

## Insurgency and the challenges of combating terrorism in Nigeria: The Boko haram menace

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### Abstract

Once in control of her territory, people, economy, politics, culture and religion, the Nigerian state have been engulfed in a rapacious and unfortunate nightmare in day light. Consequently the Nigerian state seems to be losing the very soul of her peaceful existence. The tears of the victims of terrorism, poor leadership, corruption, hyperinflation, stagnant low wages, weak naira, over dependence on oil and poor resources curse, poor infrastructure, insecurity, unreliable power and education, ethno-religious brigandage and high unemployment which unleashes a perfect storm of genocide on the nations soul, flood the country's milieu. The situation is dire in the North, the frustration and alienation drive many to join "self-help" extremist ethno religious groups some of which are hostile to the state. It is in this seeming "Hobbesian –State of Nature" that the group called Boko Haram (usually translated loosely as "Western Education is forbidden") emerged. It is an Islamic extremist sect that believes corrupt false Muslims control Northern Nigeria. The group is bent on establishing an Islamic state in the North with strict adherence to Sharia (Islamic Law). Data collection for this paper was basically secondary, making use of content analysis both as an instrument of data collection and analysis. The study adopted the structural violence theory and its theoretical framework. It is the view of this paper that more hostile groups may emerge except drastic steps are taken to pursue a more inclusive democratic government with emphasis on man-centered development strides.

**Keywords:** terrorism, insurgency, boko haram, Nigeria

### 1. Introduction

In many parts of Africa, significant socio-economic and political progress has been recorded, however in some part, this has been threatened by the menace of insurgency and terrorism (Ikporukpo, 2014:137) <sup>[14]</sup>.

Among these insurgent uprisings are the Mau Mau Guerrilla issue in Kenya, Tuareg insurgency in Mali, Sudan violence uprising and the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, only to mention a few. The activities of these insurgent groups constitute or major lacuna to economic and socio-political development of African States. According to Adebayo (2014:4), "insurgency in many parts of the continent apply various techniques to threaten the stability, corporate existence and peace enjoyed by the people and in some instances challenge the legitimacy of constituted authorities". Since independence, insurgency have plagued the country till date from region to region, the underlying reasons being deprivation, poverty, bad leadership, oppression, alienation, marginalization etc. Nigeria first experienced a full blown insurgency which metamorphosed into a civil war in 1967 as a result of the Biafra separatist movement, headed by late Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, the then Military Governor of the Eastern Region. This was partly informed by the perceived internal colonialism by the Northern and the manipulation and genocide of Igbo ethnic nationalistic after the counter coup of July 1966 by some elements believed to be Northern in Nigerian Military.

Another insurgent movement was recorded in 1966 in the then Eastern Region (Now South –South) led by Late Major Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro with his Niger Delta peoples volunteer service (NDOVS) on February 23<sup>rd</sup> who declared the Niger Delta Republic. For Boro, the long awaited salvation has been fulfilled and the Niger Delta people have

obtained our independence (cited in Tebekaeme, 1966:21) <sup>[24]</sup>. This position was held for twelve days against the forces of the Federal Government until they were subdued. It is in the above light Etekepe (2007:29) <sup>[10]</sup> opined that;

*The seed for armed struggle to press for resource control and management that was sworn by late major Isaac Adaka Boro has grown into the minds of the Niger Delta people and the federal Government is harvesting the products.*

Still in the same region in 2004, the movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta emerged with many other armed groups placing insurgent demands on the federal government. These groups led by Government Ekpemupolo Tompolo, Henry Okah, Asari Dokubo, Ateke Tom, Ebikebona Victor Ben etc unleashed terror on oil installation in the Niger Delta, kidnapping and hostage talking to press home their demand for inclusiveness and in some cases fueling passion for successions. It was however, in 2009 that the Federal Government declared Amnesty after series of dialogues.

There is clearly no gain saying the fact that the Boko Haram insurgent group is the unfair share of the group of international terrorist network ravaging Nigeria since 2002 till date. It is in this light that this paper aim to bring to limelight the activities of the Boko Haram insurgent group with the intention of expressing the challenges of combating terrorism in Nigeria.

### 2. Statement of the Problem

The literatures have demonstrated that armed insurgency is generally initiated by urban elites who are dissatisfied and frustrated with the way government had treated them and their regions or ethnic groups. They mobilize a section of

their regional or ethnic groups, engineer supporters and sympathizers, acquire arms and are often supported by foreign powers. The Boko Haram sect like any other terrorist group emerged in the above fashion.

