



AN EXAMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE R2P PROTOCOL ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S CONDUCT ON THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN NORTHEAST NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) protocol is a groundbreaking development in the realm of international humanitarian law. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 and has since become a cornerstone of global efforts to prevent and respond to mass atrocities and humanitarian crises. The R2P protocol has three pillars: the responsibility to prevent, the responsibility to react, and the responsibility to rebuild. These pillars serve as guidelines for states to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. The protocol also encourages international cooperation and intervention when a state fails to fulfill its responsibility to protect.

Since 2009, the Northeast region of Nigeria has been plagued by various levels of armed conflict. This was initiated when the jihadist insurgent group Boko Haram announced its objective to establish an Islamic caliphate in the states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (collectively known as BAY states). In response, the Nigerian government declared war on the group in 2009 and again in 2013 when they resurfaced. Over the course of twelve years (2009-2021), the northeast has witnessed one of the most devastating jihadist insurgencies globally, causing immense destruction (Barnett, 2021). A total of 350,000 lives were tragically lost during this period. Among them, approximately 35,000-40,000 individuals succumbed to direct causes, while the remaining 310,000-314,000 lost their lives due to indirect causes in the entire north-eastern region. Additionally, the conflict resulted in 2.5 million people becoming refugees in neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, or being internally displaced as IDPs. Furthermore, there were over 9,000 cases of mass kidnapping reported (UNHCR & WBG, 2016; USAID, 2020; Barnett, 2021; UNDP, 2021). The international community's attention was drawn to the conflict in 2014 following the mass abduction of female students from Chibok, Borno state. Various concerned parties raised the issue of the conflict's responsibility to protect (R2P) aspect before the international community. Despite this, both the ECOWAS and AU approached the issue with mere rhetoric and ambiguity as regional actors. However, numerous Nigerians and neighboring countries urged the international community to employ the elements of R2P, thereby justifying the need for an in-depth study.

The case study further exposed the selectivity and ambiguity with which the international community deploy the R2P protocol, putting into account the intervention in Mali in 2013. Be this

as it may, the R2P dialogue necessitated for a broader and rigorous academic discourse that clarifies on the distinction between the R2P and other forms of humanitarian intervention that react to different forms of occurrences. The R2P deals with a chain of responses that are contingent on preventive, reactive and rebuilding measures that sometimes doesn't require authorization from the UN security council. However, many observers question the differences about the R2P protocol that would lead to a more effective humanitarian intervention. Most importantly, the idea of reaction-a pivotal element of the R2P is seen as ambiguous in terms of its operation. It is in this light that this study intend to weigh in to the discourse by using this case study (the humanitarian crisis in Northeast, Nigeria) to ascertain the degree to which the R2P protocol steered the international community's reactions.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The R2P protocol recognizes that states have a responsibility to protect their populations from mass atrocities. However, when a state is unable or unwilling to fulfill this responsibility, the international community has a responsibility to intervene. In the case of northeast Nigeria, the international community has had varying levels of involvement in addressing the crisis. The implementation of R2P in northeast Nigeria has faced numerous challenges. These include the difficulty in determining when and how to intervene, the lack of consensus among member states on the appropriate response, the issue of selectivity and concerns about sovereignty and the potential for unintended consequences.

This underlying research statement is that the R2P principle embodies a major academic input to the discourse on humanitarian intervention. Nevertheless, the global support the protocol received from the international community remains quite rhetorical, as clearly demonstrated in the international community's unwillingness in expediting a permanent resolution to the humanitarian crisis in North-eastern Nigeria. Therefore, the operationalisation of this protocol, in terms of its ambiguity pose a grave challenge to its influence on the conduct of the international.

It is against this background that this study intends to investigate the extent to which the R2P protocol influenced the international community's handling of the humanitarian crisis in Northeast, Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To examine whether the R2P protocol can influence the International Community's Conduct in the humanitarian crisis in Northeast, Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The R2P protocol is a global political commitment endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005. It aims to prevent and respond to mass atrocities, including genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. The R2P protocol places the primary responsibility on individual states to protect their populations from these crimes. However, it also recognizes that when states are unable or unwilling to protect their populations, the international community has a responsibility to intervene. This conceptual review will explore the influence of the R2P protocol on the international community's conduct in humanitarian crises. (Amneus, 2012). In addition, Weiss, et al (2011) explores the legal dimensions of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), examining its classification as both a norm and a legal duty, as well as its interaction with established international law.

Evans (2008) argues that, the emergence of the R2P concept was a direct result of the international community's shortcomings in responding to the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia

during the 1990s. The formulation of R2P required extensive discussions and negotiations involving UN member states, human rights organizations, and scholars. Its acceptance represented a notable change in global standards concerning state sovereignty and the safeguarding of civilian populations.

The R2P protocol establishes a normative structure for intervening in situations where states are incapable or unwilling to safeguard their populations from mass atrocities. It highlights the importance of intervention as a final option and stresses the need for it to be carried out in compliance with international law. This protocol acknowledges three fundamental principles: (a) the obligation of states to protect their populations, (b) the duty of the international community to support states in fulfilling this responsibility, and (c) the obligation of the international community to collectively act when a state clearly fails to protect its population (ICISS, 2001).

This is well captured by Badescu (2011) that, R2P protocol has had a significant impact on the behaviour of states by establishing certain expectations and standards when it comes to safeguarding civilians in times of humanitarian crises. States have become more cognizant of the fact that their actions or lack thereof can be closely examined by the global community, potentially resulting in diplomatic, economic, or military repercussions. This protocol has incentivized states to give utmost importance to the well-being of their populations and has established a structure for ensuring accountability. Hehir (2016) observed that, international institutions, like the UN, have been instrumental in advancing and executing the R2P protocol. Within the framework of the UN Charter's Chapter VII, the UN Security Council possesses the power to sanction intervention in situations involving widespread atrocities. As a result of the R2P protocol, the decision-making procedures of the Security Council have been influenced, resulting in a heightened focus on humanitarian issues and safeguarding civilian populations.

