

Securing through the Failure to Secure? Civilian Joint Task Force and Counter-Insurgency Operations in North-East Nigeria

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Abstract

The advent of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in 2012 had a great influence in the evolution of national security in the north-eastern region of Nigeria. This is because many scholars have, at various times, described the region as an 'unfinished' region, and of inevitable instability. This article interrogates the role of CJTF in counter-insurgency operations (CIOs) and its influence on the establishment and alliance with the military forces in the north-eastern region. The article succinctly investigates the efforts of CJTF and its CIOs. It also explicates, in clear terms and with relevant cases, CJTF's role in preventing and fighting insurgency in the region. In particular, it focuses on answering the following questions: Can the current security architecture of CJTF cope with the level of sophistication of the Boko Haram insurgency groups across the region? Under what arrangement will CJTF be able to adequately confront Boko Haram insurgency? What are the challenges affecting the CJTF's efficiency and effectiveness in this region? The article will also examine how existing CJTF can be strengthened to achieve effective CIOs against insurgency in the north-eastern region of Nigeria.

Keywords:

Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), insurgency, Boko Haram, north-eastern region, Nigeria

Introduction

The impact of the Boko Haram insurgency is evidently seen in the brutality it has perpetrated in various parts of Nigeria, mostly in the north-east. It has brought about a widespread loss of lives and property and has created dread and concern, both locally and internationally. The north-eastern region's unending violence, as a result of insurgency, is a tragic exposition that is symptomatic of human tragedy. Historically, the north-eastern region has been plagued by many forms of religious insurgencies and riots. Notable among these are the adventurous voyages of Islamic explorers in the tortuous era of Shaikh Uthman Ibn Fodio, culminating in the Jihad wars, and the cruelty of colonialism. This was followed by the absurdity of rampaging political disagreements of the twenty-first century, which birthed several insurgency groups that employ a variety of strategies. The north-eastern region has been a victim of its gift of nature, displayed by brutal predatory instinct and the natural wickedness of humanity. Since the beginning of 2012, the north-eastern region has been plagued with violent insurgent acts, which have caused negative effects on the locals.

As the nature of violent insurgency is changing from face-to-face attack to, predominantly, guerrilla warfare, the capacity of the military forces providing counter-insurgency operations (CIOs) to secure the locals is weakening. Consequently, this has reinforced the demand for collective security and a form of counter-insurgency support operation from the locals, who had been at the mercy of the military forces. While the military forces were arbitrarily detaining and executing them, on the one hand, the Boko Haram insurgents were rampantly killing them, on the other. Subsequently, the rate of casualties led to the shift in the local's support, reluctantly, from the military forces to the CJTF (M. Jidda, personal communication, September 23, 2018).

This demand eventually led to the formation of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) towards the end of 2013 in the north-eastern states, specifically in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (Idris *et al.*, 2014). Still, according to Idris *et al.* (2014), the CIOs clause in the north-eastern region of the country mandated these states to work in collaboration. As a result, the mandate or right to fight the Boko Haram insurgency and other forms of organised crimes within the north-eastern region has been given to the CJTF. Insurgency is the deadliest kind of guerrilla warfare that the north-eastern region is currently experiencing (Kiras, 2010).

In particular, given the fact that the CJTF was mandated to fight a terrorist organization with a high level of sophistication like Boko Haram, the mission of the task force was generally perceived as difficult, if not impossible. It is important to state that Boko Haram was responsible for a total of 491 attacks and 5,478 deaths in 2014, and thereby ranked as the deadliest and second deadliest in 2014 and 2015 respectively (GTI, 2016). Besides, the United Nations Security Council in May 2014 enlisted the terrorist group among global terror organizations due to its affiliation with al-Qaeda. The group was subsequently linked with the Islamic State (IS) and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). However, the CJTF can be used as counter-terrorism architecture against the sophistication of the Boko Haram insurgents.

This has now spread to neighbouring regions as well. However, the investigations conducted in order to ascertain the reason for the violent insurgency in the north-eastern states have only shown the stances of the insurgency groups regarding economic, political, ethnic and religious ideologies. It must be noted that the concept of insurgency adopted in this paper is in accord with Silberman (2014)'s postulation which encapsulates wars that are fundamentally predicated on causing crippling fear and psychological debilitation among the targeted community. The insurgents instigate these insurrectional attacks in order to pressurise the government into surrendering to their ideological, religious and socio-economic demands. It follows that insurgency in itself can be defined as an act or threat of violence against non-combatants, with the aim of influencing a people or a government to succumb to specific economic, social, ethnic, religious, and political demand(s). On the other hand, violence only differs to an extent that ideologies stand as its scaffolds, and its intended goals are geared towards securing an economic, religious and socio-political order.

However, CJTF still lacks long-term CIO strategies on how to deal with all forms of insurgency and organised crime within the affected-contributing north-eastern states. According to the 2019 global terrorism index for Nigeria, the impact of terrorism was 8.6 per cent. The percentage fell gradually from 9.21 in 2015 to 8.6 in 2019. The north-eastern is presently experiencing acts of insurgency within the region (Global Terrorism Index, 2019). Geographically, activities by insurgent groups in the north-eastern region are tightly clustered along governed and ungoverned spaces of the region, stretching through Borno, Yobe and Adamawa (Abdullahi, 2015).

