

# Globalization of Crime: Problems and Challenges for World Peace and Security

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### **Abstract**

*Globalization of crime is not a new phenomenon. However, in the present global environment, there has been unprecedented dramatic increase in the magnitude of globalization of crime with serious threats and challenges to world peace and security. This study therefore explores the problems and challenges weak and strong states face in the new environment of unprecedented activities of globalization of crime. Globalization of crime is conceptualized here as the same as transnational crime and as such should be viewed as one and the same. When crime crosses national boundaries in its planning, execution or effect, it assumes a transnational and/or global character and therefore goes beyond the exclusive jurisdiction of a state to effectively and adequately contain with. In this situation, salutary actions must therefore be global in nature and with special attention paid to more vulnerable states. Therefore, the basic analysis of this study is based on a paradigm shift brought in motion by globalization and the scourge of transnational crime threats and challenges to global peace and security. This article, therefore, provides insights and lessons into the current state of threats and challenges posed by the universe of newer transnational organized crime activities. These are insights and lessons that are too important and too costly to ignore in 21<sup>st</sup> century criminology.*

**Keywords:** Globalization of crime/Transnational crime; International market; International law; World peace and security

**Introduction**

This study explores the problems and challenges posed by the wave of globalization of crime activities. Globalization of crime is not a new phenomenon. However, in the present global environment, there has been unprecedented dramatic increase in the magnitude of globalization of crime with serious threat to world peace and security. Globalization of crime was conceptualized here as the same as transnational crime and as such should be viewed as one and the same.

Evidence shows that the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union saw periods of both heightened tension and relative calm. Direct military attacks on adversaries were deterred by the potential for mutual assured destruction using deliverable nuclear weapons. Even with the period of reduced tension, what was achieved was only uneasy calm as the fear of possible outbreak of a third world war remained. Thus, the condemnation of war against nuclear build up particularly the production and/or procurement of weapons of mass destruction became the issue of greatest concern to the world (Claude, 2006). However, the collapse of the Soviet Union has been described as a pivotal historical event that intertwined with the rapid expansion of global markets which enabled money, goods and people and information super highway to circulate at a degree and speed never before seen. The development has also enabled criminal elements to have unprecedented easy access to for example arms, massive flow of information technology and communication, money, immigrants and refugees which they use to perpetuate diverse illegal activities (Davis, 2012; Shelley en, 2005).

Except few certain older crime groups like Sicilia mafia and Columbia crime cartel, most older crime groups often in long-established states though posed considerable threats and challenges to national and international peace and security. They usually “developed along with their state and are dependent on existing institutional and financial structures to carry out their enterprise and invest their profits. Rarely do the large established crime organizations link with terrorist groups, because their long-term financial interests require the preservation of state structures.” Today however, it appears that newer crime groups have taken the center stage as the major threats and challenges to both national and international peace and security. Unlike the older crime groups, the newer ones, “often originating in post-conflict situations, thrive in a state of chaos and ongoing conflict” have taken the center stage in promoting the proliferation of small arms, engaging in insurgencies, terrorism, oil and precious stones bunkering and other illicit markets across national borders (Shelley, 2005:101).

Thus, perhaps Shelley (2005, 1995) was right in his observation that newer transnational criminal groups could be the defining issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for policy makers as defining as the cold war was for the 20<sup>th</sup> century because crime groups have proliferated as a result of the rise of globalization. They take advantage of increased travel, trade, rapid money movements, telecommunications and computer links and are well positioned for growth. They also proliferate as a result of conflict zones, poverty and corruption. Thus, transnational crime groups are terrorizing virtually every part of the globe and nowhere in the world is totally immune from the onslaught of their activities and/or effects. The situation is now beyond the capacity of individual states’ security machineries especially those of the weak states to effectively and adequately contain with (Small and Taylor, 2005; Fijnaut, 2000).

