



## ECOWAS Regional Security Architecture for Counterterrorism and Counter Insurgency in West Africa: A Discussion of Case Studies and Challenges

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**Abstract.** The study examines the security architecture for counterinsurgency and counterterrorism of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It argues that the security architecture of the organisation when it was formed, did not envisage the change in the nature of warfare from preponderantly interstate to intrastate. As a result, when new threats to peace in the sub-region emerged, the security architecture was either too old to grapple them or not existing at all. However, the findings of the study reveal that despite its shortcomings, ECOWAS was able to intervene and, to a very large extent, manage the conflicts in the sub-region without much external interference. It further reveals that it was the change in the nature of the conflict that forced the organisation to review its security architecture. With reference to some examples, the study shows that the organisation has not totally overcome some of its challenges; it is now better equipped to handle the security challenges in the region. But there is the need to constantly review the security architecture in line with emerging security challenges. The study concludes that, though ECOWAS is yet to overcome the security threats bedeviling the sub-region, the security architecture put in place is now better than how it was when the organisation was formed.

**Keywords:** ECOWAS, Security architecture, Security Threats, ECOMOG.

### 1. Introduction

Security architecture amongst nations is not a new phenomenon. Even before organised societies evolved, man has always developed ways to protect himself, family, and property. With the emergence of nation-states, organised structures sprang up and assumed territorial control and sovereignty. It is the idea of territorial control and sovereignty that nation-

states do not want to compromise which led to the development of security structures, treaties and pacts within the framework of diplomatic ties with other nations in the course of external relations and some structures such as the establishment of standing armies and other security organisations internally to contain both internal and external threats to their territories and sovereignty. The League of Nations, and subsequently, the United Nations, which were established after World Wars I and II, all failed to guarantee world peace and conflicts as its core mandates.

In Africa, old and new conflict has reinforced further the need for a more robust and assertive peace and security architecture. Though this approach has been in place for several years now in the form of sub-regional military peacekeeping intervention and other forms of conflict management, it has failed in its core mandate also to ensure peace and security in West Africa because new forms of conflicts and insecurity continue to emerge across West African region, prominent of which is insurgency and terrorism. There is comprehensive cooperation between the U.N. and A.U. or regional organisations on conflict prevention, management, resolution, and peace building, especially after the 9/11 attack in America, when the American president declared war on global terror. These groupings are to intervene in regional crisis more flexible and less dependent on the U.N. but mutual support in diplomatic and operational deployments activities. (Francis, 2005; 143). This would encourage the sharing of responsibilities and information.

Terrorism and insurgency, which are part of the new nature of warfare in West Africa, have been very devastating with a high degree of brutality, especially in Nigeria and Mali, and many parts of West Africa and the intensity of these crises are further

exacerbated by globalisation and technological advancement. The crisis of African states became more apparent in the Post-Cold War era as they experienced terrorist and insurgent attacks, which could be referred to as a brand of new security threats. Some of these crises took place in Liberia (1989) Sierra Leone (1991) Guinea Bissau (1998) Mali (2013) Rwanda, (1994) Cote d'Ivoire (2002), represents both low and high-intensity armed conflict ranging from identity-based wars instigated by ethnic, religion and nationalism to conflict over resources (Kaldor,1999). The West Africa sub-region have in this period, experienced declining patronage from international organisations and former colonial powers because of limited funds for humanitarian support and military aid and support as their degree of intervention waned. The development led to the establishment of security architectures to contain and or manage the escalation of crises, conflicts, and other regional security challenges. Prominent amongst these in the African region and sub-region are African Union (A.U.) and an economic grouping, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The later stands as a collective force for the unity and cooperation among the member states to ensure the security of the state, individual, goods and services within the sub-region (**Adeji, 2002:15**). This study examines the security architecture of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) before the emergence of new forms of security threats in the region and during conflicts period. It further examines how these new forms of security threats compelled the regional organisation to jettison or amend its security architecture in response to new security challenges as well as the challenges of ECOWAS in tackling security challenges in West Africa.

## **2. Emergent Security Threats in Africa of the Post Cold War Era**

Emergent security threats in Africa of the Post-Cold War era changed the perception of security from the traditional conception of security, which focuses on national security interest and power with the state as the primary reference. These new threats have generated widespread wars and conflicts that attracted the attention of states, regions and the international system because these crises have led to atrocities and violation of human rights, loss of lives and properties with a large number of the people as refugees and internally displaced peoples (IDPs). The ECOMOG as a sub-regional security group in West Africa, intervened in these crises on humanitarian grounds to prevent further atrocities. However, the attempts by states to exert their sovereignty have led

to a lot of human rights violations. These violations are mainly because states in Africa are yet to come to terms with the asymmetric nature of these emergent threats especially, insurgency, terrorism, kidnappings, and many more. As usual, states in Africa use the “sledgehammer” approach even to manage what could be described as “minor security infractions.”

