



Institutional Architecture and Operational Efficacy of Multinational Joint Task Force in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria

Abstract

The ongoing threat of border-crossing insurgencies around Lake Chad has forced neighboring countries to rethink their defense strategies and work closely together. This study looks at the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to see how well its organization and frontline operations actually perform in fighting insurgents in North-Eastern Nigeria. The study utilized Cooperative Security Theory (CST) to assess multilateral defense cooperation, and Regional Security Complex (RSC) Theory to analyze geopolitical security interdependencies within the sub-region. Employing a descriptive survey research design, data was gathered from a targeted sample of 370 respondents across defense, diplomatic, and academic institutions using questionnaires, oral interviews, and secondary data analyzed via SPSS 25 and qualitative content analysis. The findings revealed a severe structural disconnect between the MNJTF's idealized collaborative blueprint and its battlefield realities. While majority of the respondents acknowledge that the force's mandate is clearly defined, the centralized headquarters in N'Djamena lacks genuine supranational authority. Under the lens of RSC and CST, this structural flaw manifests as command paralysis and institutional mistrust, prompting sector commanders to prioritize national directives over joint protocols. This dynamic fosters intelligence hoarding and slows critical response times. Furthermore, the lack of post-conflict policing capacities allows resilient insurgent cells to re-occupy cleared territories once frontline troops rotate out. The study concludes that the MNJTF's operational impact is tactically constrained by geopolitical shocks, mismatched procurement cycles, and donor dependence. It recommended a legal restructuring of the MNJTF to grant the Force Commander supranational operational authority and the permanent integration of multinational policing capacities to secure liberated zones.

Keywords: Institutional Architecture, MNJTF, Counter-Insurgency, Insurgency, Command Paralysis.

Introduction

The persistence of transnational asymmetric warfare in Africa has shifted the contemporary security paradigm away from isolated, state-centric defense doctrines toward integrated regional security coalitions. In the Lake Chad Basin, the violent expansionism of

Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād (Boko Haram) and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) has caused severe human casualties and displaced millions across borders (Albert, 2023). Because these insurgent factions exploit porous borderlands, the remote islands of Lake Chad, and tactical safe havens to

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evade unilateral military pursuits, sub-regional responses have become necessary. Consequently, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) member states and Benin Republic restructured the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in 2014, establishing an institutional mechanism to neutralize cross-border terrorism and restore state authority in North-Eastern Nigeria (Onuoha, Suleiman, and Mohammed, 2025).

At the center of this multilateral security approach is a critical relationship between the institutional architecture of the force and its resulting operational efficacy. The institutional architecture defined by a decentralized command structure split into four national sectors (Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria, and Niger) is designed to pool regional resources, synchronize military intelligence, and authorize cross-border hot-pursuit operations (Bala & Audu, 2024). Ideally, this structural design should achieve high operational efficacy by denying insurgents territorial sanctuary, cutting off their supply lines, and creating stable zones for civilian resettlement.

However, a severe disconnect persists between this organizational design and the operational realities on the ground. The nature and extent of this disconnect, and the specific structural flaws that underpin it, are set out in detail in the Statement of the Research Problem below.

Statement of the Research Problem

Despite frequent multinational campaigns and strategic tactical victories, a severe disconnect persists between the idealized blueprint of the MNJTF and the operational realities on the ground in North-Eastern Nigeria. The region remains highly vulnerable to protracted asymmetric warfare, characterized by frequent improvised explosive device (IED) attacks, targeted ambushes on military supply lines, and resilient rural predatory governance by insurgent cells (Global Terrorism Index, 2026). This ongoing insecurity continues to destabilize local communities and prevents millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from returning safely to their ancestral homes.

The core of this problem lies within structural vulnerabilities embedded deep inside the MNJTF's institutional architecture, which actively degrade its operational efficacy. The centralized force headquarters in N'Djamena lacks genuine supranational authority. As a result, sector commanders regularly prioritize national military directives from their respective home capitals over joint operational protocols, resulting in tactical fragmentation and coordination delays (Idris & Usman, 2024). This command paralysis encourages institutional mistrust and intelligence hoarding, which slows down response times during high-stakes encounters. Furthermore, the alliance remains vulnerable to sudden

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geopolitical shocks such as the recent operational shifts and diplomatic friction involving Niger Republic's contingent and suffers from mismatched equipment procurement cycles and heavy dependence on external donor funding (Omitola and Aghedo, 2023). Consequently, when joint campaigns successfully clear insurgent enclaves, the MNJTF lacks the integrated policing capacity and civilian holding architecture needed to secure those spaces, allowing decentralized cells to re-occupy them once frontline troops rotate out.

While existing scholarship extensively documents the historical evolution of Boko Haram and the broader humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, there is a distinct omission in the literature. Specifically, little is known about how the internal structural command dynamics, logistical dependencies, and shifting geopolitical cohesion of the MNJTF directly dictate its operational outcomes on the ground between 2013 and 2025.

