

## **NIGERIA'S POROUS BORDERS, INTERNAL SECURITY AND THE CONTEMPORARY SECURITY CHALLENGES**

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### **Abstract**

*This study highlights the challenges in the Nigeria's international borderlines and implications for national security at the cross-borderlines. Nigeria's borders, sharing a 4,047km border with its neighbors (Benin-773, Niger-1,497km, Chad-87km, and Cameroon-1,690km, a modest coastline of 853km) is characterized as porous and unmanned. It was averred that there are 84 approved entry points and staggering number of over 1,400 illegal routes in Nigeria. This shows that the illegal routes outnumber the recognized approved routes by 1,316 among which the Northern part took the highest number. Using a documentary research design and content analysis, the study revealed that one of the foremost and immediate factor of insecurity in Nigeria is the porosity of its borderlines, where individual movements are largely untracked due to short of manpower, inadequate facilities, higher number of illegal routes, lack of technological deployment, etc. and this has cost the country millions of Nigerian lives. Evidenced pointed out that huge flow of illicit activities such as proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and other dangerous weapons, illegal migrants and herders, drug, etc. which has contributed to the heightened insecurity in Nigeria. Specifically, the study's content analysis between January and December 2020 indicates that there was an average of two violent attacks and nine deaths daily across the nation. The study recommends a large number of strategies such as border communities mobilization strategy, outsourcing and third-country agreements among other things.*

**Key Words:** *Border, Porous Border, Border Communities, Border Security and National Security*

## **1.0 Introduction**

Nigeria has a total area of 923,768 km<sup>2</sup> (356,669 sq mi) in terms of landmass, making it the 32nd-largest country in the world. It shares a total of 4,047 kilometres (2,515 mi) border with Benin (773 km), Niger (1497 km), Chad (87 km), Cameroon (1690 km), and has a coastline of at least 853 km. Nigeria's claim to territorial sea (offshore space) rose from 3 miles of continental shelf and about 200 miles on exclusive fishing zones from 1958 to 1978 as a country signatory to conventions on continental shelf despite its inability to determine its extent of claim (Prescott, 1975). Nigeria's claim to a 200 mile wide exclusive economic zone in October, 1978 is part of reaction to United Nation Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Conventions on jurisdictional zones and claims to the territorial sea, continental shelf and exclusive fishing zones.

It has been rightly observed that what happens at the borders goes to determine the national security architecture of a state, which either makes or mars it (Okunade, 2017). This therefore makes it imperative for every state to uphold security of its borders and its management including mobilization of border communities (strategic intelligence) as a top priority. Border security and control is an emerging dimension of security construction which remains unexplored in terms of how it affects both physical and human securities (Eselebor and Okunade, 2021). Further to our understanding of these terms is a detailed analysis of the trends and linkages, which calls into question whether securitization of borders is a public good or a barrier in the context of national security concerns.

Globally, it is assumed that border security can be viewed from the prism of insurgencies, terrorism, undocumented migrant flows, drugs and arms trafficking among other criminalities plaguing management and control of borders (Adeola and Fayomi, 2012). However, despite fortification and externalization of border controls, these emerging global threats are not abating (Zaiotti, 2011). The border and its structure, be it at the political, economic or social-cultural levels, play significant roles as a control mechanism.

The present circumstance of the surge in migrant flows and weapons from war-torn Syria and Libya have created a worrisome concern in Europe and Africa, especially in its dynamics to the

country's national security (Pursey, 2015). This has been ascribed to more than a decade Nigeria's devastating attacks and casualties from terrorist, bandits and other similar violent groups. According to Eselebor and Okunade (2021), Nigeria has been suffering from the violent campaign of terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWAP) due to the porous and unguarded borderlines.

The study aims at interrogating the consequences of the porosity of Nigeria's borderlines, especially on its collapsing internal security. In its recommendation, it analyzed and adapt the strategy of mostly European countries using border communities in its intelligence and security architecture. Structurally, the study provides the background information, research objectives, statement of the problem, literature review including clarification of key concepts, then followed by national security challenges, analysis of security failures linked to borderlines and measures to counter same, a community-based strategy of some of the European countries. The chapter concludes with some recommendations.

## **2.0 Research Objectives**

Derived from the above narrations are the following research objectives that inform the discursive analysis of the study:

- i. Undertake an analysis of the challenges of Nigeria's national security linked to the porous borderlines;
- ii. Identify the emerging cross-border related security threats in Nigeria and its major consequences;
- iii. Draw lessons from developed countries contemporary strategies for an improved border security architecture in Nigeria.

## **3.0 Statement of the Problem**

The rationale for this analysis focusing on borderlines management and Nigeria's national security is easily discernible from the fact that most of the troubled states of Nigeria are linked to

international border routes of the Cameroun, Niger and Chad which scholars described as exceedingly porous and unmanageable (Eselebor and Okunade, 2021; and Okunade, 2017).

**Figure 2: Nigerian Borders and Border Countries**



Source: Kwarkye and Matongbada, 2021, Institute for Security Studie

Presently, Nigeria has to contend with security failures resulting from open and insecure borders with the mostly Francophone nations of Benin, Niger, Cameroun and Chad (Eselebor and Okunade, 2021). There are about 84 recognized Points of Entry (PoE) and over 1,499 unrecognized border entry points (Vanguard, June 19, 2013). The dilemmas facing Nigeria are numerous and complex. Both the approved and unapproved PoE are major sources of security concerns in the context of border management. Herein lies the problem, which informs the justification for this study.

The surge in herder and farmer clashes in Benue, Taraba, Adamawa, Zamfara and other states, with over 1,300 recorded deaths (International Crisis Group, 2018), calls for concern. This is in addition to Boko Haram insurgencies in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states that share international boundaries with neighboring states such as Chad, Niger and Cameroon. The kidnap on February 22, 2018 of over 110 schoolgirls in Dapchi, Yobe State, a town in North-Eastern Nigeria which is about 75km south of the border with Niger may not be unconnected with the near absence of adequate security in border management in Nigeria.

The Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) network is suspected to be operating in the Benue valley in collaboration with Fulani herders from neighboring countries, an emerging fact confirmed by the Directorate of State Security (DSS) as a possible explanation for the massacre of 73 persons on New Year's day 2018 in Logo and Guma local government areas in Benue State.<sup>1</sup> This mayhem is still ongoing and has spread to Zamfara, Taraba, Adamawa, Plateau, Nasarawa and other adjoining states, calling attention to the heightened security alert in Nigeria.

Importantly, the study is different from the angle of drawing lessons from the developed countries, especially to mobilise the border communities in solving and managing the porosity of Nigeria borders.

#### **4.0 Methodology**

A documentary research design using a case study approach and content analysis through secondary data with reports from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the International Crisis Group, as well as scholarly articles, books and recognized newspaper outlets was adopted. Various border security threats experienced in Nigeria and the practical steps taken by the government to tackle such – and most especially the insurgency of Boko Haram and ISWAP– were selected. This was strategic in revealing the activities of the sect and the counter force this phenomenon gets from the government. Data gathered were thematically content-analyzed by breaking down the information to meet the objectives of the paper.

#### **5.0 Theoretical Framework**

Theories are analytical tool for explanation of social and political reality. There are a number of theories that deals with such issues as social, economic, and political dominance including insecurity due to negligence, the research adopt David Easton System theory as the most appropriate theory in explaining the basis for borderline porosity and the threatening rate of insecurity in Nigeria .

David Easton System theory (1953)

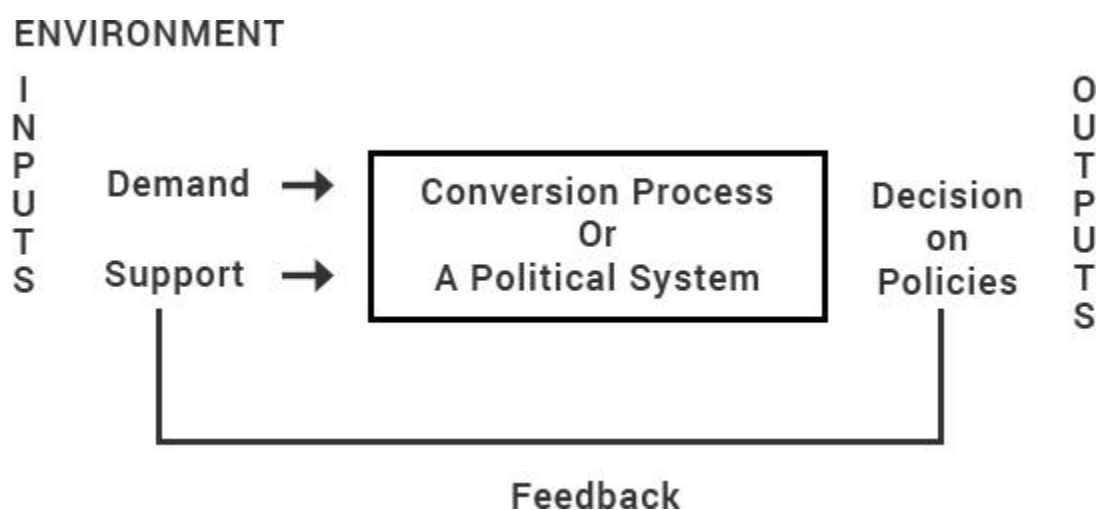
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Easton conceptualizes political system as a set of interactions in any society through which binding or authoritative decisions are made. System approach or Input-output model of political system is based on the interaction between the political system and the environment that lead to authoritative decision.

His system analysis is like a small box consists of two sets of inputs, one output and feedback mechanism to the input side. On the input side, Easton includes demands and supports. Demand is the name of pressure which flow from the environment to the political system to bring about a change in the allocations of scarce values. And support is the second input. It is the energy in the form of actions or orientation promoting and resisting a political system.

Outputs are the decisions or policy made by authorities. Further the policies made by the authorities are supported by the people or not. Thus the response or reaction of public to the outputs are feed-back into, the input system. Again the system convert it into output. This cyclic process of input, output and feedback mechanism constitute the Easton's input-Output analysis, which make decision for the society.

**Fig. 1: Input-Output Model Diagram**



**Source: Wikipedia free encyclopedia**

One could establish the fact that environment influences the action of the political system in line with the Input-Output model of David Easton. The positive action to the demand from the



environment will lead to change and development while the inability of the political system to act of the demand from environment will lead to over accumulation of demands which will bring stress to the political system due to demand overload and further collapse the system. The inability of Nigeria government to properly act of the environmental demand of proper border security, enhanced manpower at the borders, and deployment of adequate technologies, arms for proper border security and proper implementation of immigration law contribute to the porosity of the Nigeria borderlines thereby creating rooms for inflow of arms and criminal elements.

## **6.0 Conceptual Discourse and Literature Review**

### **6.1 Conceptual Discourse**

Concepts clarified in this section include security, border, border security, border communities, border management and national security.

#### Security

Security has to do with safety of lives and properties of the people in a particular society. Ogunleye et al. (2011) define security as the freedom of citizens to engage in their day-to-day activities safely, peacefully and without harassment. It equally connotes all-round protection of citizens: individuals or groups, properties, and trade and commerce financed both individually and by government. Walt's definition presents security as involving knowledge of the root cause of challenges and of the use and control of well-equipped security agents to stop or at least combat the enemy in a war situation (Walt, 1991). Achumba et al. (2013) summarize security into four dimensions: peaceful pursuit of economy that yields income for good living, pro-activeness of citizens, safety from criminal activities, as well as psychological terror. This definition indicates that security combats all threats – physical, economic and psychological. It does mean that there will always be threats which need to be combated as situations arise.

According to Eselebor (2013), two security schools of thought currently exist. They are traditionalist and non-traditionalist. The traditionalists continue to support the Cold War conception of security which centers on military and state-centric approaches. This shows that traditionalists in security studies equate the concept of security with military accounting and the use of force. The focus on military threats and the use of force complement ideas of power and

interest, rather than the tough-minded approach to foreign policy which seemed appropriate for the Cold War years (Garnett, 1996). The non-traditionalist school on the other hand, has gone a step further by broadening the meaning of security from just the military and use of force to include issues such as human, environmental, economic, social, feminist and other threats. While nontraditional security focuses on what could possibly endanger the survival of the individual (human security) as well as the state, traditional security's emphasis is centered on the state. The border in this discourse is about protection, stability and security of the state.

