

PERCEPTION STUDY ON THE ROLES OF CIVILIAN JOINT TASK FORCE (CJTF) IN COMBATING INSURGENCY IN MAIDUGURI METROPOLITAN COUNCIL (MMC) BORNO STATE, NIGERIA



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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in combating insurgency in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Borno State, Nigeria. The paper ascertains perception of people on the roles of CJTF in identifying and apprehending Boko Haram insurgents in Maiduguri. The paper adopted Resistance Theory as a theoretical guide. Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources, while the method of data collection was survey method through the instruments of questionnaire, Key Informant Interview and Focus Group Discussion. Descriptive statistical tool was used as a method of data analysis. The finding of this study reveals that the activities of CJTF has assisted in identifying, apprehending and dislodgement of Boko Haram members and organized criminal groups in Maiduguri. Furthermore, this study is of the view that CJTF had played significant roles toward the successes recorded in the fight against insurgency. The paper recommended that, Borno State government should enrol all registered CJTF members to the Regular Government Security Agencies like military, police, or the paramilitary agencies to avoid deviations after the end of insurgents activities in the state. The state government should increase CJTF allowances and ensure that they work under strict supervision of government agencies to prevent abuse of power.

Keywords: *Perception, Civilian Joint Task Force, Insurgency, Boko Haram and Military Joint Task Force*

Introduction

Conflict is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria; the country had experienced different forms of crisis ranging from political, religious, and ethnic conflict. The most severe security challenges that are well known are the civil war (Biafra) of the 1960s, the Maitatsine crisis of the 1980s, the continues ethno-religious conflict in some states like Plateau, Taraba and Kaduna State. In addition there were frequent increase in clashes between Fulani herdsmen/farmers, where as the Boko Haram insurgency in the north-eastern region of Nigeria began in 2009. Although, the responsibility to protect the lives and properties of the citizens lies in the hands of the government through the security architecture. Furthermore, in the process of combating crimes in the society, government engage a combined force of all security personnel under the umbrella of Joint Task Force (JTF). The believe is that, their effort alone cannot achieve the said goal in some circumstances, it is on this note that, the issue of involving the community members in fighting Boko Haram insurgents becomes necessary.

Groups like the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) have existed in many states in the past and present, both in the rural and urban settings for instance, the Oduduwa People's Congress (OPC) in the south-west and the Bakassi Boys (BB) in the south-east. The belief is that most of Nigerian's counter terrorism efforts are reactive without the joint effort with CJTF strategies in the aspect of intelligence gathering since they possess vast knowledge of the environment. The focus of Nigerian government special military Joint Task Force (JTF) on military control, and the hard approach, may have failed and can be argued to have contributed to the escalation of Boko Haram terrorism without the joint effort with the CJTF (Umara & Ikyase, 2018).

Major General Olukolade, a one time Nigerian Army Information Officer on Boko Haram matters said, at the initial stage of the battle against Boko Haram group, the government's special military JTF in the country did not feel the need to work closely with the civilian security force (civilian JTF) which is in place, but seldom considered as a part of the security effort, when matters of safety and security are topical issues in the north-east region of the country. In other words, the government's special military JTF thought it makes little contribution to crime intelligence or to efforts to predict and forestall terror acts. Considering the ongoing challenges posed by Boko Haram terrorism group in the north-east region of Nigeria, it is important that alternative methods be considered in the north-east region of Nigeria. One such method is CJTF (Bamidele, 2016).

At the inception of Boko Haram crisis in Maiduguri, the security

personnel were considered the main targets and labeled *tagut* (those who reject faith). During the period, the crisis has little effect on the civilians owing to the reasons they were not their target at the emergence of the group. However, as the insurgent activities continue spreading and the insurgent activities expanded their targets leading to executions of not only security personnel's but also the youths, community leaders, religious leaders and anybody relating with security agencies whether in terms of business or friendship which they believe are agents who reveal the secret of their activities to the security agents, so the insurgents labelled such people as *munaful* meaning (Hypocrites) and their penalty for the insurgence is death.

