

Boko Haram Conflict Dynamics and Gender-based Violence in the lake Chad Region

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Abstract

This paper examines Boko Haram's activities and gender-based violence in the Lake Chad Basin. The conflict typified by Boko Haram insurgency against regional authorities has been characterised by violent attacks against the civilian population, particularly women. The paper's key objective is to establish the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in the Lake Chad area. This goal is informed by the allegation that the conflict has exposed women to various kinds of gender-related violence, including rape, kidnapping, and forced marriages. The paper will give a snapshot of the origins, ideology, and conflict dynamics. It will apply the hegemonic masculinity theory as a framework for analysing and explaining the GBV in the region. The manuscript depended on the content analysis of historical and contemporary literary materials in the humanities and social science traditions to articulate its perspective. It recommends the contextualisation of relevant conventions that seek women's protection in the Lake Chad conflict. It is expected that this might prompt the region's governments to be more proactive in protecting vulnerable groups and the victims of GBV.

Keywords: Gender-based violence, Lake Chad, insurgency

1. Background of the Study

The complex context of the post-Glasnost and Perestroika reforms and their impact on the international political environment has occasioned the ‘remaking’ of the new world order and implication of the character of relations between states and human groups. The international environment has recorded the intensification of the devastating occurrences of violent conflicts and wars. It has also begun observing, as a regular aspect, the intensification of insurgencies across previously stable political spaces, and by implication the uprooting of former centres of organised power formations across the Fertile Crescent, Central Asia and Africa. Other unpleasant imageries defining the 21st-century post-Cold War situation is the rising poverty levels in the southern hemisphere as a geographically disadvantaged region, apart from the environmental degradation in varying degrees that have become core aspects of everyday life (Huntington 1991).

In the process of scouring the literature on conflict, war, and the management of these phenomena, that experts have tried to identify the reasons for instability between human groups and between states (the geographical space that accommodates these human beings. Preliminary investigations have shown various assumptions: aggressive behaviour is innate and biologically programmed into the human species. Secondly, aggression results from frustration, and these frustrations create colossal backlashes, leading to violent conflicts. The reference here is Gurr’s (1970) frustration-aggression theory and Dollard *et al.* (1939). Lastly, according to these theorists, aggressive behaviour is modelled after usually (but not necessarily) and copied by the youth/younger states from their elders/older states in formal and informal socialisation processes. Linked to other issues shaping the international relations environment is the rising wave of gender discourses in global scholarship. This is partly influenced by the intensification of the phenomenon of GBV in conflicts amongst other critical developments. Furthermore, what used to constitute privacy concerns or even troubles of women have been translated by social activists into public issues, thereby positively transforming a social structure constructed in inequality (Oyewumi 2006).

Drawing from the preceding, this paper seeks to interrogate the ideological issues motivating Boko Haram movement’s extremism in the Lake Chad region. The paper also aims to analyse the prolonged conflict to

establish the nexus between the increasing spates of gender-based violence that have become a critical feature of the Lake Chad region conflict. Finally, the paper will examine the impact of GBV and the efficacy of the existing legal regime instituted to acknowledge gender-based violence as a reality of the conflict. This paper depends mainly on external desktop research to collect and analyse the deployed data. The methodology consists of collecting data from extant literary resources, which is preferred, because it proves to be increasingly less costly, compared to field research. In other words, the paper approached its interrogations sourcing relevant information through the qualitative research medium, including newspaper articles, journal articles, published and books, magazines and other relevant written works. Also noteworthy is that the study deployed technology-based mechanisms like internet browsing of the various websites searching for useful literature to complement the other sources.

2. Boko Haram Incursion in the Lake Chad Region and its Dynamics

The insurgency of the Boko Haram and many separatist and terror movements in the Sahel have their foundations in Islamic ideology; the kind that the Islamic brotherhood of Said Qutb subscribes to (Meredith 2011). The Boko Haram leadership has been unwavering in linking their objectives and foundational corpus to an Islamic empire's institution across the Lake Chad region. Unlike most conventional insurgencies, the Boko Haram variant subscribes heavily to the deployment of terrorist strategies. The strategy is to instil fear amongst the population and the government responsible for managing the political space and the sovereign entity's welfare. This choice aims to weaken the government in its commitment to the social contract (Hobbes 1958).

