Impacts of Cross-Border Human Trafficking through Seme-Idiroko Borders on Security in Lagos and Ogun States

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Abstract

Cross-border human trafficking has increased in dangerous proportion resulting in large number of Nigeria women, boys and girls that are recruited forcefully from villages and transported through Seme-Idiroko borders to other countries for exploitation. The purpose of the paper was to examine the remarkable ways cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko and Seme borders affect safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities and border protection in the border posts. The study was built around the deterrence theory by classical scholars in order to clearly understand how severity, certainty and celerity of punishment can deter potential offenders from indulging in the crime of compromising border security. Using the Rakash sample size formula, a sample of 397 was determined from a population of 46,105 respondents drawn from NAPTIP, NCS, and NIS in both Ogun and Lagos States; ONSA, Abuja and residents of Idiroko, Seme, Kpodji-Ague and Igolo border communities. Also, 15 respondents were tentatively selected for the sample size of the study using purposive sampling method. Data were collected using structured and open-ended questions as well as in-depth interview. Data were also collected from secondary source. Data from questionnaire were analyzed using weighted average, while data from in-depth interview were analyzed using narrative-analytic technique. Data from secondary source were analyzed using relational-content analysis. Findings showed, among other things, that the higher the level of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko and Seme borders, the poorer the state of border security in Lagos and Ogun States. Among other things, it was recommended that the government should make punishment of offenders of cross-border human trafficking severe enough to discourage potential offenders from indulging in the crime.

Introduction

Border states of Lagos and Ogun have been experiencing increase in trans-border security threats, especially cross-border human trafficking in the border communities of Idiroko and Seme. Cross-border human trafficking has increased in dangerous proportion resulting in large number of Nigerian women, boys and girls that are recruited forcefully from villages and transported through Seme-Idiroko borders to other countries for exploitation. Seme-Idiroko borders are largely porous and this motivates human traffickers to transport their victims through the borders. In many cases, human traffickers bribe border security officials at the borders in order to easily carry out their illicit activities, hence compromising border security (Okereke &Okoli, 2020).

Human trafficking is a global phenomenon that affects many countries, but in diverse ways. The developed countries are in the "demand side" of human trafficking, which is driven by cheap sex and cheap labour, while underdeveloped countries are in the "supply side" of human trafficking driven by poverty, unemployment, post-conflict economy, illiteracy, among others, which make them to lose the potential contributions of some of their youths trafficked to other countries. It is estimated that over $31 billion was the proceeds of human trafficking globally (Jatau, 2019). In 2016, the average proceeds from human trafficking involving Nigerians were about $100 million (Okereke, 2018). Despite measures by government to combat the crime at the borders such as Operation Fire-For-Fire, Operation DECO, among others, cross-border human trafficking involving Nigerians has continued to fester with its negative effects on border security, especially in Lagos and Ogun States.

With over 160 illegal routes into Idiroko and Seme, trans-border criminal activities have continued to deteriorate in Lagos and Ogun States, which resulted in the killing of 5 persons in single attack in 2021 (Oladipupo, 2021). Data available from (NAPTIP, 2021) showed that from 2011 to 2021, 46 % of 818 victims of cross-border human trafficking rescued in Benin Republic were Nigerians, which points to the vulnerability of Seme-Idirko borders with its negative implications for the safety of individuals in the Seme-Idirko border communities and border posts as perpetrators of trans-border human trafficking are linked to other transnational criminals such arms traffickers and drug smugglers.Despite all efforts by the government such as Passport to Safe Migration and Operation Fire-For-Fire in Seme-Idiroko

border areas, the crime of cross-border sex and labour trafficking have continued to fester through Seme-Idiroko borders as 200 Nigerian girls heading to Ghana were rescued in Seme in 2018 (Nnadozie&Onyegbula, 2018), and more than 189 victims of cross-border human trafficking were intercepted in Seme in 2022 (Alabi, 2022). Therefore, this paper is geared towards the examination of remarkable ways cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko-Seme borders affected security in Nigeria with particular reference to Lagos and Ogun states.