Since the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency group in Nigeria (*Jama'atu ablis Sunna Lidawati wal Jihad*), there have been clear cases of sloppiness by the security forces in the affected states. They have not demonstrated active and meticulous response against the insurgents, especially in the ungoverned spaces in the region. The unregulated character of this insurgency group and its knock-on effects on the border, in most cases, have defied several attempts of counter-insurgency within the states of this region (International Crisis Group, 2017). Following this, the affected states took on the role of collective security responsibilities against insurgency. This collaboration eventually led to the formal establishment of the CJTF as a locally-based counter-insurgency force in the north-eastern region.

Before the formal launch of CJTF by the Borno State Government, the impression behind the formation was that it would function as a 'local initiative support' for the CIOs of the military forces. CJTF was a locally-based voluntary counter-insurgency initiative formed for the purpose of coordinating CIOs along with the military forces. The overall aim of the partnership is to fortify their capabilities to fight and defeat the insurgency group, as well as other related forms of organised crimes in the north-eastern region (Idris *et al.*, 2014). CJTF is, therefore, the most significant locally-based counter-insurgency architecture which was first established by the states in the north-eastern region (Gawthorpe, 2017). The main purpose of this article is to see if the earnest formation of the CJTF can be used as a counter-terrorism architecture against the state-of-the-art incidents or episodes, in the form of the new wars that the Boko Haram insurgents are waging, and if this can be formidable in organising CIOs against Boko Haram in Nigeria.

CJTF is made up of civilians from the north-eastern states and it properly works on CIOs in partnership with the military forces in Nigeria.

CJTF: Turning a Page in the History of North-eastern Region

Sequel to interrogating the accomplishment and operation of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in the CIOs in the north-eastern region of Nigeria, it is necessary to have a critical view of CIOs landscape in the north-eastern region. The crafters and drafters must have informed the decisions of the military forces and the government authorities within the north-eastern region to influence the decisions of the locals to establish the CJTF, as part of counter-insurgency architecture, in order to support the activities of military forces in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency group in this region. Following the insurgency activities within the states and the borders around the affected states, they responded with a vision of developing and building integrated and peaceful counter-insurgency architecture. The inspiration to initiate CJTF was conceived in Maiduguri, Borno State, likewise its eventual origination. The birth of CJTF was an important landmark in the CIOs in the north-eastern region's quest for peace and stability. It was on this premise that the CJTF, the arrowhead of this citizen-driven counter-insurgency option, was formally established by the Borno State government in 2013 (B. Shehu, personal communication, September 28, 2018). The circumstances surrounding its formation evidenced apparent dissatisfaction with the military forces' ineffectiveness in protecting its locals against the Boko Haram assaults (Maignawa, 2017). The CJTF simply fortified the existing local security system which was set up by the locals. The group has subsequently assumed numerous roles including the coordination of discrete surveillance – networks in the north-eastern region with the military combatants – and acting as auxiliaries or semi-autonomous fighting forces. However, by 2016, 680 members of the task force had already died during confrontations with the violent insurgents probably because they were equipped with local weapons only (Ebuzor, 2017). The CJTF's vision explicitly states an intention to defend the states' common interest, accelerate the region's development, and build peace within the boundaries in the states. At the same time, it was considered as a bold attempt by the states to genuinely redraw the map of the north-eastern region's CIOs architecture.

Olanisakin (2015) ascertains that the transformation within the collective security framework of the north-eastern region was a result of the collaboration between the military forces and the locals. The study describes the collaborative effort as visionary because both parties recognised that each of them could not single-handedly overcome the Boko Haram insurgency ravaging the north-eastern states. Part of the constraint was the unfamiliarity of the military with the terrain, the areas under the control of the insurgent group, the local people and their values. There is no gainsaying the fact that for over ten years, the north-eastern region has been experiencing horrific insurrectional attacks. Indeed, before the formation of CJTF, the outbreak of Boko Haram had literally changed the region into an active battlefield, battles between the military forces and the Boko Haram insurgency group - *Jama'atu Izalat al-Bid'awa iqamat al-Sunna*. The complex nature of the insurgency was not without an enormous security burden, which may have prompted the decision of the affected states to chart a new roadmap for the north-eastern region's

CIOs. However, the decision attracted some major debates particularly because the failure of the military forces to secure lives and property heralded the establishment of CJTF and also because the strategies adopted by the military forces to protect the locals proved grossly inadequate and unsuitable to stop or even mitigate the violent activities of the insurgent group. In addition to the problems of poor funding, poor intelligence coordination, inadequate military hardware, corruption and ineffective leadership, the military also suffered from inadequate knowledge of the affected areas and the lack of discrete surveillance networks. Consequent upon that, from the perspective of some debaters, the CJTF would add to the counter-insurgency intelligence system. They buttressed that perception by submitting that since the CJTF was made up of people who are familiar with the terrain, their fellow locals and the values of the areas under the control or attack of the insurgent group, then their participation would be effectual. They argued further that CJTF is symbolic and critical to the excellent performance of CIOs in the north-eastern region. It was also believed that they serve as lower-security-level interfaces in the war against the Boko Haram insurgency.

