



## Border Porosity and the Perennial Challenges of Nigeria Borders and Frontier Security

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### Abstract

This study seeks to highlight the challenges in Nigeria's international borderlines. The greatest challenge facing Nigeria today is international terrorism that is aided by religious extremism, the porosity of borderline and cross-border security challenges, and crime. Indeed, the existence of porous borders and cross-border and frontier activities in Nigeria has aided crimes and security challenges across Nigerian borders for a long without specific solutions. The problem of security as a result of these porous borders in Nigeria has become one of the most intractable challenges facing the country today. In recent times, the security challenges in Nigeria and its border crime are alarming, especially, the activities of the terrorist group known as "Boko Haram" in which lives and property are no longer secure. There are many speculations that the groups may have found their way through the porous borders. Therefore, the study probes into the nature of Nigeria borders using the analytical framework of assessment in the emerging trans-border crimes, and the causes and sources of insecurity of lives and property in Nigeria. The paper then revealed that the major criminal activities of Nigeria's serial borders are smuggling of contraband goods and illegal immigrants, trafficking in weapons and human parts, drug trafficking, vehicle crime, trafficking of illegally exploited natural resources, including the illicit trade in timber, oil, and diamond among others. The paper then suggests that much of the conventional wisdom regarding how best to address Nigeria's border crime and security is not only enacting a law but also creating proper national security awareness, involvement of new stakeholders in the security sector, and a strong institutional framework to checkmate the activities of trans-border crime.

Keywords: Border, Trans-Border Crime, Internal Security, Security Challenges, Nigeria

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### Introduction

The challenges facing African states to manage their borders are compounded by globalization which is tearing down traditional borders through advancement in technology and transformation of international relations. At the moment crimes are committed without crossing borders and huge amounts of goods are sold through cyberspace. The internet has not only made it more difficult to manage borders and combat cross-border crimes but has also effectively dismantled borders by



allowing imports without going through customs. Trans-border crimes are said to have manifested themselves with the coming of colonialism which regrouped states and communities into new nation-states with defined borders manned by law enforcement agents to protect the polity and its economy. Nigeria is a colonial creation whose final stage was the merging of the southern and northern protectorates in 1914. Nigeria came to share international land borders with Benin, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, totaling about 4745sq.km. Nigeria also shares maritime boundaries with Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe. Like other partitioned areas in Africa, the territorialisation of Nigeria state poses some challenges that have affected the structure of interregional trade as a result of the colonial and post-colonial economic systems. Borderlands are both melting pots and security hot spots. Often neglected in the development strategies of postcolonial states, they are an arena for cross-border crime and represent a dynamic place of historically fostered cultural and socio-economic exchange at the same time.

However, ‘trans-border crime’ represents several illegal and notorious activities carried out by individuals and group across national and international borders, either for financial or economic benefits and also-political cum religious considerations. It is a set of criminal acts whose perpetrators and repercussions go beyond territorial borders. These would include humans. The transfer of criminal activity from one country to another is a spill-over effect of interrogation policies which loosen the borders for developing and enhancing great friendly balance crimes such as human trafficking, arms and drugs are seen to cut across one geographical area but the failure to check and properly control their various activities cause security issues especially the influx of arms around borders. Out of the 1978 entry points in the country only 84 are approved and 1894 illegal route lies around the country. Of a truth, the security system is greatly outnumbered by an expounded crime situation which in turn will lose its efficacy (William, 1998).

As organized criminal groups or individuals carry out their illicit activities using major technological tools such as information networks, financial systems 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 organised or trans-border crimes. Ortuno and Wiriychai (2009) have maintained that the past few years have been characterized by a significant increase in global criminal activities such as money laundering, trafficking in human and nuclear technology and material, and the trade in human organs and migrant smuggling. At the same time, emerging crimes such as modern piracy, trafficking in toxic waste, counterfeit medicines, precious metals or natural resources have been added to the list of traditional illegal activities such as prostitution, drug trafficking and arms trafficking.