The R2P protocol, despite its potential influence, encounters various obstacles and critiques. A significant hurdle lies in the absence of agreement among states regarding the understanding and execution of R2P. While some states perceive it as a rationale for military intervention, others prioritize non-coercive approaches. Additionally, apprehensions arise regarding the selective and politicized nature of R2P's application, with allegations of inconsistent standards and prejudice against specific states (Bellamy, 2009a). The effective execution of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the obstacles that have emerged, encompassing the involvement of regional organizations, the significance of early warning systems, and the necessity for efficient capacity-building initiatives to enhance states' capability in safeguarding their populations (Bellamy, 2015a).

The R2P protocol has had a significant influence on the conduct of the international community in humanitarian crises. It has established a normative framework for intervention, influenced state behavior, and enhanced the role of international organizations in protecting civilians. However, challenges and criticisms remain, highlighting the need for ongoing dialogue and refinement of the protocol.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

This objective examines the impact of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) on the behavior of the global community. R2P has exerted a normative influence by altering discussions on sovereignty, aiding in the creation of legal structures, advocating for proactive measures, shaping discussions on humanitarian intervention, strengthening state accountability, and encouraging international collaboration.

ICISS (2001) in its report 'The Responsibility to Protect' provided a comprehensive response to the debate on the 'right of humanitarian intervention.' The issue of when it is suitable

for state to engage in military action as a measure to protect civilians at risk in other state was the major concern of this report. The twelve-man committee who were selected from different background by the Canadian government were responsible for designing the idea of redefining the concept of sovereignty as a 'right' in its Westphalian tradition to a 'responsibility.' The report act as a parameter for UN member states to construct a more satisfactory apparatus for prevention. The main aim of the report is to ensure that the international community took a political measure that will guarantee the prevention of another Rwanda.

In its synopsis, on the first page, the report vividly set out the four core principles of the R2P, thus: 'The basic principles' deal with two key issues: First, State sovereignty suggest responsibility, i.e, the basic responsibility of protection of its citizens is contingent on the state itself; and secondly, where there is mass catastrophe as a result of insurgency, internal war, and repression or state failure, and the state affected lacks the capacity or political will to prevent it, then its right to sovereignty seized, and the non-intervention principles gives way to the international responsibility to protect.

The second portion is 'the Foundation'- comprising four guiding principles that outline legal premises of the R2P, they are: the concept of sovereignty and its inherent obligations; the UNSC in Article 24 was bestowed with the responsibility of the maintenance of international peace and security; the influences of covenants, treaties, international humanitarian laws, human right laws and human protection declarations; and lastly, International conventions dealing with the UNSC itself, regional organisations and states.

The third part deals with the 'elements' which outline the action plan for the state and the international community to prevent mass catastrophe, it encompasses three precise responsibilities: The responsibility to prevent-to deal with both root and direct causes civil war, conflicts, catastrophe, etc that places citizens at danger; The responsibility to react-to take action on conditions of gripping human need with specific measure, which include, military action in severe cases, sanctions, and international prosecution; The responsibility to rebuild-to provide relief assistance after military intervention, incorporating maximum support in reconciliation, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction, dealing with the causes of the damage and destruction the intervention was schemed to prevent.

The last part deals ' The Priorities' which illustrate two major area of concern of the R2P doctrine. First, prevention is the most significant pillar of the R2P-all prevention alternative should be exhausted before military intervention is considered; and, secondly, both prevention and reaction should first involve less invasive and less coercive measures being applied before any military action is considered.

The report concludes that, debate in the past seems to portray as if contradiction exist between intervention and state sovereignty, and that they were irreconcilable concepts. Instead less friction exist between the two concepts-this was informed by the wide range of readiness and preparedness of states in the contemporary global system to accept that the responsibility to protect their citizens from mass catastrophe and gross violation of their human rights formed the primary and essential of all the responsibilities that sovereignty enforces. However, certain deficiencies of the report are palpable, for instance, its inability to present a flawless or all-embracing way out to mass catastrophe, somewhat, it only presented a guideline and mutual grounds on how to end such gross atrocities. Be this as it may, the report recommended further study in the following areas: first, linking international support with state's capacity to mobilize domestic political will; and secondly, the mobilization of international political will.

Dzimiri (2016) in his work titled ' Application of Responsibility to Protect norms to the international community's Response to humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe and Darfur' shed light on

the conception of the R2P as an interdisciplinary normative document that redefine the concept of state sovereignty as a responsibility instead of right. It compels States to protect their citizens from massive violation of human rights or any kind of humanitarian cataclysm, and in the case of failure of the state to comply to this responsibility, the international community transfer this responsibility to itself. This was solemnly endorsed by world leaders at the 2005 world summit under the guidance of the UN. The author, though argued that the R2P has been entangled by theoretical imprecision, that led the UN to urge the international community to take measure of strengthening the policy, doctrinal and institutional position of the protocol.

The Author examined two case studies of humanitarian crisis in Africa (Darfur and Zimbabwe) in which sufficient facts indicated that the two governments have evaded their sovereign responsibilities, and hence requires the application of the R2P tools by the international community. The study used a literature-based analysis to investigate the application of the R2P tools by the international community in the two case studies. furthermore, the qualitative and analytical method was utilised in assessing the length to which the R2P tools were resort to. The population of this study was the whole international community (more specifically, the UNSC, The Commonwealth, AU, SADC and South Africa), and the target population was extracted from these entities. This was in consonance with study under investigation (with differences in the choice of the sub-regional actors involved). An exploratory case study of the two selected states was embarked on in order to present the contextual framework for assessing the implementation of the R2P.

