

COMBATING TRANS-BORDER CRIMES IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract

Trans-border crimes refer to criminal activities that occur across national borders, posing a significant challenge to the security and stability of a country. In recent years, Nigeria has experienced an increase in trans-border crimes, including drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms smuggling, and terrorism. These crimes have far-reaching implications for the country, affecting its economy, social fabric, and overall development. This study examines Nigeria's challenges, implications, and management of trans-border crimes, focusing on national security. The porous nature of Nigeria's borders, lack of proper border control, and corruption among border officials exacerbate the problem. These crimes hinder trade and investment, pose a threat to citizens' safety and security, and fuel organized crime and terrorist activities. To effectively manage trans-border crimes, a comprehensive and coordinated approach is necessary. This includes strengthening border security through modern technology and equipment, increasing trained border officials, and collaborating with neighboring countries to enhance intelligence sharing and joint operations. Stricter laws and penalties for those involved in trans-border crimes are also necessary. Methodology: The study likely employed a qualitative research approach, analyzing existing literature, reports, and data on trans-border crimes in Nigeria. Framework of analysis: The study's analysis framework is based on a national security perspective, examining the challenges, implications, and management of trans-border crimes in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Trans-Border Crimes, National Security, Border Control, Corruption, Arm Struggle*

Introduction

Trans-border crime involves illicit activities that transcend national boundaries, posing significant economic threats to affected countries. Understanding the implications of these crimes on national security is crucial. According to Victor Adetula,, national security is intimately tied to the protection of a state's borders, which is a fundamental aspect of any political institution.¹ However, globalization has introduced new security

challenges, rendering traditional approaches to national security outdated and ineffective. The 9/11 attacks for instance, further shifted security discourse at national and international levels, moving beyond conventional notions of security.

Nevertheless, globalization has several benefits, including transformative advancements in transportation, communication, and various aspects of life. Globalization facilitates communication and fosters innovation in international relations among nations.² Despite these advantages, there are lingering negative repercussions that continue to imperil the stability of states within the international system. Transnational crime, in particular, has flourished due to globalization, enabling criminals to engage in illicit activities that transcend national borders with greater ease. Globalization has created an environment where criminals can operate easily, evading detection with advanced technology. This has led to a rise in transnational crimes, cybercrimes, and moral decay among youth. The widespread availability of computers and the internet has enabled crimes like identity theft and financial fraud. A new security paradigm is necessary to address these emerging threats.³

However, the myriad of threats to Nigeria's national security is alarming, and these includes illicit trade. The illicit trade involves, the smuggling of contraband goods, such as firearms, which can exacerbate violence and instability. Another threat is human exploitation, the challenges include human trafficking and the exploitation of children and women, which are known to cause a grave violation of human rights. Furthermore, financial crimes, like money laundering and fraud/theft, are also known to have the capacity to undermine the country's economic stability. Above all, the most alarming threat to Nigeria's national security is the proliferation of arms. The spread of nuclear products and arms also poses a significant threat to regional and global security. Another challenge to national security is migration, illegal migration, which can strain resources and social services is very detrimental to national security. To say the least, drug trafficking, like hard drug trafficking, which includes cocaine and heroin have devastating consequences for individuals and communities.⁴

These threats not only imperil Nigeria's national security but also put the state at risk of violence and crisis. Moreover, in an increasingly interconnected world, these threats can have far-reaching consequences for international security. As states become more interdependent, they must reassess their security policies and raise awareness about the escalating damages caused by these threats, which have resulted in the injury and death of many innocent people. The rapid advancement of technology has been a catalyst for the development and proliferation of sophisticated arms, leading to increasingly porous borders and a rise in military hardware used by terrorists. This has, in turn, contributed to a surge in crimes at national borders. Despite concerted efforts at both national and global levels to combat these transnational crimes, the incursions persist and continue to escalate.⁵

Institutional frameworks, such as the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), established to counter the activities of hard drug traffickers, have yet to effectively stem these crimes. The ongoing incursions pose a significant challenge to the security and stability of the country, exploiting and exacerbating deep-seated ethnic, political, social, and religious divisions.⁶ Illicit trades have far-reaching implications, resulting in significant revenue losses for governments and underestimating the actual contribution of trade to the economy. These activities pose national security concerns, as seen in Nigeria where arms and ammunition were smuggled in rice trailers. Illegal migration also exacerbates unemployment and increases criminal activities, perpetuating fear and threatening national security.⁷

