

Research Article

United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2349 and 2391 and Counter Terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel Region

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Abstract

This study investigates how United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2349 and 2391 have prejudiced counterterrorism efforts in the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel region between 2017 and 2023. With focus on the emerging menace of Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and the Islamic State in West Africa Province, which have disrupted the stability of nations such as Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso. The study examines the goals, execution, and success of the resolutions, as well as the logistical, political, and socio-economic issues encountered using historical data, interviews, and content analysis. The results indicate that, although UNSC interventions, in terms of peacekeeping, sanctions, and capacity building, have enhanced regional security, they have been limited by poor governance, political instability, and human rights issues. Operations such as MINUSMA have encountered challenges of operations and coordination. The research finds that improved intelligence-sharing, more financial and technical assistance, and socio-economic development initiatives are necessary to deal with root causes and attain sustainable peace.

Keywords

United Nations, Security Resolutions, Counter Terrorism, Lake Chad, Sahel Region

1. Introduction

Terrorism has been a long existing activity in the world, or in the experience of man's injustice. In human history, terrorism has been exercised by those who decided to fight states, kings and princes [1]. There is a difference between all kinds of violence and what is called terrorism. Since conflict is in respond to a government, terrorism is therefore directed towards the military and the ruling [2]. Terrorism, however, is said to include the attack on people who are innocent going by terrorists' with the intention of creating terror or panic among civilians [3]. Terrorism is thus not exclusively a 20th century phenomenon, before the occurrence of the events that took

place in September 11 of the year 2001. Terrorism has been around since before the French revolution that happened in the year 1789 [4].

The great revolutionary period which French Government was able to conduct the Reign of Terror [5]. Currently, there are terrorist activities in many part of Africa such as Nigeria, Libya and Burkina Faso [6]. Terrorism was among one of the growing list of threats to global security before 9/11 but terrorism afterwards become the main focus of the international community [5-7].

"Terrorism issues is a global concern, with its direct impact

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fueling economic and humanitarian crises, including bombings, kidnappings, hostage taking, assassination, hijacking, arson, sabotage, etc." [1]. Developing and developed states face terrorist attacks which leads to low level of economic development, political instability, loss of lives and properties, and displacement of citizens" [8]. The global terrorism threat today is imminent and more complex than ever" [9]. The growing number of conflict zones around the globe provides transnational terrorist organizations, such as Al-Qaeda and Da'esh, with multiple fronts on which they can operate simultaneously" [10].

The progress of terrorism from the late 1960s to the late 1980s was indeed influenced by various factors such as patriotism, nonconformity, ideological beliefs, prejudice, agnosticism, and financial motivations [11]. During this period, terrorist activities often had political, social, and economic motivations, with groups pursuing their agendas through violent means. However, there has been a noticeable shift towards religious-based terrorism in recent decades, particularly since the early 1980s. This shift can be attributed to several factors, including the rise of global religious fundamentalism, the politicization of religious identities, and the use of religion as a mobilizing force for extremist ideologies [8]. Some scholars argue that religious-based terrorism is more dangerous than other forms of terrorism because of its ideological fervour and willingness to inflict large-scale casualties in pursuit of religious goals [5, 9, 10]. They point to the global spread of extremist groups like Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and others as evidence of the growing threat posed by religious-based terrorism [7].

The African continent is in front of enormous human and state security threats, among which the growth of terrorist activity is remarkable [12]. In North Africa and East Africa, Al Qaeda or its related groups have escalated their terrorisms since 2008 when they attacked US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania [13]. While [12] opined the fact that many countries have not ensured the safety of their people by not demarcating their borders, terrorist' operations become inevitable. According to the Global Terrorism Index of 2016 the terrorist activities have been highly active in West Africa especially Nigeria, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and the Sahel area [14]. In West Africa, terrorism has shifted the nature of the security and political dynamics with terrorist organizations like Boko Haram employing guerrilla warfare on government buildings and civilians in Nigeria, Niger, Chad and northern Cameroon. The terrorists killed about 35,000 people of Nigeria in the period between 2011 and 2018 [12]. As calculated, the overall death toll from terrorism in Mali stands at approximately 736 in the two years from 2016-2018. Terrorist attacks have more than tripled in Chad within one year; from 2018 to 2019 [15]. Therefore, in 2012, the Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and Niger formed the MNJTF to counter the Boko Haram rebellion in the LCB. Nigeria, for example, is neighbors with Chad, Cameroon, and Niger and so these nations cannot avoid having some of the same challenges. An issue in one country

can quickly spread to other countries, largely because there are so many areas that remain ungoverned in the Sahel region.

Terrorism in the recent past has links with technological aspects, dictated by the effects of globalization [16]. Terrorists in groups and individuals have overrun the globe offering terror at every corner [17]. According to [7], technology has been influential in the expansion of terrorism, and the presence of the executors of terrorist activities in the past decade. This kind of paradigm shift is considered as modern terrorism because the meaning of this word has shifted throughout centuries. Nowadays, terrorism has been one of the main reasons for terrorists to stage their operations. This is done by either hacking into network systems, using drones, potentials of use of military and advanced technology, as well opening up easier means of communication [6]. However, it needs to be recalled that there are changes in the definition of terrorism in the context of the last decade since terrorism has resulted from globalization and impacted different countries with various innovations [18-20].

