HUMANUS DISCOURSE Vol. 6. NO 3. 2026
ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

Rethinking strategies for policing African borders: Implications against security threats

Afolabi Innocent Ariremako[1]
Department of Linguistics and Languages,
Federal University Oye Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria.

AMOSUN, Abodunrin Olukayode[2]
Department of History & International Studies, Faculty of Arts,
Federal University, Oye-Ekiti Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Adejoke Oluwaseyi – Paul[3]
Department of Linguistics and Languages
Federal University Oye Ekiti State,
Ekiti state, Nigeria

Abstract

The importance of the police in securing a nation's borders has never been in dispute. The police force is primarily involved in the prevention and detection of crimes and the arrest and prosecution of offenders. These basic functions of the police can be enlarged to embrace the preservation of public safety, the maintenance of law and order and policing a nation's borders. However, much is left to be desired in the way the police perform their duties on the borders. The police often wait for border crimes to be committed before they begin to investigate thus having grievous implications for a nation's security. Prevention of border crimes is better than trying to hold and punish the offenders after the crimes are committed. Even where crimes are committed and the attention of the police drawn, their effectiveness is diminished by the excessively long period and slows pace of investigations. Prosecutions are as a result much delayed. These days most people are calling the integrity of the police into question. There are allegations of bribery and corruption along the borders and being tools in the hands of smugglers, criminals and border traffickers whom they receive favours and whose offences are overlooked. The paper seeks to unravel why police unprofessionalism have promoted border crimes, the influx of criminals, smuggling, illicit trade in opium, gun running, drugs, trafficking in labour, women and children, wars in some African states which subsequently constitute threats to national security.

Key words: Police, Borders, Crimes, Criminals, Committed.

Introduction

The rate of terrorism, the proliferation of small arms, human trafficking, drug smuggling and other cross-border crimes which are threats to the security of African countries has brought several critical questions to the fore in terms of

[1]Email: Afolabi.ariremako@fuoye.edu.ng
[2]Email: abodunrin.amosun@fuoye.edu.ng
[3]Email: adejoke.faborode@fuoye.edu.ng

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

strategies to be adopted in policing African borders or border management in general. The ease and speed with which rebels, terrorists, human traffickers, trafficked persons, weapons and contraband materials are smuggled from country to country has further exposed the inadequacy of established structures in terms of agencies, systems, policies, laws and procedures relating to border security management. Over the years, globalization and the rise in terrorist threats and transnational criminal activities have made border management issues a matter of economic and national security.

However, despite the awareness of African states of the threats or benefits of effective border policing, with the exception of there has not been a common approach or rigorous effort at both the national, sub-regional and continental levels to implement holistic border policing strategies. In West Africa for instance, the Senegalese Ministry of Interior requested technical assistance support from the MIEUX Project (Migration EU Expertise). Since then, MIEUX experts went on a mission to Senegal to work with Senegalese officials. A strategic document and an action plan have been developed to facilitate the implementation of the strategy which was finalized in May and was launched by August 2013. Against this background, this paper discusses border policing strategies in the light of insecurity challenges. It argues for documentation of existing national strategies on border policing management and their alignment into AU and ECOWAS strategy. These strategies, when enforced, will be critical in addressing border insecurity issues in the continent.[4]

Border Posts and Checkpoints in Africa

A border post can be defined as the "location where one country's authority over goods and persons ends and another country's authority begins." It is the location where a multitude of government agencies (i.e. Revenue Authority Customs; Immigration; Security Police; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Health; Bureau of Standards, etc.) are involved in the various document and goods controls, the calculation and collection of duties and taxes, as well as immigration. The multiplicity of those agencies operating on both sides of the same borderdoubles the bureaucracy at border posts, which translates into congestion and delays (the waiting time for a container/truck to cross a border post in Africa can range from 3 minutes to 2.8 days8).[5]

In Africa, border checkpoints have been overstretched in terms of manpower and infrastructure. While they are primarily intended to prevent the entry into the country of undesirable individuals (e.g. criminals or others who pose threats) and the smuggling of illegal goods, they face a range of obstacles to the free flow of people, services and goods. These can be summarized as: the limited infrastructure available, congestion due to increased traffic volumes, delays due to the use of outdated manual procedures, corruption and illegal trading. It is noteworthy that despite these high costs, West Africa's intraregional trade constitutes an important proportion of the sub-region's total

[4]African Union Report, Draft African Union Strategy for Enhancing Border Management in Africa. Addis Ababa, 2021.
[5]African Union Report, (2012).

