



Research Paper

## The Intervention of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) In the War against Boko Haram in North East Nigeria (A Theoretical Approach)

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**ABSTRACT:** *The Nigerian government has made several efforts in an attempt to tackle the mayhem brought upon the people of North-eastern region of the country by the Islamic extremist movement “nicknamed” Boko Haram particularly the people of Borno and Yobe state. Unfortunately, the efforts of government in fighting the insurgents through the instrumentality of the Military Joint Task Force MJTF was not without some major challenges that undermined their mission. This resulted in the emergence of a new vigilante group popularly known in Hausa as “yangora” who are to be named later as the Civilian Joint Task Force CJTF. Nonetheless, the term youth and CJTF are used interchangeably. This paper therefore examines and discusses the contributions of the Civilian Joint Task Force CJTF in the fight against Boko Haram and the promotion of security as regards the protection of lives and or properties during the insurgency period in the north east especially, Borno state. Drawing information from press materials, the internet, journals and other existing relevant literatures. The findings of the study show that the Civilian Joint Task Force CJTF whose member are predominantly youth are important agents of counter terrorism in the North-eastern region of Nigeria. The study therefore makes some recommendations, which includes; rehabilitation and reorientation of the members of the CJTF to checkmate their behaviour for their reintegration back to the society in the post insurgency era.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Civilian Joint Task Force CJTF; Boko Haram; Insurgency; Terrorism; North East.*

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The contributions of the brave and courageous youth in the North-eastern Nigeria in counter terrorism campaign is quite remarkable and inspiring. Despite their heroic and patriotic act, many Nigerians are unaware of their existence. This confirms the saying that “there always heroes of war often unpopular”. However, this does not in any way undermine their sacrifices in the war against the Boko Haram insurgents. More so, more often than not, they are even confused as the replica of the more popularly known military joint task force, which constitutes mainly the Nigerian security agencies. Notwithstanding, the CJTF has no connection with the military joint task force, rather, they are only bonded by shared objectives which is, the liberation of their communities from the shackles of Boko Haram insurgents. It is therefore important here to point out that youth are major players in combating violence rather than victims or architects of same as often misconceived. “Initially, the civilian joint task force (CJTF) members were a bunch of idle, but angered young men, residing in different parts of the Northeast, who tolerated years of hostility of their population and intrusion of their territories by the insurgents. Fed-up, they decided to join the anti-terror war voluntarily to liberate their communities from the hands of Boko Haram. Such guts deserved special commendations.” (Ibekwe, The Vanguard, 2016).

#### 1.1 Problem Statement

The Military Joint Task Force constituted by the Nigerian government to curtail the Boko Haram insurgency in North-Eastern Nigeria recorded little success as attacks on civilian lives and destruction of properties by the sect persisted amidst heavy presence of the security forces in the region. This is largely due to their inability to identify the hideouts of the terrorist group who use the guerrilla style of warfare by using

civilians as shield in attacking the security forces. There was also the problem of language barrier as most the forces could not understand or communicate in the local language and lack adequate information on the geographical terrain in which the insurgents operated. The above stated problems was what instigated some of the locals who are largely youths to form a vigilante group to be known later as the civilian joint task force (CJTF) to defend their communities and to assist the Military in fighting the Boko Haram sect by providing intelligence and exposing their hide outs. The Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. TukurBuratai publicly acknowledged and praised the contributions of the CJTF in the war against Boko Haram Insurgents. The above reason however, is the motivation behind this study.

### **1.1.2 General Objectives**

The objective of this study of the civilian joint task force (CJTF) or otherwise known as “yangora” in Hausa language, is to contribute to African literature by examining, discussing and highlighting the contributions of the CJTF largely made up of youths in BornoState, Nigeria in combating Boko Haram insurgents. While some scholars like Robert Kaplan, Murphy 2003, Burgess & Burton perceive Africa’s youth as irresponsible and violent due to their involvement in social vices like kidnapping, arm robbery, political thuggery, and drug trafficking etc. often due to government’s failure to meet their social and economic needs. On the other hand, this paper share in the view of Comarof who argued that youths play a crucial role in the sustenance of peace and the anti-terrorism war.