More worrisome, is that youth are not safe from the security personnels either, as some of the arrested suspects are innocent people because of the strategies security personnel's use in combating the crisis which includes house search, arrest of suspected persons, particularly youths and sporadic gun shot in site where explosion occurred in Maiduguri. Besides this takes several months or years before the security complete their investigation to certify whether the arrested persons are innocent or guilty. In this processes so many youths have lost their lives in the hands of security agents and in the hands of Boko Haram insurgents which forces the youth to assist in ensuring security of lives and properties by forming a group called the *Yan Gora or Duri Kaah* in Hausa and Kanuri languages respectively. This later metamorphosed to what is now called the civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). Similarly, the Center for Civilians in Conflict (2018) describe the emergence of yan gora as "a child of circumstance" or a "child of necessity," required to save the community. Maiduguri at that time was bubbling with Boko Haram crisis, so a lot of people were leaving the state because of fear and there were curfews from 4 pm to 6am in the morning which restricted movement from time to time base on the security situation. Therefore people were afraid of going to school and everyone got fed up and the bravest among the youth in Maiduguri initially took it up. This youths tolerated years of hostility of their population and intrusion of their territories by the insurgents. Fed-up, they decided to join the anti-terror war voluntarily to liberate their communities from the hands of Boko Haram, Ibekwe as cited by (David,2018).

Consequently the contributions of the brave and courageous youth in Maiduguri, Borno State North-eastern Nigeria in fighting insurgency led to the establishment of this *Yan gora* in many parts of Borno and other parts of the North-eastern Nigeria, This has encourages the intervention of Government to provide formal training and enrolled some of them into government payroll by the Borno state Government so as to motivate them in supporting security

personnel's in fight against Boko Haram. It is against this background that this study examines the perception of the people of Maiduguri on the roles of the CJTF in identifying and apprehending Boko Haram insurgents in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council.

Statements of the Problem

Braveness of some youths due to the frequent harassment by Boko Haram insurgents and security personnel's in the process of apprehending the faceless insurgents who are mostly youths from the community forces the youths to confront and fight the insurgents using local weapons like logs which is referred to as *gorain* Hausa language which led to labelling them as *yan-gora* which was later honoured by the state as Civilian Joint Task Force after receiving a period of training to assist security personnel's in identifying the Boko Haram members in their communities.

In addition youths are the prime suspects because of their age and their knowledge of the happenings in their communities and their relationship with friends who happens to be members of the sect. Although several studies have been conducted in relations to the effect of the activities of insurgents and the effort of CJTF in combating Boko Haram crisis as in Eze and James (2016) Nigeria Security Challenges and the Role of Non-Conventional Security Outfit in the War against Terrorism: A Study of The Civilian Joint Task Force (JTF) on the war Against Boko Haram in North East of Nigeria, Agbiboa (2015), Resistance to Boko Haram: Civilian Joint Task Forces in North-Eastern Nigeria, Raji and Ahmed(2015) Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and Counter Insurgency Operation in Borno State, Nigeria and David (2008), The Intervention of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) In the War against Boko Haram in North East Nigeria (A Theoretical Approach).

However none of these studies have specified their attentions toward looking at the roles of CJTF in identifying and apprehending Boko Haram insurgents in Maiduguri town.

It is on this note that this paper examines the role of civilian joint task force in combating insurgency in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Borno State, Nigeria by tracing the antecedents of the CJTF and strategies in identifying and apprehending insurgents.