The main finding of this study was the length to which the politicisation of the R2P weakens its application. Absence of political will, lack of prompt response to impending cataclysm, hidden motives of the intervening actors, R2P is more rhetorical than action oriented etc. The major challenges of this study relates to the method of data collection. The nature of area under study and the fact that both the crises in Darfur and Zimbabwe were not resolved, the author failed to employ fieldwork to obtain empirical facts. The research relied excessively on documentary examination of both secondary and primary data. The main deficiency of documentary analysis is that the findings are mostly subjective. Be this as it may, the study under investigation will employ both documentary analysis and personal interview with key actors in some selected international organisations based in the area under study.

Despite this deficiency, the study came up various findings that could enrich further research, when put into consideration with the pointed deficiencies, proposed sufficient area for further study. These include: The R2P and the role of regional organizations; The R2P and norm localization; Building political will at the international level; The R2P and the next generation; and, The military dimension of the R2P.

Hodali (2017) in his work, 'The Implementation of the R2P Norms by the African Standby Force in Sub-Saharan Africa.' focused in two key area, first the adoption of the R2P in 2005 by the UN and its influence on the international community, and secondly, its adoption at the regional level, with specific reference to Africa. The choice for Africa was informed by the fact that Africa is a theatre of humanitarian crisis and armed conflict. The author assert that Africa was the first continent to give the R2P a normative and political recognition. Article 4(h) of the Constitutive act of the AU authorize it to consider the use of force where necessary and the establishment of the African Standby force consolidated Africa's seriousness to address all cases of mass violation of human rights across the continent. However, the Author, in a comparative analysis, claimed that AU like the Western powers was al not left out in the selectivity syndrome. This was obtainable in the case of where the AU recorded success in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but recorded less in Somalia and Darfur. The study claimed the slowdown the operation of the ASF was informed by lack of logistics and financial strength.

The study is literature based and thereby adopted qualitative method using case study approach. The AU constitute the population of the study and its target population is the ASF and other sub-regional forces such as ECOWAS, SADC and Troops Contributing Countries (TCC). The findings of the study revealed that the ASF and Standby Brigades despite their shortcomings possess the potential of operationalising the R2P norms in Africa. The study suggested that ASF and the AU's non intervention in Mali and Libya confirmed the incapacitation of the AU to operationalised the R2P-this call for further studies.

Ruth, (2021) in her work, 'The United Nations' Responsibility to Protect (R2P): Policy, Preference, or Politics.' clarified much about the 2005 world summit of the UN General Assembly as the guiding principle that influences the international community's conduct in humanitarian crisis. The study focused on the third 'element' of the R2P which permits the UNSC to employ force as a measure to address massive violations of human rights. The author argues that an atmosphere of disagreement among the five permanent members often led to indecision and inaction.

In addressing the third 'element' of the R2P in the Syrian crisis of 2012, the study utilised a qualitative case study approach to collect, investigate and analyse (secondary) data on R2P. The population of this work comprised of the whole international community, while the target population was the UNSC and its five permanent members, this is due to the fact that they are bestowed with veto power-meaning they can authorise and block any action on intervention. The lofty volume of secondary data limited the study from obtaining empirical data. As earlier stated, the study under investigation will collect, examine and analyse both documentary and interview records. The findings of the study revealed that R2P has not been consistent in its application to all contemporary catastrophe-associated human efforts. Russia and China used their veto power to stop the R2P resolution on Syria, even though they have authorised it in other related crisis. Secondly, the study also divulged the operation of R2P in Libya-which also proved to have yield negative consequences.

Based on the setback deduced from the findings, the study recommended two areas for further studies-first, the inclusion of the assessment of alternative body (UN General Assembly and regional organisations) other than the UNSC that could authorise, execute and stop massive violation of human rights in crisis situations. Secondly, ACT code of conduct which comprised of 112 member of the UN signed resolution, mandating the UNSC to hold back their veto power opposed to a sincere draft resolution that is projected to halt mass atrocity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Human Security Theory

The emergence of the Human Security paradigm in the late 1990s was a direct response to the limitations of traditional state-centric security approaches. This new framework places a strong emphasis on the well-being and protection of individuals, rather than solely focusing on national security. In 1994, Masahiko Kumada, a Japanese diplomat, introduced the concept of Human Security during the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Kumada argued that security should not only be understood in terms of state security, but also in terms of individual safety and well-being. The fundamental idea behind the human security paradigm is that security threats should be evaluated with a people-centered perspective, recognizing that when an individual faces a threat, so does the international community (Burgess and Grans, 2012; Kaldor and Beebe, 2010). The core of this model is centered around shifting attention from the state as the primary focus to the well-being of individuals. It represents a transition from a state-centric vision to a human-centric vision (ibid). Human Security refers to the protection of individuals and

communities against the dangers of armed conflict and various forms of aggression (Human Security Centre, in Gazizullin, 2016).

Relevance of the Human Security Theory

The R2P doctrine is based on the human security paradigm, particularly focusing on 'Elements' 2&3 (reaction and rebuilding). These concerns have emerged as a significant area of concern that R2P seeks to address. R2P concludes that the human security paradigm provides the most comprehensive explanation, as it emphasizes the international community's responsibility to protect and ensure the well-being of populations affected by man-made catastrophes.

In order to evaluate the different responses of the international community to the R2P in the examined case study, and to summarize the level of obligations related to prevention, reaction, and rebuilding, it is crucial to adhere to specific tool kits. This study takes inspiration from the toolbox created by members of the ICISS committee in 2001. This toolbox serves as a foundation and provides insight into the implementation of the three 'Elements' of the R2P. The prevention aspect (state responsibility) encompasses a toolbox consisting of two main components: structural preventative measures, which address the long-term and root causes of a crisis, and direct operational measures, which respond to short-term crises. These components are guided by four key areas: political/diplomatic, economic/social, constitutional/legal, and security sector measures (ICISS, 2001). The focus of preventive measures is on what countries facing humanitarian crises can do independently through their own national efforts and capabilities (Breau, 2016; Evans, 2008). However, when prevention fails, reactions are inevitable.