The UN as an international organization was formed on the 24th of October, in the year 1945, after the Second World War. In the following years, the UN Security Council (UNSC) has been organized to maintain world peace and security [21]. It has sought to regulate global conflict either through its court and where needed, through intercession in war. It has also negotiated in the war affected nations. The Security Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations under Article 23 of the Charter. Annex the United Nations Security Council is primarily responsible for preserving peace and security of the international level (UN Charter, Part V). This includes seeking to determine threats to peace or uses of force and seeking to cause the parties to come up with peaceful solutions [22].

To preserve or restore peace and security in serious situations, the Security Council may decide to apply sanctions or even approve the use of force (UN Charter, Chapter VII). According to UN Charter, Article 25, the UNSC is the only UN body with the power to adopt resolutions that have legal force behind them. The UN Charter establishes the UN's role in global collective security by giving the Security Council the power to look into any situation that could endanger world peace, suggest peaceful dispute resolution processes, and take action to carry out its rulings (UN Charter, Chapter VI and VII).

Five permanent members China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States have the ability to veto resolutions (UNSCRs) that are enacted by the 15-member Security Council. Member states are required to implement the decisions in accordance with Article 25 of the UN Charter, which aims to preserve global peace and security. The Security Council has passed a large number of resolutions since its founding; as of June 28, 2024, there were 2741 resolutions in total. Human rights, peacekeeping efforts, sanctions, and conflict resolution are only a few of the topics covered by these resolutions.

Terrorism remains a significant threat to global peace and security, with West Africa emerging as a hotbed of terrorist activities in recent years. Groups like Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) have carried out numerous attacks, causing widespread devastation and destabilizing the region. United Nations Security Council, as the principal organ for maintaining peace and security, has taken various measures to address this challenge [1, 7, 23, 24].

One significant effort has been the establishment of peacekeeping missions and support operations in the region. The deployment of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) by the UNSC has played crucial role in supporting stabilization efforts and countering terrorism in Mali and the wider Sahel region [16]. The UNSC has issued resolutions and sanctions targeting terrorist organizations and individuals involved in terrorism in West Africa [2]. These measures, aimed at disrupting their activities and sources of funding, demonstrate the UNSC's commitment to combating terrorism in the region.

While various measures have been adopted by the UNSC including sanctions, resolutions, capacity-building, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding their impact on reducing terrorism and addressing the root causes of insecurity in West Africa [16]. Therefore this study focused on the implementation and impacts of Resolutions 2391 & 2349 in addressing terrorism in West Africa.

- 1) What is the nature of terrorism in West Africa?
- 2) How did terrorism manifest in West Africa between 2017 and 2023?
- 3) How were the UNSC Resolutions 2349 & 2391 implemented in West Africa?
- 4) What roles did UNSC Resolutions 2349 & 2391 have on terrorism in West Africa?

The Broad Objective of this research is to examine the United Nations Security Council intersection and response to counter terrorism in West Africa. However, the specific objective of the study is to:

- 1) Examine the nature of terrorism in West Africa.
- 2) Access how terrorism manifested in West Africa between 2017 and 2023.
- 3) Analyze how the UNSC Resolutions 2349 & 2391 were implemented.
- 4) Analyze the role of UNSC Resolutions 2349 & 2391 in combating terrorism in West Africa.

The study focused on the implementation and impacts of UNSC's counterterrorism resolution efforts in West Africa between 2017-2023, with a focus on resolutions 2391 & 2349. This time frame encompasses significant developments in the region's security landscape, including the rise of terrorist groups like Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

For the purpose of this study, the qualitative methodology will be adopted, as it provides a unique depth of understanding of the UNSC resolutions 2349 & 2391 in West Africa.

Assessing the efforts, Formulation, implementation, challenges and prospects these resolutions provide in countering terrorism in West Africa. A closer look into policy documents, reports, peer-reviewed literatures and other grey literatures will provide insights to the study at hand, the study also conducted interview with three academics and experts on security studies. Thus the study uses the content, comparative and thematic modes of analysis to articulate frequent themes and recurring patterns on the trend of events.

The historical and descriptive research design is adopted for review of secondary data. Primary data is transcribed, coded and thematically analyzed. Effort is made to analyze outcome of events that have taken place in which data was already in existence. The data collection techniques used in the study was purely examining of primary and secondary data.

2. Review of Extant Literature

2.1. Global Counterterrorism Efforts

In their article titled "The United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy: Aim & objectives of post 9/11: Accomplishments, and Obstacles" These scholars pointed that security remains pinnacle on the priority list for human beings on this planet [25]. To obtain security, they have developed a number of measures, approaches and even paradigms. The challenges of the global collective security and peace that are faced by the United Nations defy effectiveness hence raising the bar on the credibility of the United Nations. That new opportunities of the twenty-first century have produced new problems that only increased the demand for a group approach to security [26, 27]. Since the tragedy of 9/11, terrorism and other extremist activities occurred throughout the world, and therefore combating these challenges in the future will need collective efforts. On the 8th of September 2006 the strategy on global terrorism was embraced by the United Nations as an appropriated plan and resolution, so terrorism would be nip-off with the assistance of international, regional and national advocacy. As a result of conflict resolution activities at international level especially in the war ravaged Asia in order to protect the world peace the United Nations have to perform its effective role in between the two or more countries [28]. The rise newer issues such as; climate change, poverty, population explosion, education deficiencies, inequality, Poor and the socio-economic classifications of different countries and different areas are the new lethal enemies of humanity which require new tactics to be beaten [25].

