

A PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF GLOBALIZATION AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria is considered one of the countries most affected by insecurity in Africa, grappling with multiple forms of violence, including kidnapping, herdsman-farmer clashes, armed banditry, inter and intra-communal conflicts, tribal clashes, terrorism, and other related threats. Although all six geopolitical zones are affected, the situation is particularly severe in North East Nigeria, the birthplace of the notorious Boko Haram insurgency, where millions have been killed and displaced. A plethora of scholarly interventions has sought to identify the causes of insecurity and propose solutions. Previous studies have examined the roles of poverty, bad governance, political will, training and equipping of law enforcement agents, and strengthening the criminal justice system in addressing insecurity. However, limited research has explored the nexus between insecurity and the consequences of globalization, such as advancements in weapons, information and transportation technology, and the economic challenges facing countries in the Global South. Existing empirical studies tend to focus narrowly on poverty without connecting it to globalization. This study employs an analytical method to explore the contribution of globalization to insecurity in North East Nigeria. Findings reveal that the consequences of globalization including improvements in communication and transportation, as well as economic hardship in the Global South have significantly contributed to insecurity in the region. Based on these insights, the study recommends that the federal government allocate all budgeted financial resources for sophisticated weaponry, implement effective compensation schemes for personnel and their families, and prioritize these measures as a more effective approach to combating insurgency in North East Nigeria.

Keywords: North East Nigeria (NEN), globalization, insecurity, Boko Haram, global south, poverty.

Introduction

There is no country in the world without the issue of insecurity, but some countries face more severe threats to their national security than others. World *Expat* insider survey carried out by inter-Nations, reports that Nigeria is the 5th most dangerous countries to live in (Okoli, 2019). Although this global index ranked Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Ukraine and Russia more dangerous than Nigeria, there is a growing consensus among scholars that Nigeria is the most insecure place on earth. In fact, Ogugua, (2020) has gone as far as to assert that in the past few years, more people have been killed in Nigeria than in the so-called failed states like Somalia and countries in active wars like Ukraine and Syria. Different criminal gangs, ideological extremists and ethnic militias roam the length and breadth of Nigeria, robbing, kidnapping, maiming, and killings people unchecked. According to Adebayo and Nadabo (2013, p. 2): Today, it is news of a bomb blast. Yesterday, it was a suicide bombing, tomorrow; it maybe an assassination and the day after, mass murder. Every day in Nigeria, the news seems to get from bad to worse, as the security situation deteriorates day by day. The insecurity is not localized as almost every part of the country is affected. In the Southwest, there are records of armed robberies; in the South-South and Southeast, there are records of kidnappings and separatist agitations, while in the Northern region there are high records of cross border robberies and terrorism (Okoli, 2019). Nevertheless, NEN, especially Borno state is the most affected part in the country. The *Nigeria Security Tracker* recorded more than 8,600 deaths nationwide between May 2011 and August 2013 because of political, economic and social violence and 2,470 (28.7%) were in Borno. The state also had the highest recorded number of political violence in the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset, at 473 separate conflict incidents since 1997 (AOAV & NWGAV, 2013). The heightened insecurity in Nigeria in recent years has attracted the diagnostic intervention of scholars who have attributed the problem to a number of causes. Ezeoba, (2011) attributed the insecurity in Nigeria and NEN to bad policies of government. Agbiboa (2014) he blamed the problem to leadership and corruption. In his submission, Nigeria is the most populous Black nation on earth, blessed with huge natural and abundant human resources. However, corruption has not allowed Nigeria to effectively use these resources to better the lives of its citizens. The results of this are high level of youth unemployment, poverty and the attendant youth restiveness and violence. The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) cited in Ogah et al., (2011) puts unemployment in Nigeria at about 23.9%. These unemployed people now employ themselves by engaging in illegal activities such as kidnapping, robbery, bunkering, and other fraudulent activities. However, in recent years scholars have started investigating the relationship between the insecurity in NEN and globalization. Chidi (2018) for instance, observed that globalization has important security implications. A variety of threats have become global in scope and more serious in their effects as a result of the spread of knowledge,

