

**An Assessment of the Economic Value of Kukawa LGA in North Eastern Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

*This paper x-rays Kukawa LGA of Borno State Nigeria. It traced the history of Kukawa as the then capital of the old Kanem Bornu Empire through to its emergence as a local government area in present-day Borno state in 1976. This study became imperative to lay a foundation for understanding the strategic importance of Kukawa LGA and why it had remained a battleground for the Nigerian military and Boko Haram terrorists. The study looked at the economic potentials of the area, its traditions, and culture, the influence of Lake Chad in the economy of the region. The paper adopts the use of primary and secondary sources in carrying out the research. Findings from the study reveals that Kukawa's proximity to neighboring francophone countries made it easier channel for easy entry and exit from the Northeastern state of Borno by armed groups including Boko Haram terrorists and the economic viability of the area made it an easy target for terrorists. The study concludes that understanding the history of Kukawa is essential and might be that missing link in the debate on how Boko Haram terrorists have been able to fiercely engage the Nigerian military in the ongoing war in northeast Nigeria.*

**Key Words:** Kukawa, Lake Chad, El-Kanemi, Boko Haram

**Introduction**

Kukawa is a local government area in Borno State. It is one of the local government areas that constitute the Borno Emirate. The Borno Emirate is a traditional Nigerian state formed at the start of the 20th century. It is headed by descendants of the rulers of the Bornu Empire, founded before 1000. The rulers have the title Shehu of Borno. It maintains a ceremonial rule of the Kanuri people, based in Maiduguri, Borno State. The current ruling line, the al-Kanemi dynasty, dates to the accession of Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi in the early 19th century, displacing the Sayfawa dynasty which had ruled from around 1300.<sup>1</sup>

Borno State lies in the extreme north-east corner of Nigeria between latitudes 10° 30' and 13° 50' north and longitudes 11.00° and 13° 45' east. It occupies an area of 69,435 sq km sharing border with three states, Adamawa to the south, Gombe to the south west and Yobe to the west as well as three countries, namely, Republic of Niger, Chad and Cameroon to the north, north-east and east

<sup>1</sup> Al-Kanemi dynasty: "Sultanate of Borno". Rulers.org, accessed 12 May, 2018.



respectively.<sup>2</sup> As an ancient nation state, it existed in a name of a polity known as Kanem-Borno Empire, for over one millennium, and was acknowledged as one of the longest surviving kingdom in recorded history. It lies along the caravan trade routes from the heart of West Africa and Central Africa to North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. At the zenith of its existence in the fourteenth century it extended as far as Fezzan in present Libya in the east.<sup>3</sup>

Muhammad Waziri in his book "Issues in the Geography of Borno State" stated that the region was occupied by the European expansionist about the beginning of the 20th century. This position differs from that of Liou Brenner in his book "The Shehus of Kukawa: a history of the Al-kanemi Dynasty of Bornu" wherein he asserted that the first reference to Bornu was in the 13<sup>th</sup> century when Muslim geographers made their first reference to Bornu, which was then a province of the Kanem Empire.<sup>4</sup> Liou Brenner further emphasized that Kanem was situated in the north-east of Lake Chad and was ruled by the Sayfawa (Sefuwa) dynasty of kings who traced their ancestry to, and derived their dynasties name from Saif b. Dhi Yazan, a pre-Islamic leader in Yemen.<sup>5</sup>

