



BIGMUN 2018

General Assembly 4 - Special Political and Decolonisation (SPECPOL)

# Research Report

Topic 3: The question of ending organised religious extremist violence in the Chad Basin by  
2050



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## Introduction

The third topic that Fourth Committee of the General Assembly will be discussing is ending religious extremist violence in the Chad Basin. The Chad Basin spans seven countries including most of Chad and a large part of Niger as well as parts of The Central African Republic, Nigeria, Algeria, Sudan, and Cameroon. Religious extremism leads to violence in many parts of the world, the Chad Basin is no exception to that. This kind of extremism often results in acts of terrorism. The Chad Basin has been targeted by terrorist activity in recent years, or more accurately gave rise to terrorist activity due to the economic, political, and social situations there. This topic is relevant and important to discuss as religious extremist violence is quite prominent in the world that we live in today.

Religious extremist violence has been on the rise in recent years perhaps due to an increasing accessibility to weapons. However using religion as a reason for violence is nothing new, look at the Christian crusades for an example. In countries and areas with conflicting religions, oppression of a particular religion, poverty, low education rates, and just suffering in general it is easier for an extremist group to rise up. Many times the extremists are seeking change because they are dissatisfied with things as they are.

## Key terms

**Terrorism-** The unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims.

**Religious extremist violence-** Phenomenon where acts committed by extremely dedicated supporters of a single or multiple religions are either the subject or the object of violent behaviour.

**Boko Haram-** Terrorist group active in the Chad Basin. Surpassed ISIS in 2014, as the world's deadliest violent extremist organisation, with an estimated 7,512 casualties that year, representing an increase of 317% from the previous year <sup>1</sup>

**Sharia Law-** The legal system of Islam, a guide to how Muslims should live their lives as Muslims. Sharia law can be important in guiding every aspect of daily life for a Muslim. Sharia law has been used as an excuse behind terror attacks and violent acts committed by individuals and groups.

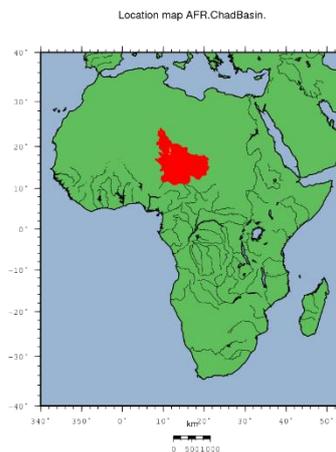


Figure 1: Map showing the Chad Basin

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<sup>1</sup> <http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Policy%20papers/r6-afropaperno32-violent-extremism-in-ss-africa-en.pdf>

**Chad Basin-** Region surrounding Chad Lake including the countries Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sudan, Algeria, Central African Republic.

**LCBC-** Lower Chad Basin Commission, an inter-governmental organisation of the countries in the Chad Basin area. Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Algeria, the Central African Republic, Libya, and Sudan are all members.

**MNJTF-** Multinational Joint Task Force established in 2014 to combat terror and terrorist groups in the Chad Basin. Its establishment was determined by the heads of LCBC heads of state and government during the Extraordinary Summit of the LCBC member states and Benin in Niamey, Niger on 7 October 2014. On 25 November 2014 the African Union's (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) fully endorsed its activation<sup>2</sup>. Members include Benin and the LCBC excluding Sudan and Libya.

## Background information

In the past eight to nine years religious violent extremism has been on the rise in the Chad Basin. The major player, Boko Haram, an Islamic group, began its violent extremism in 2009. Boko Haram, its Arabic name being Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, meaning "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad", was not originally violent at its start in 2002, in 2009 however they changed and became extremely violent in the wake of riots that killed many people in response to the arrest of some of their members. One of the factors in their uprising is lake Chad is rapidly shrinking in size, the food insecurity growing. This instability makes it easy for groups like Boko Haram to gain a foothold.

Boko Haram is committing huge crimes with an agenda, the group seeks to overthrow the Nigerian state and establish a caliphate governed by sharia law. Boko Haram translates loosely to "western education is forbidden"

The resistance against western education dates back to 1903, when the Sokoto caliphate, which ruled parts of what is now northern Nigeria, Niger and southern Cameroon, fell to Britain. During that time western education was used by Christians in an attempt to convert the Muslims. Many native Muslims still refuse to send their children to 'western' schools and as the ruling elite do not see education as a priority it is not enforced. This mistrust enabled the founder of Boko Haram to recruit Jihadists from a religious complex, including a mosque and school, he set up himself. The allure of a non-western school brought many Muslim students from Nigeria and the surrounding countries to the complex.

In 2009 the founder Muhammed Yusef was killed when Nigerian security forces seized the group's base. This was obviously not the end of the group as the new leader Abubakar Shekau stepped up and upped their insurgency. Since then the group has been responsible for countless violent acts to further their agenda, including the bombing of the UN headquarters in Nigeria, countless deaths and

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<sup>2</sup> African Union (AU), Communiqué of the 469th PSC meeting, 25 November 2014, [www.peaceau.org/uploads/cps-469-com-terrorisme-25-11-2014.pdf](http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/cps-469-com-terrorisme-25-11-2014.pdf)

attacks, mass murders, and the kidnapping of hundreds of girls, most famously the Chibok girls kidnapping in 2014.

In 2013 the United States of America officially classified Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation fearing that the group had gained ties to other militant organisations such as Al-Qaeda.

By 2015 Boko Haram swore allegiance to the Islamic State and declared their claimed territory a province of the Caliphate. The claimed territory was mostly reclaimed by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). The MNTFJ managed to push them back from their urban bases in Nigeria. After the reclamation of the territory taken by Boko Haram the leader was replaced by Abu Musab al-Barnawi who was appointed by the Islamic State.

In the September 2017 meeting of the UN security council regarding the situation, it was said “note that the Lake Chad Basin crisis has wreaked havoc on basic infrastructure, assets and government services. Insecurity has sparked large-scale unemployment and left 1 million school-age children deprived of education. The substantial economic impact of the crisis has reached nearly \$9 billion across north-east Nigeria alone.”<sup>3</sup>

The current situation in the Chad Basin is far from ideal. As of November 2017, more than 17 million people live in areas affected by the situation and more than 2 million remain displaced.<sup>4</sup>

## Relevant countries and organisations

**Nigeria-** Boko Haram was founded in Nigeria and spread out from there targeting the surrounding countries and Nigeria itself. Nigeria is also a member of the LCBC and MNJTF, the latter being the responsible for pushing back Boko Haram.

**Niger, Chad, Cameroon-** Are all targets of attacks from Boko Haram. These three countries are also members of LCBC and of MNTJF, fighting against violence in the Chad Basin area.

**Libya, Benin-** While neither of these countries have been targeted by Boko Haram, nor are the part of LCBC, they are both members of MNTJF.

**Medecins Sans Frontieres-** Provides medical aid in the Chad Basin

**Network of Civil Society Organisations in Borno State (NESCOB)-** This group assists victims of violence stemming from insurgent activities, including those perpetrated by Boko Haram.

**MNJTF-** Multinational Joint Task Force.

**LCBC-** Lower Chad Basin Commission.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.un.org/undpa/en/speeches-statements/13092017/lake-chad-basin>

<sup>4</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/lake-chad-basin-crisis-overview-19-november-2017>

## Relevant UN resolutions

S/RES/2349 (2017)

Resolution adopted by the Security Council on March 31 2017 during its 7911 meeting.

The resolution condemns the acts of Boko Haram and similar groups, calls for cooperation to stop the violence in the area, and strengthen the defence and offense.

Available at: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2349\(2017\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2349(2017))

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