

**THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM ON GLOBAL SECURITY, A
STUDY OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA**

NWOGU CHIOMA LUCKY

GOU/U22/IRE/546

**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY**

JULY, 2026

ABSTRACT

This study set to look at the impact of international terrorism on global security from the perspective of Nigeria taking the Boko Haram insurgency as a case as of recent period between 2020 and 2025. The study aimed to analyse Boko Haram's impact on the security, explore the potential for Boko Haram's global connections and inter-border operations, and analyse the impact of Boko Haram on human security and socio-economic conditions. The study was based on the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) which emphasizes the interrelatedness of the acts of aggression in geographically certain areas. The data which was collected through secondary sources such as scholarly papers, government papers, databases about the conflicts, reports from international organizations like ACLED, UNHCR, UNDP and International Crisis Group was analysed using an exploratory research design and qualitative content analysis was used. The results showed that Boko Haram is no longer a part of the local insurgency, but an international terrorist group operating with inter-lake Chad Basin operational and ideological links with the broader Sahel region. The study also confirmed that the group's cross-border operations and alliances in the region and its ability to interrupt the security structures have successfully put the counterterrorism operations at risk, created humanitarian issues, hampered socio-economic activities and resulted in threats to the security of the region and the world. The study finds that Boko Haram is no longer a Nigeria security crisis; it's a transnational threat which needs an international coordinated response. It calls for increasing region-wide and international exchanges of information between the various relevant agency, increasing border security and institutional capacity, strengthening socio-economic conditions to prevent violent extremism through sustainable development and post-conflict recovery programmes. These measures are essential for improving both regional stability and global security.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Nigeria, the most populous nation of Africa and the largest economy is still struggling with the ultimate and the increasing challenges to its national security. Among all threats, including, but not limited to, banditry, communal conflicts, cybercrime, and secessionist movements, as well as resource militancy international terrorism, Boko Haram insurgency is the only threat that could be considered the most destabilising one. Also known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Liddaawati wal Jihad, the Boko Haram, which began, in 2002 as a localised radical Islamist group, under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf, in Maiduguri, Borno State and evolved into a full-fledged terrorist group after the death of its leader in July 2009. His extrajudicial assassination resulted in a period of violence in the development of the group, which culminated in large-scale insurgence campaigns, mass killings, suicide bombings, and against civilians and state institutions (Zenn, 2020; Agbiboa, 2021).

Between 2020 and 2025 the situation under the Boko Haram changed radically, as it began to splinter and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) came to the fore, dominating over the Shekau-led group. ISWAP assumed more organised forms of governance, directed violence at security structures, levied taxes on conquered places, and advanced its technological efficiency in accordance with the models of global jihadists in line with the Islamic State (International Crisis Group, 2022). This change was a new dimension in the security crisis problem of Nigeria because the insurgent began to resemble the global terrorism, which is marked by cross-border operations, ideological connexions, foreign funding sources, and transnational recruitments.

The amount of human and material loss is imposing. Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED, 2023) noted that there were more than 15,000 conflict-related deaths in the northeastern part of Nigeria between 2020 and 2023, with the highest number being suffered in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe. The insurgency caused over 2.2 million displacement, abandoned agricultural cycles, disrupted local markets, demolished schools and hospitals, and created a humanitarian crisis never seen before (UNHCR, 2024; OCHA, 2023). The violence has compromised national unity of Nigeria, destabilised the state and compromised already poor institutions of the people.

Most importantly, the activities of the Boko Haram organisation cannot be regarded as a national danger. The insurgency is gradually assuming the features of an international terrorism as understood by the global security systems terrorism that has international dimensions and is facilitated by foreign networks. The porous Nigerian borders with Niger, Chad, and Cameroon have ensured that fighters, weapons, and logistics are easily moved by ensuring that Boko Haram and ISWAP have incorporated into the larger Lake Chad Basin conflict system. Instability in the region and especially the breakdown of security institutions in Libya since 2011, also played a role in the spread of arms, thereby allowing terrorist organisations to get access to advanced arms (UN Security Council, 2021). Indeed, the signs of the ideological and operational support of the ISIS on the ISWAP indicate the internationalisation of the conflict (Warner and Hulme, 2021).

In its part, the Nigerian government has taken the broadest scope of counterterrorism measures. These are events of military operations like Operation Lafiya Dole and its replacement, Operation Hadin Kai (formed in 2021), which featured military counterinsurgency airstrikes, land-based onslaught, and intelligence assaults. Also, Nigeria further deepened its cooperation with its neighbours by joining the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to enhance cross-

border military collaboration to use over the insurgency. Non-kinetic strategies, including the Operation Safe Corridor deradicalization programme, focused on rehabilitation of ex-Boko Haram fighters, and development programmes aimed to eliminate poverty, lack of employment and governance in the North-East (Adebajo, 2022).

Nevertheless, even after these interventions, the Boko Haram and ISWAP still stand a chance to be resilient, adaptive, and exploit the state weaknesses. Factors like poor intelligence sharing, corruption in the security service, lag in technology modernization, uncontrolled areas and marginalisation in the socio-economic sense in the North-East are all still used to restrict counterterrorism activities (Agbiboa, 2021; Adebajo, 2022). The fact that the attacks between 2020 and 2025 involved IDP camp attacks, military bases attacks, civilians attacks, and humanitarian worker attacks show that international terrorism continues to be a challenge to the national security of Nigeria.

To conclude, the decade in 2020-2025 is a critical time in the history of security in Nigeria, as the Boko Haram is turning into a better globally connected terrorist group. It is imperative to know how far this evolution will affect the national security, which has the effect, in terms of politics, economy, military, and social life, to formulate effective counterterrorism measures, enhance institutional tenacity, and secure lasting peace in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nigeria has been on rising threats attributed to international terrorism especially the Boko Haram and ISWAP insurgency. Even with billions of dollars spent on defence and various counterinsurgency actions, Boko Haram is still able to go on attacks, find new members, and use the weaknesses of the government. Between 2020 and 2025, the insurgency strengthened its

presence by using international terrorist network, cross-border mobility, and external financing channels to benefit the operation (Warner and Hulme, 2021).

By straining security forces, frustrating citizen trust, escalating humanitarian disasters, and destabilizing communities in the borders, the crisis had a decisive impact on the national security of Nigeria. As of 2024, over 2.2 million Nigerians still had the status of internally displaced people, which also implies a lack of access to basic services (UNHCR, 2024). Moreover, the inability to stop recurrent assaults on military installations and targets aimed at the defenses illustrates the still existing deficiencies in intelligence, surveillance and liaison of security agencies.

The current Boko Haram discourses tend to cover the previous periods (2009-2018) with very minimal coverage of the 2020-2025 period when the international connections and political dynamics in the region culminated. Few studies have also been done on the exact way the developments influenced the national security structure of Nigeria such as defence policy, border control, internal stability and human security.

This paper thus aims at addressing this gap by explaining how the issue of international terrorism, with Boko Haram as a case study, impacts on the national security of Nigeria within the period of 2020 to 2025.

1.3 Research Questions

The research is guided by the following questions:

1. How has international terrorism, through Boko Haram activities, influenced Nigeria's national security between 2020 and 2025?
2. In what ways have Boko Haram's international linkages and cross-border operations shaped Nigeria's counterterrorism capacity?

3. How has the Boko Haram insurgency affected human security and socio-economic stability in Nigeria from 2020 to 2025?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the influence of international terrorism on Nigerian national security, focusing on Boko Haram from 2020 to 2025.

The specific objectives are:

1. To analyze the extent to which Boko Haram's activities between 2020 and 2025 affected Nigeria's national security.
2. To assess how Boko Haram's international connections and cross-border networks shaped Nigeria's counterterrorism responses.
3. To evaluate the impact of Boko Haram's insurgency on human security and socio-economic development in Nigeria.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study on the influence of international terrorism on the national security of Nigeria is important as it offers critical understanding of the ways in which the changing environment of terrorism between Boko Haram and ISWAP between 2020-2025 (especially Boko Haram) affect the stability, safety, and the corporate resiliency of the Nigerian state. The operation pattern, linkages with other countries and the transnational operations of Boko Haram has been examined and has yielded some important findings in relation to global terrorism impact on the internal security matrix of Nigerian state. Whilst this study will, therefore, contribute to the knowledge of what works, what does not and what needs to be improved in the Nigeria counter terrorism efforts, regional cooperation, and national security policies, it will do this within its specific context.

Theoretical Significance:

This study is significant practically in the sense that it contributes to the existing theoretical body of knowledge and helps it sustain its relevance by providing further input into the field of study of international terrorism, national security and the importance of global networks in changing the dynamics of domestic conflicts. The study while bringing out the surname of the trans-terrorists and the Nigerian local safety, contributes to the current discussions on security theories, including Human Security Paradigm, Securitization Theory, and the Regional security-complex Theory. It contributes to the academic discourse by relating the international development of Boko Haram to general theoretical frameworks about global jihadism, state vulnerability, and cross-border insecurity.

Practical Significance:

The study is important practically because of the idea that in the interest of countering terrorism, policy makers, security agencies, humanitarian actors and partners in the region can develop more effective counterterrorism strategies. By demonstrating through evidence the activities of Boko Haram from 2020 to 2025, the research draws out key lessons for action on how to shore up intelligence systems, how to better coordinate counterinsurgency efforts, and how to better protect civilians living in conflict areas. The findings will guide stakeholders towards the implementation of community-based measures, deradicalisation programmes, the reform of the nation's security apparatus and international cooperation in combating terrorism and national security threats in Nigeria.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study period covers the period from 2020-2025 where Boko Haram activities, international linkages and the effect thereof on Nigeria's national security are examined. Geographically, the study focuses on the north-east region of Nigeria characterised by Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states with some extension into the surrounding regions of the Lake Chad Basin in the wider region of Nigeria, which also includes countries such as Chad, Niger and Cameroon. Thematically, it deals with counter-terrorism policy, efforts at cooperation in the region, human security, and terrorism.

1.7 Limitations of the study.

There were a few constraints in the study. First, it was difficult to access primary data due to security considerations and conflict in some frontline communities. Third, there is a shortage of "real-time intelligence reports, which severely affected detailed analysis of security operations. Third, the research is greatly dependent on the secondary data and known reports because of the sensitive nature of counterterrorism operations which would be referred to as verified reports. In spite of these hurdles, sources of credible academic research work, reports and published government papers were used to ensure reliability and accuracy.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter examines scholarly literature on international terrorism and its impact on the national security of Nigeria before 2020-2025 and focussed on the Boko Haram insurgency. Its writing style is shaped by the writing style of the sample provided (including structure, tone, and conceptual depth), and incorporates conceptual analysis, conceptual evaluation that is directly relevant to the research questions, theoretical coverage, evidence based on empirical studies, as well as a discussion of gaps in the existing literature. The chapter also reflects the security changes that have occurred in the region since its publication, such as recent shifts in international geopolitics under the leadership of U.S. President Donald Trump, the 2023 coup in Niger, and the impact of Russia's Wagner Group presence in the Sahel on Boko Haram's evolution and operational environment.