Baba Gana Wakil in his work "Kanem-Borno Empire- a Historical Introduction to the Geography of Borno." stated that Borno had an ancient and chequered political history dating back to around the eight (8th) century with the kingdom of Kanem. He argued that it grew through the centuries into a formidable polity in the central Sudan, first under the Magumi Mai (Kings) of the Sayfawa dynasty in Kanem and Bornu Kingdom, later under the Kanemiyyin leaders as from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His views somewhat tarries with that of Muhammad Waziri who stated that the region was occupied by the European expansionist in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In some academic literature, it was stated that Bornu was originally the southernmost province of the Kanem Empire, an ancient kingdom that reached its peak in the 12th and 13th centuries. Toward the end of the 14th century the power of Kanem waned, and the empire shrank until little was left of it except Bornu. Succeeding centuries saw the final dissolution of the Kanem kingdom by its hostile neighbors and the rise of Bornu. In the early 16th century, Bornu managed to recapture Kanem and made it a protectorate. The re-amalgamated kingdom of Kanem-Bornu probably reached its height in the reign of Mai Idris Alooma (reigned c. 1571–c. 1603).<sup>6</sup>

Muhammed (al-Amin) al-Kanamī, a member of the royal family who advised the *mais* ("emperors") of Bornu, founded Kukawa (80 miles north-northeast of Maiduguri) as the Kanuri capital in 1814 and restored Bornu's independence from Fulani domination in the 1820s. After the death of the Sefawa Mai Ali

<sup>2</sup>Muhammad Waziri et al., *Issues in the Geography of Borno State*: Adamu Joji Publishers, 2009, p.9.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>4</sup>Loius Brenner, *The Shehus of Kukawa*: Clarendon Press Oxford, 1973, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup>Bornu: Historical Kingdom and Emirate, Nigeria, Encyclopaedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Bornu-historical-kingdom-and-emirate-Nigeria> accessed 06 May, 2018

Dalatami in 1846, al-Kanamī's son Umar (Omar) proclaimed himself the first *shehu* (that is, sheikh, or sultan) of Bornu.<sup>7</sup>

Bornu was defeated and Kukawa was destroyed by the Sudanese warrior Rābiḥ Az-Zubayr (Rabah Zubayr) in 1893, and Dikwa (54 miles east-northeast of Maiduguri) served as Rābiḥ's headquarters until he was killed by the French in 1900.<sup>8</sup> The French restored the al-Kanamī dynasty in Dikwa; but, after the final partition of Bornu among the British, the French, and the Germans, Shehu Bukar Garbai fled in 1902 to Northern Nigeria and was recognized as the *shehu* of British Bornu. Bornu was thus acknowledged as an emirate, but Garbai moved its headquarters from Monguno (65 miles north-northeast of Maiduguri) to Kukawa in 1904 and, finally, to Yerwa in 1907. The *Shehu* of Bornu still resides at Yerwa and is officially recognized as Nigeria's second most important traditional Muslim leader, after the Sultan of Sokoto.<sup>9</sup>

According to Muhammad Wakil, the ancient Borno was partitioned and shared between, Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon Republics. In 1907, the portion of old Borno that was occupied by the British became a province in Northern Nigeria with its provincial capital at Maiduguri. Borno formed a part of North Eastern State in 1967 and became a State during the 1976 States creation.<sup>10</sup>

#### Political History of Kukawa LGA

Kukawa officially became a local government area in 1976.<sup>11</sup> The name Kukawa was derived from the Baobab tree, which translates to Bishiyar Kuka. The tree has a strong significance in the area some centuries ago and it produces a fruit called Madaran Kuka, a sweet and whitish fruit. Under the Baobab tree is where meetings are held, where elders rest in the afternoon and sometimes it could be a market place.<sup>12</sup>

According to Mohammed Adam, while growing up, the elders told them that the name Kukawa meant the people of the Baobab tree. Rukayya Muhammad, a native of Kebbi state stated that in most communities in northern Nigeria, names are usually given to a symbolic feature in the area. For example, Kabawa means "the people of Kebbi". She further averred that the town Kukawa was previously known as Kuka, until it was changed to Kukawa to reflect the people of Kukawa.<sup>13</sup>

The Baobab tree is an economic tree. Baobab is a multi-purpose tree which offers protection and provides food, clothing and medicine as well as raw material for many useful items.<sup>14</sup> The fruit pulp, seeds, leaves, flowers, roots, and

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<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>10</sup>Wakil, *Issues in the geography ...*, p.9

<sup>11</sup>Ali Goni, 58 years, Civil Engineer, interviewed at Yobe, on May 7, 2018

<sup>12</sup>Mohammed Adam. 56 years, local government administrator, interviewed in Abuja, on May 19, 2018.