Over the years, it has become evident that the nature of warfare has changed from preponderantly inter-state to intra-state which affected some West African States like Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria, Central African Republic (CAR) and many more countries showing signs of becoming victims of such wars. With the increase of this nature of warfare in many West African States, it has become clear that the existing security architecture is either too old or unsophisticated to grapple with the new challenges or is not in existence at all. This development has further necessitated the need by African countries to redraw old security architectures, defence agreements and pacts or even jettison existing ones for others as they could not guarantee or enforce peace and stability of the affected countries. In fact, the type of security and the existing security architecture maintained was more or less to ensure regional security and survival because Heads of States in the region used it to protect themselves against internal and external threats (Francis, 2005:163). This arrangement could not take up the regional security challenges, especially with the Liberian crisis (1990) which came up at a time the West African Peace and security architecture was too frail in design and execution. This new and almost unprecedented nature of warfare in West Africa has compelled West African leaders to think of new mechanism which they found in the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) which is the focus of this study. ECOMOG has played an active role to enforce and maintain security in the region. ECOMOG has been involved in the management of the internal crisis in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Mali, among others and has contributed troops under ASPA and the U.N. to enforce and maintain peace in Darfur, the Central African Republic (CAR) e.t.c. Nigeria, which is a Hegemon in West Africa sub-region and major financier in the ECOWAS is the main sponsor of ECOMOG which has stood the test of time in security enforcement and maintenance in the West African sub-region.

Nigeria has always played the role of a hegemon in West Africa because of her human and material resources. However, arguments in government have

always been that it is a way to project Nigeria's relevance and image as a "big brother" abroad and the quest for a permanent seat in the United Nations (U.N.). The over-stretch of Nigeria in its domestic and international security and peacekeeping engagements especially with the advent *Boko Haram* insurgency further exposed the strengths and weaknesses of ECOWAS security architecture. Nigeria has continued to play a leadership role in the West African region to which some Nigerian critics have argued that it is a waste of resources. Despite these arguments, Nigeria continued in the path of a hegemon in the region despite the intervention of some former colonial powers in some crises situations in the region, for example, Ivory Coast where France intervened before ECOWAS because of the existing defence pact with France as Ivory Coast's former colonial master.

The insecurity in the African region has devastating consequences on the socio-economic and political development of the region. There has been war-induced hunger, poverty and displacement of people.

The new nature of warfare denominated by insurgency and terrorism is unprecedented in the West African region. In response to this, countries of the ECOWAS had to muster efforts and resources to contain it with the establishment of a Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in addition to other multi-national attempts at peacekeeping collaborations with the United Nations (U.N.), African Union (A.U.). Despite these efforts, they have not been able to run down the threshold of the insurgents, especially Nigeria's *Boko Haram* terrorists.

Despite the advantages of collectivism in the protection of regional interest, the operation of an ECOWAS regional security architecture and the execution of its mandate revolves around key daunting challenges such as the multi-dimensionality nature of the structure, coordination and cooperation between the member states, capacity-related issues in terms of personnel, planning, Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs), logistics and equipment, finance among others. Also, all the countries lack the capacity to effectively monitor the borders and porous boundary lines and un-governed spaces. A typical example is the long stretched *Sambisa* Forest in Nigeria's northeast which that the terrorist groups exploited or could exploit to establish training bases for their members and to transport and distribute weapons across the sub-region (GIABA Inter-Governmental Action Group, 2013). If these problems are not checked, it will destabilise the West African region's security architecture.

### 3. Conceptual Clarifications

#### 3.1 Concept of Terrorism

The concept of terrorism is a multi-dimensional concept with no commonly accepted definition and has been used synonymously or mistakenly as conflict, guerrilla war, revolutionary war, low-intensity conflict, and insurgency (Jalata, 2008). For Neumann (2008), terrorism is a set of tactics, a form of fighting that can intrinsically be employed by any belligerent actor, be it state or non-state actor in any type of conflict. He reiterated that terrorism is not a weapon of the weak or non-state actors, as argued by some literature on the subject. Hoffman (2006) argued that terrorism is the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change. This definition is specific on the non-state terrorism, which does not abide by or observe war rules or code of conduct in warfare. However, even states that should abide by these rules also violate them in a war situation.

Jalata (2013) submits that terrorism is a systematic governmental or organisational policy through which lethal violence is practised openly or covertly to impose terror on a given population group and their institution or symbols or their representative members to change their behaviour of political resistance to domination or their behaviour to domination for political and economic gains or other reasons. From his definition, state and non-state actors participate in terrorism. It is employed by the state to maintain state power while the terrorist groups use it to resist state operative policies. He argued that the state engages in more high-level terrorism than the guerrillas because the government have all the resources of the state as its disposal, but with the advancement of technology, the intensity, and danger of terrorism and genocide have increased especially in the hands of terrorist groups with human and material resources to perpetuate terrorism at the global level, e.g., Al Qaeda among others he argued. In a further analysis of the definition given above, Badey (2008) stated that for political violence to be terrorism, there must be an identifiable organisation. An individual is unable to carry out the action, reach the target audience, and present the political demands for the changes that are necessary to end the violence. An effective campaign to create change also requires enough actions to be credible, an effort beyond a single individual overtime.

### 3.2 Counter-Terrorism

In an interview with Zamba (2017), Counter-Terrorism (C.T.) involves the instruments, structures, policies, actions put in place by a state to militate against factors that are likely to lead to acts of insurgency. For instance, the lack of good governance, provision of an equitable society, monetary policies, structures like health care delivery education, amenities, security, justice and fairness, visible equity, lack of inclusiveness, fair representation among others structures will engender discontent, agitation, militancy and thus leads to terrorism. Therefore, the absence of anti-terrorism related components will invariably provide a platform for threats of insurgency to subsist.