The moment the state abdicates its security and welfare role, the alternative authority, in this context, the Boko Haram, moves in to fill the vacuum (gap) left behind by the government. These alternative government roles were performed by Boko Haram's former leader, Mohammed Yusuf (deceased). Yusuf managed the sect members by incorporating a programme that was attractive to both his followers and the poor in society. Some of the privileges granted by his followers and those who admired his leadership qualities included the sponsorship of marriage ceremonies and an efficient

loan administration, because many members lived in abject poverty (Olorunfemi 2013). The package attracted many youths into the sect, including those in neighbouring countries like Cameroon, Chad, and Niger (Olorunfemi 2013). Yusuf's 'humanitarian' gesture was confirmed in an interview with the former Borno state governor, Shettima Kashim.

Besides, Yusuf was known to have housed many of the sect's leaders, family members, students, and youth was fed and sent to Quranic Schools to acquire knowledge (Olorunfemi 2013). The businessmen among the sect members were not left out of the welfare package, as a micro-finance system for business support was instituted. Inversely, many business owners had farms to support the feeding of sect members. The sect had funders amongst the political class and government officials (Ehiane 2017). Even some of the officials serving in the government of former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan were loyal to the sect. According to the former President, the sect had infiltrated the government and the security agencies (Ehiane 2017).

The contest between Western liberal orientation and Islamic civilisation gained momentum from the medieval period, right into the Renaissance, and it is instructive to note that this competition for dominance has not abated even in the post-modern phase of human evolution (Grunebaum 1955). While Emmanuel Kant, Hobbes, Hegel and others championed the advocacy for Western liberalism, Said Qutb, Abu Ala Mawdudi and Hassan Al Bannah were the philosophers of Islamic ideology the propagation of its thoughts throughout the world. These disparate positions have set the West and Islam on a collision course, as predicted by Samuel P. Huntington (1993). Conflict emanating from the clash of interests between the West and Islam (Idris 2019) has manifested in various forms including terrorism, insurgencies, geostrategic in the case of the United State and the USSR over Afghanistan during the Cold War, and so forth.

Islamic thinkers have provided the blueprint for the running of the Islamic state covering the protection of the *Darul Islam*, relationships with the non-Muslims living both within and outside the Islamic territory, the welfare administration of the believers and a wide range of other such existential issues. Concerning the problem of holding forth Islamic values and belief systems and expanding beyond the immediate geographical territory, the ideologues mentioned above are unanimous in prescribing an uncompromising and aggressive disposition in the relations with the *kafir*

(the unbeliever). On this note, Keay (2012:141-142) sheds light on this subject in the following words:

Islam is a militant ideology and programme that seeks to alter the whole world's social order and build it in conformity with its tenets and ideals. 'Muslim' is the title of that international militant party organised by Islam to affect its militant programmes. And jihad refers to that militant struggle and utmost exertion which the Islamic Party brings into play to achieve this objective. Islam wishes to destroy all states and governments anywhere on the face of the Earth that are opposed to the ideology and programme of Islam regardless of the country or the nation which rules it must be evident to you from this discussion that the objective of 'Islamic Jihad' is to eliminate the rule of an un-Islamic system and establish in its stead an Islamic system of state rule. Islam does not intend to confine this revolution to a single state or a few countries; Islam aims to bring about a universal revolution (Keay 2012:141-142).

Through the centuries, scholars of Islamic ideologies have recommended a rejection of the philosophies of the West and the materialism that defines Western consumerist culture. They advocated a complete departure from the liberal worldview that accommodates the "immorality of the homosexual and the alcohol consumption all-pervasive across the West". In the Islamic revival of the early twentieth century, Qutb and his colleagues propagated a return to the teachings of the Qur'an, pointing out the sinful path of the Western approach to life, both in the temporal and material world and in the spiritual realm.

On the issue of poverty as a motivating factor for erecting the structures of social movements and social revolutions, it has been shown that hunger, the scarcity of life-sustaining resources, and poverty have been critical factors in spurring revolutions and the toppling of unpopular regimes throughout history (Price 2021). Maximilien Robespierre used it to topple Louis XVI in 1789 (Tocqueville 1856); the Bolsheviks mobilised the Soviets, capitalising on the economic vacuum that the government failed to address until it spiralled out of control (Figs 1996). In recent times, the Arab Spring was borne under the same socio-economic conditions; a situation that was exploited by powerful agents that were opposed to governments of North

Africa and the countries of the Arabian Peninsula (Gelvin 2012). Of course, every social movement, including those induced by religious and social factors, saw poverty as their chief mobilising tool. Within the Lake Chad region's geographical context, Muhammadu Marwa, just as his predecessors and successors, capitalised on the poverty gap in northern Nigeria to mobilise their followers (Isichei 1987). Unfortunately, this has not changed regarding the current poverty profile of this previously virile economic hub of international trade and commerce. Considering that Nigeria occupies the region, Cameroun, Chad and Niger, recent developments, including the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs), terrorism, mismanaged issues of governance, and unemployment due to the recession of the Lake Chad basin have, in curious alchemy, conspired to lower the economic opportunities and aggressively deterred the infusion of foreign direct investment (FDI) to the region (Global Terrorism Index 2015). These conditions have increased the poverty of the residents of this region, making many of them exist in a state of near poverty.

