

# The Economic and Security Implications of Boko Haram Terrorism

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## Abstract

For quite some time now, Nigeria has been experiencing unprecedented level of insecurity as a result of Boko Haram insurgency. Based on the prevailing insecurity situation, the paper argued that Boko Haram terrorism has far-reaching devastating consequences for Nigeria's social, economic and political development. The insecurity has further proved that Nigeria is a 'failing state', characterized by militancy, ethno-religious conflicts, armed robbery, kidnapping, assassination, electoral malpractices, political ineptitude and pervasive corruption. All these have threatened the legitimacy and the corporate existence of the nation. Accordingly, the paper concluded that Boko Haram insurgency is a creation of the Nigerian State which has failed to resolve the aged long knotty national questions, hence the manifestations of various forms of violence in the country.

**Keywords:** Boko Haram, Security, Terrorists, Insurgents, Threat.

## Introduction

Since the emergence of democratic governance in 1999, Nigeria has been overwhelmed by one form of violence or the other. These upheavals range from youth restiveness, ethnic crises, religious antagonism, insurgencies to outright terrorism. The consequence of the violence for the Nigerian State has been devastating.

The spate of violence in Nigeria is symptomatic of a "failing state" if not a "failed state". A failed state describes a state which is unable to perform its legitimate functions, such as the maintenance of its territorial integrity, the security of its population and property, including the provision of basic public services to its citizens, among others. Nigeria may not yet be ascribed the label of a failed state but it is right to describe it as a failing state, having the features such as widespread violence and insecurity, poverty, unemployment, ethnicity, electoral malpractices and kidnapping (Akpotor and Oromareghake, 2013:75).

As a failing state, Nigeria is also characterized by institutional and governmental failures which in turns hamper growth and human development (UNDP, 2009: 103). With the level of poverty at 54.4 percent (70 million poor), in the country, Nigeria, is a failing state with lack of focus on human needs and welfare, and the fact that the majority are impoverished, deprived and alienated.

The carnage perpetrated since 1999 in the country is nothing short of terrorism in the actual meaning of the term. The UN Secretary General (2004), referred to terrorism as any act intended to cause serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a governmental or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act.

According to Olugbode (2010), the US government defined terrorism as "a premeditated politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents". Terrorism is a purposeful behaviour designed to influence targets beyond the moment of victimization and or beyond the direct victims of the violent acts (Stohl, 1988:157). Terrorism therefore, is a strategy of desperation characterized by violence in order to influence the behaviour of others to achieve a political goal.

Nigeria is experiencing its worst form of violence in history perpetrated by Boko Haram. Boko Haram group has been terrorizing the country, alleging that it is dissatisfied with the existing Nigerian State because of its western value orientations. The sect therefore intends to overthrow the government with a view to introducing an Islamic Sharia style government in the country. The zealots abhor the legitimacy of the secular Nigerian State because the sect regards it as 'evil' and does not deserve allegiance. Boko Haram was founded by Mohamed Yusuf who was killed extra-judicially. Mallam Abubakar Shekau succeeded the late Yusuf.

The sect has embarked on guerilla warfare with the State since 2009. Since the onslaught, it has destroyed several lives and properties like police stations, army barracks, customs house, public squares and places of worship, like churches and Mosques. Boko Haram is suspected to be associated with other Islamic extremist groups in the neighbouring Countries, particularly, Al Qaeda. Boko Haram's method of operations is suggestive of this external dimensions.

## CONCEPTUALIZATION

### Terrorism

The concept, terrorism, is complex and surrounded with confusion. This is because of its political implication. Some violent groups considered themselves as freedom fighters not terrorists. There is a great deal of problem differentiating between them since all perpetrate almost the same acts of violence. However, reliable authorities have attempted a definition of terrorism, agreeing on some basic criteria. Some of the common features drawn

from the definitions of expert include:

- i. The use of illegal force
- ii. Sub-national actors
- iii. Unconventional methods
- iv. Political motives
- v. Attacks against civilian and passive military targets
- vi. Acts aimed at purposefully affecting an audience

Hoffman (1982:25), defined terrorism as the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of change. The Defense Department of the U.S (1990), defined terrorism as “the unlawful use of, or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property, to coerce and intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives”.

Terrorism as used in this paper is not different from the definitions above. Therefore terrorism describes any acts of violence perpetrated against designated targets mainly civilians, for political, Ideological, religious or some other motives.

