

Investigating the Intersections between Counterterrorism and NGOs in Nigeria: Development Practice in Conflict-affected Area

Njoku, Emeka Thaddues

License:

Creative Commons: Attribution-NonCommercial (CC BY-NC)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Njoku, ET 2020, 'Investigating the Intersections between Counterterrorism and NGOs in Nigeria: Development Practice in Conflict-affected Area', *Development in Practice*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 501-512.
<<https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2020.1714546>>

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

General rights

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

- Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.
- Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.
- User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?)
- Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

Take down policy

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.

Investigating the Intersections between Counter-terrorism and NGOs in Nigeria: Development Practice in Terrorism Inflicted Areas

Abstract

This study examines the factors that influence the Nigerian government's constraints of NGOs in counter-terrorism (CT) context. Also, it analyses whether NGO type, nature, areas of operation and size were determinant factors. Drawing from mixed-methods design, this study argues that NGOs' political advocacy, reporting of human rights abuses and monitoring the use of security funds were key factors that attract government restraints. Women, youth/children, faith-based NGOs experienced more constraints from the government than human rights NGOs. Advocacy and international NGOs also suffered more constraints. The findings contribute to generalizable knowledge by showing the link between CT and NGOs in Nigeria.

Introduction

In December 2018, the Nigerian military announced that it had suspended the activities of United Nations Children Emergency Funds (UNICEF) in North-eastern Nigeria where counter-terrorism operations are on-going. The military stated that it has credible evidence that the organisation has abandoned its role of providing humanitarian services. UNICEF was accused of engaging in training of people for clandestine activities to undermine the counter-terrorism operations in the Northeast. However, the military later reversed the suspension (Premium Times, 2018).

Similarly, in December 2018, the military called for the closure of Amnesty International (AI) offices in Nigeria. The military claimed that AI is trying to destabilise the country through its false allegations of human rights abuses in counter-

terrorism operations in the North-east (Vanguard 2018). These cases capture the challenges of international and local Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) face in mitigating the effects of terrorism and counter-terrorism operations in Nigeria. It reveals complicated relations between the government, security agencies and NGOs in counter-terrorism operations in North-eastern Nigeria.

There have been renewed interests on the effects of Counter-terrorism Measures (CTMs) on NGOs (Skokova et al. 2018, Watson and Burles 2018). Besides, Sidel (2010) had argued that the effects of CTMs on NGOs vary across types of NGOs. Particularly, faith-based and human rights NGOs suffer most from CTMs. The advocacy activities of most human rights NGOs and governments' belief that Muslim NGOs are more susceptible to terrorist influence is the rationale behind the intensity of regulation of these types of NGOs (Sidel 2010). Furthermore, Howell and Lind (2010) postulated that mainstream or big NGOs¹ face fewer government restrictions in the initial phases of CTMs than the minority or smaller groups. In Nigeria, Njoku (2018, 2017a) highlighted that the government excluded CSOs in the framing of CTMs because of their perceived advocacy qualities. He also revealed a convivial relation where the state strategically co-opts some NGOs solely as service providers and represses critical ones.

However, there is a dearth of systematic studies on the factors that often influence state constrains and threats in CTMs context and which NGOs might be more affected by CTMs and why.

This article contributes to the literature by advancing existing knowledge on increased state regulations of NGOs in Nigeria and other political contexts in the counter-terrorism context. Importantly, the study highlights the nuances of the effects

of CTMs. It does this by providing empirical evidence that advances earlier assumptions on the variations on the intensity of the effects of CTMs across NGO types. Thus, the study provides corroborative empirical evidence on earlier suppositions about how government CTMs impacts NGOs differently.

The Securitisation of NGOs in the Enforcement of Counter-Terrorism Measures

The securitisation² of NGOs has been traced to the policies formed after 9/11 to curb terrorism globally (Dupuy & Prakash 2018). The belief that terrorist used NGOs as a means for routing funds contributed to influencing the post-9/11 global counter-terrorism policy (Watson and Burles 2018). As a result, the mandate of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an agency that was created in the 1989 G-7 summit to address financial crimes, was expanded to address issues of terrorist financing. The FATF established legal instruments aimed at tackling terrorists' use of NGOs as a source of financing their organisation. Consequently, despite the lack of credible evidence on the collusion of NGOs (Sidel 2010), FATF with the support of the International Monetary Funds and World Bank instituted Recommendation 8. This legal instrument directs states and private organisations to establish laws that regulate the activities of NGOs (Bayas and Green 2018; Brechenmacher 2017).

In many political contexts such as Australia, US, UK, Russia, China, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Kenya, Burkina Faso and Uganda, the enforcement of CTMs have closed civic space and made it impossible for NGOs to operate. Specifically, Bayas and Green (2018: 5) argued that FATF works on the premise that all NGOs are at high risk of been used as a means of terrorist financing. However, "this notion of extreme risk in the sector has done incalculable damage to civil society. In addition to giving governments an excuse to crack down on peaceful,

legitimate organisations that are a thorn in their side, many countries have directly or indirectly used FATF compliance as a justification to pass restrictive laws in the name of countering terrorism”. Thus, the FATF directive provided governments with the opportunity to establish state-level counter-terrorism laws that frustrate civic engagement.