Literature Review

Civilian Joint Task Force

Concept of Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) has been viewed from different dimensions by different scholars and theorists. Ahmed and Raji

(2015) defined CJTF as volunteer group organized to suppress and punish the criminals when the process of law appears inadequate. While David (2018) opines that, the CJTF are mainly group of young idle, angered and courageous men drawn from different parts of the North-eastern region with diverse background ranging from University graduates, hunters, hawkers, traders and street gangs who share common interest, goals, mission and motivation for the freedom of their country and communities from the fangs of Boko Haram Terrorists (BHTs) and Provoked, they willingly decided to enlist into the anti-terror war to save their communities. The definition given by Ahmed and Raji provide a clue about Civilian Joint Task Force, but it does not inexact appropriate academic discourse on their recruitment. Within the context of this paper CJTF is a group of unarmed youth that protect their communities from insurgent attacks and counter attacks.

Insurgency

There are divergent views regarding conceptualizing insurgency. Ajayi (2011) sees insurgency as a protracted political, military activity directed towards completely or partly scheming the resources of country through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations. According to him, this include: guerrilla warfare, terrorism and political mobilization. It is a violent anti- government activity that seeks to take over the power of a sovereign state through terrorism, guerrilla attacks, propaganda in order to achieve the goal of the perpetrators. According to Stillman (2016) insurgency is an instrument designed for the attainment of some political, religious, or ideological goals. Paust (2015) views insurgency as a purposive use of violent behaviours or the threats of violent by the precipitators against an instrumental target in order to communicate to a primary target of future violence so as to coerce the primary target into behaviours or attitudes through intense fear or anxiety in connection with a demanded power outcome.

Metz (2012) sees Insurgency as a strategies used by groups which cannot realize their political aims through conventional means of seizure of power. These strategies used are characterized by continued, asymmetric violence, ambiguities and the use of complex terrain such as jungles, mountains, urban areas, and psychological warfare and political Mobilizations which are designed to protect the insurgents and eventually affect the balance of power in their favour. Gompert and Gordon (2008) viewed insurgency as an instrument which seeks to conquer an existing order with one that is commensurate with their political, economic, ideological or religious goals. This implies that insurgency is activities of a faceless group intended to take

over power from an existing government by replacing it with political, economic, ideological and religious inclinations. Be that it may, the views of Metz is in line with the opinions of Gompert and Gordon which perceived insurgency as a strategies or instruments of conquering power with the aim of achieving their ideological goals. In whatever way it is described, insurgency acts and wreaks havoc on people, properties and means of livelihood.

Emergence of Civilian Joint Task Force in Maiduguri

The emergence of CJTF as a community security group for combating future terrorism in Nigeria and and post Boko Haram insurgents was traced to the inability of hard approach of military containment which has failed to tackle global crimes, such as the emergence of transnational organized crime (Bamidele, 2016).Eze and James (2016) said that, the accidental but courageous beginning of the Civilian JTF could be traced to 2013, when Lawal Jafar, a youth in Hausari ward of Maiduguri, the Borno state capital, saw an armed Boko Haram member and decided to accost him. The scene created by this singular but courageous act of Lawal Jafar attracted other youth who promptly came out and assisted Jafar and apprehend the insurgent. This incredible feat of Jafar and the few youth with him sent a joyful and courageous message to many youths within Maiduguri and its environs, a development which saw hundreds of youth volunteers joined the group in the fight against insurgency. Eze And James opined that CJTF was formed as a result of the courage of lawan who fought the Boko Haram member and gave the youths confidence to confront the sect, this was the first genesis of the emergence of the Yan gora which later metamorphosed to CJTF.

Strategies of CJTF in Identifying and Apprehending Boko Haram Insurgents in Maiduguri

The impact of the strategies of CJTF in identifying and apprehending Boko Haram Insurgents is increasing in Maiduguri because of its numerical advantage and local knowledge. Boko Haram was driven by the CJTF out of Maiduguri by identifying members, house by house(Agbiboa2015). According to the Center for Civilians in Conflict (2018), collecting and sharing information by CJTF and *yan gora* were seen as being proactive in investigating reports received from community members. Most often, CJTF are the first to see something or go to the place to see what is going on there, thus, relaying the information back to the community as well as the security agencies. The CJTF also passes information about the security situation, including current risks, in a timely fashion to community members as well as

share ways to improve security awareness and safeguard the locality via the use of loudspeakers, by speaking at public gatherings alongside security agencies and community leaders (Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2018).