Trans-border crimes which have been present in Nigeria, became more pronounced in the 1980s and by the 1990s, although without much empirical evidence, Nigeria is counted among the top ranking global syndicates (Bayard, et al, 1999; Williams, 1998). Most recently, transnational crime has grown in scope and is characterized by increasingly global reach, involved in multiple forms of criminal markets including large-scale financial fraud and cybercrime. And the syndicates are willing to protect their activities through violent and notorious organizational strategies to deter capture (Luna, 2008). When borders are opened (Trade liberalization), they facilitate the spread of criminal networks. The conditions favourable to crime include: the poverty in source countries and their drive to alleviate that poverty, the weakness of the new democracies, open borders, and lack



of appropriately educated law enforcement agencies and a lack of cross-national cooperation has been discovered mostly to be responsible for cross-border crimes.

Since the 1980s, Nigeria has also remained a major transshipment point for heroin and cocaine going to south Asia and Latin America respectively; indeed the sophistication of the mafias operation has reached the point that apprehended suspects have been discovered to swallow drugs in wraps to excrete them at destination countries. Lewis (1996) observed that while the country maintained the trade of the protection of top military brass, the syndicates, who had gradually moved their operations to third countries, laundered the proceeds from the trade through the domestic banking system, in conformity with the earlier alluded self-serving principle of “see no evil, hear no evil” (Dauda, 2010). Apart from drugs, the circumvention of the formal economy via the trafficking of contraband goods has also counted on local industries. At a pre-yearly general meeting with the media in July 2004, Nigeria industrialists under the aegis of the manufacturers association of Nigeria (MAN) declared that the country lost \$6.3billion (about N800 billion) to unwholesome trade practices of smuggling and products counterfeiting in 2003 (The Guardian, 2004, July 5). Against this backdrop, this research examines the issues of borderless Border and the Perennial Challenges of Nigeria's Borders.

The issue of the porosity of Nigeria's borders spanning a total land mass of 923, 768 square kilometres has remained a source of concern over the years (Ewetan & Ese, 2014). The porous borders contributed to and continued to encourage cross-border crimes, terrorist attacks, drug trafficking, and illegal trade such as the smuggling of contraband goods like shoes, frozen poultry products, duty non-paid cars and foreign parboiled rice (Akinyemi, 2013; Nwogu, 2013). This situation has also promoted the unrestrained influx of illegal migrants and cross-border criminality through her Francophone neighbours, which seemed to be posing serious challenges for Law Enforcement Agencies to contend with. Nigeria shares 773 kilometres boundary with the Benin Republic; 1,690 Kilometres with the Republic of Cameroun; 1, 497 Kilometres with the Niger Republic; 85 Kilometres with the Chad Republic and with the Republic of Guinea at the Gulf of Guinea (Salifu, 2013). Events at these border regions are crucial and fundamental in defining the nation's quest for security and socio-economic, cum political development (Asiwaju, 1996). Recent events of an increasing wave of insurgencies have further heightened anxiety about the efficacy of law enforcement across the country's borders. As it stands today, no Nigerian border can be described as truly watertight (The Nation, 2017) as the less than eighteen thousand (18,000) workforce of the Nigerian Customs Services, an Agency statutorily charged with responsibilities of anti-smuggling, revenue generation and security functions along Nigeria's land, air and sea borders are having challenges effectively policing the borders. Nigeria's poorly patterned borders and the lack of adequate personnel cum logistics to properly man the border have had a negative effect on the security of our national frontiers (Adeola & Fayomi, 2012; Akinyemi, 2013; Ewetan & Ese, 2014). Within a short space of eight months (precisely January 22, 2017, May 23, 2017, September 11, 2017 and September 21, 2017) a total of 2, 671 pump action rifles illegally imported into the country were intercepted by the Nigerian Customs Service, alongside other seizures with a total value of N12.7billion (Premium Times, 2018).

With government officials accepting that about 1, 479 illegal routes exist in Nigeria (National Daily, 2018) presupposing all manner of illegalities in the forms of illegal migration, drug trafficking, movement of contraband goods and its attendant implication exist at our national frontiers. Security



agencies the world over relies on both formal and informal information networks that could be converted into Intelligence reports to boost their operations. However, in the situation where borders are porous, they need to go beyond the formal information networks and interrogate the same alongside the informal information networks, towards securing the borders, becomes imperative. Also, with the increasing need to improve upon non-oil revenue, the Nigerian Customs Service which is also saddled with the responsibilities of revenue generation has been brought under pressure. This situation is made critical with the recessive economic growth that Nigeria is experiencing, hence, the Nigerian government prefers to spend their way out of recession thereby putting pressure on revenue-generating government agencies to generate more money into the coffers of the Federal government.

