

## Socio-pragmatic analysis of Boko Haram's language of insurgency in Nigeria: Implications for global peace and security

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### Abstract

This paper examines Boko Haram's language of insurgency and its socio-pragmatic implications in the Nigerian and global contexts. Since 2009, this sect has continued to employ periodic statements intended to actualise its sectarian objectives. In this regard, the paper seeks to delineate the communicative character of the language of insurgency and underscore its socio-pragmatic imports as revealed in the speech acts of the sect's spokespersons. From the theoretical perspective of socio-pragmatics, it analyses the social functions of Boko Haram's language within the Nigerian context. Specifically, it relies on the Austinian notion of 'speech act' to account for the communicative activity of Boko Haram in relation to the illocutionary force of such utterances. The picture, which emerges from the analysis, indicates that the consistent use of carefully chosen words conjures a frightening sense of Armageddon, which is certain to befall Nigeria if the sect's demands are not met. The perlocutionary act has engendered in Nigerians a forlorn sense of fear on the one hand, and apparent helplessness of the Nigerian government on the other. The paper avers that the parlous security situation summons on the part of Jonathan administration a renewed kind of commitment to a radical overhaul of the nation's security agencies with a view to repositioning them to effectively grapple with the emergent security challenges.

### 1. Introduction

The world generally has witnessed an upsurge of terrorism in the recent times. The resurgence of such terrorism-related activities has tended to threaten global peace and induce fear in the minds of the people. In Nigeria, the upsurge of insurgency engineered by Boko Haram has brought about a climate of fear and engendered a forlorn sense of hopelessness and loss. "Boko Haram," which in the local Hausa language means "Western education is forbidden," officially calls itself "Jama'atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda'wati wal Jihad" - جماعة أهل السنة للدعوة والجهاد - i.e. "people committed to the propagation of the Prophet's teachings and jihad." The sect's ultimate ambition is the establishment of a fully Islamic state in Nigeria, including the implementation of criminal sharia courts across the country.



Boko Haram

Abubakar Shekau

The Security Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security had a hearing on emerging threats to the United States posed by Boko Haram. In its Special Report, dated 30 November, 2011, the Security Subcommittee *inter alia*, traced the origins and history of Boko Haram. Founded in the mid-1990s as a religious study group, Boko Haram did not begin to transform into the insurgent group it is today until Mohammed Yusuf assumed control as the leader. From 2002-2009, Boko Haram engaged in low-level conflict with local police forces and non-compliant villagers. In 2009, a crackdown on Boko Haram members from Nigerian police forces in Borno state erupted into fighting. On 30 July, 2009, the battle of Maiduguri ended when Nigerian security forces captured and killed Boko Haram's leader, Mohammed Yusuf, in what human rights groups have deemed an extrajudicial killing.

The death of Yusuf lent extra verve and virulence to Boko Haram's insurgency as the sect under the leadership of Imam Abubakar Shekau re-emerged radically more violent and determined to seek vengeance against the Nigerian state. Human Rights Watch (HRW) had claimed in its Report of October, 2012 that violence

linked to Boko Haram's insurgency is believed to have left over 2,800 people dead since 2009, including killings by the security forces. According to the latest ranking of Global Terrorism Index by the Institute for Economics and Peace, Nigeria is the 7<sup>th</sup> most terrorized country in the world, having recorded 168 incidents of terrorism in 2011, from which 437 persons died, 614 persons sustained injuries and 33 properties were destroyed.

Our intentions in this paper are to (i) do a three-level analysis of the statements of Boko Haram as speech acts; (ii) examine the extent to which the upsurge of insurgency has fostered a climate of fear, anxiety, and insecurity in Nigeria; (iii) encourage the current political leadership of Nigeria to dispense with its clueless, knee-jerk, woolly, and automated promises to 'fish out the culprits' and adopt a more innovative response to the security challenges. If anything, Nigerians are desperately desirous of incontrovertible evidence that there is a government in charge, one willing and able to provide security for their lives and property.

## 2. Framework

Socio-pragmatics refers to the way conditions of language use derive from the social situation. It involves the study of the linguistic forms (i.e. the abstract phonological and/or grammatical characterization of language) and the social functions of language (the role language plays in the context of the society or the individual). In Pragmatics, notes Krisagbedo (2010: 17-18), the analyst seeks to determine the functions, which language serves in the expression of 'content' or what Brown and Yule (1983) refer to as *transactional* and the functions which language serves in expressing social relations and personal attitudes, which they term *interactional*. In almost all the cases, including those presented by Levinson (1983) and Leech (1983), analysts place great emphasis on the users and the contexts of use thus providing the rubrics on which the development of pragmatics rests.

Socio-pragmatics, as a method of analysis, is tangentially connected to the concept of 'speech act' enunciated by J. L. Austin (1962). Speech Act Theory (SAT) analyses the role of utterances in relation to the behavior of speakers and hearers in interpersonal communication. It is a communicative activity defined with reference to the intentions of the speaker while speaking (or the illocutionary force of his utterances). Although Austin's theory has been a subject of various modifications, extensions, and classifications, by Searle (1969, 1979); Allan (1986); Grice (1975); Bach & Harnish (1979); Leech (1980, 1983) and Brown & Yule (1983), indicating obvious lack of consensus among the scholars, Krisagbedo (2010: 17) avers that three main types have been identified as common to them, that is, locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act.

In essence, Austin's SAT posits that the action performed when an utterance is produced can be analysed on three different levels. It distinguishes the act of saying something, what one does in saying it, and what one does by saying it, and dubs these the 'locutionary', the 'illocutionary' and the 'perlocutionary' act, respectively. Krisagbedo (21) explains these three levels further by noting that first level is 'what is said', the form of the words uttered, the act of saying something, which is known as the **locutionary act**. The second level is what the speaker is doing with his word, the function of the words, the specific purpose that the speaker has in mind, which is called **illocutionary force**. The third level of analysis is the result of the words, known as the **perlocutionary effect**. This is what is done by uttering the words, that is, the effect on the hearer, the hearer's reaction. For speech acts to be appropriately and successfully performed, certain **felicity conditions** have to be met. Such action, according to Austin, must be carried out completely, and the persons must have the right intention. In other words, an illocutionary act can be said to be *felicitous* or *infelicitous* depending on how such an act meets Austin's felicity conditions - sincerity condition, preparatory condition, executive condition, fulfillment condition.

In this paper, we subject the periodic statements of Abu Qaqa and Abubakar Shekau (Boko Haram's spokesperson and spiritual leader respectively) to the three-level analysis specified by Austin's SAT. In other words, we shall examine the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, i.e. the utterances, what they do with the utterances, and the effect of the utterances on the social context of Nigeria.

## 3. Textual Analysis

In this section, we present the data elicited from the statements of Boko Haram sect and analyse the three aspects, that is, the act of uttering them, the actualization of the intended actions, and the effects of such actions.

### 3.1 Locutionary Acts

Here, we present a sample of press statements of Abu Qaqa and Abubakar Shekau as representing the locutionary acts of Boko Haram.

- (i) This is the time for all of us to rise and change this government and give way to Muslim government...The Nigerian state and Christians are our enemies and we will be launching attacks on the Nigerian state and its security apparatus as well as churches until we achieve our goal of establishing an Islamic state in place of the secular state... Imam Muhammad Abubakar Shekau

(ii) More attacks are on the way, and by the will of Allah we will have unfettered access to wherever we want to attack. We have more than 100 men who are willing to lay down their lives for the cause of Allah...Abu Qaqa

(iii) "Unless urgent steps are taken, the group will launch endless and violent attacks on Kano and its environs because of arbitrary arrest and persecution of his members."...Imam Muhammad Abubakar Shekau

(iv) This is an open message to the amir of Sokoto Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III...What happened in Kano will be inevitable in Sokoto unless you intervene and ensure the immediate and unconditional release of our members who were specifically arrested in the city of Sokoto...We will consider negotiation only when we have brought the government to their knees...Once we see that things are being done according to the dictates of Allah, and our members are released [from prison], we will only put aside our arms – but we will not lay them down. You don't put down your arms in Islam, you only put them aside...Shekau

(v) I am not against anyone, but if Allah asks me to kill someone, I will kill him and I will enjoy killing him like I am killing a chicken...Shekau

(vi) Negotiations suggested by President Goodluck Jonathan between us and the government will not happen. He's lying. He cannot do it...If Jonathan does not repent as a Muslim, even if I die myself, Jonathan's going to see. He's looking at me like I'm nobody, but he'll see"...Shekau

(vii) You Jonathan cannot stop us like you boasted; instead we will devour you in the three months like you are boasting. If death is your worldly gain, for us, it is eternal victory to die working for Allah. Our joy is to die in Jihad for Allah against infidels like you...You are proud of your killing us and arresting us...Allah has told us in the Koran not to be discouraged, not to be frightened and not to be downcast because we are victorious...Shekau

The foregoing represents archetypal speech acts that are quite characteristic of typical Islamist fundamentalists. Extremists cast in the sectarian mould of Boko Haram adhere strictly to the teachings of such radical scholars as Taqi al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiya (1263-1328) Muhammad ibn 'Abdul Wahhab an-Najdi (1703-92), Syed Abul A'la Maududi (1903-79) who argue that the objective of Islamic jihad is to eliminate the rule of an un-Islamic system and establish in its stead an Islamic system of state rule. Sayyid Qutb (1906–66), an influential Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood ideologue, said:

It is not the function of Islam to compromise the concepts of Jahiliya [pre-Islamic ignorance or barbarism extended to the present day] which are current in the world or to coexist in the same land together with a jahili (barbaric) system. Jahiliya, to whatever period it belongs, is jahiliya; that is, deviation from the worship of one Allah and the way of life prescribed by Allah.

