, as well as security institutions (World Bank, 2023; AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024). Because of insecurity, the cost and difficulty of movement increase to a considerable degree, When these assets are damaged, destroyed, or abandoned. Because aid agencies depend on secure transportation networks to reach displaced populations and vulnerable communities (OCHA, 2025; UNHCR, 2025), such

disruptions affect both commercial activities as well as humanitarian operations. As a result, the destruction of infrastructure increases the effect of terrorist attacks by changing a one security incident into a series of social and economic losses across multiple sectors (World Bank, 2023).

Employment losses followed a similar pattern. Direct employment opportunities disappeared when markets closed, businesses stopped operations, and agricultural lands were abandoned because of insecurity (UNDP, 2024; AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024). Related employment was in addition affected as transportation services, commercial activities, and informal businesses declined (FAO, 2017). Young people in particular faced diminishing economic opportunities in regions already characterized by high poverty rates and limited development prospects (UNDP, 2024; Okunade et al., 2021). This issue is significant because economic exclusion and social exclusion can increase vulnerability to recruitment by armed groups (UNDP, 2024). While livelihood loss increased social and economic vulnerability, The crisis for this reason generated a cycle that reinforces itself in which insecurity undermined livelihoods.

Evidence in the document in addition supports a more careful interpretation of the crisis. Environmental pressures around Lake Chad, including climate variation and resource shortage, had already affected agriculture, fishing, as well as population movement before the escalation of Boko Haram violence (AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024; FAO, 2017). Likewise, weak governance structures and inadequate infrastructure existed before the insurgency (World Bank, 2023). Because Boko Haram exploited and intensified existing vulnerabilities, This does not weaken the argument, these realities

strengthen it. The group did not create poverty from the outset; instead, it used poverty, insecurity, and weak state institutions to expand its influence as well as undermine government authority (UNDP, 2024; Okunade et al., 2021).

The impact on education and healthcare further demonstrates the long-term nature of the socio-economic effects. School closures reduce educational attainment and damage the future capacity for work of children as well as young people (UNICEF, 2024). In the same way, weakened healthcare systems affect labour productivity, public health outcomes, and community resilience (WHO, 2024). Displaced populations on many occasions require many years to rebuild stable social and economic life after conflict (UNHCR, 2025; Refugees International, 2023). As a result, the effects of the insurgency extend beyond immediate material losses and continue to influence human development as well as human security after violent incidents occur (UNDP, 2024).

The Regional Security Complex Theory approach in addition provides support for this analysis. Trade networks, population movements, and livelihood systems on many occasions cross state borders within the Lake Chad Basin (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). While refugee movements can place extra pressure on host communities and local public services (UNHCR, 2025; OCHA, 2025), a disruption to markets in one area can affect supply chains elsewhere. Border closures, security restrictions, and military operations may in addition limit normal economic activities as well as reduce opportunities for regional commerce (Tayimlong, 2020). Because of interconnected geographic spaces and economic relationships (Buzan & Wæver, 2003; AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024), For this reason, the socio-economic effects of Boko Haram were not

confined to Nigeria alone; they spread throughout Cameroon, Niger, as well as Chad.

This section finds that Boko Haram attacks had wide socio-economic effects with major importance. The insurgency damaged agriculture, trade, employment, infrastructure, education and healthcare across the Lake Chad Basin region (FAO, 2017; OCHA, 2025). The crisis interacted with climate stress, poverty, weak governance and developmental challenges which produced connected outcomes with complex patterns (AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024; UNDP, 2024). For this reason the strongest reading is not a single-cause explanation but a layered view of several reinforcing factors. Boko Haram terrorist attacks intensified existing socio-economic vulnerabilities to a substantial degree while they turned local hardship into a wider regional humanitarian as well as development crisis (UNDP, 2024; Okunade et al., 2021).

4.3 Hypothesis Three: Military Response of West African States to Boko Haram Terrorism

4.3.1 National and Regional Military Responses

The third research question studies the military responses adopted by West African states to fight Boko Haram terrorism. This section presents these responses at both the national and regional levels, drawing on documentary evidence from official notes as well as scholarly studies (African Union, 2024; Okunade et al., 2021). The responses include direct military action, border security deployments, joint counterterrorism efforts, and support provided by regional as well as international institutions (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2025; UNDP, 2024). Because it represents the main framework for military cooperation established to address the Lake Chad Basin crisis (African Union, 2024; Lake Chad Basin Commission [LCBC], 2024), The

Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) has a central position in this analysis. The table below summarizes the evidence on military responses across the affected states. In addition, the accompanying figures show the actor network involved in the response as well as the timeline of key military and political issues (Reuters, 2024; Reuters, 2025). These analytical tools help assess the extent to which the response was significant, coordinated, and able to address the threat in a sustainable as well as long-term manner (ISS Africa, 2025; UNIDIR & ISS, 2024).