<sup>13</sup>Rukayya Muhammad, 45 years, house wife, interviewed in Abuja on May 7, 2018.

<sup>14</sup>Anup Gupter "Adansonia digitata L. (baobab): a review of traditional information and taxonomic description", *Asian Pacific Journal of Biomedicine*, Vol.5, No 1, 2015, pp. 79-84

bark of baobab are edible and they have been studied by scientists for their useful properties. The fruit pulp have very high vitamin C, calcium, phosphorus, carbohydrates, fibers, potassium, proteins and lipids content, which can be used in seasoning as an appetizer and also make juices. Seeds contain appreciable quantities of phosphorus, magnesium, zinc, sodium, iron, manganese, whereas they have high levels of lysine, thiamine, calcium and iron.<sup>15</sup>

The Baobab tree is highly medical and used to cure a variety of illnesses in Kukawa.<sup>16</sup> Illnesses such as ulcer and pneumonia in children are treated with the leaves from the tree.

**The Kuka tree that Kukawa Town derived its name.**



*Source: Generated by the researcher*

An account of the history of the name Kukawa was also told by Ali Mustapha Baga, an indigene of Baga in Kukawa Local government area. The town was previously known as Kuka. He stated that when El-Kanemi came to the town, he usually sat under the Kuka tree with his disciples where they recite the Koran and perform other activities. Some other accounts stated that El-kanemi while at a young age would sit under the tree and dream of victory.<sup>17</sup> Ibrahim Modu, in his work, "Nigeria in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century" gave a more concise account of the creation of Kukawa. He stated that in 1808, Goni Mukhtar led his men to sack Ngazargamu, the Borno capital. Much of the Borno territories in the West and in the South soon fell to the Fulani. Mai Ahmed, aged, blind now abdicated for his

<sup>15</sup>Ibid

<sup>16</sup>Ali Mustapha Baga, 60 years, farmer, interviewed in Maiduguri on May 19, 2018.

<sup>17</sup>Ali Mustapha Baga, 60 years, farmer, interviewed in Maiduguri on May 19, 2018.

son, Dunama whose main purpose was to deal with the Fulani menace. To this end, Dunama soon engaged the services of one Muharnined Al Arnin (later El-Kanemi), then living in Ngala, South of Lake Chad.<sup>18</sup> With the support of El-Kanemi and his forces, they were able to recapture Ngazargamu and Dunama was thus restored to his capital. Then El-Kanemi returned to Ngala, bearing gifts of money, cattle and slaves from the Mai.<sup>19</sup>

In 1809, the Fulani took Ngazargamu again, sending Dunama into exile once more. Once again, El-Kanemi came to the rescue. But this time, he requested for and obtained a fief in Nguru before marching against the Fulani. However, after another Fulani threat and the now routine El-Kanemi rescue operation, Dunama finally abandoned his capital and established an itinerant base in the eastern provinces which had been spared the Fulani ravages. Dunama's inability to check the Fulani and, worse, his increasing reliance on El-Kanemi, irked his leading chiefs, most of whom had in any case opposed his accession since it was not customary for a new Mai to emerge when his predecessor was still alive. Eventually, Dunama was ousted and replaced by his uncle, Muhammed Ngileruma.<sup>20</sup>

By 1813, there was widespread disaffection with Ngileruma and El-Kanemi, whose influence was substantial, took advantage of the situation and drove Mai Ngileruma out of office.<sup>21</sup> He then brought Mai Dunama back to the throne; and Dunama rewarded him by allotting him a fief that equaled one-half of the entire territory under the Mai himself. This fief certainly provided El-Kanemi with a platform for political action. In about 1814, El-Kanemi moved from Ngornu, shifting his capital to a new site, Kukawa. He then took the Arabic title of Sharleh (Shehu), which implied both religious and political leadership.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Present Day Kukawa LGA**

