

**ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES PROTOCOL ON
FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS, GOODS AND ESTABLISHMENTS AND
THE MANAGEMENT OF NIGERIA'S SECURITY**

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Abstract

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) major goal in enacting the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Establishment in 1979 was to speed regional growth through economic integration. The treaty strives to remove all barriers to cross-border movement of its residents, since unrestricted mobility of people, products, and services is critical to achieving full economic unity. The research study used a secondary source to collect data, and data from the secondary sources were submitted to qualitative content analysis, with the main goal of examining the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Goods, and Establishments and the management of Nigeria's Security. This study revealed that Nigeria's drive to safeguard its national interests in the face of insecurity always outweighs its desire to fully cooperate in the implementation of regional agreements. The implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Establishment, like any other regional agreement/treaty around the world, presents security challenges; however, how these challenges are met ultimately determines the nature of the results obtained from the ECOWAS integration agenda. Lastly, this study among other things recommended that rather than adopting protectionist policies that do not bode well for regional integration in the long run, the government of Nigeria should work more collaboratively with neighboring member states to find joint solutions aimed at addressing ineffective border management systems, smuggling, and illegal migration.

Keywords: ECOWAS, Movement, Goods, State, Nigeria, National Security

Introduction

On May 28, 1975, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo signed a treaty in Lagos that established ECOWAS. The initiative was inspired by the benefits accruing to countries as a result of the formation of organizations such as the European Economic Community (EEC), the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA), the Caribbean Community (CAICOM), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Central American Common Market (CACM), and cooperation agreements among African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. Collaboration under the aegis of these institutions helped and enhanced the free flow of commerce, the establishment of a single market, and the reduction of tensions in some areas following the end of World War II (Adepoju, 2003).

The African Union (AU) Lagos Plan of Action, approved by Heads of State in 1980, was the

first stage of the integration process (De Melo and Tsikata, 2014). Through splitting the continent into Regional Economic Communities (REC), this framework attempted to promote Pan-African Unity and accelerate industrialization through improving economic union. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) backed the formation of three Regional Economic Communities (RECs), namely the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) was formed afterwards (De Melo et al, 2014).

With the Abuja treaty of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU), establishing eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as the foundational components of the African Economic Community (AEC), regional integration appeared to be an effective way of achieving socio-economic stability and facilitating the

inclusion of economic systems of newly independent African countries in the world global economy (Ekezie-Joseph, 2021).

Within the West African sub-region economic downturn and decadence were significant drivers for social change in West Africa, typified by socio-economic and political instability entwined with greater poverty, severe food shortages, increased debt, deteriorating imbalances in payments, and internecine conflicts (Anadi, 2005). As a result, in search of new strategies for achieving all-round sustainable development, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was founded for economic revitalization across the West African region and has provided the sole feasible option to establish more viable national economies (Onyia, 1995).

The leaders of member states of ECOWAS major goal in enacting the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Establishment in 1979 was to speed regional growth through economic integration. The treaty strives to remove all barriers to cross-border movement of its residents (Adepoju, 2005), since unrestricted mobility of people, products, and services is critical to achieving full economic unity (Sowale, 2018). Based on the belief that effective economic cooperation and integration were necessary to further the Member States' harmonious economic growth, a coordinated and resolute strategy of self-reliance was the foundation for this.

The 1979 adoption of the Protocol on free movement of persons, and the right of residence and establishment, was prompted by the realization that economic integration, including the free flow of people, products, and services, was necessary. All member nations approved the Protocol's first phase in 1980, which allowed visa-free access for 90 days for nationals of Member states. All of the member nations accepted the protocol's second phase, the right of residency, and it went into force in July 1986. But the established right has not yet been put into effect. The member nations eliminated visa and other entry procedures for persons visiting a sister nation when this protocol went into effect. This implies that a person of an ECOWAS member state who has legitimate travel documentation and an international health certificate may visit another country for up to 90 days. Regardless of procedure, a member state has the right to

refuse entrance to any immigrant deemed illegal by its legal system (Article 4). All member nations adopted the protocol's second phase (the right of residency) in 1986.

