

**DEVELOPING A COLLECTIVE SECURITY SYSTEM BY NATION-STATES: AS
RESPONSE TO CONTEMPORARY SECURITY THREATS IN WEST AFRICA**

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary security threats in the twenty-first century are more evident in developing regions like West Africa due to the activities of terrorist groups and trans-border criminal organizations. The existing security structure in West Africa requires review to allow the development of a strategic collective security system by the nation-state and non-state actors as a response to the contemporary security threats in the region. The activities of violent extremist terrorist groups and trans-border criminal organizations have caused social-economic and refugee crisis, loss of lives and properties in the affected parts of the region. An all-inclusive security approach is an inevitable option for West African nations to protect the region against contemporary security threats. Developing a collective security system as an approach to prevent the modern security threats by West African leaders will demonstrate their commitment to the regional and global peace-building process.

Key Words: West Africa, region, global peace, security, threats, strategic, terrorists

INTRODUCTION

Developing a cooperative security system as a response to a common problem is not a new methodological approach to insecurity in the international scene; however, its implementation demands different approaches. The term 'collective Security' is not relatively new in the field of academic research, it basically suggests collective actions to approach threats to peace.¹The contemporary security situation in the world is at its lowest level since the end of the Second World War in 1947, and the cold war in the 1990s. Furthermore, collective Security is machinery for joint action to prevent or counter any attack against an established international order.² The increasing security threats in the world have led to a twist in approaches and methods to check emerging modern security threats to international peace. The exigency to develop a collective strategic security network to combat the increasing threats to regional and world peace became essential particularly in developing regions. In the words of one of the main advocate of collective security, President Woodrow Wilson quoted in Carr E.H.' work International

Palmer, N. D., Perkins, H. C. International Relations: The World Community in Transition. California: University of ¹ California, 2007.

Schwarzenberger, G. Power Politics: A Study of World Society. London: Stevens, Third Edition, 1964.²

Relations between the Two World Wars indicated that every matter which is likely to affect the peace of the world is everybody's business.³

In spite of many proponents of collective security, there are also many critics of collective security. They argue that collective security failed to achieve its main purpose since it was first introduced as a concept in worldview at the end of the First World War. According to Kalevi Holsti, almost 100 wars have occurred since it was introduced.⁴ This observation by Kalevi Holsti, questions the effectiveness of the collective security system, though studies have been conducted to help understand the theories and functioning of the collective security system, the study of how and why its limitation in confronting global and regional insecurity have continued to generate divergent responses. Further studies are still in progress to develop and improve the effectiveness of the collective security system.

In reference to the West African security composition, the complexities of the region contradict the opposing views about the collective security system. The prevailing security situation in the West African region showed that a number of security approaches implemented to confront insecurity in the region have not improved the security predicament in the region rather it has weakened it to a contemptible state. Based on this premise, advocates of collective security theory contend that well planned and effective collective security policy is the most probable and auspicious security method to enforce regional and global peace.

In the course of literary review, several researchers have offered definitions to the meaning of collective security system, however, the doctrine of collective security is structured to accommodate the fear of smaller states by providing a system for collective defense in that its goals and principles are strictly preserved to involve the entire states within a region or indeed globally. The concept of the collective security system is seen as a planned mechanism designed to handle conflicts and other vices threatening regional and world peace. The central objective of the collective security system is to develop an effective security structure to safeguard global peace. The concept is viewed as a security union embracing political, economic, and social-cultural interest of participants. The nation-states involved in the system agree to take the security of one member as the concern of all and pledged to respond collectively to any threat to, and breakdown to their collective peace.