Concerning the issue of geography, the natural desert configuration of the area has resulted in the devastation of its flora and fauna (Toyo 2011). This development has damaged the organic cohesion and symbiotic interdependence shaping the ecological relations between man and his environment for centuries (Strategic Conflict Assessment 2012). Because of the phenomenon of terrorism, Nigeria is adjudged by the Norwegian Refugee Council as the third-largest 'producer' of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world. By this indicator, the country, according to Nigeria's National Commission for Refugees (NCFR), while making data available to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), has established that '3.3 million people have been displaced by violence, including over 250 000 who have fled Boko Haram conflict' (IDMC 2019:11). The import is that Nigeria is host to the largest number of IDP persons on the African continent, only superseded by Syria with 6.5 million on the world stage (IDMC 2019). The implication is that it is mostly women and children who are hit by diseases, limited economic opportunities, and extreme hunger and starvation due to their residence in displaced person camps. Hitherto, on the issue of human rights, especially the rights of women during emergencies, it has been observed that despite the existing protective conventions, women are still treated with indignity during violent conflicts. Contemporary conflicts since the early 1990s have seen manifestations that

confirm this. Women are raped, conscripted as cooks and servants in terrorist camps and in extreme circumstances, they serve as ‘human shield’ (Oyewole 2015).

3. The Regional Dimension of the Threat of the Boko Haram

However, within the context of contemporary international relations, there are indeed very few issues dominating the interests of scholars and practitioners of both foreign and domestic policies more than the subject of insurgency/terrorism and the aggression of non-state actors against national authorities. Insurgency and terrorism are products of a political process that pushes the potential terrorist to the point of desperation. The core values of the affected persons or institutions are at stake. Without core values to advocate and protect using desperate means, it is not impossible to have terrorism. In this sense, perpetrators of terrorism are not insane or illogical people. They are rational (even when their strategies are irrational) proponents of ideas that appear as if they are denied by more significant forces (Mazrui 1990). Their grievances can take many forms, ranging from religion to ethnicity to economic exploitation, or denial of fundamental rights of freedom and even weak or failed states. The weak state thesis believes that the inability of states to deliver to the citizenry the much-desired services often ‘propels non-state actors, such as religious and community leaders, to intervene in ameliorating the plight of the poor and aggrieved members of society, who in turn reward the leaders with utmost loyalty’ (Babalola & Ayuba 2015:23).

Historically, though the menace of Boko Haram started in the North-East of Nigeria, and specifically in Maiduguri, the chief city of Borno state; a state bordered by three countries; *viz*, Chad, Nigeria and Cameroun, from the outset, the Boko Haram started with the potential of spreading beyond the frontiers of its original birth environment. This is because of the fluid nature of the borders and the low management regimes of the administrations of the different countries. It is therefore not surprising that most of the actors and foot-soldiers of Boko Haram of the insurgency were sourced and recruited from the Chadian provinces of Lac, Kanem and HajaerL am is in the initial phase (Awodola & Ayuba 2015:250). Coupled with the border porosity of the region’s countries, Boko Haram operators were swift in launching their attacks on perceived enemy countries and retreating to where countries they felt the safest. This largely explains the imperative for a

Multinational Joint Task Force as a response initiative against the insurgents' regional threat.