Saheed and Onuoha (2019) posited that Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) like CJTF and *Yan gora* have become key actors in the provision of security and safety in communities in Africa. The formation of the CJTF in Borno State has helped to curtail military attacks on innocent civilians and also assisted in decimating Boko Haram. Saheed and Onuoha, however, argued that the activities of the group (CJTF) since its creation in 2013 have been accompanied with human rights abuses of residents, use of position as members of CJTF to witch hunt opponents, serving as informants to Boko Haram and subject to elites manipulation especially politicians and military.

On the whole, CJTF members contrary to the notion by Saheed and Onuoha, operate a number of checkpoints in Maiduguri and have been resourceful in the conduct of stop and search operations. As a result, expose themselves to attacks by Boko Haram. In the same way, Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) sees the *CJTF* are the 'eyes and ears of the security forces, as often the first responders to danger, while armed with only small weapons, helped to identify Boko Haram members in their local communities (Agbibo, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Resistance Theory

This paper reviewed and adopted resistance theory as a theoretical guide for this paper. The theory of resistance was developed in sixteenth-century by a French political theorist. Theodore de bèze (1519–1605). The development of the theory of resistance in the early modern period was complex and was based in large part on the political, philosophical, and legal arguments of French authors during the religious wars in the sixteenth century. The Catholics in 1576 justified arming themselves against the king's will with the argument that they were taking arms not against the authority of the king, but against unconventional and evil counsellors of the king and they claimed to be doing this in defence of themselves, property, their king, and their religion. So people use violence in self-defence to resist the ruler's authority when he violated the contractual relationship on which he based his power. The youth form the *yan gora* and CJTF to resist the effect of Boko Haram activities and military harassment in the exercise of their duties by participating in the fight against insurgency. This theory is of the view that when people are push to the

wall they tend to resist by retaliating and this is what exactly happen in Maiduguri which led to the formation of *Yan Gora* and CJTF.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council of Borno State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research method. Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source includes the responses from the members of CJTF, Religious leaders, Community leaders, elders and youths in Maiduguri via the use of questionnaires, Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus group discussions (FGDs). A total of 13 Key Informants were interviewed comprising of 2, religious leaders from Islam and Christianity, 5 youths, 2 CJTF, 2 *Yan Gora*, elderly male and female. Five FGDs were conducted for each group comprising 9 persons from Yan Gora, 9, CJTF, 9, Elderly Men, 9, Elderly Women and 9, youths in Maiduguri, while 342 questionnaires were administered to the respondents and 325 retrieved and returned valid which were used for the analysis while 17 questionnaires were misplaced by some respondents. A sample size of 400 was drawn from a population of 540,016 (Census, 2006) using Taro Yamani's formula.

The sample size of the study was obtained through Yamani's formula (1967).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample size, N = Target population and (e) = Level of significant or Alpha square

$$n = \frac{540,016}{1,351} = 399.7 \quad n = 400$$

Convenience Sampling Technique was adopted in selecting respondents for the study. Data were analyzed using frequency distribution table and simple percentages.

Table 1 Factors that lead to the emergence of CJTF in Maiduguri

| Respondent Views | SA% | A% | UD% | D% | SD% | TOTAL |
|---|----------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| frequent attacks on youths and their communities members by Boko Haram | 86 (26%) | 204 (63%) | 3 (1%) | 23 (7%) | 9 (3%) | 325 (100%) |
| frequent arrest and torture by security agents on Maiduguri citizens through regular patrols. | 173 (53.2%) | 117 (36%) | 0 (0%) | 11 (3.3%) | 24 (7.3%) | 325 (100%) |
| braveness of the first <i>Yan Gora</i> in Maiduguri. | 19 (6%) | 162 (50%) | 20 (6%) | 51 (16%) | 73 (22%) | 325 (100%) |