Conceptual Elucidation

Border State

Before defining the concept of border state, it is important to define the concept of border. The concept of border has been defined by many scholars in diverse ways. According to Jatau (2019), border means barriers that protect a state against illicit cross-border intrusion by external actors. Border has economic advantages to residents of border communities as it provides huge markets, giving the residents the opportunity to maximise advantage of price differences in the two sides of the borders. At the same time, borders attract illegal activities such as illegal trading, hawking, trafficking and smuggling with its negative effects on border states. However, this definition did not include the links between national sovereignty and border, which is needed in this paper.

For Moraczewka (2010); Konrad (2015); and Hagen (2021), border means a point where a country's sovereignty ends and where another country's sovereignty starts. Border is equally defined as a legal means of determining national identity because recognition is given to states by the comity of nations when they have the capacity to effectively exert control within its borders. However, the definition did not give us a clue about fortified and soft borders, which is vital in the understanding of trans-border crimes through Seme-Idiroko borders affecting Lagos and Ogun States.

Gulasckaram (2012) defined borders by examining fortified and regulated borders. According to the author, fortified and regulated borders are strictly manned by soldiers. On the contrary, soft border is defined as the type of border the permits passage of people and goods through it without stringent checks (Espejo, 2013). The foregoing is slightly related to the meaning of border in this paper. Border is defined in this paper as internationally line of demarcation

separating Benin Republic and Nigeria in Lagos and Ogun States. Therefore, border states are defined as Lagos and Ogun States where Nigeria officially share borders with Benin Republic, which shows the limits of the two countries' sovereignties.

Human Trafficking

In the past, trafficking means illegal transport of goods across international borders, especially smuggled goods such as illicit drugs with the aim of profit maximisation. Recently, the concept of trafficking has been broadened to embrace the illegal transport of vulnerable people, especially children and girls for the purpose of exploitation. The concept of trafficking is derived from "traffic", which means travel or transportation. Trafficking is seen as a lucrative enterprise as well as flourishing criminal activity in the universe (Okereke, 2018). This is in line with the position of this paper. However, the definition did not include human trafficking, which is needed in this paper.

More so, Jatau (2019) noted that human trafficking has three major aspects: the act, the means, and the purpose. The act includes recruitment or harbouring of victims, while the means include fraud and force. On the other hand, the purpose is for exploitation. Therefore, human trafficking involves smuggling as well as exploitation. Victims of human trafficking are characterised by poverty, poor level of education, young age, unemployment, sexual abuse, lack of family support as well as living in vulnerable places. Countries with huge gaps between the rich and poor in terms of economic status provides the atmosphere for exploitation and makes the poor to struggle to escape their pitiable conditions, while the rich benefit from cheap labour emanating from such decisions.

According to Okereke and Okoli (2020), human trafficking could be internal trafficking when it takes place within a country or external (cross-border) trafficking when it takes place across the national borders. The purpose of internal human trafficking is largely for illegal adoption and domestic servitude, while the purpose for external human trafficking is largely for commercial sexual and labour exploitation as well as for organ harvesting. In external or cross-border human trafficking, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo are the main countries of origin, from where domestic child labourers are transported through countries such as Gabon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Niger to Europe for plunder. However, the foregoing did not meet our requirements in this paper.

From the foregoing, cross-border human trafficking is defined, in this paper, as forceful recruitment of vulnerable youths from poor families in Nigeria or Benin Republic, and their transportation from the country of origin through Seme-Idiroko borders to a country of destination by trafficker(s) for the purpose of sexual and or labour exploitation.

Security

Brauchi (2013) noted that in the contemporary world, security is defined to have a positive value, which is related to the meaning of the concept in this paper. In the objective sense, security is a concept used in measuring absence of threats to acquired value, while in a subjective sense, security is used as a measure of absence of fear that a cherished value could be attacked. Security can be seen as a process of political and social interaction, suggesting that norms and social values, cultures, traditions and collective identities of people are vital in the understanding of security. Viewed from this perspective, security could be seen as a product of what the different actors constructed it to be. However, this did not reflect the international dimension of security, which is needed in this paper.