This study directly addresses this empirical gap by critically analyzing how command paralysis, intelligence-sharing bottlenecks, and sub-regional diplomatic friction limit battlefield success. By examining these structural barriers, this seminar paper contributes to the fields of security studies and civil-military relations by providing an empirically grounded framework for reforming multilateral military interventions in

Africa. Ultimately, these insights offer actionable, structural strategies for policy makers seeking to transform volatile borderlands into secure, stable environments.

Research Questions

- i. What is the nature of Multinational Joint Task Force and counter insurgency operations in North Eastern Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent do command fragmentation and intelligence-sharing bottlenecks within the Multinational Joint Task Force affect its operational efficacy in counter insurgency operations in North Eastern Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the Institutional Architecture and Operational Efficacy of Multinational Joint Task Force in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria; whereas the specific objectives are:

- i. To examine the nature of multinational joint task force and counter insurgency operations in North Eastern Nigeria.
- ii. To assess the extent to which command fragmentation and intelligence-sharing bottlenecks affect the operational efficacy of the multinational joint task force in counter insurgency operations in North Eastern Nigeria.

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Conceptual Review

Multilateral Relations

Multilateral relations refer to the diplomatic interactions and cooperative agreements established among three or more countries or international entities, often within the framework of international organizations, to address common issues, challenges, and interests on a global or regional scale. These relations are characterized by the principles of inclusivity, consensus-building, and the pursuit of shared goals through collective decision-making (Robert and Nye, 2001).

Weiss & Wilkinson (2014) considered multilateral relations as the system of interactions and collaborations that nations engage in within the context of international organizations, forums, and agreements. These interactions often involve political, economic, environmental, and security issues, with the goal of achieving collective solutions and promoting peace, stability, and development.

Paul and Frederking (2010) in their work "The Politics of Global Governance: International Organizations in an Interdependent World." provides a comprehensive overview of multilateral relations and international organizations, focusing on their roles in addressing global issues and challenges. These scholars see multilateral relations encompass the complex web of interactions and negotiations among

states, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and intergovernmental institutions aimed at addressing transnational challenges and advancing common objectives. These relations involve a mix of formal treaties, informal dialogues, and consensus-building mechanisms, fostering a spirit of collaboration and compromise.

Terrorism

Terrorism as any violent reaction against an established social order. In this definition, terrorists are persons seeking the change in society and use violence as instruments to destroy the existing framework of society to establish a new, perhaps more favourable to them. Gurr (1988) further explained that terrorists are offshoots of the failure of the state to meet up with societal needs. He argued that human needs require satisfaction on a hierarchical basis. Indifference to such needs on the part of government normally leads actors into violence against the state. terrorism is relative to who is in power, who is defining it, and who has the power to label another a terrorist.

Terrorism is relative, whatever the existing government designates as terrorism is terrorism. It, therefore, could be a violent act against a specific target group, particularly civilians. In line with this, the United States Department of Defence in Laquer (2001) conceptualized terrorism as; "Unlawful use of force or violence against individuals or property

to coerce and intimidate governments to accept political, religious or ideological objectives.

Insurgency

The concept insurgency has been seen used differently in many literatures. However, the popular definition is one put forward by the United State as “the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region.” Moreover, from its legal point of view, an insurgency is seen as a violent protest carried out by rebels against a constituted authority or state that has been recognized by the (United Nations, n.d) cited in (Gana, 2023). Ibiang (2018) have given more characterization of insurgency as a battle that it is usually the product of asymmetric conflict, where one party has an overwhelming force and incontestable physical influence and other instruments of coercion over the other.

Insurgency is the actions of an organized, often ideologically motivated group that seeks to effect or prevent political change of a governing authority within a region, and the actions focused on persuading or coercing the population through the use of violence and subversion (North Atlantic Treaty Organization NATO, 2011).

Counter-insurgency

Counter-insurgency is the opposite of insurgency frequently refers as an acronym COIN. By definition, Counter-

insurgency is a combination of measures undertaken by legitimate government of a state or country to curb or suppress an insurgency taken up against it (Liolio, 2013). The U.S. COIN Guide (2009), defined COIN as a "comprehensive civilian-military efforts taken to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes." For Davidson (2016), it is “those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency”. And it requires a comprehensive assessment of the root causes, strategy and technique of the insurgents.

Similarly, NATO (2011) conceived it as set of political, economic, social, military, law enforcement, civil and psychological activities with the aim to defeat insurgency and address any core grievances. Both insurgents and counterinsurgents employ varied tactics and methods. These include political, military, economic, social, information and infrastructure activities (ways), in an attempt to reach a favourable outcome (ends) and within the resources available, including time (means). If this broad array is generally categorized as political and military in nature, political considerations are of much greater importance than military considerations in a struggle for the consent of the population.

Empirical Review of Related Literature

Godwin, Kelechi and Ularju (2024), carried out investigation on Volunteer Security Outfit and the Fight against Terrorism in Nigeria. The study employed a qualitative method and the Partnership Theory of Crime Prevention and Resistance Theory was adopted as the theoretical framework for the study. Findings of the study revealed that Civilian JTF activities have helped other government security agencies in coordinating and arresting key Boko Haram members in Borno State thereby becoming a fundamental component to assisting and winning the war against Boko Haram insurgency. The study therefore recommended that educating and sensitizing members of the community and CJTF to be alert to their patriotic duty of reporting crime and illegal entry of other nationals should be advocated and intensified by the Borno State government. The reviewed study focused on the volunteer security outfit and the fight against terrorism in Nigeria which is at variance with the current study that focused its lens on the role of multinational joint task force in counter insurgency operations in north eastern Nigeria.