### Borders

'Border' means different things to different people, but in classical literature, borders, boundaries and borderlands are used interchangeably (Mata-Codesal, 2007). They sometimes constitute multiple opportunities as well as security barriers. Whereas borders are vital to separate the physical boundaries of state territories, they are in daily practice even more important to the people living along the borders. In similar vein, demarcated or not demarcated, a border can engender positive or negative effects, which have implications for national security. A greater portion of borderlands in the African continent are not distinctly demarcated and hence show no guidelines, creating security threats. According to Kristof (1959:278), a boundary does not exist in abstraction, it owes its existence to man. That is, all boundaries are manmade. This assertion finds explanation from the partition of African borderlands resultant from the African-Berlin Conference of 1884/1885, where borders were artificially drawn without the consent and participation of the beneficiaries.<sup>4</sup> Kristof further identifies two types of borders:

i. Artificial, and

ii. Natural.

Oscar Martinez (1994:1–15) classified borders into four categories as follows:

- (a) alienated,
- (b) co-existent,
- (c) interdependent, and
- (d) Integrated.

In the same vein, Richard Hartshorne (1933:115–228; 1936:56–57) believes that borders can be viewed from the perspectives of the following:

- i. Antecedent,
- ii. Subsequent,
- iii. Super imposed,
- iv. Natural.

Most African borders are super imposed and that reality has not changed, despite the intervention from the African Union Border Programme. The security dimension calls for global concern in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in the United States of America. Top of the discussion presently is immigration, described as globalization discontent. Migrants generated through conflict-induced displacement, the surge of refugees and economic flows are now regarded as security risks by host nations, a perception that is now heavily politicized

#### Border Security

International law recognizes states on the proviso that the entity puts in adequate resources to keep its boundaries under strict surveillance to ensure citizens' protection; states are thus classified as strong, weak or failed. Border security can be defined and implied in this study as the statutory purpose of preventing unlawful changes to the state border regime, maintaining the border regime and the regime at border crossing points from violation.

#### Border Communities

Border communities are the immediate towns and villages very close to the borderlines. These communities are expected to be very important stakeholders in the scheme of control and management of borders.

#### Border Management

Border management is a function of regime types in place for the purpose of maintaining border administration. It includes routine administration to be undertaken at the border and in border zones. Border management generally rests on governmental surveillance agencies like the immigration, customs and police forces to ensure a lawful flow of human and economic resources

in the national interest, be it economic security or peace. This explains why customs officers in Nigeria go to markets and warehouses to impound smuggled prohibited goods. The number of agencies in border management is great, especially at border crossings, but a recognized border point is where you have the presence of Port Health, Immigration and Customs facilities. Other agencies such as the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Plant and Animal Quarantine, Standards Organization and Directorate of State Security Services (DSS), among others, play complimentary roles. Border management also involves ensuring that there is no trespassing beyond the state's boundary beacons delimiting the country's land space. It is therefore good if the security apparatuses are integrated and work cooperatively towards attaining stated objectives. It can also be bad, if it is non-responsive to the security needs of benefactors, including the individual, the society and the state at large

### National Security

On the other hand, it is also important we delve critically into what border defense and border security mean. Segell (2005) in his argument drew a clear distinction between these two concepts. Defense of the border, he said, rests statutorily on the nation's armed forces, especially against external aggression. This mandate is always carried out with the use of heavy military equipment and weapons such as tanks, aircraft, ships and a large number of troops. All of these became insignificant in the twenty-first century as conflict focus shifted from inter-state conflicts to intra-state conflicts, as largely witnessed in Africa, thus making the procurement of these items of equipment unnecessary. This paradigm shift took place as occupying states became inconsequential after the outcome of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990. The whole world came after Iraq militarily and the sovereignty of Kuwait was restored. Since then, states' urge for state invasion no longer exists. He argued further that globalization in face of inadequate territorial demarcation encourages a military challenge to organized crime and terrorism. The wake of globalization has therefore made border defense less important given the new dimension of security threats technology has brought, such as transnational organized crimes and terrorism which have a direct impact on the citizens and greatly undermine the security of the state. This is the experience of Nigeria. This is the more reason why a change in focus is essential from border

defense to border security. This is the only way a state can adequately protect its citizens as well as the state, thus maintaining the national security in the process.

## **6.2 Reviewing Literature**

This section will review the literature on the Nigerian borders and their current state. It will touch on the various transnational criminalities that occur along the borders which make the borders an unsafe locale. Nigerian borders span many local governments in the country. Former Nigerian Immigration Head, David Parrandang, averred that only 84 approved entry points exist in the country while there is a staggering number of over 1,400 illegal routes. This shows that the illegal routes outnumber the recognized approved routes by 1,316, among which are Ogun and Adamawa States with 83 and 80 respectively. This could be as a result of the huge flow of illicit activities that happen within the area and across the borders into neighboring states. Okunade (2017) has pointed out that these routes keep increasing on a daily basis as a result of the clandestine activities as identified in preceding section. And as some are being foiled, new ones are opened up around the porous borders.

These activities, which have long existed and been carried out in the form of transnational crimes across the Nigerian borders, have to a great extent challenged the country's economic and national security. The modus operandi by which these activities are carried out continues to improve in a sophisticated way due to technological advancement, but unfortunately the Nigerian government has not been able to contain the change and stem the increasing rate of criminality, thus making the borders a free zone for their perpetrators to operate.

Eselebor (2013) opined that transnational crimes, even though on the increase, are quite civilized in practice, as they operate in syndicate states not adequately equipped to curb the menace of human trafficking, drug trafficking, contraband smuggling, smuggling of small arms and light weapons, cross-border armed banditry/robbery, oil theft/bunkering, financial crimes, advance fee fraud (e.g., '419' fraud), cybercrimes and credit card fraud and environmental crimes. These crimes have of late been compounded with the menace of insurgency and terrorism which are a far cry from the others earlier mentioned. This nefarious engagement has been adduced to be the greatest threat that has confronted the Nigerian government, to such an extent that it remains insurmountable and has turned the state into an ineffective actor.