### **1.1.3 Methodology**

This paper uses qualitative research method by generating relevant literatures from secondary sources of data such as the Internet, Newspapers, Journals, Books and other relevant literatures. Furthermore, all the sources from which the data were gathered are from well-known reputable media outlets and academic Journals that have no political, religious or ethnic inclination. In addition, the data use in this study were selected based on their credibility and relevance to the research and all biased information were avoided. Both historical and descriptive analysis are used. Invariably, the study covers the period 2010 to 2017 focusing on the role the civilian joint task force plays in combating the Boko Haram insurgents in Borno State. The paper is divided into three sections. The first part clarifies concepts used and the review of relevant literatures, the second part examines the history, ideology and activities of Boko Haram insurgents and the response of Nigeria’s security forces in combating them. The third part examines the contributions of youths in North-Eastern Nigeria in counter terrorism war with special interest on the role of the civilian joint task force in BornoState, followed by concluding remarks and recommendations.

## **1.2 Conceptual Clarification**

### **1.2.1 The Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF).**

These are mainly group of young idle, angered and courageous men drawn from different parts of the North-eastern region with diverse background ranging from university graduates, hunters, hawkers, traders and street gangs who share common interest, goals, mission and motivation for the freedom of their country and communities from the fangs of Boko Haram Terrorists (BHTs). Provoked, they willingly decided to enlist into the anti-terror war to save their communities

### **1.2.2 Terrorism**

The US State Department defines terrorism as “the application of violence for political motives aimed at creating a mind-set of panic that will lead to coercion and intimidating capable of altering group’s or person perception. More so, it also “consist of illegal attacks and threats against people or property by a group for the purpose of undermining a hated political entity”. United Nations’ Secretary General in November 2004, in his report described terrorism as any action “aimed at killing or harming civilians or otherwise that is intended to intimidate a particular group of people or force a government or an organization be it local or international to refrain or carry out a particular act against its will” (UN, 2005).

### **1.2.3 Insurgency**

Insurgency “is an organized movement which, seeks to uproot a constituted government through use of coercive force and violence” and its strategies has been in existence for many centuries. (H. Hayden, 2007). It involves the use of arms against a constituted authority. By nature, insurgency is a concept that is limitless. Nonetheless, there are insurgencies that are non-rebellious for instance, cases of civil confrontation. (Robert & Timothy, 2009). Insurgency often implies that the rebels' cause is lawless, whereas those rising up will see the authority itself as being illegitimate (Osanka, 1962. Cited in O. O. Ajibola, 2015).

## **II. EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Ardizzone, (2007) in her study “Getting My Word Out” examine how youth activists respond to injustice, counteract violence, practice social responsibility, and form collaborative networks of individuals and organisations. Lesley Pruitt (2013) in his work “Youth Peacebuilding: Music, Gender and Change” also investigate music as a means for involving youth in the process of fostering peace programmes in Australia and Northern Ireland, countries that seems relatively stable yet the youth are confronted with structural violence at the community stage.

Moreover, Stephanie Schwartz’s “Youth in Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Agents of Change” deals with critical matters of conflict resurgence in the aftermath of conflict in societies. Yet, the role of young people in counter-terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in West Africa, remains underutilized.

Gavin, (2007) postulated that the school of youth studies is flooded with suggestions targeted at incriminating “the gallantry of Africa’s youth” especially their predispositions to cruelty and ‘revolt’ (Waller, 2006). Robert Kaplan (1994: 3) In his essay the “Coming Anarchy,” compared West Africa’s youth to ‘loose molecules in a very uncertain social environment clearly on the brink of exploding.’ Yet such popular depiction of youth as troublemakers does not need to be projected negatively; it can also imply be ‘the productive dismay of supreme knowledge reign under the pressure of desire and resentment. (Comaroff&Comaroff, 2011: 268).

