

Trans-Border Crimes and Their Implications for Peace and Security in Idiroko Border Town of Ogun State

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Abstract

This paper examines the implications of trans-border crimes on sustainable peace and security in Idiroko border town of Ogun state and Nigeria as a whole. The phenomenal rise in smuggling, human and drugs trafficking and other trans-border crimes within the Nigeria borders has generated much concerns to scholars and policy makers. The study used the social learning theory as the theoretical framework while qualitative research method was used through secondary data from journals, books, articles and online libraries. The control and regulation of trans-border activities are essential for ensuring sustainable peace and security, and for promoting pertinent political and socio-economic activities needed for integrating Nigeria economies. From findings, organized criminal activities affect our joint security and the stability of the country and economies and core democratic values. The paper concludes that the extent and magnitude of the problem necessitate a definitive strategy within the broad frame of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) a sub-regional body to deal with it. This may also involve public-private partnerships.

Keywords: Idiroko-border, Peace, Security, Smuggling, Trafficking and Trans-border crimes

Introduction

Trans-border crime and violence represent a number of illegal and notorious activities carried out by individuals and group across national and international borders, either for financial or economic benefits and also-political cum religious considerations. It is a set of criminal acts whose perpetrators and repercussions go beyond territorial borders. These would include human. The transfer of criminal activity from one country to another is a spillover effect of interrogation policies which loosen the borders for the purpose of development and enhancing criminal activities such as human trafficking, arm and drugs are seen to cut across one geographical area but the failure to check and properly control their various activities cause security issues especially the influx of arms around border (Osimen, Goddy, Anegbode, John, Akande, Clement, Oyewole & Oyindamola, 2017). Out of the 1978 entry points in the country only 84 are approved and 1894 illegal route lies around the country. Of a truth, the security system is greatly outnumbered by an expounded crime situation which in turn will lose it efficacy (William, 1998).

Most recently, transnational crime has grown in scope and is characterized by increasingly global reach, involved in multiple forms of criminal markets to include large scale financial fraud and cybercrime. And the syndicates are willing to protect their activities through violent and notorious organizational strategies to deter capture (Luna, 2008). When borders opened (trade liberalization), they facilitate the spread of criminals networks. The conditions favourable to crime include: the poverty in source countries and their drive to alleviate that poverty, the weakness of the new democracies, open borders, and lack of appropriately educated law enforcement agencies and a

lack of cross-national cooperation has been discovered mostly to be responsible for cross-border crime (Osimen, Goddy, Anegbode, John, Akande, Clement, Oyewole & Oyindamola, 2017).

A Study estimates funds involved in global money-laundering and much of which is gained from transnational crimes and violence, at between 2% and 5% of world economy output been dollar equivalent of between of \$590 billion to \$1.5 trillion (Kligman, 2004). Also the International Organisation for Migration Estimate (IOME) estimate roughly 700,000 woman and children are trafficked across international borders annually (Binder, 2004). This revelation is of no mean implication, particularly post-socialist Eastern Europe where trans-border institution and availability of cheap-labour to wealthier western European countries have become an economic strategy to secure a higher living standard (Hughes, 2004). Justifying the existence, a relation between poverty and transnational prostitution, Moldova and Ukraine, two of the prime sources for commercial sex workers, share in gross national income (GNI) of \$460, \$770 respectively, in sharp contrast in two destination countries of Czech Republic and Poland with \$5,560 and \$4770 respectively (Kligman, 2004).

Since 1980s, Nigeria has also remained a major trans-shipment point for heroin and cocaine going to south Asia and Latin America respectively; indeed, the sophistication of the mafias operation has reached the point that apprehended suspects has been discovered to swallow drugs in wraps with a view to excreting them at destination countries. Lewis (1996) observed that while the country maintained the trade of the protection of top military brass, the syndicates, who had gradually move their operations to third countries, laundered the proceeds from the trade through domestic banking system, in conformity with earlier alluded self-serving principle of “see no evil, hear no evil” (Dauda, 2010). Apart from drugs, the circumvention of the formal economic via trafficking of contraband goods has also counted local industries. At a pre-yearly general meeting with the medias in July 2004, Nigeria industrialist under the aegis of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) declared that the country lost \$6.3billion (about N800 billion) to unwholesome trade practices of smuggling and products counterfeiting in 2003 (Igbokwe, 2004).

