COLLECTIVE SECURITY: Role of ECOWAS in dealing with Regional Terrorism and Coups

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Abstract
The West Africa sub-region of Africa is currently faced with the problem of terrorism and Coups. Most of the world deadliest terror groups like the Boko-Haram, Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabab, ISIS and AQIM have settled in this region. Scholars acclaimed that the growth and spread of these terror groups are directly connected to the situation ravaging the sub-region currently which include as poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment, poor governance, and crises and conflict in the region. Each individual nations of West Africa cannot but cooperate to deal with terrorism in the sub-region because of the share sameness in political, economic, geographic, and cultural structure they possess. Therefore, a unified security force will assist in addressing terrorism in West Africa. ECOWAS stands as a dominant unifying commission in the sub region and their role is vital to dealing with terrorism. This paper looked at collective Security and the role of ECOWAS in dealing with regional terrorism and coups. Conducting an extensive review on relevant literature, the paper revealed that ECOWAS has several combating forces that is currently helping in addressing security challenges in the sub-region and they are strongly involved in counter terrorism. However, ECOWAS involvement does lack member states commitment to the fight against terrorism. The paper recommends that ECOWAS regional responses require a total commitment by the member states to coordinate policies to work together despite varied interests and resources; this they can do through the creation of adequate awareness for a collective security force to address terrorism among member states.
Keywords: Collective Security ECOWAS; Regional terrorism; Coups; ECOMOG; Boko-Haram; Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabab; ISIS; AQIM; Peace-   building
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I.   INTRODUCTION

Globally, the issue of terrorism and coups has become central security challenges to nations and continents with no single one left behind on the menaces of these venomous activities (Ettang, 2011; Ekiyor, 2008; Kelsen, 2001; Pathak, 2017; The Media, 2022). Africa has been seen as a region experiencing arising number of the activities of terrorism and coups with a growing multiple actors of terror networks both between and within terror groups. A handful of the world deadliest terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabab, ISIS and AQIM, to mentioned but few, has been very active in Africa and the Africa Sub-regions (Ettang, 2011; Ekiyor, 2008; Kelsen, 2001; Ipe, Cockayne, & Millar, 2010; Kabia, 2011; Egenuka, 2020;). One may wonder why the sudden growth and spread of these terrorist groups across the Africa region and what are the propelling factors. Several answers linked to the conducive growth of terror activities in Africa in not unconnected to the prevailing political, religious, and socio-economic conditions ravaging the growths and development of Africa such as poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment, poor governance, and crises and conflict in the region (Bolaji, 2010; Aning & Bah, 2009; Afolabi, 2009; Abass, 2004; Olayinka, Abuh, & Salau, 2022).

A single most popular factor for the global spread of terrorism was the eradication of Al-Qaeda from the Islamic State Afghanistan and general Western Asia following the aftermath of the 9\11 attack on the United State of America (Kelsen, 2001; Ipe, Cockayne, & Millar, 2010). Most of these terror groups, after fleeing their

dominant region, occupied weaker regions that lacks a coordinated security and military force (Cabrera, 2012; Downs, 2004). Most especially in Africa, they meant a territory that was all nomenclatures give supports for the growth of insecurity i.e., terrorism and coups (Pathak, 2017; Ghanamma, 2022). Majority of Africa countries have serious issues to fight with. Aside the fear of terror attacks, they are faced with hostage crises and fights between non-state actors and the government with constant threats of coups (Kelsen, 2001; Ipe, Cockayne, & Millar, 2010; The Media, 2022).

Military juntas in Africa has been gaining tremendous power at a time sub-regional stability is fragile. The very same prevailing conditions that scholars highlighted that promote the infiltration of terrorist groups, are responsible for the rising military juntas in the regions. Before, during and after a successful take over, they cite reason related to corruption, underdevelopment and poverty connected to the government of the day (Bolaji, 2010; Aning,&Bah, 2009; Pathak, 2017; The Paradise, 2022). Countries in Africa have not been able to stop terrorism and coups nor enforce a strong counter-terrorist measures due to several manifest and latent reasons. Scholars have decried, as fundamental for Africa Government inability to build a strong fronters against these terror group, the lack of political will and insufficient financial resources (Ipe, Cockayne, & Millar, 2010; Kabia, 2011; The Media, 2022). Constituted Africa Government have been seen not having a strong will power to address terrorism and cry of lacking the financial supports despite the vast deposit of human, minerals and natural resources (Afolabi, 2009; Abass, 2004).