Consequently, the child soldiers of Sierra Leone largely perceived as agents of civil disunity, with the brave ‘young lions’ of South Africa, who were forerunners of democracy played a crucial part in combating the terrors of apartheid. One typical example is the post-war Sierra Leone, which experienced an unprecedented rise in individual-organised social networks, guilds and business allies among youth. According to Denov, (2010)through these inventive means, youths in Sierra Leone have taken considerable charge of their lives, harbouring a long lasting dynamics to their conditions, and contributing to larger nation growth. The underlying point of contention to note is that, youth are an embodiment of different things altogether: ‘the horrors of today, the flaws of the past, and the hope of the hereafter’ (Denov, 2010 cited in Comaroff&Comaroff, 2011).

Furthermore, Denov&Maclure, (2006: 75), the social theorist Foucault, (1981: 71) calls our attention to know that the current debates are not constant and inconclusive: ‘there is a need therefore to create space for composite and inconsistent process in which debates can be a hindrance, and a beginning for an opposing approach.’ In Nigeria places where unemployment and poverty are endemic, has the tendencies of experiencing youth violence just like the northern and southern oil-producing region. (Agbiboa, 2013a, b).

More so, Wyn& Dwyer, (1999: 14) argued, “where there is no structured pathway, or are swiftly getting eroded, individual participation has become more and more crucial in creating trends which adds values to life.” In a paper ‘Reflections of Youth: From the Past to the Post-colony,’ Comaroff & Comaroff (2011: 277) observes means through which businesses of young people in West Africa are surpassing modern means of production. Using the Sahel as an example, they invite readers to consider:

The expanding “bush markets” of Cameroon and Chad that is characterised by passports black-markets, border crossing, drug trafficking, gun dealings and currency trade undertaken by young boys who eventually get rich on the fringes of international markets through conventional means. (Comaroff&Comaroff, 2011: 277).

## **III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 The Human Needs Theory of Social Conflict**

The socio-economic perspective of the Boko Haram challenge in Nigeria, essentially tends to shy away from the notion that is a Muslim or northern crisis (Kukah, 2012). The notion, which blames social conditions for the violence, is centred on the human needs theory of social conflicts. Its major argument is that every human being lacks some basic necessities that they want to acquire hence, failure of other individuals to attain these necessities may result to conflict. (Rosati et al, 1990 cited in Faleti, p. 51). This theory is synonymous to the frustration-aggression theory of violence, which postulates that aggression is usually a product of frustration. As the theory posit, relative deprivation is seen as the difference between value expectation and value capabilities and that the absence of a need satisfaction defined as a gap between aspirations and achievement automatically depends on the psychological state of frustration and aggressive attitudes that it produces. (Midlarsky, 1975:29, cited in Dougherty & Pfaltzgrate Jr, 1990: 266).

Contrary to the relational/vengeance theory, the perspective emphasises on the underlying variables that brought about such groups. It has its largest proponents from the intelligentsia, and particularly seen by some western governments like the United States and Britain as explanations for the problem. Nigeria’s socio-economic indexes seem to support the assertions of human needs theory. For example, Nigeria ranked 156 among 186 countries in the world in 2011 according to The human development index DHItrend. In addition, youth unemployment, poverty and a worsening standard of living, most especially in northern Nigeria, are said to be the socio-economic factors responsible for the violence in the country. However, its relevance in the interpretation of the Boko Haram problem is that while its proponents admit of abstract poverty and uncertainty in Nigeria, they acknowledge its graveness in the north. Hence, according to Professor Jean Herskovits of the

State University of New York, the root cause of violence and anger in the northern and southern region of Nigeria, is chronic poverty and uncertainty,” and therefore, the government has to deal with the social and economic negation, which is most severe in the north (Herskovits, 2012).

A study by Professor Charles Soludo, found that the three northern regions have an average poverty incidence of 70.1% compared to 34.9% of the south's three. The ten states with the highest poverty ratios in Nigeria fall in the north; while on the other hand, the southern part has the lowest ratio of poverty in all the ten states of the region. (Lukman, N.d.). Consequently, “70% of the population in northern Nigeria live on less than one dollar a day, which is equal to N129 a day”. The high conflict tendencies of the underdeveloped areas could possibly be because of frustration caused by economic deprivation. (Dougherty & Pfaltzgrate, Jr. 1990: 266).

