

## COUNTER-TERRORISM LEGISLATION AND INSECURITY REDUCTION IN BORNO STATE: AN ASSESSMENT OF NIGERIA'S TERRORISM (PREVENTION AND PROHIBITION) ACT, 2022

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### Abstract

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*This article evaluates the effectiveness of Nigeria's Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act (TPPA) 2022 in addressing insecurity in Borno State, the epicentre of Boko Haram and ISWAP insurgencies. Using a concurrent mixed-methods design (408 survey respondents; 12 Key Informant Interviews), multiple regression revealed that deradicalisation and reintegration most strongly reduced insecurity ( $\beta = -0.852$ ), followed by international collaboration ( $\beta = -0.141$ ) and community engagement ( $\beta = -0.063$ ), explaining 80.4% of the variance. While the TPPA provides a comprehensive legal framework, critical implementation deficits — institutional corruption, over-reliance on kinetic operations, limited deradicalisation resources, divergent MNJTF interests, and community distrust — undermine its effectiveness. The study recommends strengthening accountability, embedding deradicalisation in transitional justice frameworks, expanding international cooperation beyond military operations, and integrating socio-economic development as a core security strategy.*

**Keywords:** Counter-terrorism; Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022; Borno State; Boko Haram; ISWAP; Deradicalisation; Community Engagement; International Collaboration; Insecurity Reduction; Nigeria

## Introduction

Terrorism remains one of the twenty-first century's most destabilising security challenges, evolving from sporadic, ideologically motivated attacks into sophisticated transnational operations (Crenshaw, 2011). In Africa, groups linked to Al-Qaeda and ISIS have expanded across the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin, undermining fragile states and deepening humanitarian crises (International Crisis Group, 2019). Nigeria has faced one of the continent's most violent insurgencies since 2009, when Boko Haram — and its splinter group ISWAP — began a campaign that has cost over 35,000 lives and displaced more than two million people in Borno State (UNHCR, 2022).

Nigeria enacted the TPPA 2022, building on prior counter-terrorism legislation from 2011 and 2013, structured around three pillars: community engagement, deradicalisation and reintegration, and international cooperation. Together these pillars aim to address the socio-political roots of insecurity including ideological manipulation, structural grievance, and governance failures.

This paper examines how effectively these three pillars enhance security in Borno State, contributing to the growing literature on counter-terrorism law in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin region.

## Literature Review

Terrorism is widely understood as the deliberate use of violence or its threat by non-state actors to advance political, religious, or ideological objectives, targeting civilians to create fear beyond immediate victims (Schmid, 2020). UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001)

obliged member states to criminalise terrorist acts, financing, and recruitment, establishing the global legal framework within which Nigeria's TPPA 2022 is situated.

Crenshaw (2011) argues terrorism evolves through strategic learning, rendering static legislative responses insufficient, while Horgan (2009) demonstrates that radicalisation is a social process requiring preventive and rehabilitative complements to punitive legal measures.

In Africa, terrorism is shaped by weak governance, poverty, ethno-religious tensions, and ungoverned spaces. Botha (2020) identifies underdevelopment and marginalisation as key factors that extremist groups exploit for recruitment, while Gurr's (1970) relative deprivation theory explains how frustrated communities are mobilised into organised violence. In the Lake Chad Basin, Boko Haram exploited these conditions after the death of its founder in 2009, subsequently splintering into Boko Haram and ISWAP — a complex, multi-faction insurgency resistant to both military and legal responses (Zenn, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2019).

The literature on Nigerian counter-terrorism law identifies three key gaps: weak institutional capacity, inter-agency rivalry, and corruption that constrain implementation despite broad legislative powers (Okoli&Orinya, 2022); the insufficiency of security-centred approaches without investment in community engagement, deradicalisation, and socio-economic development (Agbiboa, 2013; UNDP, 2022); and the structural limits of unilateral responses to a transnational insurgency, making

international collaboration a necessary complement to domestic legislation (Byman, 2022; Onapajo&Uzodike, 2021). The present study situates its examination of the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022.

### Conceptual Framework

#### Community Engagement in Counter-Terrorism

The term community engagement in counter-terrorism refers to organised community participation in designing and evaluating counter-violence programmes, premised on the view that terrorism cannot be addressed by force alone (Paul, 2023; UNDP, 2022). Grounded in social capital theory (Putnam, 2000) and legitimacy theory (Tyler, 2006), it holds that societies with strong social capital and legitimate institutions are more resistant to extremism. In Borno State, the CJTF has been central to intelligence-sharing and military support, though coercive profiling risks alienation and radicalisation (Ibrahim & Musa, 2023; UNDP, 2022).

