

# Draft ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy Tracker Report October 2015



**Draft ECOWAS Counter Terrorism  
Strategy Tracker Report (Edition 2)**

**Centre for Democracy and Development  
(CDD) West Africa**

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## *Introduction*

Extreme violence groups poses a serious threat to international peace, security and stability and constitutes a criminal act that undermines efforts aimed at achieving democracy, good governance and development, as well as the full enjoyment of the human and peoples' rights. In West Africa, particularly within the ECOWAS bloc, the challenges posed by violence extreme groups are have further impoverished many and created humanitarian situation in affected countries. The spectrum of democratic and development gains of past decades<sup>1</sup> reversal is on upward direction owing to chaos caused by these elements. Islamist extremists' activities in recent years within the ECOWAS region have demonstrated the gravity of the threat they pose and the need for greater enforcement of existing counter-measures to prevent, respond and confront various acts, such as abductions and hostages-taking, hijacking, bomb attacks, etc, that ECOWAS member state experience.

For instance, as at 31<sup>st</sup> Saturday October 2015, some 2.4 million Malians are currently affected by conflict waged for decades by Tuareg separatists and in more recent years by Islamist jihadi groups<sup>2</sup>. In Nigeria, an estimated 2.2 persons were internally displaced in Abuja, Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau, Taraba and Yobe States at the end of October<sup>3</sup>. In Cameroon, the number of refugees is on the rise because of the Boko Haram crisis in Northern Nigeria and the crisis in Central Africa Report. Cameroon maintains an open-border policy for asylum-seekers and is signatory to all major legal instruments on refugees, including the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention. Moreover, Cameroon adopted a law defining the legal framework for refugee protection in July 2005, which went into force in November 2011. Nigeria has estimated 164,715 refugees in neighboring countries of Cameroon 34% and in Chad 9%; Niger 57%.<sup>4</sup>

## *Overall assessment*

The situation in Mali was relatively stable in October but they were not without incidences. Although different Islamist factions signed peace agreement with Bamako to severe attacks against civilians but the separatists remain active in fighting government forces. And differences remain, even over the agreement itself. Many separatists are unhappy that although it calls for the creation of elected regional assemblies, it stops short of autonomy or federalism, a long-time rebel demand. Attacks this year got to the center of the country including previously peaceful

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<sup>1</sup> Banfield J. Tell (2015) Like It Is the role of civil society in responding to serious and organised crime in west Africa, International Alert, September 2015

<sup>2</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks, Militancy In Mali: Conflict Map <http://newirin.irinnews.org/dataviz/2015/11/20/map-of-conflict-in-mali-2015>

<sup>3</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

areas in the south near the borders with Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso<sup>5</sup>[map-of-conflict-in-mali-2015.htm](http://www.irinnews.org/News/2015/11/20/map-of-conflict-in-mali-2015.htm).

In the same of October, Bamako and a major Tuareg-led rebel alliance exchanged prisoners as a step forward for the country's fledgling peace process. A total of 47 (31 rebel prisoners and 16 Malian military prisoners) were traded between the government and the Co-ordination of Movements of Azawad (CMA)<sup>6</sup>. However, the army launched a new anti-jihadist operation, "Seno", in the Mopti region and arrested 12 members of the Hamadou Kouffia's Macina Liberation Front (FLM), suspected of laying landmines at Teninkou in September. In October, many Islamist group remain active with several incidences, injuries and casualties.

Across the ECOWAS, particularly in Chad, Nigeria, Cameroon and Niger, Boko Haram remains the most active group accounting for several incidences, injuries, fatalities and destruction of properties. The communities in Cameroon, Niger and Chad bordering Nigeria suffered severe suicide and guerrilla incidences from Boko Haram in October. Like in Nigeria, these countries have increased military operations in their borders with Nigeria. However, casualties were on all sides (Boko Haram, the military and civilians) in these countries. In Nigeria, in one attack against 120 battalion of the Nigeria Army, the Boko Haram suffered over 100 casualties according to military statement<sup>7</sup>. The Nigeria Army has continued to maintain that it has degraded the capacity and power of Boko Haram. Several Boko Haram camps/hideout, bomb making factories, fuel dump, and logistical supplies were destroyed.