The repression of NGOs is more glaring in new democracies or authoritarian governments, particularly in countries such as Egypt, China, Russia, Kenya and Uganda. CTMs became a welcomed excuse for illiberal political leaders to consolidate their hold on power or enforced policies that served their interest. Specifically, these governments used the narrative of counter-terrorism to target and repress key opposition groups and their leaders, activists and other groups that were critical to state policies (Howell et al. 2008). As a result of the increases in the subjugation of NGOs by state actors, many of the NGOs have either closed down or operated skeletally (Njoku 2017a; Fowler and Sen 2010). However, which NGOs are more likely to report more pressures than others or close down operations due to CTMs? I examine this question in the next section.

Variations of Threats Across NGOs types

There have been arguments on how CTMs affected various NGOs types differently. First, Howell (2014); Howell and Lind (2010) argued that big or mainstream NGOs did not feel the effects of CTMs in the early stages of enforcement. Also, Fowler and Sen (2010) stated that mainstream NGOs did not express losses compared to other organisations but have made gains due to their close affiliations and financial support from the government. Sidel (2010) and Howell (2014) argue that in the US and UK mainstream NGOs were unmindful to the repressive nature of the government CTMs

and they largely ignored the sufferings of minority groups such as the challenges Muslims communities and charities were facing. The mainstream organisations only oppose the government when they felt threatened by counter-terrorism laws. In the same vein, in Kenya, the majority of the mainstream Christian organisations with strong links to the government were oblivious of the challenges of CTMs, since it only affects Muslims groups (Lind and Howell 2010).

Second, scholars such as Fowler and Sen (2010); Sidel (2010) theorised that while all organisations have faced restrictions from governments, faith-based and human rights NGOs were more affected by CTMs than other organisations. For instance, Howell and Lind (2010) and Sidel (2010) maintained that Muslims communities in the US and the UK were more affected in the enforcement of CTMs. Many of these organisations claim that the UK governments and the US treated them as suspect communities. Thus, it negatively influenced their structural element and capacity to operate optimally. In India, Hindu nationalist, who controlled the government, used the post 9/11 global counter-terrorism campaigns to securitise the Muslim communities by constructing false narratives that equate Islam with terrorism or that Muslims are disloyal to the Indian state and thus pose significant national security challenges (Howell and Lind, 2010). In Kenya, the 2012 Terrorism Preventions Act and other related counter-terrorism laws were used to target and repress Muslim groups, such as local chapters of Middle Eastern charities, Muslim communities, Madrassas, and Muslim philanthropists (Lind and Howell 2010).

Human rights groups are another category of NGOs that have come under increasing government repressions in the wake of the establishment CTMs. This was evident in countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Egypt and Ethiopia. For instance,

Brenchemacher (2017:2) reported that Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's government in Egypt used the anti-terrorism and anti-protest laws to target and oppress human rights groups. In her words: the government used “anti-terrorism measures to institutionalise previously extrajudicial practices. Egyptian authorities targeted human rights groups with travel bans, asset freezes, and legal harassment, while local development and civic initiatives struggle to access resources for their work.”

Similarly, in Russia, human rights and political advocacy organisations were more affected by counter-terrorism legislation than other types of organisations. Precisely, "the new legal framework hit human rights and political advocacy organisations the hardest. Repeated harassment by state officials and found that some of their activities were suddenly blocked or delayed” (Brenchemacher (2017:9)

While the above advances our understanding of government-NGOs relations in the context of counter-terrorism operations globally, there is a dearth of systematic research works that advance the nuances of the effects of CTMs. My study examined systematically and holistically factors, which were disparately underscored in previous works. Unlike extant research, my study explored the effect of these factors quantitatively and articulated explanations useful for thinking about why each of these factors affects the different NGOs as they do.

Counter-Terrorism and NGOs in Nigeria

Since 2002 Nigeria has been plagued with a significant security challenge due to the violent acts of terrorist groups. The birth of Boko Haram and its affiliate Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) influenced the government’s aggressive counter-terrorism responses. Specifically, in order to limit the violent capacities of Boko

Haram and ISWAP, the government established the Terrorism Prevention Act of 2011 (as amended) and the 2011 Money Laundering Prohibition Act (as amended). Also, the government established policies such as the Countering Violent Extremism, the National Counterterrorism Strategy, which were all critical parts of its soft measures. Besides, hard measures include the declaration of a state of emergency in North-eastern Nigeria, establishment of a Joint Military Taskforce on Boko Haram, the Civilian Joint Task Force-a vigilante group. The government also facilitated the expansion of the Multi-national Joint Task Force to tackle Boko Haram sub-regionally.