The congregation of the people of tradition for proselytism and Jihad (Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda await Wal Jihad, known by its Hausa name Boko Haram" pronounced (Bo:ko: Haram) meaning "Western Education is a Sin", has metamorphosed into a terrorist group exacting mayhem on the Nigerian State. It is an Islamic Militant organization based in the North East States of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, with its pocket cells in Northern Cameroun, Niger Republic and the Republic of Chad (Daniel 2014:12) <sup>[7]</sup>. Therefore, its presence in this four neighboring countries has made its activities of exclusive concern to authorities. It is on the above premise the following research questions are asked;

i. What is the nature and dimensions of terrorism as an instrument in the hands of the Boko Haram insurgent movement in North Eastern Nigeria?

ii. What are the challenges of combating the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria?

This study tries to assess terrorism as a weapon in the hands of insurgents, especially the Boko Haram insurgent movement in Nigeria, and to investigate the challenges of combating the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

### 3. Insurgency and Terrorism: Concertual Clarification

Insurgency has a lot to do with terrorism, notably, "insurgency is a rebellion against authority recognized (for example an authority recognized as such by the United Nations) when those taking part in the rebellion are not recognized as belligerents". It also involves a struggle between a non ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the non ruling group use political resources and violence to push their demands.

It has to do with situation when a group of people make attempts to take control of political or even overthrow people in power forcefully. It is in line with the above that Thomas (2007:1) <sup>[25]</sup> defined insurgency as; "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow or destruction of a constituted government through the use of subversion, espionage, terrorism and armed conflict."

It can be deduced therefore that insurgency is first a movement against constituted authority in most case a National Government. Again terrorism as an act of violence is only a modus operandi of insurgent activities. This means the both concepts are not the same but are closely related. One can therefore say that "terrorism is a subset of an insurgency or an act of violence by criminals who want to strike at anyone especially a government". Thus there can be a terrorist act without any part of insurgency.

It's in line with the above assertion that the US Department of Defense (DOD, 2007) <sup>[28]</sup> defined terrorism as "the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear, intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological".

Notably while insurgents borders on attacking overthrowing regimes, establishing an autonomous national territory, causing a withdrawal of an occupying power and attaining political concessions that are unattainable through less violent means; terrorists activities may not border strictly on

overthrowing governments but may "chose to attack societies directly in order to achieve a particular end state: insurgents use ideology to target governments but terrorists target governments (or societies) to advance ideology. However, it is conceivable that a terrorist may also simultaneously be an insurgent. According to Bujra, (cited in Kporukpo 2014:14)

*The grievances that could prompt insurgency in Nigeria include being blocked from achieving political power under representation in government and administration, deliberately neglected from access to development funds, among many others.*

Taiwo (2014:3) stressed that in Nigeria, the case has been "years of economic stagnation in a country blessed with great natural resources, enough to cater for everyone, but for which a few elites preposterously accrue to themselves and their cronies, the wealth of the nation". The gravity of their actions has brought a myriad of insurgencies against the country leading to its present date, where the Boko Haram is now a hard kernel to crack.

Fear is widespread as the source of help in the fight against Boko Haram is elusive and unclear as only a few countries can help (Bartolota, 2011:4). This makes it difficult to eliminate Boko Haram. Consequently, the sect continues to grow, committing various extremist acts, such as sporadic suicide bombing and killing of innocent citizens and foreigners within the country. Recent history in Nigeria exemplifies a combustible mire of violent extremism and thriving home grown insurgencies. Nigeria has thus been a fertile ground for insurgencies born out of grievances, economic starvation, developmental deprivation, societal neglect religious radicalism and most of all ethnic chauvinism. Isaacs (2003:2) <sup>[15]</sup> opined that the

*High rate of poverty directly promote violence in Northern Nigeria, as a result, more impoverished, disenfranchised, and young devout Muslims are becoming increasingly skeptical about a system that has brought them little benefits while well serving the interests of the established political elite.*

It was also perceived by these Islamic fundamentalist that an imported system of government based on "western values" has resulted in ostensible corruption, poverty, unemployment, and constrained suppression of "true Islam in Northern part of the country. Again, the movement also embraces and advocates the propagation of and strict adherence to Islam by all and sundry regardless of anyone's personal wishes. In line with this objective the movement seeks to impose Sharia across in the Nigerian State.

One can only agree with Jurgensmeyer (2008:13) <sup>[16]</sup> when he argued that "there is an additional layer of complexity which religion can add to even conflicts that are primary about competition over territory, power and or resources". Religion here may not be the root cause of the discontent, instead, it initially may be primarily a way through which grievances are expressed and individuals mobilized.