The same thread of ideological fixation driven by religious zealotry runs through the Charter of the Palestinian Islamist sect, the *Hamas*. For instance, Article III provisions state thus: "In all, they fear God and raise the banner of jihad in the face of the oppressors, so that they would rid the land and the people of their uncleanness, vileness, and evils." Article VIII reads: "God is its target, the Prophet is its model, the Qur'an its constitution: Jihad is its path, and death for the sake of God is the loftiest of its wishes." This explains the proclamation of Mawlana abul Ala Mawdudi, founder of Pakistan's Fundamentalist Movement:

Islam is a revolutionary faith that comes to destroy any government made by man. Islam doesn't look for a nation to be in better condition than another nation. Islam doesn't care about the land or who own the land. The goal of Islam is to rule the entire world and submit all of mankind to the faith of Islam. Any nation or power in this world that tries to get in the way of that goal, Islam will fight and destroy.

This is in tandem with the Qu'ranic injunction to Muslims in Sura 9: 123: "O ye who believe! Fight those of the disbelievers who are near to you, and let them find harshness in you, and know that Allah is with those who keep their duty". In Sura 48: 29, the injunction says: "Mohammed is God's apostle. Those who follow him are ruthless to the unbelievers but merciful to one another." These Qu'ranic teachings ably complemented by fiery doctrinal proclamations of iconic Muslim leaders of extremist extraction suffice to justify such locutionary acts by Boko Haram adherents.

From the sample of locutionary acts, we discern the various intentions of Boko Haram, which include Islamisation of Nigeria, combative readiness to wage armed insurgency against the Nigerian state, planned attack on Kano and the Caliphate, orgiastic predilection for blood-letting, and zero tolerance for negotiation with the

Nigerian government. In the next section, we discuss the illocutionary acts of Boko Haram, that is, the actualization of these intentions.

### 3.2. Illocutionary acts of Boko Haram

Here, we examine the series of actions, which Boko Haram operatives perform through the instrumentality of those locutionary acts. In this regard, we list the timeline of these illocutionary acts in chronological order as they underscore the intentions of the speech acts aforementioned. On July 26, 2009, the Boko Haram sect members launched an attack against a police station in Bauchi state, resulting in the death of 39 its members, two police officers, and one soldier. In 2010, Boko Haram re-emerged radically more violent and determined to seek vengeance against the Nigerian state for executing its leader, Mohammed Yusuf on by the Nigerian security forces on 30 July, 2009. Under the leadership of Imam Abubakar Shekau, who claimed to have assumed control of the sect following the death of Mohammed Yusuf, Boko Haram militants carried out violent operations against government targets in the north. The most notable include an assault on a Maiduguri prison that resulted in the release of 700 prisoners, including Boko Haram members, and a bombing in the city of Jos that killed more than 80 people.

On 16, June 2011, Boko Haram militants bombed the police headquarters in Abuja, claiming at least two lives. According to Nwosu *et. al.* (2011), "the first case of suicide bombing was reported by the police Thursday as the Inspector General of the Police Hafiz Ringim narrowly escaped what could have been an attack on him at Force Headquarters in Abuja." As Agbedo (2013) observed, this was sequel to the statement credited to the Inspector General of Police, Hafiz Ringim, who while in Maiduguri, Borno State capital, was quoted to have said the days of the Boko Haram were numbered, threatening to deal with the sect. Incidentally, the IGP appeared to have been overconfident to speak too soon. Ironically, the days of the nation's number one cop were almost over Thursday as the fundamentalist group came for him, only missing him narrowly. Two months later, precisely on 28 August, 2011, Boko Haram carried out another suicide attack against the Abuja U.N. headquarters claiming 23 lives. According to Marama (2011), the group's spokesman, Abu Qaqa, said it attacked the United Nations (UN) building in Abuja because United States and the UN are supporting the Federal Government to persecute Muslims in Nigeria. Qaqa said the sect considered the US, the UN and the Nigerian government as common enemies and would continue to attack them because they are infringing on the rights of the Muslims. His words:

Though the wisdom of Allah, we have launched the attack with absolute precision. "The attack was carefully scripted and executed. We have said it several times that the UN is one of our prime targets. More attacks are on the way, and by the will of Allah we will have unfettered access to wherever we want to attack. We have more than 100 men who are willing to lay down their lives for the cause of Allah.

In November 2011, the group staged one of its deadliest attacks in Maiduguri as well as Yobe's Damaturu and Potiskum, targeting churches, mosques, banks, and police stations. According to Joel (2011), the dreaded sect during the operation bombed the state Police Headquarters along Gujba road and some buildings at the 300 housing units along Maiduguri road where the anti-terrorism operatives of the Joint Task Force (JTF) have their offices. A *Compass* news report account (11 November, 2011) notes that they stormed Damaturu like a swarm of bees, and at the end of their four-hour rampage, some 150 people had been killed – at least 130 of them Christians, according to church sources. Continuing, Agbedo noted that more than 200 members of the Islamic extremist Boko Haram sect stormed the Yobe state capital, Damaturu, at 5 p.m. on Nov. 4, and soon the terrorists had blocked all four major highways leading into town. Some of them charged the police headquarters, commando style, killing all officers on duty, while the rest broke into two banks – First Bank Nigeria PLC and United Bank for Africa, stealing millions of naira. Boko Haram also bombed police stations and an army base in and around Damaturu. The Christian leaders in Damaturu told *Compass* that out of the 150 casualties reported in the Yobe attacks, more than 130 were Christians. Boko Haram bombed and destroyed 10 church buildings: St. Mary's Catholic Church, Church of the Brethren, Cherubim and Seraphim Church, All Saints Cathedral (Anglican Communion), and Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), African Mission Centre, Assemblies of God Church, ECWA Good News Church, Living Faith Church, and Charismatic Renewal Ministries.

Bombings of **St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Madalla, Suleja Local Government Area, Niger State** carried out by Boko Haram effectively turned 2011 Christmas day into a mesh of sorrow, tears and blood, leaving at least 41 persons dead – possibly the worst Christmas Day killings in the history of Nigeria. About the same time in Damaturu, Yobe State, three security operatives were killed by a suicide bomber, while another attack on a church in Jos, Plateau State, left a policeman seriously injured. Another church was targeted in Gadaka, Yobe State, leading to six deaths. Boko Haram had claimed responsibility for the Christmas day bombings, saying it was avenging the deaths of Muslims in Jos during the last Eid-el-Fitri celebrations. Few days into the New Year (5 and 6 January, 2012), at least 29 people were killed in four attacks in Adamawa state on



Friday night and Saturday morning. Also, not less than 17 people were killed in Mubi, in Adamawa, as Boko Haram gunmen opened fire in a town hall where some Ndigbo were in a meeting planning how to convey the body of a fellow Igbo man killed by Boko Haram members. The terrorists attacked the Christ Apostolic Church, Nasarawa Parish, Jimeta-Yola in Adamawa State, on Friday evening, killing over 12 persons. The killing spree by Boko Haram gunmen continued Wednesday, as four Igbos, including a woman fleeing from the crisis-ridden Maiduguri to the South-east were waylaid and killed at Potiskum, Yobe State.

A faction of Boko Haram warned all southerners to leave the north of Nigeria. His words:

We wish to call on our fellow Muslims to come back to the north because we have evidence that they would be attacked. We are also giving a three-day ultimatum to the southerners living in the northern part of Nigeria to move away. We find it pertinent to state that soldiers will only kill innocent Muslims in the local government areas where the state of emergency was declared. "We would confront them squarely to protect our brothers

Later, a man claiming to be a spokesman for Boko Haram told local media the group had carried out both the Mubi and Gombe attacks. "We are extending our frontiers to other places to show that the declaration of a state of emergency by the Nigerian government will not deter us. We can really go to wherever we want to go," said Abu Qaqa. He said the attacks were "part of our response to the ultimatum we gave to southerners to leave the north" and called on the government to release all Boko Haram prisoners.

On 20 January, 2012, Boko Haram launched its deadliest onslaught ever following a series of coordinated attacks on Kano that claimed the lives of 29 policemen, 3 SSS operatives, 2 immigration officers, one Customs official, and a total of 159 civilians, including a journalist working for Channels Television, Lagos. According to Adeyemi (2012), the Islamic sect launched the attacks in which the death toll is expected to hit 250, according to a hospital doctor. Although the figure of 178 dead was released on Saturday, the doctor told the AFP news agency that the final toll was likely to be about 250. As usual, the sect, through its spokesman, Abu Qaqa, gave reasons for the attacks. In his words, "Last night's (Friday) attacks and bombings of Kano city followed our warnings in the second week of December, 2011." Besides, Qaqa also referred reporters to an e-mail message in which Imam Muhammad Abubakar Shekau, Spiritual Head of the sect, threatened: "Unless urgent steps are taken, the group will launch endless and violent attacks on Kano and its environs because of arbitrary arrest and persecution of his members."