#### Deradicalisation and Reintegration

Deradicalisation is the process of withdrawing individuals from extremism and reintegrating them into lawful society, premised on the view that radicalisation is a reversible social and psychological process (Horgan, 2009; Schmid, 2020). It draws on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), cognitive transformation theory, and social identity theory (Tajfel& Turner, 1986). Nigeria's Operation Safe Corridor operationalises these through counselling, vocational training, and community support, with participants showing lower recidivism than those released without

assistance (Nefliasheva, 2023; Owonikoko, 2022).

#### International Collaboration in Counter-Terrorism

International collaboration in counter-terrorism rests on the recognition that terrorism's transnational character — porous borders, cross-border financing, regional recruitment — demands collective responses (UNODC, 2021; Byman, 2022). Grounded in collective security theory (Kupchan&Kupchan, 1995) and neoliberal institutionalism, it holds that shared institutions reduce transaction costs and improve information sharing. The MNJTF (Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin) coordinates joint operations, intelligence, and border patrol in the Lake Chad Basin, though political divergences and funding gaps constrain its effectiveness (Adela, 2023; Dauda&Ukaeje, 2024).

#### Insecurity

Insecurity is understood here as multidimensional — encompassing violence, fear, displacement, and institutional failure that erode human dignity and livelihoods (Achumba et al., 2013; UNDP, 2022). Grounded in human security studies (UNDP, 1994), this view links insecurity to underdevelopment and political marginalisation, positioning it as both a cause and consequence of violent extremism. Relative deprivation theory (Gurr, 1970) further explains how unmet expectations are exploited by extremist groups for mobilisation.

#### Theoretical framework

This study is centered on the use of Deterrence Theory and Institutional

Theory as two different theoretical approaches to analyzing the impact of counter-terrorism law on insecurity within Borno State.

### **Deterrence Theory**

According to deterrence theory, developed by Beccaria (1764), Bentham (1789), and Gibbs (1975), rational actors weigh costs against benefits of illegal activities; when penalties are inevitable, severe, and prompt, would-be criminals are dissuaded. The TPPA operationalises this by criminalising terrorism, enforcing asset forfeiture, and permitting intelligence-led prosecutions to raise the costs of insurgency.

Nonetheless, its application to ideologically motivated terrorism draws criticism: Pape (2003) argues that religiously or ethnically committed individuals behave unpredictably under legal deterrence. In contexts of insecurity, the certainty of punishment, more significant than its severity (Nagin, 2013), may lack due to ineffective law enforcement, judicial backlog, and corruption within institutions of justice.

### **Institutional Theory**

Institutional theory (Weber, 1947; North, 1990; Scott, 1995) holds that the efficacy of legislation depends on the institutional structures that enforce it, emphasising capacity, legitimacy, coordination, and accountability of enforcing authorities.

Applied to the TPPA, Institutional Theory explains the gap between legislative intent and outcomes through inter-agency competition, resource inadequacy, corruption, and weak judicial processes. Together, Deterrence and Institutional Theory provide a twofold framework:

deterrence addresses the enforcement process; institutional theory addresses the enabling conditions.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a concurrent mixed-methods design in Borno State, North-East Nigeria. The quantitative component used a structured questionnaire distributed to 440 respondents across Borno's three senatorial districts; 408 valid responses (92.7%) were analysed using multiple regression. The qualitative component comprised 12 purposively selected Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with security officials, government officials, community leaders, and international partners. Three null hypotheses guided the study: H01 (community engagement), H02 (deradicalisation and reintegration), and H03 (international collaboration) each having no significant effect on insecurity reduction. Qualitative data were analysed thematically following Braun & Clarke, (2019). NVivo software was used to assist in managing and coding the qualitative data.

### **Overview of Nigeria's Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022**

The TPPA 2022 consolidates the Terrorism (Prevention) Act 2011 and its 2013 amendment into a unified regime covering identification, prevention, prohibition, prosecution, and penalties for terrorism and terrorism financing.

Specifically, Section 1(c) aligns Nigeria with the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the AU Convention on Terrorism (2002), and ECOWAS conventions. Section 4 mandates the NSA to coordinate intelligence, inter-agency cooperation, and deradicalisation; Section 54 establishes the

Nigeria Sanctions Committee for designating and asset-freezing terrorist entities. Since implementation, over 742 convictions have been secured and more than N1.4 billion allocated to fighter rehabilitation (The Nation, 2024; Major General Laka, 2025; Punch, 2024).

