

**EFFECTS OF CROSS BORDER CRIMES ON SECURITY IN NIGERIA: A FOCUS
ON SEME BORDER, 2007-2015**

Prof. Ngozi Ojiakor

Department of History & International Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: ne.ojiakor@unizik.edu.ng

&

Lynda Chisom Nzewi

Department of History & International Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: cathylynda@gmail.com

&

Blessing Chinwendu Arize

Department of History & International Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: bc.arize@unizik.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

Cross border crimes portrays the unlawful activities executed by various groups of people or individuals for their financial and economic gains. Despite the efforts of border security agencies which includes the Nigerian police, Customs service, Immigration service, and NSCDC, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps to provide security at the borders, Nigerian borders have remained porous generating various kinds of cross border or trans-border criminal activities. This includes human trafficking, smuggling, drug trafficking, armed robbery, money laundering and illicit arms trafficking. The increase in the rise of cross border criminal activities, no doubt, undermines Nigeria's security and has greatly affected Nigeria's external relations. This study examines the cross border crimes in Nigeria and its attendant effects on the security of Nigeria, with special reference to Nigeria-Benin border. It goes further to throw more light on how smuggling, arms trafficking, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and money laundering among others have caused the various security threats and problems to Nigeria. To successfully achieve the aim of this study, it obtains its data from primary and secondary sources. It also employs the use of qualitative method in its analysis. The paper adopts the rational choice theory to elucidate individual's actions in connection to crime. One of the findings in this article reveals that the issue with cross border crimes has been the rise of corrupt activities in the country, mostly among security agents. The penetrable nature of the border is, also another problem that has contributed to the collapse of the security in the country. These issues need to be settled to thwart the rise of guerilla-warfare from groups such as Boko Haram and possible internationalization of crimes and criminals from neighboring West African states. The article recommends, *inter-alia*, that, essential steps should be taken to enhance the security of the border. Such steps include among others, the amelioration of the well-being of security personnel.

Keywords: Benin, Crime, Cross border, Effect, Nigeria, Security

Introduction

Countries with penetrable borders usually experience criminal activities along their border. This is very popular amongst African countries such as Nigeria. Nigeria shares land borders with four countries namely; Benin Republic in the West, Chad and Niger in the North and Cameroon in the East (Nte, 2011). Notwithstanding the efforts of border security agencies, the borders in Nigeria have been identified as being porous. Thus, Nigeria has reported various kinds of organized crimes along these borders, ranging from drug trafficking, money laundering, corruption and fraud, trafficking in persons, especially women and children, smuggling of fire arms, kidnapping and armed robbery, oil theft and piracy (Alemika, 2013).

Nigeria continues to face serious security challenges due to cross border criminal activities. The cash from these criminal activities is used to purchase dangerous weapons that pose security threat to the nation. It has caused serious financial setbacks to Nigeria's economic growth. It has also reduced productivity in the economy's real sector. These crimes, no doubt, affect resources available to government to provide basic amenities which may include medical or health facilities, education, housing, income and the provision of other infrastructural facilities like roads, electricity, water and others but instead are used to fight crimes.

Many of these activities persist in spite of the efforts of successive governments to curb them with support from foreign governments and agencies. One of such efforts was the establishment of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control (NAFDAC) to curb the inflow of contraband drugs and the establishment of Economic Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) to curb money laundering and advanced fee fraud (419). Good and democratic governance should be strengthened in Nigeria so as to curb organized crimes, otherwise, narrowly focused law enforcement approach to the control of organized crime, especially drug trafficking, will be ineffective.

The state of insecurity in Nigeria today is no news to anyone and although it can be blamed on some factors that have been left unchecked for a long time by both the government and people of Nigeria but the level of insecurity in the country today is threatening to tear her apart and requires quick, adequate and a new approach to deal with the security challenges affecting the nation (Alemika, 2004).

Conceptual Clarifications

The main thrust of this section is to ensure clarity of conceptual usage. These terms are:

Crime: This refers to an act committed or omitted in violation of a public law forbidding or commanding it. It is individual conduct punishable by law. The definition stresses that crimes are breaches of those laws, which injure the community.

