

# Civil-Military Cooperation in the Fight against Terrorism; Case of Vigilante Groups in the Far North Region of Cameroon

Frankline Babila Doh, PhD

Pan African Institute for Development-West Africa

frankbdoh[at]gmail.com

(+237) 675326288

**Abstract:** *This paper examines the impacts of the collaboration and cooperation between the Cameroonian defense forces and the civilian population organized into Auto-Defense groups in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group. Since 2013, the Far North region of Cameroon has suffered attacks from the Boko haram terrorist group it's based in neighboring northern Nigeria territory. Given the geographical and cultural proximity between Far North Cameroon and Northern Nigeria, Boko haram has frequently carried out attacks in some remote communities, kidnapping for ransom, killing villagers, rustling cattle, destroying farms with crops, and burning down villages. In response, the government of Cameroon supported by a multi-regional force under the supervision of the African Union waged an offensive against Boko haram, thus reducing its capacity of the nuisance. However, if the capacity of the nuisance of Boko haram has significantly reduced in the Far North region in the past years, it is thanks to the collaboration between the local population and the defense forces. This paper adopts the historical approach anchored on a critical analysis of secondary and primary sources in the form of previous publications and field investigation to explore the nature and strategy of collaboration between the local population organized in Auto-defense groups and the government in the fight against Boko haram. It examines the achievements and weakness of the Auto-defense groups in combatting radicalism in the Far North region of Cameroon.*

**Keywords:** Vigilante groups, civil-military relations, Boko Haram, and terrorism

## 1. Background to Vigilantism in the Far North Region of Cameroon

For a very long time, Cameroon was considered one of the most peaceful countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. In other words, this country geographically situated in West Africa was void of political instability, coup d'états, and rebellions. Unfortunately, the year 2013 marked a turning point in the security and peace of the country. In reality, in 2013 Cameroon was provocatively attacked in its northern regions by the Islamic terrorist group named Boko haram. This group claiming allegiance to the notorious Islamic State (ISIS) terrorist group had the objective of carving out an Islamic caliphate running from Niger, through Nigeria, North Cameroon, and Chad. Despite Cameroon's effort in collaboration with multilateral cooperation to combat Boko Haram, the movement has not been neutralized. This is because to date, the Far North region of Cameroon is still a victim of sporadic attacks carried out against Cameroon's defense forces and on the local population by Boko haram fighters and their suicide bombers.

It is evident that some non-state armed groups like Boko haram possess the same types of weapons and at times more sophisticated weapons than the regular army. The asymmetric nature and membership of non-state armed groups make it very difficult to locate and track them by regular armies. Furthermore, their capacity to adapt to the environment by dissimulating the local population further complicates the task of fighting them. It is within this perspective that the indigenes of the Far North region of Cameroon in collaboration with the government decided to create auto-defense/ vigilante groups and cooperate with government forces to fight against the Boko haram

insurgency that has often used the local population to deploy their militias and attacks.

The implication of vigilante groups in the fight against Boko haram terrorism contributed significantly to reducing the nuisance capacity of the group. To understand the successful contribution of vigilante groups in reducing the nuisance capacity of Boko haram insurgency in the Far North region this study is guided by the following questions: (a) what are the socio-ethnic and environmental factors that have favored the successful contribution of vigilante groups in curbing Boko haram terrorist deployment in the far north region of Cameroon? , and (b) to what extent can vigilantism be leveraged to resolve other armed conflicts Cameroon is presently confronted with. This paper argues that regulated vigilantism is an efficient instrument for new types of conflicts such as combat insurgency in which the enemy generally dissimulate among the population and uses spontaneous strategies to deploy their strikes. Vigilante groups thus constitute a combating and information-sharing tool that can reduce the nuisance of insurgency.

This article is divided into six parts. The first presents the background to the study; the second presents the conceptualization of vigilantism in armed conflict, followed by the presentation of the methodology. A fourth section examines the factors that explain the success of vigilante groups curbing Boko haram activities in the Far North region of Cameroon. Section five deals with the paradox of vigilantism in the fight against terrorism. The last section presents the conclusion to the reflection.

