



Seeking Peace by any means Possible: An Assessment of the Role Civilian JTF in Crime Management in North-East Nigeria

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Abstract. Crime and insecurity have been, and continue to be one of the major challenges confronting the nation, with the north-eastern part assuming a permanent theater of war between the Boko Haram terrorist group and the Nigerian state since 2009. This paper presents an assessment of the role the Civilian JTF in the fight against terrorism in Borno State. To execute this study very effectively, the following objectives have been pursued: (1) the examination of the role Civilian JTF in crime management (2) investigation of how effective they are in crime management and (3) the exploration of the strategy/method employed in carrying out their informal crime management function. This paper gathered data qualitatively. The qualitative data was collected through Key Persons Interviews (KPI) of some purposively selected individuals. The data was subjected to thematic content analysis. The finding showed that the failure of the formal social control agencies has birthed the civilian JTF, that have complemented and filled the gap created in a way and they are also effective in crime management. The study recommends that the formal law enforcement agencies should collaborate with the Civilian JTF in the area of training and retraining, as well as, in information sharing. Furthermore, they - Civilian JTF - should be given incentives by the Government and Communities for the risky job they are doing. This will serve as motivation to do more for their communities.

Keywords: Seeking Peace, Assessment, Role, Civilian JTF, Crime management, Northeast Nigeria

1. Introduction

Crime and insecurity have been, and continue to be one of the major challenges confronting all humans and societies regardless of their position on the rungs of the ladder of civilization. The threat posed by the

recurrent incidents of crime affects the well-being of individuals as well as their overall social, political, educational, religious and economic advancement (Kumar, 2009; Lambert, Khondaker, Elechi, Jiang & Baker 2012). As a stark social reality with dire consequences, crime has compelled individuals, groups and communities to strive to evolve various human and scientific approaches in a bid to curb its manifestations across cultures. These approaches are either formal or informal or both.

Formal crime control is basically a political, as well as, an administrative process carried out by the state as part of its key functions towards protecting the citizens. It is a social contract that the state has with the citizens. As Ugwuoke (2020) and Madaki (2021) observe, formal crime control entails the legal means of controlling the behaviour and actions of citizens through the criminal justice network which involves (the police, the courts and corrections). Generally, agents of the formal crime control carry out their functions in accordance with the law, and utilize formal sanctions against defaulters as stipulated in the constitution or any other law.

Then, as noted above, apart from the formal crime control, there is also the informal crime control. Explaining this type of crime control, Agwanwo and Onyige (2021) note that unlike the formal crime control, the informal crime control is a form of crime management system administered by the non-state actors. This type of crime control involves or rather refers to all informal measures adopted and applied by individuals and groups in society to regulate the behaviour of people so that they conform to the acceptable norms and values. These measures are built around or make use of the existing norms values, morality, mores, folkways and religion of the people (Iwarimie-Jaja, 2014; Madaki, 2020).

Without any doubts, the formal system of crime control has been known to play very important roles in the control of crime. However, in recent times, because of the incessant occurrence of crime, coupled with the resilient attitude of criminals, some community, ethnic as well as regional based informal crime management agents have evolved and put in place such organizations or groups as the Oodua People's Congress, Bakassi Boys, Civilian JTF, OSPAC, Amotekun (the Leopard), Eastern Security Network (*Ebubeagwu*) among other crime-fighting groups to control crime in their various domains (Ayakoroma 2014; Maiangwa & Waziri, 2018; Ikelegbe, 2021, Mezie-Okoye, 2023).

Here, it needs to be stated clearly that the establishment of these vigilante groups is intended to complement the efforts of the state and not to take over its duties. In every modern state system, the main responsibility of any sovereign state is the maintenance of law and order and guaranteeing the security of lives and property of citizens. In Nigeria, the constitution clearly states that, "in order to ensure the realization of these core state mandates, the police – the Nigeria police – has the responsibility to prevent crime and protect the lives and property of citizens as the foremost and the most visible arm of the criminal justice system." It is in the light of this that Alemika & Chukwuma (2003:4) see the police as "agents of the state established for the maintenance of order and enforcement of law."