The aim of this paper is to look at the development of a collective security system in the West African region by nation-states as a probable practical approach to contemporary security threats in the region. The qualitative method was used to analyze the objectives of this paper discussion, starting by first examining the emerging security threats to the West African region which are different from the known security threats in the region in the past decades that created apprehension and security consciousness in the region. The second section of the paper analyzes how the developing of a collective security system can be the response to the contemporary security threats in the West African region. The last section of the paper evaluates nation-states

Carr, E.H.: International Relations between the Two World Wars. London: MacMillan, 1947³

Kalevi J. Holsti: Peace and War: Armed Conflict and International Order. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991⁴

response to contemporary security threats in the region through the mechanism of ECOWAS which is the foremost regional organization in West Africa. The conclusion is mainly based on the result from the findings, derived from the analysis carried out in the paper that emerging security threats to West African region need an all-inclusive approach to ensure peace and development in the region. This will allow an assured system in which all the nations are united to defend their common territory, and confront their common security challenges.

Contemporary Security Threats in West Africa

The emerging security threats to the relatively peaceful West African region has drawn global attention away from the preceding traditional security threats of political instability, border disputes, ethnic rivalry, and religious intolerance. The fast emerging modern security threats have dire consequences in the region, in view of the 2011 UN report; many parts of West Africa have been embroiled in violent.⁵ In the recent time, there are new causes of insecurity in the region different from the known traditional security threats that were prevalent in the region after the end of colonial rule when all the countries in the region got their independence.

The known traditional security threats to the West African region before now place the region on the hot-spot in the world security indexes due to the frequent military coups, violent change of governments, civil wars and economic crisis. The aforementioned were the well-known traditional caused of insecurity in the region and ranked it low in global security ranking. The implications of the contemporary security threats in the region are complicated and extend beyond the West African sphere which made it a concern to global security watchdog the United Nations. In the 2011 December edition of the Economist Magazine in assessing the security situation in West Africa beyond regional level, it stated that ‘the whole of Africa, judging from the worsening security in the continent was in recent years being viewed as the ‘hopeless continent’, now Africa is being characterized as ‘hopeful.’⁶ In view of the emerging modern security threats in the West African region if not control, international forecasters may consider the region being ‘hopeless’ again. The contemporary security threats to peace and security in the West African region found its origin in the traditional security threats that preceded the region before now. The upsurge of modern security threats such as terrorism, trans-border crimes, drug trafficking, and human trafficking are disturbing if allowed to develop with the existing traditional security challenges in the region, the outcome of it will be a catastrophe.

The contemporary security threats in the West African region pose a great threat to the social-economic development of the region, and it makes a mockery of the previous achievements in ensuring a relatively peaceful region when most of the countries in the region were drifting into a failed state. Meanwhile, a fail state is when nation-states can no longer perform the functions

UN Special Research Report No. 1: “Emerging Security Threats in West Africa” United Nations Security Council ⁵ Report, 2 May 2011.

Report by the Economist: “The hopeful continent: Africa rising”. The Economist publication, 3 December 2011. ⁶ <<http://www.cohred.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Africa-Rising-The-Economist-201112031.pdf>> [Accessed on 18 December 2017].

required for them to pass as states.⁷ Furthermore, when the country “cannot or will not safeguard minimal civil conditions for their populations: domestic peace, law and order, and good governance.”⁸

The security situation in the West African region in the 1990s prompted the setting up of the various internal and external multinationals peacekeeping outfits with no solid structure and foundation in legal terms rather than they weremandated by regional and global organizations such as ECOWAS and UN to ensure a cease fire in the affected countries. The action of ECOWAS and UN were viewed by many experts as short-term security approach to the insecurity situation in the West African region due to the outbreak of civil wars in some countries in the 1990s. The decision of the United Nations to set up various peacekeeping missions such as the“UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL); UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI); UN Integrated Peace-building Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL); and UN Integrated Peace-building Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) in cooperation with the regional peacekeeping outfit ECOMOG to restore peace in the region”,⁹ to ensure peace in the region. This move by the United Nations and ECOWAS only achieved the primary objective of stopping the wars in affected countries in West Africa without addressing the causes of the wars and other threats to security in the region.