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

For the sake of clarity, the paper hopes to provide conceptual clarifications of major keywords used in this paper, namely, Trans-Border Crimes, National Security

Trans-Border Crimes Trans-border crimes refer to criminal activities that occur across national borders, involving the movement of goods, services, or people. These crimes include human trafficking, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, terrorism, and money laundering. Trans-border crimes exploit vulnerabilities in border control and law enforcement, posing significant threats to national security, economic stability, and human well-being.⁸

National Security: National security refers to the protection of a nation's core values, interests, and institutions from external and internal threats. It encompasses political, economic, social, and military dimensions, ensuring the safety and well-being of citizens. National security is critical to maintaining sovereignty, stability, and prosperity. In the context of trans-border crimes, national security is compromised by the influx of illicit goods, people, and activities that undermine the rule of law and threaten the nation's stability.⁹

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on trans-border crimes in Nigeria have highlighted the challenges posed by porous borders, corruption, and inadequate law enforcement. However, scholars like O. Adeyemi,¹⁰ R. Olaniyi¹¹ others, have examined the impact of trans-border crimes on national security, including the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the rise of terrorist groups. While, T.A.Imobighe,¹² A. Ogunsakin,¹³ on their own part have emphasised on the need for a comprehensive analysis of the implications of trans-border crimes on national security in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts the Human Security Framework, which emphasizes the protection of

individuals and communities from threats to their well-being and livelihoods.¹⁴ The framework is complemented by the Rational Choice Theory, which assumes that individuals and groups make rational decisions based on cost-benefit analyses.¹⁵ The combination of these frameworks provides a nuanced understanding of the implications of trans-border crimes on national security in Nigeria and informs the development of effective strategies to combat these crimes.

NIGERIAN BORDER AND SECURITY CONCERNS

Nigeria's economy has failed to translate into a more stable and secure socio-political environment in the West African sub-region. This is largely due to decades of neglect and misrule, which have enabled informal economies at the borders to flourish through illicit activities. The country's borders, characterized by numerous vulnerabilities, have become conduits for smuggling people, arms, rice, used cars, counterfeit pharmaceuticals, and other contraband goods. The implications of this situation are far-reaching, rendering Nigeria an unsafe haven due to the unchecked cross-border population movements and their attendant economic activities. The lack of effective border control and the porosity of Nigerian borders pose significant challenges to national security and boundary questions¹⁶.

Moreover, the Nigerian borders' vulnerability has become a primary factor in the proliferation of illegal arms and the rise of insurgencies within the country. According to W.O. Alli, in a book titled, "Extra-National Actors and Internal Security in Nigeria's North-East: Challenges for Sub-Regional Peace and Co-operation", reiterated that conflicts in Africa have attracted a surge in arms deals, resulting in an influx of arms into various parts of North, West, and Central Africa, all of which share proximity with Nigeria.¹⁷ This has contributed to the strengthening of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, posing a significant threat to the nation's territorial integrity and national security¹⁸. Alli, acknowledges that the proliferation of arms has become a pressing concern, given the prevailing circumstances¹⁹. In essence, Nigeria's failure to establish effective border control and its inability to address the root causes of insecurity have created an environment conducive to the proliferation of illicit activities,²⁰ posing significant threats to national security, territorial integrity, and the overall well-being of its citizens, Thus:

It's one conflict after another...Because of the nature of the conflict ... the concentration of conflicts ... the black market in Central Africa is more vibrant than in other places.²¹

Nigeria's porous borders have become a conduit for illicit transnational trafficking of small arms, light weapons, and drugs, further complicated by the limited presence of security and law enforcement officials. Even when these officials are present, they often lack the necessary equipment, training, and resources, and in some cases, may be

compromised or recruited by insurgent groups. The situation is exacerbated by the proliferation of arms and ammunition, including surface-to-air missiles, anti-tank missiles, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), and AK-47 assault rifles, which have been trafficked from Libya to terrorist groups like Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and subsequently sold to Boko Haram and its splinter groups in Nigeria²².