However, to understand the meaning and concept of crime in its correct perspective, it would be appropriate to examine some of the definitions propounded by writers. Sir William Blackstone defines crimes in two ways: firstly as "an act committed or omitted in violation of a public law forbidding or commanding it"; secondly as "a violation of the public rights and duties due to the whole community, considered as a community" (Blackstone, 1893). On his part, Serjeant Steven, modified the definition of Blackstone to mean that "A crime is a violation of a right considered in reference to the evil tendency of such violation as regards

the community at large”. It narrows down the scope of crime to violation of rights only; whereas criminal law fastens criminal liability even on those persons who omit to perform duty required by law. For instance, a police officer who silently watches another police officer torturing a person for the purpose of extorting confession is liable for abetting the said offence, as he is under legal duty to prevent torture. The definition stresses that crimes are breaches of those laws, which injure the community (Steven, 1908). Raffaele Garofalo defines crime in some sociological perspective in the following words: “Crime is an immoral and harmful act that is regarded as criminal by public opinion, because it is an injury to so much of the moral sense as is possessed by a community- a measure which is indispensable for the adaptation of the individual society”. In this definition Garofalo says that crimes are those acts, which no civilized society can refuse to recognize as criminal and are repressible by punishment. He considers crime to have been some act ‘labeled’ as criminal by public opinion (Allen, 1954).

Cross border crime: Cross border as used here denotes activity occurring beyond a particular sovereign territory. Therefore, cross border crime as a form of organized crime can be defined as a set of criminal acts whose perpetrators and repercussions go beyond territorial borders (Moulaye, 2009). It often involves group activities of three or more persons using commercial or business-like structures and in some cases violence or other means suitable for intimidation to pursue some economic ends. Hence it is described as an ‘organized crime’ (Adamoli, 1998). Organized crime, however, especially in its cross border character, would invariably amount to looking at the process whereby certain criminals carry out criminal activities, increasingly within a transnational arena.

Security: This means to be in a state of no fear. It is the existence of conditions within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives or properties. Christopher however defines security as activities that ensure protection of a country, persons, and properties of the community against future threats, danger, mishaps and all other forms of perils (Christopher, 1995). In the view of Akin, security refers to “the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions” (Ogunleye & Adewale, 2011). It is generally argued however that security is not the absence of threats or security issues, but the ability to rise to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency and expertise (Ogunleye & Adewale, 2011). This state of being free from any threat within or without, underscores the importance of putting in place actions and structures that can ensure the shelving of a people away from any harm.

National security: Babangida views national security as the physical protection and defense of our citizens and our territorial integrity, of which it is a part, but also the promotion of the economic wellbeing and prosperity of Nigerians in a safe and secure environment that promotes the attainment of our national interests and those of our foreign partners (Christopher, 1995). National security is also defined as freedom from actual and potential threats to national life that may arise either as a result of human actions or inactions such as criminal activities, or from natural disaster such as flood, earthquake, etc., and other natural calamitous events resulting in death, human suffering and material damage. It is rooted in three basic instincts: self-preservation, self-extension and self-fulfillment.

Theoretical Framework

Rational Choice Theory

Rational choice theory is a criminological theory, originated during the late 18th century. Rational choice theory and its assumptions about human behavior have been integrated into numerous criminological theories and criminal justice interventions. It was developed by the Classical School of Criminology through the writings of Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham (Becker, 1976). The theory has further been expanded upon and extended to include other perspectives, such as deterrence, situational crime prevention, and routine activity theory. It was, further developed by Ronald Clarke and Derek Cornish in 1986 which attempts to explain why people commit crime (Cornish & Clarke, 1986). The rational choice theory posits that criminal behavior is no different from non-criminal behavior in that it is conduct that persons intentionally choose to undertake, that is, they are not compelled or forced to do crime, and the reason that they choose to commit crime is that they think it would be more rewarding and less costly for them than non-criminal behavior. According to Gary Becker, rational choice theory is used in both criminal and non-criminal behavior. It involves intentionally committing an act because the reward gained from that act will be greater than the risk associated with it (Becker, 1976).

According to Marsh, the basic premise of this theory is related to the rewards that potential offenders seek from their crime. This is done by certain decision-making processes that are unique to the individual (e.g. skill) and to the dynamics of the actual situation (e.g. time available). Rational choice theory holds the view that at the core of criminal behavior are concepts of choice and decision-making based on certain goals, which governs their behavior. Various options are always available to humans in a given situation and it's often left to the individual to make his/her choice. Rational choice theory is of the view that people behave as they do because they believe that performing those actions has more benefits than costs. The theory clearly holds that certain crimes are selected by offenders and committed for specific reasons (Marsh, 2012).