Nonetheless, regardless of the importance of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Establishment to the integration process, multiple roadblocks to its full implementation have been encountered. In general, while community support has been strong on resolutions, it has been weak on implementation, with a gap between policy formulation and policy implementation. These problems frequently take two forms: pre-existing situations in member states that impede implementation, or challenges that arise as a result of the protocol's adoption and implementation. However, because they are so intertwined, these two are not mutually exclusive. To a considerable degree, how member-states create initiatives and approaches to address these difficulties has a significant impact on how well they are implemented (Ekezie-Joseph, 2021).

On the whole, in an effort to address some of the security challenges, Nigeria has embarked on an array of protectionist policies, most of which are totally at odds with Nigeria's multilateral commitments at ECOWAS and will undoubtedly stymie the current progress of removing trade barriers and facilitating the freedom of movement of persons within the sub-region (Unah, 2019). It is against this background this study seeks to examine the implications of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Establishments on Nigeria's Security.

Conceptual Review:

International Migration and Security

Besides the basic definitions of international migration available in dictionaries, there are other particular meanings of essential migration-related words, including those found in the legal, administrative, scientific, and statistics sectors. There is no internationally acknowledged definition of international migration; nevertheless, some definitions are commonly accepted and have been produced in various circumstances, such as those given forth in United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (1998) Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration.

Hence, there is no need in opening up further definitions on international migration. Therefore, this study will adopt the definition of international migration provided by the United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration which defines an "international migrant" as any person who has changed his or her country of usual residence, distinguishing between "short-term migrants" (those who have changed their countries of usual residence for at least three months, but less than one year) and "long-term migrants" (those who have done so for at least one year). However, not all countries use this definition in practice (World Migration Report, 2020).

However, there is no controversy that security is one of the most significant ideas in International Relations since it is tied to the protection of governments and their populations, as well as their basic survival. However, defining security is difficult since the phrase has had many varied meanings to various individuals in various places and different periods throughout human history. According to Baldwin (1997), many academics seem to be more interested in redefining nation-state policy agendas in order to include and prioritize topics such as poverty, trade, economics, human rights, transnational crimes, and the environment, as opposed to the conventional focus with security from external military threats. According to this school of thought, Baldwin believes that conceptual matters receive insufficient attention.

Iglesias (2011:3) posit that national security centers around the realist paradigm, which holds that global politics are always a fight between states for power in an anarchic environment in which they compete for their own national interests. In this framework, states rely on military might to protect their interests by counteracting threats posed by the armed forces of other states. In this manner, national sovereignty and the distribution of power among the many states are inextricably linked to what is meant by security.

According to Hans Brauch (2011:61), objective security is achieved when the dangers posed by multiple challenges, threats, challenges, and vulnerabilities "are avoided, prevented, managed, coped with, mitigated, and adapted to by individuals, societal groups, states, or regional or global international organizations." In Wolfers' words (1952:484-485): "Security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of

threats to acquired values; in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked." However, if security could only be obtained via the buildup of power, which is not the case, the terms security and power would be identical. The subjective fear of attack-security is also not proportional to a nation's relative power position. After all, security is nothing more than the absence of the evil of insecure, a negative value.

Literature Review

There is heated debate among academics and members of the public over the security implications of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Citizens and Right of Residence and Establishment for West African States. Scholars have revealed that the protocol cannot be held accountable for existing heinous and despicable activities such as contraband goods smuggling, human trafficking, and the movement of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) (Onwuka, 1982; Agyei et al 2007; Opanike, Aduloju, and Adenipekun, 2015; and Opanike, et al, 2015; Afolabi 2018). It is clear that West African residents benefit from the provisions of this Protocol due to its appropriate level of implementation within its borders.

Lloyd et al. (2019) examines the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol in light of the West African trans-border security/herdsmen incident. They contended that previous research on West African regionalism confirm that one of the causes for regional integration is Nigeria's selfish interests. The benefits of regional collaboration among West African governments, however, cannot be sacrificed on the altar of Nigeria's political ambitions based on herdsmen debacles.