Instead of territorial conquest like the past, the Boko Haram has utilized more of suicide bomb blast than massive attempt to claim territory but this is not to say there were no such attempts. The Nigerian government and the Nigeria Armed Forces have continued to restate vow to stamp out Boko Haram before the end of 2015. In October, the Military published the pictures of 100 suspected Boko Haram members and issued several calls on international community and the United Nations to advise Boko Haram to surrender or face been stamped out.

However, government in October has commenced preliminary engagement with civil society organisations in Nigeria to strengthen the capacity of existing Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) especially in North-eastern region with the aim of involving them in addressing the chaos on ground. Currently, the Nigeria government remains active in responding to Internally Displaced Persons and incidence through the security agencies, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and recently, the Presidential Initiative for the North-East (PINE), the Victim Support Fund (VSF), and the Save Schools Initiative (SSI). In the same light, government through National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and other relevant government institutions and development partners, have continued to build the capacity of

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<sup>5</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks, Militancy In Mali: Conflict Map <http://newirin.irinnews.org/dataviz/2015/11/20/map-of-conflict-in-mali-2015>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Mali-govt-rebels-swap-prisoners-in-bright-spot-for-peace-deal-20151004>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/2015/10/100-boko-haram-members-killed-in-yobe/>

several Internally Displaced Persons for them to be able to create their own job for a lasting sense of dignity and survival. Although many Nigerians who were displaced by the crisis are still in refugee camps in neighboring countries, the government has maintained progressive efforts to ensure all Nigerians displaced are brought home.

### ***Figures and incidence within the ECOWAS region***

#### **Boko Haram/ Country Break Down<sup>8</sup>**

- 1- Cameroun: Total number of fatalities = 27 in 11 incidents.
- 2- Chad: Total number of fatalities = 52 in 2 incidents
- 3- Mali: Total number of fatalities = 13 in 8 incidents.
- 4- Niger: Total number of fatalities: 36 in 6 incidents
- 5- Nigeria: Total number of fatalities = 523 in 10 incidents<sup>9</sup>
- 6- All attacks in Chad were carried out in one region of Diffa

#### **Summary Figures in West**

Total number of fatalities in ECOWAS = 651 in 47 incidents

Of the total 47 incidence of extremist attacks within ECOWAS States, 39 were carried by Boko Haram. 523 of the 651 fatalities were from civilian, military and extremist elements fatalities recorded in Nigeria.

#### **Break Down of Report for Nigeria**

1. Total number of civilians fatalities = 195 (in ten incidents)
2. Total number of Boko Haram fatalities = Over 316 (in seven incidents)
3. Total number of military fatalities = 12 (in three incidents)
4. Total number of civilians injuries = 218 (in five incidents)
5. Total number of military injuries = 23 (in three cases)
6. Total number of rescues = 374 (in two incidents).
7. Total number of arrests made by security forces = 59 (in five incidents).
8. Over 75 of Boko Haram attacks were carried through suicide attacks
9. Of the over 523 fatalities toll in October in Nigeria, over 316 casualties were on the extremist side alone

#### ***States and ECOWAS response***

The ECOWAS counter terrorism is premised on three pillars namely Prevent, Pursue and Reconstruct.

Within the region, the government has continued to pursue the part of peace through dialogue. In Mali, government signed peace agreement with some rebel groups and in Nigeria, the government has continued to assure the public of its willingness to dialogue with Boko Haram.

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<sup>8</sup> Data source is ACLAD

<sup>9</sup> CDD Media tracker

Lots of vigilance is still required as the process remain very fragile in Mali<sup>10</sup>. The UN Mission in Mali reported earlier October that government has begun the implementation of the peace agreement. Unfortunately for Mali, there are plenty of negative forces in northern Mali that does not want the peace and stability. These are criminal gangs and terrorist elements but the government and rebel groups have sustained greater commitment towards the actualisation of peace and stability. In Nigeria, the government is yet to seat on a dialogue table with Boko Haram faction willing to dialogue but has maintained it will not beg Boko Haram to dialogue.