Accordingly, CJTF has been successful making meaningful progress in the area of CIOs in the north-eastern region. This can be attributed to the preciseness of the locals' interference clause, thus enabling CJTF to actively function as a complementary prop for the military force under which many atrocities were committed (Olanisakin, 2017). Although these clauses were seen as impediments in the CIOs of the military forces, they were perceived and accepted as huge contributions to the CJTF's success because they promoted peace and security in their localities. Thus, the conception of CJTF was inspired by global change in the nature of locals' intervention in CIOs.

Therefore, the reaction of the locals in the north-eastern region was not only to respond to the failure of the military forces, but also to conform to counter-insurgency strategies that would meet contemporary Boko Haram insurgency, and bring normalcy to their localities (Higazi, 2013). In other words, CJTF emerged to respond to the Boko Haram insurgency and other trends of organised crime within the north-eastern region. Thus, based on that premise, has the emergence of CJTF effectuated a positive change on the Boko Haram insurgency activities in the north-eastern region? The answer to that question occupies a central position in this article. Some would contend that the activities of the insurgents continued without any reduction in intensity and strength despite the establishment of CJTF. This may be true, especially when one considers the high level of killings in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe committed as a result of Boko Haram's incessant attacks in villages. For example, it has been affirmed that the Borno State borders are presently experiencing high-intensity of Boko Haram insurgency.

Based on the 2019 National Security Policy and Strategy of Nigeria, the north-eastern region of the country ranked the highest among places in Nigeria that have been ravaged by insurgents' activities and organised crimes culminating into guerrilla warfare (National Security Strategy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2019). The report also supports the postulation that 70% of the states experiencing insecurity or insurgency in Nigeria today are from the north-eastern states, the

mutiny ranging from Boko Haram insurgency to herdsmen's violent operations. To some extent, the 2019 National Security Policy and Strategy appears frighteningly correct but to conclude that the face of the CIOs has not changed is nothing but an error of judgment (National Security Strategy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2019). As this article may prove later, there have been some significant changes in the level of CIOs since the emergence of the CJTF in the region.

In fact, Oyewole (2015) shows that CJTF has demonstrated a new sense of purpose and direction to the CIOs, which are aimed at building peace within the region. Although not many investigations are available on the operations, techniques, methodologies and sustenance of the CJTF, and Nigeria's CIO settings remain complex, the situation has challenged the peace and security agenda in the region; stretched the capability and capacity of CJTF to a breaking point; and questioned its CIOs strategies. Nevertheless, the CJTF is still perceived as a timely response to the security challenges in the country's north-eastern region. Of all the pockets of insurgency activities in the region, none has perhaps exceeded CJTF's capability in the current state of the CIOs. The north-eastern region is arguably the darkest zone, especially considering the activities of Boko Haram insurgents which incidentally are a major concern in the local areas. However, it is important to remember that religious intolerance, marginalisation and injustice have generated forms of insurgency which exist until today. The national socio-economic and political situations in many states in the north-eastern region have generated insurgency beyond borders. The fragility in the strategies of government authorities for defeating insurgency and that of the state security apparatus, in general, has generated political crises throughout the history of the north-eastern states where insurgency is a possibility in the medium-term (Ibrahim and Bala, 2018). On one hand, there is an argument that the composition of the CJTF was a result of the failure of the counter-insurgency strategies adopted by the Nigerian security agencies. On the other hand, it is believed that the states involved in the creation of CJTF have justified its emergence as it has succeeded in putting an end to religious and ethnic crisis in the states. The CJTF could manage and prevent insurgency and also create an avenue for peace and security in the region. Besides, it succeeded in developing better CIOs in its respective state (Hassan and Pieri, 2018).

On the other hand, the CJTF is deficient in taking consequential measures in the area of CIOs in the north-eastern states. The reason for the deficiency can be attributed to the fact that the military force questioned the sanctity of the clause of locals' interference in discrete surveillance networks, military combat auxiliaries or semi-autonomous fighting forces, which is inserted into its mandate and under which many CIOs are operative (International Crisis Group, 2014). This particular clause constituted a great impediment to the CIOs' strategy of the CJTF.

Therefore, the archetypical shift in collective security was not only to respond to the failure of the military forces in CIOs but also to align CIOs with CJTF strategy, in order to match the contemporary fight against Boko Haram insurgency (Muzan, 2014). In other words, CJTF was structured to fit into the trends of military force in CIOs. The debate, therefore, is if the birth of CJTF has solved the problem of violent insurgency in the affected region.