Lloyd et al. (2019) posit that the Economic Community of West African nations (ECOWAS) has unquestionably embarked on many integration programs to enhance collaboration and development among member nations, the most significant of which being the Free Movement Protocol. Although previous research has looked into the protocol's advantages and efficacy in the West African Sub-region. However, they added that there has been little research into the transborder security implications of the Free Movement Protocol for the region in light of recent herdsmen assaults. Ekezie-Joseph (2021) investigates the challenges associated with the implementation of the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Right of

Establishment; and examines Nigeria's responses to the challenges and how they affect its implementation of the Protocol; as well as determines how Nigeria's responses shape outcomes in ECOWAS in relation to the expected results from the protocol in question. However, there is a knowledge gap in the literature on the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Establishments and the management of Nigeria's Security.

Saka et al (2022) examines ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of persons and its negative implications on Nigeria's national security within the context of the tenuous security challenges arising from terrorist insurgency and transnational criminal activities in the sub-region. However, this study seeks to strengthen existing argument in this research endeavor. Hence, there is improvement on the periodization of the work and methodological approach to the study of ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Establishments and the management of Nigeria's Security. It is against this background this study seeks to make contributions to this research endeavor.

Theoretical Framework

This study is situated within the context of regional integration theory. Viner's work, which was published in 1950, is credited as being the first to develop the regional integration theory. Through this, a framework for evaluating how a customs union will affect both its members and people outside the union was devised. The purpose of regional integration theory is to explain how regional international organizations are created and grow. What effect regional organizations have on states and societies in their regions, how regional organizations expand their tasks, competencies, and membership, and why and under what circumstances states choose to delegate political authority to regional organizations are important questions (Obafemi et al 2002).

Since then, with a broad comparative geographical and organizational reach, regional integration theory has concentrated on European integration and the European Union, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. According to Obafemi et al (2002). regional integration theories have closely tracked and modified themselves to the advancement of European

integration. They discuss the development of supranational organizations and policies as well as the current EU crisis. An illustrative analysis of their justifications for significant advancements in European integration reveals that they are more complimentary than competitive (Obafemi et al 2002). The theory makes the assumption that governments play a key role in the formulation of integration preferences as well as in the discussions surrounding integration. Another tenet of the theory is that welfare is a key objective of regional integration and that the relative strength of governments plays a significant role in determining the success of integration (Obafemi et al 2002).

According to Lipsey (1960), a customs union may or may not be welfare-enhancing depending on the specific circumstances. This acknowledgement represents a conceptual shift from the general belief that customs unions will always or nearly always enhance welfare. There has also been a shift in focus away from the issue of how different integration schemes affect the economy and towards the fundamental query of why they are created in the first place. Another proponent of the idea, Krauss (1972), thinks that this shift represents both a theoretical and institutional imperative (cited in Obafemi et al 2002:181-182). From a theoretical perspective, it is a reaction to the classic international trade theory's failure to explain why policies other than free trade are promoted.

On the whole, due to the reduced costs they pay after integration compared to before integration, consumers in the area effectively obtain additional rents, improving their welfare. According to Lipsey (1960), customs unions may not always improve welfare and may even have some detrimental consequences on welfare, depending on the specifics of the situation.

This theory is relevant to this study because it considers the free movement of people and commodities within the ECOWAS area and because it proposes to bring together West African nations to create and approve legislation that would promote economic growth of member states by lowering the cost of goods. According to the argument, this might be felt due to the effects of establishing a customs union on both the among West African Countries.

ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Establishments and the Management of Nigeria's Security

ECOWAS member states adopted their first protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence, and Establishment in May 1979. It established the right of ECOWAS people to enter, remain, and conduct economic activity on the territory of other member states and provides a three-step pathway of five years each to attain freedom of movement of individuals after fifteen years (ECOWAS, 1979).

The first phase dealt with the right to enter without a visa, the second with the right to live, and the third with the right to establish in another member State. The first phase has been completed completely. The second step, the right of residency, has also been established for citizens who have earned an ECOWAS resident card or permission in another member state. The third step, the right of establishment, is still being implemented in the majority of member countries (Adepoju et al 2010).