According to the theorist, five critical elements are included in choice making of an individual: constraints, alternatives, social outcomes, utility and belief. All these elements are the key to the choices made by an individual in the society. In relation to crime, criminals often have the choice to either engage in criminal activities and also not to engage in the crime. An important element of rational choice theory is the idea that people will weigh the possible pleasure from committing the crime against the possible pain from punishment, and act accordingly. This is known as hedonistic calculus (John, 2000).

The import of this theory to the study is that organized crime members are free agents possessing free will and as being able to make rational decisions regarding their involvement in crime. Hence, most cross border crimes are driven by the promise of earning illicit profits from illegal activities that exceed those possible by participating in legal business enterprises. They seek to maximize profits through the use of violence, coercion, and, most undetectable, corruption. Thus, the proceeds made from the crimes, surpasses the income possibilities from operating a legitimate business or earning an average wage, running an organized crime group can be seen as a way to maximize utility given the income choices.

The Nigeria-Benin Border

The border between Nigeria and Benin is roughly 700 km long. The border corresponds to the inter-colonial border between British and French territories that was set up in 1889 (Flynn, 1997). The border region encompasses a large surface of lagoon and marshlands in the Queme valley, which been used as a transportation route and trade route and are very difficult to control by security authorities. There are various local markets found along the border line. These markets serve as the backbone of exchange between both countries (Flynn, 1997).

Historically, the border has been the heart of economic activities between both countries. For instance, the southeast, including Lagos and Badagry, had been a focal point of economic activities. The border region between Lagos and Seme-Podji in the South has always been a busy area. Presently, the economic needs of the cities of Porto Novo, Cotonou and Lagos which are linked through the border region in the South are dependent on cross-border exuberance. This is further stimulated by a high porosity of the borders. The lagoon that links Porto Novo to Lagos facilitates the transportation of agricultural goods, such as rice and cooking oil (Constanze, 2014).

Moreover, the Beninese economy is highly dependent on informal trade with Nigeria, especially in re-exportation of goods. These activities are profitable, mainly due to the non-conformity of economic policies between Nigeria and Benin. The difference in import tolls, which is higher in Nigeria, have boosted commercial activities and yielded benefits from re-exportation activities. Studies have shown that Benin and Nigeria has organized their development policies around the trade of re-exportation. Benin imports goods from Europe and Asia and exports them to the Nigerian market (Constanze, 2014). Though, re-exportation is practiced by all of Nigeria's neighboring countries, but Benin tops the list. This is mainly due to the geographical proximity between the two cities of Cotonou and Lagos.

Evolution and Nature of Cross Border Crime in Nigeria

In the regional level, cross-border crime in West Africa in its contemporary form is generally perceived to have emerged in the 1970s, contemporaneous with the oil price rises of that decade, the delinking of the dollar from gold, high inflation, and the rapid spread of debt in the developing world (Alemika, 2004). Nevertheless, it would be wrong to be too insistent about this chronology, as the roots of the new patterns of crime are identified to have existed slightly earlier. Various antecedents could no doubt be traced back for decades earlier, such as in the ancient traditions of long-distance commerce that are characteristic of the region, or indeed in the activities of European criminal gangs who pioneered inter-continental crime from bases in West Africa in colonial times (Alemika, 2004).

In Nigeria, it is considered that the elements of border crime may be identified before 1980 in the form of organized groups involved in falsifying imports in order to transfer funds outside the country, normally in contravention of currency regulations. This process involved over-invoicing or importing sub-standard goods for delivery to government departments, in return for kickbacks paid to government officials (Addo, 2006).

However, the 1980s was the decade that first witnessed the flourishing and increase in cross border crime in Nigeria. It was a period of serious economic crisis in Nigeria. Due to

economic recession, some members of the dominant classes sought means of accumulation in areas other than the traditional export-imports business, while the less-privileged took consolation in crimes. This is mostly attributed to the general corruption of the civilian government of 1979-1983; the introduction of a Structural Adjustment Programme in 1986, resulting in greater poverty and unemployment and a consequent increase in emigration. The rise of transnational organized crime in Nigeria is also connected to the creation of ECOWAS in 1975, which facilitated movement between member States. While there had always been movements of people from place to place, the circumstances of the late 1970s stimulated some very large population movements in the case of Nigeria. The first cases of heroin trafficking were recorded in Nigeria in the early 1980s (Alemika, 2004).