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

trade (13.2 percent)[6]. Any improvement in removing these administrative bottlenecks will reduce the trade transaction costs, enhance export competitiveness, and increase intraregional trade. One sector that is badly impacted by the delays and inefficiencies at border posts is agriculture, particularly in relation to value-chain crops and livestock (e.g. maize, onions/shallots, livestock/meat, millet/sorghum, rice, and poultry). The delays experienced by trucks carrying agricultural products; the density of checkpoints along the corridors; and the high "facilitation payments" to officials, severely impact the transportation cost of goods from the production zones to the consumer markets, driving up retail prices. For instance, a truck transporting millet/sorghum on the Koutiala-Dakar corridor (between Mali and Senegal) has to pass through close to 100 checkpoints and border posts, and the driver can expect to pay bribes of about US$ 437 along the route.[7] The impact is exacerbated when it comes to perishable goods, which rely on speedy delivery times. In the wider context of soaring global prices for food, the need to address food security within the continent, and the potentiality of agriculture as a major export earner; particularly to its BRIC partners such bottlenecks constitute a risk to Africa's export-led growth performance and to its economic development.

The number of controls and the levels of bribes and delays vary significantly by corridor and by country. For instance, the Ouagadougou-Tema corridor (between Burkina Faso and Ghana) and the Ouagadougou-Lomé corridor (between Burkina Faso and Togo) experience a high number of customs controls, although the level of bribes paid to customs is very low compared to the Bamako-Ouagadougou corridor (between Mali and Burkina Faso), where almost half of thebribes go to the police. Another interesting finding is that although the Bamako-Ouagadougou ranks third (among the six selected corridors in the above graphs) in terms of the number of controls and level of bribes paid per trip, it records the lowest level of delays per trip (126) minutes of delays, compared to 591 minutes for the Bamako-Dakar corridor).[8]While this paper does not delve into the reasons for the high numbers of checkpoints along certain corridors or the varied levels of bribes paid to different uniformed services, it recognizes the severity of these constraints and seeks to sensitize governments on the need to remove them.

Border Posts and Checkpoints in Eastern and Southern Africa

In Eastern and Southern Africa, goods are transported through 10 major corridors, namely Northern, North-South, Dar Central, Dar es Salaam, Nacala, Beira, Maputo, Trans Kalahari, Trans Kaprivi, and Trans Cunene. The large number of border post and roadblocks along those corridors and the inefficiency of the procedures are overwhelmingly costly to traders and businesses in the sub-region. For instance, traders/trucks have to negotiate 47 roadblocks and weigh stations between Kigali (Rwanda) and Mombasa (Kenya);

[6]ECOWAS Report Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Related Materials, (2006), Available at www.ecowas.int.org. Accessed 12th March, 2017.
[7]ECOWAS Report, (2006)
[8]ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), Documet, Under Section 68.

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

and they have to wait about 36 hours at the South Africa-Zimbabwe border post (Beitbridge).[9]

Central and North Africa

The Central and North African countries are the least integrated in terms of road density and intraregional trade. While the road network and the quality of transport infrastructure in North Africa surpass the African average, it is the limited intraregional trade that is a major problem. North African countries trade more internationally, mostly with the EU and other OECD countries, than intra regionally.[10]Central Africa is characterized by poor infrastructure (road, railroads, ports, and ICT), inefficient transportation services, and the phenomenon of roadblocks, all of which result in high transportation and trade costs. A comprehensive and coordinated approach to facilitate intraregional and international trade, through improved infrastructure, reduced checkpoints, and harmonized customs and border procedures, will be key to expanding trade and strengthening the integration agenda in the sub-region. Promoting the development of OSBPs and corridor development programs in these two sub-regions of Central and North Africa will not only expand intraregional and international trade, it will also boost competitiveness and inclusive economic growth. For instance, developing regional transportation infrastructure andOSBPs in Ouajda-Tlemcen (Morocco-Algeria), Ghardimaou (Algeria-Tunisia), Ras Adjir (Tunisia-Libya), and Musaid-Saloum (Libya-Egypt) will contribute to increased production and exchange between North African countries and improve access to social services, especially by the poor and disadvantaged regions of the countries.[11]