In another article titled 'The Role of the United Nations in the Fight against Terrorism' [29] argues that the fight against International Terrorism application - which was initiated when USA enabled the NATO in the 1990s, this period, a number of more "general" UN Security Council Resolutions was adopted within the scope of Section VII. However, the steps in this direction came into prominence after the Sep-

tember 11 Attacks has been completely under the leadership of USA '. In this context, the above resolution number 1373 was agreed on 28 September 2011 by consensus - a move that is relatively unique, remarkable [29].

But the resolution, which put the final fight against 'terrorism' in a way, is not only for all members but also for "all states" as different from the application adopted traditionally. But the targeted application is to abate and to bar the finance and, in any way supporting of Al-Qaeda along the same lines of other like-minded organizations. Furthermore, more ambitious comprehensive obligations have been placed on the states including the obligation to prevent foreign countries that are through their territories, terrorist fighters with resolution 2178 made on September 24, 2014 to improve organization's efficiency such as ISIS at the time of Syria crisis terrorism [29, 30].

The United Nations occupies an important place in the formation of the modern system of interstate relations and is extremely important in terms of assisting in the stabilization of the international system [20, 28, 29, 31]. It can still be considered one of the important players in the international relations even after the new change in the international system that has been bent to state-centered approach. The work of the United Nations and other similar international organization patterns, internationalization. Thus, it was necessary for both the United Nations and any related institutional organizations to refer international problems in order to introduce certain changes and adapt themselves to the new world order. In this context, the United Nations aims to establish a universal legal system to ensure international peace and security by enacting various rules through the organization under the UN or by preparing the international conventions and protocols [32]. Following the 9/11 attacks, the fight against international terrorism took precedence on the United Nations' agenda. In the wake of these attacks, it became abundantly evident that new standards and laws were required in order for global society to combat terrorism. "The terrorists who attacked the United States on September 11 aimed at one nation but wounded an entire world," declared UN Secretary General Kofi Annan during these attacks [32, 33].

2.1.1. Security Council Politics and State Interests

There are those who saw the September 11, 2001 attack as an opportunity to bring back the United Nations to prominence in the world. Some academic critics maintain that the CTC and the CTED, as institutions of counterterrorism, should be liberated from the influence of the Security Council and that some new counterterrorism policies with cosmopolitan intention should be developed by offering a supranational approach [34, 35]. Many members of the Security Council, especially permanent representatives, wanted to prevent the UN from getting involved in internal affairs and from hindering efforts being made by nations to fight terrorism as it was the UN that set up the existing system. Consequently, this system created a definitive correspondence between its design

and the key authorities' most pressing concerns.

2.1.2. The Role of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Being aware of the UN's excellent accomplishment in the global war against terrorism, [36]. In its most recent form, the charter of the United Nation was penned in 1945, and the universal maintenance of peace and security is among its objectives. As for extorting a safety feeling for each individual in the face of the thoroughly terrifying problem of terrorism, let this be the mission of the UN and the collective efforts of Member States in order to achieve this colossal task. All the activities carried out by the UN towards the fight against terrorism have been provided for in this precise text. This range includes the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, and legal instruments in terrorisms cessation, among other things, resolutions passed by the UN General Assembly as well as the Security Council. The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy fronted by four pillars was discussed in details. The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and its thematic Working Groups are at the implementation level of the Counter Terrorism Strategy.

Such efforts by the United Nations are beneficial to an extent of sponsoring all nations as they are joined in togetherness.

In report A/71/858 presented in 2017, Secretary-general António Guterres explains the further function of the United Nations. The United Nations has yet formulated very comprehensive and worthy strategies on terrorism.

However, there is an emergent need for a more detailed encompassing international Convention to emerge to better detail a distinct course to combat terrorism. Terrorism, being an international issue cannot be handled by the United Nations alone. Thus, all the nations of the world need to unite and build a good judicial system. They should embark on partnership with the United Nations system towards education, gender, human rights and awareness. Thus, the key role of the UNSC over the years remain countering terrorism and ensuring security stability among nations [36].

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The theory that pre-eminently expounds the role of the UN countering global terrorism is the collective security theory. The collective security theory was propounded by political theorists and scholars such as Woodrow Wilson, who played a significant role in its development and promotion. Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the United States, advocated for collective security as a means to prevent future global conflicts and maintain international peace and security. His ideas and principles laid the foundation for the concept of collective security, which later became a key aspect of international relations theory and practice.

The UN has become a collective security Organization

which has a mandate given to it by the Charter of the UN (2001, Article 1.1) to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: To provide measures to enable it to adopt measures for safeguarding peace, and for the elimination of any threat to peace and for the prevention and elimination of acts of aggression, and other offenses prone to disrupt peace. From this background UN has a central function of ensuring international peace and security maintenance. Collective security means an international security system under which each state in the system is pledged to assist any member threatened with armed attack by another. Collective security therefore means that several states are required to come to a consensus how to deal with the problems threatening the status of peace and security. Collective security presupposes the existence of one pivotal common essential interest among all nations, and this is the interest in peace. If collective security is to work, peace must be regional and international; any threats to peace anywhere should be considered as terror to all members of the international system. After the aggressor has been identified then a consolidation of counter pressure from all other players in the system will be employed so as to cause creation of peace.