In addition, there has been an upsurge in the number of Nigerians emigrating abroad since the beginning of the 1980s. Before, the early 1980s booming, Nigeria had been a magnet for immigrants from other parts of the region. After the end of the oil boom in Nigeria, in the early 1980s, Nigerians were impelled to spread throughout the region and further afield in search of economic opportunity, and to seek out a livelihood, if necessary by any means. The down-turn in the oil economy caused many such migrants like Ghanaians, oil economy to move on in search of new opportunities (Adetula, 2015). In 1983, Nigeria officially expelled millions of Ghanaian migrants in a bid to rid itself of officially unwanted guests. Most returned to Ghana, but a fair proportion of these promptly migrated once again to wherever they believed they might find work (UNODC, 2005). This too was a major stimulus to the development of networks of people with experience of international migration, some of whom were induced to undertake criminal activities.

The nature of cross-border crime in Nigeria has changed rapidly over recent years through the use of technology, networks, the loosening of travel restrictions and through criminal diversification. Border control towards Niger, Chad and Cameroon is not quite effective and this makes smuggling of goods relatively easy (WARN, 2013). Organized criminal groups or individuals carry out their illicit activities using major technological tools such as information networks, the financial system and other sophisticated means. They also take advantage of differences in legislation, legal systems and traditions, which often seriously hamper state efforts to respond adequately to the threat of organized or trans-border crimes. Most recently, cross border crime has grown in scope and is characterized by increasingly global reach, involved in multiple forms of criminal activity, expanding criminal markets to include large-scale financial fraud and cybercrime. And the syndicates are willing to protect their activities through violent and ruthless means, linked to international terrorist groups and devising novel and notorious organizational strategies to deter capture (Ering, 2011).

The advancement and current wave of globalization have impacted on organized crime in unpredictable ways. It has generated other forms of violence that are not strictly in the form of conventional warfare but are not any less destructive and destabilizing. Globalization generally has turned cross border criminals into visionaries. Cross border criminal organizations now operate with the aid of complex and sophisticated organizational structures taking advantage of modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to enhance their efficiency, thereby making them more competitive (Alli, 2012).

Criminal Activities along the Nigeria-Benin Border

The criminal activities across the Nigerian-Benin border are manifold. They include, but not limited to human trafficking, drug trafficking, armed robbery, trafficking of small and light weapons, smuggling of other commodities, advanced fee fraud (419) and money laundering, as well as cross-border armed attacks. The porosity of the border between Nigeria and Benin and weak governance on both sides, like in other border regions in West Africa, facilitates these crimes. Crime has increased around the big cities as well as the border villages during the last years. Some villages became real exchange markets for stolen goods and contraband, such as Djoffin (Benin, in Mededjonou), and part of a broader illegal trade network (Adeola & Oluyemi, 2012).

Human trafficking: Human trafficking manifests in different forms and dimensions which include forced labor and child prostitution, domestic servitude, illegal and bonded labor, servile marriage, false adoption, sex tourism and entertainment, pornography, organized begging, organ harvesting, and other criminal activities (Agbu, 2003). There are diverse reasons for human trafficking, *vis-a-vis*; poverty, large family size, rapid urbanization with deteriorating public service, low literacy levels, high school dropout rates. The women and children are trafficked to different parts of West Africa, North America, Europe and Middle East mainly through the Seme Border (Chikwanha, 2007). Thus, with Benin being one of the main transit countries and Nigeria being a key destination country in terms of human trafficking, other than the trafficking of women, for which case Nigeria represents a place of departure, it is not surprising that the border between these two countries is an important route for traffickers (Addo, 2006).

Drug Trafficking: Drug trafficking is one of the most alarming issues of cross border crime. Nigeria is one of the major transit routes for illicit drug trade. Of all transnational criminal activities prevalent in Nigeria, the drug trade has brought the country more despondency than any other. Drug trafficking came to official prominence from 1983-1984 in Nigeria, following the public execution of some convicted drug traffickers (Awunah, 2001). Drug traffickers operate with impunity along the Seme border. They use legitimate business to camouflage drug operation. Proceeds are often invested in property and this enables them to launder illicit profits. The problem with drug trafficking shows that both supplier and users are internationally linked (Aluko, 2012). In order to have access to pass the border, these drugs are often hidden in their personal belongings. The couriers are mostly youths within the age bracket of 18-40 years. The methods of peddling in drugs varied from simple concealment in personal effects, lining of clothing, animals, concealment in women's reproductive organ (vagina), designed as talcum powder, packaged in small molded balls and swallowed, engraved in cultural artifacts to so many ingenious unimaginable methods (Mobolaji & Alabi, 2017).