The CJTF, in its CIOs against the perennial activities of the Boko Haram group in the north-eastern

region, has prompted a redefinition of the role played by the military. The redefinition conflated the operations of the military force and those of the CJTF in order to stem the deadly activities of the insurgents. As mentioned earlier, the ineffectiveness of the military force necessitated the inclusion of CJTF in the fight against the insurrectional acts of the Boko Haram sect. In the meantime, the new consensus on CIOs in the north-eastern region has attracted a wider debate hinged on the redefinition of the concept of collective security (Nwokeoma *et al.*, 2020). The CJTF has become more active in fostering CIOs at lower-security-level interfaces, interacting with locals, and also reflecting on the deepening of local contents and contexts in the war against the Boko Haram insurgency. It has continued working on dialogue at the local level and stifling the activities of Boko Haram in the territories of the north-eastern states. The operations of the CJTF have increased greatly and are still increasing. Besides, through the military forces, several restructuring activities that brought about the principles of collective security within CJTF and made it acquire new responsibilities and challenges took place. The purpose was to strengthen peace and security among the north-eastern states. As a result of the efficiency shown by CJTF, it has now been accorded the privilege of being notified whenever there is a new war against the Boko Haram insurgency in the north-eastern regional states (Raji and Ahmed, 2015).

In redefining CJTF, it is important to understand the context that made peace and security a significant asset in the north-eastern region. The vision of a peaceful and stable region, in contrast to other regions in Nigeria, is perceived by government authorities as an advantage in the context of the current CIOs flow (Omenma and Hendricks, 2018). At the same time, scholarly works have undertaken a debate on the new role of CJTF as shown in the literature cited earlier. In this context, the CJTF is considered to be a lasting solution to the Boko Haram insurgency. Two different paths are co-opted from the remaining parts of this article in order to answer certain significant questions.

First, it is important to reiterate that states in the north-east region have developed two new tasks during the establishment of CJTF as tools for defeating the Boko Haram insurgency. The first task was playing a leading role in supporting or promoting peace and security as well as maintaining CIOs in the region. The second was playing a central role in generating the north-eastern region's security paradigms, thus allowing CJTF to play an active role in fighting the Boko Haram insurgency. In addition, CJTF remains important counter-insurgency architecture for defeating all forms of insurgency and organised crimes, which have thrived in the previous years. Insofar as the locals in the states are involved, effectively collaborate and support the dreams and the visions of CJTF, one can see these functions of CIOs realized.

Second, states in the region have prevented a number of ethnic rivalries, political violence and arrays of strife, which have been essential in reducing the looming dangers of several religious wars. In consideration of the recurrent insurgencies or crises, a collective desire to redefine the role of CJTF has been stipulated to include the passage of partnership and collaborative effort in fighting and defeating Boko Haram insurgency in the states involved. Also, important conventions were ratified between the military forces and CJTF, among which is the debate on the redefinition of the concept of collective security against Boko Haram insurgency, launched by the military forces

in the region (Kasali and Odetola, 2016). The military forces have designed a mandate to review the CIOs architecture of the region. Among the issues under scrutiny include the effectiveness of CJTF, given its mandate to orchestrate a collective–collaborative security CIOs network in the region, and the drive towards greater transparency in managing CJTF capacities (Gana, Samsu and Ismail, 2018). The debate on the concept of collective security notably exists in addressing the current situation in the north-eastern region.

A redefinition of the notion of collective security should involve the incorporation and expansion of the concept, i.e., making a paradigm shift from collective security to partnership or collaborative security. This expanded concept for collective security will then allow for the perception of the interdependence between threats and insurgency. In essence, the perceived notion of insurgency to security such as extremism in the north-eastern region would not only be accepted but also defeated by the CJTF. In other words, efforts to deal with all forms of insurgency have acquired new forms of legality.

A new north-eastern regional counter-insurgency framework has been generated and CJTF is a product of this development. However, this has generated some of the debatable questions on the CIO measures which were discussed at the beginning of this article. However, the emphasis on CIOs, which guarantees transparency of security, has replaced the stress of deterrence in the concept of collective security or collective counter-insurgency defence. The idea of arms control within the region is not explicitly stated in the security policy designed for the CJTF. For instance, in 2014, the CJTF, affirming its support for the idea of arms control along with the military forces and the north-eastern region Nuclear Weapons Free-Zone Treaty (NWFZT), took on this subject (B. Shehu, personal communication, September 27, 2018). The NWFZT, which goes against the illicit production and trafficking of arms, ammunition, explosives and related materials used by the insurgents, expressed the link between the arms control plan and the conceptualisation of collectivism in the region.

In addition, there is a concern for peace and security in the north-eastern region, through CJTF CIOs, and the search for new roles for the north-eastern security architecture in order to acquire greater achievements. Presently, the states in the north-eastern region that have been ravaged by the Boko Haram insurgency have turned to CJTF as a catalyst for CIOs. Thus, CJTF, under the direction of the military forces, has conducted or coordinated locally-based CIOs with the police. It has sponsored training and capacity building programmes on the promotion of peace and security with the broader aim of strengthening the CIOs across the north-eastern states (Z. Ali, personal communication, August 14, 2018). Another follow-up objective is to deal with historic and ethnic rivalries, thereby creating an environment that permits the states to modernise their CJTF forces, without triggering suspicions from the locals or leading to an arms race. A number of meetings between the CJTF and military forces on peace, security and other CIO-related issues have been held. This locally-based CIO initiative provides a framework for advance notification of acquisition and management of weapon systems. The participation of CJTF in different aspects of CIOs attests to its vast involvement in the protection of the locals and, by extension, their states.

