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An Appraisal of the Strategies Used by the Joint Task Force (JTF) in Counter Terrorism in Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study appraised the strategies employed by the Joint Task Force (JTF) in counter-terrorism operations in Borno State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to: find out the strategies employed by the JTF in counter-terrorism, ascertain the extent to which terrorist attacks were prevented, and assess public perceptions of the effectiveness of these strategies in countering terrorism. The study adopted the Situational Crime Prevention Theory as its theoretical framework. Methodologically, the research design is mixed-method. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires administered to 984 respondents, while qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews with 18 stakeholders, including JTF personnel, community leaders, and members of the Civilian Joint Task Force. Findings revealed that the JTF employed multiple complementary strategies, including roadblocks and stop-and-search operations, intelligence gathering and information sharing, surveillance, patrols, curfew enforcement, enhanced access control to public places, and community policing. The study found that a majority of respondents believed these strategies had positively impacted counter-terrorism efforts, with majority acknowledging their contribution to reducing terrorist activities. Respondents further estimated that while numerous terrorist attacks occurred. The JTF successfully prevented between 11 and 19 attacks. The findings also indicated that the JTF's operations contributed significantly to the rescue of abducted persons, the recapture of communities previously occupied by insurgents, and the restoration of public confidence in security institutions. However, there are few challenges as terrorist attacks have not been completely eradicated. It therefore recommends that intelligence-led operations should be enhanced through improved; provision of adequate funding, modern equipment, armored vehicles, communication gadgets, and welfare packages to enhance the operational capabilities and morale of security personnel, etc.*

Keywords: *Appraisal, Joint Task Force, Counter-Terrorism.*

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Introduction

Terrorism is a global problem that exposed many countries to various security threats with Nigeria suffering from series of terrorist activities unleashed by different groups. As a result, Nigeria is bedeviled with a high level of insecurity, which is attributed to the activities of these terrorist groups. The negative effects of the activities of the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger-Delta (MEND), the Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Boko Haram group and the recent Armed Banditry have entirely changed the security situation of the country and tarnished its image in the eyes of other countries across the globe. It affects the social and economic wellbeing of people and poses threats in the minds of the people as well. The violent activities of

these groups led to loss of many lives and the destruction of properties (Isyaku et al. 2018). Attacks launched by terrorists on people, communities, governments and infrastructure became a major source of worry, tension and panic among people around the globe (Amnesty International, 2016).

The emergence and activities of terrorist groups in the country have also triggered one of the worst humanitarian crises in the 21st century and led to a massive displacement of people, causing hunger, food insecurity, a high level of child mortality rate and deaths (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2017). Despite the state of emergency declared in north-eastern Nigeria, *Boko Haram* terrorists intensified their operation in the three north-eastern States, particularly Borno State, and between 2010 and 2019 after Muhammad Yusuf (the first leader of the *Boko Haram*) was killed in June 2009. This led to the proliferation of terrorist activities in Borno and its neighboring state particularly Yobe and Adamawa states (Sarki, 2026).

In view of the spate of terrorist activities that bedeviled northeastern Nigeria, the federal government employed various strategies, ranging from amnesty negotiations to the declaration of state of emergency, among others, as counter-terrorism measures to address the menace of the *Boko Haram* insurgency in the country but still the insurgents continued to launch terrorist attacks on the public and security forces as well. This attracted the attention of both government and non-governmental organizations, nationally and internationally, on the need to counter terrorist activities with a view to restore peace and maintain the security of lives and properties in the country and provide an enabling environment for people to engage in their routine activities without fear of any threat. In view of the increase in terrorist activities and its devastating effects, Nigeria Government employ the use of the Joint Task Force to counter the activities of terrorists in the affected states.

The Joint Task Force (JTF) maintains surveillance, especially in high profile areas, such as airports, government agencies and other public places, such as schools, markets and motor stations. The operations of the JTF in hotbed states have resulted in the arrest and killing of scores of group members in different locations (Osumah, 2013). The structure of the JTF comprises the Military, the Police, Nigerian Immigration Service, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corp and Nigerian Custom Service, who carried out a designed joint operation to combat the menace of terrorism (Opuri and Etekpe, 2013). The JTF has played some roles in countering terrorism by taking some proactive approaches to deal with the problem of *Boko Haram* terrorism that is prevalent in north-eastern Nigeria, particularly Borno State (Blanchard, 2016). By implication, the JTF is designed to perform the roles of an internal security operator.

In line with the foregoing, this research intends to assess the effectiveness of strategies employed by the Joint Task Force (JTF) in countering terrorism in Borno State.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives are to:

1. Find out strategies employed by the Joint Task Force (JTF) in countering terrorism in Borno State.
2. Ascertain the estimated number of attacks prevented by the JTF using the strategies in countering terrorism in Borno State.
3. Assess the effectiveness of the strategies in countering terrorism in Borno State.

Conceptual Clarification

Terrorism

The concept of terrorism overlaps with insurgency, as they share some common characteristics but differ in some respects. However, it is important to recognize that terrorism is only one tool used by

organizations that wage asymmetrical warfare against a superior foe to conduct armed conflict against a militarily stronger enemy when the organization launching the armed struggle is not yet at a stage where insurgent or conventional warfare is viable (Stewart, 2014). Terrorism can also be used to supplement insurgency or conventional warfare. In such cases, it is employed to keep the enemy off balance and distracted principally by conducting strikes against vulnerable targets at the enemy's rear. In terms of differences, Findley and Young (2012) and the Terrorism Research resource document (n.d) posit that terrorism is considered as a method of pursuing a political goal whereas insurgency is believed to be a movement aimed at realizing a specific political goal that is ultimately targeted at overthrowing an existing regime. On the target audience, insurgent targets are at specific individuals and groups, which make it selective and discriminate, while terrorist targets are non-selective/indiscriminate (Ganor, 2002). This implies that terrorists do not have a vivid selection as to who their victim should be but rather make a random target. On the other hand, Sambanis (2008) maintained that unlike insurgency, terrorism does not directly challenge government or its forces but strives to change perceptions as to the legitimacy of the government through their acts of violence among the target audience. Several terrorist groups exist with different motives and modes of operation and targets. Some among the terrorist groups that operate in Sub-Saharan Africa include Al- Shabaab in Somalia, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in the Sahara, the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda and *Boko Haram* in Nigeria (Kaufman, 2012). These groups embarked on a series of violent attacks that claim many lives and resulted in the destruction of properties of unquantifiable amounts.