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## 2. Conceptualising Vigilantism in Armed Conflicts

The increasing threats to the survival of the State coupled with the inability of the regular armies to face enemies have prompted the rise of vigilante groups, especially in the African context. Even though vigilantism is not a new phenomenon; its re-emergence in the past decades can be explained by new forms of security threats such as terrorism and transborder criminality. In African countries threatened by insurgency as is the case with the Boko Haram terrorism movement in the Far North region of Cameroon, communities have resorted to protecting themselves. This is not because the regular Cameroon defense forces have not been protecting them, but simply the fact that the Boko Haram terrorist movement in the area keeps changing less conventional war methods. Given the asymmetric nature of insurgency and the inability to differentiate terrorist agents from the local population, it becomes very difficult for the army to operate efficiently. Accordingly, the communities have devised self-protection mechanisms. This self-protection mechanism mainly involves the formation of vigilante groups within the communities affected by the crimes of Boko Haram.

Vigilante groups are groups of people who take up armaments to protect themselves and their community when they feel that the government has failed to do so. Otherwise called Non-state security actors, their role has been qualified as a paradox in the fight against insurgency.

To Momodu (2020), the role of vigilante groups in countering Boko Haram terrorism presents some successes and at the same time poses a threat to the ongoing efforts at countering Boko Haram terrorism in the Sahel region and the efforts toward rebuilding the region.

Historically, vigilantism groups have contributed significantly to reducing the nuisance of criminal groups where the regular army has failed to do so. In countries like Sierra Leone, Uganda's Teso region, South Sudan's former Western Equatorial State, and Nigeria's northeast, the role of the vigilante groups has been important in assisting the army to dismantle and neutralised insurgent groups (ICG, 2017).

Examining the role of vigilante groups in the Far North region of Cameroon, Frii-Manyi Anjoh and Shey argue that vigilante groups were well structured in hierarchical form and members were recruited based on their mastery of their areas of operation (Anjoh and Shey, 2020). Vigilante groups have become very popular in the region due to their assistance to the military and their contribution to security in the region, but they however pose as a source of insecurity in the future.

Vigilante groups have played a major role not only in providing information but also in helping to prevent suicide attacks and reduce casualties sometimes at great risk to their own lives (Ntuda et al, 2017). The fact that they live in the said communities and master the local geography, history, languages, and cultures make them a powerful asset to Cameroonian security services in the fight against the insurgents. Their contributions have earned them accolades

from government authorities as well as great attention and support from the media.

Unfortunately, some of the members have tarnished the image of these community-based groups by falsely reporting people, extorting money, and even collaborating with the Islamist group.

The various contributions by the parties involved in fighting the sect have considerably weakened the Jihadist group in Cameroonian territory and relieved the suffering of its many victims (Ibid). However, despite military reversals, its ability to cause havoc has remained intact, and the consequences of the war on the local economic, political and socio-cultural environment are immense.

In the same vein, Jemma Arman (2020) opines that in situations of national crisis, it is not uncommon to see community members join together to provide security services to their communities, gap-filling or supplementing the security services of the State. These "community defense groups" perform many roles, from operating checkpoints and conducting surveillance missions to patrolling roads and even participating in combined combat operations with the State. Jemma however remarks that, while many community defense groups perform an important service for their community, some have been accused of serious human rights abuses or even war crimes.

Omitola et al, remarks suggest that shreds of evidence from counterterrorism and the war on terrorism operations in Africa have revealed the inadequacies of the conventional counterterrorism strategy (Omitola et al, 2021). The over-reliance on the use of simply hard-military and offensive strategy in prosecuting the war against terrorism and forms of insurgencies in Africa since the inception of the war on terrorism and counterterrorism in Africa has largely been counterproductive. From Boko Haram in Nigeria to the Islamic State of West African Province in West Africa (ISWAP), to Al-Shabab in eastern parts of Africa, and then to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the rise and spike in terrorism in Africa remain indirectly proportionate to the conventional counterterrorism operations and strategy.

The deficiency of the use of conventional counterterrorism strategy in the prosecution of the war on terrorism in Africa, coupled with its flawed outcome, has ignited calls for alternative counterterrorism strategies. Chief amongst these alternative counterterrorism strategies is the Community and Vigilante-Group Policing in Africa which emboldens the culture, language, episteme, authority, and interest of the people in the quest to address the scourge of terrorism and other security threats.