Objectives

The main concern of this paper is to examine the contemporary ways of combating trans-border crime and violence in respect to its implications on sustainable peace and security in idiroko border town of Ogun State, Nigeria. Specifically, the paper is concerned with the following objectives:

- i. discuss the nature and dynamics of trans-border crime in Idiroko-border town of Ogun State.
- ii. discuss the various factors promoting trans-border crimes in Idiroko-border Town of Ogun State.
- iii. investigate the effects of trans-border crime on peace and security in Idiroko-border Town of Ogun State and Nigeria as whole.
- iv. recommend the appropriate strategies in combating issues on trans-border crimes in order to enhance sustainable peace and security of the town and Nigeria as a whole.

Conceptual Clarification

Trans- Border Crime

Trans-border crime is defined as the number of illegal and notorious activities carried out by individuals and groups across national and international borders, either for financial or economic benefits and also socio political cum religious considerations. It is a set of criminal acts whose

perpetrators and repercussions go beyond territorial borders. These would include human trafficking, money laundering, drug trafficking, arms smuggling or trafficking of weapons, cross-border terrorism, illegal oil bunkering, illicit trafficking in diamonds, corruption, business fraud, to mention but these notable few (Ering, 2011).

The major international organized crime groups operate in the United States, Latin America, West Africa, Southeast Europe, Asia, Russia and all other regions (Ering, 2011 and Park, 2006). In the post-world war II era, legislators found themselves in a quandary as they were confronted with a growing list of commercial, fiscal, and environmental offenses that did not actually cause direct harm to any one identifiable victim, there was no stinking corpse. They decided that confiscating the proceeds of crime would adequately deter potential criminals. Anxious to avoid confiscation, organized criminals now needed to give these huge sums of money-not easily consumed or invested in the legal economy without raising eyebrows a patina of legitimacy they needed to “Launder” it (Ering, 2011; Asiwaju, 1992).

Security

Generally, security has to do with freedom from danger, or with threats to a nation’s stability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest and enhance the well-being of its people (Imobighe, 1989). The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 9 Sections 214 and 217 provides for the establishment and maintenance of an army, navy, air force and other security agencies that may be necessary for the purpose of:

- i. Defending Nigeria from external aggression.
- ii. Maintaining territorial integrity and securing one borders from violation on land, sea and air.
- iii. Suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order, when called upon.
- iv. Performing such other functions as may be prescribed (such as undertaking relief or welfare duties in such cases as national disasters, peace keeping etc).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the social learning theory. Social learning theory was propounded by Albert Bandura in 1977. The basic tenet of the theory is that behaviour is learned from environment through the process of observational learning (Mcleod, 2016). For example, children acquire their behaviour through observing people around them; hence behaviour is learned. Social learning theory also stipulates that behaviour is acquired through observation and imitating others (Bandura, 1971). Similarly, David (2015) added that social learning theory indicates that behaviour is learned through modelling; put in other words “following the footsteps of others”. In relation to the subject matter, social learning theory explains the rationale for the persistent incidence of trans-border crime and violence taking in Nigeria and Idiroko border town in particular. Trans-border crimes have proven to be a lucrative endeavour as a result of the large amount of money gained from engaging in such criminal activities. As a result of this, many young people have gone into smuggling, trafficking of illicit drugs, money laundering and prostitution because by their observation those who go into it are making it financially, likewise them too can make it through same means; hence the persistence incidence of trans-border crimes.

History of Idiroko - Border Town

Idiroko is a town in Ipokia local government of Ogun State, Nigeria. It is situated along the Nigeria-Benin border and has been an official border crossing point since at least the 1960s (Ramsay, 1972). The town is surrounded by many other towns and villages including Oke Odan,

Ilese, Ita Egbe, Ajilete amongst others. Due to the location of an official cross-border post and as a result of cross-border trading activities within the frontier town, Idiroko has grown from a village to become a town (Omoniyi, 2004, p.40). The residents of Idiroko are multilingual because of their mixed culture due to cross-cultural contact and intermarriages (Udeme, 2012). Idiroko is located on the Nigeria-Benin border along the Lagos-Badagry-Porto Novo highway. The area is about 55 meters above sea level and along the West African coastal plain. The average annual rainfall is between 1500 mm and 2000 mm. The weather pattern follows those of nearby communities with a rainy season from May to October (Omoniyi, 2004, p.40).