Terrorism is a global problem that must be address with a concerted global cooperate effort. Terrorism in Africa cannot be effectively counter by any country in Africa, it critically needs collective efforts of actors to act in unison. Looking at the menace of terrorism in West Africa, there are many factors highlighting the need for a regional response to these terror and coups (Musa, 2012; Obi, 2006; Pathak, 2017). West Africa countries have a close proximity of borders where they are currently experiencing the spread of small arms and light weapons. These borders are experiencing free movement of goods and services with an increase network of criminal movements across the borders (Olanisakin, 2011; Wilson, 2014, Philip-de-Andrés, 2008; The Media, 2022).

In Africa, at large, there have been efforts to coordinate regional and continental approaches towards address the menace of terrorism. They have devised mechanisms and have adopted measures towards collectively dealing with the threat of terrorism referred to Collective Security. According to Palmer and Perkins "Collective security clearly implies collective measures for dealing with threats to peace". Chadha (2020) asserts that collective security is an international security system where participating nations agree to take joint action against a terror group(s) or nation(s) that attacks any one of them. Michael Joseph Savage, Martin Wright, Immanuel Kant and Woodrow Wilson, who pioneered the concept believes that the security of one nation is the concern of all and the likes to cumulatively respond to the threat and breach of peace (Foreign Policy Association, 2007). That is why in Africa and at the Pan-African Level, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (1999) had a solid framework for counter-terrorism.

The Plan of Action on Prevention and Combating terrorism (2002) also put forward several measures to incorporate international standards for combating terrorism provided by the UNSC Resolution (2001). A right step towards the right direction was the adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy(2006) by the United Nations General Assembly, which Africa countries pledge support for,standing as a unique global instrument to enhance national, regional, and international counter-terrorism efforts (Wright, 2006; United Nations, 2016; Pathak, 2017; Mbofana, 2022). Our focus is on the West Africa Sub-region and its is against this backdrops that is papers take a critical look at the collective security strategies in West Africa, the dynamics of the threats of Terrorism and Coups in West African and the role of Economic Community of West Africa State (ECOWAS) on dealing with the regions terrorism and coups as well as promoting collective security.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
2.1 Concept of Collective Security

The challenges of providing security in the world today has been heightened by increasing rate of globalization, advancement in technology and the terrorism threats. A countless of strategies have been developed to provide security and ensure global peace. One of such strategy is termed collective security. Experts like Cabrera, (2012) and Wright (2006) see collective security as coalition between two or more nations towards building strategies to address insecurity and threats challenging their peace existence. They see collective security as treaty developed between countries from same region that share common interest and common security threats.

The concept of collective security was introduced in 18th century when countries in Europe came together to address their various security issues under same arrangement. Abass (2004) sees collective security arrangement under Europe as a security and peace promotion system encouraging nations to combine resources towards achieving common good and in this collective security, members follow certain agreed norms in order to support each other (Cabrera, 2012). Wright (2006) emphasized that an effective collective security is where

countries believe in the power of collective decision making process and action plan. This idea of collective security was critical in the emergence and development of League of Nations, according to Wright (2006). Kelson, (2001), Downs (2004), Cabrera (2012) all established that collective security uses certain assumption to work, which have also affected it functioning. Firstly, collective security assumes that all country's members possess the capacity to identify their source of their security threat. Secondly collective security assumes that member countries in the security treaty gives their full support and commitment whenever issues arises (Olanisakin, 2011). Thirdly, collective security assumes that member countries have same degree of freedom towards committing resources in fighting security threats and the last assumption is that the combined power of all member states is always higher than that of the threat groups (Olanisakin, 2011; Wilson, 2014, Philip-de-Andrés, 2008; The Media, 2022).

All these four assumptions have been criticized on several ground. Firstly, there may be compromises in the ability of member states to achieve security because they have different military strength. Secondly, member states full commitment may result to inconveniences where one state has immediate internal issue to deal with. Thirdly, committing resources towards addressing collective security threat may be hampered by the individual states constitutional provision for involving in international relations. Lastly, some member states believe that their internal unity is enough to protect them from external security threat, hence may give less commitment to the treaty.