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 International Terrorism

International terrorism" means the acts of violence committed by sub-state or non-state entities whose threats, objectives, operations and/or methods cross national lines and impact national security systems everywhere. LaFree and Dugan (2022) define transnational mobility, cross-border safe havens, cross-border recruitment pipelines, cross-border training aid, non-state funding, and ideological connections as the characteristics of international terrorism to coordinate violent organizations and launch attacks in various jurisdictions. According to the United Nations (2020), it is defined as the terrorism that includes the international components, either logistical, targets, or ideological encouragement.

According to scholars, the current manifestation of international terrorism has changed a lot since the post-9/11 stage of development because of the influence of globalization, online communication systems, and decentralized jihadist franchises like ISIS and Al-Qaeda (Mendelsohn, 2019; Hoffman, 2021). Extremist networks are currently depending on encrypted communication, the use of cryptocurrency to fund their activities, support death diasporas and use propaganda at the global level to recruit and organize an attack. This development has enabled insurgency and terrorist groups in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, to become a part of a larger transnational jihadist network.

Geopolitical developments usually define the phenomenon. The collapse of the state and the foreign military interventions as well as failure of the regional security architecture provides conditions to flourish the international terror networks. Indicatively, the U.S. departure out of Afghanistan (2021), the French departure out of Mali (2022), and the security vacuum in the Sahel have allowed extremist groups, including the ISIS affiliates, to increase their influence into the areas of weak governance (Fowler, 2023; Soufan Center, 2023). This subsequent spread of

jihadist methods, weaponry and militants is a way of showing how the issue of domestic insecurity is becoming intertwined with international terrorism dynamics.

In West Africa, Boko Haram is one of the most successful examples of local insurgency evolved into a terrorist one on an international scale. Having emerged as a radical Islamist movement in Borno State, Nigeria, the operational environment Boko Haram had was transformed when the group vowed to be loyal to the Islamic State (ISIS) back in March 2015. This loyalty made it official rebranding to Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). As revealed by scholars, including Zenn (2021) and Warner (2022), the allegiance enhanced its recruitment, the ease of accessing weapons, the exchange of training, and the support of its ideology to the global narrative of jihadist propagated by ISIS.

The actions of ISWAP between 2020 and 2025 reflect the features of new international terrorism. The group increased its activities into Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, by taking advantage of porous borders and absence of state on the Lake Chad region. According to International Crisis Group (2022), ISWAP also borrowed the strategies and the structure of international jihadist organization, establishing ISIS-like administrative systems, such as taxation (zakat), intelligence departments (amniyat), and sharia courts. Moreover, the group was posting propaganda, recruiting fighters, and coordinating attacks using encrypted social media, as is characteristic of the global jihadist media ecosystem that ISIS supported through al-Naba to its followers and Amaq News Agency (Mezran and Varvelli, 2021).

Transnational illegal economies also work well to nurture international terrorism. ISWAP is involved in contraband of weapons, cattle, petrol, and minerals across borders and usually with associated criminal syndicates and international criminal networks (Kotra, 2023). These cross-border financial networks keep its military going and enhance its profile at the international level.

This is further reinforced by the downfall of Afghanistan in 2021 and proliferation of small arms by Libya since the intervention of NATO in 2011, which advance further to provide jihadist networks in West Africa and connect the path of Boko Haram to larger security crises the world has experienced (UN Panel of Experts, 2023).

Ideologically, the discourse of Boko Haram/ISWAP replicates the jihadist world discourse which stresses the anti-western and anti-secular discourse, formation of a transnational caliphate. This ideological alignment locates the causes of Nigerian insurgency in the larger Islamic devotee initiative. The emergence of ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) and the re-alignment of ISIS headquarters action post 2020 provided new transnational ideological impulse, which ISWAP used in order to promote its validity in international groups of jihadists (Clarke and Winter, 2023).

Most political developments in the recent past have augmented the dynamics. The 2023 coup in Nigeria, the spread of the Wagner Group of the Russian military into the Sahel region, and the realignment of the U.S. counterterrorism policy under the 2024 re-election of Donald Trump has changed the security landscape of the region. The America First Security Doctrine 2.0 provided by Trump resulted in less funding of CT in the African region undermining intelligence support and surveillance operations in the Lake Chad Basin (Brookings, 2025). The existence of this strategic vacuum allowed ISWAP to increase operations across the borders, and it shows that international terrorism depends on the evolving great-power policies.

In conclusion it is fair to say that international terrorism is multidimensional phenomenon having a global network of organized, an ideological flow, trans-national logistic and geopolitical disruptions as its components. The example of Boko Haram developing into ISWAP is an illustration of how national insurgencies can become major global acts of terrorism who have the capacity to destabilize both Nigeria and the whole of West Africa.

2.2.2 National Security

National security can be understood to mean the ability of the sovereign state to defend its territorial integrity, political sovereignty, institutional stability, economic survival and well being of its people against internal and external threats. National security in its traditional form that should be viewed through the military prism focused on protecting states against external invasion or military conflict (Walt, 1991). In modern academia, however, the definition has expanded dramatically to include multidimensional dangers like terrorism, climate change, cybercrime, economic instability and pandemics as well as transnational organized crime (Williams, 2021).

The concept of post-Cold war security has changed the focus of the international community off inter-state conflicts to non-state asymmetric conflicts such as insurgencies and terrorist cells whose operations cut across boundaries (Kaldor, 2013). These new menaces are not only a betrayal of hard power of states but also of institutional integrity and political legitimacy. Therefore, the national security currently addresses military, political, economic, societal, environmental and human factors (UNDP, 1994).

The situation in the Nigerian context is that national security is weaker than ever as a result of both internal and external pressures. In addition to the Boko Haram, Nigeria is facing banditry, secessionist, oil theft, farmer-herder, cybercrime and loose border control. However, terrorism is the most disruptive element towards the national security of Nigeria since the year 2009. The Sunni terrorist groups Boko Haram and ISWAP have frequently attacked military bases, educational institutions, trading posts, humanitarian architecture, customary leaders, communications, and religious facilities, shutting down communication, education, and various other industries that are of vital importance to the stability of society (Agbiboa, 2021).

The result was a worsening of the national security environment in Nigeria between 2020 and 2025 as all unfolded because of various interconnected crises affecting the region. The 2023 coup in Nigeria affected security ardor amid the Lake Chad Basin and undermined the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), leaving gaps in the operations that were later exploited by Boko Haram. Likewise, the French departure of the Sahel (2022), and the extension of Wagner Group activities to Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger (20232025) readjusted militarisation of the region and created a lack of certainty and intelligence-sharing failures (Soufan Center, 2024).

The security architecture in Nigeria was affected by the recent events in the geopolitical sphere as well. In 2024, Donald Trump came back to the president of the U.S. and a new foreign policy of the country was recalibrated. America First Security Doctrine 2.0 was also more discriminative of counterterrorism missions to Africa and reduced aid to the AFRICOM-led intelligence operations in the Sahel. The decline of drone surveillance missions, training activities and funding on the stabilization of programs crippled early warning systems in Nigeria, and the Boko Haram has achieved cross-border attacks (Brookings, 2025).

Economic security is also a component of the national security and this has been seriously compromised by Boko Haram. The insurgency has wrecked farm production in Borno and Yobe, derailed trade, inflation of food and deterred local and foreign investment in the North-East. World Bank (2024) states that Nigeria incurs losses of billions of dollars through destroyed infrastructure and financial stagnant due to terrors.

Lastly, human security which puts emphasis on the safety and integrity of citizens is an extension of national security. Boko Haram has displaced more than 2.3 million Nigerians (UNHCR, 2024), forced the communities to hunger, sexual violence, forcible recruiting and psychological trauma.

The loss of hundreds of schools has enhanced backwardness in education in the region undermining the long term development of human capital in Nigeria.

In this way, the concept of national security in Nigeria in 2020 to 2025 cannot be perceived without factoring in the key role played by Boko Haram as a driver of state fragility, economic recession, weak institutions, and humanitarian crisis.

2.2.3 Boko Haram as International Terrorist Organization (2020-2025).

The evolution of Boko Haram between 2020 and 2025, specifically the rise of the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), can be taken as an example of the process of the definite internationalization of Boko Haram as a terrorist organization. This change has been based on structural, ideological, operating and geopolitical change that made the group more integrated into the wider Islamic State (ISIS) global network. According to Zenn (2021), ISWAP took over the decentralized structure of command employed by ISIS (at the expense of the authoritarian leadership style preceded by Abubakar Shekau), shifting its leadership system towards a more consultative form (shura manner). This change of governance allowed ISWAP to control the territory better, increase internal discipline and strengthen the support of the local communities in comparison to the older Boko Haram wing.

One of the major aspects in the internationalization of ISWAP is the ability to provide more intelligence information and coordination on the battle field. The organization was able to come up with advanced reconnaissance teams that could track the Nigerian military action with the help of drones, spotters, satellite phones and a network of informants. This is political maneuveres adopted by ISIS affiliates in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The multi-phase ambushes, elaborate IED operations, and attacks on Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) which

ISWAP operational cells started also reflect their global operational tactical doctrine of ISIS (Warner and Hulme, 2022). This level of operational sophistication is a break from the past in which indigenous insurgencies were marked by uncomplicated and direct strikes on the enemy.

The fact that ISWAP is pursuing cross-border expansion in 2020-25 is yet another indication of character of an international nature. Based on the weaknesses of borders and the absence of state presence in the area surrounding Lake Chad, the group intensified attacks in Diffa Region, in Niger, and Chad's Lac Province and Cameroon Far North. According to the data of ACLED (2023), the number of organized attacks on military convoys, garrisons, and humanitarian convoys across these borders is growing tremendously. It was a tactical and strategic show of the capability of ISWAP to undermine regional sovereignty in several states at the same time.

The geopolitical environment also played a big role in the internationalization of Boko Haram. The departure of French Barkhane forces in 2022, the further withdrawal of the western military forces in the Sahel left a strategic vacuum. This empty space undermined intelligence-sharing systems and border security, allowing jihadist cells, such as ISWAP, to widen their spheres of operation between northeastern Nigeria and jihadists-controlled countries in Mali and Burkina Faso (International Crisis Group, 2023). Such an operation is a change from what was traditionally seen as an indigenous insurgency, where there were simple and direct attacks against foreign actors.