## 3. Methodology

This adopted a historical approach consisting of a critical analysis of secondary and primary sources to explain the collaboration between the civilians and security forces in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency in the Far North region of Cameroon. Secondary sources of the previous study on the question in the form of books, articles, organizations, institutional reports, and dissertations

provided rich knowledge on the security situation in the far north region of Cameroon. These sources were complemented by primary sources in the form of interviews which were conducted with military officials, administrative, and local authorities in the far north region, the mass media notably the national TV, Cameroon Radio Television, and its press organ; Cameroon Tribune. Private Media such as Canal 2, Equinox TV, newspaper organs such as *l'oeil du Sahel*, and many others provided valuable information to analyze facts in the study. The most affected areas by the Islamic terrorist group are frontline-like communities like Ldamang, Mabass, kolofata, Amchide, and Gnase, all situated in the far north region of Cameroon.

#### **Determinants of vigilante group's contribution in curbing Boko haram insurgency in the Far North of Cameroon**

If the Cameroonian defense and security forces have been able to contain the proliferation of insurgency perpetrated by Boko haram on Cameroonian soil, this has been thanks to the collaboration between the military and the local population. The collaboration and cooperation between the stakeholders occurred in three phases. First, the local auto-defense groups served essentially as an informant with their role limited just to report suspicious persons or activities to the administrative and security forces around their area.

This role was further reinforced by the authorization of vigilante groups to carry rudimentary arms such as sticks, bows and arrows, and spears. The government started receiving complaints from vigilante group leaders. The complaint is that most of the time they find themselves helpless and lose some members when faced with the terrorist. As such, they need more possibilities to protect themselves in front of a terrorist who is using sophisticated weapons such as AK47s. Also, this evolution can be explained by the fact that the time required for military intervention was generally long, which gave the enemy enough time to operate and leave before military interventions. Consequently, from rudimentary arms, vigilante groups began using sophisticated lethal arms.

A series of historical events led to the success of vigilante groups in contributing to the containment of the Boko haram terrorist movement in the Far North Region of Cameroon. These determinants vary from traditional warfare techniques, mastery of the environment, and popular legitimacy.

#### **Traditional defense Mechanisms**

From a historical lens, the various indigenous people currently living in the Far North region of Cameroon have acquired warfare techniques because of their warrior history. Starting from the Jihads led by Usmanu dan Fodio at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the far north of Cameroon had been a springboard for several ethnic groups presently constituting the Grassfields (Northwest and West Region) of Cameroon.

The majority of Cameroon Grassfield's ethnic groups migrated from the North as a result of Jihads. Meanwhile, some groups resisted the Jihadists and remained resilient to date. Heraclitus has noted that all societies/communities in existence are a product of war. Before the Islamization of the area, the earliest civilization of the Sao, Kotoko, and

Musgum was characterized by their warring spirit. As a dynamic geographical space, the North region of Cameroon has constantly been the epicenter of inter/intra-community conflicts.

Like all human societies, the multiple communities in the Far North region generally organized in socio-political entities such as Chiefdoms and Lamidats had developed sophisticated means of defense against external aggression. They had developed a series of war technological skills that was translated into the types and use of arms they fabricated. The most common ones are jet arms such as bows and arrows, spears, and catapults. The fabrication of clubs and knives also constitute the main war equipment used in early communities in the Far North region of Cameroon. Material required for arms fabrication was generally obtained from the immediate environment.

The advent of the Boko haram insurgency reduces the velocity of occurrence of inter/inter-community conflicts in the far northern region of Cameroon. Boko haram insurgency targets virtually all communities in the Far North region without any distinction, be they Muslim, Christian, or animist. As such local auto-defense groups against Boko haram terrorist activities are from all communities in the area.

#### **The socio-political organization of communities in the Far North region**

In Northern Cameroon, there are dozens of traditional chiefs, called lamibe (sing. lamido), or "sultans" in the Muslim community, who are recognized and ranked by the administration. The most important ones, whose territorial jurisdiction extends to the limits of what could be considered a French department, are said to be of the first degree, while their vassals, whose territory does not exceed the limits of an arrondissement or a district, are said to be of the second and third degree, respectively, according to the decrees of July 15, 1977, and June 24, 1982, on the organization of traditional chieftaincies (Barka, 2022).

This subservience to the government is not only a result of the fact that the traditional chieftaincies are not recognized by the government, but also of the fact that they are not subject to the law. This subservience to the state, the result of struggles and concessions dating back to the colonial period, has made local monarchs and their vassals "auxiliaries of the administration," according to the terminology used in the administration. They serve as a conduit between the state and the people and exercise authority in the settlement of land disputes. They have thus represented the identity of the populations and a certain social cohesion in times of peace, that is, roughly since the country's independence in 1960.