This phenomenon is not a new occurrence in Nigeria as a mild dimension of it was witnessed in the 1980s in the form of the Maitatsine unrest in the North. This insurgent group remained formidable for the Nigerian government to tackle until they were able to suppress them. The emergence of Boko Haram was patterned along the same lines. At the latent stage, this was noticeable in their ideas and modus operandi but much later the pattern shifted sharply as they began to spread their tentacles by engaging international collaborations.

Leiter (2014) argued that the porosity of the Nigerian borders is the major factor that encourages the proliferation of illegal arms and insurgencies in the country. According to Abdullahi (2010), 70 percent of the illegal small arms in the West Africa sub-region is found in Nigeria. William Hartung, a renowned arms dealer, submits that arms deals thrive in Nigeria, and in west and central Africa, because of conflicts in Africa, which create the pivot for the arms trade (Leiter, 2014). The flourishing arms market in Africa explains the source of strength for the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, which makes it a perpetual threat to the nation's territorial integrity and national security. The inadequate border posts for surveillance are worsened by the ill equipped, poorly trained and poorly remunerated personnel who find it rewarding to compromise with the insurgents.

NBC News, a division of the National Broadcasting Company based in the USA, reported that current and former USA officials and arms experts have averred that a larger part of Boko Haram armory items were commandeered from overpowered Nigerian military stocks. The news report further credited a statement to a former USA Ambassador in Nigeria, John Campbell, admitting that: there are bad eggs/saboteurs who willingly gave access to Boko Haram to loot the Nigerian armories (Babatola, 2015). He concluded that the array of small and automatic weapons, mortars, grenades, car bombs and mines 'is all Boko Haram's soldiers need to carry out their brand of terrorism' (Babatola, 2015). In June 2013, the Nigerian military intercepted a consignment found to be loaded with arms and ammunition meant for delivery to the Boko Haram camps for the purpose of attacking, maiming and killing civilians (mostly rural dwellers), businesses, government institutions and security personnel.

This class of arms and ammunition, such as anti-tank missiles, surface-to-air missiles, AK-47 assault rifles and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs), were found to be used by mercenaries and rebel forces during the Libyan uprising and are gradually being routed into troubled zones for use

by terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Boko Haram in Nigeria (Leiter, 2014). Such weapons were equally seized by the Cameroun government *enroute* to the Boko Haram camps within the region. These weapons, mainly Russian-made AK-47s meant for combat by Boko Haram combatants, were presented by the Cameroon Defence Ministry official as being seized. It was revealed in concrete terms that the insurgency in Libya has further opened doors for arms transportation to Nigeria through her neighboring borders (Leiter, 2014). Another online publication indicated that Cameroon officials had on Tuesday 20 May 2014 declared a cache of weapons which were seized close to the Nigerian border in April 2014 immediately after rescuing some kidnapped victims (Babatola, 2015).

Boko Haram, with the help of some of these weapons that have got to them, has being able to unleash terror, turning Northern Nigeria, especially the North-Eastern region into a turbulent region, by causing chaos and unjustifiable destruction of lives and properties there and in neighboring Cameroon. Adetula, (2015) opined that the activities of the sect must have been intensified by the manpower support they got from rebels from Libya. After the demise of Muammar Gaddafi and his regime in Libya, his loyal fighters were dispersed across Africa and Middle East. Some of the rebels were cited in neighboring Chad and Niger and for them to have got so close, there is every likelihood that some of them must have filtered into Nigeria to support the cause and operations of the militant Islamic group in the country. Adetula averred that the religious upheavals in some parts of Nigeria could have identified the country as a location for an international Islamist revolution to thrive (Adetula, 2015:12).

These attacks are being felt mostly in towns and communities situated along the borders in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, such as Bama, Baga, Mubi and Gwoza in Borno state (Business Day newspaper, 2014)). The hills of Gwoza in the north-eastern part of Mandara Mountains, to the north of Cameroon through the Sambisa Forest Reserve, are being used as a base and launch spot by the insurgents. The unconventional war fought against Nigeria's state by the Boko Haram terror group has led to a huge humanitarian crisis witnessed in the form of casualties and massive displacement of persons both as internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Nigeria and across the borders into neighboring states as refugees (Leadership Newspaper, 2014).

The activities and attacks of Boko Haram, which have consistently been a challenge to Nigeria and her neighbors, gained a global awareness even though the Nigerian government did not

envisage that its activities would deteriorate to that extent. Former Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan pointed out at the regional summit on security and terrorism in 2014 that the Boko Haram insurgency has assumed a global dimension antithetical to civilization and regional stability (Leadership Newspaper, 2014). At some point, the impudence and carnage unleashed by Boko Haram degenerated to an easy influx of arms from Libya. The porous nature of Nigerian borders made it easy for the sect to manage its logistics. These items were always smuggled in via donkeys, camels, cattle and heavy duty motor vehicles through the inadequately policed borders of the vast areas of Borno and Yobe States, the same way in which women, children, SALWs, second-hand clothing, poultry products, used cars, parboiled rice, pharmaceutical products and other consumables are smuggled into the country through the porous borders (land and maritime) all around the country but especially in the South-West. At some point, these deadly attacks from Boko Haram dissuaded visitors and tourists from coming into the country (US Department of States, 2014).

A report from a Nigerian Newspaper in 2014 revealed the military prowess of Boko Haram as they routinely attacked police stations, military bases and heavily secured government structures without a counter force to stop and apprehend them (Mantzikos, 2014). This led to the kidnapping and abduction of nearly 300 Nigerian schoolgirls in a government secondary school at Chibok who were successfully driven away amid numerous military roadblocks that existed within the area. It was also stated that the Nigerian military personnel who should resist the incursion of the insurgents, show them the path to follow before and after attacks are carried out (Mantzikos, 2014). Only recently have the girls started to be released in small groups through facilitated negotiations. Therefore, the defense of the country's territorial integrity continues unabated.