The current activities of terrorists, drug traffickers, human traffickers, and trans-border crimes in the West African region have caused another great debate in the international scene, how best to handle the state of insecurity in the region. The incessant terrorist attacks carried out by the different terrorist groups across the Lake Chad Basin had claimed several lives and destruction of properties. This development has generated tension and apprehension in the international community that the attack should not spread to other parts of the region not yet affected by the activities of the terrorist groups. The aftereffects of the terrorist activities had caused significant economic consequences, discouraging investors and tourists, and hindering developmental projects. Also, the regional refugee’s crisis became abounds because people are fleeing their homes for safety. In the event from the aftermath of terrorist attacks, it is obvious the state can no longer provide the basic needs of its citizens, what Hobbes called the ‘social contract’.¹⁰

The inability of the nation-state to provide the basic crucial public social amenities to its citizens is partly responsible for the emergence of modern security threats in the region. According to the finding of ‘The Economist Publications’, it discloses that the poverty and difficult socio-economic conditions that prevail across the region, notably the shortage of secure livelihoods for young men, are unhelpful and facilitate jihadi recruitment. It further cited the case of Boko

Zartman, I. W. “Introduction: Posing the problem of state collapse”. In Zartman, IW (ed), *Collapsed states: The* ⁷
disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

Jackson, R. H. *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World*. Cambridge: Cambridge ⁸
University Press, 1990.

Articles 21-22 Support the Establishment of ECOWAS 1981 Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defense.⁹
ECOMOG, Composition, and Role. ECOWAS document, ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, Nigeria. 2006

Gros, J-G. “Towards a taxonomy of failed states in the new world order: Decaying Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda and ¹⁰
Haiti”. *Third World Quarterly* 17/3. 1996. 456.

Haram which shows how a persistent failure to tackle such issues can fuel the spread of violent extremism.¹¹

The insecurity in West Africa is not restricted to terrorism alone, another serious emerging threat to West African regional security is drug trafficking, the effect of drug trafficking is having a negative influence in the region, although drug trafficking is not unknown to the region. In recent time, the activities of drug trafficking syndicates are deeply rooted in West Africa because states are unable to perform their civic responsibility thereby allowing drug trafficking to thrive in the region. The region is now well-known as transit hub providing temporary market base and repackaging center for cocaine and heroin coming from the South American and Asian producing blocs onward to European markets. The new development in the drug trafficking operation in the region made UNODC declare in 2008 that: the crisis of drug trafficking is gaining attention. This is more than a drugs problem. It is a serious security threat.¹²

The main reasons West Africa become an ideal meeting point for drug traffickers are attributed to lack of improper security system, its geographical location, no modern technological facilities to detect drugs, and patronage of political persons by drug barons. In reference to the northern Mali debacle for example, let consider the submission by Lacher Wolfram which showed that: the incident highlights the extent to which drug trafficking, smuggling and military influence.¹³ Another security lapses provided to drug traffickers is the frequent unconstitutional change of governments which always lead to political instability. This encouraged civil disturbance, metamorphosing into civil wars, insurgency operations, and coups thereby allowing the activities of drug traffickers and smugglers to thrive in the region.

Analyzing the threat posed by human trafficking and other transnational organized crimes in the West African region sum-up the scale of emerging modern security threats in the region. The summary of all these emerging security threats in the region is enshrined in violence, enslavement of people, the breakdown of law and order which hinder development and create fear of insecurity in the people. The recent disclosure of the activities of human traffickers in the Sahel region questions the readiness, efficiency, and approach of the existing legal and institutional body at regional and international like the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN, GIFT) to halt the spread.