However, there have been allegations and counter-allegations of violations of human rights and civil liberties by security agents in counter-terrorism operations (Njoku 2017b). Also, there were claims that CTMs are affecting the operational capacities of NGOs carrying out aid delivery and advocacy projects in the North-east (Njoku 2017a). This is particularly more interesting, as NGOs have been known to resist government dictatorial tendencies in the military and civilian regimes in Nigeria (Aiyede 2004).

Hence, it will be noteworthy to examine factors that determine the government's increasing pressure or threats of NGOs. Importantly, it would be equally compelling to systematically analyse the nuances of counter-terrorism, mainly how NGOs types are similarly or differently affected by CTMs in Nigeria. The above will advance generalizable understanding by establishing the relationship between counter-terrorism and non-governmental in a different context.

Measurements and Methods

The study relied on survey research conducted between January 2015 and May 2018. The population for the study is 445 programme officers of 26 NGOs working in four broad areas: women, faith-based, children /youths and human rights. It also includes seven executives of the 26 NGOs types and six counter-terrorism security agents. The criteria for choosing these NGOs were based on their engagement in peacebuilding, development, human rights advocacy and humanitarianism activities³ in North-eastern, Nigeria. The research sites (Abuja, Lagos, Oyo, Ogun states) were purposively selected based on the locations of the operational headquarters of NGOs and on account of their involvement in capacity building, technical assistance and advocacy efforts in the North-east. However, all the NGOs have an active engagement in Adamawa, Borno, Gombe and Yobe state in North-eastern Nigeria. Moreover, Plateau state was also selected due to the involvement of the selected NGOs in aid delivery services in the Internally Displaced Person Camps.

Furthermore, out of the population of 445 programme officers, stratified random sampling was used in selecting 211 programme officers across the four categories (women, faith-based, youth/children and human rights groups) as a representative population. The random sampling was then used to know the number of respondents to administer copies of the questionnaire in proportion to their population in each of the categories of NGOs population. However, out of 211, 205 questionnaires were successfully retrieved and used for the analysis. Besides, the purposive sampling was used in selecting seven NGO executive and six counter-terrorism officials, due to their active involvement in counter-terrorism operations in North-eastern Nigeria.

In presenting the findings, "nature" and "type" of NGOs are used as central analytical categories. Whereas "nature" refers to the general characteristics of NGOs – for instance, to distinguish between international and domestic ones – while "type" means the differences in the principal orientation or demographic focus of the selected NGOs. So, in terms of women NGOs, their focus is on issues concerning women while youth/children likely focus on challenges of people within that age group. Faith-based NGOs will likely involve themselves with the interest of members of their faith and human rights groups is more general in its demographic spread. In all, 83.9% were domestic NGOs, while 16.1% were international NGOs. Also, 33 NGOs (16.1 %) were youth/children NGOs, 39 (19.0%) were women NGOs, 69 (33.7%) were human rights NGOs, while 64 (31.2%) were faith-based NGOs. However, the study did not analyse the effects of CTMs on different faith-based NGOs (Muslims and Christians) separately. Hence, future research should focus on understanding if Muslim groups were more impacted by CTMs.

The data collection instrument was formed to embody current questions on counter-terrorism and NGOs from the review of pertinent literature and the Charity and Security Network 2013 instruments. Using in a nominal scale of Yes =1; No =2 the respondents were asked to rank the effects of the following independent variables: (a) You have been threatened by security agents involved in counter-terrorism operations in North-eastern Nigeria (b) The CTMs by government affected your ability to work in North-eastern Nigeria. The above data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and simple percentages. Also, the study used Chi-Square and logistic regression analyses to examine the effects of non-governmental organisation nature (International and domestic), types (women, faith-

based, youth/children and human rights groups), areas of operations (human rights advocacy, peacebuilding, development and humanitarianism), sizes (measured by no. of branches), maturity (measured by year of establishment), sources of finance on the level of threats and hindrances from the counter-terrorism agencies. Alpha values of less than 0.05 were considered to be statistically significant. All analyses were performed using the Statistical Package of Social Science. Secondary sources and key literature were content analysed and used to validate the findings.

Findings

Determinants of the Levels of Threats and Constraints of NGOs Operating in North-eastern Nigeria

In developing and advanced democracies, advocacy NGOs are often key targets of government repression (Watson and Burles 2018, Skokova et al. 2018, Green 2018, Njoku 2018). During my interviews with NGOs executives, I observed similar trends. Explicitly, factors that attract government threats and constraints include the following: (1) NGOs advocacy efforts for vulnerable women and girls who alleged that counter-terrorism security agents sexually violated them. (2) The Reporting of cases of sexual violence and other human rights violations by NGOs engaged in humanitarian services to international governmental organisations. (3) NGOs' monitoring the utilisation of defence budgets or security funds in the North-east to ensure its judicious use.