the dispersion of advanced technologies, and the movements of people. He maintained that these developments, were not the only cause of insecurity, have helped to expand, sustain and make the situation more complex. Thus, there are relevant and insightful scholarly interventions that have explored the worrisome insecurity in NEN, especially on how to unravel the root cause of the problem. However, while there is extensive literature on the contributions of factors such as poverty, corruption, bad policies of government, etc. to the insecurity in NEN, there is paucity of research on the role globalization has played in this regard. This study seeks to find the nexus between globalization and Nigeria's national security challenges, using the NE as a case study. Specifically, the study interrogates these problems: First of all, the notion that globalization is responsible for the increase in poverty in the global south has received premium attention in the extant literature. However, scholars have largely neglected how globalization-induced poverty has contributed to the growth and spread of violent non-state actors in the NE. This study seeks to explore the connection between acute poverty caused by globalization and the proliferations of various terrorist groups in NEN. Secondly, the connection between Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and terrorism has received marginal attention in the extant literature on terrorism in Nigeria. In fact, academic attentions on the role of ICT in the recruitment strategies of terrorists groups in NEN are theoretically scanty and empirically few. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the connection between ICT, recruitment of fighters and insecurity in NEN. Scholars are beginning to appreciate the nexus between technology and terrorism, more research is needed to properly understand the interplay between improved technologies, especially the use of drones, night vision goggles, and sophisticated weapons by terrorist in Nigeria to launch attacks. This study tries to find out how the adoption of modern technology by terrorists is aiding the spread of terrorism and worsening the security situation in NEN.

GLOBALIZATION, POVERTY AND PROLIFERATIONS OF VIOLENT GROUPS IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA

There is abundance of literature linking the multiplication of insurgent and criminal groups in NEN to poverty. For instance, Temples (2013, p. 6) notes that:

The indices that measure human development are by far poorer in the 19 northern states of Nigeria compared with the rest of the country. Within the north itself, the North Eastern part of Nigeria has the lowest rate of child enrolment in schools, highest number of unemployed young people in the country, highest levels of poverty as compared to the other parts of the country. This makes the region vulnerable to highest security challenges in the country. It brought about Boko haram terrorism and the wanton killing by the group in the region.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), "shortly after independence in 1960 about 15% of the population of Nigeria was poor. This rose to 28% in 1980. By 1985, it had risen to 46% dropping to 43% in 1992. However, by 1996 the poverty incidence had gone up to 66% before climbing further to 93.9% in 2010" (NBS, 2012). In most of these indices, the NE region appears the worst hit by the poverty trap. Its income inequality level is the worst with 0.4468, and with 76.3% of its population living in poverty, it is only second to the North West region with 77.7% (NBS, 2012). This could explain the frequency in the number of ethno-religious and political violence going on in the two regions dating back to the *Maitatsine* crisis of early 80s, the political riots of 2003-2011 and the present insurgent groups and criminal gangs' crises.

Thus, according to Raul Caruso (2012), the resonance of groups like Boko Haram in northern Nigeria has much to do with the relationship between youth unemployment and limited economic opportunities. Pervasive poverty, according to Hamisu Muhammad (2013), is also another driver. In a country that officially earned approximately \$50 billion in revenue from its oil reserves in 2012, 70 percent of the northern population lives under the poverty line, and the mostly Muslim north has higher unemployment than the national average (Paul Rogers, 2012).

However, while extant literature agrees on the connection between the insecurity and poverty in NEN, there is disagreement on the exact relationship between these two factors and globalization. For instance, Cooper (2017) in his analysis of the link between globalization, poverty and the insurgency in NEN maintains that the:

A memo from the incoming U.S. administration under Donald J. Trump to the State Department in January 2017 reportedly even questioned why the United States has been involved in the fight against Boko Haram, ostensibly wondering how the movement affects U.S. interests.