As a result, the irruption of terrorism in their localities in recent years has brought these chiefs to the forefront, revealing the less visible role they have always played alongside the administration, which consists of monitoring, denouncing, and punishing, on behalf of the state, any act that shows a form of religious radicalism, or at least a break with traditional religious practices.

In the fight against Boko Haram, the Cameroonian government considered the problem to be a complex religious situation, with dimensions that escaped the attention of administrators, most of whom were Christians and animists, and certainly not from the Far North region. To get a clear picture of the conflict, the state, through the governor, prefects, and sub-prefects, had recourse to traditional chiefs, notably in the context of weekly security meetings. The chiefs, previously absent from these consultations where only the military, gendarmes, and police were present with the administrators, saw their expertise increasingly solicited. They became encouraged and even remunerated since they were paid attendance fees. This amount which, increased in times of war, constituted an incentive for many chiefs. The government had opportunely remembered that within each chiefdom, a system for gathering information and securing the village existed, and that exploiting it had once been successful in suppressing large-scale banditry (Ibid).

Since 2013, the role of these chiefs has therefore been the transfer of information from the field to the administration. Certainly, government control in these remote areas was weak and especially on the borders with Nigeria and Chad. These borderlines were already porous before the terrorist invasion and became more vulnerable to the movements of Boko Haram fighters (Kadje, 2016).

The fact that the chiefs were spies was more or less known, but their regular solicitation of administrators, directly or through their assistants, made their collaboration less discreet and condemned them in the eyes of Boko Haram members. The latter, who had little regard for local chiefs whom they readily described as traitors and perverts, saw this collaboration with the authorities as another reason to include them on the list of enemies to be killed. Many chiefs, including that of the town of Kolofata, were kidnapped or threatened (Ibid). Other third-level chiefs have been threatened, abducted, or executed, as well as villagers who are considered to be the privileged informants of the traditional authorities.

### The Magico-mystical dimension

The use of magic and other mystical practices as self-defense measures was very common in pre-colonial African communities and it is still the case today in the Far North region of Cameroon. In most Far North traditional societies, three main types of magical practices for the defense of the community were common. They include premonition, fetishism, and traditional shielding. These three instruments have in the past helped communities in the Far North region to defend themselves. The war, being governed in these societies by mystico-religious values, required ritual preparation and conditioning of the combatants.

Since the defense of the community require ultimate sacrifice, it was necessary to agree with the ancestors, to die as a hero. Otherwise, death was useless since it was not welcomed or wanted by the ancestors. This explains why each warrior was required to "prepare" himself spiritually before going to war, to ask his ancestors for strength as well as their protection.

Information collected from field investigation revealed that this practice is common in many communities in the Far North region of Cameroon. The success of vigilante groups in the fight against boko haram insurgency can partly be explained by the use of magic and fetishism which are a historical practice in the area.

To corroborate this assertion, Christian Locka (2017) noted that in 2016, the Governor of the Far North region, Midjiyawa Bakari, exhorted the population to make use of all means at their disposal to fight against boko haram, including witchcraft.

Locka affirms the governor's call to employ witchcraft against Boko Haram in January 2016, hundreds of militia fighters rushed to sorcerers, commonly called "marabouts," to obtain lucky charms and talismans to protect them in battle. "Since I have this gris-gris, I have no problem," said Mohamad Ahmed, a gym teacher and member of a local militia in Mora, referring to a small cloth bag typically worn around the neck or wrist. "It is so powerful," said Ahmed. "I put it on at the moment I go into the field of fighting. The fetish protects its wearer. If someone shoots at him, the bullets have no effect.

They fall on the ground like small pebbles (Ibid)."Having witnessed the growth of Boko Haram groups in their communities, vigilantes often know some of the militants and their business partners, as well as those from their immediate environment. On many occasions, they have prevented suicide attacks or limited their impact by detecting suspicious characters early. In the Far North region of Cameroon, some vigilante units have a member endowed with charms and mystical preparation and tasked to run and grab suicide bombers that have not been shot down (ICG, 2017).