Pius, Ndukwe and Akaba (2024), carried out a study on Libyan Conflict and Internationalization of Terrorism in the Sahel Region: The Case of Boko Haram Insurgency in North East, Nigeria. The study adopted a qualitative method and

employed a case study approach using primary and secondary data to explain transnationalization of terrorism in the Sahel Region. The study was anchored on the state fragility theory. Findings of the study revealed that Libyan conflict has destabilized the region with weapons trafficking which was developed there, and has also become a safe haven for jihadi groups threatening the entire peace of the Sahel Region. The study therefore recommended among others that, governments in the Sahel Region should diligently thwart the spread of weapons and eliminate the threat posed by terrorist organizations through concerted national, regional, and international cooperation to address the issue of weapons, fighter movements, human trafficking networks, and irregular migration. The study focused on the Libyan Conflict and Internationalization of Terrorism in the Sahel Region: The Case of Boko Haram Insurgency in North East, Nigeria. However, the current study tends to interrogate how joint security efforts have aided in mitigating consequences of the Libyan conflict in Nigeria's border, which is left unattended by the reviewed study.

Luka & Fidelia (2024), carried out study on Strategies Adopted by Multinational Joint Task Force in The Fight against Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria. Method of data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The study is anchored on Regional Security

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Complex Theory to clearly understand the interplay of national interests, rationality of states and the role of government in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. Findings showed that aerial surveillance as well as intelligence sharing are among the strategies adopted by MNJTF in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria; inadequate strategies adopted by the Multinational Joint Task Force hampered the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. The study recommended that Multinational Joint Task Force should urgently reinvigorate its strategies to cover addressing the root causes of Boko Haram terrorism. This would involve the governments of states that contributed troops to the MNJTF to ensure that issues of poverty, unemployment, religious fanaticism, and marginalization are adequately tackled in the country. The study focused on Strategies Adopted by Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria which is at variance with the current study that focused its lens on the role of multinational joint task force in counter insurgency operations in north eastern Nigeria.

Sam (2023), exploring mechanisms for holding non-state actors accountable in non-international armed conflicts: a case study of the Nigerian Boko Haram insurgency. This article scrutinizes the legal frameworks governing the accountability of non-state actors in non-

international armed conflicts, with a specific focus on the Nigerian Boko Haram insurgency. It examines international laws pertaining to armed conflicts and counter-terrorism measures to assess the mechanisms available for addressing the challenges posed by such conflicts. Through a case study of the Boko Haram insurgency, the article explores the intricacies of holding non-state actors accountable within the Nigerian context, evaluating the efficacy of existing legal frameworks and policy responses. By synthesizing theoretical perspectives with empirical evidence, the article aims to deepen understanding of non-state actor regulation in armed conflicts and inform strategies for enhancing legal and policy responses to similar disputes globally. With a detailed analysis of the Boko Haram insurgency, including its actors, tactics, and policy responses, this article seeks to identify avenues for improving non-state actors' adherence to the laws of war by pinpointing gaps in applicable laws, implementation, and enforcement mechanisms.

Theoretical Framework

Cooperative Security Theory

The Cooperative Security Theory (CST) was propounded by Immanuel Kant in the late 18th Century, but was modified in 2002 by three leading American Strategists; Ashton Carter, William Perry and John Steinbruner (Cohen & Mihalka,

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2017). The CST connotes a security arrangement in which all States cooperate to provide security for all by the actions of all, against any state within the groups which might challenge the existing order by using force. This proposition contrasts with self-help strategies of engaging in war for purely immediate national interest. While CST approach is possible, several prerequisites such as efficient bilateral relations, have to be met for it to work (Yost, 2016).

In line with the doctrines of the CST, sovereign nations eager to maintain the status quo willingly cooperate, accepting a degree of vulnerability. In some cases, minor nations also accede to the interests of the higher contributing nations organising the cooperative security (Cohen & Mihalka, 2016). The CST framework is however achievable through the conduct of efficient bilateral relations (Yost, 2016). The bilateral relations architecture then becomes an arena for diplomacy, balance of power and exercise of soft power (Vetschera, 2015).

The CST not only guarantees cheaper security, but also may be the only practicable means of security for smaller nations against more powerful threatening neighbours. In addition, the cooperative security system such as the MNJTF of the LCBC and OPHK in NE Nigeria must also be proactive. Its members must be prepared to engage in collective diplomatic, economic, and, if

necessary, military action in areas outside their common space which may threaten their welfare and stability. In the context of this study, CST provides a framework for developing strategies to combat the insurgency attacks/threats of BH and ISWAP insurgents within the NE Nigeria, which has a very expansive area of responsibility beyond the capability of Nigeria, as any single nation.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The targeted population of the study is 11,685 which include the Multinational Joint Task Force in Borno, Nigeria (Sector 3), National Security Adviser's Office (NSA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), and Bingham University Department of Political Science. These organisations are selected because they are directly involved in issues related to counter insurgency operations in North Eastern Nigeria. Krejcie and Morgan statistical formula was employed to reduce the population of the study to a manageable standard of 370.