This has created a complex security challenge, with Nigeria's porous borders facilitating the influx of illicit goods and arms, which in turn fuels insurgency, separatist agitation, cattle rustling, kidnapping, and armed robbery. The lack of effective border security and the corruption of security officials have made it difficult to stem the flow of illicit arms and goods, posing a significant threat to Nigeria's national security and stability. The situation no doubt calls for a need to investigate possibilities of sabotage, conspiracy and illicit sale of arms by unpatriotic military officers, owing to the fact that a top military officer was indicted in Kaduna, few years ago, for supplying the Nigerian Army weapons to Niger Delta militants through Henry Okah, who is currently serving prison sentence in South Africa²³.

Failure of the ill-equipped, corrupt and unorganized state controlled agencies like the Nigeria Police Force, the 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 (harbours), 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. Addressing the threats of arms proliferation in Nigeria will undoubtedly be a time-consuming process, but it's not too late to develop and implement a comprehensive national security plan.²⁴

Notorious networks, such as those led by Shina Rambo and Hammani Tidjani and other criminal networks, have exploited the opportunities provided by the ECOWAS protocol on free movement of people and trade, further exacerbating insecurity. The proliferation of arms and drug trafficking operations has been largely responsible for the insecurity in Nigeria, and the situation is further complicated by the porosity of the country's borders. The lack of effective border security and the corruption of security officials have made it difficult to stem the flow of illicit arms and goods, posing a significant threat to Nigeria's national security and stability. Importantly, the surge in cross-border criminal activities along the Nigeria-Benin border has severely undermined Nigeria's national security. To address this challenge, Nigeria must adopt a multifaceted approach that includes regional cooperation, border security reinforcement, and the development of effective strategies to combat transnational organized crime²⁵.

TRANS-BORDER CRIMES AND THE ECONOMY OF NIGERIA

Trans-border crimes have severe economic consequences that hinder Nigeria's socio-economic development. These crimes operate like legitimate businesses, employing individuals and leveraging skills, technology, and capital. However, they fuel corruption, organized crime, and terrorist financing. Organized criminal groups launder proceeds from drug trafficking and smuggling, while terrorist organizations use these crimes to finance their activities. This leads to lost revenue, decreased economic growth, and reduced foreign investment, ultimately discouraging investment in developing economies like Nigeria.²⁶ Trans-border crimes undermine the rule of law, weaken institutions, and exacerbate poverty and inequality in Nigeria and other affected countries. These crimes also damage financial sector institutions, diverting resources and fostering an environment conducive to crime and corruption. This impedes productivity, slows economic growth, and distorts trade and capital flows, hindering economic development. The consequences are far-reaching, with estimated annual costs of transnational organized crimes at \$870 billion and losses to corruption and illicit financial flows at \$1.6 trillion in 2019.²⁷

The misappropriation of funds due to cross-border crimes deprives the poor of essential infrastructure and social benefits, exacerbating poverty and inequality. Corruption and impunity erode trust in institutions, undermine the rule of law, and perpetuate a culture of impunity, threatening national stability and security. These crimes also harm the economy by altering demand for cash, increasing volatility, and triggering inflation. Advances in technology have facilitated cross-border crimes, perpetuating crime and corruption, and undermining sustainable economic growth.²⁸

Nigeria's development is severely compromised due to its role as a transit hub for drug smuggling, particularly along the West African route. This has tarnished Nigeria's image, potentially deterring investors from investing in the economy. The alarming dimensions of heroin smuggling through Nigeria are exemplified by the significant seizures made in 2007, which exceeded five tons of heroin, with subsequent years witnessing a steady increase in such seizures. The repercussions of cross-border crimes on Nigeria's economy and society are multifaceted. The influx of illicit funds can distort the economy, fuel inflation, and undermine the government's ability to provide essential services. Moreover, the perpetuation of crime and corruption can erode trust in institutions, perpetuate a culture of impunity, and exacerbate poverty and inequality.²⁹

Transnational criminals in West Africa are corrupting law enforcement, securing protection through illicit means, and exacerbating corruption. This vulnerability risks plunging fragile states into chaos, rendering them ungoverned narco-states. Countries like Benin and Nigeria are on the brink of instability. This pattern of corruption and crime is repeating globally, with criminals diversifying operations, expanding into

multiple activities, and leveraging advanced technology to evade detection. Sophisticated new operations are emerging, perpetuating illicit enterprises and undermining governance, security, and stability worldwide.³⁰