ECOWAS Member States adopted a single passport, formally known as the ECOWAS travel certificate, to allow free movement of persons within the ECOWAS area. In December 2000, the ECOWAS passport was launched to free bearers from intra-regional visa restrictions and to serve as an international travel document. The member countries are now working on a joint visa for non-ECOWAS nationals that would span the whole region, known as the Eco-Visa. ECOWAS has also taken steps to facilitate the mobility of people in private and commercial cars by harmonizing laws that allow vehicles to enter and temporarily dwell in a member state for up to ninety and fifteen days, respectively. In this sense, the majority of ECOWAS member states have implemented the ECOWAS brown card, which is a motor vehicle insurance policy that covers the owner's civil liability in the ECOWAS area (African Union, 2013).

Article 27 of the ECOWAS Treaty affirmed the need for economic integration, which includes free movement of citizens, goods, and services, by requiring Member States to remove all barriers to free movement of citizens, services, and capital (Paragraph 1 of Article 27) (ECOWAS, 1999). ECOWAS member nations were really expected to stop requiring visas and residency permits, allowing West Africans to work and engage in commercial and industrial operations on their territory (Paragraph 2). The

establishment of a borderless West Africa was in accordance with the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and UN human rights (ECOWAS, 1999).

According to the ECOWAS Treaty's preamble, the main goal is to reduce barriers to the free movement of goods, capital, and people throughout the subregion, hence enhancing economic development. More precisely, Article 27 indicates that the long-term goal is to develop community citizenship that would be gained automatically by all nationals of member nations; in other words, a borderless West Africa (Adepoju, 2005). The ECOWAS accord was hailed in London as "one of the most ambitious projects of its kind in the world", and in West Africa as "by far the most momentous and far-reaching economic treaty" (Daily Times 1975).

With other endeavors, ECOWAS has had better success. In order to offer a standard, minimal insurance coverage for automobiles travelling between participating member nations, the ECOWAS Brown Card Motor Vehicle Insurance Scheme was created in 1982. A standardized ECOWAS Travel Certificate was created in 1985 to facilitate and lower the cost of cross-border travel. Seven nations in the area provide these certifications. The ECOWAS travel certificate is now accepted in Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. The certificate has a two-year validity period and is extendable for an additional two years. Compared to national passports, whose issuance is less than consistently enforced in many member nations, they are far less expensive to create and obtain (Agyei et al 2007).

The operationalization of the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of people and products, which member states agreed to utilize as a starting point, has important concerns. They include a lack of effective controls to prevent criminal infiltration, an inconsistency in national migration laws and policies, and insufficient infrastructure to support the creation of a borderless West Africa. It has been acknowledged that ECOWAS has not set up sufficient controls to prevent illegal immigrants from entering its member states. This is because a large portion of the population in the subregion lacks any legitimate travel documentation, including birth certificates. People that engage in illicit activities like online fraud, money laundering, human trafficking,

etc. have taken advantage of this. There are also worries that some residents of the sub-region have misused the advantages granted in the convention. Smuggling of commodities and illegal drug trade are two of the abuses. Officials and the general public in the destination nations have expressed their dissatisfaction as a result of these crimes and economic sabotage activities.

Before the convention took effect, ECOWAS also failed to guarantee that national laws governing migration were harmonized. The seamless execution of the protocol on free movement of people has been significantly impacted by this. The different and diverse social, political, and economic backgrounds of the member states were not given enough attention when the protocol was enacted, which led to its revocation and the deportation of non-citizens by several Member States during lean economic times. Another problem is that the sub-region's insufficient infrastructure makes it difficult to move about. In order to promote an efficient flow of human traffic, little effort was made to develop the road and rail networks outside of national borders at the time the protocol entered into operation. Perhaps not enough was done to assist the protocol's easy and efficient deployment for the benefit of the populace. The majority of nations in the globe are working to limit the number of migrants who can enter their countries.