The study employed both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The instruments that were used in collecting data for this study are questionnaires, oral interview and secondary sources. Stratified and random sampling techniques were used in selecting the respondents among different categories for the administration of

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questionnaire. For interview, purposive sampling technique was used. The sampling comprised of people with many similar characteristics such as deep knowledge on the subject of investigation, years of experience and age. This study made use of charts as a platform to present the research data and also analyze the data collected from the field on the subject matter using simple percentage as the case may be for the descriptive analysis. The version that was used for analyzing data for the study is SPSS 25. Consistent with the descriptive survey design and the study's objectives, which sought to establish the pattern and extent of respondents' opinions rather than to test relationships between variables, descriptive statistics (frequencies, simple percentages, and charts) were considered the appropriate level of analysis. Inferential tests were therefore not applied. Content analysis was used to analyze qualitative information.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

A total of 358 copies of questionnaire were distributed while 337 copies were retrieved, representing a response rate of approximately 94 per cent of distributed copies and 91 per cent of the originally calculated sample size of 370. This response rate is considered adequate for descriptive survey analysis, and the small shortfall relative to the Krejcie and Morgan sample size is not judged to

introduce material non-response bias, given that retrieved copies were spread proportionately across the stratified categories of respondents. Therefore, the presentation and analysis was done based on the 337 retrieved copies of questionnaire. The pattern of presentation was based on the objectives of the study using bar and pie chart. The discussion of findings then followed. Codes were created using letters and numbers to represent the information from interviews conducted with participants. Meaning that the research assigned a code to all the 12 participants interviewed; each participant was given a pseudonym, for example P1, standing for Participant 1 through P12, for Participant 12, to ensure they were shielded from any form of identification. This was supported with information from extant literature.

Analysis on Institutional Architecture and Operational Efficacy of Multinational Joint Task Force in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria.

This Section dwelt on the analysis and presentation of data on the institutional architecture and operational efficacy of Multinational Joint Task Force in counter insurgency operations in north eastern Nigeria. The responses were guided by the research questions and objectives and presented in Figures.

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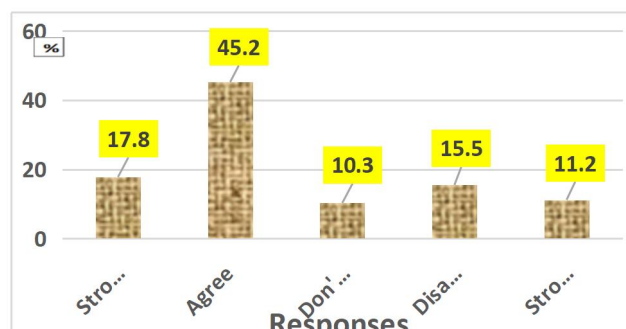
Nature of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and Counter-Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria.

The first objective of the study is to examine the nature of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and counter-insurgency operations in north eastern Nigeria. To address this research question, the study asked respondents appropriate questions and data generated are presented at figure 1.1-1.3 below.

A. Assessing Whether or Not the Mandate and Operational Objectives of the MNJTF in Counter-Insurgency Operations in North-Eastern Nigeria are Clearly Defined and Well Understood.

The study sought the opinion of respondent on whether the mandate and operational objectives of the MNJTF in counter insurgency operations in North-Eastern Nigeria are clearly defined and well understood. The responses are contained in figure 1 below.

Figure 1.1: Respondents Assessment on Whether the Mandate and Operational Objectives of the MNJTF in Counter Insurgency Operations in North-Eastern Nigeria are Clearly Defined and Well Understood.



Source: Author's Field Survey, April, 2026.

Figure 1.1 depicts that a high number of respondents cumulatively ranking 63 per cent hold the view that indeed the mandate and operational objectives of the MNJTF in counter-insurgency operations in North-Eastern Nigeria are clearly defined and well understood by both the personnel deployed to the theater of operations and civilians alike. This is more prevalent and glaring in cordial civil military relations that ensued between the MNJTF personnel and host communities. In addition, a cumulative 26.7 per cent of respondents disagreed to the posed question.

In line with the above finding, a KII (11/05/26) with P4 in Baga revealed that:

The Operational objectives and core mandate of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) is to help the member countries of the Lake Chad Basic Commission (LCBC) to combat the insurgents of Boko-Haram fighters and ISWAP afflicted groups and bring lasting peace to the crisis borne environments and also re-settle all displaced persons back to their communities particularly in the North East States of Nigeria where the activities of the insurgence originated after the extra-judicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf, the Boko- Haram founder.

In the same vein, a KII with P2 (14/05/26) at Abuja opined that:

The MNJTF's core mandate is to combat Boko Haram and related terrorist

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groups, restore peace and stability in the Lake Chad Basin, and facilitate the return of displaced populations. Its objectives include neutralizing insurgent threats, securing borders, and supporting humanitarian operations.