Cabrera (2012) also claims that collective security treaty goes with certain requirements. These includes the willingness to provide combine military supports, having common security interests while eliminating independent or conflicting interests and share same goal for addressing these threats. Experts like Downs (2004) argues that it will be difficult for countries to abandon their national interest to pursue their common interest as a treaty. Critics has considered the concept of collective security is characterized with degree of failure (Cabrera 2012), but they have also argued that conflicting national interests, ideological differences,cultural diversity, and aggressive regimes contribute to the problems ofcollective security (Wright 2006; The Media, 2022).

Despites the criticisms, collective security are beneficial towards safeguarding the peaceful and prosperity of any sovereign nation (Pathak, 2017). Collective security has repeatedly reminisced since the successful relaxing of the conflicts that arose in between the communists and the capitalists during the Cold War, thus prohibiting it from turning into a Hot War. Another major example is of the 9/11 attacks that reaffirmed the advantages of collective security as a system for maintaining good governance and order (Pathak, 2017; Nwoko, 2021).

2.2   ECOWAS Sub-Region

ECOWAS is a subregional body of 15 West African countries that was created on May 28, 1975. The creation followed the signing of the Treaty of Lagos whose mission was to facilitate economic integration in the sub-region. ECOWAS has its secretariat and headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria. The fundamental objectives was to promote co-operation and integration in order to create an economic union in West Africa (ECOWAS 2008; Ipe, Cockayne, & Millar, 2010; Kabia, 2011; Pathak, 2017). Its member states include Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Togo, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Guinea, GuineaBissau, Liberia, Mali, Senegal and Niger (ECOWAS 1981; ECOWAS, 1993; ECOWAS, 1998). The treaty indicatedthat it will be to facilitate accelerated and sustained economic development of its members and the creation of a homogeneous society, leading to the unity of the countries, by the elimination of all types of obstacles to the 151 free movement of goods, capital, and persons (ECOWAS, 1998; Pathak, 2017; Brooks, 2021). The treaty envisaged the region to be a common market with the removal of customs duties and quantitative and administrative restrictions on trade among its members. Its aim, to attain common customs duties and commercial policy toward non-members and free factor mobility among its members in the same fashion, was found within the European Union (ECOWAS 1981; ECOWAS, 1993).

The development of ECOWAS provided the right integration tool for escaping the colonial trade pattern, which the West African states were trapped into. The prospect of ECOWAS providing a meaningful vehicle for the increase of trade, linkage, and economic development among its members does not seem to be strong (Pathak, 2017). Aside trade and regional prosperity, the sub-region was also considered in establishing common security front among its members states (ECOWAS 1981; ECOWAS, 1993; ECOWAS, 1998). These common security front, as we have called it collective security, is responsible for the external threat of terrorism against the region. Hence, this paper discusses the, firstly the dynamics of terrorism and coups in West Africa and thereafter the role of ECOWAS is combating these threats (ECOWAS 1981; ECOWAS, 1998; The Media, 2022; Pathak, 2017).

2.3 West Africa Regional Insecurity: Coups and Terrorism

The region of West Africa has over the years been a fertile ground for crimes such as arms dealings, drugs and human trafficking and other forms of organized crime to strive (Obi, 2009; Nkwi, 2013; Musa, 2012). There have been a growing number of increasing network of criminal groups within and across the member states of ECOWAS sub-region. These criminal groups does not only share weapons but ideology and cooperate on wide range of activities, pointing to the extent terrorism has spread. As we have discussed above, security threats have emerged due to the prevailing political, economic, developmental, and social deficits these countries (Pathak, 2017). The heightened economic marginalization and abject poverty, poor governance structures, high prevalence of crime and banditry, and inefficient security structures, have contributed to an impoverished populace. Criminal groups from bandits to armed groups and militia have evolved (Ettang, 2011; Ekiyor, 2008; Kelsen, 2001; Brooks, 2021).

These criminal groups have been seen working together with and supporting terrorists in the region to further weaken security architecture of each country (Pathak, 2017). These dissatisfied populaces are easily recruited into local terrorist groups in the region of whom are more of impoverished and frustrated children and youths. There are numerous examples of terrorist acts continue to be reported in West Africa. The Rebel group operating in Northern fringe of Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad are said to be linked to similar network in North Africa. Al-Qaeda has sustained their presence in West Africa by using proceeds mining rough diamond to fund their smaller ceil in the region. Let look at the different terrorist groups that have been identified in the West Africa Sub-Region (Ettang, 2011; Ekiyor, 2008Kabia, 2011; Nwoko, 2021).