In view of the above, the concept of terrorism has no generally accepted definition even among terrorism experts. From the etymological concept, the word "terrorism" comes from Latin and French words: *terrere* and *terrorisme*, meaning "to frighten" and "state rule by terror*",* respectively. Thus, the concept of terrorism has been variously defined by different scholars. White (2002) argued that nobody has been able to produce an exact definition. This is because of the nature of terrorism has what he called "mutation forms" over the course of history. Gibbs (2012) also argues that the definitions of terrorism are controversial for reasons other than conceptual problems because acts of terrorism promote the condemnation of its actors. In view of this, Gibbs contends that a definition may reflect ideological or even political bias.

Chijioke (2013) described terrorism as a psychological warfare propelled using fear or panic, intimidation, force or threats of violence on individuals with the intention of forcing the state, its institutions or organizations or individuals to act against their wishes. Enders & Sandler (2012) define terrorism as the premeditated use of threat or violence by individuals or sub-national groups to achieve a political or social objective through the intimidation of a large audience beyond that of the immediate victims. This implies that terrorism usually adopts the use threat or violence to induce fear in individuals to make them incapable of retaliating. Accordingly, Shabayany (2012:33) sees terrorism as a fanatical war waged by a puritan few against the massive army of innocent people of different class, gender and religions. In other words, terrorism is a deliberate attack on civilians by state and non-state-actors through instilling panic and pandemonium among people via sustained attacks on both hard and soft targets aimed at achieving political or economic goals.

Shor (2011:51) defined terrorism "as the strategic use of violence or threats of violence by non-state political actors against non-combatants for symbolic purposes, usually with the intention of influencing policies". This implies that terrorists usually embark on their activities to have influence or take control of a particular system in the society. Pearsall & Trumble (2006) also defined terrorism as the systematic use of violence and intimidation to coerce a government or community into acceding to specific political demands. According to Stepanova (2008), terrorism is the form of violence that most closely integrates one-sided violence against civilians with asymmetrical violent confrontation against a stronger opponent, be it a state or a group of states. Also, Laqueur (1979)

sees terrorism as the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective when innocent people are targeted. In the same vein, Jenkin (1985) defines terrorism as the use or threatened use of force designed to bring about political changes. Thus, terrorism is a tool used in achieving a specific outcome by using force or violence on one segment of society with the primary goal of causing fear in the larger society to make change in that society (Garrison, 2004).

Terrorism can be domestic and international. Domestic terrorism is politically motivated violence perpetrated by the residents of a country within that country (Dyson, 2001). On the other hand, international terrorism is politically oriented violence perpetrated by residents or the representatives of one or more countries against the interests of another country or by members of a violent politically directed organization not affiliated with the country being attacked (Dyson, 2001). The disaster and serious damage unleashed by the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in the United States testify that the act of terrorism has no borders. Thus, terrorism and other violent acts continue to be on the rise with heart-breaking losses across the globe. In view of this, various measures/strategies have been put in place by governments and the public to counter terrorist activities.

Counter-terrorism

The concept of counterterrorism (CT) has been defined and explained in different ways by various scholars. Chailand (1987) defined it as a response to terrorism and one of the crucial outcomes of it. Accordingly, Udoh (2016) defined it as the techniques, tactics and strategies employed by the government, military institution, law enforcement and intelligence agencies or citizens to combat the activities of terrorists. This may include both the diplomatic and confrontational techniques that can counter the activities of terror in society. Counter-terrorism, as the act of safeguarding homeland security, particularly the protection of unarmed civilians through the application of safety measures, intelligence, law enforcement, interagency synergy and the utilization of force, when necessary (Bamidele, 2016:111), implies that the use of force is not always necessary but only when it appears to be the last resort. According to Yoroms (2013:437), counterterrorism entails the efforts made by the state and international community to tackle, prevent, preempt and deter terrorists from achieving their premeditated violent attacks against unarmed civilians through any means available, including the use of force. This prompted the use of intelligence operations through the NIA in partnership with the security agencies of neighboring countries and the DSS that spearheaded intelligence gathering within Nigeria to decimate the group, frustrate their plans and eliminate its core leadership elements (Umar, 2013).

Similarly, Imobighe and Eguavoen (2006:9) define counterterrorism as the various forms of responses aimed at pre-empting, preventing and eliminating terrorists' activities. This involves the use of intelligence and counterintelligence as well as the military and paramilitary operations aimed at dealing with all forms of threats posed by terrorists. Stepanova (2003) asserts that counterterrorism is the dependence on the specialized capabilities of intelligent operatives and the counterintelligence sector. Its primary preoccupation is to rupture and preempt the activities of terrorists and their networks. Hence, counter-terrorism in this regard connotes all the concerted efforts aimed at identifying the threats posed by terrorist cells or networks using credible intelligence capabilities to identify intercept and preempt the movement of terrorists to break their command-and-control system. In other words, counterterrorism is also described as a form of security, which involves both the defensive measures put in place by states to reduce vulnerability to terrorist acts. As observed by Steven and Gunaratna (2004:102), counterterrorism is the offensive measure aimed at containing, deterring and responding violently to terrorist activities complementary with any contingency measures used in responding to terrorist attacks and limiting their space of operations. Smith (2008) sees counterterrorism as the methods and techniques adapted to deny or deter a terror(s) from using terrorism-based tactics against his/their opponents.