The countries of ECOWAS have continued to receive international cooperation despite increasing cooperation within the region. In October, the British Chief of Defence Staff (Nicholas Houghton) visited President Muhammadu Buhari to assure Nigeria of British support to its fight against Boko Haram. In the same light, the Republic of Netherlands Defence Attaché to Nigeria, Colonel Eric Adriaan de Landmeter paid a courtesy visit to Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lieutenant General Tukur Buratai. In a bit to generate comparative ideas to tackle Boko Haram, former president Olusegun Obasanjo led a team of the Copenhagen Foundation security experts to meet with President Muhammadu Buhari to share their experience in combating terror.

Also as part of the international cooperation aspiration of the “prevent pillar” of ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy (CTS), the America government has deployed 90 military personnel to Cameroon to conduct airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations in the region, build local partnership to fight Boko Haram and train government focus. The total number of US military personnel to be deployed to Cameroon is anticipated to be up to approximately 300<sup>11</sup>. They are also supposed to help local community to reconstruct their community. Earlier in the month of October, the United States deployed more than 30 troops to central Niger, train local forces to fight Islamist militants<sup>12</sup>. Unfortunately, the visit of Buhari to the United States for many Nigerians was expected to boost on the ground support from the United States. The deployment of United States troops and drone to neighbouring countries instead of Nigeria has again reawakened anxiety over America’s sincere support to Nigeria and why the United States does not see Nigeria as a priority in its global counter terror campaign.

Nigeria has continued to solicit regional and global cooperation. The Multinational Joint Task Force 8,700-strong army formed by Nigeria and its immediate neighbouring countries to jointly fight the Boko Haram terrorists commenced operation in October after the raining season. In the face of recurrent Boko Haram activities, there are fears that the MNJTF is really slow to take off. During an interview in October, President Buhari told Aljazeera that the campaign by MNJTF would fully take off after the rainy season. Contrary to this worry, Nigeria’s Chief of Army Staff,

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<sup>10</sup> UN envoy: Mali peace process is 'back on track' <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/10/6/UN-envoy-mali-peace-process-is-back-on-track.html>

<sup>11</sup> Aljazeera; US troops deployed to Cameroon for Boko Haram fight <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/usa-troops-deployed-cameroon-boko-haram-fight-151014212428195.html>

<sup>12</sup> Boko Haram: US sends troops to Niger <http://thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2015/11/boko-haram-us-sends-troops-to-niger/>

Major-General Tukur Buratai, has confirmed the commencement of operation by the MNJTF but held that troops contributing countries (Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad) are expected to operate within their territories.

The MNJTF is empowered to operate without frontiers, with the liberty to sneak into Nigeria and across the borders of Chad, Niger Republic, and Cameroon, which are plagued by the Boko Haram annihilation of innocent people<sup>13</sup>. Again, it is not clear how the joint operation and the borderless frontline fit into the present reality. Since the meeting in June and subsequent visit by Nigeria President to neighbouring countries, the constituting countries of the MNJTF have maintained “dead silence” on the commencement of the MNJTF.

The present turn of the operational approach is a twist to the expectations of many and only time will tell what becomes of the original plan. There are no indications that these countries are sharing actionable intelligence and neither are there signs of borderless operation against Boko Haram. The present status of things reflects more of the need for neighbouring countries to maintain their territory sovereignty than for the need to collectively work to stamp about the threat of Boko Haram.

Comparing theoretical approach of the ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy and the reality, the measures across the region have been overly militaristic with little regards for soft approaches. Many countries are treating the symptoms than killing the course. Although ECOWAS is not operating its own coordinated forces in any known country of the region, the reality is that the countries experiencing terror menace have overly ignored the cross cutting soft approach embedded in the three pillars. Again, many of ECOWAS actions have been more of meetings, resolutions, policies than actual implementation. ECOWAS is disdainfully weak because of its dependent on state financial and material support for sustenance.