Observing the Crises in the Northern part of Nigeria, Onuorah (2013:14) <sup>[23]</sup> noted that, "in the case of Combating terrorism, military necessity cannot be underestimated to quell terrorism given the escalating incident of terror attacks in the country". However, over reliance on the use of force on the part of government appears to be a shortcut to sustainable peace and

security in the affected region. Military action is necessary but non-military solutions that would address the underlying causes of the dissatisfaction which includes good governance and development are non-negotiable.

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this research, the structural violence theory is adopted. Its suggestion on how economic deprivation, class discrimination and societal injustice prevents citizens from reaching their full potentials, helps to place in contest the influence which socio-economic drivers exact on public support for Boko Haram which is the bane for the eradication of the insurgent group by the federal government (Akintola 2013:1).

The term “structural Violence” was coined by Johan Galtung in 1969 to “articulate the hidden violence in society built into the structure of society itself and therefore more difficult to pinpoint and eradicate. It underscores and state institutions act as indirect instigators of violence. Individual and group grievances such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, discrimination, political cum economic marginalization, can be used as mobilizing instruments by sinister groups to find support and recruitment for terrorist violence, structural violence in society causes much suffering and lead to conflict, war and genocide, while direct, physical violence gets much more attentions, the injustice that is built into almost all social systems can cause equal or greater harms. Proponents of this theory opined that “those who benefit from unjust social structures may easily ignore the harm they are doing unless they are shown in a forceful way the results of their actions on other people”. Strictly speaking, structural violence theory explores how political religious economic and cultural structures result in the occurrence of avoidable violence, most commonly seen as the deprivation of basic human needs. Structural violence theorists attempt to link personal suffering with political, social, religious and cultural choices.

The spectrum of public support for Boko Haram is representative of both passive and active elements of the Nigerian Society, Passive supporters may not make personal sacrifices in form of suicide attacks, and however, their sympathy with the activities of insurgents, as well as refusal to betray them, is a key factor that undermines the governments counter terrorism efforts. Therefore, this theory is of the view that public support, both actively and passively to the Boko Haram insurgency is weakening the fight against the scourge.

For instance, former president Goodluck Jonathan, observed that some sympathizers of Boko Haram were not only members of the executive, legislature and Judiciary arms of the government, but also the country’s armed forces. Again, evidence of this sympathy and solidarity was the appointment of the then Boko Haram leader Mohamed Yusuf as a representative in Nigeria’s supreme Council of Sharia. Other instances also abound (Sun 2014:1) [26].

#### 5. Some Reasons for Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria

Scholars and analysts alike have upheld that poverty, long standing economic disparities, unemployment, bad leadership among others are Key factors underlying, the crises. However the complex nature of the sect’s modus operandi (alien to the Nigerian state) has caused some observer to characterize Boko Haram’s aggression as violent extremism beyond a

domestic agenda, let’s examine some of these reasons.

- 1. Colonialism:** The legacies of colonialism constitute the crux of the challenges facing the country. The “divided and rule” policy employed and the “unhealthy marriage” of seemingly incompatible partner halted the advancement of development across the regions even though there were various opportunities of intermingling. Nigeria today is drastically divided along ethnic lines due to the colonial influences greed for power (Osaghae, 1998:8) [20].
- 2. Religion:** this factor has been a major issue underlying sectarian consciousness, tension and radicalization (Alao, 2010:12). Nearly every decade of Nigeria’s recent history is characterized with violence and conflicts that have religious undertones. Prior to Nigeria’s civil war, thousands of Southern Igbos of Christian faith were killed by Northern Hausas (Muslims) in 1966. In 1991, over 200 mostly southern Christians lost their lives while over 20 churches were burnt by Muslims reacting to news of a planned visit by German Christian evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke to Northern Nigeria. The last two decades ushered Nigeria into the bloodiest violent uprising in which thousands died as a result of Muslim-Christians clash and terrorist violence instigated by Boko Haram. Thus, religion in some cases appears to be the language of politics exploited by both state and non-state actors towards parochial gains.
- 3. Unemployment:** The memberships of Boko Haram are basically dawning from the unemployed and dissatisfied youths who are former Almajoris (street children) in Northern Nigeria. Most of them survive from street begging. There is therefore no gain saying that Boko Haram offers a means of livelihood to the almajoris for being members. These poor almajoris are exploited by rich elite who are also members and sponsors of the Boko Haram sect. indeed, Boko Haram is not faceless. The sect is alleged to have over 280,000 members across the 19 states of Northern Nigeria, Niger Republic, Chad and Sudan (Onuoha 2012:135; Oyegbileetal 2009:67) [22]. Notably not all the members if the sect are poor, some a very rich.
- 4. Illiteracy:** the former minister of education, Hon. Nyesoma Wike once observed that the North is the most educationally backward region with over 10million child-beggars on the street. Perhaps this informed the former president Goodluck Jonathan’s idea of building 400 almajoris (street children) schools with public funds in the North. There is no need preaching how easy it is mobilizing such army of illiterate beggars into terrorism. Professor Ibrahim Gambari, special adviser to the secretary General of the United Nations observed that “if you take the education of the girl child as indicator, you see similar pattern of inequality with the South-East having an enrolment rate of 85%, South West having an enrolment rate of 85%, South –South 75%, while the North East 20% and North West 25%. This trend clearly signals dangers for the Nigerian State. According to the African Development Information (2013) the North Eastern region has 52.4% of uneducated makes and 61.1% of uneducated females resulting in an average of 56.75% illiteracy. Illiterate people are more likely to be unemployed and poor vice verse.
- 5. Poverty:** the high rate of poverty in the Nigeria directly