Note that the term “weak states” is defined here as states that supply lesser or less-than-adequate quantities of political goods, or poorer-quality political goods or both. Whereas “strong states” are just the opposite and can be conceptualized as states that supply adequate quantities of political goods, or higher-quality political goods or both ( Rotberg, 2013). To further epitomize the difference between weak and strong states, Rotberge (2013:1) asserts that:

Of the 193 members of the United Nations, 60 or 70 are strong states. Those are the nation-states that rank highest in the democracy rankings of Freedom House, the human rights reports of the US State Department, the anticorruption perception indices of Transparency International, the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Program, the competitiveness indices of the World Economic Forum, and the Doing Business surveys of the World Bank.

While the world's attention has been focused on the traditional maintenance of international peace and security particularly by not sparing any energy in the effort to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war within and/or between nations, however, we argue that at present another type of scourge which is threatening international peace and security and which is as serious as war within and/or between nations is proliferating. This is a scourge created by criminal elements who engage in transnational crimes which are fast growing in intensity and effect across the globe. The rise of newer transnational crime activities has been given impetus by today's general globalization of society such as the large-scale internationalization of technology and communication, the conveyance of goods and individuals, and financial transactions-including but not limited to the growth of off-shore banking in some part of the world which has narrowed down the world into a global village (Fijnaut, 2000), thus, making the world as flat as never before as Friedman (2009) argues succinctly in his work entitled, "The World Is Flat."

Note that in this study we are not more concerned about the definition of each type of transnational crime instead, we shall only briefly mention some of their forms and purveyors. For such definitions, see for example (Reichel and Albanese, 2014; Albanese, 2011). Nonetheless, the most common experience of organized crimes that might have transnational crime dimensions in the USA for instance include cyber crimes, drug peddling, gun running, corporate corruption, bootlegging, loansharking, illicit gambling, organized prostitution rings and terrorism (Abadinsky, 2010; Albanese, 2011). In the case of Nigeria as a typical example of developing economies, examples of transnational crime groups include the Boko Haram sect, Niger Delta Militants and myriads of other crime groups that engage in drug trafficking, gun running, human trafficking, kidnapping, fraud, cybercrime etc (Ezeanyika and Ubah, 2012).

There is little or no doubt that the recent process of globalization of society has fundamentally influenced the multifarious ramifications of newer transnational crime groups, with its attendant national and global peace and security implications, impacting variously on weak and strong states (Paraschiv, 2013; Shelly, 2005; Fijnaut, 2000). This paper therefore specifically examines: The nature and impact of transnational crime groups especially organized ones in weak and strong states given the varied impacts of globalization and the varied conditions and exposure that enable and facilitate the impacts and patterns of the crime groups; The nature of national security challenges associated with these crime groups particularly in the weak states; and approaches for possible effective and adequate responses to the threats and challenges posed by these crime groups.

### **Conceptualizing Transnational Organized Crime**

Ordinarily, crime signifies a violation of the laws of the state by way of an act or an omission which renders the person doing the act or making the omission liable to punishment at the instance of the state. It represents such offenses against the state and to which the state alone reserves the right to prosecute and perhaps punish offenders if found guilty. When such offenses against the state are committed within the territorial confines of a nation state and without any threat to the peace and security of the citizens of other states, we talk about national crimes or domestic crimes. Conversely, when an offense against the laws of a state but whose inception, proportion, and direct and indirect impacts involve more than one country and has profit motive, we talk about transnational crime (Ubah et al, 2015; Paraschiv, 2013; Albanese, 2012, 2011).

It is important to note that not all transnational crimes are organized crime. Take cybercrime for instance where one individual in one country can engage in a high impact transnational crime activity that may affect a larger number of people in other parts of the world. And even the real organized forms of transnational crime vary in different degrees of organization. This fact is optimized by the observation of Albanese (2011:8) that “findings around the world suggest that transnational organized crime has “degrees” of organization and that most groups are smaller networks, while a much smaller number are larger ongoing and more powerful criminal enterprises.” However, whether organized or not, transnational crimes by their nature exist usually for profit motive. Nonetheless the method and type of offenses perpetrated by these crime groups especially the newer ones have particularly serious social repercussions, often due to the violence and/or threats of violence involved in their enterprise, the financial losses encountered or other features implying anxiety or indignation among the general public, and very importantly when the crime organization was in a survival mood as was the case at certain periods of Pablo Escobar’s Columbia cartel (Albanese, 2012; Shelley, 2005).