In 2012, ECOWAS agreed on a standby force but it is currently not in existence and Nigeria rejected offer of military support when some countries pledged support against Boko Haram. More so, it is not ascertain the level of cooperation among countries of the ECOWAS in detecting, intercepting and deterring terrorist operations. On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, some Boko Haram elements sneaked into Kuje and Nyanya to detonate bomb. During October, they made several hits on Chad, Cameroon and Niger and successfully, in some cases running back into Nigeria. This clearly raised the worries of intelligence sharing and need for border cooperation to stamp out the group. Also, on October 9<sup>th</sup>, three police personnel were killed in western Burkina Faso when their barracks were attacked by “about 50” assailants near the border with Mali. Some reports have suggested that the attack was carried by some Jihadists from Mali<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/general/slow-take-off-of-multinational-force-boko-haram-regroups-in-border-villages/116358.html#MpG158cTDq2jgmwB.99>

<sup>14</sup> Armed group kills three Burkina Faso police near Mali border <http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/2015/10/armed-group-kills-three-burkina-faso-police-near-mali-border/>



As part of overall effort for timely response to conflict in Africa, the Africa Union has created a 25,000 strong multinational Union Standby Force (ASF). The Force's first training started in October in South Africa. The force will be made up of five brigades from Africa's economic blocs<sup>15</sup>. However, the ASF will be highly resourceful in many ways when operational irrespective of strength in number. The strongest feeling about operationalising the ASF is the capacity of AU to fund its one billion United States Dollars estimated budget for its' complete set up. The AU has greatly being hampered financially<sup>16</sup>.

Similarly, countries within the ECOWAS have strengthened financial, legislative, political, security and defence tools but the capacity for enforcement remains largely weak. Also, many root causes, the push and pull factors of crisis are yet to be addressed. This has made regional effort more symptomatic response than eliminating the causal factors, for lasting peace and stability in the region.

In May, the International Crisis Group warned in a report that, "Mali is heading less toward lasting peace than toward a new phase of confrontations<sup>17</sup>. Just like in Nigeria, government has continued to prioritize hardware security over the need to restore the state's social function across the Malian territory. In Nigeria, since the inception of the new administration, state social function have twitted towards security than the need for other state responsibilities. Throughout northern Mali, basic social services and government institutions are yet to be restored and are unlikely to resume as long as the fighting continues. Arms and drugs traffickers smuggle their wares across northern Mali's poorly demarcated border with Algeria. Smuggling is often the only the source of income for unemployed youths in Mali's neglected north. In Many ECOWAS countries struggling against violent extremists, the push and pull factors of violent extremist remain unaddressed.

In Mali, the United Nations estimates three million people in hunger; lacking enough to eat and in Nigeria, estimated people in need of humanitarian assistance stands 4.6million<sup>18</sup>. Serious lack of resources has been resulting in very limited humanitarian assistance to the IDPs living in host communities which are more than 90 % of the total displaced population in Gombe State, Nigeria. In the absence of appropriate assistance, this large group may feel attracted to camps thus contributing to existing overcrowding and overstretching of basic services in the camps. In

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<sup>15</sup> African Standby Force starts first military exercises <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34570755>

<sup>16</sup> Ecowas Counter Terrorism Strategy Tracker Report (Edition 1) <http://www.cddwestafrica.org/2015/11/03/ecowas-counter-terrorism-strategy-tracker-report-edition-1/>

<sup>17</sup> Katarina Höije Integrated Regional Information Networks (2015) What peace deal? No end to Mali conflict via <http://www.irinnews.org/report/101889/what-peace-deal-no-end-to-mali-conflict>

<sup>18</sup>NIGERIA: Humanitarian Dashboard (as of 16 October 2015)

[http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ocha\\_nga\\_humanitarian\\_dashboard\\_as\\_of\\_16102015.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ocha_nga_humanitarian_dashboard_as_of_16102015.pdf)

Borno State, the state with the largest displaced population (i.e. over 1.6 million individuals) is in an emergency situation<sup>19</sup>.