Moreover, CIO arrangements complement the trend of collective security in the north-eastern region. There are joint operations and training between the military forces and CJTF. The recent experience of CJTF in the region can be viewed as a bottom-up approach or an indirect approach expressed by David Galula as a 'counter-insurgency theory (Galula, 2006).' The theory identifies two approaches to CIO: the direct and indirect. While the direct approach advocates strictly for military tactics, the indirect approach emphasises the incorporation of the locals in the fight. The most essential factor advanced in this idea is the notion that CIOs are about the local alliance or support, and that the military assumes just a single role, out of many.

CIO is a holistic system-of-systems approach which is designed and implemented to guarantee protection within a state, ideally with an existing government. The Galula (2006) CIO approach is locally driven and it is postulated with the assumption that it is more critical and is gaining more support from the locals in defeating a large number of insurgents. Moreover, the objective is to contribute, at the local level, to the authenticity of support for the military forces, with the goal of harnessing longer-lasting achievements. This reality in the locally-driven CIOs is motivated by the quality of the initiative of the locals.

However, this should be approached from two proportionate sides. In the principle of CIOs, maintaining the domination of military forces is vital, with the specific end of producing open and lawful help. Yet, the locals can demonstrate their initiative by giving support in the areas of shortcomings in CIOs efforts. As part of the north-eastern region's transformation process, CJTF has acquired new and different CIO roles. Its current programmes include peace and security in the north-eastern region. However, counter-insurgency experts and scholars have recognised many difficulties in the tasks of the CJTF (Dan-Azumi, 2018).

Significantly, the scholars have recognised that CJTF, recently, has not been able to reach its full operational capability although this was the goal set in the previous roadmaps and key documents (Bamidele, 2016, Bamidele, 2017b). Therefore, the military forces have to set a new mandate to guide the operational capabilities of CJTF and then work on the policy document that previously made CJTF lack the ability to fully manage its CIOs against the Boko Haram insurgency. Also, the military forces are yet to reach decision where only CJTF could be deployed for CIO missions. Challenges befuddling them include low level of awareness, lack of cooperation and commitment among members of the group and lack of institutional capacity and effective coordination among the commanders of CJTF in managing the Boko Haram insurgency and other related crimes in the region (B. G. Zamalak, personal communication, September 27, 2018). Therefore, there is a need for the adoption and finalisation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the operation of the CJTF in the CIOs in the region, and for the locals mandated to participate in CIO missions against the Boko Haram insurgency within the region (Akali, personal communication, August 27, 2018). The states involved and the military forces are yet to outline fields of progress in the development of the CJTF framework in CIO activities in the region; but the CJTF has reached a landmark in the formation of common policy documents, annual training, counter-insurgency programmes, and improved training standards, which could be used collectively for logistic and operational CIO purposes. A notable achievement can be traced to the recent harmonisation

and rapid deployment of the CJTF in January 2015 alongside the military forces as part of the roadmap (Aliyu, A., *et al.*, 2015, Dietrich, 2015).

An achievement in the deployment of CJTF against the Boko Haram insurgency in the north-eastern region was reached in early 2019. This was when the military forces saw progress in the evolution of the CJTF's CIO architecture. Other connected aspects include policy development, establishment of management capabilities, and CIO strategic level of the CJTF (Integrated Regional Information Network, 2014, Hamza and Sawab, 2013). One significant argument in the assessment of these conditions was the possibility for the CJTF to reach its full operational capability without support of the military forces. Thus, it is clear that the military forces have had a central role in the CIOs in the north-eastern region, despite allowing the CJTF to contribute to promoting peace and security within the member states of the north-eastern region.

CJTF and Boko Haram's insurgency in the region

Following the above debate, the understanding of the efforts of CJTF with respect to CIOs to defeat the Boko Haram insurgency in the region is very important at this period. Although there is a lot of interesting literature on Boko Haram's insurgency in the north-eastern states, few have focused on the role of CJTF, contributing very little to the understanding of the subject matter. The studies even failed to make an analysis of the CIO architecture. Furthermore, there is no scholarly literature available on CIOs in the region that gives a detailed description of the role of CJTF in the context of its alliance with the military forces. Therefore, this article will serve as the first comprehensive study in terms of presenting historical understanding of CJTF's CIOs both in isolation and in alliance with the military forces. In this regard, it foregrounds the role of the military forces, which is strengthening the professionalism of warfare of the CJTF through the facilitation of various training. This could serve as the defining basis for lasting prevention of the post-Boko Haram insurgency crisis and the realisation of full restructuring where it is required.

Apparently, the CJTF has been mandated to fight the Boko Haram insurgency in the north-eastern states. It is involved in several CIOs ranging from humanitarian duties to local intelligence-gathering system, discrete surveillance networks, and military combat auxiliaries or semi-autonomous fighting forces. CJTF, with its knowledge of the local terrains and languages, as well as its intelligence-gathering capabilities, has contributed, to a large extent, to the triumphs recorded so far by the military's CIOs endeavours (Hassan, 2015). Thus, CJTF provides reliable supports in the CIOs architecture (Integrated Regional Information Network, 2013).