Consequently, this study sets to identify the inherent challenges militating against border security agencies with specific reference to the Nigeria Customs service. The specific objectives therefore include:

- i. To identify the major factors militating against maintaining border security by the Nigerian customs service.
- ii. To explore the implications of these factors for national security in Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Issues**

#### **Border Security**

Border security is a factor of border management. International borders are a security issue for all governments. States are recognized under international law for their capability to maintain their boundaries, secure their territories, and protect their citizens (Atler (2018)). The ability to secure national borders is one of the criteria used to classify states as strong, weak and failed. A state has a primary responsibility of protecting its citizens from both internal and external threats to their livelihoods. It must be pointed out that the strategic location of a country determines opportunities for illegal activities that exist or can take place in its border areas. Some countries are more threatened by insecurities or mismanagement of other countries' borders than their own. Border Security means different things: border control, border management, border monitoring, border protection, etc. Usually, border security has been used to mean border control, which seeks to facilitate or limit the movements of people, animals, plants, and goods in and out of a country. Border control is divided into two main categories: securing borderlines (activities along the boundary), and controlling ports (harbours, border posts and airports) of entry.

#### **Border Management**

Border management: commonly defined as the government functions of immigration, customs and excise, and policing, to control and regulate the flow of people and goods across a country's border/boundary in the national interest (particularly economic development, security and peace). Border management also includes the maintenance of boundary beacons that mark the physical limits of the country's territory. Border management is a collaborative process between a country and its neighbours. It cannot be done unilaterally, and it is most effective and efficient when done regionally.



**Border management has a number of stakeholders:**

- Key government agencies (customs, immigration, police, armed forces, ministry of agriculture— quarantine purposes), who in most cases operate independently and without networking or exchanging information.
- Airlines
- Shipping companies
- Border local authorities
- International business companies and individuals
- Individuals (residents of the borders or travellers across boundaries e.g. traders, relatives, tourists or terrorists)

The perceptions that a government/state has of external threats/risks determine its responses to border insecurity and the border management system it puts in place. In other words, how a country/state/government manages its borders reflects its fears and comfort.

Indeed, border management is an expression of a state's sovereignty. A state's failure to manage its borders can undermine its domestic and international legitimacies. The legal status of a state/government depends on how it manages its borders. The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States of 1933 identifies 4 criteria for state sovereignty: a permanent population; a defined territory; a government; and the capacity to enter relations with other states. In other words,

- Territoriality is equal to sovereignty
- Citizenship is defined by territory
- Territory is defined by borders
- Borders enable countries to engage in international relations
- Borders define the state-citizenship relationship

**Transnational crimes**

These are crimes that have an actual or potential effects across national borders and crimes which are intra-State but which offend fundamental values of the international community (Bonchuk, 2001). The word "transnational" describes crimes that are not only international (that is, crimes that cross borders between countries), but crimes that by their nature involve cross-border transference as an essential part of the criminal activity. Transnational crimes also include crimes that take place in one country, but their consequences significantly affect another country and transit countries may also be involved. Examples of transnational crimes include: human trafficking, people smuggling, smuggling/trafficking of goods (such as arms trafficking and drug trafficking and illegal animal and plant products and other goods prohibited on environmental grounds (e.g. banned ozone depleting substances), sex slavery, terrorism offences, torture and apartheid. Transnational organized crime (TOC) refers specifically to transnational crime carried out by organized crime organizations.

Transnational crimes may also be crimes of customary international law or international crimes when committed in certain circumstances. For example, they may in certain situations constitute crimes against humanity. The international community is confronted with an increasing level of transnational crime in which criminal conduct in one country has an impact on another or even several others. Drug trafficking, human trafficking, computer crimes, terrorism, and a host of other crimes can involve actors operating outside the borders of a country which might have a significant interest in stemming the activity in question and prosecuting the perpetrator. Contemporary



transnational crimes take advantage of globalization, trade liberalization and exploding new technologies to perpetrate diverse crimes and to move money, goods, services and people instantaneously for purposes of perpetrating violence for political ends. (Stigall, 2013)

Moreover, problems of weakened states and transnational crime create an unholy confluence that is uniquely challenging. When a criminal operates outside the territory of an offended state, the offended state might ordinarily appeal to the state from which the criminal is operating to take some sort of action, such as to prosecute the offender domestically or extradite the offender so that he or she may face punishment in the offended state. Nonetheless, in situations in which a government is unable (or unwilling) to cooperate in the arrest or prosecution of a criminal, the offended state has few options for recourse.