Table 4.7 National and regional military responses to Boko Haram terrorism

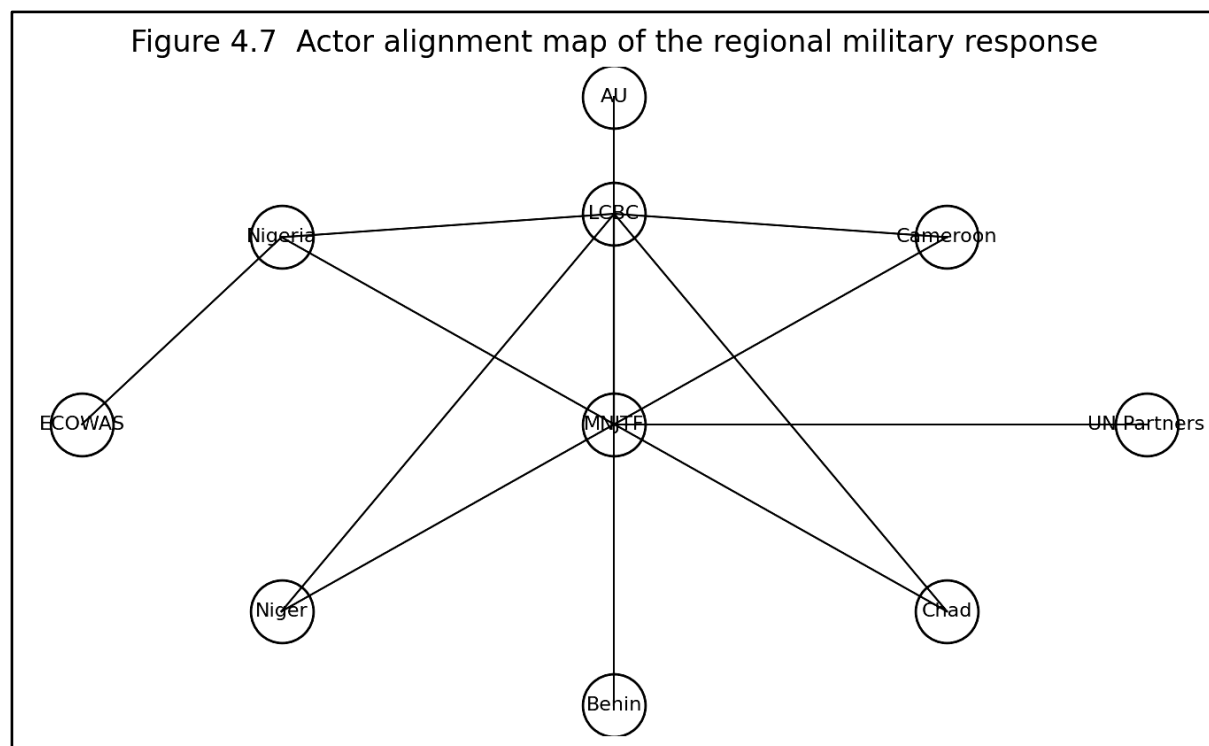
Actor	Response	Recorded gain	Main limit
Nigeria	Counter insurgency operations in North East states	Regained some areas and maintained major troop presence	Persistent attacks and local trust problems
Cameroon	Border security in Far North Region	Restricted some cross border movement	Rural areas remained vulnerable
Niger	Diffa security measures and MNJTF role	Strengthened border focus	Political change later strained regional cooperation
Chad	Mobile operations around Lake Chad	Strong military role in regional operations	Withdrawal threats showed frustration with cooperation
MNJTF	Joint multinational operations	Created shared command and cross border pressure	Funding equipment and coordination limits remained
AU and LCBC	Political support compliance and stabilisation	Strengthened legitimacy of the response	Non military recovery remained insufficient

	support		
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Source: Compiled from African Union (2024), Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (2025), Okunade et al. (2021), Reuters (2024), Reuters (2025), and UNDP (2024).