In another interview with a Platoon Commander at MNJTF sector 3 Bag (11/05/26), he averred that:

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) is a regional military coalition comprising troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, tasked with combating the Boko Haram and ISWAP insurgencies in the Lake Chad Basin. Authorized by the African Union, Its core mandate is to create safe and secure environment in areas affected by terrorism.

A Lt. Col. deployed at MNJTF sector 4 Codenamed P3 (12/05/26) posited in an interview that:

The operational objectives and core mandate of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) are to help the member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) to combat the insurgents of Boko-Haram fighters and ISWAP-afflicted groups and bring lasting peace to the crisis-borne environments, and also resettle all displaced persons back to their communities, particularly in the North East States of Nigeria, where the activities of the insurgency originated after the extra-judicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf, the Boko Haram founder.

From a similar perspective, a KII with P12 revealed that:

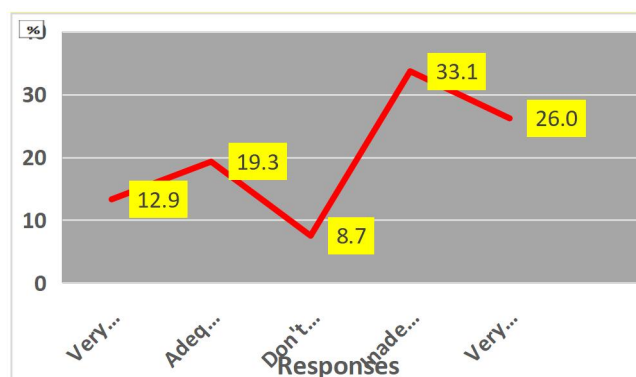
The Multinational Joint Task Force is mandated to combat terrorism, insurgency, and cross-border crimes in the Lake Chad region, particularly against Boko Haram and ISWAP. Its operational objectives include coordinating military operations, enhancing regional security cooperation, protecting civilians, restoring state authority, facilitating humanitarian access, and creating conditions for long-term peace and stability in North-Eastern Nigeria.

It could be surmised from the analysis that the underlying operational clarity of the MNJTF's mandate is constantly strained by the evolving transnational boundaries of asymmetric warfare, where terrorist actors seamlessly cross borders while security architectures remain bound by geographic restrictions.

B. Ascertaining Whether or Not Multinational Joint Task Force Operations are characterized by Effective Joint Planning, Coordination, and Execution among the Participating Member States.

Another question posed to the respondents was to ascertain whether MNJTF operations are characterized by effective joint planning, coordination, and execution among the participating member states.

Figure 1.2: Respondents Opinion on Ascertaining Whether or Not Multinational Joint Task Force Operations are characterized by Effective Joint Planning Coordination, and Execution among the Participating Member States.



Source: Author's Field Survey, April, 2026.

Figure 1.2 depicts that 217 (59.1 per cent) respondents cumulatively opined that MNJTF operations are characterized by effective joint planning, coordination, and execution among the participating member states. In addition, a cumulative 118 (32.2 per cent) respondents disagreed with the posed question.

While alluding to the foregoing analysis, an interview with P1 (13/5/26) shows that:

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) coordinates counter insurgency operations across member states through a decentralized, sector-based command structure and authorized by the African Union Peace and Security Council. Oversight is provided politically by Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) while operational planning and execution are managed

through a highly integrated regional framework.

In the same vein, a KII (18/5/26) with P12 revealed that:

Multinational Joint Task Force counter-insurgency operations are jointly planned through coordinated intelligence sharing, strategic command structures, and regular consultations among member states. Participating countries synchronize troop deployments, logistics, surveillance, and tactical operations to improve border security, combat insurgents effectively, and enhance regional stability across the Lake Chad Basin.

Further KII with P4 shows that The MNJTF counter-Insurgency operations are planned among the four troops contributing and Benin Republic. Each of these troops contributing countries and Benin Republic are organized into sectors; with Chad at Baga-Sola, Nigeria at Baga, Niger at Differ and Cameroun at Moura, Benin Republic is tasked to provide security for element of MNJTF in Chad and MNJTF Headquarters in Ndjamen Chad. They organized themselves and fight the insurgents simultaneously in the areas they operates (11/5/26).

In another interview with an administrative officer (AO) MNJTF, codenamed P4, he averred that:

The MNJTF counter-insurgency operations are planned among the four troop-contributing countries and Benin Republic. Each of these troops contributing countries and Benin Republic are organized into sectors; with Chad at Baga-Sola, Nigeria at Baga, Niger at Differ and Cameroun at Moura, Benin Republic is tasked to provide

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security for element of MNJTF in Chad and MNJTF Headquarters in N'djamena Chad. They organized themselves and fight the insurgents simultaneously in the areas they operates.

A KII (14/5/26) with P2 further revealed that:

Operations are planned jointly under a centralized command headquartered in N'Djamena, Chad, with coordination among sector commands in member states (Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon, and Benin). Planning involves intelligence sharing, combined training, and synchronized operational timelines.