Similarly, Orolundare-Ayeni (2021) defined security from political sense, especially as it relates to international relations, where security reflects protection of a sovereign state from external attacks or threats. From this perspective, also, security implies safety of individuals from crime or violence, religious peace as well as financial measures that maintain a desired standard of living. Therefore, security is used in defining threats that may bring about serious harm to the safety of the citizens in the Border States, which is related to this paper. However, the definition did not show divers perspectives to security, which is required in this paper.

Security can equally be divided into realist and idealist perspectives to security. For realist scholars, security means protection of the state and its vital interests from foreign attacks (Akbar, 2015), while idealist scholars perceive security as elimination of hunger, war, inequality, marginalisation, tyranny, diseases, and violence as sure approaches to ensuring security (Adeleke, 2021). The definition of security by idealist scholars suggests human security, which is defined as protection from dangers like natural disaster, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, depletion of natural resources and pollution as well as freedom from war,

torture, drug use, criminal attacks, kidnapping and domestic violence (Okereke, 2018). However, the foregoing did not accurately reflect the meaning of security in this paper. Therefore, security is defined, in this paper, as protection of the Lagos and Ogun States, especially its borders from illicit border crossings and protection of the individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities from poverty, violent attacks, diseases, illiteracy, injustice, amongst other cherished values.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is built around the deterrence theory of realism paradigm at individual -level of analysis. The history of the theory is traced to the early works of classical scholars such as Thomas Hobbes (1588-1678), Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), and Cesare Baccaria (1738-1794). The theory is hinged on certainty of punishment, severity of punishment and celerity of punishment as factors that prevent potential offenders from committing crime. For the classical theorists, the more severe a punishment, the more rationally-minded people are discouraged from committing crimes. This meansthat if punishment for offence is not severe enough, potential offenders will not be sufficiently discouraged from indulging in criminal acts. Certainty of punishment is anchored on the fact that anytime crime is committed, punishment should be expected and this must be swift in order to effectively deter potential offenders from committing crime (Deterrence Theory, 2010).

For Tomlison (2016), punishment should be quick, assured and in proportion to the degree of crime committed in order to deter potential offenders from breaking the law. For Baccaria, law should be clearly written and its punishment should be made known to the public so that they would be knowledgeable about their actions. Whether specific or general, deterrence is hinged on certainty, celerity and severity of punishment.

The central assumption of deterrence theory is that crime can be prevented when punishment is certain, severe and quick (Eassy&Boman, 2015). The theory is relevant to in this paper because it is vital in the understanding of the role of effective border protection in Seme-Idiroko border posts through laws by Nigeria Immigration Service, National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, among others, regarding border protection. Also, the theory is relevant in the understanding of how arrest, prosecution and imprisonment of human trafficking offenders in ensuring the safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border

communities and prevention of illicit cross-border movements into Lagos and Ogun States through the borders.

Methodology

The design of the paper was a mixed method involving the use of survey and historical research designs. The population of the study was 46,105 respondents encompassing staff from Nigeria Customs Service in Ogun and Lagos, National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, Lagos Zonal Office, Nigeria Immigration service in Lagos and Ogun States, Office of the National Security Adviser to the President, residents of Gbaji-Yeke in Seme; residents of Idiroko, residents of Pudji-Ague; and Igolo.

Using Rakash sample size formula, $SS = \frac{PS}{[(1+(PS \times PE)2]}$, where PS = Population size (46,105), PS = Precision Error (0.05%), SS = Sample Size, 1 = Mathematical constant, the sample size was 397 respondents. Proportional random sampling was used in administering the questionnaire to the population units, while purposive sampling was used in tentatively selecting 15 respondents on the basis of their depth of knowledge and experience regarding remarkable ways cross-border human trafficking through Seme-Idiroko borders affected security in Ogun and Lagos States. However, after the interview of 13 respondents, the researcher discontinued with the interview, after reaching a saturation point, in line with the saturation theory (Bello, 2021).