This implies that counterterrorism is aimed at frustrating the efforts of terrorists in attacking government or innocent citizens. Manu (2021) described it as a coordinated effort aimed at addressing the root causes and the manifest repercussion of violence perpetrated by individual/group(s) to achieve their destructive objectives.

Joint Task Force (JTF)

A "force" generally refers to an organized body of armed personnel, equipment, and units working toward military or strategic goals. A "task force" is a more focused, temporary grouping formed specifically to achieve a particular mission. Once that mission is accomplished, the task force is expected to dissolve, and its members return to their regular duties (Olayiwola et al. 2025). In contrast to permanent military structures, a task force is temporary and mission-driven. A Joint Task Force (JTF) takes this further by combining two or more security services, such as the Army, Navy, Air Force, Police, and State Security Service (SSS); into a single collaborative unit. This integration allows for the pooling of diverse skills and resources to achieve specific objectives efficiently. The JTF model is flexible and rapid, enabling quick deployment of multinational or multi-service teams under unified command. While primarily designed for military operations, it can be adapted to various missions (Olayiwola et al. 2025).

In the context of counterterrorism in Borno State, Nigeria, the JTF concept is particularly relevant. It explains how different security agencies operate together under a temporary, mission-specific structure to combat insurgency. This demonstrates why a coordinated, joint approach is essential for addressing complex security threats like those posed by Boko Haram and other terrorist groups in the region.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts Situational Crime Prevention Theory (SCPT) which has its roots from both classical and modern criminological theories, such as the rational choice theory, the opportunity theory and the routine activity theory. The development of situational prevention was stimulated by the results of a work on correctional treatments undertaken in the 1960s and 1970s by the Home Office Research Unit, the British government's criminological research department (Clarke and Cornish, 1983). As an offshoot of environmental criminology, the situational crime prevention theory argues that the nature of criminal opportunities influences the amount, nature and location of crime. The theory suggests that crime can be explained and controlled without much interest in the offender’s motivation (Cullen et al, 2014). Accordingly, three things are central to situational crime prevention; they include the offenders’ skill, opportunity and a supportive environment.

The theory became more prominent with the work of Clarke (1997 cited in Cullen 2014). Clarke argues that criminologists pay too much attention to the origins of criminal dispositions. He claimed that this limited interest is problematic because it ignores the role of opportunity in both cause and prevention (Cullen et al 2014). However, situational crime prevention is concerned with a reduction in opportunities at a particular time and place. As an opportunity reduction center, it provides a pragmatic response to crime that emphasizes on what can most easily be achieved through denying potential offenders the opportunity to perpetrate their illegal acts (Cohen and Felson, 1979). Clarke (1997) believes that situational prevention strategies should focus on making the choice of crime less attractive. He concentrates his attention on the features of the situational environment that might be changed to reduce the likely payoff from potential crime. Clarke identified sixteen techniques of situational crime prevention, which he categorized under four main approaches:

a. Increasing perceived effort through target hardening; access control; deflecting offenders and controlling facilitators.

b. Increasing perceived risks through entry/exit screening; formal surveillance; surveillance by employees and natural surveillance.

c. Reducing anticipated reward through target removal; identifying property; reducing temptation and denying benefit.

d. Inducing guilt or shame through rule setting: strengthening moral condemnation; controlling disinhibitors and facilitating compliance.

In view of the above approaches, the JTF can deal with the problem of terrorism by increasing the perceived risks of terrorists through access control to deny them access to public places where they usually launch their deadly attacks and engaging in human surveillance to detect and disrupt the evil plans of terrorists as a proactive measure that could deter the occurrence of terrorist activities. The imposition of a curfew can also help the JTF in ensuring crime opportunity reduction, as people are forced to be in-doors. That may pave the way for the easy identification and apprehension of the terrorists that may attempt to launch attacks.

One of the fundamental criticisms or weaknesses of situational crime prevention is its inability to address the root cause of crime or the offender's motive for committing a crime, which is very vital in providing practical solutions to crime. Another weakness of the theory is its restriction on the reduction of opportunities at a particular place and time without considering the offenders' likelihood of changing location, targets and even the nature and strategy of committing crime.

Methodology

Brief History of the Study Area

Borno State today was originally part of the defunct Northeastern State, which was one of the twelve states initially created in 1967. Known as 'Home of Peace' it occupies the greater part of the Chad Basin and is dominated by the Kanuri ethnic tribe. The State was known for its peaceful and hospitable nature despite its diverse differences in terms of history, religion, culture and languages, amongst others (Abubakar, 2017). It is divided into twenty-seven local government areas, which include Abadan, Askira-Uba, Bama, Bayo, Biu, Chibok, Damboa, Dikwa, Gubio, Guzamala, Gwoza, Hawul, Jere, Kaga, Kala/Balge, Kukawa, Konduga, Kwaya-Kusar, Mafa, Maiduguri, Magumeri, Marte, Mobbar, Monguno, Ngala, Nganzai and Shani.

Borno State has an estimated population of about 5,875,471 based on the 2020 NPC projected population and a population density of approximately 60 inhabitants per square kilometer (NPC, 2020). It is quite heterogeneous with dominant ethnic groups, such as the Kanuri (they inhabit Abadam, Mobbar, Gubio, Guzamala, Kukawa, Nganzai, Monguno, Marte, Ngala, Kaka-Balga, Dikwa, Bama, Konduga, Mafa, Kaga, Magumeri, Damboa and Maiduguri LGAs). Other ethnic groups are the Shuwa (known as Arabs, they inhabit Mafa, Jere, Marte, Monguno, Dikwa, Ngala, Kala-Balge, Bama and Koguda LGAs), the Hausa (Askira and Maiduguri LGAs), the Babur-Bura (Biu, Hawul, Kwaya-Kusar, Bayo and Shani LGAs), the Mandara (Gwoza LGA), the Chibok (Chibok LGA), the Ngoshe, the Guduf, the Tera and the Fulani-speaking Kanuri, Shuwa, Guduf, Marghi, Babur, Fulani, Waha and Hausa. Most inhabitants of the state are farmers producing crops, such as millet, rice, cassava, date palms, fruits, vegetables, sorghum, wheat, sweet potato, sugarcane, groundnut, cotton, etc. (Abubakar, 2017).