### 3.3 Insurgency

This concept refers to the acts of disgruntled individuals or groups who would illegally take up arms against a state to bring it down. They agitate for self-rule as a result of perceived marginalisation, exclusion resulting in mass discontent, dissatisfied that their yearnings are not met. Hence, they resort to arms activities against the state. Their support or strength could be internal or external or both. Metz (2004:2) posits that insurgency is a strategy used by groups that cannot realise their political aims through conventional means of political procedures of acquiring political power. Insurgency is primarily characterised by continued asymmetric violence, the ambiguity of tactics, the use of complex terrain (jungles, mountains, and urban areas), psychological warfare, and political mobilisation which are designed to protect the insurgents and eventually affect the balance of power in their favour. It may attempt to capture power and replace the existing government, or they may have more limited objectives such as separation, independence, or alteration of a specific policy. They avoid battle places where they are weakest and focus on those areas where they can operate on more asymmetric advantages. They try to postpone decisive action on the part of government by feigning negotiations, ceasefires with the aim to regroup, recruit and re-strategise to avoid defeat, sustain themselves, expand their support, and hope that, over time, the power balance changes in their favour.

Insurgencies (Herman 2010:678) argued, are to be considered in the present-day faces of battle. They fight from hideouts and are on the move in small scale operations. The Insurgents will always avoid engaging in large scale battle. They also try to neutralise their opponent's superiority by turning to

hit and run action to inflict as much damage and instil as much fear as possible, when this has been achieved, they disappear before the massive weight of technology is used on them. Insurgency seeks to overthrow an existing order with one that is commensurate with its political, economic, ideological, or religious goals. According to Kilcullen (2006:112), insurgency is a struggle to control a contested political space, between a state (or a group of states or occupying powers) and one or more popularly based, non-state challengers.

Liolio (2013:340) explained that while insurgency shares some similarities with terrorism and conventional war to achieve more often than not political ends, they are not the same. He argues that the difference between insurgency and terrorism lies in the scope and magnitude of violence. While terrorism rarely brings about political change on its own, insurgency attempts to bring about change through force of arms. Similarly, terrorists often apply a wide range of damage when compared to insurgents.

### 3.4 Counter Insurgency

Nagl (2005) argues that there are two approaches to counterinsurgency: the direct and indirect approach. The direct approach focuses primarily on defeating the enemy with military force. The indirect approach, on the other hand, involving a battle for the hearts and minds, focuses on a more population-centric strategy. It involves denying the insurgency the support of the local population while at the same time attacking the insurgency with military force. The primary goal of both the insurgent and the counterinsurgent is promoting good governance and winning legitimacy in the eyes of the local population. This framework for their defeat has been the primary focus of American counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a consequence, General Petraeus's declaratory strategy of containment through manoeuvres approach has also been emulated by other affected countries, and it also forms the basis for ECOWAS security architecture for counterinsurgency and terrorism.

## 4. Strategies for Recruitment and Radicalisation into Insurgency and Terrorism

For sometimes now some countries in West Africa have experienced some levels of Islamic radicalisation and extremism, particularly in Mali and Nigeria. These activities have cross border security threats in the West African region. Many factors

deduced for the cause of radicalisation range from economic, religion, exclusion, poverty, political and social expressions etc., which have contributed to the mobilisation of people to the growth of Islamic groups. Recruitment for members takes different forms. It could be from the mosque, through preaching and incitement, after which they are sent to training camps within or outside the country for the required skills to accomplish missions. Aside from this, international events, especially as they concern Islam, like the publication of a Danish cartoon, which was seen as a desecration of the prophet (SAW), the need to propagate Islam and fight against the infidels have boosted recruitment. Also, Hinds (2013) asserted that the perception by most Islamic countries of Israel's role in the Middle East, especially Palestine and Syria, have been an important unifying factor for radicalism.

The emergent security threats, namely, terrorism and insurgency, have become so daring and vicarious to the extent that the less endowed nations prefer to commit scarce resources to regional peace and security than socio-economic development. A case in point relative to the above assertion is when President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria upon swearing-in on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2015 announced a whopping amount of \$80 million as Nigeria's contribution to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) as part of his takeoff financial requirement and other logistics to combat the menace of Boko Haram terrorist group on the flanks of Nigeria's Northeast region. The security threat in West Africa is not only limited to war and armed conflict but also intra-communal violence, ethno-religious violence, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

### **5. ECOWAS Mandate and Regional Security Threat**

ECOWAS has been hailed as the best regional grouping as against all others with a similar mandate in Africa because it appears to be stable and developed. The ECOWAS, as a regional organisation was formed on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1975 with the noble objective of economic cooperation anchored on common customs, regional market, and economic integration to achieve overall regional cooperation. The pursuit of regional integration in West Africa has, more to do with the impact of the proposed markets and other economic integration schemes considered at the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the U.N. economic commission for Africa (ECA) held in Nairobi, Kenya in 1965 during which resolutions 142 (VIII) and 145 (VII) recommended that member states of the commission should establish as soon as possible sub-regional inter-governmental machinery for

harmonising their economic and social development (Johnson, 1995:34). The efforts towards a regional wide economic community was slow and difficult, but Nigeria, which looked beyond her boarder and participated in regional affairs, made this possible because of her economic power supported by her enormous human and material resources. The treaty pronouncing the formation of ECOWAS was hailed as a breakthrough in the series of efforts to institute a regional integration body and a bold step towards integration and improvement of the well-being of the people of the region. In essence, ECOWAS is not peculiar to the Francophone, Anglophone, or Lusophone countries but represents all of them ((Ezenwe, 1988:11).