The fact that ISWAP is pursuing cross-border expansion in 2020-25 is yet another indication of character of an international nature. The group stepped up attacks in nearly the absence of state control in the region surrounding Lake Chad, Diffa Region, Niger, and Lac Province and the Far North in Cameroon. The data of ACLED (2023) indicate that both organized assaults on military

convoys, garrisons and humanitarian convoys, on these borders, are skyrocketing. It was basically a strategic and tactical demonstration of ISWAP's ability to create a multiple squeeze in various states of the region at once.

Another important aspect of the internationalisation of Boko Haram was the geopolitical environment. In 2022, the French Barkhane forces withdrew, and the western military forces in the Sahel continued withdrawing, ultimately creating a strategic space for Mali. After the withdrawal of French Barkhane forces in 2022, the long-standing withdrawal of the western military forces in the Sahel led to the creation of a strategic space for Mali. This vacuum, meanwhile, damaged the intelligence interception systems and border security, further enabling hard-to-track jihadist cells like ISWAP to expand their activity between Nigeria's northeast and ISWAP-held countries in Mali and Burkina Faso (International Crisis Group, 2023). This media machinery was not only used to further ISWAP's international legitimacy but also foreign fighters were recruited from Libya, Mali, and Sudan, as well as even Syria.

In the economic sphere, ISWAP has engaged in criminal activities like arms smuggling, stolen tax on traders, trans-border cattle rustling, charcoal trafficking, fuel smuggling and has expanded its involvement in them. ISWAP was also reported to have been engaged in arms trafficking in Libya through Niger and Chad, according to the UN Panel of Experts (2023). The connections they have formed with international supply chains demonstrate this group's material support from international and regional illicit markets, and not solely their local support.

The coup that took place in Niger last year (2023) had another impact on the regional security framework, with ISWAP being a direct beneficiary. The ousting of President Bazoum destroyed one of the West's remaining Sahelian partners to combat terrorism. French troops were ousted, and Niger's military junta also scrapped essential counterintelligence cooperation with the U.S.,

EU and regional nations. These international supply lines show that the group has the material ability that is maintained by global and regional illicit markets- not local support.

The 2023 coup in Nigeria reinvented the security framework in the region, and this played directly in favour of ISWAP. The toppling of President Bazoum destroyed one of the remaining fixed western counterterror allies in the Sahel. French troops were driven out, and the military junta in Niger blocked the major intelligence-sharing agreements with the U.S and EU as well as other states in the region. The ensuing collapse of the surveillance and MNJTF togetherness made it possible to strengthen cross-border activities by ISWAP, especially in those regions formerly observed by the French UAVs and U.S. ISR flights.

To conclude, Boko Haram becomes ISWAP between 2020 and 2025 because of its ideological convergence with ISIS, reorganizing its operations, and involvement in global propagation of jihadism, as well as its reliance on large-scale geopolitical shocks in West Africa and in the Sahel more generally. ISWAP is no longer a domestic insurgency but only Nigeria based but it is a regional actor within transnational jihadist infrastructures and can threaten a number of states at the same time. The consequences of this major change on the national security of Nigerians are immense and this is why the conceptualization of Boko Haram needs to be seen within the context of global terrorism.

2.3 Thematic Review

2.3.1 International Terrorism and the Undermining of Nigerian National Security.

It can be seen that between 2020 and 2025 the national security of Nigeria has been severely compromised by international terrorism, mostly provided by the actions of Boko Haram and a more internationally oriented branch of the group, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). The violent campaign by the Boko Haram group has remained a thorn in the flesh of

Nigeria in terms of destabilizing its territories, undermining the state structure and trust of the citizens in the national institutions. Such inability to eliminate insurgency is a direct consequence of the fact that it evolved into a transnational terrorist group that is taking advantage of regional instability, global jihadist networks and lack in state capacity.

It was also during this time that the level of operation of Boko Haram improved tremendously. Drones are utilized in surveillance and reconnaissance, and mapping of military concentrates, which proves the technological change based on worldwide jihadist groups like ISIS-K and ISIS-Core (Clarke and Winter, 2023). Equally, the use of sophisticated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by ISWAP in urban hubs and supply routes are indicative of the training of tactics and transnational imparting of knowledge present in the ISIS groups in the Sahel, Syria and Afghanistan. These changing strategies have made attacks very deadly as ISWAP is now able to launch attacks on hardened military establishments and critical national infrastructures thus deteriorating the defense capacities of Nigeria.

Structural issues make the Nigerian military unable to contain the insurgency. These entail lack of proper equipments, excessive troop deployments, lack of proper coordination of intelligence organizations of the security agencies, corruption in the defense procurement system and low morale due to high casualties. Victorious experience According to reports by ACLED (2023), military convoys were repeatedly ambushed with success, and there is a lack of security in the Nigerian approach to counterinsurgency. These flaws have direct implications on the national security of Nigeria because they restrain the ability of the state to extend its power and defend its citizens.

Changes in geopolitics in West Africa have also worsened the national security situation in Nigeria. The 2023 Nigerian military coup disrupted the security institutions across the region that

had been helping Nigeria to fight Boko Haram. Niger was a vital ally that contains U.S. drone bases and that spearheads MNJTF activities at its border with Nigeria. The coup saw the ousting of the French forces, halting of counterterrorism cooperation and failure of real-time intelligence-sharing. It has resulted in a power void that was used by ISWAP to grow cross-border crossings, open new supply routes, and attack the previously limited areas (International Crisis Group, 2024).

Besides, the 2024 re-election of Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency was one of the most significant events in the world counterterrorism policy. He reinstated his old policy of America first security doctrine, which led to major cuts in stabilization missions by the U.S. in the Sahel republics leading to reduction of drone surveillance in AFRICOM, the termination of training programs on the African special forces and the withholding of counterterror funding. Nigerian Armed Forces struggled with the losing their access to the state-of-the-art ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance) means to detect ISWAP convoys and thwart ambushes. This further worsened the defensive stance of Nigeria and Boko Haram restructured, gathered forces and gained strength.

Altogether, the technological adaptation of Boko Haram, the destabilization in the region, and the global changes in policies have significantly undermined the national security of Nigeria by undermining the state ability, harming military performance, and increasing the freedom of actions of the insurgency. International terrorism has therefore become a systemic threat that is threatening the territorial integrity, stability of the regime, and unity of the Nigerian society.

2.3.2 Cross Border and International aspects of Boko Haram.

The cross-border activities and external connections, which culminated in an international-related terrorist group, can best explain the growth of Boko Haram into an internationally related

terrorist organization between 2020 and 2025. In internationalization, group transnational logistics, smuggling logistics, recruitment of foreign fighters, and alliance operation with other jihadist groups in Sahel and North Africa mark the internationalization of the group.

The inability of regional security institutions has also contributed significantly to the cross-border power of the Boko Haram. A security vacuum in the Sahel was created after France terminated Operation Barkhane in Mandinka in 2022. Jihadist groups associated with ISIS and Al-Qaeda quickly occupied this vacuum and allowed ISWAP to grow its area of influence. The coming of Wagner Group of Russia in Mali, Burkina Faso and finally Niger also changed the nature of the region. Wagner was tasked with protecting the regime over anti-jihadist missions and gave the chance to extremist forces, such as ISWAP, to use unprotected frontiers and territories that were not controlled by the state (Soufan Center, 2024).

The activities in Nigeria, which occurred cross the borders, were enhanced as Boko Haram became embedded in the tri-border area among Nigeria, Niger, and Chad. These regions are characterised by porous borders, rough terrain, weak military, and black markets prevailing well. ISWAP trafficks weapons, fuel, livestock and minerals over its corridors that have generated sources of revenue to finance its military undertakings. The figure above by the UN Panel of Experts (2023) holds that the arms trafficking networks of Libya and Sudan supply ISWAP with its feedstock, which connects the group to the broader post-Arab Spring weaponry diffusion.

Also, ISWAP has developed operation links with other jihadist groups like the ISIS which has branches in the greater Sahara (ISIS–Greater Sahara) and Jama Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM). Such alliances enable the distribution of weapons, combatants, bomb construction methods and strategies. According to intelligence reports, 2024 has coordinated attacks by the

ISWAP and ISGS militants on the border of Niger-Mali which shows how transnational jihadist cooperation is evolving.

U.S. policy making choices also had a critical role in the re-defining of the international presence by Boko Haram. The U.S. withdrawing of counterterrorism support in 2024 to Trump undermined regional intelligence systems to a large extent. With the closing of drone surveillance bases in Niger, a very important early-warning system to the Nigerian and Chadian troops was lost. It enabled ISWAP to take advantage of the un-political routes and increase its cross-border mobility, which contributes to its recognition as a regional actor that is integrated in the international jihadist networks.

The following developments underline the fact that Boko Haram internationalization is not just ideological but that it is organized into global and regional insurgencies. The presence of cross-border logistics, jihadist friends, and involvement into global smuggling economies explains why Boko Haram has to be conceptualized as an international terrorist group with operational bases to the far-off parts of the world.

2.3.3 Human Security, Socio-Economic Stability, and National Resilience

Boko Haram activities in human security and socio-economic stability have caused a disastrous effect in Nigeria between 2020 and 2025 that disadvantaged not only the safety and wellbeing of the citizens but also the resilience of communities in Nigeria, the governance system and the national economy. The humanitarian crisis brought about by insurgency by the Boko Haram has produced a multidimensional crisis, and thus, human security has become one of the key themes around which the conflict situation in Nigeria can be discussed.

Freedom of fear and freedom of want defined by UNDP as human security has been highly undermined in northeastern Nigeria. The repeated attacks that Boko Haram has inflicted on

villages, schools, IDP camps, farmlands, and transportation routes have left people in a climate of fear all the time. By 2024, more than 2.3 million Nigerians were internally displaced (UNHCR, 2024), and many of them had to live in overcrowded and under-resourced IDP camps, with a high risk of diseases, malnutrition, and exploitation. Women and children are hit the hardest: thousands of women have been taken captive, forced into marriages, sexual slavery, brainwashed and recruited as suicide bombers (UNICEF, 2023).

Livelihoods were destroyed making socio-economic stability in the region to collapse. The scorched-earth policy of Boko Haram was focused on the agricultural regions in Borno and Yobe the largest grain producing belts in Nigeria. This interfered with agricultural production times, hampered food production and increased food inflation in the country (World Bank, 2024). The insurgency also paralysed trade routes that linked Nigeria with Niger, Chad and Cameroon which devastated markets in those regions and curtailed trade in that region.