It could be inferred from the analysis that the structural splitting of the MNJTF into four distinct national sectors (Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria, and Niger) introduces inherent national biases that actively sabotage unified, timely battlefield decisions. Recent studies validate this by illustrating how home-capital military directives (from Abuja, Yaoundé, or N'Djamena) regularly superseded centralized instructions from the Force Headquarters. According to Idris & Usman (2024), this command fragmentation is an institutional flaw where national sovereignty instincts impede the realization of a truly supranational operational protocol.

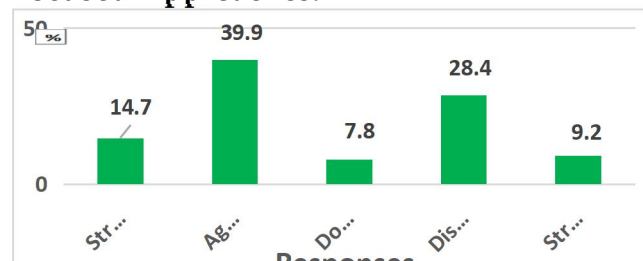
C. Determining Whether the Operational Strategies and Rules of Engagement Guiding Multinational Joint Task Force Counter-Insurgency Activities are Well Structured and Consistently Applied.

A question was posed to respondents to assess whether or not the operational strategies and rules of engagement guiding multinational joint task force counter-insurgency activities are well structured and consistently applied.

C. Evaluating Whether Multinational Joint Task Force Counter-Insurgency Operations Effectively Integrate Military Intelligence, and Civilian-Focused Approaches.

Another question was posed to the respondents to evaluate whether Multinational Joint Task Force counter-insurgency operations effectively integrate military intelligence, and civilian-focused approaches.

Figure 1.3: Respondents View on Evaluating Whether Multinational Joint Task Force Counter-Insurgency Operations Effectively Integrate Military, Intelligence, and Civilian-Focused Approaches.



Source: Author's Field Survey, April, (2026).

Figure 1.3 shows that a high number of respondents cumulatively representing 54.6 per cent indicated that the Multinational Joint Task Force counter-insurgency

operations effectively integrate military intelligence, and civilian-focused approaches. From another perspective, 39.6 per cent of respondents were of the view that there is an absence of effectiveness in the integration of military, intelligence, and civilian-focused approaches in Multinational Joint Task Force counter-insurgency operations.

It could be inferred from the analysis that the structural cohesion of the MNJTF is highly fragile and vulnerable to regional political disruptions, such as coups, which can abruptly compromise entire operational sectors. This operational risk manifested acutely following the recent geopolitical shifts in the Sahel. Reports from Amani Africa (2025) and the African Union note that Niger's formal announcements regarding its operational position and subsequent diplomatic friction drastically weakened Sector 4 in Diffa, creating a dangerous security vacuum that insurgent factions exploited to rearm and launch fresh offensives.

Command Fragmentation and Intelligence-Sharing Bottlenecks Affect the Operational Efficacy of the Multinational Joint Task Force in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria.

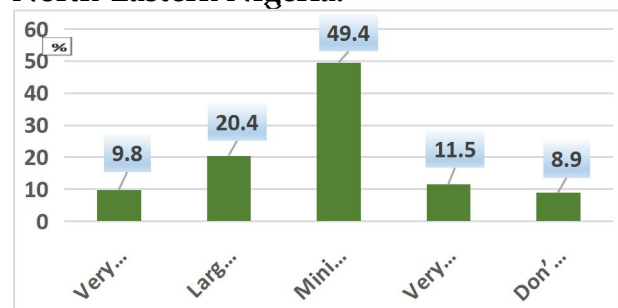
The second research question explored the way and manner command fragmentation and intelligence-sharing bottlenecks affect the operational efficacy of the multinational joint task force in counter insurgency operations in North Eastern Nigeria. To address this research question, the study asked respondents

appropriate questions and data generated are presented from figure 1.4 to 1.6.

A. Assessing whether the MNJTF has Significantly Contributed to the Reduction of Insurgent Attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria.

Respondents were also asked to determine the extent to which the MNJTF has significantly contributed to the reduction of insurgent attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria.

Figure 1.4: Respondents' Views on Determining the Extent to Which the MNJTF has Significantly Contributed to the Reduction of Insurgent Attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria.



Source: Author's Field Survey, April, (2026).

Figure 1.4 shows that 49.4 per cent of respondents were of the view that the MNJTF has significantly contributed to the reduction of insurgent attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria to a minimal extent. In addition, 30.2 per cent of respondents cumulatively indicated that the MNJTF have meaningfully enhanced the reduction of insurgent attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria to a large extent.

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It can be deduced from the forgoing finding that the formation and activities of MNJTF has significantly contributed in curtailing the escalation of Boko Haram activities in some of the affected areas of North Eastern Nigeria.

In tandem with the analysis and deduction above, the Chief of Personnel Management AHQ, (26/6/26), averred in a KII that:

Before the establishment and operationalization of MNJTF, civilians were largely displaced, captured, kidnaped, killed, and raped in large numbers. But with the MNJTF, civilians are now being returned to communities in a more controlled manner and fashion. Police station are gradually been returned to communities in order to build confidence of the people, farming activities encouraged by giving out seedling and fertilizers. SIMIC activities done in order to encourage the greater return of civilians to their communities.