Table 4.7 presents a layered military response. National governments worked inside their territories while the MNJTF served as the regional platform. Political and institutional support came from the African Union as well as the Lake Chad Basin Commission. The evidence identifies gains such as territorial recovery, joint operations, and clearer recognition of the cross border nature of the threat. Limits appear in the table. Regional cooperation faced funding problems, equipment gaps, political tension, and different national priorities. For this reason the table supports a careful judgement. The response had significant value but remained incomplete.

4.3 Hypothesis Three: Military Response of West African States to Boko Haram Terrorist Activities in the Sahel Region

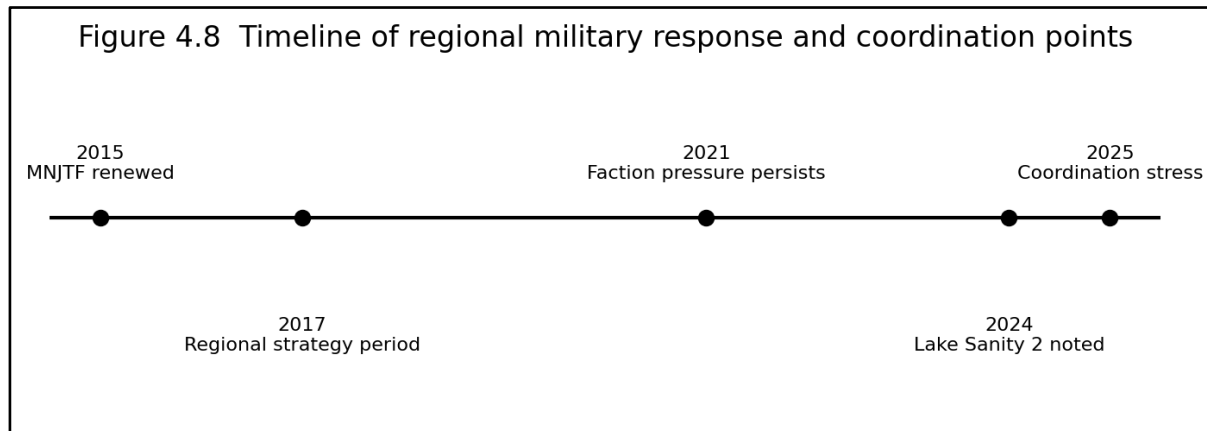


Source: Author constructed from African Union (2024), LCBC and UNDP sources, and MNJTF related public records.

Figure 4.7 shows the relationship among key actors in the response. The

MNJTF stands at the centre because it links the troop contributing countries. The African Union and Lake Chad Basin Commission support the force through political and institutional channels. ECOWAS has wider regional relevance while UN partners support stabilisation and humanitarian work. The map also shows why coordination is difficult. Many actors are linked to the same problem but they do not all have the same mandate. This explains why military response can be visible and still face slow implementation.

Figure 4.8 Timeline of regional military response and coordination points



Source: Compiled from African Union (2024), Reuters (2024), Reuters (2025), and UNDP (2024).

Figure 4.8 explains the sequence of regional response across time. The renewal of the MNJTF in 2015 marked a shift from separate state action to regional military cooperation. Later periods confirm that the response remained needed because the crisis continued. Operation Lake Sanity 2 in 2024 shows renewed joint military activity. The coordination stress in 2025 shows how politics as well as national interest shape regional response. The figure assists the test of the third hypothesis because military response appears as a long process rather than a single event. That process included gains as well as setbacks.

The affected West African states used national operations as well as regional military action against Boko Haram. Nigeria depended on counterinsurgency operations in the North-East while Cameroon strengthened security measures in the Far North Region. Niger focused on the Diffa Region. Chad used mobile military forces around the Lake Chad area (African Union, 2024; Okunade et al., 2021). These actions show that each affected country viewed Boko Haram as a direct threat to national security. The same actions show that the scale as well as transnational nature of the insurgency exceeded the capacity of any single state to respond with effect on its own (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2025; UNDP, 2024).