The education sector was ravaged. There was a burning down of hundreds of schools, murdering or escape of teachers, and failure of thousands of children to access school because of insecurity. This added to the existing elevated out-of-school population in Nigeria, which is the highest in the world. The long-term effects are undermined human capital, reduced literacy levels and poverty of the generations.

There was also similar overload of health systems. Clinic attacks, health workers being unavailable and lack of supply chain facilities hindered communities to access essential care. Cholera, measles, and diseases caused by malnutrition outbreaks increased in the IDP camps (WHO, 2024).

National resilience or the capacity of a nation to absorb and recover after the shocks has been seriously damaged. The Nigeria government has a weak ability to reintegrate the freed

communities, relocate displaced individuals, reconstruct infrastructure and offer psychosocial assistance which highlights systemic issues of government. Stabilization is undermined by corruption, lack of adequate funding and inconsistency in policies.

Another issue that added to these was the internationalization of Boko Haram. The 2023 coup in Nigeria halted access routes to humanitarian aid and logistical difficulties to UNICEF, UNHCR, and WFP, lowering the delivery of aid into areas of northeastern Nigeria. The Trump 2024 administration of U.S. strategic retrenchment resulted in less humanitarian funding of Sahel stabilization programs, adding to the misery of millions.

All in all, the activities of the Boko Haram between 2020 and 2025 eradicated human security, failed socio-economic frameworks, governance, and diminished the national resilience of Nigeria. Humanitarian impacts of the insurgency go much further than battlefield deaths and represent one of the biggest and longest term crises of West Africa.

2.4 Theoretical Review

2.4.1 Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT)

Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), introduced by Buzan and Wæver (2003), provides one of the most relevant frameworks for examining the Boko Haram insurgency because it explains how security threats transcend national boundaries and bind neighbouring states into a single security equation. RSCT's view holds that security is not distributed equally around the world, but can be concentrated in areas where the states are relying on others for security or insecurity. Such security interdependence arises from these regional 'entanglements' of amity and enmity, where a security problem in one country may have an impact on neighbours as well.

The case of the Lake Chad Basin, that is the region of Nigeria/Niger/Chad/Cameroon, is a good example of a regional security complex. There cannot be isolated incidence of the activities of Boko Haram in the State without those of neighboring states. The insurgency regularly exploits porous borders which make it easy for insurgents, weapons and logistics to travel easily across borders. Operating sanctuaries come in the form of difficult terrain, ungoverned areas, and the islands on Lake Chad, ISWAP has an operational base in the tri-border between Nigeria, Niger, and Chad. RSCT's fundamental understanding, from which these realities stem, is that regional insecurity is interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

RSCT's power of explanation is further illustrated by recent geopolitical changes. 2023 military coup in Niger was a major set-back for the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), created disruptions with regards to intelligence sharing, endangering the cross-border patrols and creating a void that was seized by ISWAP and other jihadist factions. The French forces pulling out of Mali in 2022 and Wagner Group's build-up in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger (2023-2025) also had an impact on the security situation. These developments led to a decline in regional cooperation and counterterrorism effectiveness, and gave the jihadists the outcome of expansionism as predicted by RSCT.

Moreover, Boko Haram's strategic partnerships with jihadist groups in Mali, Burkina Faso and Libya creates a poignant example of how regional security complexes can link with transregional extremist networks. Arms trafficking from Libya and Sudan is directly impacting into Nigeria's insecurity, so Boko Haram is not strictly a Nigerian phenomenon.

For these reasons, RSCT has been chosen as the main and base theoretical framework in this research, as it is the most relevant that explains the regionalised nature of the Boko Haram crisis and Nigeria's security vulnerabilities in the wider context of West Africa.

2.4.2 Securitization Theory

Securitization Theory was formulated by the Copenhagen School and was explained by the scholars of the school namely, Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998) in which it deals upon the manner in which certain issues were established as serious challenges that need exceptional measures from political actors. In that sense, there is no such thing as a threat that is merely objectively so; it must be “securitized” by leaders, institutions and elites when threats are publicly referred to in terms of an imminent threat to the country’s survival. States use emergency policies in order to close down civil liberties, escalate military power and also justify additional action in case of emergencies when they have been securitized.

The economic analysis of the Boko Haram indicates that the Nigerian government continues to do the same. Nigeria has been doing the same in its government response to Boko Haram by securitizing the insurgency. The Boko Haram has been presented as an intrinsic threat to national sovereignty through presidential orders, legislative policies, military Connotations and public statement. All of this was legalized under the pretense of this securitization and justified the following exceptional measures:

2. Conflict, war, strife, or turmoil within the community.3. War or conflict in the community.
- 2) Declaration of state of emergency areas
3. Increased counterterrorism budgeting

4. There are restrictions on the movement of civilians.

5. Intensified border controls

The creation of special counterterrorism courts is the subject of the 6th measure.

Securitization was essential for a swift response to mobilize the military force, but it was also exposed as a number of limitations. Lack of attention to socioeconomic factors driving radicalisation with over-securitization led to low effectiveness long-term. Securitization using only hard power will initially deter insurgency but not eradicate its root cause which is violent extremism, Agbiboa (2022) observes.

It is important to stress as well the supporting and not foundational nature of Securitization Theory, as it explains Nigeria's policy responses in the face of the calamitous crises, and the fact that the crisis is not only regional, but also cross-border in nature.

2.4.3 Human Security Paradigm

The Human Security Paradigm is a redefinition of security moving away from territorial security to the protection of well-being and dignity of people. UNDP (1994) argues that human security has seven facets — economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. The framework is central to understanding any impact that Boko Haram has as they target civilians directly, and wreak their havoc on the social bases that human development requires.

Boko Haram's perpetration of killings, kidnappings, sexual violence and forced recruitment undermines personal security. Throughout the group's actions, the use of scorched-earth tactics against the farming communities makes food security more difficult as a result of people becoming hungry and increasing their malnutrition rates. The attacks against health facilities and

displacement severely impact the health security, and destruction of schools directly impacts educational and community security. Displacement of more than 2.3 million Nigerians by 2024 (UNHCR, 2024) points to a humanitarian crisis with far-reaching consequences, beyond the battlefield.

Human security is therefore crucial to uncovering the full impact of Boko Haram and the extent to which it has curtailed and disrupted the development of children; exacerbated gender disparities; and undermined governance at the grassroots.

In this study, the Human Security Paradigm serves as a **tertiary theoretical lens**, complementing RSCT and Securitization Theory by highlighting the socioeconomic consequences of terrorism and illustrating how insecurity affects people at the community level.

2.5 Empirical Review

Empirical studies focusing on the dynamics of terrorism, regional insecurity, and national security in Nigeria and the overall Lake Chad Basin have been documented over the past few years. It is the combination of these studies that point to the growing level of operational sophistication of the Boko Haram and ISWAP, the geopolitical processes that define the sustainability of the insurgency, and the multidimensional effect of the terrorist campaign to the political, economic, and social structures of Nigeria.

One of the first sustained studies of the situation in Nigerian counterterrorism in post-2019 was carried out by Olonisakin (2020). Through policy content analysis and close interviews with the elite in defence departments she showed that the Nigerians counterterrorism system is disjointed, which consists of different institutions that have overlapping functions. As her analysis showed, there are major loopholes in the organization of the command, poor inter-agency coordination, corruption in the procurement operations, and systematic insufficiency of funding - all these

factors systematically affect national responses to Boko Haram. She has concluded that in spite of military offensive, structural vulnerabilities of the Nigerian state will still hinder sustainable results of counterterrorism efforts.

Likewise, Ismail and Adesoji (2021) took a social approach where the authors used the community-level interview, focus group, and the ethnographic research in Borno and Yobe States. Their results revealed that recruitment of Boko Haram is successful in communities that are marginalized, where there is no effective governance, the communities are largely unemployed, and they do not feel members of the state. According to them, Boko Haram is using local grievance, misinformation of Islam and lack of trust on the Nigerian state to topple its ideological accounts, thus, maintaining recruitment under the pressure of the military.

Mustapha (2022) conducted a security-intelligence oriented study in which the military development of ISWAP was examined based on the field intelligence reports on the organization and battlefield records. He found that the internal reorganization of ISIS Core after the Baghouz took place in Syria in 2019 had a significant impact on the tactical change in ISWAP. According to Mustapha, ISWAP did change operational cells to that of ISIS, enhanced the chain of command, enhanced its ability to create propaganda on the media and become more professional in coordinating the battlefield. These reshapes had a tremendous impact on the lethality of ISWAP and also played a major role in its replacement of the older faction of Shekau.

Umar and Haruna (2023) presented a local approach by assessing the performance of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). Based on official communiqués, military after-action reports and interviews with staff of the MNJTF, they determined that though the alliance was initially successful, its operational unity crumbled drastically upon the 2023 coup in Niger. The coup weakened the combined efforts, interfered with intelligence communication, weakened the

border monitoring, and opened space allowing Boko Haram to increase cross-border attacks. Their research came to the conclusion that political instability among the member-states is a significant predictor of the performance of MNJTF.

Most importantly, Adebajo (2023) discussed the insurgency on a geopolitical level, where he engaged in a critical analysis of the realignment of counterterrorism by world powers and how the same influenced West Africa. Through strategic trend analysis and reviews of policies, he was able to show that, the pullout of the U.S and French troops in the Sahel, and the withdrawal of Western stabilization missions resulted in operational gaps that jihadist groups took advantage of. He also observed that after Donald Trump brings back the White House in 2024, American involvement in the White House was further decreased, further fueling insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin.

Zenn (2023) selected the ACLED geo-spatial datasets to map the patterns of attacks by the Boko Haram and ISWAP in 2020-2023. His examination revealed that the insurgency continued moving its operations to borderlike societies in Niger and Chad where the presence of the state is weak. He reported statistically significant growths in attacks on military posts, highways, and civilian villages of the tri-border region. His conclusions contribute to the thesis that Boko Haram is intertwined in one of the regional complexes of security issues.

Based on the UNHCR displacement statistics, field interviews in displaced persons camps, and gender-based protection measures, Ibrahim (2024) analyzed the humanitarian impact of Boko Haram. His findings demonstrated that there were recurrent increased cases of sexual violence, forcible marriages, child soldiers, as well as psychological trauma among the displaced people. He found out that Boko Haram insurgency long-term outcomes are centred around the humanitarian crises, particularly, on gender vulnerabilities.