Multiple explosions rocked Kaduna on Tuesday, 7 February, 2012, causing serious pandemonium. The first occurred when a suicide bomber tried to force his way into the premises of the 1 Mechanised Division headquarters of the Nigerian Army, Kawo, Kaduna, but was not allowed entry by soldiers. Islamist sect, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the bombings. On Wednesday evening (15 February 2012), Boko Haram sect members stormed the Nigeria Prison at Koton Karfe, Kogi State, with bombs and guns, killing one prison warder and setting the inmates free. The March 10, 2012 bombing of St. Finbarr's Catholic Church in Reyfield, Jos was the second attack on a church in two weeks in the Tin City. Seven parishioners, including an expectant woman, were among the 11 people confirmed dead in the bombing; 22 were injured. Two professors were killed in the Sunday (28 April, 2012) morning multiple blasts that rocked St Stephen Catholic Chaplain, Bayero University, Kano. According to the *Vanguard* newspaper report, the dons, Prof Ayodele of the Chemistry Department and Prof Andrew Leo of the Library Department, were among worshippers attacked at Theatre Two near Sport Complex, old Campus of the institution.

Jalingo, the Taraba State capital, was rocked by an early morning blast – its first experience since the Boko Haram crisis began. No fewer than 11 persons were killed in the suicide bombing. The convoy of the Commissioner of Police, Mr Mamman Sule, appeared to have been the target of the attack, which took place around 8.30a.m. On Thursday, (April 26) THISDAY offices in Kaduna and Abuja were attacked by suicide bombers, with eight lives lost. On Tuesday, 18 June, 2012, the death toll of Sunday's bomb blast reprisal attack in Kaduna had risen to 70 while the number of those injured stood at 130. But there was time to count the dead - 50, the Nigerian Red Cross said. The Islamist sect Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the suicide attacks in Zaria and Kaduna – the North's political capital. The Boko Haram sect said it was responsible for the Tuesday, 10 July, 2012 attacks in Jos, Plateau State that killed at least 65 people. At the mass burial of the 64 victims, another attack by Boko Haram claimed the lives of Senator Gyang Dantong and Hon. Gyang Fulani in addition to 14 others in Riyom Local Government Area (Saturday 13/07/12).

The Shehu of Borno, Alhaji Abubakar Garbai El-kanemi and the state's Deputy Governor, Alhaji Zannah Umar, escaped death by the whiskers on Friday, 6 July, 2012, as a bomb went off near the Maiduguri Central Mosque, in front of the Shehu of Borno's palace killing no fewer than 5 people. Boko Haram was behind the Independence Day massacre of 44 students of Federal Polytechnic Mubi, Adamawa State University, the School of Health Technology, Mubi and the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID).

Olugbode & Adinoyi (2102) report that one of Nigeria's civil war heroes, General Muhammadu Shuwa, was shot dead by suspected members of the Boko Haram sect at his residence in Maiduguri, Borno State on 2 November, 2012. The bombing of St. Andrews' Military Protestant Church at the Armed Forces Command and Staff College (AFCSC), Jaji in Kaduna State and the attack on the headquarters of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigeria Police Force in Abuja between November 25 and 26 2012, the massacre of 20 mini-skirt ladies in Maiduguri, the murder of the Nigerian civil war hero, General are some of the recent bloody exploits of Boko Haram. Gunmen suspected to be terrorists, (10 December, 2012), laid ambush to Potiskum town in Yobe State where they killed the Divisional Police Officer, DPO, Mr. Mohammed Garba. The gunmen also set ablaze using Improvised Explosive Devices, IEDs, a branch of Unity Bank, telecommunication masts belonging to Etisalat, MTN and Airtel as well as a police station.

On 19 January, 2013, unidentified gunmen attacked the convoy of Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero at *Masalaci* Murtala in the state capital, killing three of his aides, three other persons and injuring others. The 19th Fulani Emir had gone to a religious function at the mosque when his attackers exploited the traditional firing of dane guns by his royal guards, which heralded his exit, to strike. What followed were sporadic shots which triggered pandemonium as the crowd that had converged to bid the Emir farewell scampered to safety. In the evening of 18 March 2013, about 60 people died in Kano when a suicide bomber attacked a bus park located at Sabon Gari, a predominantly Christian quarters. The blast reportedly destroyed several buses while soldiers and policemen cordoned off the area after the blast. "The blast occurred as five fully loaded buses were moving towards the exit gate at the park when an unidentified individual driving a Golf Volkswagen car in an opposite direction rammed into the buses resulting in an explosion. The suicide bomber died instantly.

On 20<sup>th</sup> April 2013, no fewer than 185 people including children and women were killed in Baga, Kukawa Local Government Area of Borno State, during a bloody clash between Boko Haram insurgents and a combined team of soldiers attached to the Joint Task Force (JTF) and their counterparts from Niger Republic and Chad. On 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013, Boko Haram militants launched series of coordinated attacks on Police, Army and Prison formations in Bama town, Borno State, leaving no fewer than 55 persons dead. JTF spokesman, Lieutenant Colonel Sagir Musa, who conducted newsmen round the affected places in company of the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel AG Laka, confirmed that the dead include 22 policemen, 14 prison officials, 2 soldiers, 13 Boko Haram members, one woman and three children. Places attacked by the gunmen numbering about 500 in Hilux Toyota vehicles, some of who wore military uniforms, include different police barracks, 202 Army Barracks in Bama Council area headquarters, Magistrate Court, Revenue office, Primary Healthcare Centre, and Local Government Secretariat. A

Also, an elder statesman and first Minister of Petroleum Resources, Dr. Shettima Ali Monguno, CFR, was kidnapped in Borno State by suspected members of the Boko Haram Islamic sect shortly after performing the Juma'at Congregational prayers at a Mosque in Mafoni ward in Maiduguri metropolis. Unknown gunmen had earlier killed the acting Chairman of Dikwa Local Government Area in the state, Alhaji Kachallah Umara in his compound. Mungono's abduction took place at about 2pm in the area said to be the stronghold of the sect members. He was released some five days later after an undisclosed amount of money was paid as ransom.

The foregoing represents a sample of Boko Haram's illocutionary acts, which were intended as actualization of the locutionary acts. For these illocutionary acts to generate requisite illocutionary force, they are expected to obey the felicity conditions of sincerity, preparatory, executive, and fulfillment.

### 3.2.2 Felicity Conditions

According to Agbedo (2008), an illocutionary act is adjudged *felicitous* or *infelicitous*, depending on how much such an act meets the felicity conditions of sincerity, preparatory, executive, and fulfillment. In this regard, we make attempt to ascertain the sincerity of a speaker in connection with the particular illocutionary acts, determine the appropriateness of the participants in the discourse as well as the circumstances in the successful performance of the speech act, ascertain the proper execution of the speech act, and determine the extent to which the speech acts were successfully carried to achieve the desired effect.

#### 3.2.2.1 Sincerity condition

Going by the speech acts of Boko Haram, it is possible to glean some shred of sincerity about their avowed determination to achieve their basic objective of Islamising Nigeria. Nonetheless, it is a difficult to fathom the possibility of Islamising Nigeria merely by engaging in guerilla attacks, insurgency and suicide bombings. The group has not only remained faceless but fractious leading to emergence of splinter groups. Its facelessness has often provided the anvil on the Federal Government anchored its opposition to dialogue option freely canvassed by some northern groups and individuals. Although the Ambassador Usman Galtimari Committee had, among other things, advised the Federal Government in its 22-page Report, to enter into dialogue with the Islamic sect,

the discordant notes emanating from the splinter groups of the faceless sect have added extra impetus to the Federal Government's uncompromising stance on dialogue.

According to Bello (2012), the president told a panel of editors during a live radio and television presidential media chat that the group whose bombing activities in parts of the North have led to the death of many and destruction of property, was a faceless group and therefore government could not have any discussion with any of its so-called leaders. Refuting reports that there were discussions with the terrorist organisation, he said: "Presently, government is not holding any dialogue with Boko Haram. They are still under cover, they wear mask. There is no face to discuss with. There is no dialogue going on anywhere." It is also on record that disagreements among Boko Haram members over assassinations of Muslim leaders, mass casualty attacks that kill Muslim civilians, and negotiations have contributed to the emergence of splinter groups. Some groups in the north have broken from Boko Haram because of their opposition to Shekau's faction, including the Yusuffiya Islamic Movement (YIM) and Jama'at Ansar al-Muslimin fi Bilad al-Sudan ("Ansar"). Dr. Datti Ahmed, President of the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN), Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi, a leader of the Tijjaniyya sect, and Habu Mohammed had at different times announced their intention to lead different factions of the sect in a dialogue with the Federal Government. Not long after, another offer of dialogue was made by another faction of the group. This time, the group wanted General Muhammadu Buhari to lead other notable Nigerian Muslims (Dr. Shettima Ali Monguno, former Yobe State governor, Bukar Abba Ibrahim, Ambassador Gaji Galtimari and Hajia Aisha Wakil and her husband, Alkali Wakil) in the talks on their behalf. This generated heated debate until Buhari personally laid the issue to rest when in a statement, he decline to be a part of it.