promotes terrorism. Many impoverished young devout Muslims are increasingly skeptical and frustrated by the system they had expected much from yet gets little or nothing, they consequently relapse to violence and terrorism. Weakened institutions with insignificant democratic philosophy have contributed to poor governance which stifles development process. An estimated 100million citizens are living one less than one dollar a day in the North (Campbell and Bunche, 2011). The table below graphically illustrates the above reality.

**Table 1:** Nigeria’s Population Living in Poverty

Year	Population in poverty	Total population
1980 25%	17.1 Million	68.4 million
1985 44%	34.7 million	78.4 million
1992 38%	39.2 million	95.7 million
1996 72%	67.1 million	106.7 million
2004 91%	68.7 million	132.6 million
2010 72%	112.47 million	156.05 million

Source: Nigeria’s national Bureau of statistics (2012).

The table above demonstrates a steady in of the total number of people living in poverty. As of 2010, the percentage of Nigerians living in poverty has risen to 72% of the total population. Although poverty is generally pervasive in most developing countries, evidence in research shows it is not the leading cause of violent extremism and insurgency in Nigeria.

6. **Weak State Structure:** a weak state is that which is characterized by weak institutions, low capacity of independent analyses of its own development problems along with designing adequate strategies, low capacity to collect taxes and spend government revenue in planned manner and is unable to provide adequate public goods (Migdal 1998). States that are unable to provide adequate public services and police her territory are vulnerable to violent extremisms. The Nigerian state maybe one piece but her people, especially the Northern are not at peace. The increasing spate of violence threatens the oneness of the Nigerian state.
7. **Political Exclusion:** one major reason for the Boko Haram rascality (is mentioned elsewhere) is the political exclusion. Here the political leadership in the North as viewed as an instrument of oppression, deprivation and exploitation and wants to establish a political system of equity based on the strict principals of Sharia. These are some of the Key reasons for the uprising.

**6. The Nature of Operations of Boko Haram Insurgency.**

The modus operand of the Boko Haram sect fashioned after the Taliban in Afghanistan has made some analysts conclude that its member vent therefore training. Others are of the view that Boko Haram modeled itself after the Taliban simply to acknowledge its source of inspiration. For some, it was meant to attract sympathy and support the Taliban and related groups.

Another view was that it could be that the links exists in reality. The first arrest of Boko Haram members (including its former leader, Yusuf Mohammed) revealed the link between the sect and Al-Qalda terrorist group and how the members were trained in the act of terrorism in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Pakistan and Irag. Items recovered in maps and

diagrams of government establishment buildings in Abuja (Dayibo, 2009:19). There can hardly be a week without a major attack flooding the both the print and electronic media with dangerous headlines like “fifty killed in another Boko Haram attack” Boko Haram chief of Army staffs relocates to North East” etc.