The study by Musa and Lawal (2024) examines effects of terrorism on education through the concept of mixed-method research. Their research on school administrators, teachers and pupils in Borno and Adamawa found that schooling was disrupted seriously by the attacks, kidnappings, flight of teachers and damage of school properties. They discovered that the chronic insecurity has generated deplorable decreases in literacy, attendance and retention of students. The education sector was one of the worst hit areas noted in the North-East in their study.

Investigating the aspects of governance, Aghedo (2024) carried out a corruption-specific study with documentary evidence along with anti-corruption reports and interviews with the participants of the civil society. He discovered that abuse of military budgets, diversion of resources, counterfeit procurement agreements and elite profiteering play a big role in undermining the operational ability of Nigeria. His results support the thesis that institutional graft can be one of the main facilitators of the persistence of Boko Haram.

Lastly, the World Bank (2025) conducted macroeconomic survey of conflict-prone areas with either econometric modelling. The report indicated that there is a direct relationship between the intensity of terrorism and the deterioration in agricultural production, unemployment, food inflation and lack of investment. It found that terrorism does not only destabilize the security, it also initiates a vicious cycle of poverty and instability that further encourages recruitment of the extremists.

All these empirical analyses corroborate the presumption that the disruption of government over-reach, global instability, the shift in counterterrorism focus, humanitarian crises and the socioeconomic downfall have been some factors in the continuity of Boko Haram. They highlight the fact the problem is a local challenge and also a multiple-layered phenomenon which

is embedded in regional and international developments, a key point that has not been recognized in the Nigerian context.

2.6 Gaps in the Literature

In the past, research has identified several significant gaps:

Though there is a large body of literature on Boko haram and terrorism in Nigeria, many critical gaps in the literature still exist. The gaps found justify the importance of the present study and underline the need for new academic knowledge that is geopolitically based.

First, while numerous studies have addressed the origins and early development of Boko Haram (2009–2016), the limited research to date that addresses Boko Haram's evolution from 2020 to 2025 lacks focus on the insurgent's sophisticated restructuring, its application of drones, its propaganda enhancements, and its linkages to the global jihadist movements largely. Second, there is a lack of research dedicated to specifically addressing the insurgent's evolution between 2020 and 2025, particularly the details of its sophisticated restructuring, the commencement of its drone use, enhanced propaganda, and linkages to the global jihadist movements. This only leaves the impression that Boko Haram was less capable than it is in reality.

Second, there is lack of the scholarly analysis of the implications of Donald Trump's second presidency (2024) for counterterrorism in Africa. Although U.S. commitments to security have been considerably scaled back, support for drones, partnerships with Nigerian security forces, and U.S. security funding of stabilization programs have had a massive effect on terrorism dynamics in Nigeria and the Sahel, very little academic work has been done on these new developments.

Third, while policy documents refer to the Niger coup in 2023, the academic literature does not go into any depth in examining how that coup had implications for regionally formed alliances, the functioning of MNJTF and the reduction of intelligence sharing and the rise of cross-border insurgency. This represents a key lacuna as the regional security landscape became a key redrawn one after the political crisis in Niger.

Fourth, although the political/economical impact of terrorism has been a subject of study for the individual, the integrative approach which links Boko Haram to the challenge of national security, socio-economic destabilisation, the impact of humanitarian crisis, education collapse, and governance erosion is rarely explored. There is currently no encompassing national-security approach implemented.

The fifth point is that Russia's Wagner Group has not been studied in-depth for its influence on the regional counterterror dynamic. Despite a lesser but still notable impact on Western counterterror presence in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, academic literature has failed to address adequately the implications of these operations on operations, training and mobility of Boko Haram.

Sixth, the effects of ISIS's evolution and decentralization regime in its global expansion (2020-2023) on ISWAP's religious and operational consolidation are not well-studied. These cross-border aspects are under-researched and are of fundamental importance.

The foregoing will help to update the analysis of the subject matter of this study, introduce the geopolitical aspect and give a holistic security understanding and accountability of international terrorism and national security relationship during the 2020-2025 period in Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The study takes its foundation from the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (2003) which offers an effective theory for the evolution of security threats and their operation with the regionally constrained geographical context. For RSCT, the strongest forms of meaningful security interdependence do not happen at the global but at regional level where sets of states are held together by geographical proximity, bordering, historical interactions, shared vulnerabilities, and amity and enmity. The theory focuses on the fact that threats affecting one country frequently expand to neighbouring countries, which results in more countries having security issues which are inextricably linked, to the extent of being impossible to study one without studying the others. Under this perspective, the key units of analysis for explaining current security dynamics are not the international system, but rather regions.

Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon provide an example of a Lake Chad Basin which has features of a regional security complex. Never have the Boko Haram's insurgent activities been shown to be so much a national undertaking so much as continent-wide as in the instance of its Islamic State wing, ISWAP. It makes use of porous boundaries, wet areas and ungoverned environments, around the Lake Chad islands and Mandara Mountains, to launch attacks across borders, flee military threats, smuggle firearms and set up operations sanctuaries. The movements here provide an excellent foundation for why insecurity in one state (RSCT Nigeria) is explained by – and contributing to – insecurity in other states in a mutually reinforcing way. The close connection that the insurgency has with some smuggling industries along the borders

of Mali and Burkina Faso, arms smuggling from Libya/Sudan, and its ties with jihadist groups in neighboring countries of Mali and Burkina Faso also help to explain why these operations cannot be viewed solely nationally.

In addition, the political instability and changing alliances in the region, from 2020 until 2025, have further worked to bind countries together, as foreseen by RSCT. Furthermore, the regional political rollouts and coalitions formed and broken due to the political turmoil in the region from 2020 through 2025 have intensified the interdependence foreseen by RSCT. An important event this year for regional security is the coup in Niger that took place in 2023. Before the coup, Niger was a stabilizing power, where the U.S. and French military bases were present to aid in counterterrorism and where close ties still exist between Nigeria and Niger, through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) unit. The coup, however, saw its effect paralyse these partnerships, halt intelligence-sharing efforts, create holes in joint border policing, and ultimately leave the operational landscape vulnerable to a swift attack by ISWAP. Political instability in one state has had repercussions for the stability of the regional complex, especially when it involves cross-border incursions and attacks, in recent times, as recorded by ACLED (2023).

At the very same time, the French forces of Barkhane were withdrawing from Mali in 2022 and the Russian Wagner Group came to Mali, Burkina Faso and subsequently Niger, altering the geopolitics of the region. The changes in the force structure resulted in fewer U.S. counterterrorism forces, which meant less aerial awareness, less intelligence cooperation and less regional coordination. Wagner's activities, which were not centered on counterterrorism efforts, but mostly on protecting the regime, created strategic voids which the jihadist groups eagerly filled. The change in the security patterns of the region puts emphasis on the security processes,

which are defined within the inner political processes as well as by the decisions of external elements.

Additionally, American reversion to its Sahel policy predecessor, President Donald Trump, furthered the U.S. withdrawal from the Sahel. The capability of the region to hold Boko Haram and ISWAP was further undermined by reducing AFRICOM's involvement, drone flights and limited training programmes for counterterror operations. RSCT has been instrumental in better understanding the interlinkages and basis for protagonizing vulnerability in the Lake Chad Basin due to shifts in global power engagement and how these interact with the region's security framework.

All in all, the epicenter of the interconnectedness of the Lake Chad Basin crises—namely the border insecurity, the political instability, the reconfiguration of external alliances and the spreading of jihadist networks—reflect the essence of what is described as the Regional Security Complex Theory. The Boko-Haram insurgency continues not only because of internal vulnerabilities within Nigeria but because insecurities within Nigeria are also spillover problems and their product that can be conceived as regional insecurity and reinforced by regional geopolitical dynamics. Therefore, RSCT provides the most appropriate analytical foundation for this study, as it captures the multi-state, cross-border, and regionalized nature of Boko Haram's influence on Nigerian national security.

3.2 Hypotheses

The study will be guided by the following hypotheses:

H1: International terrorism significantly undermines Nigerian national security between 2020 and 2025.

H2: Boko Haram's cross-border operations significantly influence Nigeria's counterterrorism effectiveness.

H3: International terrorism significantly affects human security and socio-economic stability in Nigeria.

3.3 Research Design

The research design assumed in the study is an exploratory research design, which is the most appropriate in researching complex and dynamic security phenomenon like international terrorism and its impact on Nigerian national security. The exploratory designs are usually applied in cases where the subject of study is under-known, very dynamic or more complex, and the researcher is able to study emerging problems without necessarily following preset methodological frameworks (Stebbins, 2001). Terrorism, especially the internationalized variety, is fluid by nature, influenced by the changes in ideologies, instabilities in the region, cross-border relations, geopolitical changes, and technological advancements. It is due to this that an exploratory design will provide the methodological flexibility required to get a multidimensional approach to Boko Haram and ISWAP in the period between 2020 and 2025.

This research design will allow discovering new patterns, relationships, and underlying mechanisms that could be unknown or whose theories are not well-documented or described in the current literature. An example of this is the emergence of ISWAP drone surveillance operations, the effect of the 2023 Niger coup on security collaboration or the consequences of Donald Trump 2024 counterterror policy reforms are relatively new phenomena that need an open-ended investigative methodology. Exploratory design thus enables the study to trace these new trends and explain the manner in which they are redefining the outcomes of national security in Nigeria, in an aggregate manner.

Moreover, the exploratory design allows adopting the widest possible range of sources of secondary data, such as scholarly publications, conflict data sets (e.g., ACLED), policy briefs, reports by the United Nations and analyses by an International Crisis Group, and intelligence briefs. These diverse sources will allow considering the operational strategies of Boko Haram, the development of the security threats in the region, and the socioeconomic and humanitarian impacts of terrorism more thoroughly and more diversely. This design allows freedom to the researcher whereby he/she is not fixed on a particular type of data or a particular analytical model, but he/she can synthesize the findings across other fields like political science, security studies, international relations, sociology and development studies.

Moreover, the subject of terrorism is commonly sensitive and dangerous and often inaccessible, and collecting primary data by interview or field may be dangerous as well as unethical. This fact makes the exploratory design consistent with it, given that its findings are based on authoritative secondary sources and still provide rigorous and insightful analysis. It enables the researcher to cross-reference data of various reliable documents to stipulate logical patterns of the Boko Haram cross-border activities, recruitment, financing networks, and their associations with international jihadist organizations.

Lastly, the exploratory design will help to increase the study capacity to produce new conceptual understanding and add value to scholarly and policy deliberations. The study can suggest explanations and interpretations of terrorism that might not be suggested by more limited quantitative or experimental methods because terrorism is fluid, adaptive and embedded in any particular region. This design is thus critical to the generation of a multidimensional relationship between international terrorism and the Nigerian national security.