The fractious character of Boko Haram came to light when the various factions of the sect issue conflicting statements regarding the group's targeting strategy. For instance, In June 2011, the YIM, which is composed of former close followers of Muhammad Yusuf, distributed leaflets in Maiduguri to "distance our group from all the bombings targeted at civilians and other establishments and equally condemn them"; call on "this evil group (Boko Haram) to desist, failing which we shall have no option than to expose and hunt them"; and announce that it would "temporarily halt our fight against the assassination of our leaders in compliance with the prohibition of fighting in the holy month of Ramadan." Another of such factional group, Ansar came to limelight when it distributed flyers in Kano days after the deadly attacks on 20 January 2012. On 3 February 2012, Boko Haram killed six members of an unnamed rival faction in Maiduguri who were reportedly collaborating with the security forces against Boko Haram. Again, Ansar issued a video statement in June 2012 in which it called Boko Haram's killing of Muslims, including two clerics who were affiliated with Ansar, "inexcusable" and accused Boko Haram of killing members who sought to defect to Ansar. It then said in July 2012 in an Arabic language posting on an online jihadist forum that one of its goals was to "protect the lives and properties of Muslims" because no other "Islamic armed forces took any military actions" against the "infidel armed groups." On its own, Shekau's faction has strived to show that Boko Haram does not kill "innocent" Muslims. On July 25, 2011, for example, Shekau explained in a video statement, "if you hear that we have killed a Muslim, we must have found out that he was collaborating with the unbelievers...But the ordinary people in town, we seek your forgiveness; I swear we will not harm you."

The foregoing perhaps might have informed the three-way classification of Boko Haram as an Islamic sect. General Buhari, according to Binniyat (2012), while quoting Professor Ango Abdullahi, said that there are three Boko Harams including the original one led by Muhammed Yusufu who was killed and his supporters tried to take revenge by attacking the law enforcement agencies and politicians. There is another developed Boko Haram of criminals who steal and kill... while the biggest Boko Haram is the Federal Government." According to Omonobi et.al (2011), Bauchi State Governor, Mallam Isa Yuguda has said that there are two types of the sect operating in the country today. According to Governor Yuguda, while one faction of the sect distorts the true teaching of Islam, the other faction is a band of criminals who are out to destroy the country for their selfish reasons. His words:

I want to use this medium to educate adequately our people about Boko Haram. They are categorized into two different groups. The real one is not after killing people, but focused on the distortion of the real teachings of Islam. They have different agenda from the other group. The other people who call themselves Boko Haram are criminals. They are the ones that kill, bomb places, loot, burn police stations everywhere in the northern part of our country. (Kinglsey Omonobi, Anayo Okoli, Clifford Ndujihe & Daniel Idonor [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com) 27 September, 2011)

In addition, the list of frivolous demands which pendulous swings accord with the unpredictable vagaries of the Islamic sect masterminds rubs its locutionary acts of all modicum of sincerity. The release of all its captive members, the implementation of Islamic law (Sharia) across the entire country, the choice of Saudi Arabia as the venue for the proposed dialogue, the demand for President Jonathan to be converted to Islam are some of the

sundry demands, which the Islamic sect had listed as preconditions to be met before they lay down their arms and end the insurgency. Such frivolous demands certainly cast a doubt on the sincerity of the sect.

#### 3.2.2.2 Preparatory condition

This condition seeks to determine the appropriateness of the speaker(s) who performed the speech act. Going by the sectarian orientation of such similar Islamic fundamentalists as al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, and Hamas, Boko Haram's predilection for waging jihad against *kafir* as evident in the utterances is appropriate. Such fiery declarations are in tandem with fatwa and other such calls to action by iconic radical Islamic leaders worldwide. For instance, Agbede (2012) observes that in a February 23, 1998 statement, Osama bin Laden declared, "To kill the Americans and their allies, civilians and military, is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate Al-Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem] and the holy mosque (in Mecca) from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim." Shortly afterwards, his followers detonated two truck bombs outside the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, killing 257 and injuring more than 5,000.

In the like manner, Mohammed Yusuf, had shortly before his death, read an open letter to the Federal Government before his congregation at the Markaz Ibn Taymiyyah. The letter and two other treatises, *Hazihi Aqidati* (This is My Ideology) and *Hayya Alal Jihad* (Clarion Call to Holy War), provided the anvil for the sect members to hammer away their insurgency against the Nigerian state and their perceived enemies. According to Bello (2012), Yusuf's exegeses, which formed the backbone of his battle against the Nigerian state, are rooted in the twelfth century philosophy of Taqi ad-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328). Ibn Taymiyyah built an 'iron cage' around the religion of Islam, the type that does not recognise any worldly authority, symbolised during his time by the Yassa Code, or man-made laws, fostered on Muslims by the Mongols during their invasion of the Muslim world around 1300. Also, Ibn Taymiyyah did not spare Christians because their belief, in his estimation, was a corruption of the true faith that Isa (Jesus) professed. Therefore, Christians were not to be trusted, for the goal of their 'false' religion is to lead mankind to eternal damnation. The foregoing explains the first locutionary act: "The Nigerian state and Christians are our enemies and we will be launching attacks on the Nigerian state and its security apparatus as well as churches until we achieve our goal of establishing an Islamic state in place of the secular state."

#### 3.2.2.3 Executive condition

The speech act cannot be said have been properly executed given that some of illocutionary acts run counter to its stated objectives. For instance, one wonders how the attempts to eliminate such prominent Muslim leaders in Nigeria as the Sultan of Sokoto, Shehu of Borno, Emir of Kano, Emir of Fika fit into the overall objective of Islamising Nigeria. It is difficult to imagine the brand of Islam that the sect intends to foist on Nigeria, the success of which is solely dependent on the elimination of custodians of Islam in Nigeria. As Agbede (2012) observed, Boko Haram seeks to transfer religious authority from the sultan of Sokoto and other traditional leaders to Boko Haram's religious leaders through a campaign of intimidation and assassination, as part of its "grand plans to Islamize Nigeria". Perhaps, it would be tenable to justify the sect's attacks on the Muslims leaders on the ground that Ibn Taymiyyah (Yusuf's iconic mentor) did not also spare Muslim protagonists and antagonists of Western-Hellenic philosophy because of its inclination towards materialism, which in his view was antithetical to the divine order of spiritualism. Otherwise, the modus operandi for actualizing the so-called 'grand plans' seems too defective to be felicitous.

#### 3.2.2.4 Fulfillment condition

This felicity condition determines the extent to which the speech act was successfully carried out. In this regard, the task of Islamising Nigeria has not been actualised. The sect may have succeeded in waging insurgency through various acts of terrorism. According to Usman (2013), Nigeria witnessed 151 Boko Haram-related explosions in 2012 alone. Violence blamed on Boko Haram has killed more than 720 people in 2012, according to an Associated Press count. Yet, Nigeria has remained a secular state. Also, the Federal Government has risen to the security challenges posed by the Boko Haram insurgency. For instance, in December 2012, the Senior Special Assistant on Public Affairs to the President, Dr. Doyin Okupe, had in a statement explained that government has acquired and deployed highly sophisticated security equipment and members of the security agencies have received and continue to receive adequate training such that intelligence gathering capacity has witnessed a monumental increase in recent time. Okupe stated that this was responsible for the reduction in over 70 per cent of the activities of the Boko Haram and other sinister plans before they occur.

As if to add extra fillip to the Federal Government's reassurances about clipping the wings of Boko Haram, newspaper reports (*Saturday Vanguard* of 19 January, 2013) had it that there were indications that the leader of the Boko Haram Islamic sect, Imam Abubakar Shekau was wounded during a gun battle with security



men recently. According to Omonobi (2013), sources said in Abuja that security agencies traced the whereabouts of Shekau, who succeeded late Mohammed Yusuf as leader of the sect to Mali, where he escaped to after sustaining injuries during a gun duel with soldiers of the Joint Task Force, JTF, a.k.a Operation Restore Order. The report further claimed that the Federal Government approved the deployment of 1,200 soldiers apparently because of the need to arrest the wounded Boko Haram leader. The seeming successes recorded by the national security agencies in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency in recent times run counter to the claims of Abubakar Shekau in a video posted on the YouTube in April 2012, wherein the sect leader boasted of 'devouring' President Jonathan within three months perhaps, in response the latter's earlier threat to crush the sect within two weeks. His words:

You Jonathan cannot stop us like you boasted; instead, we will devour you in the three months like you are boasting. If death is your worldly gain, for us, it is eternal victory to die working for Allah. Our joy is to die in Jihad for Allah against infidels like you...

In the video which lasted for about 14 minutes and titled 'Message to Jonathan,' the sect leader said President Goodluck Jonathan and the Nigerian security agencies do not have what it takes to end their operations. "You are proud of your killing us and arresting us...Allah has told us in the Koran not to be discouraged, not to be frightened and not to be downcast because we are victorious." Although the Boko Haram sect has not officially surrendered, the so-called 'victory' is visible even to the blind as the fleeing sect leader wounded during a gun duel with the JTF scampered to safety in Mali. In essence, the apparent waning insurgency of Boko Haram hardly underscores any modicum of success in actualizing the locutionary acts.