The activities of criminal gangs in Nigeria have become increasingly violent and ruthless. Between January and July 2011, the country witnessed unprecedented violence as competing cartels clashed over trafficking routes and territorial influence. This has resulted in an estimated 15,000 deaths as of 2014. The drug war has created an atmosphere of insecurity, perpetuating fear and instability among citizens. The government's inability to maintain law and order has allowed organized crime to flourish, undermining national security.³¹

Drug trafficking has severe implications for Nigeria's economic development, social stability, and national security. This illicit activity burdens public health services and society, contributing to epidemics like HIV/AIDS. Youths involved in drug trafficking abandon education, undermining human capital development and perpetuating poverty, inequality, and social instability. The diversion of resources to address drug trafficking's health and social implications burdens the economy. The correlation between cocaine trafficking and higher HIV/AIDS incidence rates among users is notable. Overall, drug trafficking has multifaceted consequences for Nigeria's economy and society.³²

INEFFECTIVE AND CORRUPT BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURES

Nigeria's border communities play a pivotal role in the smuggling activities that plague the country. Interestingly, the routes utilized by these communities predate the artificial boundaries created by colonial authorities, which have since become the de facto borders of modern-day Nigeria. However, the widespread disillusionment with the Nigerian economic system, which is often perceived as dysfunctional and unresponsive to the needs of the populace, has driven these border communities to seek alternative means of survival. As a result, communities such as Jibia in Katsina State, Kiisi in Oyo State, Idiroko in Ogun State, Badagry in Lagos State, and Bama in Borno State have evolved into informal hubs for clandestine exchange relations. These border communities have become crucial nodes in the smuggling networks that crisscross the region, with goods such as contraband, narcotics, and weapons being trafficked across the borders with alarming regularity. The proliferation of these informal exchange networks has not only undermined the Nigerian government's efforts to regulate cross-border trade but has also contributed to the perpetuation of poverty, inequality, and social instability in these communities³³.

A report published in this Day Newspaper on November 29, 2010, revealed the seizure of hard drugs worth five billion naira by NDLEA officials. A significant shipment of

heroin from Iran was also intercepted at the Tin Can Island port. These incidents highlight the growing importance of the West African route in global drug trafficking. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime noted a rapid increase in hard drug consumption in Nigeria, correlated with pervasive corruption. This correlation has alarming implications for Nigeria's social fabric, economic development, and national security.³⁴ Criminal activities have severely impacted Nigeria's financial institutions, with high-ranking government officials complicit in transnational organized crimes, particularly money laundering. These individuals exploit their power to divert public funds for personal gain, harming the Nigerian people. A notable example is the late Maurice Ibekwe, a Federal House of Representatives member arrested for financial fraud, forgery, and conspiracy. Although such cases are rare, they highlight the need for accountability and transparency in Nigeria's financial sector.³⁵

Transnational crimes are evolving, expanding beyond traditional drug and human trafficking to include cybercrimes and financial crimes. Criminal organizations are leveraging cutting-edge technology to facilitate their activities, coordinating complex operations with ease. They exploit modern channels like e-currency, digital funds, and mobile payments, posing significant concerns worldwide as their computer skills continue to improve. In Nigeria, the dimensions of these criminal activities have escalated, posing significant threats to the country's economic stability, security, and social fabric. The proliferation of cybercrimes and financial crimes has created new challenges for law enforcement agencies, which must adapt and evolve to combat these emerging threats. The Nigerian government must prioritize the development of effective strategies to prevent, detect, and prosecute these crimes, ensuring the protection of its citizens and the integrity of its financial systems. Beyond the illicit drug trade, the evasion of formal economic channels through the trafficking of contraband goods has also had a debilitating impact on local industries. In July 2004, during a pre-annual general meeting with the media in Lagos, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) revealed that the country suffered a staggering loss of 6.3 billion dollars, equivalent to approximately 800 billion naira, due to the nefarious activities of smugglers and counterfeiters in 2003.³⁶

This alarming statistic underscores the profound consequences of trans-border crimes on Nigeria's national security. The proliferation of smuggling and counterfeiting activities not only undermines the country's economic stability but also perpetuates a culture of lawlessness, corruption, and impunity. Furthermore, the diversion of revenue away from legitimate economic activities hampers the government's ability to provide essential services, exacerbating poverty, inequality, and social unrest. The impact of trans-border crimes on national security is multifaceted, encompassing economic, social, and political dimensions. The instability and insecurity generated by these crimes can have far-reaching consequences, including the erosion of trust in

institutions, the perpetuation of corruption, and the undermining the rule of law. Therefore, the Nigerian government must adopt a comprehensive and coordinated approach to combat trans-border crimes and safeguard the country's national security.