Over the years, major attacks have been made with immeasurable destruction on Government buildings, churches, markets, media outlets, Police stations, schools, mosques etc with deaths running into thousands. The table below gives a graphical illustration the dastardly acts

**Boko Haram Attacks From 2016 – Early 2017**

- **January 27/28** - Weekend rampage with a total death toll of at least 65 people and twice that number injured. Affected areas were various villages in Dalori and outskirts of Maiduguri, the capital of Borno Province. Residents say the death toll was even higher, with as many as 100 dead.
- **19 February** - Two suicide bombers kill at least 24 people and injured 112 others at a market in northern Cameroon.
- **27 February** - At least 92 militants were killed in a joint operation carried out by Cameroon's army and Nigerian Army and over 850 villagers were freed in the Nigerian village of Kumshe which is close the border with Cameroon.
- **March 16** - Three female suicide bombers killed 22 people and injured 18 in Umarari Village, on the outskirts of Maiduguri, Borno State.
- **4 June** - At least 32 people were killed and 67 injured after hundreds of members of Boko Haram attacked the city of Bosso and area in Niger. Many places in the city were torched and shot at. There were also several deaths and injuries of the attacker's side.
- **5 June** - A woman was stabbed to death by two men after allegedly insulting the Prophet Muhammad in Kano, Nigeria.
- **6 June** - Ten fishermen are cut down by Boko Haram in Darak, Cameroon.
- **12 June** - 4 women were killed by 14 assailants after being dragged outside of their homes in Mairari, Nigeria.
- **14 June** - 10 fishermen were killed by militants, and soon after 42 more were killed by Boko Haram at Lake Chad in Cameroon.
- **15 June** - At least 4 females were killed and several abducted after many Boko Haram militants attacked a village. Some sources say the number of those kidnapped is four. Many houses were burned down and shot at. Vigilantes followed the attackers and rescued one of the kidnapped after a gun battle. A vigilante was injured in Kau-Tuva, Nigeria.
- **17 June** – At least 24 people were killed and at least 10 injured after Boko Haram militants attacked a funeral Kuda, Nigeria
- 7 people were killed and 12 injured after an attack on policemen in Ghafam, Niger.
- **20 June** - At least 2 people were killed after several Boko Haram militants attacked Wumbi in Nigeria the second attack there by them in a week.
- **25 June** - At least 4 civilians were killed in another in a series of attacks by Boko Haram militants in Gouzoudoum