Border Posts and Checkpoints in West Africa

Border Posts and Checkpoints in West Africa According to the 15th report by the Improved Road Transport Governance Initiative (IRTG), there are between 1.8 and 3.2 checkpoints per 100 km along corridors in West Africa. Further, the bribes collected by customs, police, gendarmerie, and other uniformed services range from US$ 3 to US$ 23 per 100 km (close to US$ 200 per average trip). The Abidjan-Bamako corridor has the highest number of checkpoints and levels of bribery, which is principally a legacy of the 2011 political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, especially in the northern region of the country. A consignment of goods moving along the West African corridors can expect significant delays, ranging from 18 to 29 minutes per 100 km, which equates to 7 hours of delays per average trip. Those delays are mainly due to the lengthy checking of goods and vehicles by uniformed services (police, gendarmerie, and customs) stationed along the corridors and at border posts.[12]

[9]Isebill V. Gruhun, The Economic Commission of Africa in African Regional Organizations (ed), DomenieoMazzeco (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1984).
[10]Ibids.
[11]ESA BMO Network, Harmonizing Border Procedures in ESA Region to Facilitate Trade, November, 2010
[12]See Convention on Dual Nationality and Economic Harmonization, Abijan.

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

Strategies for Policing African Borders

At the continental level, the African Union (AU) has passed a series of regulations since the late 1990s that seek to guide border policing and management in Africa. At the same time, there has been recognition of the need to harmonize and consolidate these agreements to ensure the implementation of specific border management clauses. Thus, in 2007, the first steps were taken by the AU to develop a continental strategy for enhancing border management in Africa. The draft strategy document was finalized in May 2012 and full-scale implementation commenced in June 2014, although more work and consultations have to be done by roping in more stakeholders, including regional training institutions, to increase local ownership and a wider awareness of the strategy.[13] The strategy rests on three pillars: cooperation and coordination; capacity building; and community involvement.

The first pillar is borrowed from the Integrated Border Management Concept widely used by the European Union, while the remaining two are additions introduced by the AU. The integrated border management concept emphasizes national and international coordination and cooperation among all therelevant agencies involved in border security and trade facilitation. These are meant to establish effective, efficient and coordinated border management in order to reach the objective of open, but well controlled and secure borders (Guidelines for Integrated Border Management Guideline in EC Cooperation; 2009).[14]

Similarly, at the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) level, there have been agreements and resolutions adopted to enhance border security. These strategies, when enforced, will be critical in addressing border insecurity issues in the sub-region, particularly in the wake of the Sahel experience. These include the ECOWAS Protocol relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment, 1990 (Chapter 6, Article 12) and the ECOWAS Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security 1999, (Chapter X, Article 46). However, unlike at the AU, these have not translated into a sub-regional border security strategy. Despite these drawbacks, some member countries such as Senegal are in the final stages of developing their national border management strategy.[15]

Border policing essentially entails controlling and regulating the flow of people, goods and services across a country's borders in the national interest and usually for the maintenance of peace and security. Borders ensure a state's territorial sovereignty, as states are recognized under international law by their ability to maintain their borders, secure their territories and protect their citizens (Okumu, 2011).[16] These tasks are typically undertaken by government

[13]Onwuka, Development and Integration in West Africa: The case of ECOWAS (University of Ife Press, 1980), p146.
[14]Iwar, Can Nigeria's Police be Reformed? BBC. News Thursday, 30th July, 2009
[15]E.E.O A lemika and I.C Chukwuma, Analysis of Police And Policing In Nigeria. Center for Law Enforcement Education and National Human Rights Commission, Lagos.Bohm and Haley(2002), Introduction to Criminal Justice . Third Edition, Glencoe/McGraw-Hill.(2000)
[16]Okumu, Challenges Effective Policing in Nigeria. The Nigeria Voice, 20th July 2010

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

agencies (Customs and Excise, Immigration and Police) with different combinations of agencies according to the country's laws. In West Africa alone, there are a total of 35 international boundaries characterized by high levels of porosity. This makes them highly vulnerable to threats such as trafficking of people, drugs, small arms and light weapons as well as recent instances of terrorism. Nonetheless, border security issues are not always integrated into national security or economic strategies, and border agencies are usually ill-equipped, ill-trained and poorly resourced. For example, in monitoring visits conducted by the Kofi Annan International.

Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) Regional Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) programme in the 15 ECOWAS countries since 2009, alumni, security sector operatives and civil society actors have been unanimous in reiterating the need for periodic and targeted training programmes and resources to be able to effectively combat the insecurity around the borders. In the sub-region, appropriate infrastructure such as detection equipment and scanners are not always present at some border posts, especially the further away from the capital. The Customs administration in different countries of the region is also not usually equipped with national databases of offenders, their networks and types and volumes of illicit commodity seizures (KAIPTC, SALW Report 2012).[17]

Compounding the issue are understaffed agencies and unmotivated staff who do not effectively collaborate and coordinate their activities nationally and regionally. Consequently, the instability engendered by the Arab Spring and the growth and increase in transnational organized criminal groups and their transnational activities has severely tested the response mechanisms put in place to secure the borders.

Challenges and Lessons from the Sahel

Geographically, the Sahel is a semi-arid belt of barren, sandy and rock-strewn land, mostly hostile to human habitation. The nomadic lifestyle and temporary communal life leaves inhabitants at the periphery of government control, and thus easy prey to the inducements of non-state actors. Core Sahelian states are: Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Chad and Burkina Faso. However, the empirical experiences discussed here are those gathered primarily from Mali and Niger. The KAIPTC SALW programme ran a special project the Sahel Project in five Sahelian countries: Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Nigeria. Five courses were run on border security management, security sector reform, small arms proliferation, maritime piracy and transnational crimes, and collaborative policing. Following from above, border agents mandated to manage the country's borders lack the capacity to carry out their mandates effectively. In Niger and Mali, for instance, personnel at border posts are ill equipped and poorly motivated. Lack of office space and accommodation for border patrol and control personnel, coupled with inadequate means of communication have also severely tested the capacity of these agents to carry out their work

[17]ECOWAS, Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Related Material, 2006

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

effectively. Additionally, inadequate skills and poor understanding of the job are prevalent. Aggravating these problems is the poor awareness of national constitutive laws and regional agreements8 relevant to the effective conduct of their work. Some of these operatives are not familiar with their own national laws and those formulated at regional level such as the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons.[18]

In Mali and Niger, for example, personnel posted to the border areas complained of lack of adequate training and logistics to effectively carry out their work. Some posted to the Tessalit region of Mali (This is located in northern Mali and borders Algeria) bemoaned poor working conditions and lack of logistical support. These two countries occupy vast territories thus making patrolling very difficult, a situation which calls for regular training and improvement in working conditions for such personnel. Another key factor that is useful for border management is the inclusion of border communities in the management of the borders. At the local level, most border management efforts do not take advantage of border communities. The local community usually has intimate knowledge of the terrain, the criminal syndicates, meeting places and other security issues. Nevertheless, they are not always involved in managing the borders. Their inclusion and incorporation of local perspectives is useful in informing state actors of the threats in the border areas. The gaps created by these omissions are filled by transnational criminal networks. Some of their members even marry local women in order to enjoy the social protection associated with being part of a community (Goita, 2011).[19] Thus, border agencies must actively involve the local community thereby earning their trust and gradually reducing their reliance on other non-state groups.

In the Sahel region of Africa, the lack of comprehensive national border management strategies has meant that most countries derive their responses to border management issues from documents such as the Customs and Police legislation, leading to a scattered policy approach. Nonetheless, Senegal has taken bold steps in this regard by being the first Sahel country to develop a national border management strategy. The strategy ensures better management of the country's land, sea and air borders and strengthens internal security. It seeks to facilitate the movement of people and goods and promote cross-border cooperation and economic development. Large-scale migration and the increase in transnational trafficking coupled with its strategic location as an important transit point for irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa and Europe have informed Senegal's efforts at the national level to prioritise border management.[20]

Challenges to Border Policing in Africa

Despite numerous efforts by various countries to curtail the level of cross-border crimes in Africa, crime and social disorder still persist in the continent.

[18]ECOWAS, Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Ammunition and Related Material, 2006.Available @www.ecowas.int.org.Accessed 12th March, 2017.
[19]M. Goita. West Africans Growing Terrorist Threat: Confronting AQIM's Sahelian Strategy. African Security Brief, No11. 2011. Africa Center for Strategic Studies
[20]Ibids.