However, military forces have worked along with the CJTF in providing a reliable CIO framework. CJTF carries out CIOs along with the military forces, with the aim of addressing Boko Haram insurgency threats within the respective states in the north-eastern region (Odomovo, 2014). The cooperation within the CJTF is the most relevant factor that conditions this article, since the formation of CJTF has provided not only guidance but also notable support systems for the incursion of the military forces against the Boko Haram insurgency in the region. Regarding other forms of collaboration with the military forces, it can be said that the level of coordination does not have any significant results. Initially, the mandate of the military alliance with the CJTF

was to develop an autonomous plan. However, rather than following the initial plan, the military forces have taken the policies developed from the joint meeting as a guide in CIOs. In the context of collective security, through partnership, the military forces acknowledge the effort of CJTF in CIOs in the region. Thus, this evidenced the synergy between these two fronts in the CIOs in the region. The activities were undertaken by the CJTF to help consolidate what the military forces have been doing in the spots ravaged by insurgency (Olugbode, 2013).

Consequently, CJTF has been assigned with the mandate of promoting peace and security; it incorporates this mandate into its plan on a priority basis. Going back to its antecedence, CJTF was designed for collective CIOs in a bid to defeat Boko Haram insurgents in the region. This was to be done through consultation and coordination with the military force. The CIOs enacted by the CJTF are locally endorsed as collective security strategies which means that an attack on one is considered as an attack on all (Stratfor, 2013, Bamidele, 2017a, Bamidele, 2017b). As regards the Boko Haram insurgency within the north-eastern region, the emphasis lies on the use of violent means. However, the CJTF CIOs architecture outlines the procedures for state-building both within the respective states and neighbouring states. The legalist tradition, profoundly rooted in the region's culture and relevance, is firmly associated with the norm of peaceful resolution. When any form of threat is detected, CJTF designed CIO or response may be carried out either jointly with the military forces, or alone. CJTF engages the insurgents and defeats them, and this has been a landmark contribution to state-building within the region. CJTF has been successful in defeating Boko Haram insurgents and stopping insurgency from spreading to other neighbouring states (Yusuf 2014). The CIOs of CJTF are well-known in the north-eastern region. They have functioned as machinery for debate on CIOs since the inception of its establishment. CJTF was created to offer solutions to the rapid increase of Boko Haram insurgency activities, which have generated controversy. Thus, CJTF has played the role of interventionist in the process of defeating the insurgency and other organised crimes (Raji and Ahmed, 2015). Although the use of the military was extremely felt at the initial stage of the insurgents' attack, especially in Borno State, the containment of the Boko Haram insurgency threat to peace and security proved to be a significant issue and concept necessitating collective security in the region (Bamidele, 2017, Maignawa, 2017). Thus, the recurrent threat to peace and security engendered the origination of CJTF and the doctrines of collective security and state-building.

The CJTF has actively participated in initiating and promoting the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty in the region. It has also played a significant role in eradicating the proliferation of landmines and small arms in the region. It has acted as local support to neighbouring states and consolidated military efforts in order to find a lasting solution to and defeat insurgency in the region (Omenma and Hendricks, 2018). It is important to note that insurgency has led to the deaths of thousands of locals, and more than a million have been displaced from their homes in the north-eastern region (Jonah, personal communication, November 14, 2018).

In a nutshell, CJTF has been partisan in engaging the Boko Haram insurgency in the states of the north-eastern region with the purpose of defeating it and bringing the region to peace. CJTF has also been effective in CIOs functioning as insurgency preventer in the operational sense,

supporting the region's ambition to return to normalcy, that is, a state of stability or, better still, restoring the status quo and creating a forum for the maintenance of the norm of collective security.

Challenges of CJTF

The full actualisation of CJTF was initially postponed due to mixed feelings but was formally established later under the support of the former governor of Borno State, Kashim Shettima (B. Shehu, personal communication, September 28, 2018). The delay shows that the composition of the local security apparatus (i.e., CJTF) is unconventional, non-traditional and inconsistent, especially when compared with the standard military CIOs; and as such, it can be antithetical to the overall objective of the military forces (Gana, Samsu and Ismail, 2018). At the time of the conquest, Boko Haram had obtained sophisticated weapons, including substantial machine firearms and some of the CJTF's weapons from assaults on their installations, and those secured through provincial arms exchange. It is worth mentioning that CJTF's arrangements against the insurgents, by and large, have been more focused on Borno and Adamawa than anywhere else. Even then, the Boko Haram insurgents have remained versatile and highly mobile such that whenever and from wherever they were dislodged, they demonstrated their capacity to regroup. The Boko Haram insurgency had more time to gain ground because of the long time it took the CJTF and military forces to agree on collective security and form alliance in their deployments to the region. The territorial occupancy of ungoverned space by the Boko Haram insurgents also created demand for more weapons and that destabilised the locals and wiped out the benefits they have made in building the local economy in their states. This also prevented the flow of foreign direct investments to the region.