According to [37], once the aggressor is identified, collective security requires collective decision making of which the idea will work well if power is distributed. To become a collective security organization there is a need to incorporate the principles of consensus and commitment pacifism and collective defense as foundational to the concept of collective security. As pointed out by [37], “collective security should be distinguished from collective defense... The latter refers to an organization such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and War Saw Pact, it is an alliance for defense, for protection against an attack from outsiders. The collective security is based on the fundamentals of idealism which assumes that peace can be established by the assembling of the states which has the same point of view and whose association rests in a consensus.

2.3. Nature of Terrorism in West Africa

West Africa is a crucial sub-region of the African continent, with an estimated population of 466,500,800 as of May 31st, 2025, according to the latest United Nations data. This population represents 5.77% of the global total. The region has a population density of 66 people per square kilometre (172 per square mile) across its 5.1 million square kilometres, which includes 11 coastal countries and 5 that are part of the Sahel. About 47.7% of the population lives in urban areas. Nigeria leads the sub-region with the largest economy, boasting a GDP of \$514 billion, the highest in Africa, followed by Egypt at \$394 billion. While several countries in West Africa experience robust economic growth and stable macroeconomic governance, they face significant challenges such as widespread poverty and weak state institutions due to authoritarian governance [38].

West Africa's susceptibility to criminal activities, and conflict predated the rise of Islamic extremism and insurgency, with limited state authority allowing criminal networks to flourish in border areas even before Boko Haram's emergence. For example, the Lake Chad region had been a hub for organized crime due to a weak state presence, creating safe zones for violent criminal groups. Smuggling, including basic goods, vehicles, cigarettes, counterfeit or genuine medicines, small arms, and drugs, has been widespread, alongside frequent banditry. Cameroon even established a dedicated unit, the Rapid Intervention Brigade (BIR), to counter these threats. Furthermore, the original concept for a regional task force, now the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), was based on the need to address such criminal activities in the 1990s [39].

Currently, the dynamics in West Africa have shifted significantly, with hostilities characterized by suicide attacks, rocket-propelled offensives, and abductions carried out by jihadist groups fueled by the fervour of Islamic extremism and underlying domestic issues. Groups such as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda Awati Wal-Jihad (Boko Haram), the Islamic State of West Africa Province (an affiliate of ISIS), Jama'a Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (linked to Al-Qaeda), and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara have consistently terrorized sovereign states across the Sahel and Lake Chad regions, leading to thousands of deaths and the displacement of millions despite efforts from coalition forces like the MNJTF, the G5 Sahel joint force, and French military support [40-42]. In the Lake Chad Basin, the presence of Boko Haram and the Islamic State of West Africa Province remains intense, especially in Nigeria's northeast, Niger's Diffa region, Cameroon's Far North, and Chad's Lac region. In the Sahel, the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara and Jama'a Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (Al-Qaeda affiliate) are entrenched from central Mali to eastern Burkina Faso, maintaining control along the Mali-Niger border. These Sunni jihadist factions aim to seize political power, reject Western ideals, and impose Islamic rule in alignment with their ideological beliefs [39].

"In West Africa, terrorism has transformed into a multifaceted and dynamic threat, influenced by regional and international dynamics that define its features and consequences. Unlike conventional terrorist organizations that typically target government entities to advance political agendas, West African terrorism integrates extremist ideology with illicit activities such as smuggling, abduction, and human trafficking, which finance the operations of groups like JNIM, ISGS, and AQIM) [43, 44]. These organizations capitalize on fragile institutional frameworks, widespread destitution, and social disparities to garner support from disenfranchised populations [45].

AQIM's Sahel branch joined forces with a splinter group and two local affiliates to establish the Union for Supporting Islam and Muslims, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) under the leadership of Malian Tuareg Iyad Ag Ghaly. JNIM has since targeted UN, French, and state facilities in

Mali and Burkina Faso [46]. In 2018, JNIM attacked the headquarters of the G5 Sahel joint force in central Mali, forcing its relocation to Bamako. Another AQIM splinter group affiliated with ISIS and claimed responsibility for the deadly ambush on U. S. soldiers in Niger in 2017, remaining active near border regions. Despite consistent French airstrikes targeting their leaders, these groups have endured, leveraging local grievances and community tensions. In recent years, they have broadened their reach, intensified recruitment, executed sophisticated attacks on local and UN forces, and forced government and rival groups to withdraw by targeting civilian officials, traditional authorities, and those suspected of ties to Bamako or France. State and militia-related human rights abuses may have also driven recruitment. A security expert reported that [47];

I find UN Security Council Resolutions 2349 and 2391 commendable for catalyzing international awareness and regional coordination in West Africa. However, their overall effectiveness remains constrained by weak governance, inadequate resources, and persistent socio-economic root causes of terrorism.