Most of the camps are overcrowded and lacking basic services/facilities thus posing high health risks to the camp population. Since early September, more than 500 cases of cholera have been reported in 5 camps and the neighboring communities in Maiduguri. There are reports of chronic Watery Diarrhea breakout, infesting people and with children recording 50% of the total cases reported.

In Mali, the crisis in the north of the country is increasingly threatening the livelihoods of millions, affecting everything from access to food, market, water, education and grazing. Humanitarian organizations found it harder to reach communities in conflict-ridden areas and attempts to deliver aid to the north of the country were hampered by fighting in the region<sup>20</sup>. An estimated 3.1 million people in Mali accounting for approximately one-fifth of the population either doesn't have enough to eat or lacks access to nutritious foods, such as meat and vegetables according to UNOCHA. Presently, market infrastructures have collapsed. Apart from those abandoning their grazing field for fearing attacks by armed groups, the increasing hostile climatic condition has not helped.

The second pillar of ECOWAS CTS is the "Pursue pillar". The pillar seeks to ensure timely and effective response to terrorist acts; it is anchored on a criminal justice approach which provides for both military and nonmilitary responses to terrorism; it seeks to eliminate impunity and to ensure that all those who participate, support, finance and facilitate terrorist acts whether directly or indirectly are investigated, prosecuted and punished to the limit allowed by law.

In Nigeria, government has introduced several policies to tighten illicit financial flow. In August, the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), a specialized institution of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)<sup>21</sup> organized a workshop in Lagos as a measure to widening steps in addressing money laundry in the region. In June, GIABA recommended for Mali to comply with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)<sup>22</sup>. Mali is not on the FATF List of Countries that has been identified as having strategic AML deficiencies<sup>23</sup>. Mali is signatory to lots of policies that seeks to curb illicit financial flow but enforcement and political will has been very weak.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Humanitarian system 'stretched to its limits' says new research by Global development professionals network <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/oct/02/humanitarian-system-stretched-to-its-limits-says-new-research>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.thecable.ng/ecowas-host-anti-money-laundering-summit-lagos>

<sup>22</sup> This Technical Assistance report on Mali was prepared by a staff team of the International Monetary Fund. It is based on the information available at the time it was completed on December 2014 <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2015/cr15185.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.knowyourcountry.com/mali1111.html>

There are sheer weakness of law enforcement and criminal justice institutions, highly prone to chronic corruption within the ECOWAS. Although not part of the ECOWAS, Chad has recently come under attack by Boko Haram extremists. In August, Chad sentenced 10 Boko Haram members to death<sup>24</sup>. The attacks were the first by the Nigerian based group in Chad. In Mali and in Nigeria, government has arrested substantial members of extremist group but not many have been tried. In September, an alleged Islamist militant accused of destroying ancient monuments in Timbuktu became the first person to appear at the international criminal court (ICC) charged with damaging humanity's cultural heritage<sup>25</sup>.

Since 2011 that the Nigeria Terrorism prevention came into being, there are only three know cases of Boko Haram trials that were successful. The vast majority of Boko Haram extremist elements arrested on daily basis are kept in unknown military donjons.

To instill discipline in the Nigeria Army, the Nigeria Army Court Martial recently in October, dismissed and sentence to six months Brigadier General Enitan Ransome-Kuti for failing to perform his military duties during the fight against Boko Haram which may have resulted in the militants' capture of Baga, the center of a multinational force<sup>26</sup>. Earlier in the year, the Nigeria Army dismissed and sentenced several of its personnel for various degrees of offences ranging from mutiny to act of cowardice. In September, more than three thousand dismissed personnel were reinstated by the Nigeria Army after a proper evaluation of cases against them. The second ECOWAS pillars requires states to ensure timely and effective response to terrorist acts, both military and nonmilitary approach to terrorism, elimination of impunity punishment of offenders to the limit permitted by law.