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

Millions of lives and property are being lost as a result of one crime or the other. Some believed that the inability of African countries to ensure maximum security across their borders is as a result of so many social and technical constraints amongst which is corruption. Wide spread corruption amongst African states is fuelling abuses against ordinary citizens and severely undermining the rule of law on a daily basis. Countless ordinary citizens, criminals, terrorists and traffickers alike are accosted by armed police officers, customs officials, immigration officers etc who demand bribes and commit human rights abuses against them as a means of extorting money. These abuses range from ordinary arrest and unlawful detention to threats and acts of violence, including sexual assault, torture, and even extrajudicial killings (Human Rights Watch, 2010).[21] Police is not unique. Corruption exists in the various police forces in Africa much the same as it does in any other police organization the world over, except perhaps, in terms of its extent and the organization's reaction to it. However, the issue of corruption in the police as noted above cannot be treated in isolation of the larger society. Police routinely extort money from victims of crimes to initiate investigations and demand bribes from suspects to drop investigations. Corruption in the police is so endemic that it has eroded public trust and confidence they have in the police. To achieve any success in combating corruption in the police one has to take a holistic approach and most importantly understanding the growth and existence of corruption within the police.

Institutional constraints are also a factor. Allegations levelled against the institution and its personnel, some of which have proven to be true, include arbitrariness in exercising its power, corruption, perversion of justice, and delays in the administration of justice. Various factors have been blamed as constituting a stumbling block to the effective administration of justice and efficient maintenance of law and order in Africa. Other factors are inadequate manpower (both in strength and expertise), insufficient education and training, inadequate equipment, and poorconditions of service of the average policeman. The long-term failure of African authorities to address police bribery, extortion, and wholesale embezzlement threatens the basic rights of all Africans. Therefore, good policy is the bedrock for the rule of law and public safety according to Iwar.[22] In research conducted by Human Rights Watch in 2010 on 145 victims of and witnesses to police corruption on the Nigeria-Benin border, it was observed that corruption was done in the open. Among them are market traders, commercial drivers, sex workers, criminal suspects, and victims of common crime, rank-and-file and senior level police officers; federal government officials; judges, prosecutors, and lawyers, religious and civil society leaders, journalist, diplomats and members of an armed vigilante group. Findings from the research shows "the myriad forms of police corruption in Nigeria" and "also show how institutionalized extortion and a profound lack of political will to reform the force, and impunity combine to make police corruption a deeply embedded problem". This includes cases of extortion, bribery, embezzlement, and failure of oversight functions. One corrupt practice detailed in the findings is called "returns" in which rank and file officers are

[21]Law Commission of Canada, 2002.
[22]Iwar, Can Nigeria's Police be Reformed? BBC. News Thursday, 30th July, 2010

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

compelled to pay up the chain of command a share of the money they extort from the public. "Another form of corruption the report noted is the practice of forcing crime victim "to pay the police to conduct every stage of an investigation (Human Right Watch, 2010).[23]

Mammus further stressed that the major challenge of policing African borders is the manpower shortage, inadequate funding, inadequate logistic support and infrastructure, lack of serviceable information and technological equipment to cover all the areas of the borders of a country are responsible for the current state of insecurity on African borders.[24]The police is arguably the most visible agent of government and citizens often assess the character of a government through its police force. This is because the police are the "guardians" of society. To a large extent, the growth, action and behaviour of the security agencies as an institution not only reflect the political and economic character of society, but also mirror what those in power are willing or able to tolerate or condone or perhaps even demand of the police, customs union, immigration officers etc.

Police Perception like in the case of Nigeria is another important factor that has been neglected for many years is the perception of the police force itself by the police officers. Questions thatreadily come to mind are: What is police officer's perception of the citizens they claimed to be serving? What is the perception of citizens to police officers in Nigeria? To be frank, the image of police in the eyes of Nigerians is bad arising from all the factors enumerated above. Military Orientation: The police as it is now came out of a military administration. That is probably the biggest challenge we face turning it from a force into a service. Although Iwar (2009) agrees that police officers often lack the skills needed to police effectively, but refuses to admit the most serious allegations made about the police that they brutally torture and sometimes kill suspects without-trial (Iwar, 2009).[25]