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime defines an “organized crime group” as “a structured group of three or more persons existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit” (UNODC, 2005). Transnational crime involves people in more than one country maintaining a system of operation and communication that is effective enough to perform criminal transactions, sometimes repeatedly (UNODC, 2005). Evidence suggests that the organized forms of transnational crime are the most dangerous in that they have the capacity to survive and sustain themselves and continue to exist and expand its activities to an extent enough to pose some considerable threats and challenges to world peace and security (Albanese, 2011, 2008; Reinares and Resa, 1999).

Facilitated by the processes of globalization, criminal groups especially the organized ones are now increasingly engaging in a much wider range of criminal activities including but not limited to the trafficking of drugs, humans parts, trading in weapons and firearms, stolen vehicles, forced labor and sexual exploitation of smuggled illegal migrants, dealings in stolen artifacts and endangered species, nuclear material, gambling, usury, forgery, hired killings and prostitution; the sale of stolen property, especially luxury cars, credit card fraud, money laundering, advance fee fraud (popularly known as 419 in Nigeria criminal code), helping out legitimate companies in illegal matters such as breaking environmental or labor laws; the use of legal networks for illicit activities such as the management of transport companies for drug trafficking or construction investment; and systematic predatory action such as piracy, extortion and kidnapping (Paraschiv, 2013; Albanese, 2011, 2008; Abadinsky, 2010; Reinares and Resa, 1999; Lane et al, 2008). According to NgorNgor, transnational organized crimes (TOC) are the highly sophisticated and syndicated criminal activities which surpass the primary concern of a particular single nation, and their activities range across this list of inventory. Thus, Albanese (2011:3) describes the inventory as “the universe of transnational crime” and he groups them into three general categories: provision of illicit goods, illicit services, and infiltration of business or government.

An offence is transnational in nature if it is committed in more than one country or it is committed in one country but a substantial part of its preparation, planning, direction or control takes place in another country or it is committed in one country but involves a criminal element or group that engages in criminal activities in more than one country or it is committed in one country but has effects in another country. Transnational organized crime is the most complex and serious form of transnational crimes mainly because it takes a certain degree of organization, structure, and network relationships for it to form and operate at a much broader range relatively effectively. The scope and scale of newer transnational organized crime

activities and the form by which their activities take are manifestations of the process of the 21<sup>st</sup> century globalization. As a new form of manifestation in the mix of unprecedented globalized environment, makes it easier for the new crime groups to operate and mobilize at global levels than the older crime groups, and their increased scope of opportunity structures make it easier for them to establish networks relationships cross borders which enabled them to pose greater threats and challenges to national and international authorities. They also make it much more difficult to effectively and adequately contain these newer crime groups (Albanese, 2011; Shelley, 2005; Small and Taylor, 2005; Fijnaut, 2000; Godson and Olson, 1993).

The most sophisticated form of transnational crimes are the organized ones and they are crimes committed by groups of people equipped with A relative degree of structure and functioning networks and they are the most willing element to use violence as a means to further their illegal enterprise (Reinares and Resa, 1999). Some famous transnational organized crime groups worthy of mentioning here for example are the mafias (Sicilian, American and Russian), the Japanese yakuza, the Colombian drug cartels of Medellin and Cali, the Chinese triads (Albanese, 2011; Ubah, 2012, 2007). However, it is important to note that because these crime groups operate across borders and as a result their illegal activities are not always in conformity to a strictly unitary organization of rigidly subordinated groups, instead, they are mostly a network of heterogenous groups linked to one another by various forms of financial interests, alliances, complicity of international operations and market and flexibility of organizational order (Albanese, 2012, 2011; Ezeanyika and Ubah, 2012; Pearce & Woodiwis, 1993; Ryan & Rush, 1997; Williams, 1994). Such relationship is advantageous to the crime groups in that their loosely connected structure enable them to exploit market niches and at the same time make their activities very difficult to effectively and adequately bring under control.

To be clear, it is important to note that attempts to define Organized Crime (OC), Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) or Transnational Crime (TC) are not without serious difficulties. Such efforts have met with only limited success and no generally accepted definition has emerged (Paraschiv, 2013). As a result, these terms can be used to refer to crimes that are closely related and sometimes can be used interchangeably. Such crimes include crimes that have actual or potential effect across national borders and crimes which are intra-state but which offend the fundamental values of the international community as well as crimes that are carried out by crime groups within a specific nation state.