Concerning Boko Haram's motivational ideology, it is critical to note that the pursuit of jihad ideology as a guide in political movements is not a new West African historic occurrence. The 19th-century jihads of Usman Danfodio, Seku Ahmadu and Alhaji Umar are fundamental to the understanding of current happenings in West African Islamic theology and this context, the insurgencies bedevilling the sub-region (Omar-Cooper *et al.* 1969). In the early 20th century, Muhammadu Marwa (Maitatsine), alongside his anarchic followers, Yantatsine (the accursed), began operating along the Nigeria and Cameroun corridor. Marwa has initially been from northern Cameroun, but later, during his infamous activities, moved into Nigeria. His ability to mobilise adherents towards anti-establishment led the colonial government to repatriate him back to his country, Cameroun, immediately after the Second World War in 1945. However, Marwa was not to be deterred by the colonial administration of his day as he made his way back to Kano, Nigeria in the 1970s, and this time, he was successful in wrecking the kind of havoc he planned. Marwa, who claimed to be a *Mahdi*, went throughout northern Nigeria, killing and maiming all he perceived as opposed to his ideology. The statistics of his 1980s encounter with security forces claim that 5 000 people were killed in Kano; 3 000 people died in Maiduguri and Kaduna; while over a thousand deaths were recorded in Yola (Ayuba 2014). The centennial history of Nigeria's north-east region is no stranger to the incidences of violent conflicts. However, before proceeding, the paper wishes to establish that the present-day north-east was previously embedded within the Borno Empire of 9–19th century AD (Stride & Ifeka 1971). The chronicles record that, by the 11th century AD, the empire had become a force to be reckoned with in international trade and global diplomatic relations spanning centuries – from the Seifawa Dynasty to the Sheihu Political Order (Al Hajj 1983). However, from the 19th century, the fortunes of this once absolute African power had begun to wane and experience socio-economic and political recession, culminating in its overthrow by the British Empire (Alkali 1983).

As part of its violent history, the records show that during the closing years of the 19th century, specifically in 1893, Rabih Fadlallah, a soldier in Zubair Pasha's army, invaded the Borno Empire and sacked *Kukawa*, the capital, which led to the abdication of the *Sheihu*, who fled to Zinder in

present-day Niger. In Zinder, Rabih arranged the assassination of the *Sheihu*, thereby creating a vacuum that weakened the political formation of the empire. Economically, this invasion disrupted the thriving regional trade and commerce occasioned by the spoiling of the economy out of which the hordes sustained their debauchery (Ikimi 1977:179). These soldiers of fortune also constituted a threat to the viable trade routes, which led to the complete collapse of trading activities across the empire. However, this is consistent with the history of most empires in their state formation stages and beyond. Toyo (2006) affirms that marauding raids to rob communities and rustle livestock have been common in history in semi-desert areas. According to him, the cases of the Sahara Desert communities' invasion of more fortunate groups of people for loot and rapine abound.

Boko Haram emerged from this scenario to unleash terror on a region that is no stranger to the onslaught of pillaging hordes. The group is also known as *Jamā'atAhl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wahwa'l-Jihād* and more recently, Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP). The similitude of these invading triumvirates (Rabih, Marwa and the Boko Haram) lies in the fact that all, without exception, ascribe their activities to having received inspiration and motivation from religious, ideological sources. In the effort to entrench this ideology, Boko Haram have killed over five thousand five hundred people from 2014-2015 alone (Zaimov 2015). A slightly different statistic regarding fatalities is given by the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report for 2014. The information opines that Nigeria has witnessed the 'largest increase in terrorist deaths ever recorded by any country, increasing by over 300% to 7 512 fatalities' (GTI 2015:3). Due to the intensity of the activities, Boko Haram earned the status as the deadliest terrorist group in the world by the current rating. Due to the group's fatal strategy that conforms with that of the ISIS, the group recently paid homage to the Islamic State (the ISIS) by becoming the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) in March 2015. This partnership's decision is basically due to the standard approach (bloody strategies) adopted by both the *Jamā'atAhl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wahwa'l-Jihād* in West and Central Africa and the Islamic State with operational Headquarters in the Arabian Peninsula and the Levant. The paper presents evidence of the gender-based violence instrumented by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB), as being an increasingly significant component of the sect's violence and tactics.

4. Theoretical Framework

Hegemonic masculinity theory (HMT) propounded by Raewyn Connell serves as an analytical instrument (Connell 1987). The theory proposes identifying domination over women's attitude and practice otherwise perpetuates gender inequality and violence against women in Africa. At the core of gender-based violence and violence against women lies gender power relations, within which women are socially constructed to be inferior to men (Mkhize & Njawala 2016). The socially constructed and normalised subordination of women in many African societies and institutions, like that of Chad, perpetuates various forms of oppression against women. However, in recent times the theory has been described as,

a set of values, established by men in power that function to include and exclude, and to organise society in gender unequal ways. It combines several features: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access among men to power (over women and other men), and the interplay between men's identity, men's ideals, interactions, power and patriarchy (Jewkes & Morrell 2012:40).