However, the issue arises regarding the feasibility of implementing the 'responsibility to react' in situations where there is a compelling need for human protection. According to ICISS (2001), there are four different categories of tools that can be used to prevent certain actions: political, economic, legal, and security. Moreover, there are various actors who have the potential to utilize these tools through unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral approaches. The Element of post-conflict R2P, known as rebuilding, focuses on four interconnected yet distinct dimensions: security, governance, justice, and reconciliation, as well as economic and social aspects (ICISS, 2001).

The R2P debate covers different aspects of responsibility, but the toolbox mentioned above mainly focuses on the practical aspect of the doctrine. It provides a thorough compilation of the international community's responses to R2P, using evidence from the case study to validate and implement the toolbox. This approach allows for the analysis and development of conclusions regarding the wide array of tools that the international community can utilize.

METHODOLOGY

Based on the qualitative nature of the intended research, the study aims to utilize a combination of primary and secondary data sources. The primary sources will include semi-structured open-ended interviews, as well as the ICISS 2001 report, United Nations charter, AU charter, and ECOWAS charter, which provide support for the legal boundaries of the research. Other primary sources will consist of resolutions, declarations, meeting records, documents, and reports from the UNSC, AUPSC, ECOWAS and humanitarian organizations operating in North-East Nigeria. Additionally, policy manuscripts, statements, and speeches from key stakeholders involved in the humanitarian crisis in the North-East, along with official government reports, will be crucial in evaluating the implementation of the R2P. On the other hand, secondary sources will focus on the development and operation of humanitarian intervention and the R2P doctrine, aiming to determine the extent to which R2P influences the nature and character of humanitarian intervention. Furthermore, online journal articles, academic books, conference papers, editorials,

newspapers, magazines, media commentaries, and dissertations will be utilized. This comprehensive approach will greatly enhance the R2P debate in general and, more specifically, shed light on R2P's interventionist response to the humanitarian crisis in the North-East, which serves as the case study for this investigation.

DATA ANALYSIS

Research Proposition: The R2P protocol have not significantly influenced the international community's conduct in the humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria.

The theme that surfaced to test this proposition was derived from the degree to which international community's reactions to the humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria have been-directly and indirectly-influenced by the R2P doctrine. In this regard, the mandates of the P5 members of the UNSC in relation to their veto powers; the AUPSC as a regional organ recognised by the charters of UN and the R2P doctrine-having 15 members nominated from the five regions of the African continent-with mandate to prevent genocide and crimes against humanity. Lastly, the highest organ of the ECOWAS-Authority of the Heads of States and Governments (AHSO)-with the powers to authorize military intervention and other forms of preventive measures as cited in the R2P guideline, were thoroughly interrogated.

The theme presented by the data revealed inaction, partial commitment, unwillingness and a new trend in interventions by the UNSC, AUPSC, and the authority of the Heads of States and Government (AHSO) of ECOWAS to apply R2P norm in the humanitarian crisis of Northeast Nigeria from 2009 when the crisis started to present. As highlighted in chapter two of this research, there was inconsistency in the application of the R2P norm across many humanitarian crisis. The data In the case of the UNSC-in terms of its adoption of resolutions and the use of veto powers-presented proof that the UNSC has demonstrated inaction and lack of commitment to fully apply the R2P principle in the humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria.

First, evidence from the data disclosed that between 2009 to 2023, there were two resolutions adopted by the UNSC: First, Resolution 2161 of 26 July 2014-which adopted two issues-first, listed Boko Haram as a terrorist Organisation and secondly enforced financial sanctions and armed embargo on the group. This position was taken by the UNSC without any attempt to apply the necessary R2P tools to curb the atrocities committed by the group. Secondly, Resolution 2349 (31 March 2017) referenced- Peace and Security in Africa S/pv.7911. This resolution was adopted unanimously by all the 17 members. However, the resolution did not explicitly relate to the applications of element 2 & 3 of the R2P as dictated in chapter 7 of the UN Charter, instead, it advocated for strong moral support for the national forces fighting insurgency in the Northeast and call on the countries of the lake Chad region (Cameroun, Chad, Niger and Nigeria) to be resolute in their counter-terrorism measures. Even though this call was in consonance with R2P's endorsement of state as mainly responsible for the protection of its population, this appeal, nonetheless, was not regarded as a collective military intervention as provided in the R2P doctrine.

Secondly, R2P framework is solely applicable to conflicts based on the benchmark of the four underlying mass atrocity crimes-war crimes, genocide, ethnic cleansing and crime against humanity-affirmed by the 2005 World Summit. However, the data highlighted the selectivity syndrome that dominates the UNSC in determining which humanitarian crisis deserves prompt action and which does not. This was informed by the deep division within the P5 members of the UNSC (with United State, Great Britain and France in alliance, and with Russia and China on the other side of the divide) who were often motivated by a range of geopolitical, economic and

strategic interest. For instance, the data previews that despite the unanimity in the adoption of Resolution 2349 by the UNSC, Russia and China cautioned against any attempt by the other camp to interfere in the internal affairs or endorse the use of force in the Northeast region. The leader of the Russian delegation, Mr Zalyalov assert that

Russian delegation voted in favour of Resolution 2349 (2017), on the situation in the region, owing to the importance of maintaining consensus in the UNSC.....Moreover, we should avoid the irresponsible policy of interfering in the internal affairs of the region, particularly as it happened in Libya." The Chinese delegate, Mr Shen Bo also concurred with the Russian position and added that, "the international community while dealing with the Boko Haram issues, should by all means avoid interference and respect the principles of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the state in question (UNSC, 2017, p.4).