Cooper goes ahead to state that this consideration was likely based on a narrow framing of Boko Haram as primarily a domestic Nigerian threat. Similar point was made by Lily Kuo, Abdi LatifDahir, and YomiKazeem (2016), notes that, "Here are answers to Donald Trump's many dubious questions about Africa." Furthermore, according to International Crisis Group, (2016, p. 22), delayed action against the group by countries in the Lake Chad Basin region has been due to perceptions of Boko Haram as an internal Nigerian problem. Therefore, while

there was no consensus on the exact and extent of the contribution of globalization to the growth of insurgent groups in NE Nigeria, there seems to be enough consensus that globalization at least helped in escalating the poverty of an already impoverished region. This agrees with the findings of many other scholars (Salawu, 2010; Okorie, 2011; Ezeoba, 2011) who though identified several causes of insecurity in the NE still traced these causes to the economic crisis in the early 1980s which was as a result of government policies, the falling oil prices in the international markets, OPEC price increases, privatization, economic liberalization, deregulation, currency devaluation, cold war era politics and Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP).

In 2014, the then Finance Minister, Dr. Okonjo Iweala suggested an expected decline to GDP growth as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency (Stewart, 2014). However, the Deputy Governor of Nigeria's Central Bank, reported that macroeconomic policy, including monetary policy, was unaffected by the conflict (Moghalu, 2014). GDP growth was on a downward trend over 2011 to 2013 from 7.8% to 4 % before recovering to 6.3% in 2015 (see Figure 4). The downward trend has been described as reflective of the longstanding challenges of the dilapidated state of infrastructure and the reliance on the oil sector. While neither of these outcomes was helped by the destruction of sparse infrastructure or agricultural activity in the NE, it has been difficult to reduce them to resulting directly from the conflict. Rather a more significant link is put forward in the global financial crisis of 2008 through reduced capital flows and fall in petroleum demand (NBS, 2017). In fact, the modest recovery in growth between 2013 and 2014 accompanied the intensification of the conflict. Furthermore, decline in GDP growth to 2.7% post-2015 coincided with major advances by the military and recovery of territory from the Boko Haram insurgents (McHugh, 2016). It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the poverty caused by globalization is to some extent responsible for the proliferation of insurgent and criminal groups in NE Nigeria.

ICT AND RECRUITMENT OF TERRORISTS IN NORTH EAST (NE) NIGERIA

According to Abubakar, (2016), since its foundation, Boko Haram has taken advantage of different kinds of technologies to recruit members. At the beginning of the 21st century, audio cassettes' distribution was the most significant feature of the group's recruitment strategy. The speeches of Mohammed Yusuf and his deputies at the time, Abubakar Shekau and Muhammad None could be found on these cassettes handed over to the followers, supporters, and sympathizers. A specific part of the Nigerian public also showed interest in the recordings' content due to the speeches mostly focused on the disapproval of injustice and corruption in the country. However, due to the swift expansion of Internet access in Nigeria since 2010, the general audience of Boko Haram has also undergone some fundamental changes. Possibly the most intriguing of these modifications was the terrorist group's ability to expand its geographic reach through reliance on the use of social media and the Internet. It was reported that a threefold increase was witnessed by the terror group in terms of Internet usage compared to data usage in 2012 and 2015 (Kazeem, 2016). This significant difference could mostly be explained by the fact that mobile technology has been augmented in Nigeria by 2016, with 46 out of 100 active mobile phone users (Internet Live Stats, 2020). Due to the low economic indicators in the north, the rise in the audience could be justified by the increased use of the Internet to disseminate Boko Haram's online messages. The connection is especially intriguing, since only 13% of the terrorist group's statements were published on YouTube and Twitter in 2012 as opposed to three years later, when all of them could be accessed online (Mahmood, 2017).

