

**IMPLICATIONS OF AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (AfCFTA) ON  
NIGERIAN NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES.**

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**Abstract**

*The adoption of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement by African Union Member States signals a new era of harnessing migration for development across the continent. The Protocol reflects the commitment of African Union Member States to promote economic, social and cultural development, and the long pursued integration of African economies through migration. This noble venture by African leaders is quite commendable but not without challenges and shortcomings. Consequently, this study investigated the implication of the Agreement on Nigerian National Security Challenges. Secondary sources of data collection such as Textbooks, Journals, Periodicals, Newspapers and Government publications were utilized in the study. The concept of National Security was adopted as the paradigm of the study. National security connotes the safekeeping of the nation as a whole; the protection of its people from attack and other external dangers by maintaining armed forces and guarding state secrets. The study recommended that Nigeria should be cautious in areas of ratification of the Agreement especially on the aspect of the protocol on free movement to avoid compounding her already threatening National Security challenges.*

**Key Words:** *African Continent, Implications, Regional Integration, National Security, Free Trade*

**Introduction**

At the wake of independence of most African States, the Nationalists nursed the ambition of the coming together of Africa as a bloc to chart a common course of total emancipation from the spasm of colonialism. This vision of African leaders and policy makers of that time was really aimed at finding solutions to the socio- economic, political, cultural and other peculiar challenges that confronted the continent immediately after independence.

During this period, individual African countries were divided, fragmented and were unable to capitalize on their vast wealth of natural resources. They lagged behind the rest of the world in growth and development. In an attempt to address these challenges, African nations and their leaders affirmed their resolve to work towards the regional integration of the continent. Consequently, the concept of “regionalism” gained traction and the African countries embraced regional integration as an important component in their development strategies.

Though such aspirations gave rise to ideals such as “pan-Africanism” and “collective self-reliance”, there were varying notions amongst various African countries. As a result, two schools of thought emerged: the “Casablanca school” that wanted to create a federation of all African countries, with a few powers being transferred from the national governments to a pan-African authority; and the “Monrovia school” that supported gradual unity through economic cooperation, and wherein each nation would have full control over its decisions (Mishra 2018).

To further pursue this aspiration irrespective of the bottlenecks and divergent perspectives of African leaders, Organization of African Unity (OAU) was formed in 1963. One of the principal objectives of the OAU was the promotion of unity and solidarity of African States, and coordinating and intensifying their cooperation

and efforts to achieve a better life for Africans (*OAU Charter* 1963). The preamble to the OAU Charter affirmed the inspiration behind its founding as;

*“a common determination to promote understanding among our peoples and cooperation among our States in response to the aspirations of our peoples for brotherhood and solidarity, in a larger unity transcending ethnic and national differences” (ibid).*

Therefore, various pan-African organisations have been working towards deepening economic, social and political integration of Africa over the years. To further strengthen this pursuit of a new Africa that transcends ethnic and national differences and promotes cooperation and solidarity of her people, OAU was transformed to African Union (AU) in 2002. Shortly after the formation of AU, it was recommended at African Union Commission conference of 2004 that the AU should promote the concept of African citizenship and establish an African passport (*African Union Report* 2004).

In 2005, the African Union Executive Council in Sirte, Libya, reiterated African Union support for the free movement of persons in Africa and called for the issuance of an African passport. The Migration Policy Framework and African Position on Migration and Development were subsequently adopted in 2006 by the African Union Executive Council, which committed African Union Member States to the free movement of people in Africa. In 2009, the African Union Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Union adopted the Minimum Integration Programme, which consists of different activities on which the RECs and parties involved should agree upon to speed up and bring to a successful conclusion the process of regional and continental integration that include free movement of persons in Africa. In January 2016, the African Union Executive Council Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, adopted a decision to relax visa regimes to allow for free movement of Africans and urged the African Union Commission (AUC) to develop a Protocol on Free Movement of Persons for adoption by the Assembly in January 2018 (AUC and IOM 2018).