- and Kaldjiwa, Cameroon
- **26 June** - The Nigerian army claimed they had rescued 5,000 people, mostly women and children, from four remote villages in north east Borno state (Zangebe, Maiwa, Algaiti and Mainar) and killed six Boko Haram fighters. A civilian JTF member was also killed. The army also claimed to have killed two more Boko Haram fighters in operations at 11 other villages.
  - **30 June** - At least 15 people were killed and dozens injured after a suicide bombing that targeted a mosque and a video club in Djakana, Cameroon.
  - **4 July** - Two people were injured when Nigerian troops shot and killed three female suicide bombers who were targeting internally displaced persons in northern Nigeria. The injuries came as a result of one of the suicide bombers vest exploding.
  - **8 July** - At least 9 people were killed and "dozens" injured after a suicide bombing attack on a Mosque in Borno. There was also a second suicide bombing at another Mosque.
  - **9 July** - Boko Haram militants raided a town with guns and explosives, killing 7 people and damaging buildings.
  - **12 July** - A Boko Haram attack in Borno State was repelled by the Nigerian Army resulting in the deaths of 25 militants. Two soldiers were killed during the attack.
  - **1 August** - Nine Christian villagers were cut down by Muslim terrorists, who also burned three churches.
  - **10 August** - Boko Haram militants burned 60 houses, shot four villagers dead, and abducted one child.
  - **19 August** - The Nigerian military claimed Abubakar Shekau (leader of Boko Haram) was fatally wounded and about 300 militants including three senior Boko Haram commanders (Abubakar Mubi, Malam Nuhu and Malam Hamman) killed in an air raid on the village of Taye in Borno State.
  - **20 August** - Boko Haram killed 7 people with machine guns, before abducting dozens more, in the village of Kuruburu
  - **21 August** - A Boko Haram attack on a village called Kuburwva (between Chibok and Damboa, Borno State) was reported to have left at least 11 people dead. Women were raped.
  - At least 3 people killed and another 24 were injured when a suicide bombing attack a market in the city of Mora.
  - **27 August** - A land mine planted by Islamist group Boko Haram killed four Chadian soldiers on patrol near Chad's border with Niger on Saturday, security sources said.
  - **4 September** - Camel-riding assailants killed 5 people and wounded several more before being repelled by local militias. Houses were also burned.
  - **14 September** - At least 30 Boko Haram militants and 5 Niger Armed Forces soldiers are killed in clashes near the village of Toumour in Niger's southeast Diffa Region.
  - **17 September** - Chad and Nigeri soldiers killed at least 38 insurgents from terrorist group Boko Haram in Niger. 2 soldiers were also injured in the operation.
  - **18 September** - The Nigerian army has dispelled reports that 8 people were killed in an attack by Boko Haram fighters in Borno state.
  - **19 September** - members of Boko Harem claimed that they killed 40 Nigerian soldiers battling in Malam Fatori
  - **22 September** - Three civilians were killed in Cameroon's Far North in Djakana when a vigilante tried to stop a suicide bomber whose explosive device detonated.
  - **25 September** – Four soldiers and civilian JTF members died in Borno towns of Miyanti and Dareljamal in Kaduna State after an ambush on the army by the insurgents.
  - Boko Haram members attacked a Chad National Army position near the border with Niger. They killed four soldiers and injured six others. Seven terrorist were killed too.
  - **26 September** – The Nigerian Army lost 1 officer and 3 soldiers to a landmine and ambush by the Boko Haram on Sunday.
  - The Nigerian Army has suffered fresh setbacks in the fight against terrorists and gunmen with several soldiers and support staff killed during separate incidents in Borno and Kaduna States.
  - **11 October** - 5 persons were said to have been killed in an attack by suspected members of the Boko Haram on a village in Borno State.
  - **12 October** - 18 people have been reported dead in an explosion which occurred in Maiduguri, Borno State.
  - **17 October** - Boko Haram on Monday claimed it killed 20 soldiers in northeastern Nigeria.
  - **24 October** - 2 suicide bombers killed three people in Cameroon. The first of those actions was carried out by a woman causing wounds to five people in the Far North Region. The other attack was carried out in the northern locality of Waramide and 3 people were killed.
  - **29 October** - 2 suicide bombers killed at least eight people on Saturday in the northeastern Nigerian city of Maiduguri
  - **1 November** - Nine civilians were killed when a car bomb exploded near a military checkpoint in Northern Nigeria in Gubio.
  - **5 November** - An army officer and six soldiers were killed by Boko Haram militants in a gun battle in Borno State, Nigeria.
  - **8 November** – Gunmen have killed more than 30 gold miners in a remote area of northern Nigeria in Maru.
  - 4 people have died and 6 others injured after 2 suicide bombers exploded improvised explosive in Maiduguri device.
  - At least five Nigerien soldiers were killed and three others injured in a terrorist attack in Banibagou, Niger.
  - Two civilians were killed; three soldiers injured and 100 houses were set on fire when Boko Haram fighters raided a village in Far North Region, in Cameroon.
  - **11 November** - Two persons were killed today in an early morning bomb blast in the Umulari area of Maiduguri.
  - **12 November** - 240 Boko Haram fighters surrender in south-west Chad.
  - **16 November** - One other soldier died and eight others were injured in the Boko Haram ambush that led to the death of B.U. Umar, a lieutenant colonel.
  - **18 November** - Boko Haram suicide bombers caused the death of six persons, injuring many more in multiple bomb blasts.
  - **22 November** - Six soldiers were killed in an attack on a military base, while the surrounding houses were burned. On the other hand, a woman with explosives tried to enter an army post next to the Kolofata camp on Monday, but was shot down.

- **23 November** - At least two persons were killed in a suicide bomb attack in Maiduguri
- **24 November** - Two young female suicide bombers attacked a town in Cameroon's far north region early on Thursday. One of the bombs exploded in Mora, killing the girl and wounding at least four people. Locals killed the second bomber before her device detonated.
- **28 November** - Soldiers killed at least 30 insurgents from terrorist group Boko Haram.
- **9 December** - Madagali suicide bombings: Officials say 2 explosions in Madagali a town Nigeria have killed 57 and injured 177
- **11 December** - 3 people were killed in two suicide bombing attack in Maiduguri..
- **13 December** - Boko Haram militants attacked a military base in Borno state village of Kamuya leaving scores dead.
- **17 December** - A member of the civilian Joint Task Force (JTF) was injured during operations in Sambisa Forest against Boko Haram.
- **23 December** - President Muhammadu Buhari has said that The Nigerian army has driven Boko Haram militants from the last camp in their Sambisa forest stronghold and that the terrorists are on the run.
- **25 December** - A suicide bombing attack left at least 2 people dead and injured 5 others in Mora, Cameroon
- **26 December** - 2 suicide bombers struck in Maiduguri. Only one of the attackers was said to have died, as the other was reportedly captured before striking.
- **28 December** - 31 Boko Haram fighters surrender in southern Niger.
- **4 January 2017**- Three girl suicide bombers were killed while attempting to detonate their vests at market in the northeastern Nigerian city of Madagali. Local officials blamed Boko Haram for the attempted attack.
- **7 January 2017** - Boko Haram attacked a Nigerian army base in Buni Yadi of Yobe state, killing at least five soldiers. Fifteen Boko Haram militants were also killed after the army launched retaliatory strikes, a military source said.
- **13 January 2017** - Three Nigerian soldiers were killed and 27 others injured as troops fought off an attack on their position by Boko Haram militants in Kangarwa village, Borno state. Ten Boko Haram militants were also killed in the attack. Another four suicide bombers killed at least nine people Madagali town, including themselves.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_Boko\\_Haram\\_insurgency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Boko_Haram_insurgency)