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 1 revealed that 26% of the respondents strongly agreed that CJTF emerged as a result of frequent attacks on youths by Boko Haram insurgents, 63% agreed that CJTF emerged as a result of frequent attacks on youths by Boko Haram insurgents, while 7% disagreed that CJTF emerged as a result of frequent attacks on youths by Boko Haram and 3% strongly disagreed that CJTF emerged as a result of frequent attacks on youths by Boko Haram. Based on this majority views the study revealed that CJTF surfaced as a result of the frequent attacks and incessant killings on the citizens by the insurgents in Maiduguri Metropolitan council.

Similarly 53.2% of the respondent strongly agreed that CJTF emerged as a result of frequent arrest and torture inflicted on people by security agents through regular patrols. 36% of the respondents also agreed that CJTF emerged as a result of frequent arrest and torture inflicted on people by security agents through regular patrols, While 3.3% of the respondents disagree that CJTF emerged as a result of frequent arrest and torture inflicted on people by security agents through regular patrols. and 7.3% strongly disagreed that CJTF emerged as a result of frequent arrest and torture inflicted on people by security agents through regular patrols. This indicated that the techniques employed by military in their operations also encouraged the emergence of the CJTF.

In addition 6% of the respondents strongly agree that CJTF emerge because of the braveness of the first *Yan Gora* in Maiduguri, 50% of the respondents also agreed that CJTF emerged because of the braveness of the

first *Yan Gora* in Maiduguri while 16% of the respondents disagreed that CJTF emerged because of the braveness of the first *Yan Gora* in Maiduguri and 22% of the respondents strongly disagreed that CJTF emerge because of the braveness of the first *Yan Gora* in Maiduguri. This studies shows that CJTF emerge due to the pains that was inflicted on the people by the sect, arrest and torture by the military and the braveness of the first people who confronted Boko Harams with an ordinary logs.

Table 2 Contributions of CJTF towards identifying and apprehending Boko Haram in Maiduguri.

| Respondent Views | SA% | A% | UD% | D% | SD% | TOTAL |
|--|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Provision of relevant information to security agents which led to arrest of Boko Haram | 74 (23%) | 211 (65%) | 14 (4%) | 4 (1%) | 22 (7%) | 325 (100%) |
| They liaise with community members to apprehend Boko haram members | 104 (32%) | 197 (61%) | 6 (2%) | 13 (4%) | 5 (1%) | 325 (100%) |
| They involve in the battle of dislogging Boko Haram members hidout | 86 (26.4%) | 100 (31%) | 12 (3.6%) | 44 (13.5%) | 83 (25.5%) | 325 (100%) |

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 2 revealed that 23% of the respondents strongly agreed that CJTF provide relevant information that leads to the arrest of Boko Haram members, 65% agree that CJTF provide relevant information that led to the arrest of Boko Haram members, while 1% disagreed that CJTF has provided many relevant information which led to the arrest of Boko Haram members and 7% strongly disagreed that CJTF has provide relevant information that led to the arrest of Boko Haram members. Based on this majority views the study revealed that CJTF has provide relevant information leading to arrest of Boko Haram insurgents in Maiduguri. The finding implies CJTF played significant role which led to arrest of Boko Haram in Maiduguri.

Similarly 32% of the respondent strongly agreed that CJTF members

liaises with community members to apprehend Boko Haram members, 61% of the respondents also agreed that CJTF members liaises with community members to apprehend Boko Haram members, 4% of the respondents disagreed that CJTF members liaises with community members to apprehend Boko Haram members and 1% strongly disagreed that CJTF members liaises with community members to apprehend Boko Haram members. Based on this the study revealed that, CJTF members liaise with community members to apprehend Boko Haram members. This means that there is understanding between the CJTF and community in complementing their task of providing information to security in Maiduguri.