At the July 2016 African Union Summit in Kigali, the Assembly officially launched the common, electronic, biometric African passport, which would facilitate the free movement of persons across Africa (ibid). Subsequently, on 21 March 2018, 44 African leaders met in Kigali, Rwanda, and signed a framework agreement to establish the African Continental Free Trade Agreement and on 7 July, 2019 President Buhari of Nigeria signed the agreement amidst alleged wide consultations.

Given this overview, African states are notable for their effort to lift the continent from her protracted economic and socio-political quagmire. However the region has really encountered lots of challenges in her journey to continental integration ranging from but not limited to issues of imperialism, globalization, multilateralism, unfavourable terms of trade, political instability of most member states, security challenges to mention but a few. In view of these challenges it has become very crucial for African leaders to be cautious in establishing a protocol on free movement of people, goods and capital in an increasing globalized world where the issues of arms proliferation, smuggling, drug trafficking, rising wave of insurgency and other trans border crimes holds sway.

Currently, the spate of insurgency in Africa has risen from 34% in 2009 to 78% in 2018 due to advancement in information and communication technology (ICT) and trade liberalization occasioned by globalization (Nnamchi 2019). Moreso, the ECOWAS protocol on free movement of people in West African sub region have left much to be desired. Opanike and Aduloju (2015), posit that criminals who carry out nefarious activities have exploited the opportunity to their advantage laundering money, trafficking in human, drugs, illegal arms etc. Grave insurgent activities in the sub-region have also been alleged to be aided by the protocol. Thus, the privileges of the protocol have been abused. The Protocol rather than serve the purpose of integration is contributing to the insecurity prevalent in the sub-region.

In another development, unrestricted movement in Africa tends to heighten the health risk of epidemic such as Ebola, Lassa fever and the rest. This will no doubt pose a huge threat to global security because it will be difficult to curb an outbreak. Recently, South Africa has been grappling with issues of xenophobia which is allegedly caused by influx of other Africans in the country and its effect on their citizens and the economy. This agreement will encourage more FDI in Africa which will eventually lead to dominance of Multinational corporations over local firms and SMEs thereby creating unemployment and poverty hence insecurity. With these challenges envisaged, this study set out to investigate the security implications of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA) with Nigeria in focus.

### **Broad Survey of African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)**

African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) was conceived in 2012 at the 18th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Heads of State adopted a decision to establish a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) to come into force in 2017. The Summit also endorsed the Action Plan on Boosting Intra-Africa Trade (BIAT) which identifies seven clusters: Trade policy, Trade facilitation, Productive capacity, Trade related infrastructure, Trade finance, Trade information, and Factor market integration. The CFTA will bring African countries together with a combined population of more than one billion people and a combined gross domestic product of more than US \$3.4 trillion (AUC and IOM 2019).

#### ***Major objectives of the Agreement***

The main objectives of the CFTA are to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Customs Union. It will also expand intra-African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation and instruments across the RECs and across Africa in general. The CFTA is also expected to enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level through exploitation of opportunities for scale production, continental market access and better reallocation of resources. The establishment of the CFTA and the implementation of the Action Plan on Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) provide a comprehensive framework to pursue a developmental regionalism strategy. The former is conceived as a time bound project, whereas BIAT is continuous with concrete targets to double intra-African trade flows from January 2012 and January 2022 (African Union 2018).

#### ***Phases of the Agreement***

AfCFTA negotiations cover a broad scope of issues, and are divided into two phases. Phase I covers Trade in goods and Trade in services. Issues negotiated relating to goods include Tariff reductions, Non-tariff barriers, Rules of origin, Customs cooperation, Trade remedies, Standards and technical barriers to trade. Investment, including Competition Policy and Intellectual Property Rights is scheduled for negotiation during the second Phase

The CFTA's first priority is to broaden Africa's economic and market space. It has other priorities such as addressing supply-side constraints, weak productive capacities and infrastructural bottlenecks. Indeed, many view the AfCFTA as more than a free trade agreement. It is perceived as a platform that can facilitate a process of inclusive structural transformation of African countries, contributing to meeting Africa's Agenda 2063 vision and helping Africa to progress towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (BBC News 2018). If it is well-designed and implemented, the CFTA will present a unique opportunity to bring enhanced growth and increased prospect to millions of African citizens.