### **Globalization and Transnational Crime**

In this study, the rise of globalization is conceptualized as a phenomenon which is the prime mover in the development and growth of newer transnational crime groups and therefore deserves further treatment for better appreciation of the nature, origin and growth of newer transnational crime groups. As a concept, globalization is a multifaceted and multidimensional phenomenon encompasses social, economic, political, cultural, and legal forces (Etizen and Zinn, 2009; Ezeanyika, 2006). Thus, Albanese (2011:1) offers an interesting assertion that “globalization is a term that refers to the reduction and removal of barriers among national borders to facilitate the flow of goods, services, funds, and labor.” The current global phenomenon which began with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of many newly emerging democracies and post-conflict states brought with it unprecedented flow of goods, services and market opportunities across countries and regions of the world. Unfortunately, processes parallel to those which made globalization good for the interdependent world economy have also enabled criminal organizations to emerge and thrive at an unprecedented global scale (Albanese, 2011; Paraschiv, 2013; Beland, 2008; Shelley, 2005; Reinares and Resa, 1999).

Globalization is a process of shifting autonomous economies into the global market - the systematic integration of autonomous economies into global trading environment. It involves the creation of global

market in which increasingly all nations participate. The key elements include the interconnection of sovereign nations through trade and capital flows, harmonization of the relationship between these sovereign nations. Thus, the dominant conception in globalization is that it is basically the intensification of the interconnection and interdependence between all parts of the world, particularly at the levels of the economy, communications, politics and socio-cultural relations. The rapidity and the possibilities provided by innovative technologies in transportation and global free trade have increased the flow of licit as well as illicit goods and services (Albanese, 2011; Paraschiv, 2013; Shelley, 2005; Reinares and Resa, 1999).

Hanlon (2009:125) asserts that “conceptually globalization is an imprecise term.” The literature varies widely, and there is little agreement on what globalization is beyond a vague theme of “interconnectedness” a linkage between the global and the local, and an equally vague sense about change. Nonetheless, globalization can be described as a “sum of techniques”—containerized shipping, satellite communications, and network connectivity or more broadly as a process, a transformation even a revolution. The effects of globalization have not been uniformly felt; it brings greater interdependence and propels isolated peoples and regions into global market place with varying relative attendant benefits. Yet the dark sides of globalization include its power to obliterate traditional cultures, weaken of national sovereignty, creation of greater opportunity structure for cross-national criminal activities, and further widen economic inequality and stratification between the “haves” and the “have-nots” (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010).

Furthermore, Hanlon (2009:125) distinguishes four variants of globalization: economic, technological, cultural and political. These variants of globalization directly or indirectly play a role in the transformation of newer organized crime groups. However, the most critical and directly instrumental to the transformation of newer organized crime groups are the economic and the technological. The two are also the most widely acknowledged and accepted version of globalization. Economic globalization she explained encompasses large and rapid change in terms of the flow of trade, investment, finance, capital, and labor, all of which have created a global integrated economic market without uniform spread of the costs and benefits. Whereas strong States have seen their economies grow and their global market share increase, weaker states invariably have not to a comparable level. The result is gap between rich and poor states, a disparity that further undermines the sovereignty, security and legitimacy of those states on the fringes of the globalized world (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010). The second variant of technological globalization arises from the fundamental changes in communications wrought by the technologies that brought us the internet, open and free access to knowledge and information, and instant communications networks. Transnational organized crime groups of different kinds exploit these technologies to facilitate and maximum their illicit enterprise (Paraschiv, 2013; Albanese, 2011; Abadinsky, 2010; Onwudiwe, 2004; Fijnaut, 2000).