However, human trafficking is considered by some international commentators as a conventional security issue that has been in existence for a long time, the recent upsurge in traffic in human beings in Sahel region of West Africa attracts the attention of the international community. The premise for human trafficking are the same, the method and tactic may vary, due to factors, such as political and geographical conditions. Regardless of the form of trafficking, traffickers use

The Economist: "West Africa's terrorist threat". March 10th, 2016, ¹¹
https://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=54018189&Country=C%3%B4te%20d%27ivoire&topic=Poli_8
[Accessed on 15 December 2017]

UN Office on Drugs and Crime: UNODC World Drug Report. United Nations Publication, Vienna, 2008. ¹²
https://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR_2008/WDR_2008_eng_web.pdf

Lacher, W. "Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region," Carnegie Endowment for International ¹³
Peace, September 2012.

crude and manipulative skills on their victims through deception, fraud, terror, isolation, physical violence and debt servitude towards their captives. According to Perry, C. S, human trafficking is more than just a simple human rights issue; it is a global crime against humanity in which victims are moved from poor environments to more.¹⁴

The current activities of human traffickers is a rehearsal of ancient slavery in the twenty-first century with rephrasing in the new lexicon as ‘human trafficking’ but laced with elements and characteristics of slavery. A pro-active security network system is important as a response to the growing threat posed to the West African region and the world through human trafficking and migration of people. Creating social awareness campaign is not enough to halt the activities of human traffickers without attending to the main causes and providing an effective security system to counter the activities of human traffickers. Although, the mode of operation by human traffickers is becoming more exposed and better understood by many people in the world but the base of the human trafficking in West Africa is still lacking behind in term of approach and awareness, the causes of this modern slavery have not be reviewed which are central to the solution to human trafficking.

The activities of human trafficker remained unabated and continue to threaten the existing security in West African region because of some factors which are traceable to porous borders, weak institutions, corruption, political patronage, poverty, and ethnic or informal social networks which are prevailing conditions that run through the length and breadth of the region. Most experts come to an agreement that drug smugglers, human traffickers, and terrorists capitalize on the failure of the state system to provide the right approach to check the emergence of modern security threats in the region. The increasing rate of drugs trafficking, human trafficking, and terrorism which are the three greatest threats to the peace, security, and development of the West African region will go uncontrolled if the necessary security approach is not adopted.

Developing a collective security system in West Africa

Since the 1990s to date, nation-states in West Africa through ECOWAS in collaboration with UN, and other international bodies have device means to confront traditional security threats in the West African region. The various approaches to the security problems were temporary measure judging from the outcome which proven to be a short-term relieved not a permanent solution, hence, the present security challenges in the region. Analyzing it from a critical point of view, less than two decades later since the first peacekeeping military intervention was carried out in Liberia within West African region; the emergence of modern security threats in the region shows the failure of the various approaches by ECOWAS and UN in combating security challenges in the region in the 1990s. The contemporary security challenges in the region are threatening the peaceful co-existence of the countries in the region, limiting development and discouraging investors coming into the region. The emergence of various rebel and militant groups as terrorist organizations have endangered the lives and property of the countries in the

Perry, C. S. The Menace of Human Trafficking in Africa and the U.S. Congressional Response through the Office of ¹⁴ the United States Executive Director of the African Development Bank. Loyola University Chicago: International Law Review Volume 2 Issue 2 Spring/Summer 2005 Article 3.

theatre of their nefarious activities particularly northeastern part of Nigeria, and other neighboring countries i.e. Cameroon, Niger, Chad, and Mali.

It is logical to say, as much as West Africa and its contemporary security challenges are often entrenched in the past, and the same approach is being used to fight emerging security threats in the region, the expected result is predictable. The complexities of the region today call for a review of the security structure by nation-states and non-state actors to come up with a new security network system, seeking new ideas, innovations, and effective legal system as a strategic approach toward security networking in the West African region. The possibility of explosion of the modern security threats on the sub-region is high in view of the increasing rate of terrorist attacks in the northeastern part of Nigeria claiming the lives of both military and civilian personals. The time for a new approach to the security challenges in the region is now, this became necessary for West Africa's governments, people, and institutions to review and reconsider the essence of security and it's important to the society. It will help know the nature and meaning of security because security is a complex issue and the approach to it should be the core of new security thinking by interested parties in the region. This will help find a solution to the emerging security threats and break away with the obsolete approach and predictable tactics.