2.3.1. Counterterrorism in West Africa

The terrible effects of violence and terrorism have been seen throughout the African continent. Although terrorism is not a new problem in and of itself, the noticeable upsurge in Islamist terrorism in Africa is relatively recent [48]. Africa's regions are working together more closely to tackle terrorism as a result of this security issue. In light of this, the nations in the area have evolved into crucial frontline states, giving counterterrorism initiatives top priority on their agendas for fundamental security [49].

Jihadist terrorism has notably intensified in specific areas such as Tillabery, the Liptako-Gourma, the broader Sahel region, and various other parts of Africa. Groups like Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) in Nigeria and the LCB region, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and its splinter factions in Mali, along with several jihadist armed groups in North African countries, have become significant threats [50]. One of the pressing security concerns in recent years has been terrorism in the LCB region, where numerous extremist groups operate, with Boko Haram being the most prominent. Boko Haram, founded by Mohammed Yusuf in north-eastern Nigeria in 2002, has gained international attention due to its violent activities and extremist ideology [50]. The emergence and activities of Boko Haram have highlighted the pervasive issue of terrorism and violence in Africa, posing a complex and significant security threat to both the Lake Chad region and the entire continent.

The study conducted by [31] investigated the counterterrorism initiatives of the United Nations in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB), emphasizing the ongoing difficulties caused by the Boko Haram insurgency. The study evaluates the legal, policy, and empirical aspects of the UN's counterterrorism

initiatives using a critical analysis methodology. It explores the rise of Boko Haram, the development of terrorism in the LCB, and the socioeconomic and geopolitical elements influencing the problem. The report makes the case that while the UN and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) have made progress in the LCB, they still confront obstacles like complicated geography, weak government, and porous borders. It contributes to the global terrorism discourse by highlighting the intricate challenges in implementing effective counterterrorism measures in a region with unique political, social, and environmental contexts [31].

2.3.2. The Adoption of Resolution 2349

In response to the growing crisis, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2349 on March 31, 2017. This resolution was the first to focus specifically on the Lake Chad Basin, highlighting the security, humanitarian, and developmental challenges faced by the region. The resolution was introduced by the United Kingdom and received unanimous support from all 15 UNSC members.

2.3.3. Key Provisions of Resolution 2349

- 1) **Condemnation of Terrorism:** The resolution strongly condemned the activities of Boko Haram and ISWAP, recognizing them as significant threats to regional and international peace and security.
- 2) **Humanitarian Concerns:** It emphasized the need for increased humanitarian assistance to the affected populations, noting the displacement of over 2.3 million people and the critical food insecurity faced by millions.
- 3) **Regional Cooperation:** The resolution called for enhanced regional cooperation among the Lake Chad Basin countries, particularly through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), established in 2015 to combat Boko Haram and ISWAP.
- 4) **International Support:** It urged the international community to provide technical and financial support to the Lake Chad Basin countries, both for military operations and for addressing the underlying socio-economic challenges that fuel extremism.
- 5) **Human Rights and Rule of Law:** The resolution also stressed the importance of upholding human rights and the rule of law in counter-terrorism efforts, urging governments to ensure that their actions do not exacerbate the suffering of civilians [51].

2.3.4. Significance and Impact

Resolution 2349 was significant because it marked a comprehensive international recognition of the multifaceted challenges in the Lake Chad Basin, going beyond the military aspects of counter-terrorism to address humanitarian and developmental issues. The resolution helped galvanize international attention and resources, leading to increased

funding for humanitarian aid and development projects in the region. It also reinforced the importance of regional cooperation through the MNJTF, which played a crucial role in coordinating military operations against Boko Haram and ISWAP.

2.4. The Adoption of Resolution 2391

Recognizing the urgent need to support the G5 Sahel Joint Force, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2391 on December 8, 2017. This resolution built on previous UNSC efforts to address the security challenges in the Sahel, including Resolution 2359 (2017), which had authorized the deployment of the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

2.4.1. Key Provisions of Resolution 2391

- 1) Support for the G5 Sahel Joint Force: The resolution authorized the provision of operational and logistical support to the FC-G5S by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). This support included medical evacuations, access to fuel, water, rations, and engineering support.
- 2) International Coordination: It called for enhanced coordination among international partners, including the European Union, African Union, and other bilateral donors, to provide financial and technical assistance to the G5 Sahel Joint Force.
- 3) Human Rights Compliance: The resolution emphasized the need for the G5 Sahel countries to ensure that their military operations are conducted in accordance with international humanitarian law, human rights law, and refugee law. It also urged the FC-G5S to establish mechanisms to prevent and address violations.
- 4) Regional and Global Security: The resolution underscored the link between the security situation in the Sahel and broader international peace and security, highlighting the potential for the spread of terrorism and instability beyond the region if left unaddressed [52].

2.4.2. Significance and Impact

Resolution 2391 was pivotal in enhancing the operational capacity of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, which had faced significant challenges in terms of funding, equipment, and coordination. By authorizing MINUSMA to provide support, the UNSC helped to mitigate some of these challenges, enabling the FC-G5S to conduct more effective operations against terrorist groups in the Sahel.

The resolution also highlighted the importance of a comprehensive approach to security in the Sahel, recognizing that military action alone would not be sufficient to address the root causes of instability. This approach has since been reflected in various international initiatives aimed at promoting governance, development, and resilience in the Sahel, alongside ongoing counter-terrorism efforts [53, 54].