The CTS third pillar is "reconstruct". Across ECOWAS the need for reconstruction of society and cultural structures broken and destroyed by extremist elements is germane. In the same light, the state ability to reassert its authority and legitimacy is sacrosanct for ensuring stability and peace. The Malian governments are still held back by criminal gangsters and Violent extremist groups' activities from moving into northern Mali to provide aid to people trapped in conflict. Also, the government in Bamako is also helpless because of the paucity of technical, material and financial resources necessary for the realization of the agreement<sup>27</sup>. The Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita met with French President Francois Hollande over plans to bring stability to troubled areas in October. Frances has promised to release 360 million euros (\$408

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<sup>24</sup>Chad Sentences 10 Boko Haram members to death via <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34091579>

<sup>25</sup> Alleged militant appears at The Hague charged with cultural destruction in Mali via <http://www.theguardian.com/law/2015/sep/30/ahmad-al-faqi-al-mahdi-the-hague-international-criminal-court-mali-timbuktu>

<sup>26</sup> Nigeria Army Court-Martial Sentences Brigadier-General Ransome-Kuti To Six Months In Jail <http://saharareporters.com/2015/10/15/nigeria-army-court-martial-sentences-brigadier-general-ransome-kuti-six-months-jail>

<sup>27</sup> Ecowas Counter Terrorism Strategy Tracker Report (Edition 1) <http://www.cddwestafrica.org/2015/11/03/ecowas-counter-terrorism-strategy-tracker-report-edition-1/>

million) in aid from France for 2015-2017<sup>28</sup>. Owing to the violence in Northern Mali, the 2015 financial requirements by the United Nations on Mali are set at USD 67.4 million, with USD 48.6 million for the reintegration of Malians and assistance to refugees living in Mali, and USD 8 million allocated for the protection and assistance of IDPs.

France had disbursed 300 million euros to Mali in the two years following the military intervention in 2013. This was out of the pledge of 3.25 billion euros in Brussels from International donors to help rebuild Mali in the wake of conflict with Islamist groups<sup>29</sup>. It is not exactly sure the reality of this, Mali is seeking to rebuild government institutions and the military, repair damaged infrastructure, hold dialogue with rebel groups in the north, and stimulate the economy. However, Mali is confronted with the challenge of advancing the process of promoting national reconciliation and cohesion.

In Nigeria, government has initiated few programs to rebuild the region and address humanitarian crisis. The former President Goodluck Jonathan initiated Presidential Initiative in North East (PINE) with short and medium term goals of cushioning the impact of the devastation caused by the Boko Haram jihadists. He also launched the Victims' Support Fund (VSF), chaired by Lt Gen T.Y. Danjuma and which raised N58.8 billion. In July, Nigeria obtained a loan of \$2.1 billion credit from the World Bank to rebuild the North-East zone. Priority is expected to be accorded the resettlement of internally displaced persons whose home, community and sources of livelihood have all been destroyed by Boko Haram.

At the launch of the Presidential Committee on North-East Intervention in October, Chairman of the Committee, General Theophilus Danjuma (rtd) said the Federal Government will spend N233 billion on post-insurgency reconstructions and rehabilitation of the affected communities. He said N97 billion is to be spent on short term measures while another N116 billion is to be spent on the medium term plan to assist victims of the insurgency to restart their businesses. Though the actual source of the funds to finance this gigantic project was not clearly stated, it could be recalled that former President Goodluck Jonathan inaugurated the Victims Support Fund Committee chaired by Danjuma on July 31, last year. Jonathan had called on well meaning Nigerians to contribute their widow's mite towards providing succour to victims of Boko Haram attacks. Sadly, during the committee's recent visit to President Muhammadu Buhari, General Danjuma lamented that out of the N55.92 billion pledged at last year's launch, only N23 billion was redeemed while N33.54 billion is yet to be redeemed.