## **7.0 Overview of Nigeria Border Communities**

### **i. Nigeria- Benin Borders:**

Badagry LGA in Lagos State of Nigeria and rural districts of Iseme-Podji, Adjarra and Arrankou in South of Queme Province in Benin Republic with Border Post at Seme; Egbado (Yewa) South LGA in Ogun State of Nigeria and rural districts of Ifonyin (Ifangni) and Itakete (Sakete) in Central part of Queme Province of Benin Republic; Egbado (Yewa) North LGA in Ogun State of Nigeria and rural districts of Ipobe (Pobe) and Ketu (Ketou) in the Northern half part of Queme Province of Benin Republic; Kajola LGA (Oke-Iho) in Oyo State of Nigeria and rural district of Sabe (Save)



in the Zou Province of Benin Republic; Ifedapo LGA (Saki) in Oyo State of Nigeria and rural districts of Quesse in the Zou Province of Benin Republic; Borgu LGA centred around Bussa, Illo and Koko in Kwara State of Nigeria and 8 districts 5 including Kandi (Kounade), Malanville District of and Nikki District of Borgu Province in Benin Republic.

ii. Nigeria- Niger Borders:

Bagudo LGA in the then Sokoto State (now divided into Sokoto and Kebbi States) of Nigeria and part of the eight districts of Borgu Province and Department of Dosso and Tahoua in Niger Republic; Argungu and Gwadabawa LGAs in Sokoto State of Nigeria and the local communities of Dago Duchi and Mantakai in Department of Dosso and Tahoua in Niger Republic; Shinkafe and Kaura Namode in Nigeria and the local community in Department of Dosso and Tahoua in Niger Republic; Kebbi (Birnin Kebbi) LGA in the then Sokoto State (now Kebbi State) of Nigeria and the local community of Filinguee in Niger Republic; Katsina and Mani LGAs including Maradi and Tassawa (Tassoua) in the then Kaduna State (now Katsina) and Daura LGA in Kaduna State of Nigeria and many of the local communities of Niger Republic; Birin Kula in Bamle Village with border settlements and houses partly in Niger and partly in Nigeria; Dambata and Gunel LGAs in old Kano State and Department of Zinder in Niger Republic; Nguru, Geidam and West of Kukawa LGAs in Borno State of Nigeria and Local communities in Department of Zinder in Niger Republic;

iii. Nigeria- Chad Borders:

Local areas of Monguno, Ngala, Bama and Gwoza in Chad Republic; the Lake Chad region that borders Nigeria and her neighbors.

iv. Nigeria- Cameroun Borders:

Traditional states and communities of Adamawa (Sardauna), Mandara, the Hingi, Michika, Mubi, Fufori, Ganya, Wukati and others in old Gongola State and neighbouring local communities in Cameroun; Traditional communities of Kwande in old Benue State and neighbouring local communities in Cameroun; Traditional communities of Odukpani in the Ododop area of old Cross Rivers State (now Akwa Ibom State ) and neighbouring local communities in Cameroun;

Traditional 6 communities of Obudu, Ikom and Akamkpa in the Ekoi and the Efik areas of old Cross Rivers State and neighbouring local communities in Cameroun;

## **8.0 Highlights of Border related Security Threats**

A number of security threats and operational challenges face the border security and management agencies in Nigeria. These include:

**i. Narcotics:** Nigeria is a source, transit and receiving country for the narcotics trade in West Africa and this poses many challenges in policing borderlands, seaports and airports, where the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency lacks the capacity and technical ability to combat that same narcotics trade.

**ii. Insurgency, terrorism and religious extremism:** The three identified challenges are treated as one, since they are most often connected in cross-border settings. Since 2009 when Boko Haram took center stage in irredentism, North-Eastern Nigeria has become their base of operation. This can be explained from the perspective that the states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe share a large expanse of borders with Niger, Chad and Cameroun. The asymmetric approach employed by the terrorists and extremists seems to benefit from the porosity of borders in this region, particularly and most importantly since the border security apparatuses have collapsed.

**iii. Small arms and light weapons (SALW) proliferation:** Despite the moratorium on the import and export of SALW, the porosity of land and sea borders has made it possible for traffickers to bring into Nigeria sophisticated arms and ammunitions used for heinous crimes like kidnap, armed robbery and terrorism.

**iv. Transhumance:** In another development, the emerging threat of herder–farmer conflicts, claiming several lives in Nigeria since 2015, is an indication of infiltration through the Northern axis of borderlands from neighboring states. The herders are known to have attacked

villages, police and military formations with sophisticated weaponry, made possible with the ease of access to arms and ammunitions from leaky borders.

**v. People smuggling and human trafficking:** People smuggling is an organized criminal activity with huge profits for the criminals involved, who facilitate the illegal cross-border movement of people who wish to migrate, often for economic reasons. Human trafficking is a heinous crime, based entirely on exploitative tendencies. It is a specific offense that preys on the vulnerability of victims, mostly women, children and other vulnerable groups. People smuggling and human trafficking constitute offenses, but the criminal enterprise is not abating, and Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country. The perpetrators are also linked to terrorism, the drug trade and smuggling of goods, small arms and light weapons.

**vi. Prohibited goods smuggling:** There are other forms of smuggling, mostly related to prohibited goods and harmful substances. Some have to do with evasion of customs tariffs and duties payable. Goods commonly smuggled across the porous borders of Nigeria include second-hand clothing, poultry products, used cars, parboiled rice, pharmaceutical products and other consumables.