## Findings and Discussion

### Community Engagement and Insecurity Reduction

The multiple regression model explained 80.4% of the variance in insecurity ( $R^2 = 0.804$ ,  $F(3, 403) = 5105.166$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). All three null hypotheses were rejected: community engagement ( $H01: \beta = -0.063$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ), deradicalisation and reintegration ( $H02: \beta = -0.852$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and international collaboration ( $H03: \beta = -0.141$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ) each significantly reduced insecurity. Community engagement through the TPPA has significantly reduced insecurity: 86.7% of respondents agreed it improved intelligence gathering, 91.9% confirmed trust gaps between civilians and security agencies as a key barrier, and 95.1% affirmed the vital role of traditional leaders and NGOs. A Nigerian Army official noted that CJTF integration into joint patrols has helped identify operatives and reduce urban attacks, while a community leader cited youth patrol involvement stopping three ambushes in Dikwa, confirming the CJTF's role as a fundamental intelligence asset (Ibrahim & Musa, 2023).

Communities collaborating with security institutions reported greater security and higher institutional trust, with monitoring committees providing early-warning functions. However, complaints of arbitrary arrests and ethnic discrimination

erode trust in militarised settings. Consistent with Onapajo and Uzodike (2021), engagement success depends on institutional legitimacy; this study further flags risks from unaccountable CJTF conduct and child soldier use.

### Deradicalisation, Reintegration, and Insecurity Reduction

Deradicalisation and reintegration programmes show a statistically significant negative impact on insecurity. While 51.7% of respondents considered Operation Safe Corridor effective in rehabilitating former insurgents, 83.6% reported that communities are unreceptive to returnees, and 62.0% affirmed the importance of religious and psychological interventions. Program officers confirm that participants receiving vocational and psychosocial support show lower re-engagement rates (Nefliasheva, 2023). One officer noted: "Limited funding for training and monitoring increases recidivism risks." Another: "Only about 50% are successfully reintegrated due to community rejection and inadequate facilities."

Community ambivalence towards returnees significantly limits programme effectiveness: interviews in Maiduguri and Konduga show many residents view reintegration as rewarding offenders while neglecting victims, creating social friction. Post-reintegration monitoring remains inadequate, which Hamidu and Bulila (2024) identify as a key recidivism predictor. The study recommends reconceiving deradicalisation as a community-wide transitional justice process rather than an individual rehabilitative exercise.

### **International Collaboration and Insecurity Reduction**

International collaboration emerges as a highly significant pillar, with joint operations, intelligence sharing, and border interdictions reducing insurgent attacks and territorial reach. The MNJTF has cut Boko Haram and ISWAP supply lines and undermined ISWAP command structures through intelligence agreements with Chad and Niger. One security official noted that cross-border patrols have disrupted supply lines, though delays slow responses; an international partner reported a 25% reduction in cross-border threats in 2024, though more funding is needed.

Yet divergent political positions, funding gaps, and insufficient intelligence cooperation hinder the MNJTF's effectiveness, with collaboration rarely extending beyond the operational level to address the governance and development shortfalls that enable insurgent resurgence (Andrew & Bitrus, 2025).

### **Implementation Gaps and Structural Constraints**

Beyond pillar-specific findings, the study reveals cross-cutting deficiencies. Institutional corruption was the most cited barrier (72.3% of respondents), resulting in under-equipped forces, delayed investigations, and inadequate rehabilitation facilities. One security official noted funding shortfalls and community fear of Boko Haram retaliation as key obstacles; a government official cited poor inter-agency coordination and military tactics that alienate communities. Amnesty International (2020) documents over 1,200 extra-judicial killings, 20,000 arbitrary arrests, and 7,000 deaths in

military custody since 2011, underscoring the human rights costs of implementation failures.

The study also identifies structural over-reliance on kinetic operations: while military action has recovered territory, the absence of socio-economic recovery and 83% youth illiteracy in affected areas (Owojori et al., 2021) sustain the drivers of radicalisation.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study confirms that the TPPA 2022 provides a legally sound foundation for countering terrorism. Community engagement builds intelligence capacity; deradicalisation and reintegration prevent recurrence; and international cooperation expands the operational scope to tackle the transnational aspect of the insurgency problem. Yet, at the same time, the study shows that the potential offered by the act is heavily restricted by various factors.

For sustainable security in Borno State and the Lake Chad region, the study recommends: establishing accountability frameworks covering security agency oversight and prosecution of human rights violations and corruption; anchoring deradicalisation in a transitional justice process that addresses victims alongside combatants; expanding international cooperation into shared governance and development frameworks; and treating socio-economic development, education, and job creation as core components of counter-terrorism policy rather than supplements. Legislative reform alone will not suffice.

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