The issue of coordination has been a big challenge for CJTF especially for those in the rural localities. In other words, it was very hard for the military or for the CJTF's own commanders to coordinate the task force in the rural localities of the north-eastern states. It has also been difficult to coordinate different sectors and units to operate together and complement each other. These posed serious problems in dealing with the Boko Haram insurgency in the north-eastern states. These issues were central to CIOs and yet, no member of the CJTF has been thoroughly equipped to adequately deal with the Boko Haram insurgency in the region. Although CJTF was a very important local initiative in the region, it had never embarked on a monopoly of CIOs without the military forces. The proliferation of CIOs within CJTF and the military forces, thus, began to pose challenges at strategic and tactical levels. At the CIO strategic levels, both lower-security-level interfaces and higher-security-level interfaces, it has been difficult to ensure proper coordination between and among CJTFs of different states to achieve goals and operational methods (Bamidele, 2017a). While most members of CJTF agreed, in the abstract sense, that greater coordination was necessary, none of them liked to be coordinated, if it meant following another CIO agenda of the military forces. Strategic planning and coordination, which was important during the stage for CIOs, especially against the Boko Haram insurgency, became complicated between the military forces and CJTF.

This has generated a lot of delay in the deployment of CJTF for CIOs in the region. At the other lower-security-level interfaces and higher-security-level interfaces, or the tactical level, the porosity of CIOs has posed challenges related to inter-operability, coupled with the fact that commanding CIOs was made more difficult because CJTF from the states had been exposed to different kinds of training, and used distinct equipment. Militarily, there have been weaknesses; numerical power and solid intelligence-gathering mechanisms have also been poor across the region. The CJTF in some of the north-eastern states lacked training, equipment and discipline (Bamidele, 2017b). Training for respective CIOs has not seen any improvement over the years. Thus, specific areas of the CJTF-CIO architecture including its structural and management capabilities, political decision-making, mission planning processes and logistics, among others, still need to be enhanced.

As promoting peace and security is a critical enabler for CJTF-CIOs, shortcomings in this area have very serious implications for CJTF's Full Operational Capability (FOC). Another traceable problem is insufficient forces. The inability of the CJTF and military forces to adequately watch over the whole of Adamawa and Borno States, due to their large size, has led to restriction to bigger towns like Maiduguri and the borders in the north-east. Exploiting the situation, Boko Haram insurgents targeted communities where there is lighter CJTF and military presence. Further, they established 'camps' in the broad Savanna forest. However, CJTF reinforcements arrived in Borno using roadblocks and patrol operation teams to oust the insurgents from portions of these communities. According to a CJTF interviewee,

CJTF operation in north-eastern Nigeria is going on; however, information on the circumstance in Borno is filtered out. We do not have the nitty-gritty or general picture since the greater part of the cell phone systems have been turned off in the three states under crisis. Information is mainly coming from squeeze reports in Maiduguri, the state capital, or from individuals in regions bordering Cameroun who can cross the outskirts and make calls and from people leaving Borno State – including those who are relocated to different parts of the nation (CJTF member, personal communication, September 28, 2018).

It has become clear that Boko Haram insurgents, once expelled from the territories they controlled or places where they camped, tend to move to the outskirts of Borno and the border areas of other neighbouring communities. Consequently, many CJTFs have not been able to trace the precise locations of the insurgents. It should be noted that the number of CJTF is still very small, as compared to the number of Boko Haram insurgency groups (Bamidele 2017b, Hassan and Pieri, 2018). Although CJTF started with 8, 000 forces and later increased to 20,000, this number added to the military forces is still not enough for CIOs due to the vast size of the region and poor governance (CJTF member, personal communication, September 28, 2018). A related problem is the poor financial support from government authorities, which can be said to be the biggest problem within CJTF. According to the CJTF report, CJTF still needs \$1bn (£650m) to properly finance its force (B. Shehu, personal communication, September 28, 2018). The bottom line is that home-grown financing proves to be a problem, especially as the states in the north-eastern region, with larger budgets, prefer to invest on supporting the military on

their own domestic fronts rather than contributing to CJTF whom they have little control over. Other CJTF's CIOs have been co-opted from around the neighbouring border areas such as the axis of Borno's border with Niger, Chad with Cameroon, etc. and the military forces have even struggled to deploy more forces mainly because the ungoverned space is usually greater than the governed one. This implies that many CJTF units lack sufficient capacity for productive output because of their limited number of members. Worsening the situation is that regions that have relatively more CJTFs are often reluctant to deploy members under their units to other areas of need, especially in the dangerous environments where Boko Haram insurgents have better knowledge of the terrains.

Furthermore, complexity in multinational CIOs is another challenge faced by CJTF. This challenge reflects the fundamental constraint placed on CIOs by the rules of collective security architecture; legally, they cannot operate solely, without the consent of the military forces (Bamidele, 2017a). Also, CJTF's CIOs have to secure approval of the military forces and this could further delay responses to critical insurgencies. Another issue is that of ambiguity which often pervades the texts handed down by the military forces. Not only that CIO mandates are more complex than ever before, but there is also a lack of consensus on how certainly mandates or tasks can be fulfilled. CJTF is often told to assist the military forces and support processes without being given further specific instructions or pre-deployment training on how to do this (Bamidele, 2017b). A related problem stems from different forces within CJTF, interpreting general instructions differently in operational terms or ignoring certain orders from the military forces or sector commanders.