### **3.2 Rational Choice/Opportunity Theory**

This theoretical postulation simply sees armed conflict (terrorism inclusive) as the product of rational individual choices to expedite economic, social or political gains. When the opportunity and potential gain from being part of an armed group surpass the benefits of being otherwise and pursuing another way of income-generation possibilities, rebellion becomes the endgame. Therefore, from this viewpoint, it costs lower to organise a rebellion in a large youth population where poverty and illiteracy levels are higher or where loot-able resources abound. More so, these identified factors abound in Nigeria and could as well explain why some Nigerian youth are more drawn to violence in recent times. (Urdal, 2007; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004, Cited in Omale, 2016).

### **3.3 Social and Political Exclusionism**

The perception of this school of thought perceives youth violence resulting from the social and political exclusion of young people. Notwithstanding, Hilker & Fraser (2009, p.18) argued that, there is increasing sense in the literature that ‘the social and economic statuses needed for adulthood are becoming impossible to attain for the youth’. For example, Sommers’ (2006) work on ‘youthmen’ in Rwanda and on blocked youth transitions in West Africa; research on ‘waithood’ in the Middle East, and studies of youth violence in Sri Lanka (Sommers, 2007); all focuses on a blocked evolution to adulthood emanating as a result of complexity of economic, social and political rotation of elites which is rooted in the corrupt political elites. (Hilker & Fraser, 2009, p. 18; Sommers, 2007, Cited in Omale, 2016).

### **3.4 The Islamic Theocratic State Theory**

The Boko Haram insurgents have openly declared their intention to de-throne the Nigerian government, and automatically turn Nigeria to an Islamic State. Lengmang, (2011: 101) observes the alleged section of Muslims in the north may be angry at the compromise of state-level sharia coexisting hand in hand with a western federal system. Even though, this section is debatably insignificant, “they are more than ever before becoming fanatical and continually using violence as a medium to express their grievance. Lengmang attributes hatred to the sharia’ simultaneously existing alongside conventional federal system to the dismay by the northern part of Nigeria due to the failure of western education to ushering any reasonable development and prosperity in the region, hence spread the propaganda that western education cannot coexist with sharia.

Therefore, however insignificant its affiliation with al Qaeda, the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has a viewpoint of global political Islam, which seeks to pull down secular government as a whole thus, ushering an Islamic theocratic government. The refusal to engage in dialogue with Boko Haram by President Jonathan and subsequent demand by the sect that he relinquishes power or become a Muslim himself proves this tendency (PeoplesDaily, 2012).

Additionally, according to Mozayyan, radical Islam emanated first, from the Iran Revolution of 1979 that brought in a general rejectionist teaching, transformation of the Muslims’ perception and their position in the world, including their political way of life. Secondly, is the European imperialism, which leads to resentment of the West in the Middle East and thirdly, is the dominance of America in the politics of Middle East that is said to have brought a corrupt influence in the region (Mozayyan, 2009: 241). In the same vain, corrupt and bad political leadership, advocating Western beliefs and inability to impact people’s welfare constitutes a critical impetus to political Islam. The eventual coming into power by the Islamists in Iran serves as a renaissance call over the Islamic world and leading to a global Islamic rejuvenation. Thus, this sets a different pathway and a new debate gained popularity directed towards the “enemies of Islam” through radical strategies. Islam thus became an acceptable medium for the angry population, ushering in leaders who advocate for the restoration and transformation of Islam to its former glory by eliminating the corrupting Western influences that obstructs the advancement of their own millenarian beliefs (Mozayyan, 2009: 242).

#### **IV. MODELS OF CONTER TERRORISM**

##### **4.1 Counter Ecological Opportunities**

According to this model, places like rocks, forest (e.g.Sambisa Forest), creeks and mountains serves as hideouts for terrorist, militants, kidnappers and other related groups for planning and carrying out their activities with ease. Therefore, there is a need for tactical military air surveillance and vigilance to contain and curtail their activities from these ecological hideouts. (Omale, 2013).