Research Site

The study will be conducted throughout the three senatorial districts in Borno state with Kaga and Magumeri (from Borno North), Biu and Bayo (from Borno South) and Maiduguri Metropolitan Council and Jere local government areas (from Borno Central).

Research Subject

The study concentrated on the three senatorial districts in Borno State where two (2) Local governments areas were selected from each of the senatorial districts. Members of the public, community leaders (i.e traditional and religious leaders), members of the Joint Task Force (JTF), and the Civilian Joint Task Force were the subjects for this study.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The study selected a sample of one thousand and two (1002) respondents. This is in line with Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) assertion that in a population of between 10,000,000 and 300,000,000 people, a minimum of 384 can be selected to represent the entire population. In view of this 1002 respondents were selected to represent the population of the study area. For this study, multi-stage cluster sampling technique, purposive and disproportionate sampling methods were adopted. At the first stage, the three senatorial districts in the state were selected to serve as clusters. This is to have a true representation from all parts of the state. At the second stage, purposive sampling was used in selecting two (2) local governments from each of the three senatorial districts because of the prevalence of *Boko Haram* terrorism and the visibility of the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the area. This comprised of Kaga and Magumeri (from Borno North), Biu and Bayo (from Borno South) and Maiduguri Metropolitan Council and Jere local government areas (from Borno Central). At the third stage, four (4) political wards were selected from each of the six local government areas that were selected as clusters using simple random sampling (SRS). At the fourth stage, availability sampling technique was used in administering questionnaires to thirty-one (31) respondents from each of the four (4) political wards that were selected from the six (6) local governments areas. This gave a total of nine hundred and eighty-four (984) respondents for the quantitative data and was done based on the availability of the respondents during the conduct of the study.

The questionnaire contains structured questions, which comprised of open and closed-ended questions (with multiple choice and fill-in questions). The questions revolve around issues raised by the specific objectives of the research to have relevant findings at the end of the study and was written in English. The administration of the questionnaire was done by 6 trained research assistants employed (1 from each of the 6 local governments) to elicit relevant information concerning the issues under study. In doing so, the research assistants interpreted the questions to respondents that do not understand English.

For the in-depth interview, eighteen (18) participants were purposively selected and interviewed from the six local governments areas that were selected from the three senatorial districts because they have first-hand information concerning the phenomenon under study. These comprised six (6) Joint Task Force personnel, six (6) Community leaders and six (6) members of Civilian Joint Task force in the study area (i.e. 6 interviews with members of the JTF while 2 interviews with community leaders and civilian JTF in each of the six local government areas). Therefore, the sub-total of the respondents for the quantitative data (984) and the sub-total of the participants for the qualitative data (18) gave total sample of one thousand and two respondents (1002) for the study.

Method of Data Collection

This study used a mixed method technique that involved collection, analyzing and integrating quantitative and qualitative data within the same research topic. Quantitative and qualitative techniques was employed. The study adopted a survey method where a questionnaire was used to elicit data from the respondents. The justification for using this technique was to enable the researcher to produce data from a large sample of the population in the study area. In view of this, nine hundred and eighty-four (984) questionnaires were administered in the six local government areas that selected from the three senatorial districts in the state. One hundred and sixty-four (164)

respondents were administered with the questionnaire in each of the six (6) local governments that were selected from the three (3) senatorial districts via availability sampling. The questionnaire contains both open and closed-ended questions that were designed in line with the research questions. Six research assistants were employed for the study, one from each of the six local government areas selected from the three (3) senatorial districts, to help the researcher in administering the questionnaire and conducting the interview.

For the qualitative method, the study used In-Depth interview (IDI) as the qualitative technique of data collection. It was conducted with some selected individuals and involve the collection of data through verbal interaction. The respondents for the in-depth interview include stakeholders, such as the JTF personnel, community leaders and members of the Civilian Joint Task Force in the study area. Thus, 6 interviews were conducted with members of the JTF while 2 with community leaders and civilian JTF in each of the six local governments. The IDI was done with the aid of recording devices and drafting materials. The justification for using qualitative technique is to enable the researcher to elicit in-depth information concerning the phenomenon under study from the relevant stakeholders.

Method of Data Analysis

The data to be generated through the administration of the questionnaire (quantitative data) was analyze using descriptive statistics through the application of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 22). The data is presented using frequency distribution tables and percentages. The qualitative data to be generated through the in-depth interviews were transcribed and presented in line with the study objectives to support or disagree with the quantitative data for complementarities.

Ethical Considerations

In adhering to the ethical principles of the research, informed consent of the respondents and participants was sought for voluntary participation. Moreso, their confidentiality and anonymity were also ensured during the research.

Results and Discussions

This section presented the data collected, analysed, interpreted and discussed. It comprises of the quantitative data generated via 916 out of the 984 questionnaires administered and the qualitative data generated via 12 in-depth interviews conducted with relevant stakeholders.

Section A: Strategies Employed by the Joint Task Force (JTF) in Countering Terrorism in Borno State

This section presents the data on the Strategies used by the Joint Task Force (JTF) in counter-terrorist operation in Borno State.