The indigenous people of Idiroko are the Yorubas, the Anago and the Egun and languages spoken by residents include Nigerian Pidgin, French, English and Yoruba (Omoniyi, 2004, p.44). Idiroko also has a large transient population as a result of cross border trading. Traditionally, the town is ruled by the Oba, the Oniko of Idiroko, who is aided by a council of chiefs.

Nature and Dynamics of Trans-Border Crime and Violence in Idiroko-Border of Ogun State

Table 1. Categorization of Trans-border or Transnational Crimes in West Africa

Predominant Border Crimes	Country/Border Zones of activity	Groups/Actors Involved	Transit States	Recipient States
Narcotics/Drug Trafficking	Cape Verde, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo	Narcotic/Drug Dealers	Ghana/Togo/Benin/Nigeria	Spain, Portugal, UK, USA and South Africa
Internet Crime (Advance Fee Fraud/Money Laundering)	Nigeria, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone	Advanced Fee Fraud gangs or syndicates/Wealthy business men or government officials	Syndicates commute from the Western part of West Africa (Senegal) across to the eastern parts (Benin/Nigeria)	Nigeria and other countries where the '419' fraudsters are resident
Human Trafficking	All across West Africa but mainly around Benin/Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire/Burkina Faso	Traffickers who serve sometimes as middle men, trade and business partners	Mainly Ghana and Sierra Leone	Other West African countries, and In North America, Europe, and the Middle East
Fire Arms Trafficking	Ghana/Togo/Benin/Nigeria, Sierra Leone/Liberia/Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal	Rebels, local manufacturers of fire arms and middle men	Togo, Benin, Guinea-Bissau and Gambia	Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire
Recruitment of Child Soldiers, Mercenarism	Mano River states including Liberia/Sierra Leone/Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire	Rebel Groups (including LURD, MODEL, RUF, CDF, New Forces (MPCI, MPIGO & MPJ)	Same countries depending on where conflict spills-over	Mano River States and Côte d'Ivoire
Smuggling of illegal goods, minerals and natural resources and cash crops	Côte d'Ivoire/Ghana/Togo/Benin and Nigeria, and Liberia/Sierra Leone	Individuals, business men and women, warlords/civil war combatants	Mainly Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire	In Europe and North America

Source: UNODC (Geneva) document on Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa, New York, 2005 and research on cross-border crime in West Africa.

Drug Trafficking

Drug trafficking involves illegal selling drugs and drug paraphernalia, whether it is a local exchange between a user and a dealer or a major international operation. Drug trafficking is a problem that affects every nation in the world and exist on many levels. It has also been described as the commercial exchange of drugs and drug paraphernalia which may include any equipment used to manufacture illegal drugs or use of them (Ering, 2011).

Smuggling

The Nigeria's land borders are prone to crime of different shades and this sparks the themes of frontier of lawlessness, insurgence, illegal trade and rebellion against government policies. How surprising with the various security operatives around the border area with around 19 check point mounted by the Nigerian Customs, Immigration, NDLEA and the Police, the rate of border crime has not reduced. The concept smuggling has been a major issue facing security operatives across the border areas in Nigeria and West Africa as a whole. West Africa is under attack from international criminal networks that are using the sub-region as a key global hub for the distribution, wholesale, and increasing production of illicit drugs (Brown, 2013).

Human Trafficking

The trafficking of children for the purpose of domestic service, prostitution and other forms of exploitative labour is a widespread phenomenon in Nigeria. In the view of the clandestine nature of trafficking, accurate and reliable figures are hard to get (United Nations Children's Fund, 2007). It was the case beginning from the mid 1980's that Nigeria experienced increased incidence of human trafficking especially women and children (Agbu, 2008). These trafficked persons are at risk of involving in domestic and forced labour, prostitution, entertainment, pornography, armed conflict and sometimes ritual killing (United Nations Children's Fund, 2007).