### **Concept of Security**

Security is the degree of resistance to, or protection from, harm. It applies to any vulnerable and valuable asset, such as a person, dwelling, community, nation, or organization. As noted by the Institute for Security and Open Methodologies (ISECOM) in the OSSTMM security provides "a form of protection where a separation is created between the assets and the threat." These separations are generically called "controls," and sometimes include changes to the asset or the threat. National security is the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic power, diplomacy, power projection and political power. The concept developed mostly in the United State after World War II. Initially focusing on military might, it now encompasses a broad range of facets, all of which impinge on the non-military or economic security of the nation and the values espoused by the national society. Accordingly, in order to possess national security, a nation needs to possess economic security, energy security, environmental security, etc. Security threats involve not only conventional foes such as other nation-state but also non-state actors such as violent non-state actors, narcotic cartels, multinational corporations and nongovernmental organizations; some authorities include natural disasters and events causing severe environmental damage in this category.

### **Nature of Border Routes in Nigeria**

The major border countries with Nigeria are Cameroon (1,690 kilometres) in the east, Niger (1,497 kilometres) in the north, Benin (773 kilometres) in the west, and Chad (87 kilometres) in the northeast. Most of these border areas are either mountainous or in the jungle which makes effective surveillance in the borders very difficult (Mustapha, 2004).

In these major borders, there are over hundreds of illegal routes in Nigeria that link or lead to some neighbouring African countries. Nigeria's borders are massive with hundreds of footpaths crisscrossing to neighbouring countries of Cameroon, Chad and Niger with links to Mali, Libya and Sudan. From conservative estimates by locals, there are well over 250 footpaths from Damaturu/Maiduguri axis that link or lead directly to Cameroon, Chad or Niger. These paths are mostly unknown by security agencies, are unmanned, and unprotected and thus serve as leaky routes for arms and ammunition trafficking into Nigeria. It is disheartening and unfortunate that the "merchants of death" have since devised methods use to beat security agencies at the borders and through the footpaths. These methods include the use of camels, donkeys and cows to traffic arms, ammunition and drugs, like cocaine into Nigeria. The fact that the weapons are small, light and collapsible makes it easy to be concealed and moved on camels and donkeys' back in specially



crafted skin or thatched bags mainly meant for the illegal “expedition” unexpected, unsuspected and therefore undetected. Similarly, some cows and grains merchants in the North- East sub-region of the country, devices means of hiding cache of arms and ammunition in empty fuel tankers, under vehicles’ engines and inside bags of grains mostly undetected by security agencies at the affected border posts. The “grains” are transported in large numbers via trucks, trailers, Lorries and old model pickup vans and jeeps with little attention given to them by security agents, (Sagir Musa,2010). Further analysis on security challenges can be drawn from the series of a report on border criminal activities resulting from the outnumbered illegal route as against the Legal route which lacks adequate management coverage as illustrated below.

**Table1.** Showing the outnumbered illegal route as against the legal route in Nigeria.

Legitimacy	Routes	Activity
Legal	84	Majorly importation of goods and services (free market)
Illegal	1,978	Majorly illegal entry, smuggling of cars, arms Smuggling, exportation of drugs and Human trafficking.

Source: Osimen, (2017).