Table 1: Security Agencies that Constitute the JTF used in Counter Terrorism

Security Agencies constituting the Joint Task Force	Frequency	Percentage
The Military	105	11.5
The Nigeria Police	72	7.9
The NSCDC	41	4.5
Custom	29	3.2
Immigration	26	2.8
DSS	54	5.9
NIA	10	1.1

Civilian JTF	101	11.0
All of the above	478	52.2
Total	**916**	**100.0**

The table above presents the various agencies that constitute the JTF used in counter-terrorism. Majority of the respondents (52.2%) identify all of the above agencies as a composition of the JTF; 11.5% the military; 11.0% Civilian JTF; 7.9% the police; 5.9% DSS; 4.5% NSCDC; 3.2% the Customs Service; 2.8% the Nigeria Immigration Service and 1.1% the NIA. This implies the JTF is composed of all the agencies mentioned above, as revealed by the majority. A member of the JTF (Military) posited that:

> The JTF is constituted by different security operatives from the military (Army, Navy and Air force) and paramilitary (Police, Custom, NSCDC, FRSC and Immigration) who jointly work together to effectively deal with terrorists and their nefarious activities (IDI JTF personnel, 2021).

A community Leader (Religious leader) also stated that:

> The composition of the JTF include military, police, civilian JTF and hunters and the usually collaborate to fight against the *Boko Haram* terrorists through various strategies (IDI Religious leader, 2021).

A member of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) also posited that:

> The JTF is established to combat the activities of *Boko Haram* fighters so as to restore peace in the affected areas. The force composed of the military, paramilitary agencies and the civilian JTF (IDI, Civilian JTF, 2021).

Quantitatively, while over half of the respondents (52.2%) affirm that the JTF comprises all the listed agencies, the significantly lower percentages for individual agencies, such as the Military (11.5%) and Police (7.9%); suggest that many respondents recognize the full multi-agency composition only when prompted, rather than spontaneously listing all components. Qualitatively, this quantitative pattern is reinforced by interview statements, where JTF personnel, religious leaders, and Civilian JTF members consistently name the military, paramilitary, police, and civilian JTF as key constituents, but their varying mentions of specific agencies indicate that operational reality includes a broader coalition than what individual respondents voluntarily recall**.**

Table 2: Responsibilities of JTF in Counter Terrorism

Security Responsibilities of JTF in Counter Terrorism	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total
Prevention and detection of terrorist plan activities	907 (99.0)	9 (1.0)	**916 (100)**
Detection and apprehension of terrorists	901(98.4)	15 (1.6)	**916 (100)**
Protection of lives and properties	891 (97.3)	25 (2.7)	**916 (100)**
Enforcement and maintenance of law	713 (77.8)	203 (22.2)	**916 (100)**
Regulating people's activities	676 (73.8)	240 (26.2)	**916 (100)**
Responding to community's calls	778 (84.9)	138 (15.1)	**916 (100)**
Rescue mission	815 (89.0)	101 (11.0)	**916 (100)**
Emergency assistance	872 (95.2)	44 (4.8)	**916 (100)**

The table above shows that the respondents have recognized the multiple responsibilities of the JTF in Counter-terrorism where the prevention and detection of terrorist plans/activities were recognized by 99.0%; detection and apprehension of terrorists (98.4%); protection of lives and properties (97.3%); emergency assistance (95.2%); responding to community calls (84.9); rescue mission

(89.0%); enforcement and maintenance of law (77.8%) and regulating people's activities (73.8%). From the responses, it clearly shows that the JTF have multiple responsibilities in counter-terrorism, which require them to do a lot in securing the lives and properties of citizens. In an interview, a member of the JTF revealed that:

> The major responsibility of the Joint Task Force (JTF) in combating terrorism is restoration of law and order in the area and that is why the military jointly work with other sister security agencies (IDI with Military Personnel, 2021).

A member of the Civilian JTF also revealed that:

> The responsibilities given to JTF were to restore peace in the area through identifying, apprehending and prosecuting suspected terrorists so as to revive the social and economic development of the area (IDI with Civilian JTF, 2021).

Drawing from the above quotations, the JTF is tasked with various responsibilities aimed at safeguarding the lives and properties of people in Borno State, particularly where terrorism is prevalent. However, people have acknowledged the effort of the JTF in carrying out the tasks assigned to them from their operations during their counters with the terrorists with the hope that such operations will curtail the activities of the terrorists in the area.

Table 3: Strategies Used by JTF in Counter-Terrorism

JTF's Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Road block for stop and search	92	10.0
Intelligence gathering/information sharing	78	8.5
Surveillance strategy	69	7.5
Patrol	75	8.2
Imposition of Curfew	34	3.7
Enhanced Access Control in to public places	22	2.4
Community Policing strategy	38	4.1
All of the above	508	53.4

The table above presents the modus operandi used by the JTF in counter-terrorism where more than half (53.4%) identify all the mentioned strategies as the *modus operandi* used by the JTF in counter-terrorism. 10.0% identify road block for stop and search; 8.5% intelligence gathering/information sharing; 8.2% patrol; 7.5% surveillance strategy; 4.1% community policing strategy; 3.7% imposition of curfew and 2.4% enhanced access control into public places. Drawing from the responses presented above, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents attested that JTF employ various *modus operandi* that complement one another in countering terrorism.

During an interview, a member of the JTF stated that:

> We employ various strategies in countering terrorism and the major techniques used include but not limited to patrols, raids, ambushes, deliberate attacks and roadblocks. Through these ways we were able to repel attacks, apprehend suspected *Boko Haram* members, rescue those attacked and or kidnapped/abducted by the terrorists (IDI with Military Personnel).

In another interview, a member of the Civilian JTF posited that:

> The JTF employ patrol operation in the prevention of terrorist's attacks and rescue mission of those attacked and, in some instances, they succeed in making the terrorist to surrender and repent (IDI with Civilian JTF).

Drawing from the qualitative data, it can be deduced that the JTF employ other strategies in countering terrorism, such as raids, ambushes and deliberate attacks in addition to rescue operation and physical confrontation with the insurgents in an effort to restore peace in the affected areas. This implies that the JTF device other ways that may facilitate effective counter terrorism in the area.