### 3.3 Perlocutionary acts

This aspect of speech act examines the effects, which the illocutionary force have on the listeners or readers of a given speech act. In this regard, we examine the psychological effects on the victims, reactions of Nigerians and the international community, the Federal Government's response to the security challenge posed by the insurgency, and the implications for global peace and security.

#### 3.3.1 Psychological effects

One defining psychological effect elicited by the illocutionary act is the expression of pains and agony by victims of Boko Haram. When the Boko Haram operatives launched their 2011 Christmas day bombing at St. Theresa Catholic Church, Madalla Suleja Niger State that claimed at least 35 lives, the Catholic Pontiff Pope Benedict 16, condemned the dastardly act. "At this moment, I want to repeat once more forcefully: violence is a path that leads only to pain, destruction and death," he said. **According to Nwosu, et. al. (2011), "bombings carried out by Boko Haram effectively turned the festive season into a mesh of sorrow, tears and blood, leaving at least 41 persons dead – possibly the worst Christmas Day killings in the history of Nigeria."** The worst hit by the suicide bombing were the Dike and Obiukwu families. Whereas Mrs. Christiana Chioma Obiukwu lost her husband and five children, Sir Emmanuel Obiukwu lost his four daughters to the Christmas day carnage at Madalla.

In a news report entitled 'Boko Haram: Adazi 12 buried amidst wailings and agitations,' Anyanwu (2012) writes:

Sorrow, agony and anger was written visibly on the faces of the thousands of citizens whose tears surged like flood as the caskets bearing the remains of the 12 victims were laid at the St Andrews' Catholic Church, Adazi Nnukwu field for funeral mass.

Onu & Odogwu (2012) report the story thus:

It was gloomy in Adazi Nnukwu in Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State yesterday, when the twelve indigenes of the state killed on January 6 in Mubi, Adamawa State by suspected Boko Haram members were interred. They were killed during a town union's meeting. Women wept. Men sobbed. Children cried. Tempers rose. Governor Peter Obi, National Chairman of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) Victor Umeh, the member representing Anaocha, Njikoka, Dunukofia Federal Constituency, Mrs. Uche Ekwunife, could not hold back tears. The sight of pallbearers, who carried the bodies from the church to the gravesite, brought tears.



Faces of agony depicting the pains and trauma of loss: Madalla victims, Adazi 12

### 3.3.2 Local responses

In this subsection, we examine the reactions elicited by the perlocutionary acts from the Nigerian government as well as Nigerians.

#### 3.3.2.1. Reactions of Federal Government and Nigerians

The immediate response elicited from the Federal Government was outright condemnation of Boko Haram's murderous campaign and its avowed determination to crush the insurgency. Each of such dastardly incidents elicited a kind of automated or fixated response from the government. For instance, when he visited Kano to pay condolence with the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero in the wake of multiple bomb blasts that claimed no fewer than 200 of lives on 20 January 2012, President Goodluck Jonathan declared that the Federal Government will not relent until terrorism is wiped out in the country. His words:

The people doing this are not spirit. They are among us. I seek the cooperation of all towards getting those involved in the havoc arrested. I assure Nigerians that the government will intensify its security in Kano and all over the country to unravel the misery behind this act. "What is good for us as a nation is to look at our neighbours, to know what they do to enable us fish out these miscreants because if we don't, one day, it may be against us. We will not rest, until these terrorists are wiped out." ([www.thenationonline.net](http://www.thenationonline.net) 22 January, 2012)

Also, following the deaths of two police officers when gunmen attacked the Divisional Police Station in Gambouru/Ngala, Borno State, (01 December, 2012), President Goodluck Jonathan, according to Musa (2012), insisted that the country remained safe in spite of bombings, and urged Nigerians not to entertain any fear in their daily activities. Jonathan, in a statement by his Senior Special Assistant on Public Affairs, Dr. Doyin Okupe, stressed that insurgents worldwide audaciously attack institutions to kindle maximum fear among the citizenry. His words:

We should not allow fear and despair to overcome us rather we should draw strength from our well-known spirit of nationalism and forbearance to support the government and the security agencies in their effort to curb the menace. The President wishes to assure Nigerians that government will not rest but continue to work tirelessly with all the security agencies to bring to a complete end as soon as possible, cases of insecurity, while those found guilty to have perpetrated criminality and acts of terrorism either by promoting it actively or passively, are made to face the full wrath of the law.

In his reaction to the Kano carnage, the Governor of Kano State prayed fervently thus: I will pray to God that we should never re-live the catastrophe that resulted in the deaths and maiming in our city." Nobel literature laureate, Wole Soyinka, who has previously warned of the risk of civil war, appealed to fellow Nigerians not to exact revenge: "We must not accept the agenda of Boko Haram. Do not consider reprisals. They want... to

embark on a programme where neighbours will turn against neighbours.” We want to ensure that a few misguided Nigerians who have been led into this action don't take this country hostage,” said Senate president David Mark who travelled to Kano with the speaker of the House of Representatives Aminu Tambuwal. ([www.thisdaylive.com](http://www.thisdaylive.com) 24 January, 2012).

Before the Kano carnage, President Jonathan had on 31 December, 2011 declared a partial state of emergency in parts of Borno, Yobe, Niger and Plateau States. In his words, “it has become imperative to take some decisive measures necessary to restore normalcy in the country especially within the affected communities. Consequently, I have in the exercise of the powers conferred on me by the provisions of section 305(1) of the Constitution, declared a state of emergency in the following parts of the federation, namely: i) Borno State a) Maidugiri Metropolitan LGA b) Gamboru Ngala LGA c) Banki Bama LGA d) Biu LGA e) Jere LGA (ii) Yobe State a) Damaturu LGA b) Geidam LGA c) Potiskum LGA d) Buniyadi-Gujba LGA e) Gasua-Bade LGA (iii) Plateau State a) Jos North LGA b) Jos South LGA c) Barkin-Ladi LGA d) Riyom LGA (iv) Niger State a) Suleja LGA. Almost two years after, President Jonathan found it necessary to impose another state of emergency in the three states of the north. In what appeared to be a firm resolve to put a stop to the atrocities of the Boko Haram Islamic extremists, President Jonathan on Tuesday May 14, 2013 declared a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states. The president said recent developments in the affected states had made it necessary for the government to take extra ordinary measures to restore normalcy. According to him, the soldiers are under orders to put an end to the impunity of the insurgents and terrorists.

In his interview with Christiane Amanpour of Cable News Network (CNN) on Wednesday 23 January 2013, President Jonathan disagreed with the opinion that poverty and misrule were responsible for the Boko Haram insurgency, arguing that poverty was not a recent phenomenon in the country “and therefore cannot form the basis of the sudden wave of criminal attacks on innocent victims, most of whom live within the poverty bracket.” Dr Jonathan argued further that there have been successive regimes before this administration but this insurgency increased the same way terrorist activities are escalating in other parts of the world at this time. So it is clear that some people are out to perpetrate acts of terrorism in Nigeria to create a semblance of insecurity as it obtains in other troubled spots of the world.”

Also, worried about the incessant killings of innocent citizens in the country by Boko Haram through bomb explosions, the Nigerian upper legislative chamber (the Senate), on Wednesday, 11 January 2012, asked the Federal Government to go after and deal immediately with their sponsors. In a motion on the general insecurity in the country sponsored by the Deputy Senate President Ike Ekweremadu and 72 others, the Senate through its President, Senator David Mark called on state governments to wake up to their responsibilities in the area of security, believing that “every state has a responsibility in providing security for the people, in making sure that things don't go wrong because the governors are the chief security officers in the states.” He adds further that nobody is so big that is above the law in this country. If any Nigerian, irrespective of his position, is involved in sponsoring the current level of insecurity, he must be dealt with according to the law and as quickly as possible, because we did not want this to go on as it is becoming an impediment to our desire to develop our country.

Reactions from the Christian community in Nigeria were not unexpected. Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) President, Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, warned that his religious constituency may have to begin to ‘respond appropriately ‘to future acts of violence, and Living Faith Church leader, Bishop David Oyedepo threatened to personally lead the battle if any other church is attacked by the Islamic group. Groups in the southern part of the country have either threatened or actually carried out acts of retaliation. Ogbunigwe Igbo threatened ‘extreme violence’ in retaliation for the killing of Igbo people while the Gani Adams faction of *Oodua People's Congress* (OPC) urged Yoruba people in the North to return home. In July 2012, CAN President, Pastor Oritsejafor made a passionate appeal to the United States government to designate Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO), saying: “My people are dying every single day.” According to Adedjoja (2012), he made the appeal while appearing at a hearing on Nigeria convened by the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, Sub-committee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights.