The present day Kukawa is the administrative headquarters of the local government area. According to the 2006 population census, the total inhabitants of Kukawa LGA are 203,343, consisting of 109,287 males and 94,056 females.<sup>23</sup> The district head of Kukawa is addressed as the AJA. He is the head of the traditional institution in Kukawa LGA. There are also other wards and clan heads called the Lawans and the Bulamas. They administer the various wards and clans that make up Kukawa LGA and its environs. <sup>24</sup> Kukawa is an Islamic society. The traditional institutions compliment the Islamic injunctions as typical in most Islamic societies. The Kukawa local government council is in charge of public administration in Kukawa local government area. The council is headed by a chairman who is the executive head of the local government. The Kukawa legislative council makes laws governing Kukawa local government

<sup>18</sup>Ibrahim Modu "Nigeria in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century" University of Maiduguri Centre for Distance Learning

<sup>19</sup>Ibid, 61.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, 66

<sup>21</sup>Ibid, 69

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Federal republic of Nigeria Official Gazette No 2, Vol. 96, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2009

<sup>24</sup>Ali Mustapha Baga, 60 years old, farmer, interviewed in Maiduguri on May 19, 2018.

area. It consists of 10 Councilors representing the 10 wards of the local government area.<sup>25</sup> Fishing and agricultural activities are the main stay of the economy. Towns in the Kukawa Local Government Area include Cross Kauwa and Baga, but there is no place called Kukawa apart from the local government.

### **Ethnic Groups and Settlement Pattern**

The indigenes of Kukawa LGA are mainly of the Kanuri ethnic stock. The name Kanuri itself is coined from the combination of two Kanuri words; "KA" meaning Stick and "NURI" meaning light.<sup>26</sup> The Kanuris on arrival were mainly pastoralists engaged in rearing of cattle and Sheep. They rear these animals on feet or with the support of riding animals such as Horses and Donkeys. As a normal tradition almost every pastoralist carries a stick along that helps guide his animals while grazing and chasing them back home on return, so same it was with the Kanuri people.

The area also consists of other minor tribes such as the Hausas whom, because of their fishing and farming, activities, migrated to the area. Kukawa falls in the Sudan Sahelian vegetation zone of Nigeria, which is characterized by scanty tree vegetation.<sup>27</sup> The trees in the area include Acacia family, Balanite and Neem trees. The shrubs include Calotropis procera. The area experiences two distinctive seasons – wet and dry. The rainy season last for three months – July to September. The rain is sporadic in nature. The dry season begins from the month of December, with the onset of harmattan, to the month of June.<sup>28</sup>

Kukawa is predominantly a Kanuri settlement and the language spoken is Kanuri. The Kanuri people are 100 % Muslims. Islam stands as a reference point for the Kanuri lifestyle and the entire Kanuri culture.<sup>29</sup> In Kukawa, there are four major tribes under the Kanuri umbrella. They are Kanembu, Bowduyi, Koyam and Suwurti. There are also shuwa-arabs and fulanis indigenes in Kukawa. Both Kanuri and Kanembu belong to ancient language called Classical Kanembu. Linguistically, this language belongs to the same Nilo-Saharan language family as the Tubu languages of Dazaga the tedaga, and the Zaghawa language, known as the Beria which is found in eastern Chad and western Sudan. Kanuri and Kanembu are today spoken in many dialects in Chad, Niger, Cameroon and Nigeria<sup>30</sup>

Kanuri usually understand their ethnic group being a conglomerate of several population segments, the "peoples of the Kanuri". This classification can be

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid

<sup>26</sup>Babagana Abubakar, "Kanuri Complete" Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320004428\\_KANURI\\_COMPLETE](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320004428_KANURI_COMPLETE) [accessed May 20 2018].