Primary data were collected using closed-ended and open-ended questionnaire, while Key Informants Interview (KII) guide was used in generating data from the experts. Secondary data were collected from NAPTIP websites, and NAPTIP Reports from 2011 to 2022 on human trafficking in Lagos and Ogun States. Data from questionnaire were analysed using weighted average. Weighted average $= \frac{Sum\ of\ Products}{Number\ of\ Respondents}$ (Adeleke, 2021). **Decision Rule**: Decision rule is that any weighted average value ranging from 1.00 to 2.49 is unacceptable, while weighted average value ranging from 2.50 to 3.49 is neutral. Also, weighted average value ranging from 3.50 to 5.00 is acceptable. Data from in-depth interview were analysed using narrative-analytic method, while data from secondary source were analysed using relational-content analysis.

Data Analysis

Ways Cross-Border Human Trafficking Through Seme-Idiroko Borders affected Security in Ogun and Lagos States

Findings on remarkable ways cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko-Seme borders affect security in Lagos and Ogun States from questionnaire revealed that with weighted average of 3.85, the statement, buying and selling victims of external sex trafficking largely increased the likelihood of linkage between the former and arms traffickers in Lagos and Ogun States, was acceptable. Also, with weighted average of 4.01, the statement, exportation of persons for external sex exploitation largely undermined safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities, was acceptable. Likewise, with weighted average of 3.95, the statement, importation of persons for internal labour exploitation hampers safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities, was acceptable. More so, with weighted average of 3.99, the statement, the higher the level of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko and Seme borders, the poorer the state of border security in Lagos and Ogun States was acceptable and valid in line with the decision rule.

Findings from in-depth interview showed that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that victims of cross-border sex and labour trafficking are smuggled through illegal borders in Seme and Idiroko, which are largely unmanned by border security personnel into and out of Nigeria. Usually, border security agencies are bribed in order to facilitate the activities of cross-border sex and labour traffickers. Majority of the respondents were also of the view that the nature of cross-border sex and labour trafficking is hardto identify, notingthat the victims of sex and labour trafficking and their perpetrators lodge in brothels in the border communities of Seme and Idiroko, from where the victims are transported through the land borders to Benin Republic through Igolo and Kpodji-Ague. Majority of the respondents are of the view that cross-border sex or labour traffickers have a complexlinks with other trans-border criminal gangs, which basically help in making sex and labour trafficking through Seme and Idiroko borders a flourishing enterprise. In perpetuating the crime, the illicit gangs share intelligence on the security situation in their various areas, and this helps in giving oxygen to the illicit enterprise by making them fleefrom arrest more often than not. The borders are largely unmanned; hence permit all manner of illegal border crossings between Nigeria and Benin Republic.

Majority of the respondents agreed that victims of cross-border sex and labour trafficking are frequently sexually battered, exploited, and forced to work for people, their rights are repulsively violated and abused; hence leaving them psychologically andbodilydistressed. Victims of sex trafficking, according to majority views, are forced to work as prostitutes in brothels against their will. Similarly, majority of the respondents agreed that cross-border sex and labour trafficking is responsible for crimes in Seme and Idiroko such as armed robbery, prostitution, drugs abuse, and smuggling of vehicles into Nigeria. Majority of the respondents agreed that arms traffickers and other trans-border criminals work with cross-border sex and labour traffickers in increasing the spread of SALWs, starting with the border communities, and later to the country as a whole. For the greater part of the respondents, cross-border sex and labour trafficking cannot be isolated from rising cases of terrorism and violence in Nigeria given that the crime erodes the degree of border protection and crime prevention in Seme and Idiroko borders. Majority of the respondents were of the view that cross-border sex trafficking brought about increase in the number of brothels in the border communities of Seme and Idiroko, which provides hideouts for criminal gangs such as drug barons, sex traffickers, labour traffickers, and arms traffickers.