Nigerian informal cross-border trade is estimated at around 20% of its GDP and includes trade with all its neighbours, especially Niger and Cameroon. Many of these neighbour countries are dependent on the openness of the Nigerian (illegal) market. Nigeria has already taken advantage of this in the past by using its border policies to manifest its power. In 2003, when the border between Nigeria and the Benin Republic for instance was closed by Obasanjo, the Beninese economy found itself in high distress. A key commodity illegally imported to Benin is petrol. Cheaper in Nigeria, petrol is smuggled into Benin in large quantities. This contraband business is an important source of income for many of the border community members. In 2004, 73% of the Beninese market was satisfied by illegally imported petrol which is more readily available in remote regions and more affordable than the petrol offered by the state-owned stations. For some other commodities, such as agricultural goods, the volume of informal cross-border trade between Nigeria and its neighbours is estimated to be ten times higher than declared at customs. Informal cross-border trade can be seen as a positive or negative phenomenon, depending on the viewpoint taken. On the one hand, it is a manifestation of ancient solidarity between people that were separated by colonial borders. It can be seen as an expression of entrepreneurship and economic dynamism that is healthy for any economy and which secures the livelihood of many families. On the other hand, custom evasion deprives the state of important revenues which contributes to the weakening of public institutions and the state's legitimacy (Afrika & Ajumbo, 2012).

Informal trade, both legal and illegal is the most common form of trans-border activity in the region. Less common, but still important is a transnational organized crime (TOC), which has been growing in the region over the past few years. Despite increasing sub-regional and international cooperation, criminal cross-border activities remain a key variable of instability in the sub-region. It is only in recent years, that the complexity of TOC has steeply increased. This development has occurred parallel to an increased commitment toward the free movement of persons and goods in the ECOWAS region that is designed to stimulate growth and stability in the region.

**Table2.** Routes through which contraband goods are smuggled into and out of Nigeria

Routes of Smuggling	Items smuggled into Nigeria	Items smuggled out of Nigeria	Border
<b>Idiroko Border</b>	Rice, apple, frozen foods, second hand cloths, textile materials, used tyres, vehicles, vegetable oil, spirit, flours, arms and ammunitions	Petroleum products	Nigeria- Benin
<b>Ilela</b>	Wheat, flour, sugar, confectionaries, spaghetti/noodles, used vehicles, textiles, foot wears etc.	Milletts, maize, petroleum products, fresh fruits, cement	Nigeria-Niger (Sokoto)
<b>Jibia</b>	Rice, palm oil, spaghetti, macaroni, used vehicles and tyres	Cement, petroleum products, woods and furniture, groundnut oil, beans, yam, sugar, corn.	Nigeria-Niger (kastina)
<b>Mfum</b>	The presence of the military at the Bakassi Pennisula has temporarily led to diversion of smuggling from this area.		Nigeria-Cameroon border (Cross River)
<b>Bele Sahoda</b>		Petroleum product	Nigeria Cameroon border (Adamawa)
<b>Gaboru-Ngala</b>	Arms and ammunitions, rice, textile, beverages, used vehicles.	Petroleum product, grains, drugs/Indian hemp.	Nigeria-Niger (Borno)
<b>Seme</b>	Arms and ammunitions, used vehicles and parts, rice, textile and frozen food (turkey, chicken and fish).	Petroleum products	Nigeria-Benin (Lagos)
<b>Coastal area</b>	Textiles, arms and ammunitions and human trafficking.	With the withdrawal of subsidies in petroleum products, land smuggling in this product has been reduced. However, it is still lucrative through the creeks to other African countries.	Linkin up Cote-d'ivoire, Benin, Equatorial, Guinea, and Central Africa.

**Source:** Human Rights Watch (2003). *The Warri Crisis: Fueling Violence. Lagos Human Rights Watch. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/sites/defaultfiles/reports/nigeria1103.pdf>*





Despite long-standing ECOWAS plans for a customs union, little progress has been made, largely because of Nigeria's unwillingness to participate. It has maintained one of the most protectionist trade policies in the world, with very high tariff spikes and a large number of import bans. Unlike Benin and Togo, Nigeria has relatively developed but often inefficient manufacturing and agricultural industries, with powerful interest groups favouring protection.