At inception, the regional body comprises of 16 states, after which Mauritania left in 2000 to join the Maghreb states of North Africa, citing the reasons of cultural and religious affiliations but has, however, indicated interest to return. Morocco, a North African state have indicated an interest in joining the ECOWAS while Tunisia seeks an observer status. The West African region is endowed with human and material resources accounting for about 32% of Africa's total population (Francis, 2005:146). Many West African states are agricultural producers and major exporters of crops like cocoa, cotton, particularly Burkina Faso, which is rich in cotton, Cote d'Ivoire, and Ghana in cocoa. Some countries like Nigeria, Ghana, and Niger, for instance, have deposits of liquefied gas and oil, which they have used as a source for economic development. Some others have large deposits of diamond, uranium, gold, etc. but not explored in large quantities to provide the needed growth and economic development for these countries. The underdeveloped nature of these countries made them dependent on the developed world and non-state actors like the world bank U.N., United Nations, WTO, etc. for their needed assistance.

Though issues of regional security is not a major reason for the creation of ECOWAS, it has been envisaged by series of security challenges which includes military coup'd'etat, civil wars, border skirmishes, etc., some of which were backed by extra-regional intervention and mercenaries like in the case of Benin Republic, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Nigeria. These external intrusions made these countries insecure and have also heightened the security threats experienced in these countries and the region as a whole and made the leaders sign the ECOWAS protocol on non-aggression adopted on the 28 of April.

History has shown that each era has a peculiar challenge or challenges it grapples with. The nature of the challenge determines whether status-quo should be maintained or new measures should be taken. When ECOWAS was formed in 1975, the prevailing situation at the period was more of an interstate crisis with very little heard of terrorism and intra-state ceases. When ECOWAS was formed; it called on all member states as a matter of urgency to give special attention in their relationships with other members state to the provisions of the protocols on non-Intervention which they have pledged, among other things to refrain from committing, encouraging or condoning acts of subversion, hostilities or aggression against the territorial integrity of political independence of the other member state” (the official journal of ECOWAS, 1992, Vol 21).

In addition to this was the 1981 protocol on mutual assistance in defense. The essence of these agreements were summarised in the submission of Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal when he argued that “development cannot be secured in a climate of insecurity and hence it is imperative that we must among ourselves establish a genuine West Africa solidarity Pact to guard against external aggression (Adebi, 2002). The Francophone west African community (CEAO) had in 1977 proposed that if economic integration and cooperation are to be meaningful, then they had to be accompanied by a defense and security arrangement, this idea led to the establishment of the Francophone Mutual Defence Pact (Francis, 2005:146) which was to Maintain peaceful coexistence and cooperation in the region.

## **6. ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture for Counter-Terrorism and Counter Insurgency**

Security and its application is not a new phenomenon in West Africa and Africa in general. In the spirit of Pan-Africanism, the newly independent states in Africa sought unity and security as a solution for survival. Depending on the perspective being considered, the coming together of independent African states for the common good of their citizens is seen as a step towards strengthening their social and economic security. Meanwhile, some of these steps were faulty and, therefore, could not much achieve some of the desired objectives. In the 1960s, for instance, the Heads of State of the independent states formed the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Some of the guiding principles of the OAU charter include, according to Schraeder (2013:258):

- The inviolability of frontiers inherited from the colonial era.

- Non-interferences in the internal affairs of member states.
- The peaceful settlement of all disputes via negotiation, mediation, conciliation, or arbitration.

These provisions which should be a source of security was faulty and precipitated challenges that affected the effective operation of the organisation as member states were not their brother’s keeper, and the organisation was not able to contain crisis like coup d’état, inter and intra-state wars, crisis associated with nationalism among others. Rather it functioned as a club of presidents engaged in a tacit policy of not inquiring into each other’s practices (Welch, 1991:537) and welcomed whoever is in power in a state, not minding how the person got in there, even a junta that has illegally deposed their civilian counterpart was allowed to maintain their OAU seats. The security mechanism could not achieve much because of the strict adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states; also, there was no standing mediation organ or regional framework.

The new realities that emerged in Africa in the 1990s were devastating and demanded a review of the institutional structures for the maintenance of peace and security in the continent. With the establishment of the African Union in 2001, the non-interference clause became invalid, and the transition brought about a new peace and security mechanism that will enable Africa to meet the emerging security challenges. There is no implicit definition of security architecture, but knowing the nature of security in the region will determine the character of the security arrangement, how counter insecurity measures are positioned and how they relate to the overall system. Security architecture is interpreted very differently from organisation to organisation. Traditionally security architecture is a document, which specifies which security services are provided how and where, why, and the mechanisms used to provide them (ISSS, 2017).