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW): The Benin-Nigeria border is furthermore prominent for the smuggling of narcotics, small fire arms and light ammunition that are being transported through Benin on their way to Nigeria. Small arms and light weapons are portable weapons made or modified to military specifications for use as lethal instruments of war by either members of armed or security forces or unauthorized groups or individuals. They include revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and local pistols, dane guns, hand grenades and light machine guns. In addition, heavy

machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars of calibers less than 100mm and other similar weapons simplistic in nature that can be operated by anybody even without formal training are also classified as SALW (Adetiba, 2012). Border management failure creates an environment conducive to the illicit trafficking of SALW. Nigeria's border with its immediate neighbors, especially Benin Republic is so porous that arms are conveyed into Nigeria through them to fuel internal crisis.

Armed Robbery: Armed robbery activities have severally been reported along the Seme border. The robbers take advantage of the porous borders to specialize in the theft of cars. These cars when stolen are moved across the border to Chad where the vehicles are either dismantled and sold as spare parts or wholly sold to unsuspecting customers (UNODC, 2005). Nigerians also suffered from the activities of Hamani Tijani's criminal gang from the Republic of Benin.

The crimes between Benin and Nigeria border increased dramatically in 2003, involving an international robbery network led by the infamous Hamani Tijani, a criminal gang from the Republic of Benin that specialized in car-jacking and theft. The gang would move into Nigeria in a convoy and rob Nigerians of their cars and thereafter, move back to their base in Benin. For several years, the gang operated unhindered because of collaboration with security officials in Benin Republic. Before Tidjani, there was another trans-border armed robbery gang led by Shina Rambo who also had his operational base in Benin Republic (UNODC, 2005).

Armed attacks and extortion at illegal checkpoints and criminal activities are experienced, especially along the Nigeria-Benin border. The most spectacular example would be the double attacks on several banks at Dantokpa market in Cotonou in 2008 by Nigerian criminals that entered the country undetected via the lagoon. Apart from leaving casualties and many injured, a huge amount of CFA was stolen from the banks as well as from market vendors (Adeola & Oluyemi, 2012).

Smuggling of other Commodities: The smuggling of other commodities such as oil across the Nigeria-Benin border. Oil bunkering in Nigeria has also continued to occur at an alarming rate due to the easy smuggling of the stolen oil via the Seme border. According to the Federal Government, some 300,000 barrels are illegally exported per day with the Nigeria-Benin border acting as a major transit zone. Efforts have been made to reduce smuggling activities to its minimum at Seme border due to its economic consequence which is a vital part of our national security. Between 2009 and January 2010, Nigeria Customs Service (NICS), Badagry Area Command says it made a massive seizure. The head of the command, comptroller Aliu Barbriel Toba, put the value of goods seized at 573.3 million naira. Among the seized items were fairly used vehicles, bags of rice, wines, textile material and vegetable oil as well as pharmaceutical products topping the list of the seized items. The mode of concealment equally was amazing as some of these goods were concealed in a manner that ordinarily will not give an inkling of suspicion (UNODC, 2005).

Although information on the structure, organization and operating procedures of persons or groups involved in cross-border crime along this border is difficult to discover, media reports and confessions made by arrested culprits or alleged criminals disclosed some general conduct and modes of operation. These crimes are hardly organized in a corporation-like model, unlike organized crime in North America. The crime syndicates form transnational networks by bringing in relatives or friends after they have succeeded in illegal business deals or activities. These recruits are then used as middle men in dealing with illegal trade or business partners, targets or victims. The business mostly takes place among groups or gangs of criminals numbering an average of three to five persons, and organized along lineages or as groups of friends desperate to make quick money (UNODC, 2005).

The criminals involved in this crime develop a close relationship with some of the officials at the border and some high ranking government officials. They bribe these officials in order to carry out their criminal activities without being caught or arrested. The organizational structure, modes of operation and political affiliations pose challenges to law enforcement agencies. This is due to the fact that the individuals who engage in transnational crime are not permanent employees of these gangs and so it is very difficult for them to be caught. The profits gotten from committing these crimes are what they use to bribe corrupt government and border security officials.