##### **4.2 Counter Violent Extremism and De-Radicalisation Programmes (CVEDP)**

Radical Islam contradicts modern Islamic beliefs with a diet of anger, hate and intolerance among young men, who see themselves as outcasts, and are brainwashed by teachings that not only embed this difference further but requires that they resent absolutely the society they once lived in with suicide bombing'. According to this model, to win the war against terrorism, there is a serious need for a de-radicalisation programme across the country that will educate the people most especially the youths on the dangers terrorism poses in the society. This can be achieved through the instrumentality of religious institutions and leaders especially in a complex nation like Nigeria that is crowded with religious and political space that get in the way of effective interfaith and interreligious cooperation. (Omale, 2013).

##### **4.3 Meghalaya Model**

This model, which was originally designed to fight children trafficking in Asia, could be imitated to combat terrorism in Nigeria. This is because there are speculations that a group of hired killers and enlisted combatants for Boko Haram being trafficked along the Nigerian border from neighbouring countries due to the porous nature of Nigerian borders. Anti-human trafficking is imperative to war against terrorism because it has the potential to stop the trafficking of mercenaries as well as the supplies and demands of terrorist activities. This is crucial because, even with the international consensus and domestic laws on anti-terrorism, the problem remains amongst other issues the fastest growing criminal violence globally. Its escalation is an implication of its cross border nature hence, calls for collective synergy and partnership between states, if it is to be tackled effectively. (Omale, 2013).

#### **V. THE EMERGENCE AND INTERVENTION OF THE CIVILIAN JOINT TASK FORCE CJTF IN THE WAR AGAINST BOKO HARAM IN BORNO STATE.**

As the ongoing campaign against Boko Haram intensified, youth in their hundreds found themselves in the detention camps of various security forces in Maiduguri and its surroundings in addition to the arrest of actual suspects. Observers are of the view that the "brutality" coming from the then military joint task force troops in addition to the unbearable hardship caused by the declaration of State of Emergency prompted youths in Maiduguri to rise fearlessly against Boko Haram sect.

It all began in Hausari area in Maiduguri town in June 2013, where an increasing pressure from security officials and deadly attacks by Boko Haram, instigated the youth to organise themselves and decide to henceforth to attack any terrorist that paroles any place around the Monday Market or BabbanLayi to robe or detonate explosives or shoot innocent civilians. Armed with local traditional weapons such as bow and arrows, machetes, and in few cases hunter's gun, young men who overcome their fears in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital came out in their hundreds in 2013 and enlisted in the anti Boko Haram fight. (Idris, *et al.*, 2014).

The civilian joint task force is synonymous to "vigilante groups," or a group of political thugs that surfaced in the North-East, as a result of Nigeria's return to multiple party system in 1999. Among these groups are Ecomog in Borno and Yobe States, Sara-Suka in Gombe State, YanKallare in Bauchi State, Banu-Isra'il in Taraba State, and Yan-Shinko in Adamawa State. Predominant members of these ragtag groups are jobless youths funded by overzealous political elites who entice them with fake promises of lucrative government jobs and all sort of political affiliations and patronage. Failure to deliver on their end of the bargain, the politicians have themselves become a target for these angry thugs in public functions.

Moreover, it is only a matter of time the concept of CJTF gained a widespread acceptance in the rest of the North-Eastern region where they engaged in conducting security checks, acting as informants to security agents on Boko Haram in their midst, and exposing Boko Haram's hideouts to the security forces. They also fight the insurgents on the battlefield side by side with the military, and carried out rescue missions to save those in captivity of Boko Haram. (Ibekwe, 2016).

Consequently, having led some attacks against the terrorist group, the Chief of Army Staff himself confessed that they are pivotal to the fight against Boko Haram. The Nigerian army under Buratai's command tactically deployed the CJTF operatives in the core area of intelligence gathering which yielded many successful ambushes against the insurgents and degraded their supplies. (Ibekwe, 2016).

Indeed, the emergence of the 'civilian JTF' was therefore a great mishap to Boko Haram, even though a great number paid the supreme price for going against the insurgents, the result however, is that Boko Haram's activities in Maiduguri was significantly brought to its knees. (Idris, *et al*,2014).