### **6.1 The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework**

The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) was developed in January 2008 to inform and guide the organisation’s conflict prevention efforts. It aims to provide a strong conceptual understanding of conflict prevention, strengthen ECOWAS’ conflict prevention capacity, and integrate existing initiatives of ECOWAS institutions and mechanisms responsible for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. These aims are to be achieved through

a set of 14 components covering a broad spectrum of areas that enhance human security, namely; Early Warning, Preventive Diplomacy, Democracy, and Political Governance, Human Rights and the Rule of Law, Natural Resource Governance, Cross-Border Initiatives, Security Governance, Practical Disarmament, Women, Peace and Security, Youth Empowerment, ECOWAS Standby Force, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Education. To enable its implementation, the ECPF calls for increased advocacy and communication of the goals and activities of ECOWAS, resource mobilisation to support peace and security efforts, cooperation with the A.U., U.N., member states and civil society and participative monitoring and evaluation. The ECPF is a very comprehensive framework document that addresses a fundamental limitation of earlier security mechanisms – the failure of coordination amongst various departments and institutions within ECOWAS and member states responsible for peace and security programming.

### **6.2 ECOWAS and Civil Society**

Another important feature of the emerging peace and security architecture of ECOWAS is its engagement with civil society groups. This reflects the new ECOWAS vision of moving from ‘an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of peoples.’ In this respect, ECOWAS, with the help of local and international NGOs, created the West African Civil Society Forum in 2003 to act as a platform for civil society interaction with ECOWAS policymakers. This new person-centered approach has in information gathering and analysis for the implementation of ECOWARN, who is generally very active, in a partnership which is unique among African early warning systems already resulted in civil society playing an active role in matters of regional peace and security including helping to develop the region’s small arms control convention, the ECPF and working alongside ECOWARN to enhance ECOWAS early warning capacity. Organisations such as the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the West African Network on Small Arms (WANSAs) are notable in this regard. However, critics have accused ECOWAS of only working with selected organisations that have the capacity to access the ECOWAS Commission (Ekiyor, 2008) and have been criticised for lack of Early Warning Capacity as information sharing is not prompt and well-coordinated. Thus for ECOWAS to be considered serious with its people-centered approach, it must seek to work with a broader set of civil society actors and organisations and increase representation

### **6.3 De-radicalization Efforts as a Strategy**

This is one of the approaches to CT-COIN in Nigeria. The Nigerian government has made efforts to counter radicalism and violent extremism in the North East. De-radicalization as CT-COIN is to change the extremist interpretation, distance individual extremist groups, and help to reintegrate the individual back into normal society Funso (2009:1) also through the provision of economic incentive, and this program will reduce their appeal to terrorist ideology. The West African peace architecture has shown some exemplary features that made it stand out as the best among the other regional groupings. Despite these lofty arrangements, the organisation has some fundamental problems.

### **7. Case Studies in the ECOWAS Regional Security Architecture**

Since the formation of ECOWAS and following its revised mandate to include ensuring the security, peace, and stability of the West African sub-region, several cases have tested the security mandate of the organisation. This aspect of the paper attempts a discussion of some of these case scenarios and examines how ECOWAS intervention in these resulted in their resolution or otherwise.

#### **7.1 ECOWAS and the Liberian Crisis**

It was the Liberian crisis that exposed the weaknesses of the security architecture of the Economic Community of the West African States. The Liberian crisis, which started in 1989, occurred when the International community started withdrawing from African conflicts without anything on the ground to protect the people. The escalation of the Liberian crisis, which reverberated to the neighbouring states and with no known assistance coming from outside, ECOWAS was forced to fend for herself by establishing Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) in May 1990, a kind of ad hoc security mechanism to manage the situation. Going by THE existing ECOWAS protocols and agreements, ECOWAS had no serious security mechanism with which to intervene in the Liberian crisis. The effort to establish the SMC was due to the commitment of the leaders and also due to the obvious consequences of staying aloof.

Meanwhile, with the establishment of the SMC, the intended peace was not achieved partly because Samuel Doe refused to resign. Charles Taylor and other warlords who were having upper hand in the war were more interested in gaining political power

than in the peaceful resolution of the conflict. ECOWAS, in such a desperate and pitiable situation, took a bolder step despite the discordant voices from some member states to establish and deploy the ceasefire monitoring group ECOMOG.

Like most African leaders of the undemocratic era, the style of leadership adopted by Samuel Doe disenchanting the people of Liberia, and this led to an attempted coup against him in 1985 by Thomas Quiwonkpa, but this did not stop his discriminatory policy against some ethnic groups like the Mano and Gio. If ECOWAS has improved systematically in her security architecture, it was the experience gathered in Liberia that taught the great lesson to the organisation. Between 1990 and 1996, ECOWAS initiated about 11 of either talks, agreements, agreements and accords with different warring groups in Liberia. These according to Omede (2012:2) include:

The Banjul Communiqué and the ECOWAS Peace Plan of 7 August 1990; The Bamako Cease-fire of 28 November 1990; the Banjul Joint Statement of 21 December 1990; the Lomé Agreement of 13 February 1991; The Yamoussoukro Accords I - IV of June to October 1991; the Geneva Cease-fire of 17 July 1993; the Cotonou Accord of 25 July 1993; the Akosombo Agreement of 12 September 1994; the Accra Clarification of 12 December 1994; the Abuja Accord of 26 August 1995 and the supplement to the Abuja Accord of 17 August 1996.