3.4 Method of data Collection

The study is based only on secondary data, which is the most appropriate and methodologically sound approach to the study of issues dealing with terrorism, regional insecurity and volatile conflict environment. A broad array of reliable and authoritative sources make up secondary data, including published books, peer-reviewed journal articles, official government data, conflict datasets, policy briefs and institutional reports produced by reputable international organizations. Among these, there are the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Crisis Group (ICG), the World Bank, Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and other research bodies that are recognized throughout the world.

Using secondary data is especially pertinent for studies of terrorism because of ethical, logistical, and security issues that can be associated with primary data collection in conflict-affected areas. The regions hit hardest by Boko Haram -- Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa -- are extremely volatile with ongoing attack, military and population displacement. There are enormous risks to researchers, study participants and local communities in conducting primary research in such environments. Secondary data is a safer and equally robust alternative wherein the researcher has the opportunity to draw upon verified analyses, well curated data-sets and field-based reports generated by experts with secure access.

Moreover, secondary data allows the study to capture patterns of change of Boko Haram's actions longitudinally and in terms of comparative trends between the 2020-2025 timeframe. For instance, the application of ACLED offers detailed data on events concerning the conflict, such as the frequency of attacks and geographical dispersion, number of casualties and evolving operational tactics. Data generated by the UNHCR and IOM organizations give access to good statistics on displacement patterns, humanitarian needs, and population movement. Reports from

the International Crisis Group provide in-depth analysis of regional political shift, alliances, counterterrorism initiatives, and geopolitics contributing to insecurity in Lake Chad Basin.

Additionally, dependence on secondary sources furthers the study's analytical rigor in that it allows for triangulation of the information available from multiple angles. Theoretical and conceptual knowledge is gained from academic publications, official versions from government and military reports, and verified empirical versions from international organisations. This multidimensional approach, ensures a comprehensive and balanced understanding of the nature of the influence of Boko Haram's internationalized terrorism on the Nigerian national security.

The transnational dimension of Boko Haram's operations further emphasizes the importance of secondary data from which to collect micro-level data related to 'cross-border insurgent movements and arms traffickers' as well as the establishment and shifting makeup of foreign fighter groups, the varying nature of international counterterror collaborations, and the respective national policies of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. These broader geopolitical trends could not be fully documented if the data relied only on primary data.

Overall, secondary data is rich, reliable and ethically appropriate basis for analyzing terrorism as the researcher can now look at both micro level realities of the affected communities and the macro level structural forces that is shaping the security environment in Nigeria.

3.5 Method of data Analysis

The study uses the qualitative content analysis as the main method of data analysis. Qualitative content analysis has been known as a social science research methodology for studying complicated phenomena, as it is a good method in order to research more complex phenomena with security threats, geopolitics, and the pattern of the changing violence. This method enables the researcher to be able to systematically review, interpret and categorize information from

various sources of secondary data to help identify the central theme, recurrent pattern and underlying meaning that is relevant to the influence of international terrorism in the national security of Nigeria.

Qualitative content analysis is especially suited to the study of terrorism since it is flexible enough in gathering analysis from non-numerical and text-based data from a variety of sources that can be considered credible. These sources include academic journals, conflict databases, reports by international organizations (UNHCR, ICG, ACLED, UNDP, World Bank), official government publications, policy briefs, intelligence assessments and reputable news analyses. Terrorism studies are not infrequently conducted with data that is descriptive, narrative and explanatory in character and qualitative content analysis permits the structured interpretation of such material without reducing its complexity.

This approach also allows for the analysis in this paper of geopolitical developments that influenced Boko Haram's activity between 2020 and 2025, such as the 2023 coup in Niger; the withdrawal of French forces from Mali; the expansion of Russia's Wagner Group across the Sahel; and changes in US Counter Terrorism policy under the Trump administration of 2024. Since these events are multi-faceted in nature and embedded in the wider regional security dynamics, through qualitative analysis the researcher is able to trace causality, explore linkage and interpret the level which these developments influenced the security environment of Nigeria. Furthermore, qualitative content analysis allows for aggregation of insights in different dimensions of national security political, military, economic and human security. By categorizing data thematically, the researcher is able to compare how Boko Haram and ISWAP impact the stability of governance, effectiveness of militaries, humanitarian state, economic productivity and regional cooperation. This thematic approach is particularly important because

terrorism is not a problem pertaining to just a single dimension; it is a problem of security, politics, social and developmental challenges all at the same time.

In addition, content analysis has a technique used to facilitate triangulation and contribute to the credibility and validity of the results of the study. One source of data (e.g. ACLED attack data) can then be triangulated with another source of data (e.g. ICG situational reports and/or UNHCR displacement data). The advantage of this process is to reduce the likelihood of error, more accurate clinical information and conclusions that are based on corroborated information.

Finally, this is a research methodology that allows the researcher to make new discoveries, or to combine them to form an analytical story that is appropriate for the Boko Haram's regionalized insurgency. It allows analysis of not only the thematic processes of the study but also interpretation of the processes, and the impact on the region's security structures and the long-term national security of Nigeria.

3.6 Logical Framework

The logical structure of this study provides an analytical pathway leading to the connection and the unification of the objectives of the study, the hypotheses, variables and methods of the study. It gives coherence and clarity when it is demonstrated how each of the research questions is made 'operational', what indicators are used to operationalise the individual variables and how the data collection and analysis phases link together to produce findings. This framework will give the investigation the intentionality by which it is coordinated and synchronized with the purpose of the investigation which is the understanding of the contribution of International terrorism and specifically the Boko Haram to the national security of Nigeria between 2020 and

2025. The logical structure reinforces the analytical coherence and methodological validity of the study by linking each variable with one or more empirical indicators and methodology.

Research Questions	Hypotheses	Major Variables	Empirical Indicators	Method of Data Collection	Sources of Data	Method of Data Analysis
RQ1: How has international terrorism undermined Nigerian national security between 2020 and 2025?	H₁: International terrorism has no significant influence on Nigerian national security between 2020 and 2025.	Independent: International terrorism Dependent: National security	Attack frequency, territorial seizures, military casualties, breakdown of intelligence networks, attacks on critical infrastructure, decline in state control	Documentary / Secondary Data Method	ACLED, UN Reports, ICG, academic journals, Nigerian security documents, policy briefs	Thematic content analysis; Historical interpretation
RQ2: How do Boko Haram's cross-border operations shape Nigeria's counterterrorism effectiveness?	H₂: Boko Haram's cross-border operations do not significantly influence Nigeria's counterterrorism effectiveness.	Independent: Cross-border terrorism Dependent: Counterterrorism effectiveness	Smuggling corridors, foreign fighter movement, arms trafficking, MNJTF coordination failures, post-Niger coup disruptions	Documentary / Secondary Data Method	MNJTF releases, UNHCR reports, security briefs, ACLED, ECOWAS assessments	Comparative analysis; Regional security interpretation
RQ3: What is the impact of international terrorism on human security and socio-economic stability in Nigeria?	H₃: International terrorism has no significant impact on human security and socio-economic stability in Nigeria.	Independent: International terrorism Dependent: Human security & socio-economic stability	Displacement figures, hunger levels, poverty trends, school closures, gender-based violence, loss of	Documentary / Secondary Data Method	UNHCR, World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, humanitarian agency reports	Thematic content analysis; Socio-economic impact evaluation

	Nigeria.		livelihoods, humanitarian needs			
--	----------	--	---------------------------------------	--	--	--

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The analysis presented in this chapter is based on both documentary analysis and qualitative content analysis conducted on the content of this document. The analysis and findings of the document were then discussed through analysis of the documentary and qualitative content analysis to bring out the nature of the phenomenon under study, which culminates in the findings in this chapter. The chapter is laid out in a way that follows the research questions and hypotheses presented in Chapter One and the theme presented in Chapter Two. The chapter analyses changes in Nigeria's security architecture, regional stability, and human security due to Boko Haram's growth into an international terrorist organisation using secondary data from reports of international organisations, conflict databases, government publications and scholarly journals, policy briefs, and geopolitical analyses.

The three major dimensions of the analysis are discussed below. It looks at the level of threat to national security Liberia by international terrorism through its continuous attacks, institutional degeneration and overstretched military. Second, it explores the transnational and intercountry aspects of Boko Haram's activities, namely transnational logistic networks, regional instability, and the international geo-political landscape in maintaining the insurgency. Third, the chapter examines how Boko Haram's action affect human security, socio-economic stability and resilience in Nigeria.

The results are analyzed in the light of the Regional Security Complex (RSCT), which posits that security challenges in a region are not independent of each other and they cannot be analyzed on

their own. Therefore, this chapter shows that the attacks by Boko Haram are not only a local Nigerian issue but are also a regional and international security crisis in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel region.

To assess the impact of international terrorism, as perpetrated by Boko Haram on Nigeria's National Security between 2020 and 2025.

Table 4.1: Occurrence of Boko Haram/ISWAP Terrorist Activities and National Security Impact in Nigeria (2020–2025)

Year	Estimated Number of Major Attacks	Major Affected Areas	Nature of Attacks	Security Impact on Nigeria
2020	420+	Borno, Yobe, Adamawa	Bombings, village raids, military ambushes	Increased military casualties, displacement of civilians, weakening of territorial control
2021	470+	Maiduguri axis, Lake Chad region	IED attacks, attacks on military bases, kidnappings	Overstretching of security forces and rising insecurity in border communities
2022	510+	Borno, Niger border communities	Cross-border assaults, destruction of infrastructure	Weakening of border security and increased regional instability
2023	560+	Nigeria–Niger–Chad tri-border region	Coordinated ISWAP attacks, drone surveillance, FOB attacks	Collapse of some intelligence-sharing structures after Niger coup
2024	610+	Lake Chad Basin, Northern Nigeria	Advanced ambush operations, attacks on highways and military convoys	Intensified pressure on national security institutions and humanitarian crisis
2025	590+	Northeastern Nigeria and border corridors	Cross-border insurgency operations and	Continued strain on military coordination and regional

			strategic raids	counterterrorism efforts
--	--	--	-----------------	--------------------------

Source: Adapted from ACLED (2023), International Crisis Group (2024), UN Security Council Reports are complete with accounts from both sources (2024) and Brookings Institution Security Assessments (2025).

The results revealed that the country's national security has seriously been affected by international terrorism in Nigeria between 2020 and 2025. Boko Haram and ISWAP evinced signs of proliferation and metamorphosis from local insurgents to globalized and well organised terrorists who operate with other terrorists on national boundaries and engage in ideological links with global jihadists groups. This development more or less altered the security scenario in Nigeria.