Internet growth in Nigeria also enabled the group to circulate information to a broader range of audiences. The distribution of audio cassettes and CDs complemented by fliers and local preachers' messages did undisputedly have an effect, albeit only locally. The most widely-read newspapers of the country reporting on Boko Haram are Daily Trust, Premium Times, Punch, and Vanguard (Campbell, 2016). They are mainly circulated in the capital, which is in Central Nigeria or Lagos, the economic hub and financial center of the south. It means distribution is relatively sparse in the north, where the terrorist organization is mostly active. Additionally, literacy constitutes another problem in the area, which is likely to restrict outreach to desired audiences (UNESCO, 2012). Nevertheless, while press releases issued by the newspapers amplified Boko Haram's voice, they did that indirectly without giving actual control to the group to convey its messages with the use of visual content. On the contrary, the extension of mobile technology and the rise in Internet access brought about significant changes, including sharing, viewing, and downloading photos and videos directly. Social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter was used by terrorists in furthering their objectives, whatever it may be. In their article "Terrorists and Social Media Messages: A Critical Analysis of Boko Haram's Messages and Messaging Techniques" Mutsvairo, Ogbondah and Agbese (2017) show that social media messaging is part of the overall military and ideological strategies of the insurgent groups in NEN especially Boko Haram. According to the authors, Boko Haram's attempts to wage a battle for the hearts and minds of Nigerians through a deliberate use of social media to disseminate its messages. Focusing on statements and video appearances by its leader, Abubakar Shekau, Mutsvairo, Ogbondah and Agbese claim that Boko Haram's overt and subtle messages to Nigerians and the world at large are used for a number of reasons, including:

... to reveal what the group thinks of itself, the Nigerian government and the Nigerian security establishment, to convey its brutality, military invisibility and total disdain for the Nigerian government and its armed forces, to assert the righteousness of its interpretation of Islam using Islamic religious imageries and rhetoric to justify its atrocities. To instill fear and to convince its viewers of its inevitable victory over the Nigerian government. Boko Haram does not only use its messaging to claim that the Nigerian government is anti-Islamic but also that it utilizes it to define good or proper Muslims (p. 325).

The purpose of all this is to attract sympathy of especially Moslems through wining hearts and minds and to recruit young people into the files and ranks of the insurgent group. Thus, analyzing Boko Haram's media strategy within the theoretical framework of propaganda, the authors maintain that the terrorist organization uses social media messaging as a very effective recruitment tool, which explains the asymmetrical growth in enrollments into the insurgent group with the expansion of the use of social media around the world but in Nigeria specifically. Corroborating this claim Tukur (2021) contends that social media make it relatively easy for extremist groups such as Al Shabaab, ISIS, Al Qaeda, and other jihadist groups to articulate and disseminate their messages to a worldwide audience, a global reach that would not have been possible without the commitment of enormous and resources. In this context, Boko Haram has been particularly successful in articulating its messages resulting in the enormous enrollment of members from within and beyond the country. Tukur particularly emphasized the role of religion in the use of social media to radicalize young Muslims. According to him, global events such as the Israel-Palestine war, the US/Western war on terror in and around Moslem countries and the fear, especially among young Moslems that Western education/value system are out to fight and destroy Islamic values are factors that combine with ICT and led to the radicalization of young Moslems and the proliferations of insurgent and criminal groups in the North East Nigeria (NEN).

DEVELOPMENT IN WARFARE TECHNOLOGY AND TERRORISTS ATTACKS IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA

Ayitogo (2021) while documenting how foreign links has facilitated Boko Haram's access to finance and weapons observes that these wide ranging supports has increased the capabilities of the insurgent group. For instance, in case of brazen confidence, *Boko Haram* claimed it shot down a Nigerian Air Force (NAF) Alpha jet (NAF 475) which went missing on 31 March 2021 with two crew members. While Edward Gabkwet, spokesman for NAF, admitted the aircraft went missing while on a mission against *Boko Haram*, the latter released a video as evidence that it actually shot down the plane. In the same regard, Okorie (2018 p. 66), argues that the insurgents on many occasions overwhelm the Nigerian security agents, especially because of the advantages they have against these security agents in terms of fire power. Onuoha (2013, p. 6) reports that "hundreds of weapons including RPGs, rocket launchers, anti-aircraft missiles, and AK 47 rifles have been intercepted by security operatives in various locations in NEN. It is widely believed that these weapons found their way to Nigeria from Libya and Mali." In addition, Boko Haram also sources some of its weapons from Chad and from sympathetic members of the Nigerian army (Windrem, 2014). Whereas with the "anti trade" the trading of weapons to and from OCGs is prevalent, seizures of weapons heading to Boko Haram reveal larger shipments to be the norm in the region. For example, "four Toyota Hilux vans, 10 AK-47 rifles and magazines, two G3 rifles and 10 x 4 40mm bombs, three RPG tubes, and 85 rounds of special ammunition" were seized by members of the Multi-National Joint Task Force in one haul on 4 August 2013 (Onuoha, 2013, p. 7). One of the consequences of the acquisition of sophisticated arms by insurgent groups in NEN has been an increase in attacks against the military. In a report by Financial Times (2018), titled, "Under fire: why Nigeria is struggling to defeat Boko Haram", the apparent inability of the Nigerian military to confront and defeat Boko Haram was blamed on the acquisition of sophisticated weapons by the insurgent group. According to the report, the jihadi group, which has split into two factions, appears to be escalating its attacks and building its arsenal. Consequently, the security situation in NEN is deteriorating, sparking criticism of the military's strategy. The report states that: Last month, a raid on a military base in Metele near the border with Niger and Chad left around 100 soldiers dead and more than 150 missing, according to the Reuters news agency, though the army insists the death toll was 23. A military commander explained it graphically: "What we see is that ISWAP comes with superior firepower. It takes extreme courage to withstand them for one hour and at times our soldiers may not be lucky enough to withdraw successfully in the face of a fierce battle." He concludes by saying that superior weapons and equipment, like Armored Personnel Carrier and Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, popularly known as MRAP, which is both bullet- and bomb-proof, were urgently needed by the troops. In sum, there is enough evidence in extant literature to conclude that effective communication and efficient smuggling network made available by globalization has helped the insurgent groups in the NE to acquire sophisticated weapons and that this acquisition have resulted in increased insecurity in NEN.