#### ***Enforcement of AfCFTA***

The Agreement Establishing African Continental Free Trade entered into force on 30 May 2019 for the 24 countries that had deposited their instruments of ratification. This date marked 30 days after 22 countries had deposited their ratification instruments with the African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson; the designated depositary for this purpose, as stipulated in Article 23 of the Agreement.

#### ***Ratification of AfCFTA***

The 22-country threshold for ratification was reached on 29 April 2019 when Sierra Leone and the Saharawi Republic deposited their instruments of ratification with the depositary. Since then, five countries have put down their instruments of ratification: Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, São Tomé and Príncipe, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. Nigeria and Benin signed the AfCFTA Agreement during the 12th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union on the AfCFTA in Niamey, Niger on 7 July 2019, which marked the launch of the operational phase of the AfCFTA Agreement. Of all the AU member states, only Eritrea has yet to sign the Agreement. It has been indicated that trading under the AfCFTA will begin on 1 July 2020.

Of these member states that have signed the agreement, 27 have deposited their instrument of ratification. The 27 countries that have deposited their instruments of AfCFTA ratification with the AUC Chairperson are Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Niger, Chad, Congo Republic, Djibouti, Guinea, Eswatini, Mali, Mauritania, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), Senegal, Togo, Egypt, Ethiopia,

The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Saharawi Republic, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, São Tomé and Príncipe, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea (African Union 2019). It is instructive to note that Nigeria is yet to deposit her instrument of ratification.

### ***Implementation of the Agreement***

The AfCFTA is set to be implemented in phases, and some of the future phases still under negotiation. At the Kigali summit, areas of agreement were found on trade protocols, dispute settlement procedures, customs cooperation, trade facilitation, and rules of origin. This was part of Phase I of the agreement, which covers goods and services liberalization. There was also agreement to reduce tariffs on 90% of all goods. Each nation is permitted to exclude 3% of goods from this agreement (Signe et al 2019). At its launch on July 7, 2019, five operational instruments that will govern the AfCFTA were activated: the rules of origin; the online negotiating forum; the monitoring and elimination of non-tariff barriers; a digital payment system; and the African trade observatory. Some Phase One issues that remain to be negotiated include the schedule of tariff concessions and other specific commitments. Negotiations are also underway to see which city will host the next AfCFTA summit (Erasmus 2019).

### **National Security in Theoretical Perspective**

The model of Security was conceptualized as the framework of analysis for this study. Security is a keenly contested concept of which there is no consensus operational definition. However, Security is the degree of resistance to, or protection from, harm. It applies to any vulnerable and valuable asset, such as a person, dwelling, community, item, nation, or organization. Security is not an independent concept. It is always related to individual or societal value systems (Brauch 2003). Every actor talking about security assigns different meanings to the term. Based on the assumptions of the realist theory of international relations, security was interpreted from state centric point of view. The realists holds that security is the dominant concern for states; that force is the major instrument; that governments preserve their unity as they interact with one another and that security is achieved once threats to security can be prevented or at least managed (Nye 1988). The realists refer to relevance of territorial integrity, political independence and primacy of security measures in security discourse as ‘Traditional or National Security’. National security is a concept that a government, along with its parliaments, should protect the state and its citizens against all kind of "national" crises through a variety of power projections, such as political power, diplomacy, economic power, military might, and so on.

According to the realists, National Security simply put is the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory; to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to preserve its nature, institution, and governance from disruption from outside; and to control its borders (Brown 1983). In his words, Thomas Hobbes, one of the foremost scholars of realist school in his work *Leviathan* stated that;

*“citizens yield to a powerful sovereign who in turn promises an end to civil and religious war, and to bring forth a lasting peace, and give him the right to conduct policy, including wage war or negotiate for peace for the good of the "commonwealth", i.e., a mandate for national security (Hega 1991)”.*

From this assertion, national security is perceived as a social contract between the people and the state where individuals feel obliged to submit to state authorities and the state on the other hand presumes that the protection of the boundary ultimately leads to the protection of individuals. (John 2000). Realists assumes that a sovereign state is operating in an anarchical international environment, in which there is no world governing body to enforce international rules of conduct.