Introducing strategic collective security system in West Africa will signal a departure from the age-long approach to security challenges in the region by setting up multinationals task forces and peacekeeping alliance resulting from bilateral and multilateral agreements. The concept of 'collective security' approach to security challenges is not a new security theory that has not to be tested on a global stage but its implementation in a developing region such as West Africa face with several security challenges will serve as a panacea to the numerous security threats in the region. However, the misconception that collective security application is only to prevent the outbreak of war is a wrong assumption, "collective security is a security arrangement where a group of countries pledges co-operative joint action in the eyes of the threat to their economic or territorial sovereignty.." ¹⁵

The concept of collective security is the basis on many international peace agreements in modern international relations which should not be misconstrued that is only applicable when there is a threat of war, although collective security is initiated along cooperative defense pact but not only during war. Hence, collective security is an arrangement, usually formalized by a treaty and organization, among participant states that commit support in defense of a member state if it is attacked by another state outside the organization. ¹⁶ The previous approaches to West African security challenges are far from being called collective security rather the formation of a multinational alliance to resolve a specific security mission. According to Cooper Andrew, et' al "what we have today is pseudo-multilateralism: a dominant power acts essentially alone, but,

The Law Teacher: "What Are the Concepts of Collective Security International Law Essay, November 2013" ¹⁵
<https://www.lawteacher.net/free-law-essays/international-law/what-are-the-concepts-of-collective-security-international-law-essay.php> [Accessed on 15 November 2017]

Claude Jr. Inis L, "Collective Security as an Approach to Peace", in *Classic Readings and Contemporary Debates in International Relations*, ed. Donald M, Donald M. Goldstein, Phil Williams, & Jay M. Shafritz, Belmont, 2006, 289-302.

embarrassed at the idea and still worshipping at the shrine of collective security, recruits a ship here, a brigade there, and blessings all around to give its unilateral action a multilateral sheen".¹⁷ In simple words, Collective Security system assures the security of each nation-state of the world against any war, hostility and other related security threats in whatever forms which may be committed by any nation-state against any other states. Furthermore, the collective security system will checkmate the activities of any unlawful organizations and groups that pose a threat to national and regional security.

However, developing a collective security system in a region like West Africa facing a different kind of security challenges, the implementation of such a security system will be different. The region is not expecting an attack from external aggressor but with the security consciousness to provide a cooperative obligation to guard the region against modern security threats and thereby reduced the security challenges in the region. Developing a collective security system as a response to the West African security dilemma will be less cumbersome because of the composition of the region. The region is homogenous in nature, interlocked, has a similar historical and cultural heritage, these common characteristics will help the implementation process easier to checkmate the activities of the people living in the region. Telling from experts and analysts' viewpoints that perpetrators of emerging security threats such as terrorism, drug and human trafficking, and trans-border crimes are citizens of West Africa living in the region in collaboration with outsiders. They understand the terrain and have primary knowledge of the existing security system in place.

The historical analogy of the establishment and implementation of collective security system always alludes to the formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact which are examples of collective defense, but the scope of collective security is wider than that of collective defense. At the global stage, the UN make effort to establish collective security as enshrined in Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, which stated: .¹⁸ This section of the UN charter empowered the UN Security Council the responsibility and power to initiate collective security action for meeting any threat to international peace by a war or aggression. In support of UN chapter on collective security, its protagonists argue that it is easier to adopt collective security defense approach to fight modern security issues than countries separately attempting to act alone because countries with lesser resources cannot afford to defend themselves.