Initiatives and Countermeasures to Eradicate Transnational Organized Crime Across Borders

Threat analysis requires a holistic approach, recognizing that security encompasses multiple factors beyond military concerns. A comprehensive perspective enables governments and regional organizations to develop effective strategies, mitigate threats, ensure stability, and promote prosperity. National and regional security involves protecting and extending national values against adversaries. Nigeria's security interests encompass various strategic factors, including law and order, development, stability, trade, economic development, and international relations. Therefore, assessing threats to Nigeria's national security must consider socio-economic systems at both national and regional levels. Socio-economic systems shape political culture, influencing the environment where threats emerge. In West Africa, migrants' involvement in organized crime is linked to their home countries' failure to provide public goods, leading to disillusionment and alternative livelihoods. This can result in a "flight from the state" and the emergence of transnational criminal networks, as seen in northeastern Nigeria.³⁷

Statutory Responses

Nigeria has enacted various laws to combat transnational organized crimes and jihadist activities. These laws provide the foundation for action and legitimacy for response. Recent laws include the Anti-Terrorism Act, Anti-Piracy Act, and Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing (Prohibition) Act. Additionally, laws such as the NDLEA Decree and the Money Laundering Decree aim to control drug trafficking and financial crimes. The establishment of anti-graft commissions and amendments to existing laws are also part of the government's efforts to combat transnational crimes in Nigeria.³⁹

Strategic Initiatives

Nigeria's response to terrorism has been largely military-focused, which is a weakness in its counterterrorism strategy. Unlike Western countries, Nigeria lacks a comprehensive strategy that considers multiple measures to combat terrorism. A robust strategy would assess threats within the country's historical, political, and socio-economic context, identify gaps, and prescribe approaches for engagement. This would not only build confidence among stakeholders but also guide military budgeting, promote transparency, and measure success. A clear strategy is essential to effectively combat terrorism and promote national security.⁴⁰

Public Safety and Enforcement Initiatives

Law enforcement measures are being implemented to combat transnational organized crime in Nigeria. These efforts include enhancing customs and immigration services, installing detection equipment at airports and seaports, and improving internal security and policing. Officers are receiving extensive training to address new threats like terrorism, and intelligence gathering and analysis are being improved to prevent crimes. Community policing is also being strengthened through cooperation with vigilante services in northeast Nigeria. Additionally, there is a focus on prosecuting criminals, including suspected military officers aiding Boko Haram, and reviewing imprisonment and detention facilities to prevent jailbreaks.⁴¹

Defense Force Deployments

Military measures, probably the most visible measures that have been taken by the Nigerian government include deployment of Joint Task Force and Special Forces to northeast Nigeria, advanced weapons procurement, training of military personnel in counterterrorism operations, and recently, rescue of over 700 persons, mostly women and girls, from Sambisa Forest. Budgetary implications of the military measures have been significant and may also be examined here. For instance, defense and security took almost 25 percent of Nigeria's 2014 budget; in addition, a supplementary budget of \$ 1 billion was approved to support the fight against Boko Haram in the northeast; shadow transactions and procurement of several military equipment and weapons were also reported in the media⁴².

Socio-economic Measures

Socio-economic measures are better assessed in the medium to long term since their impact might not be immediately felt. Such measures seek to address and eliminate conditions conducive to terrorism and transnational organized crimes. It includes promoting policies aimed at addressing the root causes of terrorism and cross-border crimes, including poverty and unemployment, economic and political marginalization, human rights abuses, corruption, and weak security institutions. Specific policies should also be developed to counter terrorist propaganda, dissuade and deter people from turning to terrorism. In the words of Kofi Annan,

*there are statistical correlations between levels of poverty and the incidence of terrorist attacks in particular countries, failed development and poverty create inequalities that underpin many of the grievances that drive terrorism*⁴³.