The Boko Haram

West Africa an witnessed growth in terrorism activities since the emergent of Boko Haram. This terrorist group, with its heinous activities and the escalated capability to attack, seeks greater attention from the world and internationalizing its activities (Ettang, 2011; Ekiyor, 2008; The Media, 2022; Kelsen, 2001). The terrorist group has increased attacks that focused mostly on targets like security-defence apparatus, police agencies, public infrastructure, worship centers, markets, religious leaders, media houses, and average but helpless civilians (Pathak, 2017). Boko Haram has developed an improved capabilityand technological sophistication coupled with enhanced training facilities, attacking using "improvised explosive devices (IEDs), targeted assassinations,suicide bombings and drive-by shootings" (Walker, 2012; Pathak, 2017). For example, the group attacked the United Nations headquarters in Abuja on 26 August 2011, killing 23 people. Group objective has been to Internationalized their activities in West Africa Sub-Region (Mbofana, 2022).

The Ansaru

The growth and emergence of terrorist group has added a new dimension to West Africa's unfolding landscape of terrorism. The word Ansaru was translated to mean "Vanguards for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa". Ansaru, as a terrorist group, has claimed responsibility for various acts of terrorism in Nigeria. They include the November 2012 armed attack on a detention facility in Abuja, the January 2013 ambush of Malibound Nigerian soldiers at Kogi State, the February 2013 kidnapping of seven foreign expatriates in Bauchi State and the 9 March 2013 murder of the seven kidnapped expatriates. The last claim has remains the biggest of its kind since the outbreak and emergent of this violent group in northern Nigeria" (Nkwi, 2013; Pathak, 2017; The Media, 2022).

The Hezbollah and AQAP

The Hezbollah and AQAP expansion and infiltration into West Africa are a major concern for the security of the region. The expansion became obvious with the arrest of two Nigerian citizens for accepting money from AQAP to recruit potential members from Nigeria. The Hezbollah has been raising funds and recruitingpotential members in Ivory Coast,Sierra Leone, Senegal and Gambia. Most of these terror outfits raise funds for their operations by facilitating trans-national organized crimes and trafficking of contrabands (Kelsen, 2001; Ipe, Cockayne, & Millar, 2010).

The MUJAO

The MUJAO is a prominent Islamic extremist group offshooting from Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. They have expanded their outreach and acquired sophisticated weaponry to carry out lethalstrikes in Mali. These group have re-strategized since the intervention of French forces in the Mali crisis in two principal ways. They have retreated into the mountainous region of northern Mali and have adopted the hitherto tactics like the suicide bombings and guerrilla attacks. They have also extended its attacks in the neighbouring countries like Niger claiming responsibilities for the 23 May 2013 twin suicide bombings in Niger" (Kuhne, 2013; Pathak, 2017).

The AQIM

The AQIM are indulged in the kidnapping and murder of Western tourists, aid workers, and soldiers. They also involve in attacks on government establishments, security posts, and foreign diplomatic missions in Mauritania (Olanisakin, 2011; Wilson, 2014; The Media, 2022). They provide fundamental support to Islamic insurgents in Mali; strengthened and emboldened them to mount more vociferous strikes on the people of Mali. The Mali coup of March 2012 dragged the country into instability and chaos that created a power vacuum, which was supported by Islamic groups such as MUJAO, AQIM, and Ansar Dine insurgents controlling about two-thirds of the territory of Mali.

The Islamic State

The Islamic State (IS) terrorists has showed how dangerous and combative they are in Nigeria when they clashed with soldiers from the US and Niger on the border with Mali. The battle that resulted to the loss of the lives of four US and five Nigerian troops. The expanse of ungoverned spaces of West Africa gives this insurgent the strength to target (Olanisakin, 2011; Wilson, 2014, Philip-de-Andrés, 2008). Besides, the large ungoverned space, the sub-region is characterized as one of the poorest Muslim-majority territories in the world, with weak governments and an absence of national identity in states (Pathak, 2017). This terrorist group have capitalized on the deficiency to achieve their aim of bringing back classical Islam turning away from western civilization. They believed westernization adulterated classical Islam and by launching attacks on Western installations, kidnapping of western tourists, bombing on western embassies, and attacking those who stand in their way, they could achieving their objective (Kieh, 2009).