Traditional security relies upon building up national power and military defense that takes common forms of armament races, alliances, strategic boundaries etc. In a nutshell, National security policies in realist perspective are designed to promote demands ascribed to the state. Other interests are subordinated to those of the state. Traditional security protects state boundaries, people, institutions and values. Arguably, realists refer national security as the protection and preservation of the core of national interest of a state.

However, overtime the concept of national security paradigm as conceptualized by the realist school became overwhelmed with new security threats and reality checks of intra state wars, proliferation of arms, effect of climate change, hunger, starvation and diseases which constituted major threat than external aggression. These emerging internal security threats jettisoned realist state centric notion of national security and gave rise to a multi-sectoral paradigm of human security by the behavioural school.

Human security is the protection of the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms, freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity." (CHS: 2003) as quoted in UNTFHS (2009).

According to the Behaviouralists, human security is drawing attention to a multitude of threats that cut across different aspects of human life and thus highlighting the interface between security, development and human rights; and promoting a new integrated, coordinated and people-centered approach to advancing peace, security and development within and across nations. The theorist identified five characteristics of human security to include: People-centeredness: human security places the individual at the centre of analysis. Multi-sectoral: human security entails a broadened understanding of threats and includes causes of insecurity relating for instance to economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security. Comprehensive: human security involves approaches that stress the need for cooperative and multi-sectoral responses that bring together the agenda of those dealing with security, development and human rights. Context-specific: human security acknowledges that insecurities vary considerably across different settings and as such advances contextualized solutions that are responsive to the particular situations they seek to address. Prevention-oriented: human security introduces a dual focus on protection and empowerment in addressing risks and root causes of insecurities.

Furthermore, the UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report's definition of human security argues that the scope of national security should be expanded to include threats in seven areas namely:

- Political security: this is concerned with ensuring that people live in a society that honours their basic human rights because human rights violations are most frequent during periods of political unrest.
- Economic security: this assures every individual a minimum requisite income from productive work or public finance system.
- Food security: this is the guarantee that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to basic food.
- Health security: this is also the guarantee of minimum protection from disease and unhealthy lifestyles.
- Environmental security: this involves protecting people from the short and long term ravages of nature, man-made threats in nature, and deterioration of the natural environment.
- Personal security: this is concerned with protecting people from physical violence.
- Community security: this entails protecting people from loss of traditional relationships and values and from sectarian and ethnic violence (UNDP 1994).

Nonetheless, attempts to implement this human security agenda have led to the emergence of two major schools of thought on how to best practice human security, viz; "Freedom from Fear"(survival) and "Freedom from Want"(livelihood). Whereas the first approach seeks to limit the practice of Human Security to protecting individuals from violent conflicts while recognizing that these violent threats are strongly associated with poverty, lack of state capacity and other forms of inequities; the second school advocates a holistic approach in achieving human security and argues that the threat agenda should be broadened to include hunger, disease and natural disasters because they are inseparable concepts in addressing the root of human insecurity and they kill far more people than war, genocide and terrorism combined (Pitsuwan 2007). Different from "Freedom from Fear", "Freedom from want" expands the focus beyond violence with emphasis on development and security goals. Nevertheless, these two approaches are complimentary in Human Security discourse as it gives in-depth analyses of basic human needs and well being of the society as whole.

Given these developments, Human security postulation is apt in understanding the security implication of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement in the era of globalization especially on the aspect of free movement of people, goods and capital across national boundaries. A critical analysis of the Agreement alongside major indices and threats to human security challenges currently bedeviling Nigeria in particular and the entire continent in general will put the theory in proper perspective.