2.5. Comparative Analysis of Resolutions 2349/2391 and Other Resolutions

UN General Assembly resolutions from 1949 to 1974 have been compiled and analysed [55], highlighting the historical significance of these documents. The legal effects of UN resolutions have been examined, emphasizing their impact on international law and policy [56]. Research has also been conducted on the wording and treatment of different countries in Security Council resolutions, revealing potential biases, particularly towards Israel and South Africa during the Cold War period [24]. While both Resolutions 2349 and 2391 address terrorism and security challenges in Africa, they focus on different regions and adopt distinct approaches. Resolution 2349 is more focused on the humanitarian and developmental aspects of the crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, recognizing the complex interplay between security, poverty, and governance. In contrast, Resolution 2391 is more operational in nature, providing direct support to a regional military force in the Sahel.

Implications for Regional Security

The adoption of these resolutions underlines the growing international recognition of Africa's security challenges, particularly the spread of terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel. These regions, which have historically been marginalized in global security discourses, are now seen as critical fronts in the global fight against terrorism.

The emphasis on regional cooperation and the support for regional forces like the MNJTF and the G5 Sahel Joint Force reflect a shift towards empowering African states and regional organizations to take the lead in addressing their security challenges. This approach is seen as more sustainable and effective in the long term, as it builds local capacities and ensures that counter-terrorism efforts are more attuned to the specific dynamics of the region. Despite the progress made, both resolutions have faced criticisms. In the Lake Chad Basin, the MNJTF has been hampered by a lack of resources, poor coordination, and allegations of human rights abuses. Similarly, the G5 Sahel Joint Force has struggled with funding gaps, logistical challenges, and accusations of misconduct by its forces [57].

3. The Manifestation of Terrorism

(Discussion of Findings)

Between 2017 and 2023, West Africa experienced escalating and increasingly complex terrorist activity, largely led by militant jihadist groups including Boko Haram, the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP), Jama'a Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). These groups exploited socio-political and economic vulnerabilities, widened their areas of control, and carried out attacks across the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel regions, which destabilized numerous countries and prompted international responses [46]. All three academic experts on security studies agreed that the major causes of insecurity in Africa, West Africa particularly, has been terrorism, which

has evolved over time in a place like the Sahel Region. Boko Haram has been, like, the world's most deadly terror organization as of 2016 [47, 58, 59].

One of the experts expressed it thus;

And even recently, we have seen in the news that these people are beginning to bite again. So terrorism is one. Terrorism and violent extremism has been a major cause. Then we have the weak governance of the African states which has led to corruption. Corruption is another cause of insecurity. We also have ethnic and communal conflict. And this ethnic and communal conflict over time is also, in alignments to what has led to separatists' agitation and movements across different regions of West Africa, which is also a cause and, it has led to insecurity. I think the last one I'll talk about is, poverty and unemployment. Poverty and unemployment has led a good number of young people to pick up arms for terror.

Originally, Al-Qaida's influence, particularly through Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), was restricted to Mali's northern extremities, but it has since spread across Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, capitalizing on weak state structures, political instability, and vast ungoverned spaces. Their activities include coordinated attacks on military and civilian targets, kidnappings, and insurgent campaigns designed to destabilize regional governments [60-62].

These groups are not only driven by ideological motives but also benefit from lucrative criminal enterprises, including smuggling, which helps sustain and expand their operations. In Northeastern Nigeria and the surrounding Lake Chad Basin, Boko Haram and ISWAP have been the dominant forces. ISWAP, which emerged as a Boko Haram offshoot in 2016, distinguished itself by its focus on high-profile attacks against military and state installations, particularly targeting Nigerian military bases. ISWAP's approach was more strategically organized, aiming to win local support through selective violence and outreach efforts, often distancing itself from Boko Haram's more indiscriminate tactics [39]. This allowed ISWAP to attract recruits and resources in the Lake Chad Basin, which spans Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. The basin's porous borders, weak state presence, and limited economic opportunities made it a fertile ground for recruitment, financing, and movement of weapons and fighters, amplifying the region's instability [39, 45, 50].

In the Sahel, the 2017 merger of several jihadist groups to form JNIM under Iyad Ag Ghaly marked a turning point. JNIM, an al-Qaeda affiliate, launched coordinated attacks on national and international forces, targeting the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), French forces, and the G5 Sahel joint force [46]. For example, in 2018, JNIM bombed the G5 Sahel headquarters in Mali, forcing its relocation to Bamako. JNIM's attacks were not limited to military targets; they also conducted assaults on civilian officials and local leaders suspected of collaborating with government forces, thus destabilizing local governance structures and instilling fear within communities. Simultaneously, ISGS, an ISIS affiliate,

carried out violent attacks across Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. This group was responsible for the 2017 ambush on U. S. soldiers in Niger, an event that highlighted the growing threat and sophistication of militant groups operating in the region's border zones. These jihadist groups proved resilient in the face of military pressure from both local and international forces, such as France's Operation Barkhane (which concluded in 2022) and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which comprised regional forces from Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.

For Instance, on the question to what extent the security strategies for countering terrorism have been effective, one of the experts expressed that [58];

I would say to a large extent, West Africa's counterterrorism strategy has been effective. But personally, I feel or rather I would say I think that we can do more.