Terrorism has, no doubt, had an immense impact in this Africa sub-region. Terrorist activitieshas led to severe insecurity and political instability; affecting the economic bedrock of West African societies. Looking from the economic context, terrorist activities has discouraged foreign investment and tourism and the misused of fund primarily meant for development. Failed states, religious and ethnicity have heightened terrorism (Pathak, 2017; Brooks, 2021). Political gladiators in West Africa finance and support groups who use terrorist acts to exploit internal conflicts and promote political agendas. A look at the sub-regional intervention towards addressing terrorism is what this paper is aimed at. Specifically, the role of ECOWAS in dealing with terrorism in the area of monitoring of borders and information and intelligence sharing, remains inadequate across the West African continent.

2.4   Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this paper is the Theory of Collective Security. Theory of Collective security is a liberal theory of international relations that emphasizes avenues of cooperation and mutual obligation. The theory posit that states enter multilateral agreement to refrain from one another attack and for economic relations within an overarching organization they owe allegiance. The theory, pledges that international or regional organization should create a more stable commitment than a large, confusing set of bilateral treaties. In collective security arrangements, member states will not attack each other, and that they will rise in defense of a member state thus attacked. According to Claude (1956):

> *"The twentieth-century hope that international organizations might serve to prevent war, or , failing that, to defend states subjected to armed attack in defiance of organized efforts to maintain the peace, has been epitomized in the concept of collective security. . . ."*

Sovereign nations that is eager to maintain the status quo, willingly cooperate, accept a degree of vulnerability, smaller states accede to the interests of the chief contributing nations organizing the collective security. This theory claimed that collective security is achieved by setting up an international cooperative organization, under the auspices of international law giving rise to international collective governance but limited in scope and effectiveness. These collective security organization becomes an arena for diplomacy, balance of power and exercise of soft power.

The concept of "Collective Security" was forwarded by Michael Joseph Savage, Martin Wight, Immanuel Kant, and Woodrow Wilson. They deemed to apply the concept in security in a broad manner, to avoid grouping powers into opposing camps, and refusing to draw dividing lines that would leave anyone out.

Basic Assumptions

Organski (1960, in Claude,1962) pointed out lists of five basic assumptions of the theory of collective security. He claimed that in an armed conflict,

    i.   Member nation-states will be able to agree on the aggressor nation.
    ii.   Member nation-states are to be committed equally to contain and constrain the aggression, irrespective of its source or origin.

iii.   Member nation-states should have identical freedom of action to join in proceedings against the aggressor.
iv.   Cumulative power of the cooperating members of the alliance for collective security drives adequate and sufficient to overpower the might of the aggressor.
v.   The aggressor nation will always modify its policies in the light of the threat posed by the collective might of the nations or if unwilling to do so, will be defeated.

Prerequisites
Also, Morgenthau (1948 in Claude,1962) highlighted three prerequisites for collective security to be successful in conflict resolution.
i.   Collective security system must assemble military force strength higher than that of the aggressor and deterring the aggressor(s) from changing the world order which is currently defended by the collective security system.
ii.   Nations, whose combined strength is currently use for deterrence must have identical beliefs on security of the world order that the collective is defending.
iii.   Nations must possess the willingness to subordinate their conflicting interests to common good, defined in terms of the common defence of all member-states.

Ever since the fall out of the League of Nations and after the second world war, nations began to collectively devise means to protect their regions and territories. Many Regional and International Bodies emerged such as the United Nations, the African Union, the Europe Union. The closely identified mandate was to protect common share interest against external aggressors and to growth socio-economically. The ideology driven collective security is what has also propelled the West Africa Sub-region to form the Economic Community of West Africa State (ECOWAS).