### Legitimacy of Vigilante groups

During the pre-colonial era, strategies employed at combating and preventing crime and deviance, fell within the ambience of certain indigenous social institutions and groups (Onwuegbusi, 2017). Groups, usually youths charged with such duties received the legitimacy of the community and were sustained in any course. For instance, in pre-colonial North Cameroon, prevention of crime was primarily the social obligation of the entire citizenry at various capacities ranging from grown-up members of kindred to the members of various age grades who were fit and agile.

Given the vulnerable situation of the local population to attacks perpetrated by boko haram, the local populations welcome the idea of vigilante groups in the far north region of Cameroon. Amnesty International Worldwide, maintained the view that the rise in crime and insecurity and the sense of low performance by the security forces has led to the expansion of vigilante groups at local and State levels in various countries where they exist (AIW, 2013).

The fact that vigilante groups partner with state security forces gave them popular legitimacy. All informant interviewed on the field agreed that that they accept and prefer vigilante service groups as agents of crime control above other security outfits due to their (the vigilante service

group) accessibility and responsiveness when contacted over any security issue. This appreciation falls in line with what Chukwuma found in their study about acceptability of informal policing structures. They stated that the level of acceptance of informal policing structures is measured by level of legitimacy enjoyed by vigilante groups (Chukwuma, 2001). The high level of acceptance of vigilante service groups in the state portrays their importance in crime control caused by boko haram insurgents

An inherently contested and nebulous concept, legitimacy is usually considered a characteristic of a hierarchical relationship between two actors that is marked by an inequality in their relative power (Sarah et al., 2017). Most commonly this is the relationship between rulers and ruled, usually in a state setting, and legitimacy in these terms relates to the accepted right of the ruler to rule or the duty of the ruled to obey (Bukanovsky, 2002). This judgement on the right of an actor to hold and exercise power and to demand compliance is based upon shared general norms of what is right or good in a particular state or society, and it is usually granted by a majority of the population, rather than by an elite or any particular socio-economic group within the polity (Beetham and Lord, 1998).

Legitimation, however, is not a concern reserved to states alone; despite the facts that most legitimacy research has been carried out on states and the majority of legitimacy theory is built around them, recent years have seen an increase in studies on legitimacy beyond the state. International organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) are concerned with their legitimacy standing in the eyes of their member states (Lord and Magnette, 2004).

Similarly, international peace operations seek to legitimize themselves in the eyes of several audiences, including domestic support in the states seconding staff or providing funds, local populations in the host states, and the key states who mandate the missions (Coleman, 2004). While the recent shift in legitimacy studies, away from a focus exclusively on the state shows an appreciation of the wider applicability of this relational characteristics and many theoretical and conceptual assumptions born out of the state-focused has literature survived.

### **The Paradox of Civilo-Military Cooperation against Insurgency**

There is no gainsaying that the contribution of vigilante groups has minimized criminality and insecurity in their zones of application. The absence of the state in some parts of its territory exposed to crime and insecurity has generally forced communities to adopt indigenous defense mechanisms. The success of the Cameroonian defense forces in containing the advancement of Boko haram insurgency has been partially thanks to the collaboration of the local population through vigilante groups. Vigilantes have played major roles, from mostly discrete surveillance networks in the Far North to military combat auxiliaries. For the region's overstretched and under pressure militaries, they have somewhat filled the security gap and provided local knowledge. They have made the Cameroonian military

response more targeted, more efficient and robust on the ground.

In as much as vigilante is an effective instrument against counter-insurgency, it can have some long-time negative implications. The first implication is that of the exposition of families of vigilante groups to terrorist movements. In the far north region of Cameroon for example, in the past years Boko Haram has launched many attacks on vigilantes, the traditional chiefs associated with them and their communities. It frequently used targeted suicide attacks against families or communities, markets, and mosques where vigilante groups are based. According to a report published by the International crisis group, the promotion of vigilantism was a principal driver that turned the conflict from an anti-state insurgency into a messy civil war, pitting Boko Haram against communities in the far north region of Cameroon (ICG, 2017).

Vigilantism has been a way for some civilians to regain a form of control in a situation of extreme uncertainty and powerlessness. The material benefits have mattered, but perhaps even more important than these occasional profits has been the relative protection from security-service suspicions that vigilante membership affords. Indeed, the groups grew when it became clear they had official support. In the uncertainty created by blunt, abusive counter-insurgency operations, an official ID or being on a list of approved members can mean appreciable protection, a modicum of security that vigilantes can hope to extend to their kith and kin. Affiliation with a vigilante unit can also importantly make travel through government-controlled areas safer (Ibid).