Liberian crisis started when Charles Taylor, on 24 December 1989 with his group, taking up arms against the government of Liberia. The rebel group was so powerful that by late January 1990, they had already taken hold of Nimba Country in north-central Liberia. By late January 1990, Taylor's motley supporters had advanced from the border, and by June of the same year, they had got to Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia. It was at this juncture that several warlords emerged and the country was engulfed in a Civil War.

As a result, on August 23, 1990, ECOMOG troops comprising of 3,500 soldiers from Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia were deployed to Liberia. Meanwhile, some scholars argue that ECOWAS had no legal backing to intervene in the Liberian crisis, but the fact that the organisation in such a jumbled ambiguous situation dabbled into the crisis and came out some notable success is a testimony that the security architecture of the organisation will be perfect if it is constantly amended in line with new challenges. In fact, President Doe, who appealed to the organisation to

intervene in the crisis, made a fundamental mistake or rather, was confused as to the right person to address the letter to. He stated in his letter the addressee was to "assist in finding a constitutional and reasonable resolution of the crisis in our country (Liberia) ... it would seem expedient at this time to introduce an ECOWAS peacekeeping force into Liberia to forestall increasing terror and tension and to assure a peaceful transition environment" (Bundu 1997 cited in Omede 2012).

The letter was addressed to the Chairman of the Members of the Ministerial Committee of the SMC and not to the Chairman and members of the Authority. The ambiguity of the letter notwithstanding, the intervention of ECOWAS in the conflict brought the restoration of normalcy in Liberia. When the rebel group led by Charles Taylor was having the upper hand in the crisis, he rejected every peace move made by ECOWAS. However, when the tide turned against him, he accepted the Cotonou accord of July 25, 1993, and the Geneva agreement of 17<sup>th</sup> July 1993. Both accords agreed on arrangements for a transitional government, another ceasefire from 1 August 1993, and a general amnesty, among others. ECOMOG was active in the affairs of Liberia until a general election was conducted on July 19, 1997, and a new government led by Charles Ghankay Taylor was inaugurated on August 1997.

## **7.2 ECOWAS and Security in Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)**

Although Africa is one of the continents of the world known for political instability, especially during the era of military rule but during this period, Cote d'Ivoire enjoyed a wave of relative peace. Meanwhile, the death of the pioneer president of Cote d'Ivoire, Houphouët-Boigny, in December 1993 exposed Cote d'Ivoire to political challenges unknown in the country for the over three decades he presided as the number one citizen of that country. However, this crisis was not totally unconnected to the long stay in power of his political party. But the crisis was due largely to the political behaviour of his successor, Konan Bedie who wanted to elbow away his key political opponents including Alassane Ouattara of the Rally for Republicans (RDR) in pursuance of his policy of d'Ivoirité which put some sections of the country on a political vantage position over others as the policy distinguishes what may be called true Ivoirians from those who had one or both parents born outside of Cote d'Ivoire. The uncontrolled political intrigue led to the intervention of the military led by General Robert Guei in 1999, but he was also numbed by the crisis as there were a

series of protests against his emergence and policies. The emergence of President Laurent Gbagbo did not help matters as he failed in his rescue mission, which aggravated the already horrible condition. His policy, which favoured the concept of Ivoirite triggered a series of crises in the country. Some members of the national army who were demobilised in 2002 and who were core loyalists of General Gueirevolted (Addo, 2005:49). As it is often said, the only thing certain is the beginning of the conflict, the end is always uncertain. In the crises that followed the breakdown of law and order, different rebel groups emerged, and the country was in a mess.

### 7.2.1 ECOWAS Intervention in the Ivorian Crises

At the time crises erupted in Cote d'Ivoire, it could be argued that West African states were no longer greenhorns in conflict management, having learned much from the experience of Liberia. Therefore, the sub-region decided to activate the protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security in 1999 (otherwise known as the mechanism) instead of the protocol on non-aggression or the Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence and Other Norms which were more active during the 1970s and 80's when inter-state conflicts were dominant (Kode, 2016:12).

The terms of the protocol were unambiguous, especially on the area that states that crises in any state have ways of reverberating in other states if the neighbouring countries take no serious step in the sub-region. Although France intervened to stabilise the situation by increasing the number of her troops stationed in the country, it was the intervention by ECOWAS that brought the tensed and intractable situation to a more manageable one. The first attempt by ECOWAS to intervene in the crises was on 29 September 2002 in Accra, Ghana, under the auspices of the Senegalese president. Others in attendance were ten other Heads of States and Governments in the sub-region and the representatives of other four West African countries. It was in this meeting that a contact group comprised of six West African countries of Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, and Togo, in conjunction with the African Union, was set. The group was charged with the responsibility of reaching out to both the rebels and the government to eschew brinkmanship.