Advanced Fee Fraud (419)/Money Laundering

Due to money laundering the worsening economic crisis that reached the beginning of a climax in the 1980s, '419' takes its name from Nigeria's criminal code on fraud. It is difficult to ascribe a specific stereotype mode of operation to the dozens of small groups and independent operators involved in the 'business' that has expanded into internet scam, as their activities do not only take a variety of guises ranging from "seemingly legitimate business solicitations" to "illicit proposition for collusion in money-laundering" (Garuba, 2010, p.4). Criminals often take advantage of the advanced internet and telephone/fax facilities as a cheaper means of communication to rob targeted and unsuspecting victims of their assets and resources (Addo, 2006).

Trafficking and Proliferation of Arms and Weapons

Small arms and light weapons proliferation in Nigeria is due not only to its strained economic and social situation, but also to the high rate of trafficking and smuggling of SALW into the country (Ngboawaji, 2011). The high rate of criminality, the development of secret cults, the emergence of private security and the electoral and political violence demonstrates as well as feed the culture of violence, which is strongly related to SALW. It is worth noting that Nigeria produces SALW. The Defence industries corporation of Nigeria (DICON) is the only legal manufacturer in Nigeria. It produces rifles, pistols, ammunition, but there are mainly used by the Nigeria Police, and do not represent a significant source of proliferation (Agekameh, 2002). Not found in the reference list

Factors Promoting Trans-Border Crimes and Violence in Idiroko-Border of Ogun State

Corruption

Corruption is an endemic problem that affects the prosperity and well-being of nations and a major contributor to poverty (Carr, 2007). Corruption in Nigeria has eaten deep into the blood system of citizens from the top officials to the ordinary citizen. In 2015, top government officials were arrested and prominent among them is National Security Adviser, Sambo Dasuki who was accused of diverting revenue meant for arms purchase in combating the Boko Haram terrorist attack in the Northern part of the country as well as former Comptroller General of Customs. Furthermore, high level elected officials and security personnel were found to be involved in a range of cocaine and heroin trafficking seizures in the late 2000s, indicating that both formal and traditional governance and security systems of many West African countries are vulnerable to the criminal activities of international drug trafficking cartels (Aning & Pokoo, 2014).

Governance failure

Governance failure contributes to trans-border crime and violence in Nigeria. The inability of state actors, agencies and institutions to use public recourses and authorities to ensure the protection of lives and properties as well as delivery of public goods resulting to mounting poverty and unemployment. This has led many to indulge into criminal activities such as piracy, armed robbery kidnapping, militancy which contribute to the demand of arms penetration and circulation (Jacob, Gofwan, Ishaya & Ado, 2019).

The crude nature of Nigeria's politics

The crude nature of Nigerian politics is one of key factor driving the process of trans-border crime and violence in Idiroko border. Politics in Nigeria, especially electoral politics according to him is defined and approached by politicians as a do or die affair, or warfare. The stake in Nigerian politics is incredibly high, making politicians desperate in the struggle to win elective positions. As a result, many of them recruit perpetrators of violence -cultists, gangs and thugs to attain and retain political power (Jacob *et al*, 2019).

Porosity of the borders

While Nigeria's border problem is related to colonial history, its porosity has been exacerbated by the failure of succeeding governments to properly administer these borders. As Onuoha noted, "the high level of insecurity on African borders is largely due to the way they are administered and managed, and less to do with how colonialists drew them" (Onuoha, 2013) No page no included. Despite this spirit of enterprising and promising neighbourliness, the borders linking the two countries are the most problematic because of the activities of internationally reputed criminals engaging in smuggling and trafficking of virtually everything from human trafficking, ammunition, arms, and drugs manufactured goods, agricultural produce, prostitution, and child labour to religious fanaticism, terrorist attacks and insurgency (Adeolu & Fayomi, 2012).

Institutional Framework

Criminals have availed themselves of this initiative of ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of People, Goods and Services to perpetrate their nefarious activities. These have a lot of implication for the security of the sub region. There is no security of lives and properties, weapons are readily available as a result of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. However, in spite of the

positive pronouncement of this protocol, it has its own negative effects. This protocol allows the movement of criminals to move across the border and also engage in cross border activities under the pretext of this protocol. It is important to note that; border has become a safe passage for people without identities as ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement has been abused to mean an entry without valid documents (Akinyemi, 2013).