<sup>27</sup> Reuben Udo, *Geographic Regions of Nigeria*, (London: Morrison and Gibb, 1970) 64

<sup>28</sup>Ibid

<sup>29</sup>Babagana Abubakar " Kanuri Complete"

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320271910\\_KANURI\\_COMPLETE](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320271910_KANURI_COMPLETE)

<sup>30</sup> The Empire of Kanem-Bornu: The Kanembu and Kanuri Peoples.

<https://walkoulo.wordpress.com/2015/04/19/theempire-of-kanem-borno-the-kanembu-and-kanuri-peoples/>



equated to the category linguists use to classify dialects, which includes "family groups" as well as "regional groups". According to a survey in Borno in 1991-1993, where most of the data on Borno history and Kanuri subgroups were collected, the following sub-groups were mentioned: Badawai (Monguno), Suwurti (Kukawa), Mower (Yo), Manga (Machina), Kanembu (Kukawa), Koyam (Maiduguri), Ngomatiwu (west of the Dikwa-Mart-road), Fadawu (east of the Dikwa-Ngala-road), Firgiwu (people of the black cotton soil), etc. Besides differences in regional belongings and linguistics, cultural distinctions were made too.

### **The Local Economy of Kukawa**

Kukawa is known for large scale production of beans, millet, and maize and water melon. Farming in Kukawa is all year round. People farm on the shores of the Lake Chad regardless of whether it is raining season or not. The soil is also very fertile that fertilizer is not needed for planting.<sup>31</sup> Kukawa LGA borders Lake Chad, Lake Chad is an important wetland in the semi-arid Sahel corridor. It provides the basis of many thousands of livelihoods which depend on its seasonal fluctuations to renew fish stocks, farmland and rangeland. The Lake bed is flat and its waters shallow, so that seasonal changes in the volume of water result in large fluctuations in the surface area of the lake. The consequent exposure and submerging of the lake shore provides both fertile farmland and good feeding grounds for fish. The flooding regime represents an important natural asset which most households at Lake Chad exploit in one way or another. The fishing systems on the lake shore have therefore been developed to exploit seasonal flooding.<sup>32</sup>

Fish is also a significant source of income and a principal trade commodity in Kukawa LGA, bringing together the re-mote fishing community of North-east Nigeria with the major urban centers of the Southern part of the country. The origin of the fish trade from the waters of Lake Chad is a long standing one. The coming of modern transport system, the rise in population (especially in the urban centres) and the increase in earnings (mainly as a result of the expansion of the overseas export sector of the Nigerian economy) have greatly contributed to the expansion of the trade in fish. In other words, the fish trade developed with the coming of colonialism largely because of the expansion of the market, greater freedom of movement and increased cash needs<sup>33</sup>. Throughout the arid and semi-arid tropics, the interfaces between wetland and dry land provide the natural resources on which many livelihoods depend. Lake Chad is endowed with fish throughout the year, though there are particular periods for the peak and off peak periods for abundance of fish, fishermen from various parts of Nigeria and the neighboring countries take advantage of the lake in order to earn a living. There are fishermen who seasonally come for fishing on the lake

<sup>31</sup>Ali Mustapha Baga, 60 years old, farmer, interviewed in Maiduguri on May 19, 2018.

<sup>32</sup> Marie-Therese Sarch and C. Birkett, "Fishing and Farming at Lake Chad: Responses to Lake Level Fluctuations", *The Geographical Journal*, 166 (2000): 156-172

<sup>33</sup>Yakubu Mukta and Waziri Gazali, "The Dynamics of Fish Trade in North East Nigeria: A case study of Doron Baga" *Berichte des Sonderforschungsbereichs 268, Band 14*, Frankfurt a.M. 2000: 83-91

and after earning some profit from fishing they move back to their areas of origin until another season.