Historically, from 5000 BC, representing the Sumerian and Egyptian epochs, women have been discriminated against by organised patriarchal militaries and even by bands of renegade elements roaming and operating in civilised humanity's margins. Since the theory was first propounded in 1987, it has engaged the minds of scholars such as Rachel Jewkes, Robert Morrell, Jeff Hearn, Emma Lundqvist, David Blackbeard, Graham Lindegger, Michael Quayle, YandisaI kweyiyaand Lucas Gottzén (2015).

The theory is relevant to this study because it directly links to patriarchy which has since existed as the form of masculinity that is 'culturally exalted' in Africa (Connell 2005:77). Violence against women (VAW) in Africa, and globally, has always been embedded in normalised gendered structural inequalities, mainly based between the female and male genders. Within gendered structural inequalities, women have always been treated as the second sex (Oyewole 2015), and men as the superior sex (Mkhize & Njawala 2016). As a result, gender-based violence where women and girls are treated as objects and equal to slaves has emerged in most parts of the Lake Chad region (Oyewole 2015). The extremist and patriarchal militantly

organised groups, such as Boko Haram, have waged war against humanity to further their religious and ethnic ideologies and terrorised and violated women and girls (Connor 2017). Many women and girls in the Lake Chad region have been murdered, sexually assaulted, raped, abused, beaten, and forced into marriage and childbearing against their will. The women survivors' stories indicate how much women, girls, and children have suffered under these extreme sexual crimes, acts of terrorism, and crimes against the female sex under the extremist militant groups' ruthless commands. The Lake Chad violence has taken diverse forms of attacks (Bature 2019), violence against women being one thereof. It is therefore safe to conclude that 'violence against women continues to persist as one of the most heinous, systematic and prevalent human rights abuses in the world today' (Zhianpour, Arashpour & Shekarchizadeh 2015:40). However, relevant is also the fact that women bear the suffering, and they are exposed to have imperilled the 21st century's Development Initiatives as codified in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Dating back to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979 1981 and 1983) (Evatt 1991) to the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), interventions have been proposed targeting the elimination of violence specifically against women and children. Governments were instructed to devise programmes and policies to address violence against women and children, and gender-based violence at large (UN 2015).

Employing hegemonic masculinity thinking helps reveal the historical normalised gendered powers and bring about gender equality. Gender equality is necessary to the Lake Chad governments' instruments and interventions to combat and end extreme violence against women in the region. The former UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, shared this view, who in his speech during the annual International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (IDEVAW) on Sunday, 25 November 2014, opined; Violence against women is always a violation of human rights; it is still a crime, and it is always unacceptable. Let us take this issue with the deadly seriousness it deserves – not only on this day of International Day, but also every day of our lives (Zhianpour *et al.* 2015:40).

5. The Plight of Women in the Lake Chad Region

In war, people are subjected to different conditions of suffering, including

individual and collective group suffering. The reality that informs thesis that in conflicts, the preferred strategy amongst non-state actors and even national militaries is the attacks on civilians and increasing women's casualty figures (Schirch 2004). This has proven true in Rwanda, Somalia, and Bosnia Herzegovina's conflicts, just as they have proven correct in other deadly scenarios like the terrorism of ISIS and Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region.

Nevertheless, with the weakening of states and militaries of the region in the face of threats, Boko Haram activities across the past decade have shown a pattern suggesting perfection in the craft of meting out indignity on womanhood. Throughout their operational bases, spanning the Mandara Mountains to the Sambisa up to the Lake Chad fringes, the group has successfully made women and the girl child their choice target of abuse and perverted practices. As a result, the world has continued to receive bitter doses of their shocking activities. Beyond killing and maiming victims, the group has sustained its abduction of women that they forcefully indoctrinate into accepting their practices (Ayuba 2014). Some monitors of the phenomenon have submitted that no fewer than 7 000 women were abducted by Boko Haram (Gyangyang 2018). Most of the tasks designed for and assigned to women during their captivity are consistent with the distinctive gendered structure derived from the typical nuclear family setting that features a 'subordinate wife and a patriarchal husband' (Oyewumi 2006:315). For example, during the abduction of close to three hundred schoolgirls from the Government Secondary School Chibok, the girls were automatically turned into sex partners and cooks, a standard weapon favoured by terrorist groups worldwide. In this vein, it can be noted that the very notion of a 'woman' or 'womanhood' is only relevant in the context of a wife, which has a foundation in the family environment (Johnson 1988:40). As shown above, the woman in the family setting is subordinate, while the husband is the authority. This gendered mindset informs the distribution of functions by the terrorists and the insistence that abducted women must be married off to their captors.