Njoku (2017a) postulated that the state-NGOs relation in the context of CTMs in Nigeria is skewed in favour of service delivery and rejection of advocacy for terrorist suspects. The above influenced the framing of CTMs in Nigeria (Njoku

2018). From the interviews of NGOs executives, one area that often attracts government threats and constraints are advocacy efforts for susceptible individuals in counter-terrorism operations. One of them stated that part of their advocacy efforts is to investigate cases of sexual violations and other rights violations. When completed, advocacy NGOs report their findings to appropriate authorities.⁴ However, security agents involved in counter-terrorism operations in the Northeast often frustrate these efforts by preventing NGOs from accessing women and girl victims of sexual violence in detention camps in the North-east or threaten both victims and the NGO worker involved⁵. For instance, an executive of NGO working on women issues reported experiencing constraints during her efforts to interview women and children in detention facilities. In her words: "In going to the North-East, you see the military asking you what is your mission, what is your purpose. But you don't really tell them your mission; you tell them you are going to University of Maiduguri for research because if you tell them you are going to see victims to interview, they will not even allow it."⁶ Thus, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence of how NGOs that engage in political advocacy for vulnerable and marginalised persons in the North-east were often constrained and threatened by the government (Njoku 2017a).

International and local NGOs engaged in humanitarian services provide Medicare, psycho-social counselling to victims of sexual violence and other challenges in counter-terrorism operations in the North-east. However, the executive of these NGOs stated that they report these cases to international governmental organisations (IGOs) that fund their programmes.⁷ Therefore, these organisations do not only treat victims but report these cases of sexual violence to international

governmental organisations, which then use this information as evidence to challenge the government or restrict foreign aid. I am arguing that this is a significant source of antagonism by the government over NGOs. The government, including its security agencies, routinely accuse NGOs of fabricating spurious claims of human right violations in counter-terrorism operations. Many of these NGOs reported being constrained and threatened by the government on many occasions.⁸ The above also provides practical proof of existing arguments on the rationale given by the state for restraining the operations of NGOs in Nigeria (Njoku (2017a)).

Another factor that attracts government threats and constraints is government agencies resentments of NGOs that act as a watchdog on the utilisation of budgeted counter-terrorism funds. There have been complaints that despite huge budgetary allocations to the defence sector and specific allocations for counter-terrorism, Boko Haram and ISWAP are yet to be defeated or curbed. There were claims of poor or dubious utilisation of fund in procuring adequate weapons, and somewhat substandard products were bought (Financial Times 2018). In the same breath, many political leaders including top security agents were accused of syphoning counter-terrorism funds, leading to poor remunerations, demoralisation of ground troops or security operatives and insufficient weapons to curb Boko Haram (BBC 2015). Security agents on the ground in the North-east decried government neglect in providing an adequate supply of weaponry to fight back or match Boko Haram sophisticated weapons. A counter-terrorism operative in the National Security and Civil Defence Corp recounted the rationing of bullets and how they were not allowed to return fire when attacked by Boko Haram terrorist until their commander gives them the order to

return fire. The above action is not necessarily tactical but due to insufficient weaponry.⁹

Reports of embezzlement of security funds are a result of investigations by NGOs. Explicitly, NGOs have been monitoring the amount of funds allocated and its judicious use in procuring adequate military hardware needed to curb terrorism and also ensuring that security personnel involved in counter-terrorism operations in the North-east are well remunerated. In other words, these NGOs try to ensure that issues of transparency and accountability are adhered to and thus prevent situations where political leaders in collaboration with senior security agents do not embezzle the funds meant for curbing terrorism in the North-east. However, many NGOs have faced resistance and threats from government security agents as a result. As an executive of a peacebuilding NGO explained: "We work a lot; track budgets and try to reconcile what was proposed and what is spent. Increasingly, some amount of money is being used under security vote, which we cannot monitor, so limiting your ability to hold government officials accountable. (Typically), government agencies responded to questions that they don't want to answer with a blanket (frames like) 'security' or 'national interest'. The fight against terrorism is providing opportunities for government agencies to put a lot of things under cover of 'national interest', which we cannot check."¹⁰

Having established some factors that spur government constraints and threats on NGOs, I proceed to understand the variations of these effects across the four categories of NGOs. Explicitly, while it may appear on face value that some NGOs face more threats and pressures than others due to their advocacy qualities or the type of NGOs, it is salient that these suppositions are measured and tested. Thus, I try to

understand which of the four NGOs are likely to report more threats or constraints than the other.