Effects of Trans-Border Crimes and Violence on Security in Idiroko-Border of Ogun State

Break Down of Rule of Law

Criminal elements contribute to the erosion of the rule of law when they harness public institutions to facilitate their illicit activities. Today, many of these criminals and illicit actors have strong ties with public institutions, creating a culture of impunity. This is particularly problematic in the military, police, border control, and in the justice system. In many instances, the police aid and abet drug traffickers, gangs and criminal insurgencies. In Nigeria, the dimension of these criminal activities has increased. The emergence of smuggling in the Idiroko border, and the spade of drug trafficking have created serious problems of insecurity. This is however done in connivance with security agencies. This situation is scaring to foreign and local investors and impinges seriously on the socioeconomic development of society (Ering, 2011).

Damage to Economic Growth

Money laundering and drug trafficking are twin evil activities with devastating effect on the economy. Specifically, money laundering damages the financial sector institutions that are critical to economic growth; it reduces productivity in the economy's real sector by diverting resources. It also encourages crime and corruption which slow economic growth, and can distort the economy's which is detrimental to long-term economic development. Money laundering and drug trafficking facilitate crime and corruption within developing economies, with dire consequences on sustainable economic growth of societies (Ering, 2011).

Threat to Human lives and Properties

Findings reveals that, lives are been lost on regular basis especially in communities surrounding the border area when there is any gun fight between the security agencies and the criminals. Numerous times, there have been community clashes leading to the death of security agents and also smugglers in these areas. This often escalate into expanded conflict as findings shows that, there have been faceoff between security agents and the communities who always try to protect their people (Mobolaji & Alabi, 2017).

Inflow and Outflows of Contraband Goods that are dangerous to human health

The commonly trafficked drugs include heroine, cannabis, cocaine and synthetic drugs. The drug menace became one of Nigeria's major security challenges right at the dawn of independence with discoveries of cannabis farms in the country, arrests of Nigerian cannabis traffickers abroad, and reports of psychological disorders suspected to be associated with cannabis use. In the early 1980s however the problem of drug trafficking became a major problem following alleged involvement of military personnel in heroin trafficking in Nigeria (Obot, 2004).

Conclusion

When the border fails to perform its required functions as barriers it creates space for different crimes to find their way into the country and disrupt our national security. Criminal organizations and gangs constantly devise new strategies at a rate which law enforcement agencies are not able

to meet up to with addition to globalization and ECOWAS protocols on free movement of anything or person, goods and services, the border has become a line on a map highly abused all round the clock. Trans-border crimes and violence contribute significantly to the destabilization of political, economic and social activities in Nigeria and the ECOWAS sub-region. If there is no sensitization of the security force and improved welfare, border crime will continue to soar and further breakdown the security system of the state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

Firstly, there should be concerted efforts at the sub-regional level between governmental and non-governmental agencies to combat trans-border crimes. Here cooperation and coordination is required through having adequate information, training and knowledge of the nature and trends of cross-border crimes, as well as reorienting and realigning structures to address the transnational organized crime situation in the sub-region.

Secondly, it is important to speed up the establishment of a Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Centre (ECPCJS) recommended in Article 46 of the ECOWAS Conflict Mechanism to serve as focal point for mutual legal assistance. It should also coordinate salient legal matters in individual member states and beyond, especially on matters related to trans-border crime.

Thirdly, there is need to strengthen public private partnerships in the fight against organized crime and corruption in the society. Greater cooperation and co-ordination with nongovernmental groups can serve as a force multiplier in the war against international crime.

Fourthly, there is need to address corruption within government and security agencies in order to avoid complicit acts by government and security officials. The principles of justice, transparency and accountability should be reinforced through policy directives, and remuneration of law enforcement agencies upgraded to reflect comfortable living standards. Lastly, the government must strengthen her national criminal justice systems. This could be done through a co-ordinated and comprehensive response systems based on a number of measures. One is measures that address the conditions conducive to the spread of crime, and through measures that prevent and combats crime.

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