Given the onerous task before the Nigeria police, it could be said that the police need the collaboration of these local vigilante bodies to assist it in the discharge of their constitutional mandate of crime prevention and the protection of the lives and property of citizens. In fact, generally speaking, Nigeria has witnessed all forms crime and criminality in recent time, these have ranged from terrorism and insurgency, herdsmen violent attacks, banditry, kidnapping of all classes of people, including pupils and students, armed robbery, ritual killings, politically motivated killings, "unknown gunmen," attacks, cultism, militancy to ethno-religious conflicts, among others. And, very unfortunately too, these realities have equally assumed perennial dimension. Worst still, the spike in insecurity spares no one region in the country. In fact, some scholars have blamed this situation on police ineffectiveness. Agwanwo and Bello (2018), Onwuama (2020) and Dilichukwu (2021) argue that the high and increasing rate of crime and insecurity in Nigeria stem from of the failure on the part of the Nigeria police to rise to the occasion. Even as it stands currently, the police officers themselves, just as the ordinary citizens of this country, from time to time,

have become casualties of criminal victimization of criminals too. Their stations are attacked and several of the officers are killed across the country. This has signaled a failure on the part of the police to contend with the criminal situation in country. They could not protect themselves; how would they be able to protect the citizens?

The clear failure or inability of the Nigeria police as the foremost law enforcement agent to prevent and detect crime, apprehend criminal, protect life and property, as well as guarantee social order has made the citizenry to lose hope in the ability and potency of the police to secure them (Soyombo, 2003, Alemika, 2014). It is this situation, according to Soyombo (2003), Ayakoroma (2014), and Ikelegbe (2021) which has compelled many communities, neighbourhoods, local government areas, states and regions in Nigeria to evolve and establish various forms of community policing/vigilantees groups to take up the task of protecting themselves, as well as, their people and property in their hands. In fact, Ikelegbe (2021:41) observes that "the gap in federal security management and responses are leading to the emergence of the regionalization of security response to security threats, through common frameworks woven around vigilantes and hunters." This, no doubt, is a crisis situation in disguise.

As a result of the inability of the formal police to prove its mettle in crime control and the subsequent emergence of various forms of community-initiated police, there has been increasing number of scholars who have researched on the recourse to this alternative form of policing. One of these scholars is Soyombo (2003) who examined the situation and stressed the need for community to be fully involved in crime control in Nigeria. Another scholar Ayakoroma (2014) investigates the failure of the policing system and the emergence of vigilantes from the lens of Nollywood films. On his part, Ajayi probes the involvement of ethnic militia in crime control in Nigeria and finds out that the involvement of ethnic militia in the control of crime dated back to pre-colonial era, but has recently, reemerged following the lack of competence on the part of the Nigeria police. Also, Ajayi and Aderinto (2012) investigates the role of Oodua People's Congress in crime control in Lagos. The study reveals that the vigilante group played key role in the reduction of crime. Ode (2003) as well, examines the role of vigilante groups in Makurdi, Benue state. Relying on information from questionnaire and focused group discussions, the study reveals that the existence of some vigilante groups has contributed to the reduction in the crime rate in the study area.

Also, Ijioma & Aku (2021) in their investigation, studied the centrality of vigilante security agency in the control of crime in Ozuitem, South-East Nigeria. Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data, the study reveals that the local vigilante group is very useful in crime management. This is more so when viewed against the backdrop of the seeming (or do we say obvious) ineptitude or absence of the formal police and the high level of crime in the area. Having considered the number of researches on the recourse to alternative crime management by communities, states and ethnic groups in Nigeria as a fallout of inability of the Nigeria Police to protect lives and property of individuals and groups through vigilante groups, it is apparent that their very few research that had focused on the role of vigilante groups like the Civilian JTF in the north-east. Much of the previous studies on vigilante groups are generalistic in their approach with a few considering the performance of these bodies and not specifically on the Civilian JTF. This paper, therefore, fills the gap by examining the roles of the Civilian JTF in crime management. To execute this study very effectively, the following objectives have been pursued: (1) the examination of the role Civilian JTF in crime management (2) investigation of how effective they are in crime management and (3) the exploration of the strategy/method employed in carrying out their informal crime management function.