Table 4: Whether the JTF's Strategies have Impacted on Counter-Terrorism

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	749	81.8
No	167	18.2
Total	**916**	**100.0**

The table above indicates that 81.8% of the respondents believed that the JTF's *modus operandi* is effective in counter-terrorism while 18.2% were of the opinion that it is not effective. This implies that the strategies employed by the JTF have impacted in the fight against terrorism and thus respondents see it as effective.

In an interview, a religious leader revealed that:

> For now, we began to see the positive impact of the counter-terrorist operation of the JTF as they are now winning the terrorist and restoring peace and therefore people are having confidence in the JTF (IDI with Religious Leader).

A Community leader (Traditional leader) a revealed that:

> Although the JTF are doing their best in the fight against the *Boko Haram* terrorism, yet the terrorists still continue launch attacks on innocent citizens but the frequency and the free access into the public places by the terrorist has been minimized due to the presence and actions taken by the Joint Task Force operatives (IDI with Traditional Leader).

As reported from the data above, people in the study area acknowledged the impact of the *modus operandi* employed by the JTF in countering terrorism. They believed that it has reduced the terrorists' activities to some level, especially by denying the terrorists free access to public places and thus have confidence that the JTF will defeat the terrorists. As such counter terrorist operation in the area is yielding some positive outcomes.

Section B: Attacks Prevented by JTF during Counter-Terrorists Operations

This section presents the data on attacks made by terrorists and those prevented by the Joint Task Force (JTF) during counter-terrorist operation in Borno State.

Table 5: Estimated Number of Terrorists Attacks in Borno State

Number of Terrorists Attacks	Frequency	Percentage
1-10 attacks	93	10.2
11-19 attacks	146	15.9
20-29 attacks	281	30.7
30-39 attacks	301	32.9
40 attacks and above	95	10.4
Total	**916**	**100.0**

The table above presents the estimated number of terrorist attacks during the period under review where a significant portion of the respondents (32.9%), being the highest percentage, attest that an estimated 30-39 attacks were launched by terrorists between 2010 and 2019 while the least (10.2%)

attest that an estimated number of 1-10 terrorist attacks were launched in the area. This implies that there is no precise number of terrorist attacks during the period under review, as terrorists made several attacks that cannot be comprehensively recalled by the respondents, as some of the attacks were launched after some of them were displaced from the area. In an interview, a member of the JTF (Military Personnel) opined that:

> Many attacks were made by *Boko Haram* terrorists but the exact number of the attacks cannot be established because even when attacks are being repelled the terrorists continue to launch attacks from time to time. This led to casualties from the part of the JTF, the terrorists and the public. Moreover, properties worth billions of Naira were destroyed during the attacks (IDI with Military Personnel).

In another interview with JTF, Community Leader, they revealed that:

> There are several attacks by *Boko Haram* terrorists but no one can give the exact number of the attacks as they happen in various places and at different times. Sometimes they attack a particular place about three times within a night and the disruption caused by the attacks alone cannot make people to establish the exact number of attacks launched (IDI with Community Leader).

A member of Civilian JTF further revealed that:

> Several attacks were made by the terrorists in different areas but the number of those attacks cannot be ascertained due to the frequency of attacks at different times (IDI with Civilian JTF).

Drawing from the qualitative data above, the study area was ravaged by a series of violent activities of the terrorists with frequent attacks on communities and individuals whose number cannot be ascertained because there is no official record available and the attacks were indiscriminately launched in many places by different groups of terrorists.

Table 6: Views of Respondents on whether there were attacks Prevented by JTF

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	532	58.1
No	384	41.9
Total	**916**	**100.0**

The table above shows the views of respondents on whether there were terrorist attacks prevented by the JTF during the period under review. From the responses, 58.1% revealed that there were but 41.9% said the contrary. This implies that majority acknowledged the efforts of the JTF in counter-terrorism in the area during the period under review. A member of the Civilian JTF during an interview revealed that:

> Some attacks were prevented during the counter-terrorists' operations where the *Boko Haram* terrorists were defeated and chased away. In some instances, casualties are recorded from the part of the terrorists and the JTF as well (IDI with Civilian JTF).

In another interview with JTF personnel, they further revealed that:

> The JTF succeeded in preventing many attacks during the counter-terrorists' operations and despite the loss of our members in the battle, we still summon courage to confront the terrorists any time they came (IDI with JTF Personnel).

Drawing from the above data, the JTF have impacted in the fight against terrorism, as they succeeded in preventing and repelling some attacks, thereby reducing the ugly menace of terrorism that destabilized the peace and security of communities in the study area.

Table 7: Estimated Number of Attacks Prevented by the JTF in Borno State

Number of Attacks Prevented by the JTF	Frequency	Percentage
1-10 attacks	201	21.9
11-19 attacks	334	36.5
20-29 attacks	222	24.2
30-39 attacks	114	12.4
40 attacks and above	45	4.9s
Total	**916**	**100.0**

The table above shows the respondents' views on the estimated number of terrorist attacks prevented by the JTF between 2010 and 2019. From responses, they have different estimates of prevented attacks where the highest portion (36.5%) revealed that the JTF did prevent 11-19 terrorist attacks during the counter-terrorist operations in the area while the least (4.9%) said the JTF was able to prevent up to 40 attacks and above during the period under review. This implies that the JTF recorded some achievements in its counter-terrorist operations. In an interview, Custom personnel posited that:

> The JTF succeeded in preventing hundreds of attacks between 2010 and 2019 in Borno State and this is seen as a remarkable achievement that led to the defeat of the terrorists. It has also increased the level of confidence that people have on the JTF (IDI with Custom personnel).

A religious leader during an interview revealed that:

> The number attacks prevented cannot be ascertain but actually there were several attacks by the terrorists and some were repelled by the JTF and in some instances some of their vehicles and arms were confiscated by the JTF. Also, the number of terrorists that usually came for the attack cannot be said but they use to come with about eight vehicles or more. Some members of the JTF particularly the Civilian JTF, several members of the public and the *Boko Haram* terrorists lost their lives during the battle but the actual number cannot be ascertained. (IDI with Religious Leader).