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) became the most visible sign of regional military cooperation in the fight against Boko Haram. It helped affected states recognise the cross-border dimensions of the insurgency through coordinated military action (African Union, 2024; LCBC, 2024). Boko Haram and ISWAP crossed national boundaries on many occasions. For that reason isolated national operations could not contain the threat (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). The MNJTF gave participating states a way to share operational burdens, exchange intelligence, and conduct joint military campaigns. The African Union report on Operation Lake Sanity II supports this view because it states that coordinated operations degraded Boko Haram and other terrorist groups within the MNJTF operational area to a significant degree (African Union, 2024).

The response had a political dimension in addition. Member states had to accept a level of shared security responsibility despite the traditional importance of national sovereignty in international relations (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). Effective joint operations required trust, intelligence sharing, and coordinated planning among participating

governments (Okunade et al., 2021). The continued operation of the MNJTF despite operational and political problems suggests that affected states accepted the regional nature of the threat as well as the need for collective action. This pattern fits Regional Security Complex Theory because the theory holds that neighbouring states become interconnected when they face common security threats (Buzan & Wæver, 2003).

Despite these gains the military response faced significant limitations. Funding limits as well as military equipment shortages reduced the effect and sustainability of operations (ISS Africa, 2025; UNIDIR & ISS, 2024). Language differences, military doctrine, along with command structures made cooperation harder between Anglophone as well as Francophone forces (Okunade et al., 2021). Domestic political changes within member states changed national priorities in some cases and affected regional commitments. Reports on the threat of Chad to withdraw from the MNJTF as well as the changing security policies in Niger show how regional cooperation can weaken when national interests diverge (Reuters, 2024; Reuters, 2025).

Civilian protection created another challenge for the military response. Counterinsurgency operations in many cases take place in populated areas where military activities can affect civilian communities (UNDP, 2024). Military success may suffer when local populations feel insecure or left outside post-conflict recovery work (UNIDIR & ISS, 2024). For this reason effective counterterrorism strategies must connect military operations with accountability, civilian protection, and stabilization measures. The African Union along with the Lake Chad Basin Commission placed emphasis on stabilization, recovery, and compliance. This shows that military force alone cannot rebuild public trust or address the underlying causes of insecurity

(African Union, 2024; LCBC, 2024).

Evidence in the document points to clear outcomes from the military response. Several territories were recovered from insurgent control. The movement of Boko Haram as well as ISWAP fighters was restricted in parts of the Lake Chad Basin (African Union, 2024; ISS Africa, 2025). Insurgent groups had to adjust their tactics as well as operation patterns because of sustained military pressure. These gains show important security results. Even so the continued presence as well as activity of Boko Haram and ISWAP indicates that the insurgency was not defeated in full (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2025; UNDP, 2024). The most balanced reading is for this reason one of partial success within a prolonged and evolving conflict.

This section shows that the military response had significant value because it changed the way affected states managed the Boko Haram crisis. Separate national operations became over time a coordinated regional security effort supported by institutional systems for military cooperation as well as intelligence sharing (African Union, 2024; Okunade et al., 2021). The response addressed the threat in important ways by improving coordination and raising military pressure on insurgent groups. Even so its effectiveness remained limited by coordination challenges, political tensions, resource limitations, and the lack of strong socio-economic recovery as well as stabilization programmes (UNDP, 2024; UNIDIR & ISS, 2024). For this reason the evidence supports the third research question with important limits on the long-term effect as well as sustainability of the military response.

4.3.2 Effectiveness and Limitations of the Military Response

The final Chapter Four evidence section studies effectiveness and limits. It is not enough to say that West African states responded. This research must ask whether the response addressed Boko Haram terrorism. Effectiveness is measured through territorial recovery pressure on armed groups intelligence sharing and institutional cooperation. Limitations are measured through continued attacks, factional survival, civilian protection concerns, funding problems and political tensions. The table and dashboard below help present the evidence in a clear manner. They in addition help support the decision for the third hypothesis.