THE UTILIZATION OF ROBUST TRANSPORT SYSTEM AND USE OF DRONES INCREASE THE NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES ATTACKED PERIODICALLY

According to Adam Higazi (2013), although Boko Haram ideology condemn secular education and any government or civil service work, the group uses technology, including the internet and mobile phones, and members of the group have acquired technical expertise to make explosives, including car bombs. The group is also deploying efficient transportation system, which has allowed it to expand its operation within and outside the NE. "It seems that as long as the knowledge helps their religious/political struggle they are willing to utilize it." The groups thus have deployed western technology, especially in weapons and transportation to its advantage. By May 2013 Boko Haram controlled large areas of territory in Borno State, including much of northern and central Borno and Damboa in southern Borno. The Nigerian military were already in Borno and Yobe States fighting a counter-insurgency campaign, as part of a Joint Task Force (JTF) that also includes the Mobile Police and the department of state services (the domestic intelligence agency or state security service). However, Borno and Yobe are big states and the JTF were not able to patrol the whole region they were more focused on the larger towns, including Maiduguri, and around their barracks. Boko Haram therefore entrenched themselves in areas where there was a lighter military presence and also established 'camps' in the extensive savanna forest that extends across much of southern Borno and into parts of Yobe. It is from these peripheries that the insurgent groups, helped by their mobile transport system launch attacks on communities. The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP, 2020) attributes the ability of insurgent groups in the NE to expand, kill and occupy communities to the integration of robust transport system to their operations. A UN (2012) report notes that the most significant transport capability acquired by members of Boko Haram came from AQIM. In October 2010, AQIM's media wing Al-Andalus uploaded an Eid message from Shekau on a jihadi-run website, while during the height of AQIM's territorial conquests in northern Mali, Boko Haram fighters and couriers with money and messages traveled between the two groups via Niger. Up to 100 Boko Haram members (or perhaps simply Nigerians) were reportedly present in Gao and Timbuktu, Mali, in April 2012. The lessons gained from this experience like the use of motorbike to maneuver in desert areas likely resulted in the boost in Boko Haram's desert warfare capabilities, including the appearance of technical (vehicles with a mounted gun) and the use of RPGs for the first time in Nigeria in early 2013, along with 'shaped charge' IEDs for suicide attacks. This enhanced Boko Haram's capabilities, allowing it to overrun military barracks and ensure the flight of security actors, laying the seeds for a more formal occupation of territories. According to a report by Sasu (2022), the most recent of the capabilities acquired by Boko Haram are the use of night vision goggles and drones, which have not only resulted in the increase in the effectiveness of the insurgent and criminal groups but have also expanded their reach. He notes that the insurgents, especially armed herders operate mostly in the night or generally carry out what he called pre-dawn attacks on military formations and local communities. The use of night vision goggles in these pre-dawn operations makes the militants effectively dangerous and the result has been deaths and displacements both in and beyond the NE zone. According to him, in the recent past the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria has been increasing, buoyed by the ability of the militant groups to deploy night vision goggles and drone technologies. He maintains that according to a recent report, Nigeria, with 2.730 million internally displaced persons had the third highest number of IDPs in Africa. Supporting this claim, Adaramola (2017), observes that the use of night vision goggles and drones gave the insurgents in the NE some combat edge over the Nigerian military in their operations. For instance, night vision goggles facilitate their predawn operations against military posts. It specifically gives them that element of surprise which is very necessary for the success of military operations. The night vision goggles and drones and in many occasions interoperated because the insurgents would deploy reconnaissance drones during the day to identify their targets and use the night vision goggles at night to move against these identified targets. In this regard, Adaramola (2017) has maintained that the use of these technologies has led to increased death and displacement in the NE.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since 2010, the activities of insurgent groups and criminal gangs in North East Nigeria have represented the gravest national security concern for the Nigerian government and its international partners. Thousands of people have been killed, maimed, kidnapped, or displaced across the region. The Nigerian government has deployed various military tactics including curfews in major cities, declarations of states of emergency, and engagement of military contractors from South Africa yet insecurity has continued to escalate in both scope and intensity, leading some scholars to describe the situation as a humanitarian disaster. According to Human Rights Watch (2020), the humanitarian crisis in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states is among the world's most severe, with 1.8 million people internally displaced and over 7 million in need of urgent lifesaving assistance due to a decade-long insurgency by Boko Haram.