Meanwhile, countries that engaged in fighting emerging modern security threats alone usually lack support and cooperation from neighboring countries thereby becoming involved in never-ending security battle over the long term. In addition, from the interpretation of collective security theory by political analysts is that collective security union promotes trust, bond, and association among countries from different regions and continents in the world. While, other alternative security systems create rift, power struggle, competition, and conflict in the polity. The UN further make provision for regional collective security initiative in Article 51 of chapter

Fenton, C. A., Higgot, R. A., and Nassal, K. R.: Bound to Follow? Leadership and Followership in the Gulf Conflict,¹⁷ Political Science Quarterly. V. 106, N. 3

Charter of the United Nations. Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace,¹⁸ and Acts of Aggression. UN documents, 2017. <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-vii/index.html>

VII of its charter which accepts the right of the states “to an individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a member until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.”¹⁹

Meanwhile, the kind of strategic collective security system being envisaged is not only about the deployment of military personals to guard border post but having a security structure that will effectively respond to the emerging modern security threats. The main direction of collective security thinking is to develop a security blueprint that involves all the nation-states in the region. All-inclusive participation in regional security by nation-states will give legal backing to the implementation of the collective decision to find a solution to the remote causes of emerging security threats and proffer the best response to terrorism, drug and human trafficking, and trans-border crimes.

However, many experts traced the origin of modern security threats in the West African region due to lack of food security, unemployment, stagnant economic growth, lack of basic education, health service, and social-cultural marginalization. The development of strategic collective security system in the region can only function with the cooperation of nation-states involved, to pledge their allegiance, contribution, and relinquish some sovereignty privileges to allow the system to work.

Nation-states response to modern security threats in West Africa

Nation-state and non-state actors were actively involved in the formation of the existing security policy document in West Africa. The role of nation-states in the region is carried out through the various established regional organizations mainly, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). ECOWAS main objective is to promote and protect the interest of the West African region in all areas of endeavors including providing security for the protection of lives and property in the region. Since the establishment of ECOWAS as an inter-governmental organization in West Africa, its approach to security matters in the region has not solved the increasing rate of insecurity in the region. The setting up of ECOMOG in the 1990s to carry out peacekeeping operations in the warring countries in the region only succeeded in stopping the wars not to escalate to neighboring countries in the region, with no security initiatives to respond to post-war conflicts.

The present state of insecurity in the region is the consequence of the conflicts of the 1990s which was not properly resolved. The absence of a post-war plan for the war-torn countries and resolution of the causes of the conflicts allowed the security situation in the region to deteriorate, thus generating security tension in the region which have triggered the emerging of modern security threats in the region in form of terrorism, human, drug trafficking, and trans-border crimes. In fairness to ECOWAS, the organization created many internal agencies in the region to fight the raging threats of terrorism, drug, and human trafficking but the existence of these various agencies have not improved the security situation in the region.

Bennis, P. Article 51: Self-Defense and its Limits in the UN Charter. TNI Website, 1 February 2002. ¹⁹
<https://www.tni.org/en/archives/act/729>

In furtherance of ECOWAS fight against emerging security threats in the region, it enacted several laws to help check the activities of terrorism, human trafficking, and drug trafficking and bring the perpetrators to face the wrath of the laws. The enacted laws are more seen in the paper than in operations, though most West African states governmental institutions have passed laws repelling activities of terrorists, drug, and human traffickers, these laws are either obsolete or not implemented. The non-implementation of the enacted laws by state institutions contributed largely to the non-operationalization of ECOWAS protocols laws against terrorism, drug, human trafficking, and trans-border crimes. The countries that are signatories to the protocol agreements are unwilling to commit themselves to the implementation of the agreements. Such unenthusiastic actions by ECOWAS members present daunting challenges in the fight against terrorism, drug, human trafficking. This is the seeming reason the various approaches to fighting terrorism, drug, and human trafficking, and other trans-border crimes have not been very effective in West Africa.