One of the most significant ways to threaten national security with terrorism was to threaten military infrastructure and state authority. Boko Haram expanded its operations in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States, targeting military posts, airports, police stations, government compound, houses, mosques and strategic roads, between 2020 and 2025. There were concerted assaults against some Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), thefts of military materials and deaths of soldiers. ACLED counts attacks targeting military targets increasing during this same period from 2021-24, indicating a trend by ISWAP to target state security forces rather than just civilians in indiscriminate attacks.

The insurgencys also exposed gaping security vacuum in Nigeria. Results of policy evaluation and security audit reports indicate that there are ongoing issues of poor coordination amongst

intelligence agencies, weaker surveillance mechanisms, corruption in procurement by the military, and inadequate supplies of field personnel. Security agencies were not able to respond quickly to attacks, which allowed the insurgents to maintain activities in rural and border communities. Moreover, successive assaults on military units caused lack of trust in the State's capacity to ensure security.

Another significant discovery was the advanced technological and tactical approaches of Boko Haram, which they borrowed from other international terrorist groups. ISWAP began to rely more heavily on drones for reconnaissance, satellite communications, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and ambush tactics. These approaches were deemed to be under the influence of ISIS affiliates in the Middle East and Sahel regions. These technologies made the attacks more deadly, and increased the sophistication of the insurgency's operations.

The fragility of the Nigerian national security was also partly the result of regional political instability. The 2023 Niger coup had impacted information-sharing and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). Niger was one of the most active countries in the region to engage in counterterrorism operations before the coup and was home to Western military monitoring facilities. Political crisis led to a sharp reduction in regional cooperation, leading to operational weaknesses which ISWAP used to intensify cross-border attacks.

Additionally, the French forces' pullout from Mali and a decrease in U.S. counterterrorism operations in the Sahel occurred as the Trump administration in 2017 started to reduce America's footprint. Moreover, the French withdrawal from Mali and the overall decline in U.S. counterterrorism operations in the Sahel in Donald Trump's administration in 2017 made coordination in the region more difficult. Boko Haram factions had increased their mobility

around the Lake Chad Basin due to a decrease in aerial surveillance, military support and intelligence-sharing capabilities.

The results, therefore, establish that International terrorism has become a systemic security threat to Nigeria's national security. It has led to loss of territorial control, fragility of institutions, depletion of military capabilities and increased regional insecurity.

Testing of Hypothesis One

H₀₂: International terrorism does not significantly influence the Nigerian national security between 2020 and 2025.

Results of this study refute the null hypothesis. The conflict reports, security analysis and geopolitical studies all show resoundingly that national security of Nigeria was seriously affected by international terrorism during the period under study. The deteriorating security institutions and territorial stability in Nigeria were due to Boko Haram's international connections, technological adaptation and trans-border operations.

4.2 In what ways have Boko Haram's international linkages and cross-border operations shaped Nigeria's counterterrorism capacity?

Table 4.2: Cross-Border Operations of Boko Haram and Effects on Nigeria's Counterterrorism Capacity (2020–2025)

Year	Major Cross-Border Activities	Countries Involved	Counterterrorism Challenges	Effects on Nigeria's Security Response
2020	Movement of fighters across Lake Chad Basin	Nigeria, Niger, Chad	Weak border surveillance	Difficulty tracking insurgent mobility
2021	Smuggling of arms and fuel through border	Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger	Poor regional coordination	Sustained operational strength of

	routes			insurgents
2022	Expansion of ISWAP logistics networks	Nigeria, Chad, Mali	Limited intelligence sharing	Increased attacks on military bases
2023	Exploitation of instability after Niger coup	Nigeria, Niger	Collapse of some MNJTF operations	Reduced effectiveness of joint military operations
2024	Collaboration with Sahel jihadist groups	Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali	Reduced U.S. surveillance support	Weakening of regional counterterror operations
2025	Cross-border movement of weapons and fighters	Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon	Regional instability and poor coordination	Continued pressure on Nigeria's military capacity

Source: Adapted from International Crisis Group (2024), ACLED (2023), MNJTF Security Reports (2024), and Brookings Institution Assessments (2025).

The results indicate that Boko Haram's global ties and trans-border activities had an impact on the nature of Nigeria's anti-terror measures from 2020 to 2025. The insurgency began to become more transnational, as part of larger circles of jihadists connected to ISIS and other extremism groups in the Sahel.

One of the consequences of this is that Boko Haram were able to exploit the incidence of porous boundaries and regional instability to operate. The Lake Chad Basin was unique in terms of its operating opportunity of minimal border control, rugged terrain, low states presence. Fighters, weapons, fuel and supplies were easily transported from place to place in Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. The network of transnational logistics had a significant role in allowing Boko Haram to evade the military pressure and make operations possible from a resiliency point of view.

The report also uncovered ISWAP's ability to make contacts with jihadist groups in Mali, Burkina Faso and Libya. Reports and analyses of intelligence suggested contacts between various extremist groups in the Sahel regarding weapons trafficking, operational knowledge as well as ideological coordination and planning. These partnerships boosted Boko Haram's operations and integrated the insurgency into broader regional security challenges.

Russia's Wagner Group has entered the stage of the Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger situation between 2023 and 2025, changing the security landscape in the region. Wagner's operations were mostly geared toward protecting the regime, leading to areas of weakness in certain regions. This under-coordinated anti-terrorism efforts indirectly allowed Jihadist groups to grow influence.

The results also show that the country is affected by international geopolitical changes with respect to its ability to effectively combat terrorism. U.S. counterterrorism support for the Sahel region decreased following Donald Trump's reinstatement in office in 2024. Surveillance operations by AFRICOM were curtailed, training support for the military decreased and funding for stabilization efforts was reduced. This has therefore, resulted in reduced access to intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance systems essential for countering cross-border insurgency in Nigeria and its regional partners.

Another significant positive development is the Niger 2023 coup's adverse effect on coordination in the region against terrorism. The Intelligence Joint Patrols were suspended, The Joint Border Patrols reduced & The Integrity of MNJTF is compromised. Both these disruptions gave Boko Haram a chance to enhance its operations in the areas of tri-border.

To sum, the findings show that Boko Haram's internationalisation process went beyond becoming just a Nigerian challenge, and ultimately led to Boko Haram becoming a regional

security issue. Thus, domestic factors alone were not the only ones that significantly influenced Nigeria's counterterrorism strategy; transnational geopolitical factors also played a role.

4.2.1 Testing hypothesis two:

H₁₂: Boko Haram's cross-border operations have a significant impact on the effectiveness of Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts.

The result refutes the null-hypothesis. Regional security assessment, intelligence reports and geopolitical analysis have all confirmed that the cross-border activities of Boko Haram had a great impact on Nigeria's efforts, as a counter-terrorist. The cross border activities of Boko Haram had a great impact on Nigeria's counterterrorist efforts, as confirmed by evidence gathered from regional security assessment, intelligence reports and geopolitical analysis. The operational effectiveness of Nigeria's security agencies and regional security agencies was undermined by regional instability, poor inter-agency coordination of resources at borders, and external jihadist linkages.

4.3 How has the Boko Haram insurgency affected human security and socio-economic stability in Nigeria from 2020 to 2025?

The results indicate that Boko Haram insurgency had significant impacts on human security and socio-economic stability of Nigeria between 2020 and 2025. The insurgency created large scale humanitarian crisis, economic downturn, displacement, food insecurity, educational disruption and psychological trauma.

The large scale displacement due to the Boko Haram attacks is one of key findings. Millions of civilians were driven out of their homes in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States. Overcrowded camps were home to many DP's who did not have access to medical facilities, clean water, food

or sanitary facilities. There was a high level of vulnerability of women and children to exploitation, trafficking, forced marriages and gender based violence.

The results also indicate that Boko Haram had severely affected the agricultural production and economic activities. The farming areas were repeatedly raided, farms were left behind, and trade routes were made unsafe. This led to food crises, inflation, increasing poverty and unemployment in the northeast of Nigeria. The loss of local markets and buying and selling hubs further reduced regional economic productivity.

The education sector was also badly hit by the insurgency. Hundreds of schools were destroyed and/or closed because of insecurity. Many children were not able to attend school and teachers ran away from conflict zones. The prevalence of attacks against educational institutions led to high drop-out rates among students and to increased illiteracy among the affected communities.

Major challenges were faced by health systems, too. There was insecurity, causing hospitals and clinics to be attacked or abandoned. In the Review period, there were reports of a rise in cholera, malnutrition and communicable diseases outbreaks in IDP camps. Limited access to healthcare worsened the humanitarian crisis.

One of the major findings is that Boko Haram undermined the resilience of the nation Nigeria. There were challenges to government institutions in efforts to rehabilitate and resettle the displaced populations, reconstruct destroyed infrastructure, and offer long-term psychosocial support to the victims. Poor policies and implementation, and corruption, also hindered recovery efforts.

The study also revealed that political events in different parts of the world induced deterioration in humanitarian situation. The Niger coup had an impact on support networks to provide

humanitarian assistance, while the withdrawal of western stabilization support since President Trump took office helped weaken humanitarian response networks in the Sahel.

The results, therefore, indicate that Boko Haram's insurgency was wider than just military force, impacting human security, economic stability, governance and social development.

4.3.1 TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS THREE

H₀₃: International terrorism does not affect human security and socio-economic stability in Nigeria.

The results support the hypothesis. Humanitarian reports, displacement data, economic evaluations and education analyses have all confirmed that international terrorism had a tremendous impact on human security and socioeconomic stability in Nigeria from 2020 to 2025.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study's results are consistent with the assumptions of the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), which states that security threats in a region are interconnected, and that they are mutually reinforcing. Boko Haram's operations proved that insecurity in Nigeria is not confined to the confines of Nigeria but extended to the developments in the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel region.

Excessive Boko Haram membership to the ideology of ISIS and a series of regional axes and transnational operational structures led to the formation of the group into an internationally connected terrorist organization, the study validates. This has mirrored the finding of Zenn (2021), Warner and Hulme (2022) and International Crisis Group (2023) that ISWAP increasingly imitated organizational and tactical approaches of global jihadist groups.

The results also echoed earlier studies that highlighted governance problems, corruption, non-adequate intelligence cooperation and regional instability in Nigeria as key drivers of the

insurgency in the country. The destabilisation of the security cooperation in the region following the coup in Niger just goes to prove that instability in one regional security actor has knock-on effects on the overall security architecture.

Moreover, the results show that Boko Haram's insurgency is also affecting humanitarian, economic and developmental crises beyond military insecurity. Strengthening and broadening the focus on human security is pertinent in the context of terrorism, where livelihoods, educational systems and healthcare infrastructure have been ravaged.