There is no doubt that the Nigeria government will need both short and longtime plans to return IDPs to their home because schools have been destroyed, markets burnt, homes, hospitals, bridges, highways, border posts and communities razed down and all forms of economic

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<sup>28</sup> France awards 360 million euros in aid to Mali: Hollande

Read more at Reuters <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/21/us-france-mali-aid-idUSKCN0SF2C520151021#2V5xEBKZUJzY38i.99>

<sup>29</sup> TVC News, Mali reconstruction: French and Malian Presidents meet <http://www.tvcnews.tv/?q=article/mali-reconstructionfrench-and-malian-presidents-meet>

activities crippled. The Nigerian government is hoping to reconstruct places ravaged by Boko Haram elements and plans are already in place to return many IDPs to their community by May 2016<sup>30</sup>. Unfortunately, these plans have not sufficiently addressed trauma healing for IDPs who have are critically traumatized by their experience while in Boko Haram camp or while in the bushes trying to survive. There is course for worries as government plans may not be too holistic to ensure that people are dissuaded from turning to terrorism because of the backlash of terrorist influence on them. The social consequences of not following through the process of healing for these victims might come with its set back when government least expect them.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the fact that terror has festered in countries with very poor social programs, high cases of poverty, weak institutions, poor standard of living among others, automatically raises the need for government to start a holistic emancipation of citizens from these problems. However, there is a skewed approach to addressing the threats on ground. While tackling the active threats with the stick and carrot approach, Countries of the ECOWAS have out of sheer irresponsibility ignored passive threats.

The unfortunate inability of the region to form common alliance against crime and criminalities has made the region a common ground for breeding criminals and citizens' impunity. This is worsen by the lack of legitimacy by political elites, weak state structures, corruption, lack of political will, poverty, social injustice, unequal access to state resources, economic and political disequilibrium.

### **Recommendations**

The tenet of the ECOWAS strategy requires states to strengthen regional and international cooperation because the success of the strategy is anchored on states cooperation. The partial fulfillment of Nigeria's financial pledge is a step in the right direction but the agreements that were reached in Abuja in June when Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Benin and Nigeria met should be implemented to the later. Among other things, the forces from relevant countries need to work collectively to stamp out extremist jihadist group instead of states operate on their own accord.

States also need to move away from the thinking that soft approaches are only applicable after military forces have been used to crush the jihadist elements. The soft approach is cut crossing and are usable at every stage of the CTS pillars. The perfect blend of the soft and hard approaches is critical to restoring stability and peace across the region.

States also need to move away from overly being militaristic; this is not so say dispel the importance enriching security institutions with adequate resources needed to discharge their role optimally. Still responsibility of providing basic amenities, creating enabling environment for

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<sup>30</sup> <http://dailypost.ng/2015/10/18/idps-to-return-to-their-homes-before-may-next-year/>

people to aspire to greater height, providing good education, ensuring good standard of living among others must continue.

Again, there is need for states to ensure mutual legal assistance as absolute necessity to meet the shortfall and disparity in states' capabilities. Punishing offenders to the extent allowed by law and ensuring that abuses are institutionalized is critical citizen's support.

Transparency of the state and its institutions in its activities and operations to the extent required by democratic tenets is pivotal. There is need to operate an open policy with consistent interface with civil society and the media as a measure of galvanizing national support. States and its instructions must therefore ensure collaborative efforts, transparency and accountability.

ECOWAS states need to maintain consistent dissemination of actionable intelligence and information and cooperation in investigation, prosecution and counter terror operations as a key prerequisite in ending violent extremism.

There is also the need for government to re-establishing social contrast with the people who have been affected by extremist conflict through engagement and dialogue to ensure that the want of the people reflects in what government is doing to reconstruct the region. There is need for coordination and involvement of affected people, social and media groups in combating violent extremists and reconstructing of destroyed cultural structures, communities and institutions.

More so, those who have been displaced need to be provided psychological, mental, physical and emotional support before they are returned to their communities. However, government need to guarantee their safety, ensure rebuilding of their community, houses, markets, roads/bridges among others before they are returned to their respective communities.