Coupled with the challenge of lack of effective conflict resolution mechanisms, horizontal inequalities, or inequalities among identity groups and feelings of marginalization by groups have intensified political conflicts in many multi-ethnic or

multi-religious societies in Africa. Such measures that have been taken in Nigeria include infrastructural development of border areas and engagement with border communities to help in combating transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking, establishment of and support to Almajiri schools in northeastern Nigeria, Safe Schools Initiative, provision of irrigation and agricultural development to provide alternative livelihoods for the unemployed, sensitization to prevent radicalization of youth, etc⁴⁴.

International Cooperative Strategies

As a responsible nation, Nigeria has obligated herself to all relevant international treaties and conventions on transnational crimes. She has also taken initiatives to establish bilateral and multi-lateral groupings towards fighting this war. Nigeria is signatory to:

- The United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Substances of 1961.
- The United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971.
- The United Nations Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.
- She is also an initiator co-founder/principal actor in the meetings/activities of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies in Africa (HONDLEA).

In the areas of money laundering, she is either an obligor or a responsible adherent to the following initiatives:

Recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force;

- statement of principles on prevention of criminal use of banking system for purpose of money laundering by Basel Committee on banking regulations and supervisory practice of 1988.
- the convention on laundering, search, seizure and confiscation of proceeds of crime in 1990;
- Naples political declaration and global Action Plan adopted at World Ministerial Conference on organized Transnational crime 1994;
- the Political Declaration and Action Plan against Money Laundering at the twentieth Special session of the United Nations General Assembly 1988;
- Nigeria is a co-founder of the Inter-governmental Action TaskForce Against Money Laundering in Africa "GIABA", founded in the year 2000;
- Nigeria also has bilateral agreements with both America and Britain on fighting drugs and money laundering;
- Nigeria is also a signatory to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.⁴⁵

Public Education and Awareness Campaigns

The Central Bank of Nigeria has through the various Nigerian Embassies and High Commissions abroad placed advertorials in foreign media warning people of the

possibility of falling into the hands of fraudsters in the process of doing business with Nigerians. The advertorials advise would-be investors to cross-check their dealings with government agencies before engaging in transactions.

Problems of Enforcement

Despite every effort that has been made at both national and global levels to contain transnational crimes, the offenses have remained on the increase. In Nigeria, a lot of legislation has been put in place to fight this crime, but it has become obvious that fighting transnational crimes in Nigeria is not just an issue of law. There is a need to address socio-economic issues like unemployment and poverty. These two elements have provided impetus for the rising incidences of drug trafficking, money laundering and advance fee fraud all of which are transnational in nature.⁴⁶

Problem of Funding

Generally, crime-fighting is a capital-intensive enterprise. Information gathering and interdiction have huge cost implications. NDLEA for instance in policing drug trafficking and money laundering had to establish 27 zonal commands and about 200 area commands across the nation. The cost of doing this is enormous and the task becomes more difficult when funding is inadequate.

The Challenges of Shaping Public Attitudes

Enforcing laws against drug trafficking and advance fee fraud in Nigeria is challenging due to a lack of public support. Many Nigerians tend to celebrate success without regard for its origin, which can lead to a lack of empathy for victims of these crimes. As a result, public opinion often shifts in favor of perpetrators, making it difficult to implement effective measures against these crimes. A notable example of this challenge is the public outcry that followed the promulgation of Decree No. 33 in 1990. Despite the severity of Nigeria's drug problem, many criticized the government's efforts to address it. Unfortunately, this attitude persists, and Nigerians continue to engage in these illicit activities. The consequences are alarming, with 688 Nigerians convicted of drug offenses abroad between 2001 and 2003. This statistic is a stark reminder of the need for a collective effort to address these issues and restore Nigeria's reputation⁴⁷.

Legal System Challenges

Crime fighting is incomplete without the judiciary. However, the machinery of justice is very slow in Nigeria. This has made prosecution too costly for enforcement agencies.