In addition 26.4% of the respondents strongly agreed that CJTF involved in the battle in dislogging Boko Haram members hidout, also 31% respondents also agreed that CJTF involved in the battle in dislogging Boko Haram members hidout while 13.5% of the respondents disagreed that CJTF were involved in the battle in dislogging Boko Haram members hidout to ensure peace and 25.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that CJTF were involved in the battle in dislogging Boko Haram members hidout to ensure peace. This shows that CJTF member do battle with Boko Haram on field together with military JTF to apprehend insurgents in Maiduguri.

Thirteen different people were interviewed as the key informants comprising of 2 religious leaders from Islam and Christianity, 5 youths, 2 CJTF, 2 *Yan Gora*, elderly male and female. They all agreed that the CJTF has made tremendous impact in combating the Boko Haram insurgents. However, Mallam Mala argued that the CJTF have in many occasions molest civilians and some of them misused the power by dealing with innocent people. Also respondents were of the view that there are many hoodlums, and lack of consultation in the conversions of some this *Yan Gora* to CJTF can frustrate government effort. In addition government should checkmate and control the enrollment of underage and bad citizens into CJTF.

Forty five(45) FGDs were conducted with 9 members of *Yan Gora*, 9 CJTF Members, 9 Elderly men, 9 elderly women and 9 youths in Maiduguri. All were of the opinions that the CJTF actually tried toward ensuring peace in Maiduguri by giving relevant information which leads to the arrest and dislogement of so many Boko Haram and their camps. While the members of *Yan Gora* were of the opinions that they also perform but only selected CJTF members were receiving the merit and they complained that selection process to join CJTF is based on Favouritism and highly political in nature. This Group were of the view that the CJTF were the reasons why the military succeeded in most of their operations despite the fact that they don't have sophisticated

weapons. Malam Garba was of the view that the CJTF need close supervision because they misused their connection with the military by killing arrested Boko Haram which will be of benefit in terms of retrieving information from them. While the elderly men and women were complaining that the CJTF members were mostly arrogant youths which giving them weapons could post danger to people after the end of this insurgent activists, so they suggest orientation including entrepreneurial training and education among the CJTF and the *Yan Gora* members.

Discussion of Major Findings

The result from table 1 revealed that civilian joint task force (CJTF) emerged as a result the frequent attacks of community members and unusual arrest as well as molestation by the Military Joint Task force and this is in line with David (2018) that said the pressure military put on the people and the frequent attacks by Boko haram led to the emergence of CJTF.

While the findings in table 2 revealed that CJTF assisted in producing relevant information and have contributed in the battle against Boko Haram by dislogging their hidout and this is in line with Bamidele (2016) who said the CJTF have contributed toward providing genuine information and dislodging Boko haram hideout.

Although Saheed and Onuoha (2019) said Despite the CJTF achievements they have been accompanied with human rights abuses of residents, use of position as members of CJTF to witch-hunt opponents, serving as informants to Boko Haram and subject to elites manipulation especially politicians and military. Also mal Garba in FGD also confirmed that some members misused power by intimidating people.

The study established that, their is positive relationship between the CJTF and military in counter insurgency operations which pave ways in their operations and successes they recorded, this study is of the view that CJTF had played significant roles in the fight against insurgency.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study concluded that the activities of civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) has assisted in the identifying and apprehending Boko Haram members and also dislodgement of their camps in Maiduguri. This has really improved the fight against insurgency and the protection of properties in Maiduguri and it is on this ground that this study recommends the followings for improving the activities of the CJTF;

Borno state government should ensure that all trained CJTF members

be enrolled in the regular security agencies like military, or the paramilitary agencies to help fight insurgency so as to avoid deviation after the end Boko Haram.

Finally Borno State Government should increase CJTF allowances and ensure that they work under strict supervision of security agents as their leaders or head of patrols to prevent abuse of power.

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