The findings of this paper are vaguely different from the findings of previous studies in terms of depth, coverage of issues, and scope of the study. Findings from studies by Tor-Anyii and Adamu(2013) found out that human trafficking negatively impacts economic, health, and psychological dispositions of its victims in Nigeria. Also, a study by Njoku (2015) found that human trafficking erodes national image of Nigeria as well as portrays the later as a country with massive political and economic crisis, which impinges on the efforts of Nigerian government in realizing MDGs goals, especially Education For All. However, the foregoing studies did not identify how forced prostitution, increase in the level of forced labour, buying as well as selling of victims of external sex trafficking significantly increase the likelihood of linkage between the factor and arms trafficking in Lagos and Ogun States, which are largely covered in this paper.

Similarly, Osezue (2016) found out that human trafficking has negative impacts or implications for parents and families of its victims. Though the findings of the study aresomewhat similar to the findings of this study in terms of issues covered, it differs from findings from this paper in terms of depth of issues covered. In addition, the findings of this

paper are different from the findings from studies carried out by Ibrahim and Omoregbe (2020); Sunday (2020);Ojiakor, Nzewi, and Arinze (2021), among others, in terms of depth of issues covered and focus of the studies. Ibrahim and Omoregbe (2020) identified effects of human trafficking as poor human capital development, low life esteem, and poor economic advancement, and findings by Sunday (2020) showed that human trafficking negatively impinges on Nigeria's economy, which are slightly related to the findings in this paper. However, the findings by Ojiakor, Nzewi and Arinze (2021) is largely related to the findings of this study by identifying cross-border crimes as being responsible for deterioration of security situation in Nigeria, which is partly one of the findings of this study. This shows that the borders are largely porous and allows for illicit cross-border movements into and out of Nigeria with its implications for security of lives and properties in Nigeria.

From 2011 to 2022, a total of 1,003 non-Nigerians who were victims of cross-border human trafficking were rescued in the border states in the Nigeria, especially in Lagos and Ogun States (Okereke, 2023). The meager number of victims of cross-border human trafficking and perpetrators of the crime rescued or arrested in Nigeria within the period may have resulted into increase in crimes and criminalities in the country, starting from the border states. according to Sasu (2022), from 2011 to 2022, Boko Haram alone killed over 35,646 people in Borno State; 5,747 in Zamfara State; 5,463 in Kaduna State; 4,097 in Adamawa State; 3,774 in Benue State, 3,359 in Plateau State; and 3,176 in Yobe State through violent attacks involving use of SALWs. Boko Haram also kidnapped 276 female students from a secondary school in Chibok, Borno State in 2014. Sasu further stressed that as at 2022, over 100 of the girls were still missing, while 6 of them were believed to have died.

Similarly, report from the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD) showed that over 60,000 people have been killed in 18 northern states from 2011 to 2022 through violent attacks (Elebeke, 2022). Violent attacks using SALWs are not restricted to the north as it extends to all parts of the country, especially in the border states of Lagos and Ogun States where trans-border criminal gangs usually attack border security personnel in the border communities and border posts. Information in the public domain is that many people have lost their lives through criminality sweeping across the southeast and southwestern parts of Nigeria through trans-border attacks by criminal gangs. Therefore, with weighted average of 3.99, the statement, the higher the level of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko

and Seme borders, the poorer the state of border security in Lagos and Ogun States is agreeable and accepted in line with the decision rule.

Strategies for Mitigating Likely Negative Effects of Cross-Border Human Trafficking through Seme-Idiroko Borders on security in Lagos and Ogun States

Findings on alternative strategies for mitigating negative effects of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko-Seme borders on security in Lagos and Ogun Statesfrom questionnaire showed that with weighted average of 3.84, the statement, increase in the level of cooperation between Nigeria and Benin Republic in fighting cross-border sex trafficking would significantly improve safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities, was agreeable. With weighted average of 3.96, the statement, use of biometrics to profile emigrants and migrants largely prevents illicit cross-border movements through Seme-Idiroko borders was agreeable. Similarly, with weighted average of 3.73, the statement, formation of security alliance between Nigeria and Benin Republic would largely help in enhancing effective policing of Seme-Idiroko borders, was agreeable. With weighted average of 3.72, the statement, the use of drones to monitor those crossing the borders would largely prevent illicit border crossings through Seme-Idiroko borders, was agreeable to the respondents. With weighted average of 3.89, the statement, effective border policing and use of biometrics to profile migrants are among the strategies for mitigating likely negative effects of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko-Seme borders on security in Lagos and Ogun States, was agreeable to the respondents.