The security and intelligence community in Nigeria equally responded accordingly. For instance, in December 2012, a total sum of N290 million ransom was approved for anyone who could assist in locating Imam Abubakar Shekau and 18 other leaders of Boko Haram. They were wanted in connection with terrorist activities, particularly in the North East zone of Nigeria that led to the killings, bombings and assassination of some civilians, religious leaders, traditional rulers, businessmen, politicians, civil servants and security personnel, among others. They were also wanted for arson and destruction of properties worth millions of naira. A release by the JTF listed the wanted Boko Haram leaders to include five members of the Shurra (the highest decision-making body of the sect) Committee and 19 of their commanders. The five members of the Shurra Committee of the sect, including Imam Abubakar Shekau whose ransom was N50 million, and Habibu Yusuf (a.k.a Asalafi), Khalid Albarnawai, Momodu Bama and Mohammed Zangina. Apart from Imam Shekau whose ransom was put at N50 million, the other Shurra members' ransom was put at N25million each. A ransom of

N10 million each was put on the Boko Haram Commanders including, Abu Saad, Abba Kaka, Abdulmalik Bama, Umar Fulata, Alhaji Mustapha, (Massa) Ibrahim and Abubakar Suleiman-Habu a.k.a Khalid. Other commanders also included Hassan Jazair, Ali Jalingo, Alhaji Musa Modu, Bashir Aketa, Abba Goroma, Ibrahim Bashir, Abubakar Zakariya and Tukur Ahmed Mohammed.

A fresh dimension was added to the parlous security situation in the country, as non-indigenes especially from the Northern parts of the country began to flee to the South-East in droves. On its own part, the Boko Haram called on Nigerians of northern extraction residing in the southern part of the country to return to their homeland in the north to avoid possible reprisal attacks from the aggrieved southerners. The desertion of the north by Nigerians of southern extraction was not without reasons as they became targets of massacre by the Boko Haram insurgents. For instance, it was a dark Thursday 02 February, 2012 in Adazi Nnukwu as the community helplessly committed to mother earth 12 of its citizens mowed down in Mubi, Adamawa State on December 28, 2011 and January 6, 2012 by the Islamic sect, Boko Haram.

In the light of orgy of mindless bloodletting without let or hindrance, leaders from Southern region of the country, under the aegis of Southern Nigeria Peoples Assembly, at a conference in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, called for redeployment of corps members from Southern Nigeria from the volatile Northern states until the security situation in those states improve. The statement from the group was jointly signed by Chief Edwin Clark (South-West), Rt. Rev. B. Gbonigi (South West) and Chief Mbazulike Amaechi (South East).

On their own part, the northern leaders of thoughts, elite, and the elders called on the federal government to grant amnesty to members of Boko Haram. Stakeholders in the north had been advocating amnesty for members of Boko Haram, but the call made by the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Abubakar 111, on March 5, at a meeting of the Central Council of Jama'atu Nasril Islam in Kaduna was like a watershed in the pardon advocacy. Sultan told the meeting, which took place on the eve of Jonathan's two-day visit to the Boko Haram hotbeds of Borno and Yobe states, "We have been hearing about terrorism everywhere and every day. I want to use this opportunity to say that we have heard in the news that Mr. President will be visiting Maiduguri in a couple of days. "We want to use this opportunity to call on the government, especially Mr. President, to see how he can declare total amnesty for all combatants without thinking twice; that will make any other person who picks up arms to be termed as a criminal. If the amnesty is declared, the majority of those young men running would come out and embrace that amnesty and some of them have already come out because we have heard some of the stories in the newspapers."

When Jonathan made his working visit to Borno and Yobe states, he was confronted with the same request for pardon. In the end, the President refused to grant the request for amnesty. Instead, he berated those calling for amnesty for playing a hiding game with the terrorist onslaught. He accused them of failing to identify those for whom they were advocating pardon, saying he cannot grant amnesty to "ghosts." Jonathan made his position known on March 7 in Damaturu, on the first leg of his visit to the two North-east states of Yobe and Borno. His response was pointed. "We cannot declare amnesty for Boko Haram because we cannot declare amnesty for ghosts." Later, the President was to change his tough stance on the amnesty issue following intense pressures from the Northern elders Forum when he set up the Turaki-led committee, which mandate was to explore all practical ways of getting the Boko Haram members to a roundtable for dialogue and possible amnesty. Under the plan, the Federal Government is to set up an Amnesty Commission, which would serve as a quasi-judicial body, to register and cater for repentant members of the sect and protect them from being harassed or intimidated by security agents.

A faction of the sect rejected the amnesty offer, saying the group did not ask for it. Spokesman of a faction of the sect, Abu Dardam who spoke on the Hausa service of the BBC stated that they are rejecting the amnesty because they don't recognize democracy as a form of government and that the group does not agree with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, arguing that justice can only be found in the Holy Quran, that is Shariya system of government. Leader of militant Boko Haram Islamic sect, Abubakar Shekau, yesterday, rejected the idea of any potential amnesty deal which the Federal Government may offer the sect members if the committee set up to look into it gives the go-ahead. Shekau, in a 30-minute audio recording, where he spoke in Hausa, Arabic and English declared that his group had "not committed any wrong to deserve amnesty". He said it was the government that should be seeking amnesty from his group and not the other way round, adding that even though the sect was the one wronged and the one that should be asked for amnesty, it was not ready to grant any pardon to the government. He said: "We are the one to grant them pardon. Have you forgotten their atrocities against us?" The man in the video later threatened the lives of anyone claiming to be a representative of Boko Haram. "We are surprised that today it is the Federal Government saying it will grant us amnesty. Oh God, is it we who will grant you amnesty or you are the one to grant us amnesty? "What have we done? If there is room for forgiveness, we are not going to do it until God gives us permission to do it. Have you forgotten your sin, have you forgotten what you have done to us in Plateau, the state you called Jos. We emerged to avenge



killings of our Muslim brothers and the destruction of our religion. Was it not in Plateau that we saw people cannibalising our brothers?"

On 04 June 2013, the Federal government of Nigeria proscribed two terrorist groups - Jama'atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda'wati wal Jihad (Boko Haram) and Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladissudan (Ansaru) – describing their activities as illegal and acts of terrorism. In proscribing the sects, President Jonathan authorized the gazetting of “an order declaring their activities illegal and acts of terrorism”. The order, which had already been gazette as the ‘Terrorism (Prevention, Proscription Order) Notice 2013’, was approved by President Jonathan pursuant to Section 2 of the Terrorism Prevention Act 2011 (as amended). The order cam

### 3.3.2.2. Responses from the international community

From this perspective, the mindset of the United States about the Boko Haram challenges was expressed by the country's ambassador to Nigeria, Terence McCauley, who observed that it behooves the Nigerian government to “react with a broad-based strategy by addressing security as well as the questions of development and poverty which feed underlying grievances that can promote acts of violence... To fix the Boko Haram problem, the government will have to develop a new social compact with its Northern citizens. It will have to develop an economic recovery strategy that complements its security strategy. It will have to draw on the support of Northern governors, traditional Hausa and Fulani leaders and local officials and organisations. The Nigerian government should consider creating a Ministry of Northern Affairs or a development commission similar to what it did in response to the Niger Delta crisis...”

This stance was chorused stridently in the communiqué of a two-day conference under the theme: “The North and Strategies for Sustainable Development”, organised by the Arewa House Centre for Historical Documentation and Research of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State and chaired by former military Head of State, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar (rtd.). The Northern leaders, according to the *Guardian* newspaper editorial ([www.ngrguardiannews.com](http://www.ngrguardiannews.com) 09 January, 2013), blamed the social and political predicament facing the North on the failure of the Federal Government to improve the welfare of the people and also guarantee freedom and rights of citizens. Nonetheless, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), disagreed with the poverty theory, noting that the principal reason behind serial bombings in some parts of the country was not about poverty and youth unemployment, but about radical religious ideology. CAN President, Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor argued that noted that poverty and almajiri syndrome were babies of past northern leaders who amassed the country's resources for themselves.

A Special Report of *Vanguard* newspaper ([www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com) 02 May, 2012) burrowed through the presumptuous marrows of America's poverty posturing to underpin the selfish economic interests at stake:

Forget the posturing of Ambassador Carson, America knows the truth, they also understand the root. While the United States has a duty to protect its strategic oil interest in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, it also has a duty to protect the interest of the North. The control of most of the nation's oil wealth is directly and indirectly largely still under the big oil moguls of Northern Nigeria. Also, bearing in mind that almost all of these Northern oil moguls export their crude oil to the United States of America, and also have mostly American technical partners, it is safe to suggest that beyond Nigeria being America's most important strategic ally in Sub-Saharan Africa, the United States has a good deal of specific interest in North.

Also, the official position of the US government on the non-designation of Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) was further clarified by the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Ambassador Johnnie Carson while responding to Pastor Oritsejafor's appeal. Carson said the terrorist designation made sense for the three leaders - Abubakar Shekau, Abubakar Adam Kamar and Khalid al-Barnawi - due to links to Al-Qaeda, but that it would be counterproductive to target the entire movement. “It would serve to enhance their status, probably give them greater international notoriety amongst radical Islamic groups, probably lead to more recruiting and probably more assistance,” Carson said. He said Boko Haram had grown stronger and increasingly more sophisticated over the past three years, adding that, “defeating the sect would require a sophisticated and comprehensive domestic response.”