Levels of Effects of Counterterrorism Measures on NGOs in Nigeria

In order to determine which type, nature, size, NGOs are likely to report more threats and hindrances than the other, we deploy chi-square and logistic regression analysis. In Table 1, 186 participants of the 205 participants said the activities of the security agencies affected their ability to work in the North-east. The proportion varies by type of organisations, sources of funding, the number of branches and area of operations. For instance, 91.9% of domestic NGO workers compared to 84.8% of international NGO workers reported that their ability to work had been affected by the activities of the security agencies. However, this difference was not statistically significant. Similarly, bigger NGOs (as measured by their number of branches) reported 91.2% while smaller NGOs were 89.7%. The differences in the responses were not statistically significant as the probability values were greater than 0.05. However, NGOs within the operational area of peacebuilding (67%) were significantly less likely to report constraints compared to those in human right advocacy (92.9%) and humanitarian services (96.6%). The reduced constraints reported by organisations operating in the area of peacebuilding can be attributed to their engagement of service delivery roles, such as post-conflict peacebuilding programs, specifically getting early warning signs of violence or intelligence gathering needed to curb terrorist recruitment (Njoku, 2017). The above advances current discourse on how the government engaged those NGOs it views as suitable because of their acceptance to shun advocacy and only carry out social service programmes and intelligence gathering in the context of counter-terrorism. However, the government repressed

those organisations viewed as activists because of their critical stance on government counter-terrorism policies and advocacy activities (Howell and Lind 2010). Moreover, Fowler and Sen (2010) assert that the government provided suitable NGOs unlimited access to funds and those critical ones were marginalised and further inhibited by the government. Thus, the findings, as mentioned above, confirm previous arguments.

(Insert Table 1)

Meanwhile, in Table 2, 95 participants of the 205 respondents reported that security agencies in the North-east had threatened them. However, there was no statistical difference in exposure to the threat from the security agencies based on the size of NGOs, maturity and sources of funds. However, the differences in the responses of NGOs based on type and nature of NGOs, areas of operations and sex of respondent were statistically significant at the probability values of less than 1% (0.001) significance level. Thus, I probed further to examine these variations in responses using logistic regression, as shown in Table 3. The analysis shows that non-governmental organisation workers in youth/children, women and faith-based organisations had higher odds of being threatened by security agents relative to those in human rights organisations. Male NGO workers were 2.6 more likely to be threatened by security agents compared to female NGO workers. Relative to NGO workers in human rights advocacy, those in humanitarian operations were 71% less likely to be threatened by security agents. Interestingly, domestic NGO workers were 87% less likely to be threatened by security agents compared to international NGO workers.

(Insert Table 2)

(Insert Table 2 a)

Discussions and Conclusion

This article centred on two key objectives: to determine the levels of threats and hindrances that NGOs faced in the context of counter-terrorism and explain the variations of the effects of threats and hindrances on the NGOs surveyed. First, I argued that political advocacy, playing watchdog role on defence budgets and reportage by humanitarian NGOs on the sexual offences committed by Nigerian security apparatuses were crucial factors that contributed in influencing government, including its security agents' pressures and threats of NGOs in the context of counter-terrorism. This finding advances existing knowledge on the governments' increasing target of NGOs that engage in political advocacy, which they believe undermine their counter-terrorism objectives (Skokova 2018; Watson and Burles 2018, Brechemacher 2017). Furthermore, the arguments advance Njoku's (2017) claims that within the context of counter-terrorism, the government restricts NGOs access to information and victims of terrorist attacks and counter-terrorism operations and forcibly amend the programmes of NGOs to be in line with state counter-terrorism objectives.

Second, I demonstrate that: (1) all organisations irrespective of nature, types, size and maturity have been constrained by government CTMs. However, those whose operational area is peacebuilding did not face the same level of constrained as others; (2) Women, youth/children and faith-based organisations experienced more threats than human rights NGOs; (3) NGOs that operate in the area of human rights

advocacy have faced more threats than others, and; (4) International NGOs have received more threats than domestic NGOs.

It is noteworthy that in contrast to previous suggestions that NGOs were unevenly affected by CTMs (Skokova 2018, Watson and Burles 2018, Howell 2014) human rights and faith-based organisations faced more constraints and threats from states in the enforcement of CTMs than other NGOs types (Sidel 2010; Howell 2014; Howell and Lind 2010). This study advances the discussion by showing that all NGOs experience constrained irrespective of types in Nigeria. Furthermore, the study shows how mainstream or big NGOs have also come under considerable threats as CTMs have gained ground, especially in Nigeria. Thus, it builds on Howell and Lind's (2010) view that big or mainstream NGOs did not face government constraints when the CTMs were introduced and thus were silent on its repressive nature until CTMs affected them. I argue that constraints on mainstream NGOs have grown with increasing violence by terrorists and large-scale deployment of CTMs.

Second, also differing from what current researches indicate, the evidence in this study shows that human rights organisations were less threatened by security agencies when compared to the experiences of youth/children, women and faith-based organisation. I am arguing that for domestic human rights NGOs, the fewer threats faced in Nigeria is traced to their inability to do much rights advocacy work that the state considers undermines their counter-terrorism campaigns. This further ties into current debates on the dwindling of political activism that once characterised human rights NGOs in Nigeria. According to Aiyede (2004), human rights NGOs, in collaboration with Labour unions, led the struggle for democratisation during military rule in Nigeria. However, the activism of human rights NGOs has declined

significantly in Nigeria's democratic dispensation (Obadare 2004), which has also reflected in the weak responses of NGOs to repressive governments CTMs (Njoku 2017). Besides, international human rights organisations (IHOs) such as AI and Human Rights Watch have been major critics of the Nigerian government counter-terrorism operations. These organisations have accused the government of various human rights violations in its counter-terrorism operations. Moreover, it should be noted that IHOs plays vital roles in influencing the decisions of Western States in areas of issuing foreign aid to recipient states (Dietrich, Murdie 2015). Hence, this may have contributed to influencing the few threats they faced in the context of counter-terrorism in Nigeria. This is because the government fears that the actions of these IHOs may negatively affect their access to foreign military aid. Although, cases of threats by the Nigerian government, particularly AI, have been reported.