Because ECOWAS at this point was better equipped to handle conflicts in the sub-region, ECOWAS, through its Secretary-General Mohammed Ibn Chambers, condemned the coup attempted by some

members of the armed forces because it was a violation of the protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. It was this contact group that developed the framework for the resolution of the crisis and initiated contact between the rebels and the Ivorian government. It was this meeting of September 29 that led to what later came to be known as Accra 1 Agreement (Kode, 2016). ECOWAS quickly deployed a contingent of soldiers under the name of ECOWAS mission in Cote d'Ivoire named ECOMICI. With the substantial assistance of the French government, the West ECOWAS was able to broker a peace to a very appreciable extent and brought the two belligerent parties to sign series of ceasefire agreements with the first in Lomé, Togo on 13 January 2003, 2003, and the Linas-Marcoussis agreement in Paris, France of 24 January. The agreement was quite precise as it stipulated that all parties must respect the ceasefire agreement, maintains the territorial integrity of the country and even called on the sub-region, France and United Nations to prepare to manage the warring parties including disarmament (Gberie and Addo 2008) With the help of African Union and the United Nations, ECOWAS was able to manage the crisis until 2011.

## 8. Challenges of ECOWAS Regional Architecture for Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency in West Africa

One of the greatest security challenges of the contemporary world is how to manage terrorism and insurgency, which are on the increase. Some of these insurgents groups have transcended national boundaries, and some of the renowned ones like ISIS and al-Qaeda have overtaken the leadership of the local ones by demanding or accepting their allegiance and in turn, training and retraining them in their modus operandi which make them to constitute global terror. The proximity of West African States with its attendant porous borders coupled with ECOWAS free movement of people and goods policy have made it easy for movement of small arms and light weapons. This, in turn, has made it stress-free for the emergence and spread of terrorism and why counter-terrorism is a herculean task in the sub-region. Despite the shortcomings of the ECOWAS security architecture, there appears to be synergy between and among the ECOWAS states to combat terrorism and other activities of the armed groups in the region. In pursuance of this objective, ECOWAS Commission President Kadre Desire Ouedraog at the 15<sup>th</sup> International Forum on Africa held in Berlin, Germany, promised that West Africa will cooperate with the rest of the world in meeting the African

dream of making Africa a crisis-free state (ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy Tracker Report, 2015).

In pursuance of effective counter-terrorism strategy, ECOWAS Chief of Defence Staff met in September 2015 in Dakar, where they deliberated over regional security. In that meeting, which happened to be the 35 edition of the ordinary meeting of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) two major things occupied their attention, viz, the new structure of the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) and Peace Support Operation Division (PSOD) (Ibid). The periodic meetings of the Defence Chiefs of member states, the creation of ECOWAS standby force, the establishment of the West African Police Chiefs Committees (WAPCCO), the creation of the Moratorium against the Importation and Exportation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in 1998, the adoption of Conflict Prevention Framework in 2008 and many more are all steps to tackle terrorism and insurgency in the region. Other measures include the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI) in countries like Tunisia, Ghana, Algeria, Senegal, and Morocco. At the national level, individual states have legislated anti-terrorist acts. Some of these countries include the Nigeria Counter-Terrorism Bill 2010 and the Anti-Money Laundering Bill 2004, Niger Titre VI du Terrorisme et du Financement du Terrorisme (2003), Senegal Loi Modifiant le Code de procedure Penale et Relative à la lutte Contre les Actes de Terrorisme (2007), Ghana Anti-Terrorism Bill (2005) and the Anti-Money Laundering Bill (2007) (Adigbue 2014:49) etc all anti-terrorism and insurgency architecture.

However, it would not be out of place to argue that the ECOWAS approach to counter-terrorism in the sub-region was somehow lackadaisical until February 2013 when in its 66 ordinary sessions in Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire, the Authority of Heads of States adopted the ECOWAS counter-terrorism strategy. According to Adigbue (2014), "the principal purpose of the Declaration and Strategy is to prevent and eradicate terrorism and related criminal acts in West Africa, intending to create conditions conducive to sound economic development and ensure the well-being of all ECOWAS citizens." Although the implementation of this strategy to the core will be quite instrumental to its workability but its adoption are enough signals to ECOWAS preparedness to stamp out insurgency and terrorism in West Africa. Marin A. Ewi put it thus "While the Strategy may not be a complete answer to the problem of terrorism in West Africa, it certainly does provide a robust and proactive framework for containing the threat of terrorism."

## 9. Challenges of ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Move

Despite the gains made by ECOWAS in restoring peace in war-torn areas and its effort to stamp out terrorism in the region, it is apparent that the organisation still has a lot to do to counter terrorism and other unlawful activities in the region. Some factors had and are still playing an active role in inhibiting the performances of ECOWAS. In a workshop organised by the government of Nigeria and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) on 31<sup>st</sup> October to 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013 in Abuja, participants repeatedly cited porous border as a serious challenge in the region. Even at manned border posts, the capacity to reliably process people and goods is often missing.

Terrorism in one Member State can reverberate to other States. Terrorists and other armed groups exploit conditions of poverty, political instability, bad governance, corruption, and the absence of the rule of law to recruit, plan and train their members and even raise money for their nefarious activities. The point being made here is that since the borders of the countries of West Africa remain porous and poorly manned, ECOWAS efforts at countering terrorism and insurgency would always be challenged.