However, the Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights, Rep. Christopher Smith rejected the official position of the US Government that terrorism is caused by social and economic problems, warning that the State Department underestimates the threat of militant sects which seek to impose Sharia. He said: “Ideology that is highly, highly radicalised may exploit poverty at times, but poor people do not necessarily become terrorists and killers. That is an insult, frankly, to poor people.” Smith requested an explanation from Carson on why Boko Haram had not been designated despite the fact that the FBI, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security and a congressional committee of the House and some senate members had called for the designation of the sect. He also requested information on whether the

activities of the three designated Boko Haram leaders were at variance with the activities of the sect. Then, on 03 June 2013, the US Government offered \$23million (about N3.6bn) reward for information on the location of 5 leaders of AQIM and Boko Haram including Shekau. Kurt Rice, the US Acting Assistant Director of Diplomatic Security, Threat, Investigation and Analysis Directorate, who made the announcement at a joint tele-news conference with David Gilmour, Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, said that Shekau could be tried in the US when caught.

In its 2012 report on the crisis titled: 'Spiraling Violence: Boko Haram Attacks and Security Forces Abuses in Nigeria,' Human Rights Watch blamed the security forces for extra-judicial killings in Maiduguri and many parts of Northern Nigeria. In equal measure, the HRW pointed accusing fingers at both the Boko Haram and the security operatives said to be after them. Particularly, the report indicted the police and the military for killing innocent people during their raids. According to Bello (2012), the report also gave details of what it termed 'detention related abuses', noting that Nigeria's government has responded with a heavy hand to the Boko Haram violence. "Government security forces, comprising military, police, and intelligence personnel, known as the Joint Military Task Force (JTF), have been implicated in serious human rights violations. The authorities have also brushed aside due process rights of detainees in the name of ending the group's threat to Nigerian citizens," HRW observed. On the Nigerian military, the report specifically noted that it "has been implicated in numerous abuses during its operations in response to the Boko Haram violence in Northern Nigeria, including extra-judicial killings of men during neighborhood raids and detainees in military custody." Regarding the proliferation of checkpoints, the report indicated that "in both Kano and Maiduguri, the JTF has set up numerous checkpoints to aid the search for arms, explosives, and Boko Haram suspects. But residents allege that the security personnel also harass, extort money from, and abuse residents."

The International Criminal Court's prosecutor noted that ICC has a "reasonable basis" to believe Boko Haram Islamists have committed crimes against humanity in Nigeria, noting that Nigerian authorities should prosecute acts of murder and persecution attributed to the radical group that have claimed more than 1,200 lives since mid-2009 or the ICC could step in. The prosecutor's office noted that Nigerian security forces may also have carried out human rights violations in its operations against the group, but said it had no indication that this was part of a "state or organisational policy to attack the civilian population." The prosecutor's office said it would assess whether Nigerian authorities "are conducting genuine proceedings in relation to those who appear to bear the greatest responsibility for such crimes".

In his reaction, President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai had in May 2013, advised Boko Haram insurgents to sheathe their swords. Karzai, during the presentation of letters of credence to him by Nigeria's Ambassador to Afghanistan, Dauda Danladi, called on the Boko Haram members to lay down their arms if they are true Muslims and embrace amnesty offered by the Federal Government noting that no religion preaches violence. "Boko Haram should stop burning schools, Mosques, Churches in the name of Islam. You should not destroy your country if you are true Muslims. You should protect lives because in Islam if you kill one, it is as if you have killed the whole of humanity and if you save life, it is as if you have saved the whole of humanity".

#### **4. Boko Haram insurgency and threat to global peace and security**

The Security Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security had a hearing on emerging threats to the United States posed by Boko Haram, the Islamic group originating from Northeast Nigeria. The report of the hearing dated November 30, 2011, which was endorsed by sub-committee chairman Rep. Patrick Meehan and the ranking Democrat member, Rep. Jackie Speier, adumbrated the international dimension of Boko Haram and threat to global peace and security. In putting the real threat, which Boko Haram poses to U.S. interests and the Homeland Security in proper perspective, the Report examined two other groups whose rapid expansion in capabilities and apparent evolution in targeting and goals took the United States by surprise. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), both newly formed groups, were viewed by the U.S. Intelligence Community and outside experts as regionally focused and content to launch strikes against their home governments and Western interests in the region. In both cases, the Intelligence Community – and the country – were caught off guard when attacks were launched by AQAP and TTP against the U.S. Homeland. The rapid evolution of Boko Haram as a threat shares certain characteristics with AQAP and TTP is quite instructive in projecting the potential threat of Boko Haram to interests outside its home government. The Islamic sect launched a deadly bomb attack on the United Nations House in Abuja in August 2011, which claimed at least 26 lives and wounded over 60 people. In a statement issued shortly after the attack, the sect's spokesman Abu Qaqa said it attacked the United Nations (UN) building in Abuja because United States (US) and the UN are supporting the Federal Government to persecute Muslims in Nigeria. Qaqa further observed that the sect

considered the US, the UN and the Nigerian government as common enemies and would continue to attack them because they are infringing on the rights of the Muslims.

The possibility of forging links with foreign terrorist groups received extra credence from the comments of General Carter Ham, the head of the US military's Africa Command, that al-Qaeda's North African branch, Shebab militants in Somalia and Boko Haram have expressed a will to "more closely collaborate and synchronise their efforts". While the Boko Haram sect was long considered a domestic group targeting symbols of Nigerian authority, the two videos obtained by Agence France-Presse (AFP) and posted on 18 September, 2011 by Marisol on [www.jihadwatch.org/2011/09/](http://www.jihadwatch.org/2011/09/) also show an international emphasis. In the video message to 'Obama and infidels,' the voice said to be Shekau's calls the UN headquarters a "forum of all the global evil," while also offering praise for Osama bin Laden. Also, in an interview granted the *Guardian* of London and published on 27 January 2012, Boko Haram's spokesman, Abu Qaqa said the group's members were spiritual followers of al-Qaida, and claimed they had met senior figures in the network founded by Osama bin Laden during visits to Saudi Arabia. His words:

Al-Qaida are our elder brothers. During the lesser Hajj [last August], our leader travelled to Saudi Arabia and met al-Qaida there. We enjoy financial and technical support from them. Anything we want from them we ask them...Recruits from neighbouring Chad, Cameroon and Niger have joined us...

As if to lend credence to Qaqa's claims, a United Nations report published in January 2012, cited regional officials as saying that "Boko Haram had established links with Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," and that "some of its members from Nigeria and Chad had received training in Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb camps in Mali during the summer of 2011." Seven Boko Haram members passing through Niger were arrested with "names and contact details" of members of the Qaeda affiliate, the United Nations report said. Two Westerners (Italian engineer Francesco Molinara, 48, and his British colleague Chris McManus, 28) were kidnapped on 12 May, 2011 at a construction site in Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State northwestern Nigeria. The hostages were eventually killed on 8 March 2012 during a failed British-Nigerian rescue operation. Quoting a Nigerian security source, a *Vanguard* newspaper report confirmed that the mastermind of the kidnap that goes by the name Abu Muhammad is an AQIM affiliate associated with Boko Haram, referring to the al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

In his speech while addressing a meeting of ECOWAS Chiefs of Defence Staff held in Abidjan Cote d'Ivoire (March 2012), to stem the rising insecurity in West Africa, former Nigeria's Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Oluseyi Petinrin, said the Boko Haram network was spreading to Niger and Cameroon and the ECOWAS Chiefs of Defence Staff had agreed on a broad-based regional strategy to nip the insurgents. Quoting the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), *Vanguard* newspapers ([www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com) 10 March 2012) reported that the meeting of the Chiefs of Defence Staff agreed on the need to deploy peace keepers to Mali that would intervene on the growing menace of the Tuareg rebels. Specifically, the meeting agreed that ECOWAS Standby Force should be deployed by the authority of the Heads of States to bring peace to Mali. This was in the light of the fact that the Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghrib (AQIM) had ballooned in size and joined the Tuareg rebels in Northern Mali to seize power or create their own nation out of Mali. The ECOWAS Standby Force came to fruition in the form of the prompt intervention of the French and Nigeria-led ECOWAS troops, which drove out the Islamists from Mali.

The external affiliates of the Boko Haram sect retaliated their dislodgment from their northern Mali haven by regrouping in Nigeria under the aegis of Ansaru to carry out terrorist activities. On 16 February 2013, Ansaru fighters kidnapped 7 foreigners from a camp of the construction company, Setraco at Jama'are, a town 200 kilometres north of Bauchi, the capital of Bauchi State, northwest Nigeria. On 9 March 2013, SITE Intelligence Group released a video showing the executions of the 7 kidnapped foreign employees of the Setraco construction by the Nigerian Islamist group Ansaru. The incident forced the international community to mount pressure on Nigeria to accept the classification of Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation, FTO. Citing a diplomatic source, a *Vanguard* report ([www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com) 20 March, 2013) contended that the Federal Government's resistance to classification of Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation, FTO, is ridiculous because "the group's link with Al-Qaeda is not in doubt, its mode of operation is not different from that of other terrorist groups in Asia and the Middle East. Now the abduction and killing of foreigners have upped the ante. What will be your government's argument for arguing that Boko Haram should not be classified as FTO," queried the diplomatic source?