Moreover, Agyei et al (2007) points out that the top 25 wealthiest nations spend between \$ 25 and \$ 30 billion yearly on immigration enforcement. A significant portion of these monies is utilized for border control, building physical barriers and structures, and implementing limitations and rules like airline checks and other regulations. However, such immigration laws are not exclusive to developed nations in the North. 44 nations, including 30 from developing nations, were recognized as governments with enhanced border restrictions in their separate migration policies in the United Nations' 2002 report on migration. Additionally, 57 of the 78 governments that implemented legislation to lower immigration numbers were developing nations, including republics in Africa (Agyei et al 2007).

Consequently, some of the migration policies that some ECOWAS member nations are pursuing are not in line with the organization's text and spirit. In order to secure and protect

each state's people' interests, member states must depart from the protocol on free movement. This might be explained by a wish to avoid internal political upheavals that would probably follow from a lack of economic growth and progress. The ECOWAS protocol hasn't been put into action as effectively as it could have due to the leaders' divergent political and ideological views, internal political instability, and civil unrest. As a result of the divisions between the leaders, border restrictions have become more stringent.

Additionally, there were worries that certain Member States would be aiding rebels or insurgents and permitting them to conduct assaults from their territory in an effort to topple their governments. Even if the protocol exists, limitations on cross-border mobility grow in order to counter such threats. Such rigid border controls go counter to both international conventions and the liberal democratic philosophy that dominates the world. People have a right to movement from a human rights standpoint. The AU and NEPAD charters, in addition to ECOWAS, support Africans' rights to travel freely and without many obstacles.

The unrestricted free movement of people within the sub-region poses sensitive challenges in countries where immigrants predominate in commerce and labor in some sectors of economy. As a result, populist political movements are fueled by anti-immigration sentiments (Agyei et al 2007). Such conflicts act as undercurrents for weak regime destabilization. The occurrence of political and social turmoil in several ECOWAS member nations diverted governments' focus away from carrying out their duties towards the sub-regional body. The way institutions are set up at the national and sub-regional levels encourages variation in how policies are carried out. Most member states delegate responsibility for managing immigration policies to other ministries, departments, and organizations. Numerous issues that impede the free movement of individuals in the area are caused by ineffective coordination, rivalry, and implementation flaws.

Hatton et al (2005) notes that whereas trade policies have become more liberalized over time, immigration restrictions have not. Trade agreements have reduced industrial tariffs from 40% to 3% over the past fifty years, yet most nations' immigration laws are still strict or even

getting stricter in some cases. As more effort and resources have been invested in harmonizing trade policy within ECOWAS, trade problems now take precedence over the mobility of people within the region. One significant distinction is that, unlike trade, multilateral discussions between nations do not help migration policy. While there are challenges to resolve when it comes to commerce, the benefits of migration are almost always in favour of one party.

The member nations' economies are all very small, therefore for maximum economic integration it is necessary to use all of their labor and capital resources. However, the sub-region is harmed by what Wolf (2004) refers to as the world's largest economic distortion, restrictive policies that are meant to limit international migration. Cross-border informal trade is a further issue that creates division. This entails West African nationals smuggling illegally profitable things including gold, diamonds, cocoa, and other commodities into nearby nations. The practice is made possible by the permeable boundaries in the area and the complicity of dishonest border officers. Trade across unofficial borders benefits everyone (cited in Agyei et al 2007).

Despite the benefits accruing from the implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Establishments of 1979. Nigeria has implemented a slew of protectionist policies, the majority of which are at variance with Nigeria's multifaceted obligations at ECOWAS and will unquestionably hinder the sub-region's current progress in eliminating obstacles to trade and facilitating free movement of people due to a number of security challenges necessitated from the implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Establishments (Unah, 2019).

However, there are critical difficulties concerning the implementation of the protocol that member nations agreed to utilize as a starting point. They include a lack of suitable procedures to manage criminal infiltration, a lack of harmonization of state migration laws and policies, and insufficient infrastructure to support the realization of a borderless West Africa.

Since independence, the Nigerian government has demonstrated a commitment to fostering friendly ties with its neighbors. The promise is

embodied in her foreign policy objectives at independence, which include the pledge that Nigeria would not intervene in the domestic problems of her near neighbors and will adopt a policy of good neighborliness with them (Gambari, 2008).