Thus, the sheer volume, speed, and geographic spread of globalization confer a degree of anonymity on those who participate. Transnational organized crime groups such as armed groups have effectively exploited this anonymity at least in three distinct ways. First, the sheer size of the global economy and market enables armed groups to mask their trade of legal and illegal goods, to move people, and to evade detection. Second, the ability to communicate and operate anonymously over vast distances enables armed groups to create linkages with other groups having disparate ideologies, objectives, memberships, and operational structures capabilities. Third, the heightened connectivity of the globalized world has enabled armed groups to transmit information and recruit on an international scale while masking their criminal activities and operations in the noise of legitimate global interaction (Paraschiv, 2013; Hanlon, 2009; Shelley, 2005).

In this an ever-increasing globalized world, developing nations are bound to be weaker in national security; because of their degree of exposure to the threats and problems of newer transnational crime groups mostly as transit areas and recruitment hubs. In the same vein, international organizations are bound

to face greater challenges in their roles toward addressing the problems and challenges of newer transnational crime groups posed in developing nations in particular and the world as a whole (Fijnaut, 2000; Paraschiv, 2013; Shelley, 2005; Small and Taylor, 2005). As has been noted, in a globalized environment, the scourge of newer transnational crime groups in developing nations often originate in post-conflict situations, and flourished in countries besieged with ongoing conflict, corruption, shadow economy, and weak structures and government. These factors are evident in many of the peripheral countries of Africa (e.g., Angola and Nigeria); making it very difficult to effectively and adequately contain the activities of newer transnational crime groups especially the organized ones (Egbu, 2014; Zumve et al, 2013; Albanese, 2011; Ubah et al, 2015 Forthcoming; Shelley, 2005; Fijnaut, 2000; Small and Taylor, 2005).

Fijnaut (2000) argues that transnational crimes flourished mostly in developing nations of the world because they lack strong public administration that can tackle transnational crime activities in a sustained, targeted and consistent manner. Shelley (2005:102) postulates that new transnational crime groups have proliferated in number and membership since the end of the Cold War in weak states of the globe that are besieged with conflict, corruption, poor governance, and shadow economy. These crime groups have no interest in stable and secure states. "In fact, they promote grievances, because it is through the prolongation of conflict that they enhance their profit."

The point is that the various crime groups have directly exploited the economic, technological, and virtually entire cultural and environmental variants of globalization on certain nation states. This is such that weak states are further weakened by it because of their vulnerable situations (Zumve et al, 2013; Hanlon, 2009). For example, transnational organized groups exploit the sheer volume of trade and the compression of time and space to evade detection more so in weak states than in strong ones. Criminal organizations benefit from the anonymity of the global market to move drugs and other illegal cargo. Insurgents and militia can procure the necessary arms, including large weapons and export their illicit goods, masking their shipments in the vast trade in legal goods. Armed groups have also exploited the anonymity of globalization-the vast global market and interconnectivity to mask their illegal business and also have created marriages of convenience and linkages with various criminal gangs of differing ideologies, interests and political goals (Schultze-Kraft, 2014; Gastrow, 2011).

Research strongly suggest that all these processes thrive in weak states of the world more so than in strong ones because in strong countries, where the technologies to track people and the intelligence to anticipate and link such movements, arrest and prosecute them are robust, and where there are stable and good governance and no widespread of corruption and as a result the impunity of armed groups are more so constrained in stronger states than in weak ones (e.g., Aning and Pokoo, 2014; Schultze-Kraft, 2014; Paraschiv, 2013; Zumve, 2013; Gastrow, 2011; Albanese, 2008; Shelley, 2005).

Our position therefore is that transnational crime groups in all their manifestations and ramifications as aspects of the global phenomena have benefitted from the said processes that can be said to have globalized the world. And has done so in such a manner and scale not anticipated and adequately responded to by the world community especially in weak states (Albanese, 2011; Paraschiv, 2013; Shelley, 2005).