More so, findings from in-depth interview showed that use of surveillance equipment, improved information flow, intelligence sharing, adequate manning of borders between Nigeria and Benin Republic, and use of biometrics in profiling those that cross the bordersfor mitigating the negative effects of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko-Seme borders on security in Lagos and Ogun States are vital in tackling the menace of human trafficking through Seme-Idiroko borders.

Findings from both questionnaire and in-depth interview were slightly related to findings from previous studies in terms of issues covered, but differ from it significantly in terms of strategies adopted in mitigating negative effects of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko-Seme borders on security in Lagos and Ogun States. Aluede (2017) examined foreign

policy of Nigeria and criminal activities in shared borders between Nigeria and Benin Republic covering a period from 1960 to 2013, which is slightly related to this study in terms of focus of the study. To maintain security between the two countries, Aluede (2017) stressed that the linkages between Nigeria's foreign policy towards its neighbours and behaviours of global actors regarding cross-border crimes in Nigeria-Benin Republic borders should be expanded. Also, close and open border policies; effective border management; and strict border control were recommended as solutions to border insecurity in Nigeria, which is largely related to the findings of this study in terms of issues relating to strategies for mitigating the negative effects of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko-Seme borders on security in Lagos and

Ogun. Also, Msuya (2019) studied traditional "juju oath" and human trafficking in Nigeria from human rights perspectives, and identified proper enforcement of international laws against human trafficking for protecting vulnerable children and women, which is largely related to issues covered in this study, but differs significantly from the findings of this study in terms of depth and scope of issues covered. Therefore, the statement, effective border policing and use of biometrics to profile migrants are among the strategies for mitigating negative effects of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko-Seme borders on security in Lagos and Ogun States, is accepted in line with data from secondary source, in-depth interview and questionnaire.

Discussion of Findings

Examination of Effects of Cross-Border Human Trafficking through Idiroko-Seme Borders on Security in Ogun and Lagos States

The results from examination of effects of cross-border human trafficking through Seme-Idiroko borders on security in Lagos and Ogun States showed that buying as well as selling of victims of sex trafficking largely increases the likelihood of linkage between the former and arms trafficker in Lagos and Ogun States. Also, exportation of persons for external sex exploitation largely undermines safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities. Similarly, importation of persons for internal labour exploitation hampers safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities. In addition, exportation of persons for external labour exploitation increases the likelihood of linkage between human traffickers and drug traffickers in Lagos and Ogun States. In view of foregoing, it becomes imperative to

know that the higher the level of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko and Seme borders, the poorer the state of border security in Lagos and Ogun States, a situation that further exposes the border communities to illegal cross-border movements and threats such as terrorism, spread of diseases, arms proliferation, kidnappings, ritual killings, among others. Recently, information in the public domain show that the level of insecurity in Lagos and Ogun States has worsened, resulting in incessant killings, abductions, and loss of properties. This has many implications for security in Nigeria as foreign investors could be discouraged from investing in the country, a situation that would further deteriorate the spate of unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, amongst other drivers of cross-border sex and labour trafficking, especially at individual level.

Findings from in-depth interview also support the foregoing findings. The findings show clearly that victims of cross-border sex and labour trafficking are smuggled through illegal borders in Seme and Idiroko, which are largely unmanned by border security personnel into and out of Nigeria. In most cases, border security agencies are bribed in order to give way to the activities of cross-border sex and labour traffickers. Cross-border sex and labour trafficking are found to be responsible for crime and criminality in Seme and Idiroko such as armed robbery, prostitution, drugs abuse, and ritual killings. Findings of this study equally established connection between arms traffickers and other trans-border criminals, especially cross-border sex and labour traffickers in perpetuating proliferation of SALWs, starting with the border communities, and later to the country as a whole. This shows that cross-border sex or labour trafficking cannot be isolated from rising cases of terrorism and violence in Nigeria since the crime erodes the degree of border protection in Seme and Idiroko borders. Cross-border sex trafficking is equally connected to increase in the number of brothels in the border communities of Seme and Idiroko, and the brothels sometimes provide hideouts for criminal gangs such as drug barons, arms traffickers, and smugglers of contraband goods.