As previewed in the data, Resolution 2161 (2014) and 2349 (2017) have indicated the inconsistency of the P5 members of the UNSC in the application of element 2 & 3 of the R2P norm-as security and strategic interest often guide the P5 members to either adopt a resolution or use their veto powers in contradistinction to the peculiarities and requirements of some humanitarian crisis. The Global centre for Responsibility to Protect observed that: Over the past eleven years, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has consistently failed to fulfill its duty of protecting the population in Northeast Nigeria, despite the series of extremist attacks that have claimed the lives of more than 40,000 individuals and displaced over 2.5 million people. Regrettably, any efforts towards direct intervention have been obstructed by Russia and China. (GCR2P, 2021).

Synchronizing with this view, Frimpong (2019) argued The conflict situation in Nigeria has not been given the necessary attention it deserves. In 2011, the United Nations authorized an intervention in Libya to remove the oppressive ruler Gaddafi. The UN made this decision based on humanitarian concerns. However, in the same year, President Jonathan requested US intervention, but the US declined, citing the inability to unilaterally decide to intervene. Despite the glaring fact that humanitarian crisis and terrorist's operations of such temperament magnetize international response, particularly from the UN.

Peter (2018) argues that, in regions where the permanent members of the UNSC hold less divisive stances, the responses of the UNSC reflect a novel approach to interventions. An example of this can be seen in the operations carried out by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram. These new types of interventions are emerging at a time when a host state's invitation to regional organization is often subject to the approval of the UNSC. Host states often seek a solution to their internal problems rather than an outside actor. Today's crises necessitate more aggressive responses, and regional actors are better able to implement them than the UN. (Peter, 2018).

In addition, Nigeria's significant regional and global influence effectively deterred any coercive international intervention in response to Boko Haram. Consequently, this diminished external pressure on Abuja to take more decisive action in countering this significant security threat at the human, national, and regional levels (Mickler et al, 2019). The requirement of element one of the R2P has not been fulfilled by the Nigerian government going by the displacement and casualty figures, instead the international community, particularly the UN failed to uphold its responsibility to protect and at the same time have been unable to criticize the Nigerian government for its failure to safeguard its citizens.

AU Response

In the case of the AU-in line with the provision of Chapter VIII of the UN charter on the role of regional organisations in the maintenance of international peace and Security-the AUPSC was established to prevent conflict, coordinate a common defence policy, harmonise a continental attempt in the prevention of international terrorism in all its ramifications, and implement peace building and post conflict reconstruction. The AUPSC comprised of 15 members drawn from the five zones of the African continent with equal votes. As stated above, AUPSC also acts as a common security and early warning system to enable rapid and effective response to conflicts and emergencies in Africa.

The extant account of the AUPSC (as previewed in the table) indicates that the AUPSC has been influential in the provision of series of support for the government of Nigeria and the MNJTF in combating terrorism in the Northeast Nigeria. As showed in the Constitutive Act, the AU granted the AUPSC the mandate to intervene through the African Standby Force (ASF) in a member state bedevilled by grievous condition, such as genocide, war crime, crime against humanity, in accordance with Article 13 correlating to the establishment of the AUPSC. In the case of the Northeast humanitarian crisis, the AUPSC as demonstrated in table used the MNJTF as alternative to the ASF in the fight against BH. The table further indicates that the AUPSC engaged in the mobilisation of resources by way of setting up donor conference for MNJTF and handling and collecting financial support on behalf of the mission in Northeast Nigeria.

This is well captured in Ismail and Ababu (2021) as they observed that, The African Union has played a crucial role in providing various forms of assistance to the MNJTF. In February 2016, the AU organized a meeting of experts to develop the operational concept of the MNTJF, as well as to mobilize resources for the mission. This included convening a donor conference for the MNTJF and managing financial assistance on behalf of the MNJTF. The financial assistance, which included donations from the EU, UK, and Turkey, was used to procure essential equipment such as helicopters, personnel carriers, operational vehicles, and night vision goggles for the MNJTF. However, Ismail et al (2021) have noted that the AU's support system has been plagued by problems, despite its willingness to assist the MNJTF. The AU's procurement system caused a two-year delay in the delivery of the EU's €50 million contribution, during which Nigeria had to cover the cost of the task force. Additionally, there appear to be vested interests and competing expectations that further complicate the AU's support for the MNJTF. Abugbilla (2017) argued that, despite the ongoing insurgency in the northeast region of Nigeria and its neighbouring countries, there has been no effective and coordinated response to tackle the issue. The African Union is facing a collective action problem due to the lack of a leader to guide them in security matters. It is evident that the AU has not taken a proactive approach in combating the insurgent group, and the measures taken so far have been retroactive in nature." Acceding with this position, Al Jazeera News (2015) assert that Idriss Déby, the former president of Chad, echoes the African Union's failure to tackle the BH insurgents' threat, as he assert that. "We have had too many meetings and issued communiqués with no follow-up."

looking at the role of the AU from a different point of view, Brubacher, Damman and Day (2017) argues that, the new intervention approach poses a challenge as it operates independently under the MNJTF, which is not part of the larger ASF framework. The troops involved in this arrangement serve their respective national interests, which weakens the AU's command and control and restricts the PSC's capacity to offer strategic direction. Moreover, they maintained that Using the MNJTF is antithetical to the principles of the R2P, since the composition of the Task Force-shows that all its members were parties to the conflict that emanated from the Northeast Nigeria-and this raised many question over its inability to eliminate Boko Haram.