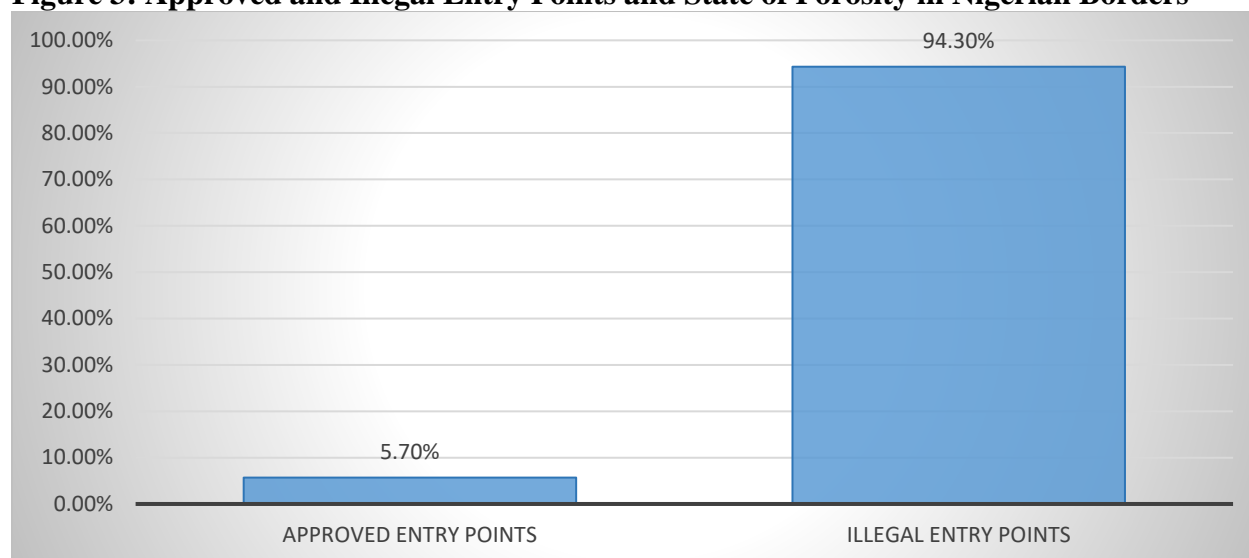
## **9.0 Understanding the Extent and Causes of Nigeria's Borderlines Porosity**

Nigeria's porous borderlines could be traced to the Berlin Conference of 1885 coupled with large expanse of the border, poor demarcation, poor manning, loose border and unguarded communities. Nigerian boundaries were delineated by the Europeans at the 1884/1885 African-Berlin Conference, and consist of 4,047km of land and 853km of maritime borders (Babatola, 2015). The sheer size and nature of these borders make it difficult for them to be policed and managed operationally by the relevant security agencies assigned the responsibility of protection. The porosity resulting from poor demarcation and poor manning presents serious challenges (Babatola, 2015). This has therefore paved way for constant occurrences forming part of a climate of criminality across the Nigerian borders.

Nigeria has to contend with several consequences of insecure borders with the mostly Francophone nations of Benin, Niger, Cameroun and Chad (Eselebor and Okunade, 2021). Nigerian borders span many local governments in the country. Former Nigerian Immigration Comptroller General, David Parrandang, averred that only 84 approved entry points exist in the country while there is a

staggering number of over 1,400 illegal routes<sup>2</sup>. This shows that the illegal routes outnumber the recognized approved routes (see Figure 2).

**Figure 3: Approved and Illegal Entry Points and State of Porosity in Nigerian Borders**



**Source: Eselebor and Okunade, 2021.**

In the same way, Vanguard Newspaper (June 19, 2013) reported that Nigerian border is characterized by about 84 recognized Points of Entry (PoE) and over 1,499 unrecognized border entry points. Across the over 4,000 square kilometres coverage, Nigeria have illegal routes which are not manned (The Cable, 2014). According to the Report of the Comptroller General, the following are the summary of the causes of the porous borderlines in Nigeria:

- i. The Nigerian border is too large: Nigeria has about 4,047km of land and 853km of maritime borders;
- ii. The number of illegal routes is 100 times more than the number of approved routes. In Adamawa State for instance, there are only five control posts and 80 illegal routes. Also in Ogun State, there are almost 10 control posts and 83 illegal routes amounting to grave security implications for the citizens and the country;

- iii. The Immigration Service is short of manpower: There is grossly inadequate 22,300 immigration officers to carry out the service's mandate. To meet up with the present issue of inadequacy of manpower, the NIS needs an annual recruitment of 5,000 personnel for a period of five years to effectively carry out its duties;
- iv. Inadequate facilities, such as patrol vehicles; and aircraft. NIS has only two aircraft. Others like communication gadgets, scanners and importantly deployment of E-pass system. This will connect all the borders;
- v. Poor welfare packages and no insurance for the officers;
- vi. Presence of a large non-demarcated, poorly-marked borders. This makes people at the border community so intertwine to the extent that stringent control is apparently difficult.

Parrandang lamented that there are people who have their bedrooms in another country and their sitting rooms in Nigeria; the windows open to another country, so, how do you tell that person that he should not cross the border?". Importantly, these situations as pointed above had led to a severe consequences such as influx and proliferation of small arms and light weapons, unchecked criminal migrants and substances, deaths and attacks, etc. in Nigeria.

## **10.0 Consequences of Porous Borders in the Northeast, Nigeria**

The following are the major consequences of porous borders in Nigeria as captured in the various reports:

### **i. Influx and Proliferation of Small and Light Weapons**

The issue of the influx and proliferations of small and light weapons (SALW) in Nigeria has been directly linked to the various violent campaigns recorded in Nigeria overtime (Hazen and Horner, 2007). This alongside other challenges as stated above as worsen the security of the country. Nte (2011) posits that there is a direct link between the acquisition of weapons like SALW and escalation conflicts into a full-brown war. Unfortunately, challenges such as lengthy and porous nature of Nigerian borders, shortage of personnel, presence of untrained security personnel, etc. had worsen the effective management and control of borders (Hazen and Horner, 2007).

