

Joint special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh) Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities; and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011)

“The nexus between international terrorism and organized crime: a focus on Lake Chad Basin Area”

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INTRODUCTION

International terrorism is no doubt becoming a domestic slogan currently in every region of the world. It has often been found to have strong and most times inseparable ties with organized crime. Primarily, the search for funds is a key factor connecting international terrorism and organized crimes. Several researches, publications, articles and experiences solidify this claim. Organized crimes, covertly or overtly, are aimed at generating illegal funds. It is usually perpetrated by means of terrorism, either pretentiously or otherwise. The persons, environment and circumstances for organized crimes and terrorism are usually one and the same because they all thrive and strive outside the control of government.

The Lake Chad Basin Commission was created in 1964 by four Member countries namely Chad, Cameroun, Niger and Nigeria. Though the LCBC was formed to manage the Lake Chad and its related issues, the sudden shrinking of the Lake had become a major clog to achieving its mandate. The plan to recharge the Lake Chad from the Ubangi River of the Congo Basin, is a gigantic project requiring well above 14 Billion USD. This is obviously beyond the immediate resources of the LCBC. It therefore, requires greater regional, continental and international support to achieve.

Since 1963, the Lake Chad drastically shrunk from its original size of about 22,000 square kilometers to its present size of about 1,500 square kilometers. About 40 million inhabitants lived in the Lake Chad area but today almost all of them are displaced. The impact of the drying lake has caused terrorism and organized crimes in the region and Boko Haram had exploited it to their advantage.

The LCBC, as a regional political forum, is addressing the security issue by coordinating joint military efforts and cross-border cooperation in the fight against terrorism through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). The MNJTF was mandated to bring an end to the Boko Haram insurgency by creating a conducive security environment for the development of the affected areas.

The purpose of this presentation is to explain the relationship between international terrorism and organized crime and its impact on the Lake Chad region. In doing this, the presentation will cover the incidences of organized crime in the Lake Chad region, the effects of organized crimes on the fight against terrorism in the Lake Chad region, the efforts of the LCBC towards addressing terrorism and organized crime and the challenges and possible suggestions for addressing these threats.

INCIDENCES OF ORGANIZED CRIMES IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN COMMISSION REGION

Countries affected by terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin area have recorded cases of organized crime. These countries are Cameroun, Chad, Niger and Nigeria.

Cameroun: recent filed reports have indicated systemic raid in several villages along the border states of Cameroun. These raids have targeted the highly commercial villages with specific focus on food and other material supplies. Additionally, there are also reported cases of kidnapping for ransom and robberies and cattle rustling. Within the period of January to March 2019, more than 20 cases of kidnaps have been reported by the MNJTF.

Chad: the Chadians have been grappling with various threats of terrorism and armed rebellion fuelled by ISIS and their affiliates. Their actions have prompted the operationalization of the G5 Sahel military element and other intelligence agencies. Furthermore, the mines between Niger and Chad have also been identified as a source of financial sustenance for Boko Haram and other criminal groups. Consequently, the Chadian government had closed the mines and appealed to Niger to follow suit.

Niger: Niger faces similar problems of terrorist and organized groups as other member States of LCBC.

Nigeria: Nigeria is presently suffering from the throes of organized crimes and its associated relationship with terrorism. The illegal sale of crude oil and the barter for arms in the high seas are common stories in the Niger delta militancy saga. In the North-East, Boko Haram have been the main contender for terrorism and organized crime. It is also pertinent to note that emerging insecurity trend in the North West of Nigeria is being monitored currently.

Crimes such as cattle rustling, kidnapping, arms smuggling, forced marriages, robbery and drug trafficking, etc. are common criminal occurrences in the area. These has been traced to Boko Haram terrorism and some other cases of organized crime.

EFFECTS OF ORGANIZED CRIMES ON THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

Some of the effects of organized crime in the fight against Boko Haram terrorists in the Lake Chad Basin area are:

- financial support for terrorism
- attraction of other elements especially unemployed youths
- displacement of communities
- strengthening of terrorism networks and militarization of the region

EFFORTS OF LCBC TOWARDS ADDRESSING TERRORISM AND ORGANIZED CRIME

The LCBC has made several efforts towards addressing the issue of terrorism and organized crime. Some of these efforts are:

- the formulation of the LCBC Regional Stabilization Strategy (RSS) for Boko Haram terrorist affected areas
- the operationalization of the MNJTF
- collaboration with other initiatives (the RIFU, CCL and G5 Sahel collaboration). The Summit of the Heads of States and Governments of the LCBC facilitated collaboration with regional and multinational actors.
- efforts to recharging the Lake Chad

CHALLENGES OF LCBC ON THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM AND ORGANIZED CRIME

- inadequate capacity
- funding
- diplomatic and administrative bureaucracy
- difference in economical standing of the different states
- lack of unified legal framework

POSSIBLE SUGGESTIONS

- recharging the Lake
- formulation of unified legal frameworks
- development of the area through the implementation of the RSS