In a video interview with the commissioner of the AUPSC Ismael Chergui, conducted by CCTV (2016) in Addis Ababa, claimed that " the AU proposed a force of more than 10,000 troops and police officers be deployed against Boko Haram, mandated and funded by the UN. So far there has been little progress on that plan,"

In summary, This content analysis reveals a multifaceted approach by the AUPSC, encompassing condemnation, support for regional initiatives, humanitarian concerns, international cooperation, and a comprehensive strategy to address both the immediate threat and the underlying causes of the Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast Nigeria. The consistent unanimity in adopting resolutions underscores the collective commitment of the AUPSC to address the crisis. However, the documents highlight ongoing challenges such as criticism in AU's response, citing a lack of a concerted and proactive approach, meetings without follow-up, and a perceived failure to address the threat posed by Boko Haram effectively. Secondly, concerns are also raised about the MNJTF's structure, operating outside the broader ASF structure, diluting AU command and control, limiting the PSC's strategic guidance, and being antithetical to the R2P principles, and the evolving nature of the conflict, requiring comprehensive and collaborative responses.

ECOWAS Response

Like the AU, Chapter VIII of the UN charter also bestowed same role to the ECOWAS as a sub-regional body in the maintenance of international peace and security. The ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government (AHSO) is the highest decision-making body and the supreme institution of the community. As stated in Chapter 6, Article 58 of the revised Treaty of the ECOWAS, the AHSO is responsible for overseeing and managing the overall direction and supervision of the community. This includes maintaining regional peace and security, as well as ensuring that member states collaborate with the community to establish and consolidate suitable mechanisms for preventing and resolving intra-state and inter-state conflicts. The AHSO is composed of all 15 Heads of State and governments of the West African sub-region, who convene through ordinary or extraordinary sessions to make decisions on peace and security matters affecting the region. These decisions are made through unanimity, consensus, or by a two-thirds majority.

The ECOWAS also followed the pattern and footfall of the AU in influencing various support for the humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria. Even though there were no evidence of the deployment of the West African standby troops as part of the requirement of the R2P principle, the community through the AHSO, initiated series of processes and strategies to combat terrorism in the west African sub region and in Northeast Nigeria, this include: Regional Action Plan (RAP) and the 2020-2024 Priority Action Plan which intend to deal with the root cause of terrorism and reinforce the capacity of ECOWAS in averting terrorism in the region; the establishment of the early warning centre; the creation of a permanent Forum of West African National Security Advisers; and the creation of regional counterterrorism fund among others.

Acceding to the above, Akanji (2019) observed that, ECOWAS has played a leading role in raising global awareness about terrorism in the sub-region and advocating for international measures to combat it. This has been achieved through various means, such as issuing regular public condemnations and issuing press releases whenever terrorist activities occur in the region. An illustrative example of ECOWAS' efforts is its request to the AU Peace and Security Council on 12 January 2015, urging them to include an agenda item on terrorism by Boko Haram in Nigeria at the upcoming AU summit. As a result, terrorism by Boko Haram was indeed included on the agenda of the 25th AU Summit, which took place in Johannesburg in June 2015. However, Tejpar and Albuquerque (2016) observed that, As an institution, ECOWAS has been largely absent from

the main armed conflict that has consumed the region for the past five years, particularly the Boko Haram crisis.

Synchronising with the above, PSC Report (2019,) argued that, ECOWAS's inability to play a significant role in the fight against Boko Haram is partly due to the fact that Nigeria is the dominant power in the region, and the complications that would ensue from Nigeria responding to such a step. Due to respect for regional power and national pride, 'small neighbours' often find it difficult to mobilize efforts to deal with threats in larger neighbours, even when those threats necessitate a regional response. Christian C.M. Ichite and Bowmanere, (2015) argued that despite mass atrocities committed by the Boko Haram. However, instead of ECOWAS, it is the MNJTF, a sub-regional force known as the 'coalition of the willing', that is taking action. This raises the question of why this is the case. It seems that ECOWAS still maintains strong normative frameworks and plans of action to combat terrorism and manage humanitarian crises. However, apart from providing relief supplies to displaced individuals in Nigerian camps, there have been minimal or no tangible initiatives observed from this regional economic community to effectively tackle the threat.

The absence of ECOWAS in the fight against Boko Haram can be attributed to the group's expansion into territories outside of ECOWAS' jurisdiction, such as Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. This has emphasized the necessity for a trans-regional response. The lack of cooperation among states affected by Boko Haram's violence, as well as the difficulties in coordinating with various regional organizations like ECCAS, ECOWAS, LCBC, and other intergovernmental groups in the Lake Chad basin, have further complicated the situation (Tejpar *et al*, 2016; Atangana 2018).

Responses from the Interview

Respondents pondered on the usual pattern of the international community's response to humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria based on guidelines. Nevertheless, views of majority of the respondent previews that the international community's stand on the humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria is not different from other humanitarian crisis that failed short of receiving the needed attention from the international community; and secondly, that the international community is not guided by the R2P principles but rather the motivating factor is the geo strategic interest of the intervening actors. The respondents below buttress such views: The respondent acknowledged that the international community has utilized specific mechanisms to address the conflict in the Northeast. However, it should be noted that this intervention was not comprehensive one, as seen in other cases of R2P. The respondent further elaborated on this matter in his analysis.

Yes, the R2P doctrine can influence the conduct of the international community, particularly the UN in humanitarian crisis. Broadly speaking, the R2P does guide the UN and more specifically the UNSC in determining appropriate preventive, protective and rebuilding measures to be taken. For example, the UNSC may authorize the deployment of peacekeeping forces to protect civilians from violence, or it may impose sanctions on individual or entities responsible for human rights abuses. In cases where a state is failing to protect its population from mass atrocities, the UNSC may authorize the use of force to stop violence and protect civilians. In the context of the humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria, the UN has deployed several mechanisms to cushion the effect of the Boko Haram crisis-these include-sustainable financial support, technical and operational support, targeted sanctions against Boko Haram leaders, collaboration with AU and ECOWAS in the fight against Boko Haram etc. However, it is important to note that the application of the R2P doctrine in practice is often complex. for example, the resolution passed by the UNSC in respect to the Boko Haram was not as firm as the one against the Libyan government in 2011 which adopted the use of force, while in it not so in the case of the Boko Haram despite the manifestation of the four atrocity crime enshrined in the R2P.