2. The Emergence of Vigilante Groups in Crime Management

Vigilantism or informal policing is not any recent phenomenon but had dated back to the pre-colonial era in Africa, and indeed in Nigeria. This has come to be because various communities had one form of insecurity or crime challenge or the other that has necessitated them to police their local communities. In fact, Akaruese (2007: 259) observes that part of the security challenges in this period was because the area was “dotted by a multiplicity of few autonomous empires, umpteen ethnically defined kingdoms, chiefdoms, etc; inter-ethnic conflicts and wars were a recurring decimal, given the dominant morals of that period enconced on the rightness of might.” As a matter of fact, given the reality of some forms of norm violations and perennial wars of conquest and territorial expansion, local communities had standby armies, made up of able-bodied men from specific age grades who were there for the purpose of engaging intruders and fighting off invaders from other communities, and also helping to maintain law and order in their respective domains (Sesay, Ukeje, Aina & Odebiyi, 2003; Ajayi, 2014).

In fact, many local communities in Nigeria instituted these local armies and local policing agents as a way of fighting invaders, and curbing norm violation in pre-contact Nigeria. Then several forms of local policing agents existed with varying composition and method of operation. Unlike the formal policing system, the various forms of vigilante bodies in pre-colonial and post-colonial Nigeria, were comprised of able-bodied youth and men from the local communities. This, of course, earned the guards credibility and legitimacy (Atuguba, 2007). They were relied upon for arresting and dealing with anyone who violated the norms and values of the community. Petty thieves and those who went against the collective conscience of the community were adequately dealt with in line with their offences.

It is important to note that many of these agents of informal policing/vigilante groups in pre-colonial Nigeria were either warriors, youths, community guards or palace guards. Their basic task was to ensure that their community was protected from external incursion by neighbours. Also, they maintained internal peace and security. No members of these groups were forced to do these jobs. They were volunteers interested in the peace and security of their community. Anyone of them who distinguished himself in his service was rewarded with titles and with other community resources, as the community deemed fit for their commitment in ensuring social order in their domain (Sasey, e'tal; Atuguba, 2007). These local guards used some weapons that were available to them at the time. Ajayi (2014) and Maiangwa & Waziri (2018) noted that the weapons used by these community vigilantes were very rudimentary in nature and included tools such as clubs, cutlasses, cudgel, and local gun, were available. The use of these weapons was accompanied by the application of magical powers for their fortification and protection.

As noted earlier on, the local vigilante groups were very useful in many communities in traditional societies in Nigeria. Today, because of the exigencies of time, the need for these local armed groups has become overwhelming. This account for why in the 21st century Nigeria, there was heavy re-reemergence of these local vigilante groups. Also, as part of the functions of these modern-day vigilante or voluntary armed groups as observed by Maiangwa & Waziri (2018) in Africa, in Nigeria the emergence of these vigilante or voluntary armed groups has been basically to align with government security agencies in the fight against criminals. This is the case because the formation of the vigilante groups in Nigeria has been largely based on the philosophy of defending their

communities against criminals and insurgents owing to the failure of the formal policing system.

3. Rationale for Involvement in Crime Control of Civilian JTF

As it should have been clear by now, the establishment of informal policing organs are not intended to serve as mere décor or adornment in the country's security outfit. These organs were evolved as a result of some critical events in the country. Nigeria, in the not so recent, and even currently has been acknowledged as a very hotspot of criminality, which the formal policing security system finds it difficult to contain. This means there should be some ancillary voluntary crime-fighting armed groups to help out the situation. Thus, on the emergence/re-emergence of informal policing organs, Maiangwa & Waziri (2018), Alemika (1993) and Ekpenyong (2020), explained what they referred to as the Nigerian crime problem, which they say has overwhelmed the nation. It has been observed that in more ways than one, Nigeria's crime profile has baffled the global community. For instance, in terrorism, Nigeria is rated as one of the leading terrorist countries in the world according to Global Terrorism Index (GTI) (2023). Also, drawing on the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, Oguntunde, Ojo, Okagbue & Oguntunde (2018) observe that the most recurrent crimes committed in Nigeria include armed robbery, kidnapping, terrorism, burglary, rape, cyber-crime, fraud, bribery and corruption, ritual murder, herdsman killings, cult killings and banditry among others. The high and increasing incidences of crimes and its variegated patterns and sophistication have given rise to the establishment and involvement of these informal voluntary organs of crime fighting and prevention.