### **Transnational Organized Crime and National Security**

Before the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the link between transnational organized crime and national security could not have been clearly established in virtually all nations of the globe. But in just one decade preceding the 21st century, newer transnational crime groups engaging in various illegal enterprises such as drug trafficking, illicit trade in counterfeit goods and other commodities, trafficking in wildlife products, human trafficking and smuggling, small arms trafficking, arts and antiquities trafficking, toxic waste trafficking, money laundering and so on have emerged and expanded in scope and scale never before seen

and are now no longer limited to certain countries or regions of the world but instead are becoming one of the major factors to consider when defining threats and challenges to national security of virtually all countries or regions of the world (e.g., Paraschiv, 2013; Tapia, 2012; Albanese, 2011; Godson and Olson, 1995; Shelley, 2005; UNODC, 2005). However, this empirical fact does not in any way suggest that they problem occur at the same scale and degree across all nations of the world but instead in varying scale and degree. Take West Africa of the 1980s as an example, except what has been described as the Middle Eastern organized crime connection where there was a clear association between organized crime in West Africa and the guerrilla warfare during the Lebanese civil war of the 1980s, when Lebanese traders based in West Africa used money earned from diamonds and other businesses to fund militias activities in their home country (Ellis, 1988), there has been no such suggestion of any clear association between organized crime and international terrorism in West Africa prior to that time (UNODC, 2005).

Nonetheless, as the UNODC (2005) reported, the relative lack of any clear association between organized crime and international terrorism in West Africa had changed very rapidly as a result of external and internal stresses such as globalization process, on-going conflict situations, corruption, and weak governance have enabled and facilitated organized crime groups to increase in number and membership in West Africa and thrive in their illicit trade to the extent never before known and with serious negative consequences on the security of various nation states (Paraschiv, 2013; Shelley, 2005). Cases in point include but are not limited to Sierra Leone and Nigeria, and more recently Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Mali. Take for instance, during the conflict periods of 1980s and 90s in Sierra Leone as reference points when major Russian criminal gangs allegedly took advantage of the conflict situations in the country to advance and globalize their criminal enterprise to an alarming level (Freidman, 2000). But according to the UNODC (2005:24), “this danger is probably most acute in the case of Nigeria, the richest and most populous country in West Africa, and also one where, it would appear, criminal entrepreneurs have been most successful in penetrating international markets in drugs and fraud.”

However, unlike the case of Mali and Guinea-Bissau (Aning and Pokoo, 2014; Gastrow, 2011), at present there has been no clear evidence suggesting that any of the major politicians in Nigeria are acting as a front for organized criminal groups, or that the profits from organized crime are being systematically invested in Nigeria politics (Schultze-Kraft, 2014). Yet, few observers doubt that money from a wide variety of illicit sources goes into funding Nigerian election campaigns one way or the other. But the UNODC (2005) cautions that “information on such matters is very difficult to find, (and) it would be unwise to draw any firm conclusions on the subject.” However, what can be said with more confidence is that contemporary Nigeria has become more violent and insecure country, with thousands of conflict related deaths occurring mainly as a result of the Niger Delta crisis and the activities of Boko Haram islamic sect which has been described as politically and religiously related (Aning and Pokoo, 2014; Egbu, 2014; Ezeanyika and Ubah, 2012). Consequently, “there is a clear nexus in Nigeria between massive corruption, violence and politics, in which organized crime groups may not for long retain an outside role” (UNODC, 2005).

The emergence of newer transnational crime groups especially the organized ones have led to a redefinition of the concept of national security, but not like the one during the Cold War, which was based on the confrontation between antagonistic blocks (Shelley, 2005; Reinares and Resa, 1999) when the threat was nuclear annihilation; today however, with the emergence of the newer transnational crime groups, the greatest threat is terrorism. With the rise of globalization ushering in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with its elements and processes, the threats of terrorism and other illicit enterprise has increased dramatically and has consequently changed the nature and scope of threats to national security (Shelley, 2005; Reinares and Resa, 1999).



Transnational organized crime is the most dangerous form of transnational crimes. Perhaps, the main reason for that is that it is able to structure, organize and more resilient than other forms of transnational crimes. These attributes enable it to pose greater threat and challenge to states as well as better able to withstand potential danger to its existence, continuity and capacity to expand its activities than ordinary transnational crimes (Paraschiv, 2013; Reinares and Resa, 1999). For instance, transnational organized crime group resiliency and protection capability of its existence are often achieved in two ways: (i) through intimidation or actual use of violence, or the threat of using it, and (ii) corruption, which blocks action by state institution or civil society entities (Albanese, 2011; Fijnaut, 1996). As empirical evidence has shown, some organized crime group sometimes resort to terrorism as part of its violent methods at certain times or during particular stages of its existence as was the case with Sicilian mafia and Columbia narco cartel for instance (Fijnaut, 2000; Paraschiv, 2013; Shelley, 2005; Reinares and Resa, 1999). Thus, Albanese (2011::xi) epitomizes the nature of the reality of transnational crime groups in the 21st century by asserting that “transnational crime is to the early twenty-first century what city gangs and Al Capone were to the early twentieth century.” Even though, Albanese may have been speaking from the perspective of early twentieth century American notorious crime group historical context, the empirical facts in this paper clearly suggests that his assertion seems to cut across all nations including Africa on which we now turn.