### **Nigerian National Security: Issues and Challenges**

Since independence, Nigeria have been grappling with glut of security challenges emanating from mostly identity crisis, religious differences and intolerance, interrogation of the union called Nigeria and the struggle against undue domination of one ethnic group amongst the heterogeneous nationalities that made up the country. Another notable factor amidst these identified challenges is the failure of leadership challenge. Failure of leadership has been alluded as the bedrock of the Nigeria security question (Achebe 1983). Nigeria leaders have failed to address the perennial problem that confronted her at independence until it continued escalating to a threatening stage.

At present, the issues of insecurity in Nigeria have gotten to an alarming state due to inability of the leaders to tackle it squarely before it escalated. Also, the era of information communication technology occasioned by globalization has allegedly aided the wave of insecurity in Nigeria (Nnamchi 2019). Nigeria is recently struggling to maintain her corporate existence as a country with protracted crises with the rise of ethnic militia groups such as; the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), from the South East, Niger Delta crises of the South South, Herders/ Farmers conflict in every part of the country but predominant in the North Central, Boko Haram Insurgency prevalent in the North East. Besides these conventional threats are also the issues of ritual killings, cyber crimes, car theft, carjacking, advanced free fraud, drug trafficking, human trafficking, proliferation of arms, rape, armed banditry, smuggling among others. Consequently, these internal security challenges have not only posed threats to corporate existence of Nigeria as a sovereign state, but also undermined the quest for unity in diversity which underscores the rationale for adoption of federalism in Nigeria (Nwagboso 2018).

It is also instructive to note that these security crises have overshot the boundaries and are being difficult to tackle by the security operatives. Boko Haram insurgency (one of the deadliest sect) has harvested the tools of information and communication technology to perpetrate their act. The sect also has links with other insurgent groups within and across Africa who help them in Financing, recruitment, weapon procurement and training via the internet (Nnamchi 2019).

More so, Fulani herders' crises have led to the death of over 10,000 people and destruction of property worth more than 200 billion naira in the last four years (Udo et al 2019). The inability of the government to adopt a tactical measure to deal with the menace has made the conflict the greatest threat in the country today more than Boko Haram insurgency. It has been alleged that the crises is being politicized by the present government of President Buhari because they are his kinsmen. Instead of heeding the suggestions and opinions of policy makers such as the clamour for state police and proscription of Fulani herders as terrorist, the government has engaged in 'Ruga settlement', which has breded more controversy across the country. There are also insinuations that the herders who engage in kidnapping and other menace are non Nigerians who always enter the county through our porous borders.

The most recent security threat in Nigeria is that of the shii'tes movement that have gradually become violent and causing havoc even in the streets of Nigeria's capital where lives were lost: a Deputy Commissioner of police in charge of operations in FCT, Usman A.K Umar, a corps member and 17 others on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2019 (Omololu et al 2019). It is pertinent to note that this movement's operation is similar to Boko Haram in their early days. Therefore, something drastic and urgent need to be done to nip the impending doom the El Zakzaky loyalists are bound to unravel.

However, insecurity in Nigeria and beyond has been more transnational largely due to multilateralism and trade liberalization occasioned by global trends of borderlessness and erosion of sovereignty.

### **Implication of AfCFTA on Nigerian National Security Challenges**

The momentum by African leaders to take on African free trade is a long standing ambition. This is more so in the age of global call for free trade relations amongst the countries of the world. According to the proponents of this Agreement, free movement of people, goods and services across Africa will go a long way in helping her economies and societies offset intra African and global structural disadvantages. Unrestricted trade relations in Africa have external and internal benefits which include the growing realization that the fragmented and externally oriented nature of Africa's economies continues to impose serious costs, evident for example in the low level of trade among African countries when compared with other global regions. Regardless of the impressive strides in recent African integration efforts, intra-African trade remains low relative to other regions (15% compared with 60% for the European Union, 41% in North America and 53% in East Asia) (AUC and IOM 2018). If properly embraced, the policy will provide an

organized framework to accelerate regional integration and promote easier and flawless movement of people, merchandise, ideas, knowledge and expertise (ibid).