On the issue of French-led and regional efforts targeted the leadership of these groups, but the jihadists adapted by shifting their operational bases, diversifying recruitment strategies, and exploiting local grievances such as ethnic tensions, poverty, and perceived state neglect [23, 63-65].

The drivers behind the rise of terrorism in West Africa are multi-faceted. Structural issues, including poor governance, pervasive corruption, political instability, and social inequalities, have created a fertile ground for extremist ideologies [66]. Furthermore, the economic hardship experienced across the region has rendered marginalized communities susceptible to recruitment by terrorist groups, who often promise financial incentives and social belonging [43].

Terrorism in West Africa evolved from 2017-2023. Jihadist groups adapted, exploiting socio-political complexities. Their persistence destabilized Sahel and Lake Chad, disrupted governance and strained resources. Key factors fueling persistence include poverty, inequality, ethnic/religious tensions, weak governance and external interference. The rapid expansion of terrorism in West Africa has severely impacted security, human rights, and socio-economic stability. Over the past six years, violence has displaced millions of people, strained local economies, and led to widespread insecurity, especially in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Regional efforts, such as the G5 Sahel Joint Force and multinational initiatives, have sought to counter these threats, but challenges persist due to resource constraints, limited international support, and deeply rooted socio-economic inequalities that allow these groups to thrive [45]. Going forward, a comprehensive approach addressing both security and developmental needs, as well as improving governance, will be crucial to mitigating terrorism's influence in the region.

As noted by one of the security experts [59]:

With the aid of international organizations, I think that when nations come together, they can do more. They say two good heads are better than one. So if the Lake Chad, Sahel Region and the other part of West African regions are able to come together to put in place structures that will ensure for tight security, I believe it would do more good than harm. So

there is a need for that collaboration with neighboring countries to enhance regional security.

4. Conclusion

Since resolutions 2349 and 2391 were adopted, the UNSC's role in counterterrorism has changed dramatically, with a particular emphasis on the worsening security conditions in West Africa. The analysis showed that stronger implementation mechanisms are required, even if these resolutions have given rise to a legal framework for international collaboration. Although the G5 Sahel and ECOWAS have played a significant role, logistical and financial limitations continue to limit their efficacy.

Despite the progress made through these resolutions, terrorism continues to destabilize the region. Groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP have shown resilience in adapting to changing political and security environments, accentuating the need for continuous innovation in counterterrorism strategies. Furthermore, addressing the root causes of terrorism such as economic disenfranchisement, social inequalities, and weak governance remains critical for any long-term solution.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several policy recommendations can be made to strengthen counterterrorism efforts in West Africa:

Strengthening Regional Cooperation: Enhanced coordination between West African states, regional bodies, and international actors is crucial. ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel should receive more financial and logistical support to bolster their capacity to respond to terrorism. Regional cooperation should also focus on harmonizing legal frameworks to better prosecute terrorists and disrupt funding channels.

Improving Intelligence Sharing and Border Security: Greater emphasis should be placed on intelligence sharing, not only within West Africa but also with international partners. Establishing a robust intelligence-sharing framework would allow countries to act more proactively against terrorist groups. Furthermore, strengthening border security to prevent the cross-border movement of terrorists is imperative.

Addressing Root Causes: Counterterrorism efforts must focus on addressing the socioeconomic conditions that allow terrorism to flourish. Poverty, unemployment, and disenfranchisement drive recruitment into extremist groups. Therefore, international aid programs should prioritize economic development, education, and infrastructure projects in vulnerable regions.

Ensuring Human Rights and Rule of Law: Counterterrorism operations must adhere to international human rights standards. Training programs for military and law enforcement personnel on human rights should be expanded to avoid abuses that can fuel further radicalization. States should also

work to strengthen their judicial systems to ensure fair trials and due process for suspected terrorists.

Utilizing Technology for Counterterrorism: West African nations must adopt modern technological tools for intelligence gathering, surveillance, and combating terrorist propaganda. Social media platforms and online channels used by terrorist organizations to recruit and spread their ideologies should be actively monitored and countered with appropriate measures.

Abbreviations

AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BIR	Rapid Intervention Battalion
CTC	Counter Terrorism Committee
CTED	Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JNIM	Jamat Nusrat Ul-Islam Wa-al Muslimin
MINUSMA	Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Missions in Mali
LCB	Lake Chad Basin
MNJTf	Multinational Joint Task Force
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution

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Author Contributions

Moses Ameh: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Funding acquisition, Resources, Writing – original draft

Jibola Samuel Kolawole: Conceptualization, Data curation, Writing – review & editing

Ololade Oluwatosin Adesuyi: Data curation, Review & editing

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the outcome of this research work has been reported in this manuscript.