### **5.1 The Role of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in the War against Boko Haram in North-eastern Nigeria.**

Agbiboa, (2015) in his work the 'Youth as Tactical Agents of Peacebuilding and Development in the Sahel, observed that an overlooked but critical area of the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency is the manner in which the angry youth in Northern Nigeria are contributing their quota as the conflict unfolds. To complement the efforts of the state's joint task force/multinational task force in the anti-terrorism war, they enlist against the insurgents with bows and arrows, swords and machetes in their communities thereby given combat and intelligence support respectively. Contrast to the accusation that the CJTF are a bunch of thugs, they undertake the function of community-based policing. The emergence of youth vigilantism in Maiduguri occurred from the grassroots, in reaction to the failure of the Nigerian military to protect civilians against Boko Haram. Thus, the group emanated in acts of necessity undertaken in the face of relentless terror, their patriotic intentions also have a serious consequence amidst endemic corruption, political marginalisation, and electoral mishap that plagues the country. The group consist largely of teenagers without basic education.

The integrated regional information networks (IRIN), reported that the CJTF are the 'eyes and ears of the security forces and are often the first responders to trouble' (IRIN 2014). Notwithstanding, the CJTF has helped in identifying, arresting and execution of many members of the Boko Haram sect through local intelligence and the use of local weaponry.

More so, these youths have used local skills to fish out hiding Boko Haram members in their various neighbourhoods. In the process, they have greatly helped in the improving civil-military relations. Notably, the civilian joint task force (CJTF) has recorded some success against Boko Haram by killing over 200 Boko Haram Militants in March 2014 in one of the military barracks in the State that was overrun by the insurgents. In particular, the CJTF's cooperation with regular security forces has also helped deter attacks in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, pushing the militants out into more remote villages (Siollun, 2014, Cited in Agbiboa, 2015).

#### **5.1.2 The Future of the Civilian Joint Task Force and Concerns of Human Rights Abuses**

Although the 'civilian JTF' seems to be doing good, some residents said some of the youths are too zealous and some resident even claim to have narrowly escaped death in some of their operations. According to one of their victims Hajiya Yagana Muazu, a former Commissioner alleged that two of her security personnel got murdered in the hands of the civilian joint task force with local guns as she and her children ran for their lives. She pleads with the State government to regulate the operations of the 'civilian JTF'. However, the legal adviser of the group, Barrister Jibrin Gunda claimed otherwise, insisting that thugs and not the 'civilian JTF' attacked the former commissioner adding that their operations are regulated through a distinct chain of authority" (Idris, *et al*,2014). Moreover, the Commissioner for Justice in Borno State, Barrister Kaka Shehu Lawan noted, although the Task Force have their shortfalls, the state government is quite aware of the contributions of the group in combating the insurgents pointing out that in 2013, the State Government in partnership with security agencies mobilized and trained 1,678 of them. The programme is tagged "Borno youth empowerment scheme" (BOYES). In recent times, the governor of the State in an effort to motivate them, purchased over 20 vehicles for the Task Force to carry out their operations effectively. They are also expected to work hand in hand with other security officials to boost security in the State. (Idris, *et al*, 2014). However, there are great concerns about their future when peace inevitably returns, as a good number of them have high educational qualification with some of them even university graduates.

### **5.2 Youths as Agents of Peacebuilding**

The UN World Population Expectation statistics projects that there are over 1 billion youths ranging between 15-24 years globally and almost one billion are found in developing countries where there is prevalence of conflict. In light of these realities, the potential that the younger generation hold for change and positive action has become the theme of growing research agenda, particularly the issue of social turmoil and humanitarian crises in recent times across the world. (Ozerdem, 2016).

Numerous instances in different parts of the world highlights the impacts made by youths in fostering peace such as the intensifying of community unity and reconciliation in South Sudan, civic awareness for peaceful social coexistence and development programmes in Nepal, trust building along various ethnic and religious segments in Sri Lanka, and community entrepreneurship and livelihoods programmes in Burundi. Furthermore, the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development Report entitled 'Young People's

Participation in Peacebuilding: outlines certain policy and programme examples from different conflict affected countries that would promote this kind of engagement successful. (Ozerdem, 2016).