### **National Security Threats and Challenges of Transnational Organized Crime in Africa**

Before the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the link between transnational organized crime and national security threats and challenges within the sphere of Africa could not have been clearly established. Instead, it was often imagined without much hard evidence that warrant serious concerns and serious official attention on the problem. But in just one decade preceding the 21st century, newer transnational crime groups have emerged and expanded in scope and scale in virtually all over African countries and had done so at the extent never before seen and consequently have rendered the once relative lack of any clear association of them with national security threats and challenges of all states in Africa a thing of the past. This is because, now, there are a worth of empirical evidence establishing clear links between transnational organized crime activities and national security threats and challenges in Africa (for example see Aning and Pokoo, 2014; Akinloye, 2014; Gastrow, 2011; Holmgren, 2013; Schultze-Kraft, 2014; Shelley, 2005; UN, 2010; UNODC, 2005). As a whole, these studies clearly established the links between transnational organized crime groups and national security threats and challenges in Africa. Just for instance, Aning and Pokoo (2014) document that:

During a briefing to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in July 2012, Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), expressed concern about drugs and crime in West Africa. According to Fedotov, some 30 tons of cocaine and almost 400 kg of heroin were trafficked through West Africa in 2011, and methamphetamine laboratories had been discovered in the sub-region. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its part acknowledged that, ‘...drug trafficking is an enemy of the state and the rule of law, existing as a parallel power that rivals the legal system and we are compelled to fight it.

On the same vein with the above evidence but somewhat different type of transnational organized crime enterprise, Gastrow (2011:5-6) shows succinctly that:

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that up to 20,000 Somali and Ethiopian male migrants are smuggled from the Horn of Africa to South Africa every year. Kenya is normally the first step in their long journey, with corrupt police and immigration officers facilitating the trip. These illegal smuggling activities generate annual revenues of

about \$40 million. At least five to ten networks, each headed by a mukhali, coordinate and organize this trade in northern Kenya and Nairobi. They tend to be respected and well-known figures in society who operate within “legitimate” businesses. Their connections with top government and political figures contribute to the relatively low risk environment in which they operate.

Because of the scope and seriousness of transnational organized crime activities currently taken place in Africa, some countries in Africa such as Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Northern Mali, Kenya, Somalia, Sahel region and Nigeria can be described as ground zeros of these forms of ‘dark sides’ of globalization dynamics negatively taken place in Africa as they are also taken place in other parts of the globe in varying degrees. And the activities of these crime groups are not without serious national security threats and challenges (Aning and Pokoo, 2014; Bwala and Gesinde, 2014; Eke, 2014; Schultze-Kraft, 2014; Holmgren, 2013; Albanese, 2012; Ebbe and Ubah, 2012; Ezeanyika and Ubah 2012; Gastrow, 2011; UN, 2011). For example, as Gerard Araud, the French permanent representative at the United Nations warned:

(Transnational crime, as a security threat), can weaken or destabilize states, damaging their good governance and slowing their economic development. They compete with legal economic systems and promote corruption ... they hamper the post crisis reconstruction efforts of public institutions and development organizations led by national authorities and the international community. Criminal networks not only benefit from weak or failed states; their activities also help to exacerbate political tensions, inter alia, by financing nongovernmental armed groups and insurgency movements (UN, 2010).