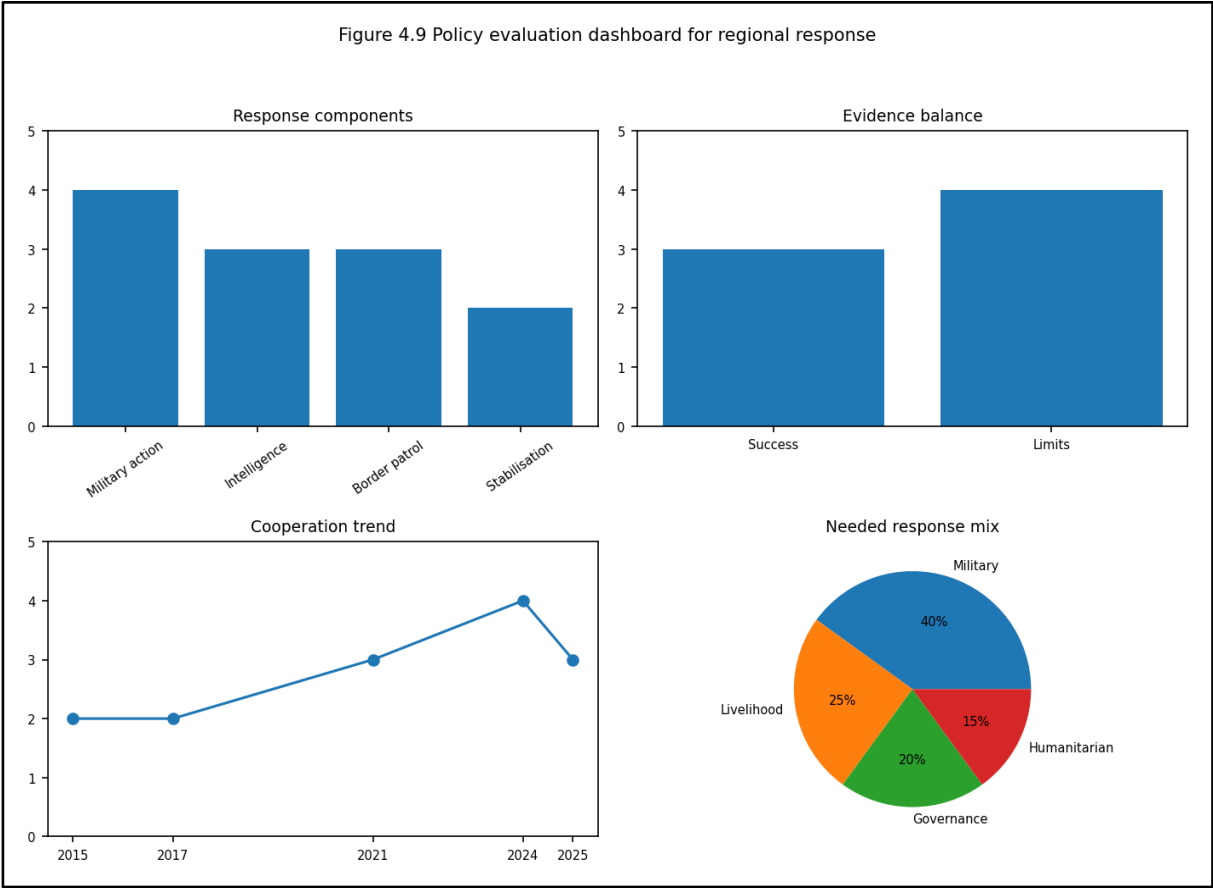
Table 4.8 Effectiveness and limitations of the military response

Response area	Evidence of success	Evidence of limit	Overall reading
Joint military operations	Created shared pressure across borders	Did not end factional activity	Partly effective
Territorial recovery	Some areas were recovered or cleared	Hold and rebuild phases remained weak	Partly effective
Intelligence sharing	Improved regional knowledge of movement patterns	Trust and capacity gaps remained	Moderate effect
Border patrols	Raised state presence in key routes	Large spaces remained hard to secure	Moderate effect
Civilian protection	Compliance and accountability became part of AU support	Civilian fear and service gaps remained	Limited effect
Stabilisation	RSS and recovery ideas were recognised	Livelihood and governance recovery lagged behind military action	Weak but necessary

Source: Author synthesis from African Union (2024), AfDB, LCBC and UNDP (2024), ISS Africa (2026), Okunade et al. (2021), and UNIDIR and ISS (2024).

Table 4.8 shows a mixed pattern. The response was partly effective in joint operations and territorial recovery. It had a moderate effect in intelligence sharing and border patrol. It was weaker in civilian protection and stabilisation. This does not mean the response failed completely. It means the response was too military centred for a crisis with social and economic roots. The table therefore supports a qualified decision for the third hypothesis. The military response significantly addressed Boko Haram terrorism in some areas but it did not fully resolve the crisis.