The above data on Boko Haram attacks did not include earlier attacks from 2009 to 2015 because of the magnitude of the reports. However the earlier attacks are even more regular which claimed several thousands of souls not to talk of the material loss.

The implications of the above trend are so grievous to the Nigerian State and Africa in general. It has resulted in the near total collapse of economic activities. Clearly nobody wants to invest in an unsecured environment. The cost of Boko Haram attack runs into trillions coupled with thousands of lives lost. There is therefore no free movement, investors withdraw their investments, abuse of power by initiating military brutality on civilians, frustration fear and displacement, exemplified in the growing number of IDPs

with thousands of people posing serious environmental and health treat, defacing Nigerians and Africans in the international community, religious unrest and political instability. Funds meant for development are diverted and voted for security purposes.

## 7. Combating Boko Haram Insurgency: The Challenges.

### i) Public support

There is no gain saying that the sect is supported by top politicians and businessmen alike. The associates of Yusuf Mohammed, Alhaji Biyi Foi who was appointed and commissioner of Religious Affairs in Borno State in a glaring example of this situation. While late Boko Haram leader Yusuf Mohammed was executed the evidence of popular (and political) support for Yusuf was reflected in his position as a Borno state representative in Nigeria's Supreme Council of Sharia. Northern Nigerians who lent support to Boko Haram in the part past are suspected to have done so partly because they believed in the group's radical ideology. Again, this is not to say that there is no foreign support.

A major setback for the fight against the dreaded Islamic sect was the move by the Northern elders Forum (NEF) to drag the former chief of Army staff Lt. Gen. Azubuike Ihejirika to the international criminal court of Justice on grounds of extra judicial killings of civilians who were suspected Boko Haram terrorists on 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2014, just 24 hours after he left office. This move distracted both the federal government and the military.

### ii) Religious Influence

According to Akinola cited Olojo (2013:8) <sup>[3, 21]</sup> religion is not the cause of religious conflict, however, Seul (cited in A. Olojo, 2013) <sup>[21]</sup> observed when that when conflicts involving one or more religious groups occur, the combatants may be embolden by a sense of religious defined identity and their traditions may provide a form of symbolic, moral and institutional basis that can be used to mobilize the group and legitimate its cause. Clearly while religion is essentially for good, Boko Haram employed it a tool to express high levels of negativity. This is the basis for the call for a Sharia state in Nigeria. It is on the above premise that many churches have been attacked by the sect. however some Muslims have also been victims of the sect's attacks.

The activities of the sect clearly negate section 10 of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria which states that "the Government of the Federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as state religion". The role of religion in the Boko Haram insurgency cannot be over emphasized.

### iii) Poverty and Unemployment

Economic deprivation has played a significant role in stimulating the drive towards violent extremism recruitment and support for Boko Haram. Many youths tends to relapse into terrorism as a means of survival. The frustration of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment can be used as mobilizing instrument by groups to find support and recruits for terrorist's violence. Idle, they are easily recruited by anti-state and militia groups (Crisis Group, 2014:2).

In May 2013, the Federal Government of Nigeria released a number of women and youths previously detained as relatives of suspected Boko Haram members. Among the youth were individuals who confessed to accepting payments of 5,000

Nigerian Naira with Kegs of fuel to set schools ablaze in Maiduguri, Borno state. This is indicative of the economic realities experienced by Nigerian youths. Although, schooling note that the link between poverty, illiteracy and terrorism is indirect and complicated the high number of youths under the quagmire of poverty and illiteracy intensifies the link. It is perhaps the need to check the above menace that the government of Good luck Jonathan's administration built a good number of Almigri Schools. Except these inequalities are checked, we may be expecting Armageddon.

#### iv) Political Undertones

It is no longer news that some political elements are supersavers and beneficiaries of the Boko Haram crises. While already popular Yusuf rose too much greater prominence when he reported formed an alliance with Ali Modu Sheriff a politician and wealthy businessman allegedly also generated resources for Yusuf and his followers. Sheriff and his associates have denied any alliance with Yusuf and accused the people's democratic party of creating Boko Haram (Marc-antone, 2014:40). It is often vague to imagine the Boko Haram as no political and international connection.