Godfatherism which has also become a problem in African politics has roared its head in cross-border issues. Godfatherism is an endemic problem in Nigeria, which the police still battle with. Godfatherism is the funding and abetting of vices and shielding "connected" criminals from justice by government agents and highly placed officials entrusted with the power and authority to investigate and prosecute such vices. It has become a dominant issue in African polity and impedes the course of justice in virtually all the countries in Africa (Onyeozili, 2005).[26] Furthermore, many highly placed public officers in Nigeria are known to pervert the course of justice by the virtue of their closeness to the seat of power. Often, the police get sucked in, and this accounts for their complicity in several unresolved crimes across the country. According to Alemika, many of these problems in the Nigeria police force are self- evident and have been sources of serious concern to the public, governments, police authorities and officials, the mass media and human rights organization in the

[23]Iwar, Can Nigeria's Police be Reformed? BBC. News Thursday, 30th July, 2009
[24]Mammus, Challenges and Prospects of Policing (Edo State, Nigeria in Perpective).
[25]Iwar, Can Nigeria's Police be Reformed? BBC. News Thursday, 30th July, 2009
[26]Onyeozili, (2005).

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

country.[27] What is required is a determination to address the problems. The knowledge of human rights among the majority of policemen is poor. This might be as a result of the long period of military rule. Although policemen are taught the principles of the rule of law, in reality this is not put into practice because military rule does not recognize the rule of law. In the new democratic dispensation, policemen should be given intensive on-the-job training on citizens' fundamental rights which they must uphold at all times.

The customs environment in the Southern and Eastern African sub-region is characterized by a lack of coordination among the multiple government agencies on both sides of borders. This raises the common challenge of the duplication of procedures at each border, which increases the potential for risk management and fraud. While some countries in the sub-region have entered into agreements to standardize customs procedures and to coordinate government agencies, limited progress has been achieved in the integration of processes and cooperation between border checkpoints. Furthermore, the lack of computerized customs management systems results in lengthy and inefficient manual operations carried out by traders and officials at borders. In most cases where customs systems are not harmonized, the different government agencies at borders cannot interact or trade. Even when computerized systems are used, such as ASYCUDA, the incompatibility of the systems that are tailor-made to suit each country's specific needs, together with unreliability of the networks, pose additional threats to the cost of trade in the sub-region.[28]

The bottlenecks confronting formal cross-border trade in Africa serve to fuel the very high level of informal trading practices. These can be defined as the trade in goods, between two neighboring countries, which does not pass formally through customs controls. While informal trade is a major source of job creation and livelihoods (60-70 percent of African households earn income from the informal sector), policymakers have been slow to incentivize traders to formalize their activities. The informal sector in Africa, which is estimated to represent about one-third of official GDP, is characterized by micro, small and medium-size enterprises (MSMEs), predominantly women and individual dealers in agro-business and pastoral activities. Small traders and business owners turn to the informal sector to avoid the complex regulations and duties (especially the high price of import and export duties) levied in formal trade, cumbersome customs procedures, and the high degree of corruption and "facilitation payments" encountered at checkpoints and border posts. The types of products traded informally are mainly unprocessed and from sectors that are weak and poorly organized. In West Africa, they include cotton fiber, cement, vegetable oils, petroleum products, fertilizers, and pesticides. Countries such as Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, and Kenya have a high incidence of informal cross-border trading in respect to veterinary drugs, livestock, milk and dairy products, chickens and eggs, fish, coffee, grains, beans, shoes, clothing,

[27]E. E. O. Alemika, Colonialism, State and Policing in Nigeria, Crime, Law and Social change,(1993) pp189-219.
[28]African Union, Draft Union Strategy for Enhancing Border Management in Africa. Addis Ababa.

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

manufactured and electronic goods. In the Southern African sub-region, it is mostly crop products such as maize, rice, and beans that are traded informally among countries. For instance, the volume of maize traded informally in the sub-region rose to 11,168 metric tonnes (MT) in April 2011 (a 79 percent increase over the previous year).14 Informal cross-border trades bring with it a number of disbenefits. It weakens formal trade and lessens government resources (such as value added taxes). It reduces potential investment in the local economy, while being rendered "invisible" in official national statistics, which are used for forward planning and policymaking by governments.[29]

Informal trade also lowers the efficiency of policy measures that guarantee health, safety and environmental protection. For example, agricultural goods traded informally escape SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures) controls at borders, which may pose health risks. To sum up, the cost of informal cross-border trade is significant for most African governments and for overall socioeconomic development. For instance, in 2006, the informal export of goods from Uganda to its five neighboring countries reached close to US$ 231 million, which equates to about 86 percent of official export flows to these countries. In order to address this problem, African governments need to incentivize small and large-scale informal trade operators to formalize their activities by registering their businesses, and paying customs duties and taxes.