In another interview, a member of the Civilian JTF posited that:

> I cannot state the actual number of attacks made by the *Boko Haram* terrorists but sometimes they attack three times within one night and certainly some of the attacks were prevented by the JTF but the number cannot be ascertained. Also, the number of terrorists that came for attack cannot be ascertain as they came in mass in some instances more than one thousand fighters do come and launch attacks and capture some communities. (IDI with Civilian JTF).

In another opinion, a Traditional Leader posited that:

> Sincerely the exact number of attacks prevented in this area cannot be established. There was a time they entered the Biu Military Barracks but the military ambush them and kill some while others ran away because the leaders of the *Boko Haram* does not come by themselves they stay a little bit far from where the battle is taking place and send their boys that does not know the tactics of the battle, if the boys succeeded in penetrating the community, then the leaders will then follow them into the community and continue with their attacks (IDI with Traditional Leader).

Drawing from the qualitative data, there is a positive outcome from the JTF's counter terrorists' operations, especially the prevention of some attacks, though the number could not be ascertained. Although the JTF recorded some casualties because of the nature of attacks by the terrorist, that does not discourage them from confronting the terrorists. Thus, they continued with the battle and have succeeded in killing some terrorists and confiscated arms and vehicles from them.

Section C: Effectiveness of the Strategies Used in Countering Terrorism in Borno State

Building on the identified composition of the Joint Task Force and the attacks it has prevented, this section appraises the overall effectiveness of the strategies employed by the JTF in countering terrorism in Borno State, Nigeria.

Table 8: Views of Respondents on whether the Strategies use by JTF are Effective

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	576	62.9
No	340	37.1
Total	**916**	**100.0**

The table above shows the views of respondents on whether the strategies used by the JTF are effective. From the responses, 62.9% revealed that the strategies are effective while 37.1% said the contrary. This implies that majority acknowledged the strategies of the JTF in counter-terrorism are effective.

Table 9: Effectiveness of the Strategies used by JTF in Counter-terrorism

Responses	Effective	Ineffective	Total
Road block for stop and search	717 (78.3)	199 (21.7)	**916 (100)**
Intelligence gathering/information sharing	254 (27.7)	662(72.3)	**916 (100)**
Surveillance strategy	364 (39.7)	552 (60.3)	**916 (100)**
Patrol	453 (49.5)	463 (50.5)	**916 (100)**
Imposition of Curfew	687 (75.0)	229 (25.0)	**916 (100)**
Enhanced Access Control in to public places	526 (57.4)	390 (42.6)	**916 (100)**
Community Policing strategy	698 (76.2)	218 (23.8)	**916 (100)**

The table above reveals the multiple responses of the respondents on the effectiveness of the strategies used by the JTF in counter-terrorism. As identified and indicated on the table, some strategies are effective such as road block for stop and search (78.3%); imposition of curfew (75.0%); enhance access control into public places (57.4%) and community policing strategy (76.2%) as opposed to Intelligence gathering/information sharing (27.7%), surveillance strategy (39.7), and patrol (49.5%). Looking at the responses, it can be deduced that the strategies used by the JTF in counter-terrorism are effective and thus, majority of the community members acknowledged the good effort of the JTF in countering terrorism in the area.

During an interview, military personnel revealed that:

> Our operations were successful and thus effective as we succeeded in rescuing some of the communities attacked and recapturing some of the communities captured by the *Boko Haram* terrorists. As at now some people resettled in the communities and are currently doing their normal businesses (IDI with Military personnel).

In another interview with a Religious Leader, he posited that:

> The effectiveness of the strategies employed by the JTF can be practically seen from the successful recapture and rescue of some communities by the security personnel and the Civilian JTF in during their counter-terrorist operations (IDI with Religious Leader).

Quantitatively, while strategies such as roadblocks for stop and search (78.3%), community policing (76.2%), and curfew imposition (75.0%) were widely rated as effective, intelligence gathering/information sharing (27.7%) and surveillance (39.7%) received strikingly low effectiveness ratings, indicating significant operational weaknesses in information-driven approaches. Qualitatively, these findings are contrasted by interview accounts from military personnel and religious leaders who described JTF operations as successful in recapturing communities and enabling resettlement, suggesting that perceived effectiveness may be shaped more by visible tactical outcomes than by the performance of intelligence or surveillance systems.

Discussions of Findings

As revealed by the findings, the JTF employ the use of various strategies in the counter-terrorist operations. It revealed that road blocks for stop-and-search, intelligence gathering/information sharing, surveillance strategy, patrol, the imposition of curfew and enhanced access control into public places were believed to be the major strategies of the JTF in counter terrorism while community policing strategy is believed to the least of the JTF's *modus operandi* in Borno State. This implies that various complementary strategies are employed by the JTF in countering terrorism.

Qualitative findings further revealed that the JTF employ various strategies in countering terrorism and the major techniques used include but not limited to patrols, raids, ambushes, deliberate attacks and roadblocks. Through these ways they were able to repel attacks, apprehend suspected *Boko Haram* members and rescue those attacked and kidnapped/abducted by the terrorists. They also engage in physical confrontation with the *Boko Haram* terrorists. In line with this, Yoroms (2013) revealed that the JTF were able to man borders and highways to have a thorough check of vehicles and persons moving in or outside the country to ensure that people are not in possession or weapons that could be used in the perpetration of criminal acts within the country. Accordingly, Akpan, Ekanem and Olofu-Adeoye (2014) posited that security operatives mount road blocks to have a thorough check of people and their vehicle as a way of identifying terrorists and also mitigate the inflow of arms and other explosives used by the terrorists in launching attacks. Again, Siro and Sundramoorthy (2017) posited that patrol is an important strategy in dealing with crime that helped in arresting crime perpetrators, including terrorists. This also serves as a strong proactive as well as reactive measure against terrorist attacks on innocent individuals in the society. Umar (2013) also maintained that the JTF embark on armed patrol in areas where terrorism is pronounced, particularly along major roads and environs, to discourage activities of *Boko Haram*. The patrols have gone a long way in checkmating the group's activities and reassured the populace of their safety. The purpose of such patrols is to deny members the freedom to operate with impunity. Thus, the *modus operandi* significantly helped in rescuing people from the violent acts of terrorist, although other strategies also have positively impacted in the rescues mission.