This time around, the focus is on the emergence and involvement of Civilian JTF in the North-east Nigeria. The origin and development of the *Civilian JTF* is traceable to the onslaught and the terror evoking actions against the innocent citizens of this country by the Boko Haram insurgents in the north-east, Nigeria. The gruesome killing of hapless and defenseless citizens in the north-east, especially in Borno State prompted the emergence of Civilian JTF vigilante group in 2013. The Boko Haram Islamic sect, with the killing of its ace leader Muhammed Yusuf, by the Nigerian state in 2012, has since intensified its armed engagement with the Nigerian state in what can be referred to as a guerilla warfare (Agwanwo & Ekpetorson, 2018). This warfare has the soft targets of the Nigerian population, that is, the innocent and defenseless Nigerians as its targets. Of course, these are Nigerians whom the law enforcement agents like

the police, and the various military agencies are incapable giving adequate protection as a result of some factors. One of these is the secret involvement and connivance of people in government and indeed, some high-ranking military officers in Boko Haram intrigues because of their profiteering interest in the insurgency in the north (Maiangwa & Waziri, 2018).

Another very cogent reason that brought about the formation of the Civilian JTF was the strategy deployed by the military JTF in the fight against the insurgents that conduced to the intimidation and abuse of the fundamental right of the resident in the Borno and other Boko Haram infested state in the region. They imposed curfews, door-to-door search and arrest of sect members as well as innocent citizens, the destruction of people's homes and personal belongings, as well as, long detention of those innocently accused. The Human Rights Watch (2012: 59) corroborated this point when they observed that the "JTF abuses created growing resentment in communities, making community members more unlikely to provide information that could help curtail Boko Haram abuses by the JTF have created more distance between the people and the government."

In fact, it is the dissatisfaction and resentment against the military for their inability to crush the Boko Haram attacks and make the region habitable and devoid of the perennial killings and the destruction of property fueled the intervention of the Civilian JTF in the North-east. This intervention was driven by some strong motives, and Maiangwa & Waziri (2018: 211) identified these motives to include the following:

To revenge the death of loved ones killed by Boko Haram, to prevent the group from causing havoc to the civilian population, proved to the security agents that fighting urban warfare does not necessarily require heavy troop's deployment and lastly knowing the culture and terrain of where terrorist operate is significant in gaining advantage over insurgents.

These motives, as a matter of fact, boosted their morale in engaging their enemy the Boko Haram Islamic sect, moreover as they remember the death of well over 20,000 and the displacement of about 2.2 million of their people from their homes (BBC, 2016). However, as at 2018, in spite of their effort and zeal the Armed Conflict location and Event Data Project (ACLED) estimated that 37,346 had been killed by the Boko Haram Islamic sect (Campbell and Harwood, 2018).

But the point has been made that in spite of this heavy loss the involvement of the organized youth - Civilian

JTF-, in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgents has had some positive impact in the region. The Civilian JTF, has fought and also won the insurgents in a number of cases. For instance, in 2013, some members of the Civilian JTF caught and handed some Boko Haram members over to the military in Maidugiri (Maiangwa & Waziri, 2018). Also, Olugbuo & Ojewale (2018) declare that the Civilian JTF has made remarkable progress in fighting off major assaults of the insurgents, and as well, raided the homes of suspected members of the Boko Haram terrorists to make arrests on behalf of the military.

Apart from the effort they made to protect themselves and their communities, the Civilian JTF has worked as a worthy ally of the military in the fight against the Boko Haram Islamic sect in the area of intelligence gathering. Lar (2018) notes that the usefulness of the Civilian JTF was clear in the area of intelligence gathering, surveillance, patrolling and manning of checkpoints which aided the activities of the military in the state. Their partnership with the military JTF, has apparently strengthened and sustained the fight against Boko Haram insurgents in the region. Acknowledging the usefulness of the Civilian JTF in the fight against the Boko Haram sect, the Human Rights Watch (2017) observes that they were serving as foremen by guiding the military JTF through the difficult terrain in search of the Boko Haram insurgents. In fact, the support the Civilian JTF gave to the military JTF facilitated the reorganization of this informal community security outfit into an organized command structure in various communities in Borno state, and is being overseen by the military JTF. The reorganization of the Civilian JTF along the military command made it possible for them to have a uniform for proper identification. Their uniform is made up of two colours- black shirt and trousers having blue stripes on the pockets and shoulders (Lar, 2018).