Nevertheless, it is quite difficult for genuine border officials to report their superiors who are involved in committing these crimes. Some of these officials are most times compelled to join them. These criminal practices deny the public sector the legitimate income or revenue that could be gotten through legitimate business transactions and the payment of taxes. Corrupt government officials who associate themselves with cross border crimes undermine the very principles of good governance and at the same time spoil the image of public institutions expected to fight against these crimes. Due to the fact that they have the ability to penetrate the criminal justice system for different reasons such as the lack of appropriate laws to deal with such cross-border criminal activities, the bribing of corrupt political officials or legal personnel in the process, or of relying on key government officials to evade prosecution, it becomes very difficult for the state and public institutions to deal effectively with cross-border crimes and end it for good (Addo, 2006).

Measures taken to Eradicate Cross Border Crimes in Nigeria

One of the measures taken was the establishment of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) in 1993. This agency regulates and controls the manufacture, importation, exportation, advertisement, distribution, sale and use of food, drugs, cosmetics, medical devices, chemicals and packaged water in Nigeria. It was established to checkmate illicit and counterfeit products in Nigeria under the country's health and safety law.

The money laundering Decree no. 3 of 1995 and its subsequent amendments were introduced to check transnational crimes of financial nature. There was also the coming into effect of the Advance Fee Fraud Decree no. 18 of 1996. The establishment of the anti-graft commission Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related offences Commission, ICPC., Financial and Economic Crimes Commission, as well as amendments to the money laundering law are

some of government's recent initiatives to control transnational crimes in Nigeria (Lafiaji, 2003).

The Nigerian government has responded to the problem of cross border crimes through various national frameworks, as well as at bilateral and multilateral levels. In 2000 and 2001 respectively, Nigeria signed and ratified the United Nations Transnational Crime Convention and its supplementing protocol on trafficking in persons in December 2000. The protocol was subsequently domesticated by the National Assembly with the enactment of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration (TIPPLEA) Act into law in July 2003. The law established the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other related matters (NAPTIP) in August 2003 as the central agency to coordinate and facilitate the government's anti-trafficking agenda (Addo, 2006). NAPTIP is empowered by law to coordinate the arrest, investigation and prosecution of human trafficking offenders; rescue, counsel, rehabilitate and reintegrate victims of human trafficking into functional members of their community and carryout public enlightenment about the dangers of human trafficking as well work with other agencies to curb human trafficking in Nigeria. NAPTIP has made remarkable progress in arrest and prosecution of offenders with over eighty-nine (89) human traffickers having been sentenced for crimes of human trafficking in Nigeria (Addo, 2006).

Other related measures put in place by the Nigerian government in this area include, setting up of the National Task Force on Trafficking in Persons in October 2006, establishment of Victim of Trafficking Trust Fund in 2008, approval of the National Policy on Protection Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria by the Federal Executive Council in November 2008, the National Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons as approved by the Federal Executive Council in 2008, and signing of bilateral and multilateral agreements etc (Nnaoma, 2018).

Furthermore, The Nigerian government has responded to the drug menace through the enactment of several drug law and policies beginning with the Indian Hemp [Cannabis] Decree of 1966 (as amended in 1975) for the punishment of cultivation of cannabis, exportation and smoking or possession of the drug. The Special Tribunal (Miscellaneous Offences) Decree of 1984 was however, a watershed in drug law in Nigeria. The Decree had retroactive effects and assigned death penalty by firing squad for dealing in, buying, selling, exposing or offering for sale or inducing any person to buy, sell, smoke or inhale the drug known as cocaine or other similar drug (Obot, 2004).

In addition, the most significant drug law in Nigeria has been the promulgation of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Decree no. 48 of 1989 (now Laws of the Federation 1990), the omnibus organization responsible for the execution of Nigerian drug policy. This was done in a bid to control the scourge of trafficking in hard drugs. The agency has responded stringently to the worsening situation of Nigerians involvement in the international drug trade within and outside Nigeria. It listed the punishment for drug offences, including the forfeiture of assets of arrested persons and life imprisonment for trafficking in cocaine, heroin, or similar drugs and a sentence of 15 years (Nnaoma, 2018). The NDLEA continuous measures to check the activities of the trafficking in hard drugs are yet to stem the tide.