This will help to build an enabling environment for business (i.e. equal access to credit and training, knowledge and information sharing etc.). Any attempt to increase formal cross-border trade in Africa should be accompanied by the design and implementation of joint trade policies as well as effective customs procedures.

Responses to Border Policing Challenges in Africa

At the ECOWAS level, there are some protocols and regulations that provide for interventions on border management. The 1999 ECOWAS Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, for instance, under Article 46, talks about control of cross-border crime but makes little mention of related areas of border management. The ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons of 200612 under Article 22 also encourages the strengthening of border controls through sub-regional cooperation and capacity building but, understandably, it stops short of prescribing a more comprehensive border management strategy such as the AU's draft strategy (ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and related Materials, 2006). The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework in turn emphasizes cross-border initiatives as a means of reducing tensions, fighting cross-border crime and enhancing community welfare, among other concerns (ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework Section 68).[30]

[29]UEMOA 15th IRTG Report UEMOA. Available at http://www.borderlesswas.com.Accessed 22nd March 2017.
[30]ECOWAS Conflict Framework (ECPF) Document, under Section 68

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

ECOWAS has also been reviewing the Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Implementation Plan in response to the terrorist activities and threat in the region. These initiatives address aspects of border management but do not address comprehensively border insecurity issues as a whole. Thus despite the challenges and threats posed by border insecurity, there is a lack of a common approach in terms of policy formulation, especially at the national and sub-regional levels. The AU's strategy, therefore, offers the blueprint from which ECOWAS and national governments can formulate their own context-specific strategies for a more integrated regional response to the challenges of border management. Despite the many challenges associated with the implementation process, the strategy will nevertheless be useful as a starting point for national and regional efforts at border management.

However, the primary responsibility for managing borders rests with the state, which must necessarily put in place the structures and policies required to maintain national sovereignty and protect its citizens. (14 Draft African Union Strategy for Enhancing Border Management in Africa, 2012).[31]

Joint Border Posts as a Solution

The cumbersome procedures and requirements for trading across borders and the resulting increased trade costs have been the subject of much discussion at international trade forums. This has underscored the need to negotiate and implement preferential trade agreements aimed at reducing the barriers and costs of trade, which result from compliance costs, procedural delays, and lack of predictability, among others. For instance, the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures, which entered in force in 1974 (Kyoto Convention),[32] is a landmark agreement for facilitating international trade and harmonizing legislative and regulatory requirements. The imperative to simplify and harmonize customs procedures was reiterated during the 2003 World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference, where it was stated that "customs administrations are a major component in the efficiency of international trade because they process every single consignment to ensure compliance with national regulatory requirements and international multilateral trading rules."

Many regions of the world have entered into agreements to facilitate the cross-border transportation of goods and persons, and to standardize and harmonize customs policies and procedures. For instance, in Asia, the Agreement on the Facilitation of Cross-Border Transport of Goods and People was signed in 1999 by six member states, namely Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Myanmar, and Cambodia. This calls for the harmonization of cross-border procedures and the propagation of multimodal transportation. It enabled the implementation of fast border clearance through the establishment of Joint Customs Controls at selected border sites (e.g. in Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia) and the practice of One-Stop Customs Inspection (i.e. customs procedures carried out at

[31]African Union, Draft Union Strategy for Enhancing Border Management in Africa. Addis Ababa.
[32]United State Agency for International Development (USAID), Cross-Border Trade in East African Countries: Shared Issues and Priorities for Reform, (June 2009).