Although estimates of fish production from the lake vary and the exact roles of the lake's contraction and the exploitation of the fish stocks are difficult to ascertain, at least part of the reduction in production over recent decades is accounted for by the contraction of the lake. Seasonal migration to Baga area is not a new phenomenon; people from neighboring countries and part of the country come in for fishing and farming activities. The cause of seasonal migration in each case is basically the same; mainly the economic and social conditions of migrants from their place of origin and would-be destination.<sup>34</sup>

The Doron Baga fish market is the biggest fish market in the whole of North-east of Nigeria.<sup>35</sup> Doron Baga is populated predominantly by the Hausa, most of whom hail from Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara States and a few from Jigawa State. Besides the Hausa, there are Kanuri, Yedina (or the Buduma to the Kanuri), Kanembu, Igbo, Yoruba, Jukun, and Tchadian and Malian nationals. It is very difficult to give the exact value and volume of the Doron Baga fish trade due to lack of accurate statistics. In spite of the level of government involvement, by way of revenue generation, the fish trade along the Nigerian shores of Lake Chad almost falls within the informal sector of the country's economy<sup>36</sup>.

According to Yakubu Muktar and W. Gazali in their work "The Dynamics of Fish Trade in North-East Nigeria: A case Study of Doron Baga" the Fatoma is a key factor in the fish trade. Without his blessing or consent, most transactions are usually considered inconclusive by the parties involved.<sup>37</sup> Fatoma is a Kanuri word, meaning the owner or possessor of the house. In other words, the term means a land-lord, or one who accommodates, looks after or takes care of a visiting, non-resident long distance trader. Considered in this commercial context, the fatoma is a commission agent or broker who buys and sells fish (as well as other items) on behalf of his client. Besides being professional intermediaries, most fish fatoma of Doron Baga are fish dealers in their own right. Many fatoma initially started their career as fishermen. After consolidating their position in the fishing industry, and having accumulated some working capital, they start trading.

The fatoma institution is an integral part of the operations and development of long distance trade in Borno and neighbouring areas, especially Hausaland. The fatoma, besides accommodating or housing his clients, usually performs the following functions:

- a) He is willing to take risks on behalf of his clients;
- b) He introduces fishermen and fish sellers (at times by way of enticement) to the market;

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<sup>34</sup> Marina Moschetta, "on the Legal Aspects of Fisheries Management in the Lake Chad Basin", FAO Fisheries Report, 445(1991): 94-101.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid

<sup>36</sup> REED, William et al. (1967). Fish and Fisheries of Northern Nigeria. Zaria.

<sup>37</sup> Yakubu Mukhtar and W. Gazali, "The Dynamics of Fish Trade in North-East Nigeria: A case Study of Doron Baga" Berichte 268 (2000): 83-91



- c) He is entrusted with the safe-keeping of his clients' capital and goods;
- d) He provides financial assistance to his clients whenever they are in need; He initiates the transportation of his clients' goods to the big urban centres of the country;
- e) And being the main channel of communication or interaction between fish dealers or traders and sellers, he usually safeguards the interests of his clients to the very best of his ability and skill.

Thus, a successful fatoma is a relatively well-off person. Apart from the money he realises from his transactions, through buying and selling in his own right, he usually has a fixed amount from every transaction he initiates. The selection of a fatoma by fishermen and traders is largely not dictated by ethnic consideration. Although there are more Hausa fatoma than other groups in Doron Baga, perhaps because of the numerical strength and level of participation of this group in the fish trade, it is common to find Buduma fishermen having a Hausa fatoma and vice-versa.<sup>38</sup>

The prices of fish usually appreciate during the rising flood around February, and depreciate during the low water period around June. The highest peak of the fish trade at Doron Baga usually extends from January to April. It is estimated that during the rising flood or peak of the fish trade in Doron Baga between approximately 25 and 40 Lorries leave the market weekly loaded with fish.