Similarly, the Nigerian authorities are fully aware of the harmful potential of the illicit movement of small arms and light weapons, thus, the establishment of the Nigeria National Committee on the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NATCOM) in 2001 to combat the illicit import, export and transfer of SALWs. NATCOM is part of national response to the implementation of the ECOWAS and UN Conventions on the control of SALWs. However, these measures undertaken by government are plagued with many problems among which are: problem of funding, problem of people's orientation, lack of sufficient human and material resources, judicial problem and international difference.

Cross Border Crimes and its Attendant Effects in Nigeria

Instability and Violence: The constant supply of smuggled arms into the country is a major cause for concern because of its disastrous effect on our national security, with many criminal gangs, ethnic militias, revolutionary, rebel and terrorist groups all in possession of huge arsenals. Most arms trafficked into the country are used in internal conflicts, armed robbery and drug trafficking and therefore, creating a continuous cycle of violence and instability in which particularly, women and children, are brutalized.

The high rate of criminality, the development of secret cults, the emergence of private security and the electoral and political violence demonstrate as well as feed the culture of violence, which is strongly related to SALW. Nigeria is one of the countries hardest hit by SALW proliferation and use in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that at least 70 percent of the illegal small arms and light weapons (SALW) circulating within the West African sub-region emanate from or are destined for Nigeria. Some arms from the post Gadhafi Libya have found their way into the hands of insurgent groups in Nigeria, particularly, the Boko Haram Sect who also allegedly have established links with the rebels in Mali and are already exchanging technical and logistic services (WARN, 2013). The porous borders, which are the strongholds of the sect, made it possible for Boko Haram to smuggle arms into Nigeria.

According to Wezeman, Nigeria jumped from being a minor importer to become the largest importer of SALW in sub-Saharan Africa in 2006–2010 (Alli, 2011). The acquisition of SALW and its use to terrorize the Nigerian populace constitute a serious threat to socio-political and economic development of the country.

Economy: Cross-border crimes have a few identifiable economic consequences which impinge negatively on the socio-economic development of Nigeria, particularly as a growing economy. Indeed, trans-border crimes are not only a crime in society; it is just another business activity. It employs people, skills, technological know-how and capital resources just as any other industry but, to the extent that these inputs are measured, they are not differentiated from similar legitimate activities (Aning, 2009).

Furthermore, these criminal activities damage the financial sector institutions that are critical to economic growth, reduce productivity in the economy's real sector by diverting resources and encouraging crime and corruption which slows economic growth and can distort the economy's external trade, internal trade and capital flows or economic development. It cause resources appropriated for specific development projects to be diverted to curbing this menace. As such, it involves many individuals specifically members of the political class in Nigeria who are privileged to occupy government positions to siphon people's money to

foreign banks to the detriment of the Nigerian public. This revenue which is meant for development is turned to personal use thereby damaging the economy (Aning, 2009).

It also erodes a Nigeria's economy by changing the demand for cash, making interest and exchange rates more volatile and causing high inflation in countries where criminals are doing business (Ering, 2011). Nigeria's development is also jeopardized because available evidences show that the country is used as a transit for drug smuggling, particularly for the West African route. This paints a bad picture for Nigeria's image and could deter investors from investing in the economy (Ering, 2011).

Again, human and drug trafficking has economic effect on Nigeria's economy. It places increasing demands on the public health services and the society at large. These increasing demands and strains come in different forms. These may include serious epidemic like HIV/AIDS. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reports that along the cocaine trafficking route, number of users and cases of HIV/AIDS is distinctly higher (UNODC, 2005).

Increased danger to lives and properties

Crimes committed along the border have been one of the problems affecting the national security of Nigeria. These numerous crimes have caused great challenge to the lives and properties of people living in Nigeria. There have been fights between security agents and criminals which have put individuals living in the surrounding areas at risk. Disagreements have also occurred between the members of the surrounding communities and the security agents, as some of these communities harbor criminals and as a result pose serious challenge to the officials in carrying out their works which is a danger to the security of Nigerians.

Rise in criminal activities

The high level of crimes is one of the causes of conflict and has affected the security in Nigeria. Due to the widespread of arms in the country, people are likely to make use of it for their own individual gain such as armed robbery and fraternity wars. Criminal activities increase daily due to border crimes. There have been various cases of criminals from neighboring countries terrorizing and threatening the lives of the citizens in Nigeria and as a result of the porous nature of Nigeria's border, it is very easy for these criminals to escape. The ban on land importation of vehicle had an adverse effect on those who deal on car trade. With no other form of income, some of them engaged in crimes like armed robbery (Mobolaji & Alabi, 2017).