As it could be expected, however, in an armed conflict situation, there is usually the cases of maiming, the destruction of property, and at its extreme the loss of lives by parties involved. On the part of the Civilian JTF, the Vanguard (2017) reported that about 680 Civilian JTF members lost their lives, while trying to repel the reign of terror by Boko Haram insurgents in Borno State, between 2012-2017. Also, in order to demonstrate their avowed commitment to the course of protecting their communities, and to deal with the issues of betrayal among themselves, they all agreed to take an oath with the Quran, which is administered by the Chief Imam of Borno State (Maiangwa & Waziri, 2018).

4. Methods and Research Setting

The method a researcher deploys in carrying out any research depends on a lot of factors. Snape & Spencer (2003) stated that these factors include the researchers' beliefs about the nature of the social world and what can be known about it, the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired, the purpose and goal of the research, the characteristics of the research participants, the audience for the research, the financiers of the research and the position and environment of the researchers themselves. In the context of this research, the qualitative research method was adopted. As Bryman (2004:46) had stated, qualitative research is an "approach to the study of social world which seeks to describe and analyze the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied." The qualitative method helps the researcher to understand and interpret the social world of those being studied and how their social world is created and recreated in a patterned way that has enabled their continued existence.

The qualitative data for this study was collected through Key Persons Interviews (KPI) of some purposively selected individuals. They were selected on the basis of their knowledge of the security dilemma in the study area, and the role played by the informal security to curb insecurity in their areas. Those selected include the police, the military, community leaders and members of the Civilian JTF. A total of 20 Key Persons Interviews was conducted. While content analysis of the Key Persons Interviews was done for the qualitative data. Due to the distance of the state, coupled with the security situation, the researcher, through the assistance of a colleague in the Department of Sociology, University of Maiduguri, helped to engage some graduate level students who assisted in the data collection process. The data collected were gathered and sent via email to us. Those involved in the data collection were paid for the work done.

As regards the geographical location of this study, the study was carried out in Borno State. Borno state is one of the states in the northeast Nigeria. The state was created on the 3rd of February, 1976 and currently has 27 local government areas. Christened as 'Home of Peace', Borno state has in recent time become a theatre of war and violence. It is now the epicenter of Boko Haram terrorist onslaught. The violent criminal activities of the Boko Haram terrorist in the state have led to the loss of lives and property. Boko Haram terrorist onslaughts have halted socio-economic, political, educational and religious activities in the

state. Granted that it is the responsibility of the state to protect the lives and property of citizens, their near failure in carrying out this constitutional mandate through the various law enforcement agencies has led to the emergence of the Civilian JTF. The presence of the civilian JTF as community-based security outfit, is very visible in other northeastern part of the country.

5. Results and Discussion

In this session, attempt was made to investigate the role of the civilian JTF in crime control.

The following persons were interviewed based on the topic at hand

- The police
- The military
- Community leaders

An interviewee explained that (Police Response).

In combating the Boko Haram terrorist group, the Nigerian army has not fought alone; it has found an invaluable partner in the form of the civilian joint task force, also called “Yan Gora”. This collaboration has dealt significant blows to Boko Haram, resulting in substantial losses for the group. However, the CJTF itself has also suffered significant casualties in the process (Police response 1).

In concomitant with the first respondent, the second interviewee stated that:

The role of the Civilian JTF is one of collaboration and mutual support. We work closely with them to address security challenges, especially in areas where our resources might be stretched thin. The Civilian JTF provides valuable local knowledge and intelligence that helps us in our operations. This is because they are familiar with the terrain and the communities, which gives us an advantage in combating crime and insurgency (Police response 2).

The above response is a clear depiction that the role of the CJTF in crime control involves a concerted effort. Synergy between the CJTF and the police is undoubtedly valuable. In fact, prompt intelligence needs to be gathered on time to avert certain criminal tendencies. Hence the third respondent stated that:

The Civilian JTF has been instrumental in facilitating the safe return of abducted individuals and reuniting them with their families. Their swift action and cooperation with the police have helped rescue many victims from the clutches of criminals. The most important role is that they serve as our eyes and ears on the ground, they know everybody in the community

and even most of the participants of the Boko Haram group. Some are their friends; others are either close relations or business mates. Therefore, it is difficult for Boko Haram to infiltrate the population without being detected. They also assist us in identifying and apprehending suspects, as well as, providing information on suspicious activities in their neighborhoods (police response 3).