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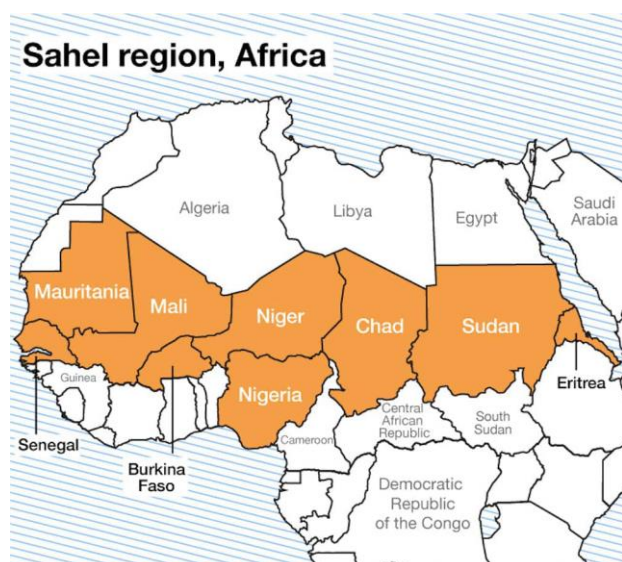
Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Appendix

Table 1. List of UN Security Resolutions from 2014 to 2023.

UNSC Resolution 2349	March 2017	Counter-terrorism specific to Boko Haram	Aims to address the threat of Boko Haram and ISWAP in the Lake Chad Basin region	Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon
UNSC Resolution 2391	December 2017	Support for the G5 Sahel Joint Force in Counter-terrorism	Provides logistical, operational, and financial support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force, facilitating regional cooperation to counter terrorism	Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad
UNSC Resolution 2396	December 2017	Reinforces counter-terrorism measures for FTFs	Strengthens the global framework for preventing travel and financing of foreign terrorist fighters, which impacts countries like Niger and Nigeria	Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso
UNSC Resolution 2457	February 2019	Silencing the Guns in Africa	Focuses on tackling armed conflict and insurgencies, aiming to reduce terrorist threats in West Africa by 2020	All West African countries
UNSC Resolution 2498	November 2019	Addressing Terrorism in Africa	Strengthens African Union-led counter-terrorism operations, with a focus on supporting regional forces like the G5 Sahel	Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad
UNSC Resolution 2532	July 2020	COVID-19 and Peacekeeping	Calls for a global ceasefire during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the need to maintain counter-terrorism efforts during the health crisis	All West African countries
UNSC Resolution 2565	February 2021	COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution and Security	Focuses on ensuring safe and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines in conflict-affected regions, while maintaining security from terrorist threats	Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Nigeria
UNSC Resolution 2584	June 2021	Renewal of MINUSMA Mandate in Mali	Extends and strengthens the mandate of the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, with a focus on counter-terrorism and stabilizing northern regions	Mali
UNSC Resolution 2605	October 2021	G5 Sahel Joint Force Mandate	Reaffirms support for the G5 Sahel Joint Force in combating terrorism in West Africa	Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad
UNSC Resolution 2667	December 2022	Sanctions Against Terrorism in Africa	Imposes sanctions and travel bans on individuals and groups associated with terrorism, particularly in Africa	Nigeria, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso
UNSC Resolution 2680	June 2023	MINUSMA Extension	Extends the mandate of the UN peacekeeping force in Mali, focusing on security and counter-terrorism efforts	Mali



Source: The Conversation

Figure 1. Part of the African Map showing The Sahel Region.

The above Map of Africa covering the Western Region shows the countries in the Sahel region, i.e the countries that the resolution 2349 and 2391 cover which includes some part of Nigeria, and then the Lake Chad, Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso.

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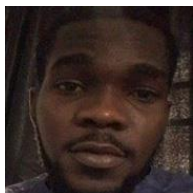
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Biography



Ameh Moses is a PhD candidate of political science in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He holds a masters degree in International Relations and bachelors in Political science from University of Ibadan and Kogi state university respectively. He is currently a graduate, research and teaching assistant at the department of political science, University of Ibadan. A recipient of the federal government scholarship award for studies in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. His research interest includes terrorism and counter terrorism, national security, insurgencies and the impact of conflict on the state. His current research intersects community policing and counter terrorism in North Eastern Nigeria with emphasis on Intelligence gathering by local communities and government law enforcement agencies.

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Jibola Samuel Kolawole is an emerging scholar in International Relations with a strong foundation in history and education. He earned his Master's degree in International Relations from the University of Ibadan in 2024 and holds a BA, Ed in History from Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo (2019). His academic curiosity is reflected in notable research works, including a study on the impact of social networks on student performance. Jibola also conducted significant archival research in Abeokuta, uncovering vital historical pieces. His academic portfolio is complemented by a professional teaching certificate from the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), demonstrating his commitment to education and research. His scholarly interests lie in security studies, international

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Ololade Oluwatosin Adesuyi is a Political Science scholar and software engineer with expertise in international security, foreign policy, and international organizations. She holds an M.Sc. in Political Science from the University of Ibadan and a B.Sc. in Political Science from Adekunle Ajasin University. Alongside academia, Ololade is a Software Engineer, specializing in scalable API development and collaborative software solutions. She has teaching and research experience at the University of Ibadan and Adekunle Ajasin University. Passionate about youth empowerment, governance, and technology's role in political activism, she actively contributes to advocacy movements such as the Not Too Young to Run campaign.

Research Field

Moses Ameh: Terrorism, Counter terrorism, Foreign Policy, State Repression, International Security, Insurgencies

Jibola Samuel Kolawole: International Relations, Security Studies, Migration Politics, Foreign Policy State Formation and State Building

Ololade Oluwatosin Adesuyi: International Relations, Foreign Policy, Cyber Security, Conflict Studies