The problem of mutual suspicion has further compounded the efficiency and credibility of vigilante groups. It has emerged that some vigilante members have been playing a double-cover role, informing terrorist movement and claiming to be members of vigilante groups. Security sources say that some vigilantes double as Boko Haram agents or resell goods stolen by the jihadists. Several Cameroonian traditional chiefs and *comités de vigilance* members, have been accused and arrested (l'oeil du sahel, 2015). Vigilantes also have occasionally accused the security services of double-dealing – selling weapons to Boko Haram, or being too lenient with suspects they handed over, sometimes releasing them within hours (Ibid).

Furthermore, another paradox posed by vigilantism in the Far North region of Cameroon is that of impunity. The justice issue is particularly sensitive. Vigilantism because it emerges from the weak state's inability to maintain law and order and is frequently fed by a desire for revenge for personal losses, has a built-in bias for rough justice. There have been ample reports of abuses (Ibid). Several Boko Haram suspects were burned alive. It has been recorded that several vigilante members are "pompous", hinting that they derived an undue sense of self-importance and impunity from their power.

Vigilantes also have engaged in other abuses, including sexual violence and extortions within their own communities. Herdsmen in particular, as they circulate in the

bush with valued cattle, have been targets. There are reported cases of vigilantes levelling false accusations against persons with whom they have personal feuds (Journal du Cameroun, 2016). Human rights organizations have noted how those with a bit of power in IDP camps demand sexual services or money in exchange for favors, including the right to leave the camps or build a house there (HRW, 2016).

#### Threats of Vigilantism in Far North Cameroon

Beyond their important contribution in containing the nuisance of boko haram insurgency, the administrative uncontrolled actions of vigilante groups has become a serious threat to the rule of law and the legitimacy and legality of the State among several other dangers.

Vigilantism has potential to feed ethnic or ethno-religious cleavages, because its focus is the defense of a specific local community. In the Cameroon locality of Amchidé, for instance, the initial *comité de vigilance* was controlled by Christians and harassed Muslims. It was eventually dissolved by the authorities and replaced by a mixed comité (ICG, 2017).

Vigilantism is often also in an ambivalent relationship with the established orders of chiefdom and patriarchy, particularly in rural areas. It can cut ways, sometimes revalidating “decentralised despotism”, a two-tier state system whereby peripheral areas, usually rural, are governed on the cheap, through delegation to chiefs with dubious claims to legitimacy and fitness to rule (Mamdani, 1996). At other times, it can give some autonomy to the young men (and occasionally women) who are the muscle of the vigilante forces.

If vigilantes are not disbanded, they can become mafias that turn to protection rackets and organized crime. The question is what happens when those who have become accustomed to receiving salaries or “gifts” react when these cease. This is not a new phenomenon in the Lake Chad basin, where the distinction between vigilantes, regular security force members and bandits or rebels can be fluid. Some vigilantes have already been using their relative impunity to engage in crime, from small-scale drug trafficking to resale of stolen goods (Roitman, 2005).

#### 4. Conclusion

Since 2021 the republic of Cameroon and specifically the Far North region of its territory have been victims of the incursions of the boko haram terrorist Islamic sect. The objective of this movement which was to create an Islamic caliphate by carving part of the Cameroonian territory has not succeeded in occupying or controlling an inch of Cameroon’s territory. This has been thanks to the joint efforts and collaboration between the security defense forces and the local population constituted in vigilante groups. The contributions of vigilante groups in the Far North region have been of significant importance in reducing the nuisance of the boko haram deployment in the area. The success of the contribution as revealed in the study can be explained historically. However, despite the contribution of vigilante groups in curbing the rate of nuisance and operations of the

Islamic sect the operationalization of vigilante groups have marred by some bad practices that have become a threat to the peace and tranquility they have been fighting for by combatting boko haram. In the past two years, the deployment and attacks carried out by the boko haram terrorist movement have witnessed a significant increase. The Cameroonian defense forces and the civil population have paid the ultimate price of these renewed attacks of boko haram. Can this fresh impetus of attacks perpetrated by boko haram against security forces and communities in the Far North region explained the challenges marring the effective functioning of vigilante groups?

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