Again terrorism cannot be tackled by military means alone. It requires a broad range of policy responses, including the promotion of human rights and good governance. As long as the harbingers of terrorism, which include among others, poverty, corruption, unemployment, illiteracy, and other incubators of terrorism are not perfectly managed, ECOWAS aim of eradicating terrorism and insurgency in the sub-region will remain a noble dream. Although ECOWAS is making remarkable efforts to promote democracy in West Africa, available evidence would tend to suggest the intertwined relationship between good governance and anti-terrorism has not been perfectly understood by the governments of the West African States.

ECOWAS counter-terrorism portfolio within the ECOWAS commission is assigned to the office of the Political Affairs, Peace, and Security, but it has not created a dedicated office within the unit to deal with counter-terrorism (12). WAPCCO and other networks of security officials are too narrow in their substantive focus and composition and do not adequately address the needs of a sub-regional counter-terrorism network. (Ipe, Cokanye, and Millar, 2010).

Although it would appear as if ECOWAS has now overcome the hitherto distrust between the Anglophone and Francophone countries, in the past, the mistrust between these groups hindered the performances of ECOWAS in its effort to stamp out terrorism and other civil unrest in the region. This mutual distrust was further exacerbated by Nigerians role as a regional hegemon. Some of the neighbouring countries, especially the Francophone states, did not believe that Nigeria was not making plans to dominate them. All these and many more acted in concert to reduce the efficacy of the ECOWAS security architecture.

In line with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) thought, which saw the intervention of member states as anathema, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), when it was formed, maintained the policy of non-intervention. This policy of non-intervention was also pursued at different degrees by different regional organisations due to the fact that the Cold War restrained them to a very large extent from resolving regional conflicts. Meanwhile, the collapse of the Cold War in 1989 and the change in the nature of warfare from inter-state to intra-states coerced most of these regional bodies to have a re-think, develop other strategies to deal with the situation on the ground. The dominance of political and security issues makes it inevitable for the sub-regional organisation to review its mandate because without securing the sub-region politically, even the economic relations, which is the core mandate of ECOWAS, will be unachievable. This period also coincided with the period of “democratic inauguration in Africa” as most African states left one-party politics for multi-party politics and which marked the turn from military rule to democracy.

In pursuance of democratic rule or instead, because of it, many African states amended their constitution to accommodate good governance and the rule of law. At this point, the body language of the United Nations (U.N.) changed. For instance, in the “U.N. Agenda for Peace,” the then Secretary-General of the Organisation Boutros-Ghali argued in favour of regional organisations that they have a greater role in preventing and resolving conflicts in their sub-regions, which would, in turn, reduce the burden of the U.N. Meanwhile, the massive return to democracy by West African states created its own brand of problem as contested electoral results, and manipulation of the constitution became one of the major causes of insecurity in the sub-region.

As a result of this, coupled with the experiences of the past, ECOWAS member states decided to

strengthen their intervention in a more justified manner. On December 10, 1999, in a summit in the Togolese capital, Lomé, the organisation adopted a “constitution” on collective security when they adopted a protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (Essuman 2009:419). Because of the role ECOWAS through the sub-regional monitoring group ECOMOG played in restoring peace in different parts of West Africa from 1990s, ECOWAS, it could be argued, have contributed immensely to international peace and stability.

From the available evidence, the most remarkable step taken by ECOWAS towards the establishment of permanent mechanism security, conflict resolution, and management was in 1993 when the ECOWAS treaty was revised. Although critics see the ECOWAS 1978 Non-aggression protocol as mere window dressing as it did not provide, in the case of any breach, an institutionalised mechanism, it was this protocol, it could be argued, that made the organisation to sign the Mutual Assistance on Defence (MAD) in 1981 which provided the member states with the power to assist each other in the case of any armed threat and to consider it as an attack to all. One primary reason why most of the protocols of the 1970s and 1980s never worked was the suspicions among the West African States. The majority of the States in the region are Francophone states that feared the possible domination of Nigeria as a regional hegemon. One of the undoing’s of the protocol was the recommendation of the withdrawal of foreign troops from West Africa, even though it was evident that Francophone states have serious military ties with France. Again, following the boundary dispute between Mali and Burkina Faso, the Francophone states signed in 1977 the Accord de Non-Aggression et d’Assistance en matière de Défense (ANAD) which was seeing MAD as a rival (Kabia, 2011). Over time, however, ECOWAS was able to rise above some of these challenges and could now effectively intervene in the crisis in the region without the over-reliance on the United Nations.

## 10. Conclusion

ECOWAS, when it was formed, was essential as the name implied an organisation that was formed to enhance the economic needs of the countries in West Africa. The major security concern of the founding fathers was how to protect their regimes and not the people. Due to the nature of warfare during the period, which was more of inter-state than intra-state, there was no provision for the intervention of

regional powers into the affairs of the member states. It was the Liberian crises that forced ECOWAS to jettison the old protocol, which did not give enough room for the resolution of conflicts in the sub-region. However, given the challenges the organisation faced during its intervention in the Liberian crises, it made bolder steps to strengthen the security architecture of the organisation. Although the organisation still has so many challenges, ranging from finance, interferences from former colonial masters in security matters, especially those former France colonies and sufficient personnel to consummate the security architecture, it is however now more than ever, better equipped and strategic in focus to handle the modern security challenges of insurgency and terrorism than before in the West African sub-region.

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