Third, the findings show that NGOs that advocate for human rights either through reportage to IGOs and foreign governments or any form of political advocacy have faced more threats than others. This is in tandem with extant perspectives on government practices of repression of NGOs engaged in advocacy programs and endorsement of those engaged in service delivery such as post-conflict peacebuilding services (Bayas and Green 2018). Alternatively, as Haynes (2017:38) contended, "organisations involved in funding and delivering projects aimed at conflict transformation – whose activities, such as human rights advocacy and support for marginalised groups, often lack legitimacy in the eyes of state parties".

Fourth, the findings also reveal that international NGOs were more threatened by the government than domestic NGOs. Recent events validate this finding. Explicitly, UNICEF was briefly proscribed by the Nigerian military in 2018, and AI was accused

of spurious human rights violation claims. The military believed that UNICEF and AI have neglected their humanitarian roles to engage in clandestine activities or make false claims that undermine the counter-terrorism objectives of the government. Although, UNICEF's prohibition was later reversed; however, it does show the deep-seated antagonism between the government and international organisations in the counter-terrorism context in Nigeria.

The finding is particularly relevant to the debate on the use of CTMs by the governments to target international NGOs and those domestic NGOs that have a close association or received funding from IGOs and NGOs in countries such as Australia Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia and Hungary (Bayas and Green 2018; Brechenmacher 2017). Explicitly, in Russia, the government established the "Foreign Agent Law" in 2012, which was used to threaten and repress international NGOs. It further extends its repressiveness to domestic organisations receiving funding from international organisations. These organisations were tagged as foreign agents under the 2012 Foreign Agents Law and were required to label themselves as "foreign agents" in every formal and informal communications or engagement. Moreover, the organisations are required by law to label their publications and websites "foreign agents". The actions of the Russian government aided in de-legitimising these organisations before the Russian people (Skokova 2018)

Besides, the government's strategic engagement of domestic NGOs as service providers in the context of counter-terrorism also explains the fewer threat domestic NGOs faced when compared to international ones. The above view finds relevance to the Njoku (2017a:1) argument that "the capacity of NGOs to operate in the context of counter-terrorism is influenced by the politics that places these organisations in the

service of the state. It, therefore, created a convivial relationship in which NGOs advance the interest of the state, while they are in turn endorsed by the government.” Furthermore, the finding is consistent with Howell and Lind (2010) argument that in the enforcement of CTMs states deployed a two-prong strategy of co-option and containment where they endorsed and engaged those organisations considered as "good" NGOs as service providers and represses NGOs that were termed "bad" because of their advocacy efforts.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable evidence to international development agencies and local and international NGOs on government practices that are increasingly affecting the capacity of NGOs to deliver aid services effectively and timely. It also reveals how growing government hostility towards political advocacy and other activities of NGOs that advocate for probity on the counter-terrorism activities of the government. It equally provides empirical evidence on the blurring of the boundaries between freedom, development and security issues. Thus, the study recommends a reconsideration of current CTMs where NGOs are considered partners to the government. Specifically, the government should be more accommodative by establishing forums where NGOs can serve as watchdogs to government's CTMs. This would ensure the adherence to issues of transparency, accountability, social justice in the enforcement of CTMs.

Tables

Table 1: There was significant difference in the proportion of participants that reported that their activities are hindered irrespective of their organisation type.

Variables	The activities of the security agencies affected your ability to work in the North East		P-value
	Yes n (%)	No n(%)	
All participants	186 (90.7)	19 (9.3)	
Organization type			
Youth/children	27 (81.8)	6 (18.2)	0.188
Women	35 (89.7)	4 (10.3)	
Faith-based	61 (95.3)	3 (4.7)	
Human rights	63 (91.3)	6 (8.7)	
Nature of organisation			
Domestic	158 (91.9)	14 (8.1)	0.170
International	28 (84.8)	5 (15.2)	
Areas of operation			
Humanitarian	57 (96.6)	2 (3.4)	<0.001
Peacebuilding	19 (67.9)	9 (32.1)	
Development	45 (93.8)	3 (6.3)	
Human rights advocacy	65 (92.9)	5 (7.1)	
Number of branches			
One branch	61 (89.7)	7 (10.3)	0.451
More than one	125 (91.2)	12 (8.8)	
Year established			
1965-2000	116 (92.8)	9 (7.2)	0.152
2001-2014	70 (87.5)	10 (12.5)	
Source of fund			
Foundations	7 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0.169
Grants	68 (93.2)	5 (6.8)	
Donations	25 (80.6)	6 (19.4)	
Others	86 (91.5)	8 (8.5)	