#### **Military Presence in Kukawa:**

The palpable insecurity in the Lake Chad region occasioned by armed banditry, arms trafficking and border intrusion along Nigeria's border with Chad, Cameroon and Niger necessitated the establishment of a Multi National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in 1998 with Baga town in Kukawa Local Government Area of Borno State as the Headquarters<sup>39</sup>The initial mandate of the Task Force was to conduct military operations in the Lake Chad Region, checkmate banditry activities and to facilitate free movement of the member states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission across their common border. The activities of Boko Haram in Baga as the epicenter of strategic activities in terms of arms procurement, planning for attacks and reception centre for foreign insurgents or mercenaries (due to its proximity to porous borders) obligated and justified the expansion of the Task Force's mandate in April, 2012 to include the fight against terrorism. The MNJTF in Baga is in charge of Lake Chad region and is administratively and operationally independent.<sup>40</sup>

According C.C.C Osakwe in his work "Nigeria's Military Operations in the Lake Chad" he stated that the Lake Chad Basin is the largest endorheic drainage basin in Africa, centered on Lake Chad. It has no outlet to the sea and contains large

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid

<sup>39</sup>Lt Col Sagir Musa " Baga: Multinational Joint Task Forces, BHTs and Host Communities" Sahara Reporters, 07 May, 2013. Accessed 06 May, 2018  
<http://saharareporters.com/2013/05/07/baga-multinational-joint-task-forces-bhts-and-host-community-lt-col-sagir-musa>

<sup>40</sup>Ibid

areas of desert or semi-arid savanna.<sup>41</sup> He further asserted that “by its geographic situation, the Lake Chad basin is the buffer zone between the Sahel, and Sub-equatorial Africa; between Central and West Africa. Indeed, the former great lake is shared by Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger. It is because of this strategic position in the trade routes that the British colonial power made Maiduguri as the capital of Borno state in Nigeria, in 1900”

Ambush, human trafficking, kidnapping and robbery are old phenomena on the roads of the Lake Chad basin and specifically near the borders. But several factors are progressively transforming activities that used to ensure the vital minimum to the population and a fragile social peace, into a danger zone.<sup>42</sup> Julie Owono in her work “Military and Religious Extremism on the Shores of Lake Chad argued that the failure of regional and pan-African cooperation and solidarity benefit the movement and organizations of fanatic armed groups around Lake Chad and beyond.<sup>43</sup>

### Conclusion

Kukawa as a town and a local government area has been shown to have a rich history in Borno state; thus, its strategic importance cannot be overemphasized. It is on this premise that Kukawa in historical perspective became necessary. Understanding Kukawa in historical perspective laid a solid foundation for further academic investigation on the Boko Haram narrative. As in this case, it is evident that Kukawa remained a battleground for the Nigerian Military and the Boko Haram insurgents for factors such as its proximity to the neighboring francophone countries, its economic potentials, and activities evident in farming, livestock rearing, and fishing. Even before the Boko Haram conflict in the area, phenomena's such as ambush, human trafficking, kidnapping, and robbery have been prevalent in the Lake Chad basin and specifically near the borders. Insecurity in the Lake Chad region necessitated the establishment of a Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in 1998 in Kukawa Local Government Area of Borno State. The paper touched on the salient attributes of Kukawa as the capital of the old Kanem-Bornu Empire, as well as Kukawa as a local government area of present-day Borno state. The people, their origin, their way of life, the economic potentials of the area, as well as the culture and tradition of the people highlighted in this work, gives a clearer picture of how vital Kukawa is in the scheme of things in Borno State.

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<sup>41</sup>C.C.C Osakwe and Bem Japheth Audu “Nigeria’s Military Operations in Lake Chad” Journal of Defence Management <https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/nigerias-military-operations-in-the-lake-chad-basin-2167-0374-1000162.php?aid=92976>

<sup>42</sup>Ibid

<sup>43</sup>Julie Owono “Military and religious Extremism in the Shores of Lake Chad” <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/03/201339102350880705.html?%20Accessed%2020-11-2015>.