The second respondent further supports the previous respondent's statement and additionally claims that the international community has not utilized military tactics, as it has done in other regions, to combat the threat posed by the insurgents in the Northeast. As he argued that:

The Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria which began in 2009, has resulted in widespread violence, displacement and human right abuses. The Nigerian government has struggled to address the crisis effectively, and the international community has been involved in various ways, including providing humanitarian assistance and supporting efforts through financial and technical assistance to combat Boko Haram. However, there is an ongoing debate that the international community has failed in its responsibility to respond with the appropriate mechanism- through military intervention- to halt and protect the population in the North eastern region from these mass atrocities. In my view, the international community has been limited as a result of the deep division within the UNSC over the 'use of force' as the appropriate form of intervention.

The respondent clarified that due to the international community being overstretched, it allocates less attention to the Northeast. This is a result of their less interest in the region. Therefore, he asserts that:

The Boko Haram crisis in Northeast Nigeria has been ongoing for over a decade and has resulted in significant violence and displacement. The international community's response to the crisis has been a topic of debate and criticism. While the R2P principle requires the international community to intervene when a state is unable or unwilling to protect its population from mass atrocities, in my own view, one major factor may explain why the international community has taken less interest to deploy troops in the crisis in the Northeast Nigeria- is the limited resources available for military intervention. The international community is often stretched thin in responding to crises around the world, and there may be competing priorities that limit the resources available for the crisis in Northeast Nigeria. Additionally, we cannot not rule out the possibility of donor fatigue or lack of political will among the P5 members of the UNSC to support military intervention in the crisis.

This respondent elaborates on the complexity of the Northeast crisis and how such lessen the efforts of the international community from deploying the necessary preventive and reactive measures:

First, it is important to note that, Africa, and more specifically the AU is the first regional organisation to recognise and incorporate R2P principles into its Constitutive Act. This demonstrate the doggedness of Africa to align its conflict resolution efforts in line with the dictates of the R2P norms. Secondly, the AU in line with R2P principles sought to provide humanitarian assistance, support regional peace and security initiatives, updated and reviewed the mandates of the MNJTF as well as sought for external financial and technical support to combat the Boko Haram menace in the affected region in Nigeria and beyond. Nevertheless, the complex political and security situation in Nigeria has lessen the efforts of the AU and the international community from deploying the African Standby Force. For example, at the peak of the crisis between 2013-2014 an attempt was made by the AU to use force, but the Nigerian government declined the offer on the ground that it can adequately deal with the situation. This has complicated the AU's efforts to protect civilian population. This equally informed the reason for the AU to rely heavily on the MNJTF to combat Boko Haram insurgency in the affected region.

This respondent claimed that, Nigeria's approach and track records human rights violations were among the factors that hindered that the international community's response to the crisis. Furthermore, the response was also limited by geopolitical interests.

The R2P principle requires the international community to intervene when a state is unable or unwilling to protect its population from mass atrocities, numerous factors may limit the international community's response to the crisis in Northeast Nigeria. For instance, the international community has criticized the Nigerian government for its handling of the crisis, and there have been concerns about corruption, human rights violations, and the effectiveness of the military response. This has made it difficult for the international community to determine the suitable form of intervention and to engage with the Nigerian government effectively. There may also be geopolitical considerations and interest that influence the international community's response. Nigeria is a significant regional power in Africa and has strategic importance for many states. This may steer some countries to prioritize their political and economic interests over humanitarian concerns, especially if there is a risk of destabilizing the region.

This respondent corroborate with above respondent, arguing that political interest and sovereignty concerns were at the center of the problem bedevilling the international community's response:

The R2P framework has influence the attention of the international community to the humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria, its practical implementation has been challenging. For example, there is limited military intervention-the international community has been reluctant to intervene militarily in the Boko Haram conflict. This has been due to concern about sovereignty, as well as the fears of further aggravating the conflict. In this regard, despite the severity of the crisis which has been widely documented, yet the response of the international community has been limited and fragmented. The response to the BH conflict has also been influenced by political considerations. Some governments have been reluctant to take action due concerns about impact on their domestic political situations.

The respondent expanded the perspective to consider various obstacles to the implementation of the R2P in the Northeast. These obstacles include concerns regarding sovereignty, uncertainty about intervention, political motivations, regional dynamics, and the potential for prolonging the conflict:

In accessing this, five factors comes into play: Sovereignty concerns- some countries are cautious to endorse R2P due to concerns that infringe on their sovereignty or set a precedent for intervention in their domestic affairs; international intervention-many countries have different views on whether the crisis in Northeast Nigeria constitutes an issue that requires international intervention; Political interest-each country has its own strategic interest, and these interests may sometimes conflict with the goals of the R2P. For instance, some countries may be reluctant to intervene in the BH crisis if they do not see any potential in doing so; Regional dynamics- different countries have varied relationships with Nigeria and the wider region, which could impact their perspectives on the crisis in the country, and the use of R2P; and, potential for conflict-Boko Haram conflict has a high potential for a prolonged conflict, and certain countries may be hesitant to involve themselves in the situation due to concerns that they could worsen or prolong the conflict.

In summary, the responses highlight the complexities, challenges, and varied approaches in the international community's response to the humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria, with a focus on the application of R2P principles and the roles of regional organizations.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The analysis of the data provided highlights on the influence of R2P doctrine and the challenges encountered in the context of the humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria.

First, In the case of northeast Nigeria, the international community has invoked the R2P doctrine to justify its humanitarian interventions in the case of the Boko Haram insurgency. The UN, AU, and ECOWAS have all condemned the human rights abuses and humanitarian crises perpetrated by Boko Haram, and have called for the protection of civilians and the respect for international humanitarian law. However, such recycled condemnations by the UNSC, AUPSC, and AHSG, demonstrated a mere lip service, inaction, partial commitment, and unwillingness to fully apply the R2P norm in the Northeast Nigeria crisis since 2009.