Table 2: Pearson Chi-square statistics showing relationship between organization type, areas of operation sex, nature of organization and being threatened by security agencies

Variables	You have been threatened by security agencies		P-value
	Yes n (%)	No n(%)	
All participants	95 (46.3)	110 (53.7)	
Organization type			
Youth/children	14 (42.4)	19 (57.6%)	<0.001
Women	29 (74.4)	10 (25.6)	
Faith-based	35 (54.7)	29 (45.3)	
Human rights	17 (24.6)	52 (75.4)	
Nature of organisation			
Domestic	65 (37.8)	107 (62.2)	<0.001
International	30 (90.9)	3 (9.1)	
Areas of operation			
Humanitarian	12 (20.3)	47 (79.7)	<0.001
Peacebuilding	13 (46.4)	15 (53.6)	
Development	22 (45.8)	26 (54.2)	
Human rights advocacy	48 (68.6)	22 (31.4)	
Sex			
Male	66 (56.4)	51 (43.6)	0.001
Female	29 (33.0)	59 (67.0)	
Number of branches			
One branch	30 (44.1)	38 (55.9)	0.382
More than one	65 (47.4)	72 (52.6)	
Year established			
1965-2000	53 (42.4)	72 (57.6)	0.102
2001-2014	42 (52.5)	38 (47.5)	
Source of fund			
Foundations	6 (85.7)	1 (14.3)	0.002
Grants	22 (30.1)	51 (69.9)	
Donations	15 (48.4)	16 (51.6)	
Others	52 (55.3)	42 (44.7)	

Table 2 (a) Adjusted and unadjusted regression analysis showing odds for being threatened by security agencies

Variables	UOR	AOR
Organization type		
Youth/children	2.25 (0.93-5.44)	2.32 (0.82-6.55)
Women	8.87 (3.59-21.90)***	2.99 (0.99-9.08)
Faith-based	3.69 (1.77-7.71)***	1.77 (0.73-4.26)
Human rights	1	
Nature of organisation		
Domestic	0.06 (0.02-0.21)***	0.13 (0.03-0.48)*
International	1	
Areas of operation		
Humanitarian	0.17 (0.05-0.26)***	0.29 (0.10-0.83)*
Peacebuilding	0.40 (0.16-0.98)***	0.64 (0.23-1.80)
Development	0.39 (0.18-0.83)***	1.04 (0.39-2.80)
Human rights advocacy	1	
Sex		
Male	2.63 (1.48-4.68)***	2.55 (1.21-5.38)*
Female	1	

*** *P*-values <0.001; * *P*-values <0.05; AOR: adjusted odds ratio; UOR: unadjusted odds ratios

Notes

¹ Mainstream NGOs are those big organisations that are funded by the government and operate in the area of service delivery. In the case of Nigeria, these NGOs are considered big not only because of the government's support but their presence in different parts of the country. This is noticeable by the number of branches.

² Securitisation is "an articulated assemblage of practices are contextually mobilised by securitising actors, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications about the critical vulnerability of a referent object, that concurs with the securitising actor's reason for choices and act by investing the referent subject with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexion that a customised policy must be undertaken immediately to block its development" for more on securitisation see Balzacq, T. 2011. A Theory of Securitisation: Origins, Core Assumptions and Variants in Theiry Balzacq eds *Securitisation Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*. New York: Routledge.

³ Although they are overlaps in these areas of activities, I categorised the NGOs based on the programmes they implement in the North-East. First, this study focuses on organisations that engage in rights advocacy for victims of terrorism and particularly for victims of counter-terrorism operations. These NGOs ensure they security agents adhere to the rules of engagement that entail respect for human rights. They also advocate for the rights of illegally detained men, women, girls and boys suspected of being Boko Haram members. They also advocate for the rights of women and girls that were sexually violated by security agents, civilian joint task force and community members in the North-east. Second, they also focus on NGOs that engage in development activities such as train youths to learn specific entrepreneurial skills and provide them with soft loans to start-up businesses. Provision of educational services to youths and deconstruct Islamic radicalism or ideology in various Madrassa in the North-east. These help to curb terrorist recruitment in the North-east. Third, for peacebuilding, NGOs focus on engaging local communities in order to understand various grievances towards the government and resolve them. Seek their cooperation in curbing terrorism through the provision of intelligence. Also, detecting early warning signs of conflict or attacks. These information are usually passed to

appropriate government agencies/International governmental organisations, so that mechanism are put in place to prevent the proliferation of terrorism. Fourth humanitarian services include provision food, temporary shelter, Medicare, psycho-social counselling for victims of terrorism and counter-terrorism operations in the North-east.