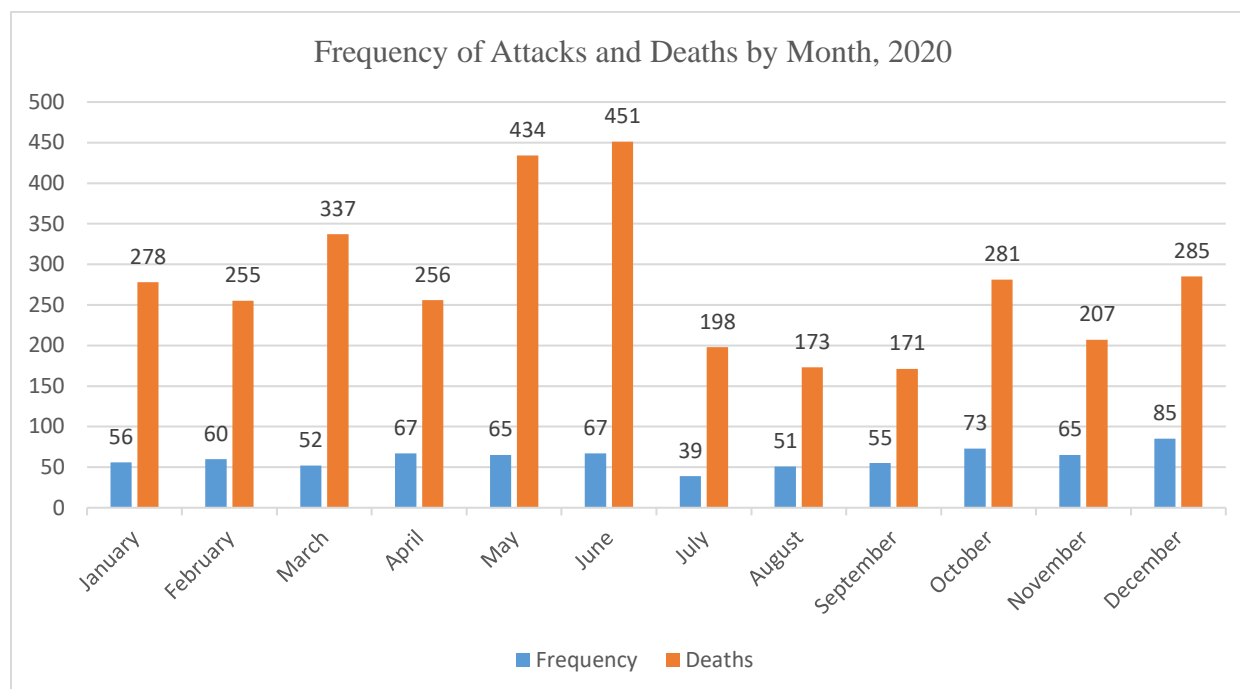
SB Morgen Report tagged “Small Arms, Mass Atrocities & Migration in Nigeria” (2020) stated that the number of small arms in circulation in Nigeria, in the hands of civilian non-state actors is estimated at 6,145,000, while the armed forces and law enforcement collectively account for 586,600 firearms. This according to the report has driving the increasing rate of violence in Nigeria, especially in the Northeast and Northwest. A spiral of it has also got to the Northcentral states.

Proliferation of SALW has enabled the rise of armed groups, violence campaigns, kidnappings, communal clashes, deaths and injury of thousands of innocent citizens, displacement of several Nigerians and thus, had impacted on Nigeria’s internal security.

## **ii. Increasing Violent Attacks and Deaths**

The terrorist activities of Boko Haram since 2009 attest to the fact that the borders around North-Eastern Nigeria are hospitable towards cross-border attacks, more so where the security apparatuses have failed to contain the flow of small arms and light weapons. Reports, based on data gathered between January and December, 2020, indicate that there was an average of two violent attacks and nine deaths daily across the nation. This amounts to at least 60 attacks a month and over 720 for the year, and in turn over 270 and 3,240 deaths monthly and the year respectively. Figure 3 below shows a breakdown of frequency of attacks and number of deaths per month across the country in 2020.

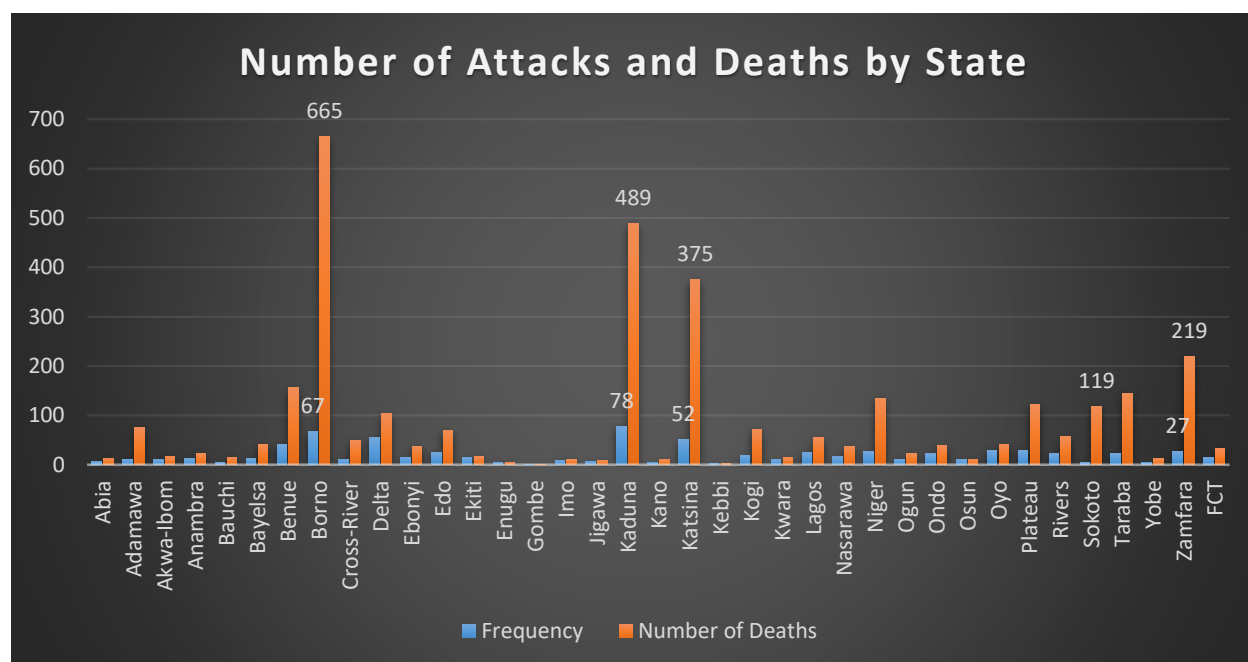
Figure 4: Number of Attacks and Casualties in Nigeria by Month, 2020



Source: Compiled by the authors from Nigerian Dailies, 2020, The Cable, and Global Rights Nigeria.

When the data is disaggregated across the 36 States and the FCT, Borno State witnessed 67 violent attacks and recorded the highest number of casualties across all States at 665. It is closely followed by Kaduna State with 78 attacks and 489 deaths, and Katsina State with 52 attacks and 375 deaths. Taken together, these three States account for about 45% of the total number of deaths within the period. Figure 4 below gives a visual representation of these statistics.