The international dimension of Boko Haram-induced terrorist activities in Nigeria assumed a more frightening proportion when an arms depot linked to an international terrorist organisation, Hezbollah was discovered on 28 May 2013, at the residence of a Lebanese in Kano. According to Director of the Department of State Security Service in Kano (DSS), Mr. Basse Etang, the weapons were brought in by an international terrorist organization, Hezbollah, to attack Israeli and Western interests in Nigeria. Etang spoke at a joint press

conference by the Commandant of the 3 Motorized Division in Kano, Brigadier-Gen. Iiyasu Abba, at the scene of the discovery in the Bompai area. He said the weapons were brought in by an international terrorist organization, Hezbollah, to attack Israeli and Western interests in Nigeria.

He added that on 28 May 2013, a combined team of the JTF involving the Nigerian Army of the 3 Brigade in Kano and the Kano state DSS conducted a thorough search of the house located at 3, Gaya Road, off Bompai Road, belonging to one Abdul Hassan Taher Fadlalla, a Lebanese national who is currently out of the country. "After painstakingly searching of the whole premises, the search team uncovered an underground bunker in the master bedroom where a large quantity of assorted weapons of different types and caliber were recovered. The bunker was specially constructed for this purpose," he said. Abba revealed the weapons of mass destruction included, "11, 50mm anti-tank weapons, two, 122mm artillery gun ammunition, four anti-tank landmines, 21 Rocket Propel Grenades (RPG), 16 Rocket Propel Grenades Charger, one Rocket Propel Grenade Tube, 76 Military Grenade, 1 SMG riffle, nine pistols, 17 AK47 riffles, 44 magazines, 11,433 rounds of 7.62mm special ammunitions and 103 packets of slap TNT. "Investigation also confirms the existence of a Hezbollah foreign terrorist cell in Nigeria. "Consequently, the DSS on 16 May 2013 arrested one Mustapha Fawaz, the co-owner of the popular Amigo Supermarket as well as the Wonderland Amusement Park, all in Abuja.

### Conclusions

Austin's (1962) *How to do things with words* has been able to demonstrate in various ways how human beings that possess linguistic and communicative competence use language to perform different types of action. In other words, making use of language to communicate goes beyond making an utterance; the user goes further to perform action. Such action, in turn, generates ripple effects on the hearers, from whom such action elicits reactions of variegated dimensions. In the present study, it is clearly evident how the Boko Haram sect members have not only made effective use of their linguistic and communicative competence to make utterances but also utilised them to perform actions, which have elicited reactions from their hearers as well as exerted profound impacts on the Nigerian social context and that of the international community. Anchored on the theoretical framework of socio-pragmatics, an interface study, which accounts for how the conditions of language use derive from the social situation, this work analysed the communicative activity of Boko Haram insurgents in relation to their intentions and actions and the resultant reactions of the hearers.

From the perspective of Austin's Speech Act Theory, Boko Haram's language of insurgency was subjected to a three-level analysis. To this effect, we accounted for the following three aspects of Boko Haram's communicative activity: (i) locutionary act (what they said, the form of the words uttered, the act of making utterances); (ii) illocutionary act (what the Boko Haram sect members do with their utterances, the function of the utterances, the specific purposes that the sect members have in mind); and (iii) perlocutionary effect (the result of the utterances). The success/appropriateness or failure/inappropriateness of such communicative activity was determined by subjecting them to Austin's felicity conditions of sincerity, preparatory, executive, and fulfillment. The picture that emerges therefrom bespeaks of iron belligerency, combative doggedness, galvanic purposefulness, and suicidal determination of an Islamic sect to actualise its avowed sectarian objective of creating an Islamic state in Nigeria. This locutionary act matched by its corresponding illocutionary force have thrown up a lot of issues bordering on the colossal loss of human lives and property, national security challenges and threat to global peace. The burgeoning sectarian insurgency has polarized Nigerians along the traditional ideological, religious, ethnic, and geopolitical fault lines. Condemnations and abatement of equal measure have trailed the insurgency. For the predominantly Christian southerners, Boko Haram insurgency is a renewed kind of condemnable religious genocide targeted at them. For the northerners, whose relationship with the south is defined through the skewed prism offered by the Hausa-Fulani oligarchy, Boko Haram is its military subterfuge, whose insurgency provides a cover to prosecute its agenda of reclaiming political power in 2015, which it negotiated away to the southerners in 1999.

For the western powers driven by vested economic interests in Nigeria, Boko Haram insurgency needed to be dressed in the borrowed robes of popular poverty-driven class uprising, and security efforts aimed at clipping the wings of the bugbear must be targeted, tempered and humane. "A coordinated government effort to provide responsible, accountable governance to all Nigerians, while creating opportunities for economic growth, will diminish the political space in which Boko Haram operates," US Ambassador Carson had argued. Moreover, the idea of designating Boko Haram as an FTO is not even contemplated by the US. Clearly, the United States' posturing, notes Alabo-George (2012), "is that it will be politically injurious to their strategic interest in the region, if they list the terrorist sect Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) or even attempt to support the Federal Government's military effort overtly." He argues further that the condition for the listing of a terrorist organization like Boko Haram as an FTO is mostly based on political permutations rather than its level of viciousness or the threat the organization poses to local and world peace. For instance, Hezbollah is considered as an FTO by the United States but not the United Kingdom.



In February, 2012, Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT) the terrorist organization (with lot of similarities with Boko Haram), which seeks to establish an Islamic caliphate in Indonesia, was added to the Foreign Terrorist Organization list by the United States, following its attacks on Indonesian police, government personnel and citizens and churches. In the case of Boko Haram, it serves the interests of the US to downplay Boko Haram's terrorist trappings and blame the insurgency on poverty, chiding the Nigerian government for economic alienation of the North. Boko Haram has killed much more police officers than the JAT; they have bombed much more churches than the JAT; they have killed more government officials than the JAT; they have killed more innocent citizens than the JAT. They have executed the most daring kinds of attacks and have a higher horror profile than the JAT with regards to foreigners killed. Yet, while the United States considers JAT good for listing as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, it doesn't consider Boko Haram good enough for such designation because, it does not pose substantial threat to its strategic interests. This position serves the interests of US at least for now until perhaps, when Boko Haram stretches its terrorist tentacles to ensnare her economic interests in the northern Nigeria's Chad basin as well as the Republics of Chad and Cameroun.

The Jonathan-led Federal Government needs to see through this posturing and tackle the Boko Haram head-on as a personal fight. The declaration of state of emergency in the three states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa and the proscription of Boko Haram are good steps. Extra political will is needed to sustain the gains of the emergency rule and finally put to an end the Boko Haram nightmare.

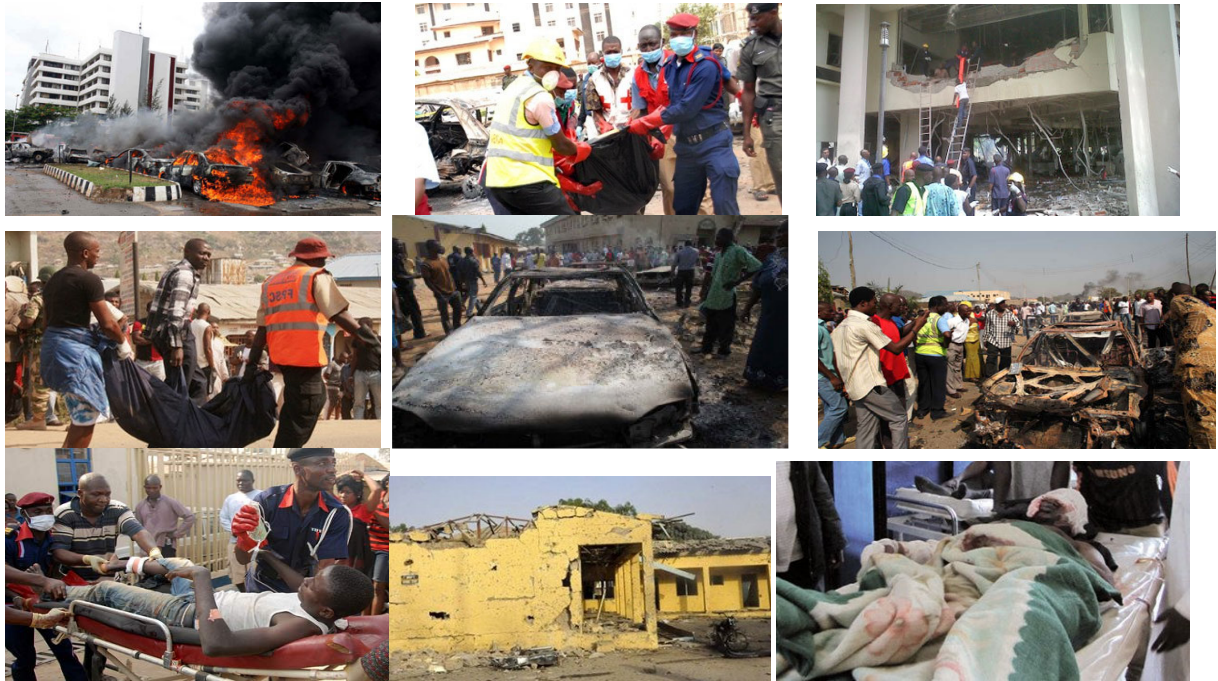
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## Appendix

A sample of the gory scenes of Boko Haram's insurgency in Nigeria



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