Furthermore, African Union maintains that increased movement of people, goods and services across borders inevitably incentivizes better infrastructural linkages and connections among African countries. As economic benefits of greater trade, labour mobility and business competitiveness flow, countries will improve cross border infrastructure, links and connectivity (AU 2018). In the EAC and ECOWAS regions, infrastructure improvements such as roads, networks and corridors have developed faster following free movement protocol. It is estimated that Africa needs annual investments of USD 93 billion over the next decade to gradually close its gaping infrastructure financing gap (World Bank 2015 in AUC and IOM 2018). However, as prospective and convincing this standpoint may seem, this paper tends to inwardly look at security repercussions of borderlessness as envisioned by policy actors of African Union on the continent in general and Nigeria in particular. At first, there is bound to be social security problems. The rate of unemployment in Africa is incredibly high, for instance, in Nigeria as at September 2018 the range is between 22.7 and 23.1% (*Trading Economics 2019*). With this ratio, free movement of persons into Nigeria will further compound already severe competition for jobs amongst citizens because hiring of migrants with higher skills and probably cheaper pays are evident. This will invariably ignite cases and perceptions similar to that of South Africans, “that foreigners take up too many local jobs” which was largely blamed for the xenophobic attacks and hostility against mostly African foreigners in South Africa. This when it happens will spark other socio political violent related crimes.

Secondly, researches show that most African borders are porous especially in the West African region largely due to lack of proper border management information systems. Borders are the nucleus of enhanced free movement across countries. Therefore, challenges and pressures at borders can be overwhelming. Borders are being used by criminal gangs and terrorists to gain entry to other countries; it is also used for smuggling of goods and people, and other illegal crimes and migration. Free movement of persons will definitely increase the heat that border management is already facing. According to Gwakwa et al (2016),

*“The magnitude, severity and complexity of border management problems in Africa call for urgent actions to be taken to turn borders into zones of peace, security, stability and development. It is plausible that the African Union has drafted a policy framework on security sector reform that guides it, the Member States, the Regional Economic Groupings and other stakeholders to, among other things, provide State security by defending the borders, national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States within the rule of law. Border management is no longer about physically seeing things happening, but involves a lot more than the traditional physical controls. The challenges facing African States to manage their borders are compounded by globalization that has changed the model of traditional borders through advancement in technology and transformation of international relations. One cannot deny the issue that increases in volumes of cross-border trading and movements of people from their countries of origin in search of greener pastures elsewhere have put enormous pressure on border control systems.”*

Additionally, the AfCFTA will foster the erosion of sovereignty of Nation-states that is already being threatened by globalization. In the 21st century, the state is being challenged by the processes of integration and globalization. International integration has to do with the process by which supranational institutions begin to replace national ones, i.e., the step by step transfer of the state sovereignty to the global or regional organizations (Goldstein, 2003:414 in Nnamchi 2019).

According to Zahiti (2000),

*European Union is example of such institutions that undermine state sovereignty. EU member countries, decided jointly to reduce their national sovereignty in order to strengthen their international influence, the influence that none of the EU countries can achieve separately. So, in the European Union, 27 of its members renounce a part of its national sovereignty, and ceded it to the creation of supranational organization - the creation of the EU. And thus was created, for the first time in legal history a “supranational sovereignty” which is binding for its member states, and thus enabling EU to independently exercise public power towards its member states (Zahiti, 2000:35 in Nnamchi 2019).*

Summarily, it can be gleaned from the above that the autonomy of states as enshrined in the concept of state sovereignty though seems to strengthen the states and direct their actions on the international level, has in a myriad of ways undermined the same sovereignty it seeks to protect. Thus basically through the operations of some intergovernmental organizations (IGOs); international non-governmental organizations (INGOs);

international regimes; multi-national corporations (MNCs) and activities of some powerful states, arising out of the pervasive nature of globalization, the sovereignty of some other states are undermined.

Besides, insurgency is one of the key challenges to facilitating free movement of persons in Africa, and these challenges must be seriously considered when planning expanded free movement areas. In Africa, for example, insurgent attacks on the continent increased significantly between 2009 and 2018, from 171 to 938, with Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Al-Shabaab as the primary actors (ibid). The level of collaboration between Boko Haram and other insurgent groups are more significant than earlier thought. These insurgents' attacks have persisted especially in West Africa where they have taken advantage of ECOWAS Protocol on free movement to perpetrate their acts through illegal arms trafficking across the sub regional boundaries. Free movement has been viewed as adding salt to injury, because there will be a huge number of people on the move from all over Africa whose intentions the State cannot ascertain.