Second, In the case of the UN, the UNSC is identified as a key player in responding to humanitarian crises. However, there are observations that the UNSC's response, particularly in the case of Boko Haram, has not been as firm as in other R2P-related situations, like the Libyan conflict in 2011, despite the manifestation of all the mass atrocity crimes (war crimes, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity) as outlined in the R2P-where over 40,000 lives were lost and over 2.5 million were displaced. The findings pertaining to this theme have validated the existing literatures position. The application of R2P, particularly in relation to measures like sanctions and the use of force, is a complex task, which arises from the geopolitical and national interests of the P5 members of the UNSC, which often lead to a selective approach in their actions. The data have substantiated the profound political and ideological division within the UNSC, which has been bestowed with the power to apply R2P. The utilization of the veto power has further confirmed the inconsistencies in applying R2P to contemporary humanitarian crises. For instance, Russia and China have cautioned against any interference in internal affairs or endorsement of the use of force in the Northeast, Nigeria, by the opposing faction. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Ruth (2021) which revealed that, The absence of consensus among the five permanent members often led to indecisiveness and a lack of action, causing the application of R2P to be inconsistent in addressing all present-day humanitarian crises.

Third, The AU employs a diverse approach that includes backing for regional initiatives, humanitarian considerations, international collaboration, and a comprehensive plan to tackle both the immediate danger and the root causes of the Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast Nigeria. The unwavering consensus in adopting resolutions highlights the shared dedication of the AUPSC to address the crisis. These efforts were, however, seen as "an armchair approach," highlighting a lack of "coordinated and proactive approach" in the response of the AU, such as meetings without follow-up, as well as a perceived failure to effectively address the threat of Boko Haram. More importantly, the AU relied heavily on external partners to fund the course of humanitarian crises in Africa. This, in part, explains why the AU's proposal to deploy more than 10,000 troops against Boko Haram, to be funded by the UN and the EU, failed. Secondly, concerns are also raised about the MNJTFs structure, operating outside the broader ASF structure, diluting AU command and control, limiting the PSCs strategic guidance, and being antithetical to the R2P principles, and the evolving nature of the conflict, requiring comprehensive and collaborative responses. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Fort (2017) who contend that, the ASF and AU's failure to intervene in Mali and Libya further demonstrated the AU's inability to effectively implement the R2P principle. On the contrary, Fort (2017) further revealed that, despite their limitations, the ASF and AU have the capability to implement the R2P norms in Africa

Fourth, the analysis reveals a recurring pattern of concern, determination, and collective action by the ECOWAS AHSG in response to the Boko Haram crisis. The communiqués underscore the importance of regional collaboration, international support, and a holistic approach that addresses both the immediate security threats and the root causes of terrorism. These themes collectively demonstrate a regional commitment to addressing the complex and evolving challenges posed by terrorism in Northeast Nigeria through coordinated efforts, resource mobilization, and international collaboration. The result portrays ECOWAS as actively engaged in addressing terrorism through various initiatives and seeking global attention. However, criticisms

and challenges, including military absence and coordination issues caused by lack of political will, are raised. This is in line with the study conducted by Dzimiri (2016) claimed that absence of political will, lack of prompt response to impending cataclysm, hidden motives of the intervening actors, rendered R2P more a rhetorical than action oriented.

CONCLUSION

The primary aim of the study was to evaluate the humanitarian responses led by the UN, AU and ECOWAS in the context of the humanitarian crisis in northeast Nigeria, which has been ongoing for over 10 years. The study reveals that the R2P doctrine has been invoked by the international community in response to the humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria caused by the Boko Haram insurgency. However, the effectiveness of the R2P doctrine in addressing this crisis has been limited due to challenges such as inaction, partial commitment, and unwillingness to fully apply the norm. The UN, AU, and ECOWAS have condemned the human rights abuses and humanitarian crises perpetrated by Boko Haram, but their efforts have not been sufficient in providing adequate protection and assistance to the affected population.

The study further placed the humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria in a comparative context to demonstrate that despite the cataclysmic atrocities committed by Boko Haram that led to the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives and displacement of millions of innocent citizens from their homes, the application of R2P by the international community was entirely different from what was obtainable elsewhere. A notable characteristic of the Humanitarian crisis in the Northeast is the unity of the international community in their rhetoric, which unfortunately lacks the necessary vigor, specifically the AU and ECOWAS, whose limited capabilities have resulted in their nonexistence and relegation to the background.

RECOMMENDATION

In order to tackle these limitations and foster a more efficient application of the R2P protocol, the following suggestions are put forth:

- i. **Strengthening the R2P Mechanism:** By clarifying its scope and making compliance a primary duty of the relevant international and regional bodies by ensuring that a common front is adopted. This endeavour would entail enhancing the effectiveness of the early warning systems, facilitating the exchange of information, and fostering collaboration among relevant stakeholders.
- ii. **Encouraging Diplomatic and Non-military Approaches:** Given the international community's tendency to selectively apply element II of the R2P, it becomes imperative to advocate for diplomatic and non-military solutions as an alternative. One recommendation is to foster dialogue between conflicting parties, implement conflict prevention measures, and initiate peace-building initiatives. By prioritizing non-military interventions, the international community can effectively address humanitarian crises while respecting the sovereignty of the affected nations.
- iii. **Enhancing the Role of Regional Organizations:** Given the reluctance of the international community to intervene in the internal affairs of sovereign states, it is essential for states to empower and institutionalise regional adhoc arrangement like the MNJTF, to play a more proactive role in addressing humanitarian crises in their respective regions. This would involve providing them with the necessary resources and capacity building to effectively respond to such situations.

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