2.5 The Role of ECOWAS in Addressing Regional Terrorism
Terrorism has uncountable implications for both security, political and economic development of nations and the region. As a region in Africa, it has become of increased concern for ECOWAS to respond to terrorism. ECOWAS' premise for response to counter terrorism is based on the idea of collective security, as discussed earlier, where threats confronting nation states cannot be solved by states alone but requires synergy of capacity and strategy (ECOWAS, 2008).
Since May 1975 when ECOWAS was created, the primary focus of the treatyhas shifted from trade and cooperation to an extended mandate of securing the nation states (Pathak, 2017). Efforts have been made to achieved these with regards to dealing with terrorism in the region.For example, Article 3 of ECOWAS' Protocol for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security outlines the combating of international terrorism as an objective of the regional body and a wide range of steps taken in ECOWAS' to contribute towards regional peace and security. These include the following deployments;
i.   The ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in West Africa,
ii.   The Defence Chiefs of member states,
iii.   The ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF), and;
iv.   The Moratorium against the Importation and Exportation of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Other efforts include the 2008 Conflict Prevention Framework to support sub-regional responses to general insecurity (ECOWAS, 2008).
There has been various joint initiatives between ECOWAS member states and the United State. These joint initiatives was created to counter terrorism. They include;
i.   The Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI) in countries like Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria.
ii.   ECOWAS and the Sahelian and Saharan belts of West Africa
Other partnering with ECOWAS includes'
i.   The Security Council's Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED),
ii.   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC),
iii.   the African Union (AU),
iv.   the European Union (EU), and
v.   the United States

These partners have all provided technical and other counter terrorism capacity-building assistance to a number of ECOWAS countries in the sub-region. In exploring these assistance rendered by these partners at the regional level, ECOWAS has tried to find opportunities for engagement and collaboration on a wide range of counter terrorism initiatives, such as harmonisation of policies, capacity-building, technical assistance and

information sharing among member states. A look at each of these initiatives will provide a clearer picture of the role of ECOWAS in dealing with Terrorism and how they have responded to it (Pathak, 2017; ECOWAS, 2008).

ECOWAS Monitoring Group

ECOWAS Monitoring Group, called ECOMOG, is an arrangement created for specific needs. ECOMOG activities and functions include:

  i. Observation of conflict situation and peace monitoring delegation,
  ii. Support missions for humanitarian activities,
  iii. Peacekeeping and peace restoration missions,
  iv. Agencies to supervise the enforcement of sanctions,
  v. Preventive deployment of forces,
  vi. Peace-building activities, efforts and initiatives for disarmament and demobilization of warring parties,
  vii. Regional policing undertakings to deals with fraud,
  viii.   Trafficking and organized crime

The activities of ECOMOG are determined from time to time by Mediation and Security Council. ECOMOG protocol enumerates the various conditions required for the enforcement of their mechanism. The protocol makes provisions for implementing the mechanism in case of armed rebellion and violent conflict or threat to the territorial integrity of the member state or any other condition that may be decided by the Mediation and Security Council (Obi, 2006; Pathak, 2017). Then, who are these Mediation and Security Council?

Mediation and Security Council

The Mediation and Security Council (MSC) of West Africa responsibility is to formulate and implement policies on peacekeeping and security; prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts in the region. The council authorizes all interventions through a legal action. The council operate a protocol and according to the protocol, the secretary take action to commission the fact-finding missions, deliberate, resolve, and mediate among the parties to the conflict. The secretary appoints members of the council; recruit reconciliation teams and fact-finding commissions based on circumstantial evaluation (ECOWAS, 2008; Pathak, 2017).

ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework

The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework was an adopted resolution in 2008 to clarify the strategy for successful implementation of 1999 and 2001 protocols. The documents of the ECPF declares that ECOWAS has set up several promising organs for conflict prevention, including the Early Warning System, the Council of the Wise, the Mediation and Security Council and Special Mediators. The framework of ECPF was based on a comprehensive operational conflict prevention and peace-building strategy enabling ECOWAS system and nation states draw on human and financial resources, including civil society and the private sector, international levels to creatively transform conflicts (Ekiyor, 2008; Pathak, 2017; ECOWAS, 2008; Brooks, 2021). ECPF comprehensively accommodated the different components of ECOWAS protocols including preventive diplomacy, democratic governance, rule of law, human rights, early warning system, etc. The implementation of the mechanism has lacked a strategic approach characterized by under-utilization, weak internal coordination and misdirection of existing human resources and the deployment of limited instruments (ECOWAS, 2008).

ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network

The ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) is an observatory and monitoring network in West Africa to detect early enough potential crisis and prevent conflict. ECOWARN is said to monitors various security threats indicators such as pandemics, natural disasters, and social factors such as social unrest and armed conflict (Obi, 2006). When there are such indicators, they alert the ECOWAS Commission for any emerging security threats the region faces. Scholars have pointed out that there are disconnect between early warning and effective early response. In an attempt to b bridge this gap, ECOWAS early warning directorate established the National Early Warning and Response Mechanism (NEWRM) to increase the ownership of member states and their political will and ability to engage in early response.