Analyzing further, the security network system designed by agencies set-up by ECOWAS to combat terrorism, drug, and human trafficking are ill-equipped, not well trained in the art of modern security operation, and the concepts behind their establishment are misinterpreted. Also, the most important tool in fighting insecurity, the political will is not there, without the concrete legal backing and involvement of nation-states in the fight against modern security threats, it is difficult to make headway in the fight against emerging security threats in West Africa. Although, ECOWAS protocol agreement in Article 3 (d) of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security prescribes improvement of cooperation in several areas including the control of cross-border crime and international terrorism which was later revised in 2006 to integrate counter financing of terrorism.²⁰

The enactment of Article 49 is to strengthen the fight against emerging security challenges in the region, the Article 49 empowered ECOWAS member states to come up with plans targeted at the sponsors and agents of the perpetrators of these heinous crimes of terrorism, drug, human trafficking,²¹ with the presumption that such a strategy will restrict the porous security system that allows criminal activity to flourish within the region. The same provision is contained in the 2001 Supplementary Protocol on terrorism which mandated ECOWAS Department of Political Affairs, Defense, and Security to form joint activities for ECOWAS member states agencies empowered to prevent and combat terrorism.²² Meanwhile, Article 58 of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework on Cross-border crime acknowledges the existence of emerging security

ECOWAS Protocol Agreement in Article 3: The Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, ²⁰
Peace-Keeping and Security. ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, Nigeria. 2006. http://www.zif-berlin.org/fileadmin/uploads/analyse/dokumente/ECOWAS_Protocol_ConflictPrevention.pdf
Solomon Ebobrah, Armand Tanoh. Compendium of African Sub-regional Human Rights Documents. African ²¹
cooperation, 2010.

ECOWAS 2001 supplementary protocol: Protocol A/SP1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance. ECOWAS ²²
document. Executive Secretariat, Dakar, December 2001.

threats in the region.²³ The acknowledgment by ECOWAS nation states recognized the fact that there is a coordination of activities between cross-border crimes, drug and human trafficking, and arms proliferation criminals which have a direct effect on the regional security.

In the face of the various protocols, agreements entered into by ECOWAS member states and its partnership with other agencies outside the region on the fight against terrorism, drug, human trafficking, and trans-border crimes, so far their activities continue to grow in strength and with an advanced method of operation. The non-implementation of the protocol agreements is due to lack of strong political will and legal backing from ECOWAS member states, even though they are signatories to the agreements. Besides, the lackadaisical response of nation-states not directly affected by the activities of terrorist groups, drug, and human traffickers are signs of them not showing enough commitment to the fight against emerging security threats in the region despite they are members of ECOWAS. Sometimes, these countries are not also consulted nor included by ECOWAS leadership when setting up the various multinationals task forces to combat the emerging security threats. This is why some of the countries not affected are not willing to commit their resources to the course of fighting insecurity in the region.

The unceasing activities of terrorism, drug and human trafficking, and trans-border crimes in West African region needs a timely response from nation-states in partnership with non-states actors. The emerging security threats have the capacity to put the region in the edge of extinction, with the possibility of crippling the regional economies systems, reversing developmental stride, which could hypothetically turn West Africa into a lawless and isolated failed region. In view of this obvious danger, nation-states through ECOWAS should harmonize its various agencies in the fight against terrorism, drug, human trafficking, and trans-border crime to form an all-inclusive strategic collective security system with the allegiance and pledge of ECOWAS member states by demonstrating their commitment in practice not just appending their signatories to the agreements.

The use of collective security to combat complex security situation is not new in advanced regions and at the global stage but its usage in developing region such as West Africa needs a comprehensive review of the existing security system in the region and a working synergy with other international agencies in the fight against modern security threats to global peace. The new security map for West Africa must comply with international laws and norms such as the 1988 UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, (Vienna Convention)²⁴ as well as the 2000 Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Convention).²⁵ At the continental level, the African Union in recognition of the fact that organized crimes and terrorism violate basic human rights especially the rights to life and

ECOWAS Protocol Agreement in Article 58: The Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, ²³ Peace-Keeping and Security. ECOWAS document. ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, Nigeria. 2006. http://www.zif-berlin.org/fileadmin/uploads/analyse/dokumente/ECOWAS_Protocol_ConflictPrevention.pdf

UN Vienna Convention: United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic ²⁴ Substances. UN conference report, Vienna, 1988. https://www.unodc.org/pdf/convention_1988_en.pdf

UN 2000 Palermo Convention: Articles 18 and 27, United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized ²⁵ Crime. UN office on drugs and crime, Vienna, 2000.

development, freedom of expression and freedom from fear adopted the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in 1999²⁶ which all ECOWAS member states are signatories.