The role of the CJTF in crime control (Military response).

The Civilian JTF serves as a force multiplier for the military in the fight against Boko Haram. Their grassroots presence and community trust enable them to gather intelligence, conduct patrols, and support the army operations effectively. This partnership significantly enhances our ability to combat crime and insurgency, especially the Boko Haram-afflicted regions (Military response 1).

The second responded added that:

The Civilian JTF's involvement in crime control is indispensable in Boko Haram-infested areas. Their local knowledge and deep understanding of the terrain enable them to detect and deter insurgent activities, contributing significantly to the overall security efforts led by the military. Their collaboration is pivotal in achieving our objectives against Boko Haram (Military response 2).

Yet, another respondent has this to say:

The Civilian JTF serves as a critical ally to the military in crime control endeavors. Their engagement at the community level not only helps in gathering intelligence but also fosters trust and cooperation among the local populace, which is essential for long-term stability. The Civilian JTF's role is indispensable in our collective efforts to combat crime and insurgency in these areas (Military response 3).

The role of the CJTF in crime control (Community leader response).

The community leaders were also interviewed concerning the role of the civilian JTF in crime control. Thus, the first interviewee appraised the efforts of the CJTF and stated their role since inception:

From a religious perspective, I can attest to the CJTF's commitment to protecting our mosques and religious gatherings. They work tirelessly to ensure that worshippers can practice their faith without fear of violence or intimidation. (Community leader 1).

The second respondent added that:

As a youth leader, I've seen firsthand how the CJTF engages with young people in our communities. They provide vocational training and mentorship programs to steer vulnerable youths away from joining extremist groups like Boko Haram. This preventative approach is essential for long-term peace and stability (Community leader 2).

In similar vein, the third interviewee stated:

Additionally, the CJTF's presence has boosted economic activities in our region. Their efforts in maintaining security allow businesses to operate without constant fear of attacks or extortion by Boko Haram insurgents. Even our market places are protected by them, people can now freely visit the market to carry out transactions without fear of being apprehended by herdsmen or the book harm sect (Community leader 3).

The responses from our respondents on the role of the Civilian JTF in crime control in the Northeast, Nigeria are quite revealing as regard crime reduction in the area of study. Prior to the evolution of the vigilante group, the members of Boko Haram terrorist group and bandits were said to have terrorized the people to the point that they had capture some local communities and local government areas in the Northeast. However, with the involvement of the Civilian JTF, the terrorist onslaught by the terrorist group has drastically reduced to the barest. Also, they have made it very difficult for the terrorist to capture and take control of communities as their main base. The critical role played by Civilian JTF have, to a reasonable extent, brought some respite to the residents as a result of the security gap created by the inability of the formal security agencies to prove their mettle. The finding of this study is supported by Brownyn's study. Brownyn (2001) in his study on vigilantism in Sierra Leone found that vigilante groups play pivotal role in the maintenance of law and order as a result of the failure of the police curbing incidences of crime and insecurity in the nation. Also, the finding of this study is further corroborated by Aderinto & Nwaeze (2010), and Mezie-Okoye (2023), when they noted that vigilante groups help to fill the security gaps created by the ineffectiveness of the police in Nigeria. Drawing from the works of these scholars, it is very clear that vigilante groups like the Civilian JTF, has played an important role in the fight against insurgency and sundry crime in the North-east Nigeria.

The second objective of this study is to investigate the strategies adopted by Civilian JTF in crime control. This is important because if they have played key role in security governance, it is necessary to underscore

the strategy they adopted to reduce the security threats in their localities. To answer this question, responses was elicited from the Police, the Military and the Community leaders. Strategies employed by the CJTF in crime control (police response).

The CJTF's community engagement approach is one of the effective strategies employed by the CJTF in crime control. They actually have strong ties with local residents and are deeply embedded in serving this community. This allows them to gather intelligence and identify potential threats more efficiently. This is of major help to us because not all of us here understands the language (police response 1).