The highly discretionary application of policies is also notorious. Recently, some progress has been registered in ECOWAS's efforts to liberalise, with Nigeria participating in negotiations (World Bank, 2009). Nigeria had insisted on a fifth tariff band of 50 per cent. Whether or not an agreement will be reached and if so, how many products will be included in the fifth band and the extent of Nigerian implementation will be crucial for the future of Togo's and Benin's transit re-export trade. In October 2008, Nigeria removed 25 products from its list of prohibited imports, including some meat products, flowers, cassava, fresh and dried fruits, wheat, cocoa butter, biscuits, beer, some truck tyres, and selected textile products, and bicycle frames. In many cases, it eliminated import bans that had been introduced in the last few years, returning the situation to roughly what it was in 2004. The most important remained in place, however, including frozen poultry, textiles, clothing, footwear and used cars, although the allowed age for used car imports was extended from 8 to 10 years. In 2017, a new regulation has been made to domesticate all vehicles to custom clearance, which means that all incoming vehicles must pass through legal means and must have all the necessary documents for clearance. For a number of other important goods such as rice, cigarettes and sugar, high tariffs remain.

### **Border Management and Perennial Security Challenges in Nigeria**

Border security is a factor of border management. International borders are a security issue for all governments. Border security and the management of borders in ways that promote national security have generally been given low priority in Africa and Nigeria in particular compared to the security provided for political elites and their assets in the national capitals and other urban areas far removed from the borders. While national security strategies of the country are left to be suffered. The negligence of border security and poor, border management in Nigeria have largely contributed to a prevalence of threats such as cross-border crimes; Nigeria's border security issues are distinctive when compared to the other countries of the world. Because of this fact, these borders are not monitored, patrolled or controlled. Consequently, these borders have become transit points for smuggling and other illegal cross-border activities (Martin, 2011). In other words, most, if not all the borders in Nigeria are transnational crime zones. The conundrum of national security in Nigeria has been compounded by the porous nature of Nigerian borders. When borders cease to function effectively, different forms of crimes prevail and the security of a state or region is put in serious jeopardy because borders constitute the most visible sign of the sovereignty of a State on its territory. Border management is therefore crucial to a State's involvement in the protection of its population against what it considers threats ranging from migration, international terrorism, and multiform trafficking as in human beings, drugs, raw materials or SALW (Jihan & Cedric, 2010).

Interestingly, Nigeria's border points especially in the North-east and North-west no longer perform their strategic functions but serve as channels for smuggling all sorts of illicit materials into the country. The current security challenges in Nigeria where the nation's Northern borders with Niger and Chad witness the unrestrained incursion of armed bandits to terrorize innocent citizens in towns



and villages on the Nigerian side of the border calls for the need to put in place a rather effective border control system (Makka, 1989)

### **Key Issues in Border Management in Nigeria**

- i. **Human Trafficking:** The trafficking of children for the purpose of prostitution and some form of exploitative labour is a widespread issue in Nigeria. Foreign children trafficked to Nigeria come mainly from Benin and Togo (an estimated 96%, with 90% of that figure coming from Benin alone), Cote d'Ivoire and Niger. Children as young as five and six years trafficked from Benin have been found working in exploitive conditions in Nigeria mines in the Western part of the country. Trafficked girls are used for domestic services or street trading as well as commercial sexual exploitation while boys are generally forced to work on plantations or in commercial farming, construction, quarries and mines or engaged in petty crimes and the drug trade (UNDOC, 2006). With respect to women trafficked to Europe for the purpose of sexual exploitation, an estimated 94% are from Edo State while the remaining are from Delta, Kano and Borno State.
- ii. **Arms Smuggling:** Over 70% of about eight to 10 million illegal weapons in West Africa is in Nigeria. The high rate of illegal procurement and use of SALWs in Nigeria is indexed by the intermittent seizure of SALWs by security and border control officers, the frequency of deployment of these arms in conflict and crime scenes, and the level of human casualty and material damage recorded in the aftermath of its use in the country. For instance, the number of arms surrendered during the disarmament and demobilization (DD) phase of the Amnesty Programme for the Niger Delta militants in 2009 gave an idea of the quantum of SALWs proliferation in the country. The Amnesty initiative saw over 15000 militants surrender arms at the expiration of the DD phase of the Amnesty. Weapons recovered during the disarmament process included 2760 assorted guns, 287445 ammunitions of different calibre, 18 gun-boats, 763 dynamite sticks, 1090 dynamite caps, and 3155 magazines and several other military accessories, such as dynamite cables, bulletproof jackets and jackknives. It is widely believed that militants only surrendered a small fraction of their arms, as most of them doubted the government's genuine commitment to the amnesty. The regular interception of illegal arms trafficking within and across the borders by security agencies also reveals the worrisome dimension that arms proliferation has recently assumed in the country. (Wellington, 2006.)
- iii. **Drug Trafficking:** Drug trafficking has become a common phenomenon in West African countries like Nigeria, the Gambia, Ghana, Niger and Burkina Faso. The reason is not far-fetched. Profits from drugs and guns reportedly exceed that of human trafficking. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime alarmingly revealed that the volume of cocaine transiting the West African region is roughly 50 tons annually (United Nations, 2008). The commonly trafficked drugs include heroin, cannabis, cocaine and synthetic drugs. The drug menace became one of Nigeria's major security challenges right at the dawn of independence with discoveries of cannabis farms in the country, arrests of Nigerian cannabis traffickers abroad, and reports of psychological disorders suspected to be associated with cannabis use. In the early 1980s however, the problem of drug trafficking became a major problem following the alleged involvement of military personnel in heroin trafficking in Nigeria (Obot, 2004). Nigeria is a major source of heroin and cocaine.



