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How Can African Food Insecurity Be Addressed in the Midst of Rising Insurgency? Preliminary Reflections from Cameroon

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Abstract

Despite increasing global prosperity, large numbers of people remain hungry and malnourished. The agreement that this situation cannot be allowed to persist is reflected in global agreements, which set out targets for the reduction of hunger and food insecurity. While issues of food insecurity have been linked to conventional pre and post harvest challenges in the agricultural sector, coupled with the vagaries of weather a climate, it has become crystal clear that measures to address food insecurity need to consider rising insurgency. This concerns a number of African countries, including Cameroon, our case study, where issues of insurgency are becoming crucial in most parts of the country. Once described as the “bread basket” of the central African region, Cameroon’s food security situation has, in the recent years, been compromised by issues of rising insurgency including the Boko Haram and the increasing unrests in Anglophone Cameroon. Although studies on food security have been conducted especially for the drought-stricken northern regions of the country, including the proposition of measures to tackle the issue, an important aspect which has not been factored into the equation has to do with rising insurgency. This perhaps, explains why the prospects for food self-sufficiency remain bleak in the affected parts of Cameroon. Using some cases of insurgency, we undertake a review of existing frameworks to address food security concerns, and analyse the ecology of food insecurity and rising insurgency in Cameroon. Fifty semi-structured interviews were conducted to key stakeholders in four affected regions of Cameroon to understand the potential contribution of rising insurgency on food insecurity. Based the information obtained, we discuss potential aspects to be incorporated into existing food security framework to address food insecurity concerns relating to accessibility, availability and stability.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Cameroon, ecology, food security, insurgency