Another respondent further explains:

In addition to their community-based efforts, the CJTF also collaborates closely with law enforcement agencies like ours. They share valuable intelligence and assist in joint operations targeting criminal elements, including Boko Haram insurgents (police response 2).

Also, another police officer had this to say:

Another noteworthy strategy is the CJTF's focus on youth empowerment and rehabilitation. By providing vocational training and mentorship programs, they offer alternatives to young people who might otherwise be susceptible to recruitment by criminal organizations (police response 3).

Strategies employed by the CJTF in crime control (Community leaders' response).

From a religious perspective, I've witnessed the CJTF's efforts in promoting peace and reconciliation initiatives. They work to resolve conflicts within communities and discourage violence as a means of resolving disputes, which contributes to overall crime reduction (community leader 1).

Secondly:

The CJTF also plays a significant role in fostering trust and cooperation between residents and security forces. They act as liaisons between the community and law enforcement agencies, facilitating communication and collaboration.

The last respondent added that:

One strategy I've seen is the CJTF's active involvement in neighborhood watch programs. They organize community patrols and engage residents in reporting any suspicious activities, which helps in preventing crimes before they occur (Community leader 3).

Strategies employed by the CJTF in crime control (military response):

One key strategy employed by the CJTF is community policing, where they work closely with the local populace to gather information on insurgent activities and provide security at the grass roots level. This helps in preventing attacks before they occur and also facilitates the arrest of suspects (military response 1). In addition to the first respondent, the second respondent stated that:

The CJTF conducts patrols in collaboration with the military to secure major roads and strategic locations. They act as the eyes and ears of the military, reporting any suspicious activities or movements (military response 2).

The last respondents added that:

Through counter-radicalization efforts, the CJTF engage with the youths and communities that are vulnerable to extremist ideologies. They provide alternative livelihood opportunities and promote peace building initiatives to mitigate the spread of radicalisation (military response 3).

Unlike the police and the military who are deployed to this area for the purpose of curbing or fighting the terrorists, and recently, bandits; the CJTF are locals who understand the environment and the language so well. Their knowledge of the people and their challenges has helped them come up with the strategies that have helped them to a reasonable extent, succeed. From the responses, it is evident that the CJTF employs a range of strategies, including identifying the root cause of the insecurity, collaborating with the state security agencies, promoting community engagement, conflict resolution, and fostering trust and reconciliation, so as to reduce insecurity and crime in Borno State. This finding is in tandem with Olamiyi (2005); Ajayi & Aderinto (2008) and Tankebe (2009), that vigilante groups adopt specific strategies such as collaborating policing with the police, utilizing the knowledge of the environment and language to source for intelligence, as well as, fostering a culture of trust and reconciliation among community members.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, criminal activities engender insecurity and this has continued to ravage human societies irrespective of their ladder of civilization. Both the formal and informal crime control management system are key to ensuring that the impact of these criminal acts is brought to a minimal. The Civilian JTF which is an aspect of the informal crime control system is traceable to the onslaught and the terror evoking actions against the innocent citizens of this country by the Boko Haram insurgents in the north-

east, Nigeria. While it is true that the formal system of law enforcement in the country has become increasing overburden with spiraling incidents of crime and security challenges that has made the 'force' incapable of proving their mettle in crime control, the informal, community-based Civilian JTF have emerged to complement their role. This button-up approach or community-evolved security control is effective mainly due to the fact that they understand the terrain and language for the purpose intelligence gathering; and also utilize the principle of youth engagement in the fight against Boko Haram onslaught in their localities.

7. Recommendations

The findings of this study have clearly shown that the formal law enforcement agencies are incapable of dealing with the increasing and complex security challenges in Nigeria, especially in the northeast that has been ravaged by Boko Haram terrorist group. This situation has inevitably led to the emergence of and the involvement of the Civilian JTF in security governance in the state. It is therefore recommended that the community and the state government should provide the much-needed equipment to enhance that role in crime management. By doing this, it will enable to effectively carryout their functions. Also, the formal law enforcement agencies should collaborate with them in the area of training and retraining, as well as, in information sharing. Furthermore, they should be given incentives for the risky job they are doing. This will act as motivation to do more for their communities.

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