The development of strategic collective security system by nation-states in West Africa will help resolve many issues obstructing the implementation of previous laudable initiatives to fight emerging security threats in the region. For example, ECOWAS recognized poverty as a major cause of modern security threats in the region, reason, ECOWAS enshrined in its Supplementary Protocol, Article 25, the call for 'Democracy and Good Governance'²⁷ as a legal provisions and strategies to encourage its members to provide the basic necessities of life for their citizens, which was further stressed in its Article 41(a) of Conflict Prevention Framework²⁸ which places a specific moral obligations and legitimacy on nation States to mediate to limit the unacceptable levels of deprivation of the basic needs in life in the region to defend human security by taking measures to propel solution to the direct causes of intra and inter-state conflicts that put populations at risk.

The approach to emerging security threats in West Africa will be better through strategic collective security system since previous approaches such as multinational task forces, bilateral agreements, and joint border patrols have not yielded the desired result rather it increased the activities of the criminal's groups. The legal formulation of collective security entails all members involved are bonded by the agreement entered and are fully implemented to ensure the full cooperation and loyalty of members to the fight against emerging security threats in the region. It will systematically reduce the spread of terrorism, drug, human trafficking which is fast advancing in West Africa due to the capability of terrorists to sponsor their activities with earnings from the exploitation of the sub region's rich natural resources. Abetted by weak border posts, corruption of nation-state and non-state institutions, and the struggle to accept democratic governance.

CONCLUSION

By and large, there is a paradigm shift in approach to security matters at regional and global levels, the emerging security threats to regional and global peace called for a review of the existing security apparatus put in place to fight security issues. It is apparent that the state of insecurity in the West African region cannot be solved through the same outdated security approach which did not produce a positive result in the past rather the region is facing a new wave of security challenges. The emerging security threats in the West African region such as

OAU 1999 Convention: Article 20, OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. OAU ²⁶ document, Adopted at Algiers on 14 July 1999. <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/oau-convention-on-the-prevention-and-combating-of-terrorism.pdf>

ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol. Article 25, A/SP1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance. ECOWAS ²⁷ document. Executive Secretariat, Dakar, December 2001.

ECOWAS Protocol Agreement in Article 41(a): The Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, ²⁸ Peace-Keeping and Security. ECOWAS document. ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, Nigeria. 2006. http://www.zif-berlin.org/fileadmin/uploads/analyse/dokumente/ECOWAS_Protocol_ConflictPrevention.pdf

terrorism, drug, human trafficking, and trans-border crimes have defied various approaches used so far to restrict its increasing rate.

The security thinking of West African regional leaders should be redefined to accommodate modern security approach to a complex security situation like the one in the region. ECOWAS must study the composition, operationalization, and application of collective security system as a solution to the expanding activities of terrorists, drugs smugglers, human traffickers, and the trans-border criminal gang in the region. The present approach of using multinational military task force and weak task force agencies to fight complicated security issues will only prevent the security situation not to escalate but the security challenges in the region will remain if adequate security network is not designed to accommodate every country in the region no matter how insignificant is the country.

The time to review the present security structure in the region is now, postponing it, is allowing the contemporary security threats in the region to escalate and continue to pose danger to lives and property in the West African region. The functioning and use of multinational task force through alliance has become outmoded, it is time to replace it with a well-structured collective security system to take the fight to the doorsteps of terrorists, drugs smugglers, human traffickers, and trans-border criminal gangs.

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