Figure 4.9 Policy evaluation dashboard for regional response



Source: Author coded from African Union (2024), AfDB, LCBC and UNDP (2024), ISS Africa (2026), and UNIDIR and ISS (2024).

Figure 4.9 brings the response evidence into one dashboard. The first panel shows that military and intelligence actions were more visible than stabilisation. The second panel shows that evidence of limits is stronger than evidence of full success. The third panel shows that cooperation rose after 2015 but faced pressure later. The fourth panel shows that a balanced response needs more than military action. It needs humanitarian support, governance recovery and livelihood rebuilding. The dashboard supports a balanced finding. Regional response mattered but it remained incomplete without strong civilian recovery.

Table 4.9 Final evidence chain for testing the third hypothesis

Evidence area	Interpretation
Evidence that supports effectiveness	MNJTF operations AU support territorial recovery and cross border coordination.
Evidence that limits effectiveness	Continued factional activity border gaps, political tension and funding limits.
Theory link	Regional Security Complex Theory explains why the response had to be regional.
Main judgement	The response significantly addressed Boko Haram but did not fully solve the crisis.
Policy meaning	Military action must be linked to stabilisation, livelihood recovery and civilian trust.

Source: Author synthesis based on documentary analysis of Chapter Four evidence.

Table 4.9 sets out the final evidence chain for the third hypothesis. It avoids a simple yes or no conclusion. Joint force action as well as regional coordination helped the military response address Boko Haram. Yet armed factions survived and the fragile

political setting limited the depth of success. The theory link remains direct because the response became regional after the threat became regional. The policy point has equal clarity. Any lasting answer must join military pressure with governance, livelihood, and community recovery.

The effectiveness of the military response appears in the creation and use of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). It gave affected states an organised platform for coordinated military action as well as a shared view of the transnational nature of the Boko Haram threat (African Union, 2024; Okunade et al., 2021). Support from African Union for Operation Lake Sanity II shows that joint operations placed pressure on Boko Haram and other armed factions in the Lake Chad Basin (African Union, 2024). This achievement matters because insurgent groups had used porous borders as well as national responses with weak coordination to avoid military pressure (Kimbartas, 2023; Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2025). It shows why joint structures became central to the regional security effort.

The evidence does not prove full military success. Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) continued to operate despite repeated military campaigns as well as counterterrorism operations (ISS Africa, 2025; UNDP, 2024). These groups adjusted to military pressure by moving into difficult terrain, using remote communities, and changing operational tactics (Kimbartas, 2023; Stoddard, 2019). This shows that military force can contain insurgent activity but may not remove it in a complete way. A successful response requires more than clearing territory. It must maintain security, restore governance, and rebuild normal social life as well as economic life (UNIDIR & ISS, 2024; AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024). Without

these supporting measures insurgent groups may regain influence or rebuild their presence in affected communities.

The policy evidence shows in addition that stabilization efforts remained weaker than military interventions in many parts of the region (AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024). This creates a major challenge because lasting recovery depends on education, healthcare, employment opportunities, justice systems, and safe movement for civilians (UNDP, 2024; UNICEF, 2024). Military operations may create security conditions for recovery but they cannot replace long-term development as well as governance programmes (World Bank, 2023). When displaced populations return to communities without important services or livelihood opportunities many root conditions behind instability remain unresolved (Refugees International, 2023; UNHCR, 2025). For this reason military action should be read as one part of a wider stabilization strategy instead of a complete solution to the crisis. This point keeps the analysis balanced.

Political cooperation shaped the effectiveness of the response. Regional security cooperation depends on trust, sustained commitment, and alignment of national priorities among participating states (Buzan & Wæver, 2003; Okunade et al., 2021). Political tensions, withdrawal threats, and shifts in regional alignments show that cooperation can weaken even when the security threat remains (Reuters, 2024; Reuters, 2025). This reflects a wider problem in international relations because states may face shared threats while giving priority to national interests as well as domestic political concerns (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). The MNJTF has stronger results when member states recognise the connected nature of their security and keep a shared commitment to collective action (African Union, 2024).