In the African Independent Television (AIT) News documentary in June 2015, it was reported that out of the over 700 women rescued from the group, more than 200 had become pregnant. On another occasion, when the military liberated 234 young women from the group, 214 were visibly pregnant (Gyangyang 2018). A victim confessed that they had turned her into a sex machine and took turns in raping her daily until she became pregnant.

Before they engaged her in sex, each of the rapists prayed that she would conceive so that the sired seed may carry-on their ideologies. However, according to one of Boko Haram gender-based violence victims, Miriam maintained that she, alongside her friends, had refused to be married to the Islamic terrorists. In an attempt to convince them to change their minds, the terrorists had slit the throats of some of them. When Miriam refused to repudiate her position, the elements began taking turns in raping her until she got pregnant. She only escaped after six months of this experience (Zaimov 2015). Asabe, another victim from Adamawa narrated her story thus, *'I was abducted in Delshak, our village. We were moved to a forest between Nigeria and Cameroun and subjected to sex slaves, and now, I am pregnant ... I believe this is the fate of all women in the captivity of Boko Haram'* (Gyangyang 2018).

In addition to this grim image, recent statistics indicate that Nigeria has lost over 20 000 civilians to Boko Haram in the last three years. This statistic includes women and children. This is apart from the vast numbers of the same women folk captured/kidnapped and subjected to sex slavery (Ayuba 2014). Social infrastructures have suffered immensely as a result of the activities of this group. Concerning the devastation to the educational sector, Boko Haram's attacks on schools at every level have forced the government of the Nigerian section of the Lake Chad region to close schools. This situation has led to an increased drop in school enrolment, especially at primary and secondary school levels. The number of available classrooms has dropped because many of the available classrooms have been transformed into IDP accommodation facilities (*The New Humanitarian* 2014).

In Cameroon, many of the people abducted by Boko Haram in March 2014 were women and girls, and they were compelled to be wives (Regional Protection Work Group 2017). The victims of GBV are presently encountering issues in their communities in terms of stigmatisation, marginalisation, and discrimination, and those who were once married to the insurgency are tagged 'Boko Haram women or Sambisa women' and treated with suspicion (Regional Protection Work Group 2017). In Chad, GBV has been at its peak. In January 2018, 106 cases of GBV were reported in Chad's Lac region while in 2017 2,270 cases, mostly physical assaults though some psychosocial supports were granted (UNOCHA 2018). The main challenges in the region are inadequate medical facilities and access to justice for the victims. In Niger, particularly in Diffa and Bosso regions, rape and

kidnapping are commonly experienced by women living in the region (International Rescue Committee 2019). The area harbours thousands of refugees who have fled the Boko Haram conflict after they were forcibly displaced from Lake Chad Island. Moreover, the GBV in the regions has led to a breakdown in family and community structures.

6. Conclusion

The Lake Chad region governments are policy-bound to put more effective laws to criminalise gender-based violence and violence against women and children, resulting in imprisonment and removal of extremist militant groups from society. Also, the increasing violation of women's rights calls for a need to implement special gender-based violence awareness programmes in and around the region, involving religious, education and ethnic structures' platforms. Hence, governments in their policymaking and programming strategies should involve other stakeholders working on gender-based violence, such as non-governmental organisations. Also, utilising women, victims and survivors can help strengthen intervention initiatives as they possess the lived experiences of violence against women narratives essential in combating this gender impacted violence. The study focused on Boko Haram, intending to shed light on the group's atrocities due to the increase in GBV and the need to address the issue urgently. The study started by tracing the genesis of the conflict in Africa and the theory that justified the preponderance spread of war, particularly on the African continent. However, Africa's continuous warfare has been argued based on the frustration-aggression theory among numerous other conflict theories. It is also important to note that while the study focused on Boko Haram, the sect does not have the monopoly of GBV in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB). However, it has become more prevalent as the group have adopted it as a tactic and instrument of their conflict. In line with this reason, the study, examined the group's antecedent and its Islamic ideology and the consequences of the series of attacks over a decade, despite resistance from the multinational forces of the LCB states. The study also evidenced the forms of GBV perpetrated by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region. Thus, the study calls for the strengthening of the global and regional frameworks that eliminate all forms of abuse against women and the need to ensure legal action against perpetrators.

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