West African Civil Society Forum

The West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) is a platform that aggregates civil society organizations (CSOs) across the 15 states of West Africa (The Paradise, 2022). The main function is to channel contributions of civil society towards the implementation of regional integration agenda of the ECOWAS. Civil society organizations have become inevitable; playing an active role in conflict management increasingly (ECOWAS, 2008; Pathak, 2017; Obi, 2006).

ECOWAS Standby Force

ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) is at the forefront of ECOWAS regional security integration and they have achieved monumental milestone since their formation. The ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) is a multidisciplinary force that is composed of military, police, and civilian personnel from the ECOWAS nation states. They provide personnel for regional and continental peace and security operations and humanitarian support missions for the region (Cilliers, 2008; Pathak, 2017).

2.6   ECOWAS and its Response Security Challenges in West Africa

The continuous state collapses, coups and the several violent conflicts in West Africa received increasing responses over the years from ECOWAS most especially in conditions of international disengagement for the conflict. ECOWAS stood-by several states in the region and undertook military interventions in Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Mali, Liberia, Gambia and Guinea Bissau. These intervention included peace enforcement, peace building and safeguarding civilians. ECOWAS was critically involved in the armed insurgency of Charles Taylor of Liberia and the subsequent civil war that took place, at a time when there was no designed institution to respond to conflict of such. ECOWAS was forced to develop an adhoc team to control the situation in Liberia. ECOMOG was said to intervene in the conflict in Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau to restore peace and stability to the states in 1998. ECOMOG was also deployed as a peace keeping force in Ivory Coast in 2002 and the second time in Liberia in 2003. The military intervention of ECOMOG in these states significantly contributed to the reestablishment of West Africa Peace (Pathak, 2017; Bolaji, 2010; The Paradise, 2022). ECOWAS has also intervene in addressing humanitarian crises in West Africa, states collapses and spread of contagion conflicts. ECOWAS has shown their ability to revamp states thereby connecting socio-economic development of the states to security for regional integration. ECOWAS has successfully demonstrated its competence and willingness to work in cooperation with all stakeholders whether within and outside the region such as multilateral or global like AU, EU, and the UN (ECOWAS, 2008; Obi, 2006; Pathak, 2017).

An analysis of ECOWAS response to security challenges in West Africa in the last 5 quarters depict that ECOWAS conflict management tools is not too strong for conflict prevention but still evolving. The ECOWAS Standby force lack the financial strength to muscle their logistic capability in conditions of large-scale conflicts. For instance, the ECOWAS depot in Sierra Leone suffers from member states not deploying their troops to the depot. This is because most of the member state faces internal security threats and they complain of not having enough troops to tackle their own internal security problems. Example is the case of Guinea Bissau, where ECOWAS fared quite abysmally with its small peacekeeping mission in the country, ECOMIB. These support the criticisms raised by Abass, (2004) and Cabrera, (2012) on the effective implementation of collective security at any regional level. However, ECOWAS seems to have made significant development in partnership with agencies and multi-nationals on conflict management and prevention. For instance the European Union have assisted ECOWAS with substantial finance for the effective implementation of their Conflict Prevention Framework and institutional capacity building (Bolaji, 2010; The Paradise, 2022).

Furthermore, states support is the only guarantee that these several interventions will work effectively in the ECOWAS agenda. It is exigent that the region must take responsibility and ownership of their security. The continuous efforts for the institutionalization of peace and security mechanisms by ECOWAS and the promotion of good governance, political freedom, and economic development in the region are some significant steps in the right direction. ECOWAS is now than ever more focused on issues and threats of terrorism, piracy, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime affecting the region. On counter terrorism, ECOWAS has helped West Africa countries to resist terror activities in the region by playing a significant roles in conflict prevention, management, and resolution, peacekeeping, and security (Bolaji, 2010). Article 3 of the 1999 security mechanism emphasize measures directed at dealing with the threats of terrorism even before the official declaration of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) (Pathak, 2017; Bolaji, 2010; Olayinka, Abuh, & Salau, 2022). Most members states of ECOWAS are signatories to the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism of the African Union (AU). ECOWAS adopted the political declaration and common position against Terrorism that provided regional counter-terrorism strategy and implementation plans in fighting terrorism by states.