Lastly, the study finds that the shift of U.S. foreign policy, the arrival of the Wagner Group in the Sahel, and the French military withdrawal from Mali were significant geopolitical shifts that affected West Africa's terrorism landscape. These studies highlight the need for the interdependency of global and regional security systems.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study was a descriptive survey, designed to investigate the effect of international terrorism on Nigerian national security especially Boko Haram and ISWAP crisis that lasted from 2020-2025. This study had three research questions and three hypotheses. The study questions and hypotheses were three in total. Based on the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), the study delved into the impact of Boko Haram's internationalization on the security architecture, counterterrorism capabilities, and the state of human security in Nigeria.

The study method employed was a descriptive-exploratory design and secondary data was exclusively drawn from academic papers, government documents, conflict databases, humanitarian reports and international policy documents. The qualitative content analysis has been performed for analysis of data.

It was found that there existed very high levels of reduction of Nigeria national security due to international terrorism during the study period. Boko Haram and ISWAP stepped up the attack on military installations, government bodies, civilians, and strategic infrastructure facilities. The insurgency is exposing a number of flaws in Nigeria intelligence, military coordination and border security.

The study also reports that Boko Haram's cross-border operations and international ties had a great impact on the effectiveness of Nigeria's counterterrorism operations. The porous nature of their borders, regional instability and transnational jihadist alliances helped maintain operations in Nigeria, the neighboring countries of Niger, Chad and Cameroon. Regional counterterrorism

cooperation was hampered by geopolitical developments like the Niger coup, French forces pulling out of Mali, U.S. foreign policy developments and the expansion of Wagner Group operations.

Further, the study found that the insurgency by Boko Haram posed tremendous impacts on human security and socioeconomic stability. The displacement of millions of civilians, dwindling agricultural production, and the closure of schools and health centres have worsened the humanitarian crises in the North East of Nigeria.

The overall findings of the study revealed that Boko Haram insurgency became a multidimensional dimensional crisis with significant implication for the national stability and development of Nigeria, on a regional scale.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that in the contemporary era, international terrorism continues to be one of the serious threats facing Nigeria's national security. During the 5 year period from 2020 to 2025, Boko Haram and ISWAP became international networks, moving beyond their local character into regional and global jihad networks.

The insurgency affected the territorial control of Nigeria, stretched military capacity, caused public distrust of the government, and increased the human suffering of the people of Nigeria. Regionalisation of the conflict using cross-border operations and overseas alliances of extremists showed that the security issues in Nigeria need to be solved beyond the boundaries of Nigeria.

It also finds regional instability and global geopolitical changes had an important impact on the trend of terror in West Africa. Political crises—most notably the coup in Niger—increased operational opportunities for extremist groups following the withdrawal of support from the West's counterterror efforts and the shifting "hourglass" of international partnerships, as well as a shift in U.S. strategy. Decreasing Western counterterror involvement and shifting “hourglass” of international alliances and strategies, the withdrawal of U.S. strategy, allied to political crises like the coup in Niger, created operational opportunities for extremist organizations.

Also, it is an important study that finds that counterterrorism need not rely solely on military solutions. Strengthening governance structures, intelligence capacity, and the efforts to resolve socioeconomic disparity, as well as regional cooperation and the restoration of confidence in State institutions are essential for sustainable security.

Ultimately, the Boko Haram has demonstrated the extent to which the problem of terrorism in Nigeria is national and regional, and the need for coordinated political, military, economic, and humanitarian efforts to address it.

5.3 Recommendations

The results of this study lead to the following recommendations:

1. Strengthening International and Regional Counterterrorism Cooperation

The study revealed that Boko Haram has not only intensified its homegrown insurgency, but have grown into an international threat that is operating across North Nigeria's border and connected to transnational networks of extremists. This requires increased partnerships among the countries of the Lake Chad Basin (LCB), Nigeria, African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), United Nations (UN) and other partners. Their partnership appears to be especially focused on strengthening intelligence sharing, joint military

drills, border surveillance and joint efforts to combat terrorism to effectively aid the breaking-up of the networks and enhance world security.

2. Enhancing Border Security and institutional skills

These findings also revealed porous borders, weak institutional coordination and intelligence deficits have afforded Boko Haram space to operate across the national boundaries. In conclusion, the Nigeria government in collaboration with neighbouring countries should harness to improve the border management systems with the use of the latest modern technologies in surveillance, intelligence gathering, and strengthening intra-agency cooperation. The enhancement of training and equipping operational capabilities of security forces to increase operational efficiency and boost national and regional capabilities against international terrorism should also be increased.

3. Abandon the Humanitarian and Socio-economic Drivers of Terrorism

The study has confirmed the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on the people of Nigeria has caused widespread displacement, poverty, disruption of education, unemployment and humanitarian crises which ultimately affect the national and international security. Thus, global development and governmental sustainable post conflict recovery programmes must support educational, youth empowerment, employment creation, community rehabilitation and socio psychological support of the victims of Terrorism. Solving these core socio-economic issues will not only help to make human security a reality but will also help diminish the conducive environments for radicalization and violent extremism to thrive.

REFERENCES

- Adebajo, A. (2022). *Counterterrorism and regional security in the Lake Chad Basin*. *African Security Review*, 31(2), 145–162.
- Adebajo, A. (2023). *Geopolitical shifts and counterterrorism in West Africa*. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 41(3), 201–219.
- ACLED. (2023). *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project: Nigeria conflict data report*.
<https://acleddata.com>
- Agbibo, D. E. (2021). *Boko Haram, regional instability and the crisis of governance in Nigeria*. *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, 11(1), 55–78.
- Aghedo, I. (2024). *Corruption and counterterrorism failures in Nigeria*. *Journal of African Security Studies*, 18(2), 88–106.
- Brookings Institution. (2025). *U.S. foreign policy shifts and counterterrorism retrenchment in Africa*. Brookings Institution Press.

- Buzan, B. (1991). *People, states and fear: An agenda for international security studies in the post-Cold War era* (2nd ed.). Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Buzan, B., & Wæver, O. (2003). *Regions and powers: The structure of international security*. Cambridge University Press.
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Clarke, C., & Winter, C. (2023). *ISIS propaganda networks and the evolution of ISWAP media operations*. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 46(4), 512–531.
- Fowler, M. (2023). *State fragility and terrorism expansion in the Sahel region*. *Global Security Review*, 15(1), 44–61.
- Hoffman, B. (2021). *Inside terrorism* (3rd ed.). Columbia University Press.
- Ibrahim, M. (2024). *Humanitarian consequences of Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria*. *International Journal of Humanitarian Studies*, 12(1), 73–95.
- International Crisis Group. (2022). *Reassessing Boko Haram and ISWAP in the Lake Chad Basin*. International Crisis Group.
- International Crisis Group. (2023). *The Sahel crisis and regional insecurity in West Africa*. International Crisis Group.
- International Crisis Group. (2024). *Niger coup and the collapse of regional counterterror cooperation*. International Crisis Group.
- Ismail, A., & Adesoji, A. (2021). *Governance failure, poverty and Boko Haram recruitment patterns in Nigeria*. *African Sociological Review*, 25(2), 90–112.
- Kaldor, M. (2013). *New and old wars: Organized violence in a global era* (3rd ed.). Stanford University Press.

- Kotra, J. (2023). *Transnational criminal economies and terrorist financing in West Africa. African Security Journal*, 17(3), 118–136.
- LaFree, G., & Dugan, L. (2022). *Global terrorism and transnational violent networks. Terrorism and Political Violence*, 34(5), 901–920.
- Mendelsohn, B. (2019). *The al-Qaeda franchise: The expansion of militant Islam and the challenge to international order*. Oxford University Press.
- Mezran, K., & Varvelli, A. (2021). *ISIS media strategy and jihadist communication networks in Africa. Mediterranean Politics*, 26(4), 489–507.
- Musa, A., & Lawal, T. (2024). *Terrorism and educational disruption in northeastern Nigeria. Nigerian Journal of Educational Development*, 9(2), 133–154.
- Mustapha, A. (2022). *ISWAP restructuring and battlefield adaptation after ISIS reorganization. Journal of Terrorism Research*, 13(3), 66–84.
- OCHA. (2023). *Humanitarian needs overview: Nigeria*. <https://www.unocha.org>
- Olonisakin, F. (2020). *Counterterrorism and institutional weaknesses in Nigeria. African Journal of Security Studies*, 14(1), 25–47.
- Soufan Center. (2023). *Extremism and instability in the Sahel*. The Soufan Center.
- Soufan Center. (2024). *Wagner Group and shifting security alliances in the Sahel*. The Soufan Center.
- Stebbins, R. A. (2001). *Exploratory research in the social sciences*. Sage Publications.
- United Nations Development Programme. (1994). *Human development report 1994*. United Nations Development Programme.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Human security and violent extremism in Africa*. United Nations Development Programme.

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2024). *Nigeria emergency update and displacement report*. <https://www.unhcr.org>
- United Nations. (2020). *Measures to eliminate international terrorism*. United Nations.
- United Nations Panel of Experts. (2023). *Illicit arms flows and terrorist financing in the Sahel region*. United Nations.
- United Nations Security Council. (2021). *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts in Africa*. United Nations Security Council.
- UNICEF. (2023). *Children affected by armed conflict in northeastern Nigeria*. UNICEF.
- Umar, S., & Haruna, M. (2023). *Regional alliances and the effectiveness of the MNJTF after the Niger coup*. *West African Security Review*, 19(1), 58–79.
- Warner, J., & Hulme, C. (2021). *The Islamic State in Africa: Boko Haram's transformation into ISWAP*. *CTC Sentinel*, 14(5), 1–15.
- Warner, J., & Hulme, C. (2022). *ISWAP's military evolution and regional expansion*. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 45(7), 611–629.
- Walt, S. M. (1991). *The renaissance of security studies*. *International Studies Quarterly*, 35(2), 211–239.
- Williams, P. D. (2021). *Security studies: An introduction* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- World Bank. (2024). *Economic impacts of insecurity in northeastern Nigeria*. World Bank.
- World Bank. (2025). *Conflict, poverty and economic decline in terror-affected regions of Nigeria*. World Bank.
- World Health Organization. (2024). *Health emergencies in conflict-affected northeastern Nigeria*. World Health Organization.

Zenn, J. (2020). *Unmasking Boko Haram: Exploring global jihad in Nigeria*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Zenn, J. (2021). *The rise of ISWAP and the transformation of Boko Haram*. *Terrorism Monitor*, 19(6), 10–18.

Zenn, J. (2023). *Cross-border insurgency and Boko Haram attack patterns in the Lake Chad Basin*. *African Security*, 16(2), 147–169.