⁴ Interview, NGO executive focused on security and governance issues in Northern Nigeria (Abuja; May 2 2018); Interview, executive of an NGO, focused on Women's rights and development (Oyo; April 23, 2018)

⁵ Interview, executive director, of a women rights group Oyo; April, 23,2018

⁶ Interview, executive director, of a women group Lagos, February 20 2015

⁷ Interview, executive director, of a women group Lagos, February 20 2015

⁸ Interview, a director of an international human rights Organisation (Abuja; May 25 2018), Interview, a programme officer of international Health care services organisations (Borno; May 26 2018)

⁹ Interview, an officer of the National Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) (Oyo; May 13 2018).

¹⁰ Interview, executive of peacebuilding NGO Lagos; February 20 2015).

Reference:

Aiyede, E.R., 2004. "United we stand: Labour Unions and Human Rights NGOs in the Democratisation Process in Nigeria." *Development in Practice* 14 (1-2): 224-233

Bayas, L. and Shanon N.G. 2018. *CTMs and Civil Society: Changing The Will, Finding The Way*, A Report of the CSIS Human Rights Initiative, Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

- British Broadcasting Corporation 2015 "Nigeria's Dasuki 'arrested over \$2bn arms fraud" retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34973872> (February 15, 2019)
- Bloodgood, E.A and Tremblay-Boire J. 2011. "International NGOs and National Regulation in an Age of Terrorism." *Voluntas: International of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations* 22:142–173
- Brechenmacher, S. 2017. *Civil Society Under Assault: Repression and Responses in Russia, Egypt, and Ethiopia*. Massachusetts: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Dietrich, S. and Murdie, A. 2015 "Human Rights Shaming through INGOs and Foreign Aid Delivery" *Review of International Organisation* DOI 10.1007/s11558-015-9242-8
- Dupuy, K & Prakash, A. 2018. "Do Donors Reduce Bilateral Aid to Countries With Restrictive NGO Laws? A Panel Study, 1993-2012." *Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 47,(1), 89– 106
- Financial Times, 2018. "Under fire: why Nigeria is struggling to defeat Boko Haram" retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/62928c8e-f7b8-11e8-8b7c-6fa24bd5409c> (February 15, 2019)
- Fowler, A. and Kasturi, S. 2010. "Embedding the War on Terror: State and Civil Society Relations." *Development and Change* 41 (1): 16
- Green, S. N. 2018. Australia's Exceptional Counterterrorism Powers Is There Room for Improvement? In Lana, B. and Green SN (eds) *CTMs And Civil Society: Changing The Will, Finding The Way*, A Report of the CSIS Human Rights Initiative, Centre for Strategic and International Studies.
- Hayes B. 2017. *The impact of international counter-terrorism on civil society organisations: Understanding the role of the Financial Action Task Force*. Berlin:

Bread for the World – Protestant Development Service Protestant Agency for
Diakonie and Development

Howell, J. and Lind, J. 2010. *Civil Society Under Strain: Counterterrorism Policy, Civil Society and Aid Post 9/11*. Bloomfield CT: Kumarian Press, 2

Lind, J. and Howell, J. 2010. "Counter-terrorism and the Politics of Aid: Civil Society Responses in Kenya." *Development and Change* 41 (2): 335–353

Njoku, ET 2018. "Strategic Exclusion: The State and the Framing of a Service Delivery Role for Civil Society Organisations in the Context of Counterterrorism in Nigeria." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1543131>

Njoku, ET 2017a. "Politics of Conviviality? State-Civil Society Relations Within the Context of Counterterrorism in Nigeria." *VOLUNTAS: International of Voluntary and Non-profit Organisations*. DOI 10.1007/s11266-017-9910-9

Njoku, E. T. 2017b. "Laws for Sale": The domestication of counter-terrorism legislation and its impact in Nigeria. In S. N. Romaniuk, F. Grice, D. Irrera, & S. Webb (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of global counter-terrorism policy* (pp. 1003–1016). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Premium Times 2018. "Nigerian Army accuses UNICEF of impropriety, announces 'suspension' of its activities in North-east" retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/301122-breaking-nigerian-army-accuses-unicef-of-impropriety-announces-suspension-of-its-activities-in-north-east.html> (January 15, 2019)

Sidel, M. 2010. "Counter-terrorism and the Regulation of Civil Society in the USA." *Development and Change* 41(2): 293–312

Skokova, Y., Pape, U. & Krasnopolskaya, I. 2018. "The Non-profit Sector in Today's Russia: Between Confrontation and Co-optation." *Europe-Asia Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/09668136.2018.1447089

Vanguard 2018 Breaking: Get out of Nigeria, Army warns Amnesty International
retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/12/breaking-get-out-of-nigeria-army-warns-amnesty-international/> (January 16, 2019)

Watson, S and Burles, R. 2018. “Regulating NGO Funding: Securitizing the
Political.” *International Relations* DOI: 10.1177/0047117818782604