The Nigerian government, like other African nations dealing with border and boundary security, has explored different solutions to the multiplicity of security challenges arising from border-related security challenges with her neighbors. These border concerns are a result of colonialism, which has hampered collaboration and, as a result, nation-building between Nigeria and her border neighbors. Trans-border patrol is one way the Nigerian government has attempted to handle boundary and border-related issues with its neighbors (Uwak et al 2023).

Over the years, the Nigerian state has been faced with various security threats from its neighbors. During President Shehu Shagari's (1979-1983) administration, certain Nigerian communities in Illo district, Sokoto State, were invaded by Beninois troops in 1983 (Nigerian Herald, 1981). They even raised their national flag in these villages. The same thing happened in 1983, when Cameroonian forces attacked and murdered five Nigerian soldiers in Ikang, a border town next to Cross River State. In the same vein, Chadian military encroached into Nigerian territory and captured various border towns in 1983 (Ate, 1992). This development heightened tensions between Nigeria and her immediate neighbors. Despite the fact that the Shagari administration addressed the difficulties diplomatically rather than militarily, the event prompted security worries about Nigeria's border relations with its immediate neighbors (Uwak et al 2023).

However, since the 1970s, transnational criminal activities on Nigeria's border with her near neighbor have increased. Poverty, unemployment, and the porous nature of the border all had a role in the increase in illegal criminal activity. The illegal operation jeopardized security and economic growth along the Nigeria-Benin border. Despite efforts to curb the stream, trans-border crime has become an embarrassment to the Nigerian government. The development caused the Nigerian government under President Olusegun Obasanjo's civilian administration to take immediate measures in order to pressure the Beninois government to act (Uwak et al 2023).

The infamous operations of trans-border criminals, particularly across Nigeria-Benin frontiers, compelled the Obasanjo government to seal the border between the two nations in 2003. The closing of the two countries' borders hampered economic operations between businesspeople and women from both countries. To reopen the border, the Nigerian government asked that the Beninois government hand up Ahmed Tijani, a renowned trans-border criminal, to the Nigerian government (Uwak et al 2023).

On the whole, Nigeria's protectionism and concentration on national interests and sovereignty would preclude the prospect of developing closer economic linkages in the future, and might be a big setback in the community's efforts to establish a single currency shortly. In the political sphere, Nigeria's protectionist policies may have an impact on regional security because it relies on countries like Chad and Niger for cooperation in fighting the Boko Haram insurgency, and in the aftermath of these economic squabbles, these countries may be hesitant to render assistance, which could result in chaos if not handled properly. Nigeria has a lot of clout in the community and has a lot of ability to push regional priorities if it wasn't so self-centered.

Conclusion

In light of Nigeria's implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement, it is understandable that, despite its role in the community's creation and survival, Nigeria's desire to protect its national interests in the face of challenges constantly outshines its desire to fully cooperate to implement regional agreements. As with any other regional agreement/treaty around the world, the implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Establishment presents challenges; however, how these challenges are met ultimately determines the nature of the results obtained from the ECOWAS integration agenda.

Also, important especially as it relates to Nigeria and ECOWAS member states, it is important to consider these concerns not as impediments to the advancement of national interests or national security, but as a chance to develop shared solutions to problems that impact every ECOWAS member state. Overall, the future of sub-regional integration and the

establishment of closer relationships between member states of ECOWAS are heavily reliant on the sort of ways used to cope with obstacles that occur especially issues of national security, as well as the steadfast dedication to the community and its mission.

Recommendations

The ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture should embrace new approaches and intensify efforts to address the issue of insecurity, particularly the Boko Haram insurgency and other security threats in the sub-region.

Also, on the part of the Nigerian government, there is the need for proper harmonization of national security policies in Nigeria to reflect all provisions of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Establishment would facilitate implementation and ensure compliance on the part of national agencies and bodies in charge of executing and monitoring the protocol's implementation.

Lastly, rather than adopting protectionist policies that do not bode well for regional integration in the long run, the government of Nigeria should work more collaboratively with neighboring member states to find joint solutions aimed at addressing ineffective border management systems, smuggling, and illegal migration.

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