Another potential and real security threat is organized crime, including migrant smuggling, human trafficking and arms and drug trafficking. In parts of Eastern Africa, for example, the poor condition of the land borders is a contributing factor for the widespread smuggling of migrants from Ethiopia, and some from Eritrea, into Somalia for clandestine departure to Yemen. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimated that, in 2012, more than 100,000 people paid smugglers to transport them across the Gulf of Aden or Red Sea to Yemen, generating an income for the boatmen of more than USD 15 million. Non-Somalis made up approximately 73 per cent of this group, likely generating more than USD 11 million of the USD 15 million generated in illicit revenue for the smugglers (UNDOC 2013).

Free movement of people across African borders also poses a dangerous health risk. Diseases do not care about borders hence free movement of persons, where public health is concerned, also translates into free movement of diseases. In Africa, this is worrisome because the national and cross-border monitoring systems are limited. Epidemics present numerous challenges to the public health safety of African Union Member States, as illustrated during the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease, particularly in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, in 2015. The first and expected reaction to an epidemic such as Swine Flu (H1N1 and H3N2 influenza virus) or Ebola Virus Disease is to greatly limit or altogether halt the free movement of persons across the border. The decision to quarantine and prevent free movement of persons during such times is necessary to prevent the spread and transmission of health epidemics across the continent. But such decision seems difficult because of earlier mentioned limited cross border monitoring system. However, the humanitarian and medical aid costs of the West African Ebola crisis has run into billions of US dollars. A 100-bed isolation facility costs around USD 1–1.5 million or about USD 10,000–15,000a bed. It requires trained medical staff; Sierra Leone alone needed 750 additional doctors and 3,000 more nurses (AUC and IOM 2018). These must be sourced from foreign countries, thereby diverting resources. This is an indication that the costs of containing epidemic is enormous, and States will prefer it safer to do without free movement than to attempt it and bring plagues upon themselves.

Nevertheless, the security implication of free movement of people within African boundaries in an increasing globalized world is enormous especially for Nigeria, a big economic player in the continent and a country grappling with series of national security issues. Therefore, it is pertinent for Nigerian representatives in African Union to critically look into these challenges highlighted before ratifying the already signed agreement.

## **Conclusion**

Regional integration no doubt is one of the panaceas to bailing Africa from her economic doldrums. The efforts of African leaders towards such emancipation are quite commendable. Having said that, the position of this paper is not to condemn the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) in its entirety but rather to raise salient issues that will impede the smooth operation of the Agreement during implementation. Therefore, the study finds that many African States still lack sufficient border management system to create and manage such free movement. It concludes that, security is paramount in achieving an effective free movement of people, devoid of abuse by criminals and mischief makers. Moreover, since African Union Member States are at different stages of socioeconomic and political development, they will need to facilitate free movement progressively and in phases. A gradual, integrated and step-by-step approach based on common interests can offer the best prospects for integration. It allows States to assess its progress more effectively over time.



## Recommendations

This study however recommends as follows:

- ❖ Nigeria should not be hasty in ratification of the Agreement because of her National Security challenges. It is advised that upon ratification, issue of free movement should be ignored for the mean time. This will give her time to study the implementation of the Agreement and also allow her tackle the issue of insecurity before opening her borders freely.
- ❖ The policy formulators should attach stringent measures against other trading partners to prevent foreign and multinational corporations from taking undue advantage of the free trade relations to make Africa a dumping ground.
- ❖ A strict and reliable border management system across African boundaries is advocated to curb illegal movement of people and goods and also curtail border security compromise by designated boundary security personnel.
- ❖ Nigeria as a big economic player in Africa should draw a good policy framework to protect her citizens at home for fear of skilled migrants taking their jobs and also protect local firms.

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