In relation to the strategies used by the JTF in counter-terrorism, routine activity theory emphasized on the provision capable guardians that will serve as effective deterrence against the evils of terrorists. Thus, the deployment of the JTF and the application of various measures, such as patrol, road block/stop and search, imposing curfew and intelligence gathering, are among the measures will serve as deterrence against terrorism in the study area. These measures will also serve as opportunity reduction mechanisms that may increase the likelihood of detecting and apprehending terrorists, as propagated by situational crime prevention and rational choice theories respectively.

Findings also revealed that several attacks were launched in the study area and some were prevented by the JTF during their counter-terrorist operations. It revealed no precise number of terrorist attacks during the period under review, as the terrorist made several attacks that could not be comprehensively recalled by the respondents; some of the attacks were launched after some of them were displaced from the area. However, 30-39 attacks were estimated to have been made by the terrorists out of which 11-19 were estimated to have been prevented by the JTF, as revealed by the highest portion of the respondents. Accordingly, the Annex of Statistical Information (2015) revealed that Nigeria witnessed 662 terrorist attacks that resulted in loss of lives, different degrees of injuries and the destruction of property in 2014. Onyebuchi and Chigozie (2013) posited that Borno state in particular witnessed 13 deadly attacks by *Boko Haram* terrorists between July 2009 and November 2012 with adverse effects on the lives and properties of people in the state. Mantzikos (2013) posited that, as part of its efforts in countering terrorism, the JTF launched a massive crackdown on the terrorists and successfully prevented attacks, arrested and killed some members of the group, including its key leaders, for example, the arrest of 156 members of the insurgents and killing of 35 others, including one of their key leaders in a major military raid on the group's enclave in Yobe and Adamawa States on 24 September 2012. In October 2012, other 30 members of *Boko Haram* were killed in a battle with the military. Other major clampdowns occurred on different occasions in March 2013, which saw the death of 72 members of the group.

In line routine activity theory, the success recorded by the JTF in preventing terrorist attacks in the study area defined them (JTF) as capable guardians, as they counter/repel some attacks made by *Boko Haram*. Similarly, the Situational crime prevention theory supports this claim by stating the capability of the JTF in frustrating attempts by the terrorists to launch attacks through opportunity reduction strategies such as the imposition of curfew and patrol operations. Accordingly, the rational choice theory fits in here, as it postulates that increasing the cost of crime is a preventive mechanism. Thus, some of the strategies employed by the JTF, such as the restriction of movement through the imposition of curfew, road blocks for the restriction of access and security checks, have helped in the prevention of terrorists' attacks.

Although there is no official statistics of the actual attacks made and those prevented or repelled, the study concluded that the JTF succeeded in preventing 11 to 19 attacks, as reported by the respondents. Findings further revealed that the strategies used by the JTF in counter-terrorism are effective as they helped in rescuing some of the communities attacked and recapturing some of the communities captured by the *Boko Haram* terrorists. It further established that the JTF has greatly helped in regaining the freedom of some people kidnapped/abducted by the terrorists.

Conclusion

The study assesed the effectiveness of strategies used by JTF in counter-terrorism in Borno State, Nigeria. It was established that the JTF employ the use of various strategies in the counter-terrorist operations. It revealed that road blocks for stop-and-search, intelligence gathering/information sharing, surveillance strategy, patrol, the imposition of curfew and enhanced access control into public places were believed to be the major strategies of the JTF in counter terrorism while community policing strategy is believed to the least of the JTF's *modus operandi* in Borno State. This implies that various complementary strategies are employed by the JTF in countering terrorism. On attacks prevented by the JTF, the study established that several attacks were launched in the study area and some were prevented by the JTF during their counter-terrorist operations. It revealed no precise number of terrorist attacks during the period under review, as the terrorist made several attacks that could not be comprehensively recalled by the respondents; some of the attacks were launched after some of them were displaced from the area. However, 30-39 attacks were estimated to have been made by the terrorists out of which 11-19 were estimated to have been prevented by the JTF, as revealed by the highest portion of the respondents. On the effectiveness of

the strategies used by the JTF in countering terrorism, the study further established that the strategies used by the JTF in counter-terrorism are effective as they helped in rescuing some of the communities attacked and recapturing some of the communities captured by the *Boko Haram* terrorists. It further established that the JTF has greatly helped in regaining the freedom of some people kidnapped/abducted by the terrorists.

Recommendations

1. Intelligence-led operations should be enhanced through improved coordination among security agencies and community informants to facilitate early detection and prevention of terrorist activities. The JTF should also be equipped with modern surveillance technologies such as drones, satellite imagery, communication monitoring systems, and intelligence databases to improve operational effectiveness.
2. Government should provide adequate funding, modern equipment, armored vehicles, communication gadgets, and welfare packages to enhance the operational capabilities and morale of security personnel.
3. Stronger collaboration among the military, police, intelligence agencies, immigration, customs, NSCDC, and other stakeholders should be sustained to ensure a coordinated response to terrorism. In addition to this, government should encourage collaboration between security agencies and local communities through community policing initiatives and support for the Civilian Joint Task Force to improve intelligence flow and public trust.
4. Security agencies should maintain accurate and centralized records of terrorist incidents, attacks prevented, casualties, and operational outcomes to facilitate evidence-based policy formulation and evaluation.

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