Nigerian drug dealers use large numbers of small-scale smugglers, each carrying a tiny quantity of heroin, sometimes packed in condoms and then swallowed. The major routes of Nigerian traffickers are Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Senegal and South Africa for heroin and cocaine destined for Europe and the United States (Sabrina et al., 1998). Nigeria and Senegal are the sources of the greatest volumes of cocaine seized on commercial air flights (United Nations, 2008). The menace of drug trafficking in and out of the country had necessitated the enactment of several drug laws and policies. Drug abuse has become prevalent in the country amid daunting security challenges. The drugs come into the country as a result of the porous borders and poor security in the airports. According to official figures from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), 37% of Kano State's population is drug abusers and the state also has the highest number of people arrested for illicit drug trafficking (Ogene, 2013).

- iv. Smuggling of Contrabands: (untaxed cigarettes and alcohol) is a common occurrence over most borders. The smuggling of contraband goods and undocumented aliens is usually done with the connivance of border personnel (customs & immigration). Auto theft—in Nigeria, is also a serious matter mostly along the Benin Republic is on a high side to the level that over 100 vehicles are usually stolen in Nigeria per month to neighbouring countries, mainly Land Cruisers, four-wheel drives, Mercedes-Benz, Toyota and BMWs. The criminals steal and smuggled these vehicles across the borders with Nigeria each month. This is done with the assistance of border communities who “hide the vehicles and provide information on local law enforcement patrols” for a fee of between \$150 - 200 and Naira as the case may be.

### **Conclusion**

Border issues or boundary politics remains an integral part of citizens' livelihood, economic activities, movement of goods, regional cooperation and territorial integrity (sovereignty of any nation) and every approach to its management and proper settlement should take all the risks and benefits into account. Though it has been observed that interstate disputes may occur with or without reference to border disputes and that border disputes may occur as a result of border clashes without contention over border demarcations or as a result of conflicts over jurisdictions and control of off-shore islands which are not land boundaries, the fact remains that border activities have a great implication on a nation's integrity, even when it has little or no economic implication on its citizens. Cross-border crimes contribute significantly to the destabilization of political, economic and social activities in the ECOWAS sub-region. Transnational criminal activities in West Africa are rather one of the symptoms of larger underlying structural problems than the cause of insecurity.

Over the years, Nigeria has initiated measures to check firearm proliferation. The Firearms Act of 1959 (amended) spelt out prohibitions on use, exemptions, and licensing before possession, manufacture and sales of firearms, including punishment for offenders. There are also laws against robbery and the use of firearms for the same purpose as well as committees to check proliferation. Regional coordination has improved in many areas. For example, regarding small arms (Convention on small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and related materials, June 2006), human trafficking (Plan of action and declaration) and narcotics (the newly established ECOWAS Drug Control Unit). It has also focused on terrorism, under the auspices of ECOWAS, with the recent



adoption of the regional Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Implementation Plan. However, it results from the absence of significant improvement of these problems that “...the underlying factors contributing to the outbreak of these crimes as well as the complex linkages between them” have not yet been sufficiently addressed. This is necessary to achieve significant improvement of these problems. Nigeria’s borders are “very porous” and the current 20,000 customs personnel in the country are inadequate to police them.

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