The findings of this study are slightly similar to the findings of this study because it pointed out some of the ways cross-border crimes and criminality affect security in Nigeria, but differ from the findings of this study in terms of depth of issues covered and focus of the study. While previous studies by scholars such as Njoku (2015); Osezua (2016); Sunday (2010); Ojiakor, Nzewi and Arinze (2021), examined effects of trans-border crimes in Nigeria generally, this study critically interrogated the various ways cross-border human trafficking

through Idiroko and Seme borders possibly affect security in Lagos and Ogun States. Therefore, findings from both the primary and secondary data support our position that, the higher the level of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko and Seme borders, the poorer the state of border security in Lagos and Ogun States.

Strategies for Mitigating Negative Effects of Cross-Border Human Trafficking throughIdiroko-Seme Borders on Security in Lagos and Ogun States

Results from both primary and secondary data on strategies for mitigating negative effects of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko-Seme borders on security in Lagos and Ogun States showed that effective border policing and use of biometrics to profile migrants are among the strategies for mitigating likely negative effects of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko-Seme borders on security in Lagos and Ogun States. Findings further showed that the use of biometrics to profile emigrants and immigrants largely prevents illicit cross-border movements through Seme-Idiroko borders. Similarly, the use of drones to monitor those crossing Seme-Idiroko borders would significantly prevent illicit border crossings through Seme-Idiroko borders, while preventing the use of fake travel documents would largely promote safety of lives and properties of people in Lagos and Ogun States. Findings equally showed that formation of security alliance between Nigeria and Benin Republic would significantly help in enhancing effective policing of Seme-Idiroko borders.

The findings of this paper are slightly similar to the findings of previous studies such as Aluede (2017), Msuya (2019), among others, in terms of strategies for maintaining border security, but differ from it significantly in terms of scope and depth of coverage of issues. While this study focused largely on ensuring the safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities and effective protection of Seme-Idiroko border posts using improved methods of border and frontier security such as use of biometrics, use of drones, trans-border cooperation between Nigeria and Benin Republic as well as effective border policing, previous studies did not. Therefore, our argument that effective border policing and use of biometrics to profile migrants are among the strategies for mitigating likely negative effects of cross-border human trafficking through Idiroko-Seme borders on security in Lagos and Ogun States, was valid.

Conclusion

This paper has been an attempt to examine the impact of cross-border human trafficking through Seme-Idiroko borders on security in Lagos and Ogun States. Findings from the study showed that cross-border human trafficking; especially cross-border sex and labour trafficking largely hamper effective protection of Seme-Idiroko border communities and undermine safety of individuals in the border communities. Though the government, at various times, has made efforts at combating the crime and improving border security in the areas, such strategies have largely proved grossly inadequate in mitigating the crime. Therefore, it is concluded that unless illicit trans-border movements by human trafficking and their victims through Seme-Idiroko borders are adequately mitigated, security threats would continue to fester in Lagos and Ogun States.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are found relevant in this paper:

i.   the government should make punishment of offenders of cross-border human trafficking severe enough to discourage potential offenders from indulging in the crime;

ii.   residents of border communities in Seme-Idirko border communities should be well-sensitised to make it increasingly difficult for them to connive with perpetrators in driving the crime;

iii.   the government should set up stringent control measures at the borders using technology in profiling those that cross the borders;

iv.   border security personnel should be well-remunerated to discourage them from conniving with trans-border criminals in perpetuating the crime of human trafficking; and

v.   religious leaders, traditional and market leaders in the border communities should be brought in to help the border security personnel in identifying criminal elements perpetuating the crime of human trafficking in their areas.

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