Scholars, both local and international, have investigated the causes of insecurity and proposed various solutions. These studies have focused on the weaknesses of Nigeria's security architecture, the link between poverty and

insecurity, and other contributing factors. However, the literature shows a significant gap regarding the relationship between insecurity and globalization a gap this study seeks to address.

The study identifies three primary ways in which globalization has contributed to the escalation of insecurity in North East Nigeria.

1. **Economic Integration and Downturn:** The incorporation of Nigeria's economy into the global capitalist system has produced economic downturns characterized by galloping inflation, capital flight, and rising living costs. The rural and agrarian economy of North East Nigeria was disproportionately affected. Economic hardship and frustration, compounded by global events such as the Israel-Palestine conflict and the US-led "War on Terror," contributed to the radicalization of youths, particularly among Muslims, fostering the proliferation of insurgent and criminal groups.
2. **Information and Communication Technology:** Insurgent and criminal groups have effectively leveraged modern communication technologies to expand their propaganda and recruit youths locally, regionally, and globally. The ability to disseminate anti-Western narratives and mobilize support beyond Nigeria's borders has amplified the reach and influence of these groups.
3. **Advanced Weaponry and Mobility:** Insurgents affiliated with international jihadist movements have acquired expertise in weapon manufacturing and smuggling. They deploy high-tech weapons and efficient transport systems, including motorbikes and Hilux pickup trucks, which allow maneuverability in difficult terrains. The use of drones and night-vision equipment has further enhanced reconnaissance capabilities, enabling targeted strikes on military positions without direct exposure to risk.

These dynamics combine to make combating insurgency in North East Nigeria not only difficult but extremely complex.

Recommendations:

1. **Address Poverty as a Root Cause:** Poverty underpins insecurity in the region. The Nigerian government and its international partners should consider declaring a state of emergency on poverty to allocate resources aimed at alleviating economic hardship and reducing vulnerability to radicalization.
2. **Counter-Propaganda Strategies:** Since insurgency often begins in the minds of youths, the government must develop comprehensive strategies to counter jihadist messaging, particularly on social media platforms, addressing early indoctrination before it escalates into armed conflict.
3. **Enhanced Military Capacity:** The Nigerian military should be equipped with advanced weaponry and technological equipment, including systems to counter drones and conduct real-time reconnaissance. Additionally, providing competitive compensation packages for military personnel and their families will help sustain operational effectiveness and morale in the fight against insurgency.

By addressing both structural and technological factors, this multi-pronged strategy can help mitigate the complex security challenges in North East Nigeria.

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