In another KII with P12 (18/5/26):

The Multinational Joint Task Force has improved security in North-Eastern Nigeria through coordinated military offensives, intelligence sharing, and border surveillance. These efforts disrupted insurgent networks, reclaimed territories, reduced cross-border attacks, protected civilians, and enhanced regional cooperation against Boko Haram and affiliated extremist groups.

P1 further reiterated in a KII (13/5/26) that:

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) improves security in North

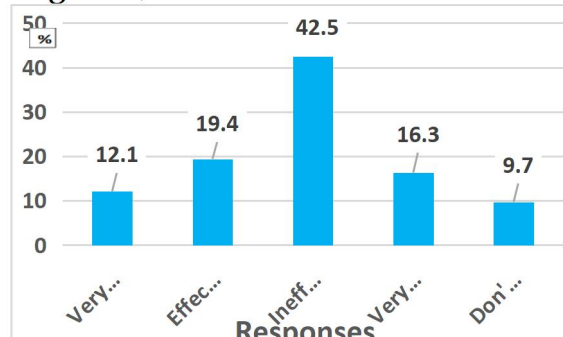
Eastern Nigeria by degrading Boko Haram and ISWAP capabilities, securing porous borders, and facilitating humanitarian access. Integrating troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad, the force has achieved the following key milestone: Regional Encirclement and Operational push, Reduction in Fatalities, Mass surrenders and defection, Civilian Resettlement and Trade and Humanitarian Access.

It could be deduced from the study that the operational pace of the MNJTF is heavily curtailed by asynchronous defense procurement cycles across member nations and a dangerous over-reliance on international third-party donor funding. Omitola & Aghedo (2023) observe that military alliances in the Lake Chad Basin face severe operational bottlenecks because member nations utilize mismatched equipment and rely on ad-hoc funding from partners like the European Union. This limits the long-term sustainability of multi-sector campaigns.

B. Ascertaining Whether MNJTF Operations Have Been Effective in Disrupting Insurgent Networks, Logistics, and Cross-Border Movements.

Respondents were further asked to rate the effectiveness of MNJTF operations in disrupting insurgent networks, logistics, and cross-border movements.

Figure 1.5: Respondents View on Ascertaining Whether MNJTF Operations Have Been Effective in Disrupting Insurgent Networks, Logistics, and Cross-Border Movements



Source: Author's Field Survey, April, (2026).

As shown in Figure 1.6, a cumulative majority of respondents ranking 58.8 per cent opined that MNJTF operations has been ineffective in disrupting insurgent networks, logistics, and cross-border movements. In addition, 31.5 per cent of respondents cumulatively indicated that the MNJTF have exerted effective influence in disrupting insurgent networks, logistics, and cross-border movements.

In corroborating the foregoing, P1 confirmed in a KII (13/5/26) that:

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) has been moderately to highly effective in neutralizing terrorist infrastructure, intercepting arms smugglers and severely degrading the operational capacity of Boko Haram and ISWAP in the Lake Chad Basin. However, its long-term impact is frequently undermined by porous

borders, funding gaps and shifting geopolitical commitments among member states. The MNJTF has succeeded in Disrupting logistics and supply lines, restricting cross-border movement, defection and surrender.

The response from P7 and P12 (14/5/26) is in tandem with that of P1 where he reiterates that:

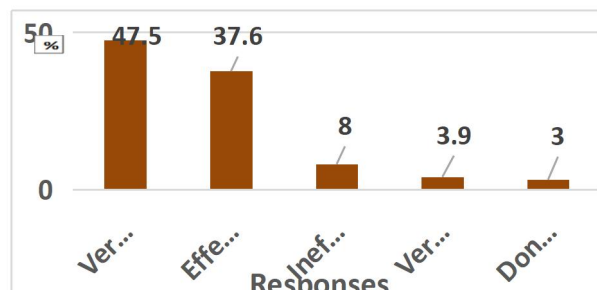
The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) has been moderately effective in disrupting insurgent networks, logistics, and cross-border movements in North-Eastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad region. This is done by targeting camps, interdicting supply routes, and reducing cross-border mobility. However, porous borders, adaptive insurgent tactics, and limited surveillance capacity allow continued movement, regrouping, and logistical recovery in some remote areas.

It could be inferred that while the MNJTF has executed massive kinetic campaigns like *Operation Lake Sanity II*, its institutional apparatus has failed to match the technological leap made by insurgent cells. Recent field assessments show a qualitative capability leap by terror groups. Amani Africa (2025) documents that by 2024/2025, ISWAP increasingly deployed tactical surveillance drones, sophisticated propaganda machines, and advanced Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), which accounted for nearly 60% of MNJTF casualties due to a lack of anti-drone jamming systems and advanced IED detectors.

C. Assessing Whether the Intelligence Sharing and Joint Operational Coordination among MNJTF Member States are Effective in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria.

Another question was posed to assess whether the intelligence sharing and joint operational coordination among MNJTF member states are effective in counter insurgency operations in north eastern Nigeria.

Figure 1.6: Respondents Assessment of Whether the Intelligence Sharing and Joint Operational Coordination among MNJTF Member States are Effective in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria.