#### v) Government Policies

Government has tried with very minimal success to quell terrorism since early 2010. Although believed that the violence would wither away, sustained attacks however ushered in more sober responses. In other to check this menace, defense budgets have been increased from 100billion naira in 2010 to 927billion naira in 2011 and 1 trillion naira in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 and even more in 2016, much of these increases were to combat the Boko Haram. Other measures include boosting the military strengthening anti-terrorism legislation, declaring state of emergency and launching military offensives.

#### vi) Move for Dialogue

Several attempts have been made by the government to dialogue with the sect but unsuccessful. The report submitted by the Usman Galtimari on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2011 recommended talks and amnesty for sect members who renounce violence after a series of studies. All the peace moves in 2011 headed by former president Olesegun Obasanjo, the April 17, 2013, 26 member amnesty committee headed by Kabiru Tanimu Turaki yielded no positive results. This is because Boko Haram dismissed the report as a farce (Daily trust, 2013:6).

### 8. The Prospect of Combating Insurgency and Terrorism

It will not be correct however to look at the future as been totally bleak. There are also on-going individual initiatives that may indicate some form of possible harmony between different religious and ethnic groups in the country. One extremely successful initiative is the one being organized by Pastor James Wuye and Imam Mohammed Ashafa, who were respectively leaders of the youth wings of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Islamic Society of Nigeria (ISN). Both have been violent radicals in the propagation of their faith and both had personal tragedies of the roles they played in the forceful propagation of their faith. Apart from losing members of their families in riots, Wuye, in fact lost one of his arms. Amidst trepidation, the two of them

came together to form the "Pastor and Imam Project", which has won several national and global awards.

Pastor Wuye noted in a February 2001 interview:

*We are now like husbands and wife that must not divorce: if we divorce, our children will suffer and our children in this context are the Nigerian Youths who we must not allow to suffer. So we have vowed to stay together. (falola, 2009)*

There are also people preaching international harmony. A popular Muslim columnist in one of Nigeria's most important newspapers, the Guardian, Muhammed Enbeay pointed out that during his last pilgrimage to Mecca, shortly before his death, the Holy Prophet Muhammad addressed a vast concourse of Muslims. His farewell address reads among other things:

*O you men! Your God is one and your ancestor is one. An Arab possesses no superiority over a non-Arab. A white is in no way superior to a red, nor for that matter a red to white, but only to the extent to which he discharges his duty to God and man. The most honored among you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you" (Embeay; 2008)*

All this, thus gives a glimmer of hope for harmonious inter-group and religious relations in Nigeria. We must not also lose hope for a better Nigeria where, despite the economic disparity between North and the South, the educational disparity, ethnic differences and religious alignments, Nigerians must begin to see themselves as partners in the Nigerian project and Dream. A country where peace will be enjoyed in all spheres of the country, from the North to the South, East to West, Where a president will be seen as a Nigerian President and not a sectional president. Where Legislatures will not attach Regional, Ethnic or Religious sentiments to law making, but will consider the entity, NIGERIA above all, a judiciary that will dispense justice without fear or favour, all this is possible in a One Nigeria, with a true federalism structure and the rule of law.

### 9. Conclusion

This paper concludes that the Boko Haram sect is a terror entity and has constituted itself into a nightmare for the Nigerian State.

That it is a radical Islamic organization based in the North-Eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, with its pocket cells spread across Northern Nigeria, Northern Cameroun, the Republic of Niger, and the Republic of Chad.

That the support for it includes both passive and active, civilians, politicians and external support, with the aim of undermining the political administration of the day and establishing an Islamic Caliphate. The Federal Government and its security forces have not been able to put the activities of the insurgents under arrest.

That the Federal Government has explored various means to put an end to the activities of, including dialogue, amnesty, military operations, civilian vigilantes, international military co-operation and preaching non-violence across the country.

### 10. Recommendations

1) To check the activities of insurgent terrorists, the followings are recommended;

- 2) Strict adherence to inclusive democratic principles.
- 3) Discontinue heavy-handed military and police methods that risk pushing yet more restless, jobless and frustrated youths into violence and extremism.
- 4) Free up the necessary national resources to address sustained economic hardship, rising inequality and social frustration by expanding and strengthening the anti – corruption agencies, and ensure they work effectively at state and local levels, free of political manipulation.
- 5) Introduce employment scheme and encourage massive education and agriculture.

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