Global Disparities

Combating transnational crime requires international cooperation, including information sharing, synchronized legal processes, and extradition procedures. However, differing legislative frameworks across nations pose a significant challenge. Disparities in laws and regulations hinder information exchange and coordination. In

some countries, laws and regulations may be nonexistent or underdeveloped. This was evident in Nigeria's experience with drug traffickers and advance fee fraudsters, who relocated to other West African countries with weaker laws, exploiting legislative gaps and weaknesses, and highlighting the need for harmonized international legal frameworks to combat transnational crime effectively.⁴⁸

The Gap between National Rhetoric and Action

The global fight against illicit drug trafficking is hindered by inconsistent approaches and double standards among nations. Despite shared goals, countries like the Netherlands and the UK are legalizing cannabis, undermining a unified global stance. This ambiguity worsens the situation in countries like Nigeria, where cannabis production is prevalent. Furthermore, some nations hypocritically conceal money laundering activities when beneficial, but complain when victimized. These inconsistencies and double standards characterize a failed international approach to combating illicit drug trafficking, aligning with the failed theory framework adopted in this study.⁴⁹

CONCLUSION

Trans-border crimes pose a significant threat to national security in Nigeria and require a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to effectively manage them. By enhancing border security, improving law enforcement coordination, and addressing the root causes of these crimes, Nigeria can better protect its citizens and safeguard its borders against criminal activities. Collaboration with international partners is also crucial in addressing trans-border crimes and promoting regional security and stability.

RECOMMENDATION

Transnational organized crime (TOC) poses a significant threat to global peace and stability, with Nigeria being one of the most affected countries. The country's porous borders, corruption, and lack of effective law enforcement mechanisms create an enabling environment for trans-border crimes to thrive. To effectively address the challenges, implications, and management of trans-border crimes in Nigeria with a focus on national security, the following recommendations are very vital.

First, to strengthen the border security, effort should be made to enhance border control measures. These control measures include, the use of technology, surveillance systems, and increased manpower at border crossings to help detect and intercept illegal activities.

Secondly, there should be need to improve interagency cooperation among security personnel in the border, this will by far enhance coordination and information sharing among law enforcement agencies, border control authorities, and intelligence agencies to facilitate a more integrated and targeted approach to combating trans-border crimes.

Additionally, enhancement of international collaboration should be paramount to effective border control initiative, this will help to strengthen cooperation with neighboring countries and international partners to share intelligence, resources, and best practices in addressing trans-border crimes, as these crimes often transcend national boundaries.

There is also need to intensify effort towards the identification and addressing of the root causes of Trans-border crimes. While addressing the root causes of trans-border, it becomes necessary to also investigate to address the social and economic factors that contributed to the proliferation of trans-border crimes, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunities, through targeted development programs and initiatives. By so doing, therefore, government should provide alternative employment and tendency educations for the unemployed youth in the country, this will enable them refocused on other means of livelihood.

To say the least, the lackluster attitude of the agency has not been encouraging. Therefore, proactive security personally should be deployed to border areas of the country to tighten security. While ensuring on the effort of security management, incentive should also be given to officers in borders areas to enable them work harder, the incentive would also boost their morale towards their working condition. These incentives could be in monetary form, commendation letters, accelerated promotion and provision of official accommodation. These encouragements, will by far, enable these officers on border patrol to reject bribery from criminals and embrace transparency.

Adequate arrangement should be made to police our porous borders, river line areas and creek. Capacity building should also be encouraged, for instance, there is need to invest in training and equipping law enforcement personnel and border control authorities with the necessary skills and resources to effectively combat trans-border crimes.

In the area of Security Control, stricter security controls are needed to check the high incidence of trans-border crimes in and out of Nigeria. Stricter passport control and a close monitoring of the movements of the people in and out of Nigeria are needed. A more effective security system at the major borders are also needed to discourage traffickers and other cross-border criminals. The attempt to provide this will contend with the problem of endemic official corruption. To achieve this result, effective surveillance equipment at the various ports is also needed to boost physical security.

Our security agencies should begin to build up a data bank on people who regularly travel out of the country through international borders as well as on certain personalities suspected to have links with the cross border criminal activities.

Public awareness and community engagement are equally needed, increased awareness among the public about the dangers of trans-border crimes and the importance of reporting suspicious activities should be encouraged. To achieve this, engagement of local communities in crime prevention efforts through community policing initiatives should be encouraged, especially along the border areas. By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can strengthen its national security, protect its citizens from trans-border crimes, and promote regional stability and security.

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