Source: Author's Field Survey, April, (2026)

Figure 1.6 depicts that a cumulative majority of respondents ranking 85.1 per cent were of the view that the intelligence sharing and joint operational coordination among MNJTF member states are effective in counter insurgency operations in north eastern Nigeria. This situation underscores the critical need for all the governments of the Troop

Contributing Countries (TCC's) to ensure that the sharing of military intelligence and joint gathering of vital information are done with utmost sincerity. Doing so would significantly nip in the bud the menace of insurgency in North Eastern Nigeria.

In line with the forgoing finding, an interview with P1 (13/5/26) revealed that:

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) is considered a moderately effective counter-insurgency force, notable for significantly degrading the operational capabilities of Boko Haram and ISWAP in the Lake Chad Basin. However, its successes are consistently undermined by structural, financial and operational challenges.

In an interview with the Commanding Officer (CO) codenamed P7, he affirmed that:

The effectiveness of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in achieving its counter-insurgency objectives can be assessed as partially effective. The force has recorded successes in weakening Boko Haram and ISWAP through joint military operations, intelligence sharing, and cross-border coordination.

It could be inferred that despite the military success of clearing insurgent enclaves, the failure to combine kinetic operations with sustainable civil-military holding strategies has prolonged the humanitarian crisis and slowed down the safe, permanent return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). While the

African Union Commission notes that thousands of IDPs have been facilitated to return to communities like Kukawa and Banki town, these communities receive little to no sustainable humanitarian or socio-economic assistance (Amani Africa, 2025). The structural failure to protect these livelihoods leaves resettled populations highly vulnerable to rural predatory governance (Global Terrorism Index, 2026).

Discussion of Findings

The core finding of this study centers on the deep structural divide between the idealized blueprint of the MNJTF and its actual operational efficacy on the battlefield. The institutional framework was designed to pool sub-regional resources, allow cross-border hot-pursuit operations, and deny terrorists safe havens. However, the finding that the Force Headquarters in N'Djamena lacks genuine supranational authority introduces a fatal flaw into the alliance: command paralysis. Because sector commanders answer directly to their home capitals, joint operations are frequently delayed by bureaucratic confirmation and tactical fragmentation.

This systemic flaw is worsened by intelligence hoarding. Instead of serving as an open, real-time repository for preemptive maneuvers, the Joint Intelligence Task Centre is restricted by institutional mistrust. This structural friction severely lowers response times, allowing groups like Boko Haram and

ISWAP to exploit porous borderlands and remote islands. This finding aligns with the arguments of Idris and Usman (2024), who assert that geopolitical fractures and competing national interests consistently undermine the collective security architecture of the Lake Chad Basin.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that the MNJTF's operational model relies heavily on kinetic military actions without a matching post-conflict stabilization strategy. When major multi-sector operations clear insurgent camps, the force fails to establish a continuous, secure environment because it lacks integrated policing and civilian holding frameworks. This security vacuum allows decentralized insurgent cells to return, re-occupy territory, and continue their predatory governance and IED campaigns. The African Union (AU) (2025) and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS, 2026) supports these findings, demonstrating that security cannot be sustained by military force alone. True regional stabilization requires a balanced approach that combines military action with civil-military operations, rule-of-law enforcement, and robust humanitarian support to permanently disrupt the cycle of violent extremism.

It should be acknowledged, however, that the call for a fully supranational Force Commander is not without difficulty. LCBC member states have historically been reluctant to cede national command authority over troops deployed on their

own sovereign territory, and some scholars argue that the MNJTF's national-sector structure, whatever its coordination costs, has been a necessary condition for member states' continued participation in the force at all. Any restructuring proposal must therefore weigh the operational benefits of centralized command against the political risk that greater supranational authority could reduce troop-contributing countries' willingness to remain in the coalition.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) represents an essential, logically sound regional security framework for the Lake Chad Basin, but its operational efficacy is severely limited by its institutional architecture. The combination of a decentralized command structure, national sovereignty constraints, intelligence-sharing bottlenecks, and vulnerability to geopolitical shocks turns what should be a unified military alliance into a fragmented coalition.

Furthermore, the lack of post-conflict policing capacities and long-term funding models prevents the force from turning short-term tactical successes into durable regional stability. If the structural flaws within its command and intelligence frameworks are left unaddressed, the MNJTF will remain trapped in a repetitive cycle of clearing territories only to see them re-occupied by resilient insurgent cells. This dynamic leaves

North-Eastern Nigeria and the broader Lake Chad Basin continuously vulnerable to protracted asymmetric warfare.

Recommendations

Based on the research objectives and findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered:

- i. To resolve command paralysis and tactical fragmentation, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) member states must legally restructure the MNJTF's institutional architecture. This requires granting the centralized Force Commander in N'Djamena direct operational control and supranational authority over all four national sectors during active joint campaigns.
- ii. To resolve intelligence hoarding, the Joint Intelligence Task Centre should be reformed into a genuinely shared, real-time repository, with standardized information-sharing protocols and confidence-building safeguards that reduce sector commanders' incentives to withhold intelligence from their counterparts.

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