Consequently, a perfect example of the role youths play in peacebuilding and counter-terrorism is the effort of the civilian joint task force CJTF in Borno State in the North-Eastern region of Nigeria where the youths shoulder the responsibility to protect their communities against the menace of the terrorist movement. Their efforts will no doubt go a long way in encouraging and motivating their counter parts across the globe faced with similar security threat.

The UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security of 2015 clearly recognise the contributions of youth in the promotion of peace and designs a blueprint to promote their efforts. In May 2016, the UN Peacebuilding Fund launched its first Youth Promotion Initiative, which is capable of playing a major role in helping youth leadership in peacebuilding. Therefore, the recent development has the potential of springing up more corresponding youth leadership programmes in different parts of the world.

However, Ozerdem, (2016) observed that “the major point for their successes will depend on the capability of the initiatives to address a widespread socio-economic, cultural and political challenges that young people face in their venture of becoming proactive instruments of positive change”. In addition, Alpaslan further emphasised that “unless youth are acknowledged as political actors, their approach in peacebuilding has the likelihood of being neglected or less utilized”.

Consequently, De Vos suggested six ways in which youths can be engaged in peacebuilding and they include; first, provide avenues for youths to express themselves and be given attention. Second, intensify the peace-building capacity and skills of youth. Third, build trust between the youths and governments. Fourth, foster intergenerational exchange that would bring youths, elders and parents together in peace-building projects. Fifth, strengthen monitoring and evaluation programmes covering all peace-building initiatives by taking advantage of youth participation. Lastly, Support youths who influence and contribute positively to their communities.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

This paper studies and examines the contributions and the role the youths in northeast Nigeria popularly known as the civilian joint task force CJTF played in the pre and post Boko Haram insurgency period particularly in BornoState. Contrary to the popular perception of the African youths as perpetrators of violence and crime as described in the words of Robert Kaplan (1994: 3) in his essay the “Coming Anarchy,” compared West Africa’s youth to ‘loose molecules in a very unstable social fluid clearly on the verge of igniting’, this study found this view untrue. Indeed, the youths in north-eastern Nigeria displayed an impeccable degree of courage, fearlessness and heroics in the face of great adversity and uncertainty by vesting themselves with the responsibility of protecting their communities with mere sticks, machetes, bows and arrows and local hunter’s gun to confront a more sophisticated terror group like the Boko Haram insurgents. This to me, is admirable and a demonstration of bravery and patriotism of the highest degree and hence, a model for youths faced with similar challenge in other communities not only in Nigeria and other parts of Africa but the world at large. However, even though the CJTF are not without criticism of human rights violations and tendencies of high degree of violence just like their counterparts in the military joint task force, their contributions to peacebuilding and protection of life and property in their communities, outweighs their shortcomings hence, in my opinion, worthy of commendation and recognition by the Nigerian government.

## **VII. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Given the role the civilian joint task force played in counter terrorism in the northeast region, it is imperative for government both state and federal to establish a special program to mobilise, orient, rehabilitate and educate them in order to keep their actions in check in the post insurgency period by ensuring their welfare and wellbeing. In addition, government should closely observe, monitor and regulate the CJTF’s activities to prevent them from violating the rights of their fellow citizens. Furthermore, The Federal government should also continue to integrate and recruit them into the various security agencies to prevent them from degenerating into criminal gangs, political thugs or even becoming members of the Boko Haram sect, which is a high possibility if care is not taken. However, those among them who were petty traders, farmers or artisans before the era of the insurgency and those who will fit into carpentry, tailoring or other vocational jobs should be adequately funded and empower. If this is properly done, it will not only make them responsible but productive as well as contribute to the economic growth of the region. The step taking so far by the BornoState government to introduce a re-orientation programme tagged the ‘BornoState youth empowerment scheme (BOYES) which will carter for about 800 CJTF in the first batch, is indeed thoughtful and commendable. Finally, I will like to suggest that government at both federal, state and local level to promote small and medium scale businesses, which will create employment and job opportunities for the millions of unemployed and jobless youths in the

country. This will reduce the level of crime, violence and tendencies to social vices the youths engaged in as a result joblessness an idleness.

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