Reinares and Resa (1999) were in accord with Gerard Araud’s observation and warning by their assertion that with globalization ushering in in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it brought a change in the nature of threats and challenges to national security which previously were related with great accumulation of power, resources and territory, to threats now associated with the generation and control of information, creating new vulnerabilities in the security defenses of states as criminal organizations, can access information more easily than never before and in turn use them to facilitate and expand their links and illegal enterprise of various sorts including but not limited to drug trafficking, fraud and cybercrime, corruption of businesses and governments, kidnapping, commercial vices-obscenity and pornography, extortion and racketeering, money laundering, human trafficking, artifact trafficking and terrorism and narco terrorism. This universe of transnational crime especially in their organized form, constitutes a growing threat and challenge to national security of virtually all states and international stability and peace: it can disrupt social institutions and economic development; it has the ability to undermine democratic process, and in fact, can victimize an entire population as is particularly the case with the recent crisis situation in Iraq as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorize and victimize a verse group of people (Aning and Pokoo, 2014; Asu, 2014; Schultze-Kraft, 2014; Zuckerman, 2014; Holmgren, 2013; Paraschiv, 2013; Sandu and Nitu, 2013; Levi, 2012; Albanese, 2012, 2011; Gastrow, 2011; Shelley, 2005; United Nations, 1996).

Research show that some of the most serious and troubling conditions that enable and facilitate newer transnational organized crime groups to operate and flourish in activity and membership in Africa include but are not limited to the threats and challenges posed by ongoing chaos and conflict situations; weak institutions and states; increasing demand and consumption of illicit goods and services; prevalent norms and behavior; and linkages between trafficking, violence and extremism to mention but a few (for example see Aning and Pokoo, 2014; Schultze-Kraft, 2014; Holmgren, 2013; Paraschiv, 2013; Albanese, 2012; Gastrow, 2011; Shelly, 2005; Fijnaut, 2000). On their own, each of these studies gives insightful and powerful support to this assertion. But perhaps Aning and Pokoo (2014) study is the most outstanding

because it is uniquely distinctive in terms of the way and manner by which they systemically discuss and present the issues.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

In this paper, we have shown that globalization and the growing economic interdependence have encouraged and promoted the transformation of crime beyond borders in virtually all parts of the world. That improved systems of communication and information technology delivery, increased blurring of national borders, greater mobility of people, goods, and services across countries, thereby creating greater opportunities for economic activities and at the same time making it easier for the universe of transnational crime including but not limited to drug trafficking, stolen property, counterfeiting, human trafficking, fraud and cybercrime, commercial vices-obscenity and pornography, extortion and racketeering, money laundering and other criminal activities to proliferate globally (Albanese, 2011). That newer transnational crime organizations have emerged and expanded in size, scope, influence, impact on peace and security and governance of many states and consequently represent one of the most profound threats and challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Aning and Pokoo, 2014; Schultze-Kraft, 2014; Zuckerman, 2014; Holmgren, 2013; Paraschiv, 2013; Levi, 2012; Tottel, et al, 2012; Albanese, 2012, 2011; Gastrow, 2011; Shelley, 2005).

These studies suggest that criminal organizations have also expanded in their capacity, organizational networks and links, technically sophisticated in their operations and influence beyond the capacity of individual states to effectively and adequately contain with. Hence there is an urgent need for a paradigm shift which requires a more robust and committed multinational security arrangements that take cognizance of the peculiarities and various levels of risks and resource capacity of various participating states of the world. The leadership and efforts of the United Nations in recognizing the global threats and challenges of transnational crime and responding by drafting the first Convention against Transnational Organized crime in December 2000 which was ratified by forty countries in 2003 was remarkable and a right step in the right direction (Holmgren, 2013; Albanese, 2012; Elliott, 2012; Fijnaut, 2000; United Nations Center for International Crime Prevention, 2000). But to adequately and effectively address the threats and challenges of transnational organized crime, every country on the face of the earth needs to ratify such conventions, protocols and resolutions (United Nations Security Council, 2014) in response to the threats and challenges of transnational organized crime.

After all is said and done, the fact remains that the positive impacts and benefits of such approaches to the conventions, protocols and resolutions depend largely on their implementations. As a result, we urge member states to seriously and honestly commit to the conventions, protocols and resolutions by doing whatever necessary to make them succeed for the interest of 21<sup>st</sup> century global peace and security.

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