The ECOWAS commission identified "three pillars of counter-terrorism:

The first is to prevent terrorism before it occurs based on the concept of Detect, Intercept and Deter (DID) (Bolaji, 2010). The second is to ensure timely and effective responses to terrorist acts. This is anchored on military and nonmilitary approaches as well as the criminal justice system. The third is to restore society and reassert the authority of the state after terrorist attacks. This is a regional based strategy with international cooperation including mutual legal assistance to meet the shortfalls and disparities in states' capabilities. All these strategic pillars for counter-terrorism requires cooperation in the areas of intelligence, investigation, prosecution (African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, 2011; Pathak, 2017).

ECOWAS has worked to control terror activities in West Africa specifically those of Boko Haram. ECOWAS set up an on-the-spot commission called the Abuja Commission after the 2014 Boko Haram terrorist attack in a college in Nigeria that resulted to the death of 50 innocent students. The commission also reaffirmed its commitment and determination to collaborate with all member states and other partners in the struggle to make the region terror-free and to promote the necessary environment for peace and security towards realizing the overarching goal of regional integration and development thereby keeping states within the brackets of political stability. They met in several occasions where they strongly condemned terrorist aggression perpetuated against member states and member states were directed to always participate in all efforts to halt terrorism in the region (Aning,& Bah, 2009; Bolaji, 2010; Pathak, 2017; Olayinka, Abuh, & Salau, 2022).

2.7 Promoting Regional Collective Security in the ECOWAS sub-region

On a positive note, ECOWAS has portrayed itself as one of the strongest sub-regional bodies on the African continent that has the potential to play a leading role in the advancement of the United Nations global counter-terrorism strategy for West Africa (Pathak, 2017; Egenuka, 2020). In order to promote ECOWAS regional security, It is pertinent that the two-pronged approaches be utilised as regional and national responses to support and supplement the fight against terrorism (Obi, 2006; Olanisakin, 2011). These two approaches can't work separately, as resources needed to support and complement is limited. ECOWAS can create stronger mechanism for pooling of resources, sharing information for member states.

It is crucial that grassroots engagement of actors and communities be considered at all levels that are more vulnerable to terrorist groups or those likely to involved in terrorist acts, because terrorism requires a regional response (Olanisakin, 2011; Kabia, 2011; Pathak, 2017; Olayinka, Abuh, & Salau, 2022; Egenuka, 2020). Very important is the fact that regional and grassroots initiatives should be linked to ensure ground information is utilised towards developing stronger counter terrorism measures. A regional response to counter terrorism is likely to requires response for developmental account through proper tracking and solid technological mechanisms. ECOWAS should follow new technological trends to develop her regional response.

III. CONCLUSION

In Africa, terrorism brought opened up political, security, economic, and developmental deficits of nation-states. And these terror activities can only have an adequate regional response to address these underlying factors instigating and fuelingit, especially within the West Africa. Addressing terrorism require a coordinated, sustained, and coherent sub-regional response to curb and inhibit the impact in West Africa sub-region. In reality, regional intervention to dealing with terrorism remains rather weak. Cross-border counter terrorism response, like the information and intelligence sharing and the monitoring of borders are inadequate in the sub-region, considering the transnational form of terrorism. In dealing with terror activities, regional responses must evolve to tackle-combat this menace.

Despite the progress made by ECOWAS in securing the sub-region, much remains to be done regarding ECOWAS' involvement in counter terrorism efforts. For a regional action plan to address terrorism to be implemented, priority ECOWAS is to adopt a sub-regional strategy and plan of action that support counter terrorism efforts. Initiatives like the West African Police Chiefs Committees (WAPCCO), that facilitates the information exchange among member states on terrorist and international criminal activity, should be duplicated within the military, government ministries and border control. This will allow for a holistic response to terrorism towards the regional defence and security capacities.

ECOWAS regional responses require a total commitment by the member states to coordinate policies to work together despite varied interests and resources. Effective collaboration is required by individual member states to give up some aspects of their independence toward contributing to the wider goals of collective security. Because countries in the ECOWAS region are less likely to put into place legislations to combat terrorism; the commission role in fighting terrorism in the sub-region will be halted. Therefore, ECOWAS' need to create awareness and engage with member states to activate stronger legislations to ensure compliance is achieved.

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