The document shows in addition the importance of human rights protection and civilian trust in counterterrorism operations. Military measures can create resentment when civilians experience harm, movement restrictions, or weak access to justice as well as accountability systems (UNDP, 2024; UNIDIR & ISS, 2024). When local populations distrust insurgent groups as well as state security forces the flow of community intelligence may fall which reduces the effectiveness of security operations (Okunade et al., 2021). For this reason accountability, civilian protection, and community engagement are important parts of effective counterinsurgency strategies. The African Union as well as the Lake Chad Basin Commission placed emphasis on compliance, stabilization, and civilian-centred methods. This shows that military force alone cannot create lasting security or public confidence (African Union, 2024; LCBC, 2024).

The third research question can be answered with balance. The affected West African states responded to Boko Haram terrorist activities in the Sahel region through national military operations, regional cooperation under the MNJTF, support from the African Union as well as the Lake Chad Basin Commission, and sustained border-security measures (African Union, 2024; LCBC, 2024). These responses addressed the threat in important ways by reducing insurgent pressure in some areas and building institutional systems for regional security cooperation (ISS Africa, 2025; Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2025). The crisis was not resolved in full because insurgent factions survived, border vulnerabilities remained, and many social as well as economic drivers of instability continued (UNDP, 2024; AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024). This keeps the conclusion cautious.

The findings in addition support the relevance of Regional Security Complex Theory. The Boko Haram insurgency was a regional threat that required a regional response. This supports the argument of the theory that neighbouring states share interconnected security challenges (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). The theory explains in addition why weak coordination among member states creates risks for the entire security complex. When one state reduces its commitment to collective security arrangements weak points appear across the wider region (Okunade et al., 2021). The general reading is that the military response was necessary, important, and effective in part. Its long-term success depends on stronger stabilization initiatives, improved governance, economic recovery programmes, and sustained regional cooperation focused on visible effects as well as the underlying causes of insecurity (AfDB, LCBC, & UNDP, 2024; UNIDIR & ISS, 2024).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

1. Boko Haram terrorist activities to a significant degree affected the military security capacity of West African states in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025. The activities placed pressure on military bases, border posts, troop deployment, intelligence work and defence planning. While Cameroon, Niger and Chad faced serious border pressure, Nigeria carried the highest direct burden. The crisis forced the affected states to move from separate national action to regional military cooperation under the MNJTF.
2. The activities produced significant socio economic effects in the affected countries in the Sahel region. Evidence in the document showed displacement, food insecurity, livelihood loss, trade disruption, service collapse and infrastructure pressure. Nigeria was the most affected state but Cameroon, Niger and Chad in addition carried major humanitarian as well as economic burdens. The crisis did not create every weakness in the Lake Chad Basin but it deepened poverty and turned old weakness into a regional emergency.
3. The military response of West African states to a significant degree addressed Boko Haram terrorist activities in the Sahel region but did not end the threat. National operations and the MNJTF produced territorial pressure as well as regional cooperation. Yet factional survival, political tension, funding limits and weak stabilisation reduced long term success. The response was necessary and in part effective but it needs stronger civilian recovery as well as better regional commitment.

5.2 Conclusion

This research concludes that global terrorism and regional insecurity in West Africa changed the security as well as development conditions of West African countries in the Sahel region from 2015 to 2025. Boko Haram terrorist activities weakened military security capacity through pressure on troops, borders and state authority. They also damaged socio economic life through displacement, food insecurity and livelihood loss. Because insecurity in Nigeria moved into Cameroon, Niger and Chad through shared borders as well as social ties, Regional Security Complex Theory explains this. The military response was useful but incomplete. Lasting security needs joint military action, strong governance, livelihood support, civilian trust and steady regional commitment among the affected states over time.

5.3 Recommendations

1. In line with the first research question, the governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad should strengthen the military security capacity of affected West African states in the Sahel region with a better joint intelligence platform under the MNJTF. The platform should support shared alerts, joint patrol planning, rapid information exchange, border surveillance, equipment maintenance, troop rotation and regular training for forces operating in vulnerable border communities.
2. In line with the second research question, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, ECOWAS, the African Union and relevant UN agencies should expand socio-economic recovery programmes in affected communities in the Sahel region. The priority should be farming support, school reopening, health access, market rebuilding, youth

livelihood schemes, trade route protection and safe return assistance for displaced households.

3. In line with the third research question, West African states and MNJTF member countries should improve the military response to Boko Haram terrorist activities through stronger command coordination, stable funding, regular joint operations, civilian protection as well as accountability systems. Each major security operation should have a follow up stabilisation plan that restores governance services, rebuilds community trust and links military action with livelihood recovery.

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