Increase in the widespread of inferior products

The rise in the spread of fake and inferior health products have a harmful effect on the citizens. For instance, drugs that are bad for consumption or have expired are being smuggled into the country and sold to unsuspected buyers. Such drugs are harmful to human health. The use of hard drugs such as cocaine usually has a negative effect on the psychological state of mind which makes individuals who take them inefficient to the society (Mobolaji & Alabi, 2017). The former Director-General of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control, Dora Akuyilli, saw to the reduction of the inflow of expired drugs but regardless of her efforts to stop the spread of expired drugs into the country, the drugs still finds its way into the market.

Recommendations, Conclusion and Findings

The following recommendations are made with a view to mitigating the cross border crimes in Nigeria.

- a) The lack of enough manpower has been one of the factors affecting the security agencies from combating crime. Enough manpower to a correspondent will enable the security agencies carry out their duties effectively.
- b) The security agents should be trained and re-trained, preferably on a monthly basis, by the security agencies. These trainings is very important to enable the security agencies and agents work effectively in the fight again border crimes. The government must also provide the relevant security agencies with good communications gadgets, strong working patrol vehicles and other equipment needed to do their job.
- c) Research has revealed that the security agent's welfare of is not being attended to adequately. The staffs engage in illegal means of livelihood as they are not being paid well. When there is a well-structured welfare package for the agencies, this will increase their efficiency and will reduce corruption.
- d) Strong institutions devoid of political interference should be established. However, reducing the scale of corruption should not stop at establishing institutional frameworks but should include human capacity building. Periodic training of officers on the art of investigation as well as prosecution will address technical problems that hinder successful prosecution.
- e) Finally, the government should immediately develop a border security strategy that will handle the country's domestic and national security objectives. To better secure the borders, the Federal Government must work hand in hand with the government of Benin in order to plan on the best strategy to curb the Seme border crimes.

This study examined the various cross border crimes that are been perpetuated across the Nigeria border with special reference to the Seme border, and its attendant effects on the security of Nigeria. One of the major findings of this study is that there is an increasing concern about cross border crimes and its implications on the national security of Nigeria. A variety of explanations have been put forward for its increase. In this era of globalization, it is suggested that the incentives for cross border crimes have increased, as criminals have identified the opportunities to gain greater rewards from criminal activity outside their traditional boundaries. However, the flow of criminal trade is not all one way. The more developed countries export crime as well as import it. The 2004 UN Secretary- General's report on ways to combat sub regional and cross border crimes in West Africa identified major cross border problems including the continued weakening of the security sector, proliferation of roadblocks, youth unemployment, environmental degradation, social exclusion, explosive remnants of war (ERW), mass refugee movements and forced displacement. In this study, it is found out that inequitable and illicit exploitation of natural resources, weak national institutions and civil society structures and violations of human rights, including the rights of women, have been at the very root of these crimes that constitute serious problems afflicting the sub region.

From the study, it was discovered that the situation of Nigeria's porous border, which serve as conduits for different kinds of cross border criminal activities is further exacerbated by limited presence of security and law enforcement officials. If they are present, they are poorly

equipped, poorly paid, poorly trained and sometimes compromised or recruited to do the bid of the insurgents. Failure of the ill-equipped, corrupt and unorganized state controlled agencies like the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Customs Service, the Nigerian Immigration Service, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Nigeria Intelligence Agency, the Department of State Security Service and other interrelated independent bodies involved in the process of protecting the nation's seaports (harbors), the border posts and border bi-national links within their areas of jurisdiction and in cooperation with Government of neighboring states leaves much in doubt.

The study discovered that the resorting issues of cross border crime and security in Nigeria, if not addressed, can lead to an adverse effect internationally. The spate of cross border criminal activities in Nigeria affects its security and economic growth. Due to the porous nature of Nigeria's borders, smuggling of contraband goods such as firearms, human trafficking, including children and women, money laundering, fraud/ theft, prostitution, proliferation of arms/ nuclear products, illegal migrants, hard drug trafficking such as cocaine, heroin and many more pose a threat to Nigeria's national security and exposes the state to the risk of violence and crisis. These cross border crimes not only pose security threats but also dent the image of the country in which the citizens are subjected to harassment abroad and deny the country of foreign investors.

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