A further issue stems from the sheer difficulty of the tasks CJTF has to undertake, especially with limited resources and according to externally driven and usually unrealistic timetables. While it remains absolutely difficult to measure the impact and effectiveness of CJTF in preventing the Boko Haram insurgency group, the question of value of financial support calls for scrutiny. The approaches require partnership for the work to proceed and whether the resources have been used for the intended purposes. The cost-benefit analysis reveals the increased tendency of local grabbing of resources earmarked for CIOs. It is left to the CJTF and its networks to tap into resources but it still depends on the military forces to implement CIOs. There is a general feeling that countering the Boko Haram insurgency group has become an opportunity to fill ones' pockets while the real work needed to be done is left to the locals who have no access to funding. The implication of this and perhaps what has impacted the CJTF-CIOs negatively is the lack of rule-engagement between the locals and the military in the design of the CIOs. The lack of local sensitivities and contexts has resulted in initiatives that hardly work but which need to be implemented as part of fulfilling the CIOs. The activities of the Boko Haram insurgents are terribly audacious and unpredictable. Hence, for workable CIOs, the CJTF wants secured lines of communication with the military forces. Since it is said that it lacks rules of engagement, the CJTF sometimes becomes a nuisance and begins to intimidate innocent locals. This unruly act grossly violates the local's basic rights raising queries on their rules of engagement and operational procedure with the military forces.

This prompts the mandate to strengthen the rule of law and reform the security sector. Demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration have also posed huge problems to CJTF over the years. For instance, no matter how much force they used in their attempts, it was hard for the CJTF to disarm Boko Haram insurgents when the former were willingly operating in the region. Demobilisation is difficult to achieve especially when there are few opportunities to help the Boko Haram insurgents reintegrate into the society. Sometimes the entire process is met with hostility by the locals who do not want to reintegrate the insurgents among them, but instead, want them punished or killed. Another problem is the physical protection of the locals. Many CIOs in the region, particularly since 2016, have been grappling with the task of protecting the locals (Bamidele, 2017b). But it is important to recall that these mandates have always come with various caveats, usually that CJTF should only protect locals under imminent threat of Boko Haram insurgency.

In addition, it is rightly left for the military forces and CJTF commanders on the ground to decide whether they have sufficient capabilities to carry out specific protection tasks. Recently, most discussions and debates have centred on the failures of CJTF CIOs against the Boko Haram insurgency group in the region. Instances abound in 2019 after CJTF troops withdrew from CIOs in the Lake Chad Basin. Some of the CJTFs deployed to remote rural areas with harsh physical terrain and no access to infrastructure had to face huge logistic problems (Jonah, personal communication, September 28, 2019). A lot of them, deployed for CIOs in the Boko Haram insurgency hotspot in the neighbouring states, also had similar problems to struggle with. Moreover, some features have made CIOs particularly challenging to CJTF as they are not confined to the state borders. Another major challenge is lack of political will, i.e., not getting timely reactions from the military forces when the Boko Haram insurgency erupts. While the sinews of insurgency regularly stretch across political boundaries, CIOs are generally deployed to very few neighbouring states. CJTF has only been able to deal with part of the issues confronting them.

Conclusion

CIOs in the states of the north-eastern region are highly localised and they defy simplistic strategies and explanations based on stereotypes. This article argues that the CJTF has, since its establishment in 2013, followed the orientation of its mandate in a limited but important area, which is defeating Boko Haram insurgents by allying with military forces. The CJTF is very relevant because it plays an important role in mitigating the activities of Boko Haram insurgents in the north-eastern states so they do not result in full-blown guerrilla warfare. The capacity and capability of CJTF in generating communication channels to stamp out the Boko Haram insurgency and promote CIOs has been its greatest contribution. Norms have partly been developed within the CJTF as part of mechanism for defeating the Boko Haram insurgency, which is a necessary derive towards state-building. The pattern of behaviour observed in the above sections permits one to point out that the CJTF has been built to perform several functions, including defeating the Boko Haram insurgency within the region. It is also very important to stress that technical assistance given by the military forces in several arenas is still fragile, especially in the area of military apparatus. This range of technical assistance is acquiescence to military supports.

On the other hand, if we look at the data produced by the report of the military forces, it is clear that it aims at discrediting CJTF's effort and undermining its significant impact on CIOs in the north-east region. It claims that CJTF has been silent about Boko Haram insurgency in all surrounding states. However, this is because CJTF has not really developed a military capacity in spite of its experience in fighting the Boko Haram insurgency in the neighbouring states. Moreover, CJTF's decision-making with regard to CIOs is limited in context when seen against the wide division and polarisation of opinions in the region on matters concerning Boko Haram insurgency. The CJTF has assumed new responsibilities, particularly in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency and stopping situations from becoming more intense. However, the principle of collective security has been challenged. Although there is still an ongoing debate between local interventionism on the part of the CJTF, the front lines have definitely been redrawn. Thus, this article explicated the significance of CJTF in checking and stemming Boko Haram's insurrectional acts. However, it leaves for subsequent debate the Task Force's limitations in its endeavours in the north-eastern region of Nigeria.

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