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

only one side of the border but in compliance with the laws of both countries). In the European Union, the establishment of Joint Customs Controls between member states has significantly reduced duplicated inspections at borders, minimized unpredictable delays, and reduced the overall cost of trade. Improving customs procedures through one-stop customs inspection or a One Stop Border Post (OSBP) is a relatively recent phenomenon in Africa. An African regional grouping that has carried out significant work in this area is the South African Development Community (SADC), which comprises 14 member states (Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe).[33]

Acknowledging the high additional costs caused by delays at border posts, SADC has adopted as a core mandate to create and implement Joint Customs Controls. Currently, agreements are being concluded between member states over the establishment of joint facilities and the harmonization of cross-border procedures. Other African regional groupings such as the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), and Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS), also view the establishment of one-stop and joint control arrangements at borders as key to facilitating trade. In Southern Africa, the Chirundu OSBP and the recently signed border agreement between Mozambique and South Africa constitute two such initiatives. The adoption of the EAC One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) Bill, in May 2010, will set the legal framework and encourage political commitment for the establishment and implementation of OSBPs in the sub-region. Currently, negotiations are ongoing to establish an OSBP in Malabar, between Kenya and Uganda. In West Africa, ECOWAS is making provision, with assistance from the EU (through9th European Development Fund EDF) for the construction of five Joint Border Posts (Nigeria-Benin, Togo Ghana, Benin-Niger, Togo-Burkina Faso, and Burkina Faso-Ghana). This initiative, which supports the implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Services and the Right of Residence and Establishment, aims to reduce the formalities and required time for goods and persons to cross borders as well as to help check irregular practices (e.g. the smuggling of goods or informal trade)

Recommendations

In order to improve border policing in Africa, experiences from different regions of the continent recounted above must be rigorously examined. The first emphasis must be placed on the importance of a robust policy on border policing at the national and sub-regional levels. Secondly, it is critical to continue to enhance the capacity of law enforcement agencies and their allied institutions in the sub-regions. The unrest in the Sahel for instance was worsened by the weak capacity and logistical constraints of law enforcement agencies. Thus, as part of capacity building programmes, the ECOWAS Convention text as far as it relates to border security management and concepts such as Integrated Border Management could be integrated into the training of

[33]M. A. Ajomo, O. Adewale, African Economic Community Treaty, Issues, Problems and Prospects, (Nigeria Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Lagos, 1993).Pp 2-5

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

the security and law enforcement agencies such as the Police, Gendarmerie, Military, Customs, Immigration, Prisons etc. in the region.

Another approach to address these problems is the establishment of One Stop Border Post (OSBP) or Joint Border Post (JBP) systems. Improving the efficiency of custom clearance procedures through OSBPs will not only help increase the flow of goods across borders, it will also significantly improve African countries' productivity and competitiveness, contribute to raising government revenues, and increase business and income opportunities, especially for landlocked African countries. In order to promote a harmonized and integrated border management system through the creation of a OSBP/JBP, the following steps should be considered: The movement to more integrated border agencies operations should start with an analysis/mapping of each agency's existing procedures, mandate, and operations.

Border-crossing agencies should be designed, leading to the development of common documents and integrated procedures. The delegation of responsibilities and tasks, the exchange of information, as well as the need to operate on an extraterritorial basis for some agencies requires that an enabling legal and regulatory framework be prepared. The decision to share data between the different agencies and Departments operating at the border will require a new IT environment, and possible the introduction of a Single Window platform. All procedures should comply with the highest international standards for data exchange and the use of data elements.

Lastly, border communities must be involved in border management processes since they are a haven for all kinds of criminal activities. Sub-regional and national policies must consistently focus on them. For instance, in Sierra Leone, police have community boards which allow them to interact with the local population, present a human face to them and simultaneously gain their trust. Thus, they are able to receive information on any security issue in the community.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the extent to which inefficient border policing, posts and checkpoints in many African countries are contributing to insecurity challenges. The paper found that improving and harmonizing customs procedures as well as addressing corruption and other illicit practices that take place at checkpoints can significantly reduce cross-border crimes, checkmate insecurity and increase government revenues. African countries have undergone a shake-up due to the nature of her porous borders and the sand is still settling on the complex security challenges facing the second largest continent in the world. Increasingly, border policing today requires certain skills and delicate balancing between tightening controls on cross-border movements and the facilitation of cross-border flows. A first step towards achieving this is to develop and align national and sub-regional policies which can be operationalized across the region for an integrated regional approach to border management. There is the need to reduce some of the vulnerabilities exploited by non-state actors for the maintenance of peace and security.