**Figure 5: Number of Violent Attacks and Casualties in Nigeria, 2020, by State**



*Source: Compiled by the authors from Nigerian Dailies, 2020, The Cable, and Global Rights Nigeria.*

Using the figure above, the study discovered that major casualties recorded in 2020 were more felt along the Border States as Sokoto, Borno, Adamawa, Katsina, Zamfara, and Kebbi. While Sokoto State recorded only 5 violent attacks and casualty rate of 119, Borno, Adamawa, Katsina, Zamfara, and Kebbi have 67/665, 11/67, 52/375, 27/219, and 10/8 attacks/casualties respectively. In other words, for every attack in the State, about 24 people lost their lives, making Sokoto State the highest in terms of number of casualties per attack, closely followed by Borno State.

Finally, when the data is interpreted through the lens of geopolitical zones, the North-West recorded the most attacks and deaths at 123 and 1224 incidences respectively, making it the most susceptible to violent attacks for the year. This is closely followed by the North-East with 121 violent attacks and 914 deaths.

### 11.0 Summary/ Conclusion

Nigeria borderlines and the threat of insecurity remain the major challenges bedeviling the nation presently. The porous nature of the border has created a safe heaven for illegal migrant, illegal importation of arms, importation of prohibited drugs and substance, and a fertile ground for terrorists, kidnappers, armed bandits, and other criminal elements. Nigeria has an estimated border entry points of 1400, out of which only 84 are legal and manned while over 90% are porous and



partway for illegal migrants and importation of contrabands. The challenge of border porosity could be attributed to the reason Nigeria has not succeeded in the war against terrorists and other criminal elements across Nigeria mostly the Northern part of the country. Border porosity and insecurity attracted by it has resulted to loss of lives and properties of Nigerians, slow pace of economic growth, loss of jobs and over budgeting for security votes.

The anomalies in the Nigeria borderlines could be corrected if Nigeria government could demonstrate strong political will towards that direction by adopting the feasible approaches applied by the European countries which made their borderlines the most secured across the globe.

## **12.0 Recommendations**

Going Forward: Drawing Experience from European Countries Border Control and Security Strategies

The following strategies were drawn from the European countries border control in order to solve the present porosity of Nigerian borders:

### **i. Border Communities Mobilisation Strategy**

There is a collaborative efforts between the border communities and former policing system and agencies. It's a collaborative efforts between informal and formal apparatus. The embedded relationships between the formal and informal are apparent in the incorporation of irregular workers into key border security structure and pay them accordingly. In Europe, since there is a known collaboration between the local communities and the people; government agencies also make an informal collaboration between the border communities in its intelligence. The citizens around give information to related agencies in exchange for money. This had led to reduction in the inflow of illegal products including criminality and weapons Davis (2006: 178).

### **ii. Outsourcing and Third-Country Agreements**

The national security-influenced paradigm of an externalized border policing system has gained considerable traction within Europe. This policy of subcontracting and outsourcing is at its most visible in the series of agreements drawn up by the European Union and its individual member

states delegating border control to neighboring countries. These agreements are empowered by intergovernmental policy bargains made between member states – for example, over what constitutes a “manifestly unfounded claim” and the designation of “safe third countries” to which they can be deported. As a consequence, countries around the Mediterranean, such as Turkey or the North African countries of Morocco, Algeria or Libya, have been recruited through bilateral and European Union or Frontex-brokered agreements containing returns and readmission clauses into playing the role of buffer zone, filtering out unwanted migrants, restricted and unlawful products including weapons and drugs. Thus, this strategy is important in keeping Nigeria porous borders clean and properly manned.

### **iii. Police-driven approach**

Heads of State have often acknowledged that migration policy is almost exclusively the preserve of their home affairs while security and identity issues and, more recently, integration from an assimilationist standpoint, have remained at the heart of the debate. However, this strategy is the best from the point of strength, and is hereby recommended. However, former Nigerian Immigration Head suggested a continuous recruitment of 5,000 officers in the couple of years before they could have manpower to adequately man the Nigerian porous borders.

### **iv. Anti-terrorist measures**

It would therefore be inaccurate to refer to 11 September 2001 as the critical juncture. Moves to step up security around immigration and the association of immigration with terrorism go back considerably further than that. However, the US decision of 13 September 2001 to give the President emergency powers plainly sped up these procedures in Europe, and was grist to the mill of all those who were already calling for a proactive approach based on prevention, technological intelligence gathering and more intrusive and comprehensive surveillance. The list of anti-terrorist measures that have an impact on migration flows is impressive. The fight against terrorism has clearly served as a justification for strengthening control mechanisms whose efficacy in combating clandestine organizations is far from proven, but which ‘help’ the police in their surveillance and control.

### **v. “Biometric Borders or Smart Borders”: The Vision of Total Control**

The information Frontex acts on is managed and filtered through surveillance equipment, mass databases and data-mining technologies. These are employed by Europe's migration management regime to identify and track "illegal" individuals, products and weapons by reference to a nexus of putative external dangers. The development of the European Border Surveillance System (Eurosir) signals the attempt to integrate these technologies into a streamlined transnational apparatus. The system was proposed in 2008 as part of Europe's so-called Smart Borders Package, and is now running as a pilot project dedicated to enhancing the "situational awareness and reaction capability" of both member states and Frontex in the interception of "illegal migrants" and "cross-border criminals" (European Commission cited in Hayes and Vermeulen 2012: 8). The European Council describes Eurosir's remit as providing a "common pre-frontier intelligence picture" (Council of the European Union 2013). As such, it represents a paradigmatic shift in the policing of the open seas, with "comprehensive 24/7 surveillance" of the waters beyond European territory and around the coasts and ports of North Africa (Hayes and Vermeulen 2012: 9).

#### **vi. Private Involvement in the Border Management and Control**

It is important to include Built, Operate and Transfer (BOT) policy in our recommendations to provide an alternative to the problem of border policing system in Nigeria. This is because the infrastructures needed to deploy major strategies that were drawn from European countries require infrastructures and even technology. Government may wish to enter an agreement with a private company to manage Nigerian borders through various strategies under the strict control of the government in order to protect the national security.

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