### **Security**

Security can be defined as the totality of actions and measures as well as legislative and operational procedures taken to ensure peace, stability and the overall well being of a nation and its people (Shinkeiye, 2004). Security refers to a feeling of safety from harm or danger and the defense, protection and preservation of core values. In short, security has to do with survival and human existence (Francis, 2006: 22-23).

With the end of the cold war, the concept of security has been scrutinized and expanded to include “human security” instead of its traditional military pre-occupation as it used to be previously. Accordingly, human security is seen as peoples’ safety from threats and protection from sudden hurtful disruptions in patterns of daily life (Galadima, 2006:42).

With the increasing threats to homeland security by non-state actors, the notion of security has now become elastic to include other than the military component, economic strength, internal cohesion, good governance, environment, quality of life, technology, health, education, political stability and social justice. Therefore, the term as used here, refers to both the military and the non-military or human aspects of security.

### **Threat**

Threat is anything that constitutes danger to the security, survival and peace of a state as an entity and everything within the territorial domain of the country.

Threat refers to anything that undermines or has the potentiality of undermining the ability of the state to function, optionally towards promoting the well being of the people.

Threat can be viewed from two perspectives, internal and external. Internal threat is anything that disrupts the social economic and political equilibrium of the state, such as political thuggery, bad governance, ethnicity, armed robbery, extreme poverty, youth restiveness, religious extremism, hostage taking and terrorism (Mbachu and Eze, 2009). Externally, threat can come from outside a state.

Within the context of the present circumstance in the country, the Boko Haram insurgency and terrorism adequately depicts a threat situation.

### **Emergence and Philosophy of Boko Haram**

From available information, the origin of Boko Haram can be traced to Abubakar Lawan. The sect was known by the name *Ahiulsunna Wa! Jama ah Hijra*. Another account traced the origin of the sect to 1995 under the name *Shabaab*, Muslim youth Organization in Maiduguri, Borno state, also with Mallam Lawan as its leader ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/boko\\_Haram](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/boko_Haram)).

The record also revealed that Abubakar Lawan proceeded abroad for studies and Mohammed Yusuf succeeded him as the leader of the sect. It was under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf that the sect gained influence and notoriety (Onuoha, Odoh and Chilaka, 2012:3). Mohammed Yusuf who was extra-judicially killed in 2009, hailed from Yobe State. He had formal Islamic education and strong radical ideology. Based on his radical convictions, he was constantly in conflict with other moderate Islamic adherents.

Boko Haram official name is, *Jama, atu Ah!is Sunna Lidda, await Wa!- Jihad*. The sect has changed its nomenclature over the periods such as *Muhajirun*, *Yusuffiyyah*, *Nigerian Taliban*, Boko Haram and so on. The sect is disenchanted with the existing secular Nigerian State and the ruling classes. They are against social injustice, corruption and widening gap between the rich and the poor. They perceived the police as enemies. The group’s aspiration is to implement strict shariah law and enthrone Islamic republic in Nigeria. To that extent, Boko Haram aims to destroy the system of secular government and all its symbols.

As a Salafist Jihadist group, Boko Haram claims to be committed to the propagation of Islamic faith in Nigeria. To that extent, Mohammed Yusuf established a religious complex, including mosque and school in

Borno State. Student from the north and neighbouring Chad and Niger Republic were his students. The centre also served as a recruiting ground for the purpose of insurgency.

In terms of organization, Boko Haram has a well organized and coordinated pattern of authority designed for attack and violence. The sect is headed by a leader with two deputies. In the states where the sect exists, there is a commander or Amir. In the local governments where they operate, there are also Amirs, Below the Local Government Area Commanders are the lots of the followers. The sect operates clandestinely and this makes them elusive to security operatives. Their funding derives from three main sources, namely, levy by members, donations from individuals and organization and external sources especially Al Qaeda (Onuoha, 2011:92).

### **Activities of Boko Haram**

It will be pretty difficult to catalogue the atrocities of Boko Haram since they re too numerous, moreso, when the orgy of violence still continue unabated. However, some major ones are presented in this paper.

Boko Haram's operation started in 2009 when the sect struck on July 26, 2009 in Dutsan – Tanshi, Bauchi State. Prior to 2009, the sect was veiled until the killing of its leaders Mohammed Vusuf. Thereafter, the group vowed to carry out reprisal attacks. Since then, the violence escalated both in intensity and frequency. In short, the sect leader, Mallam Abubakar Shekau, in a press release said unequivocally, that he would kill and eliminate irresponsible political leaders of all leanings, hunt and gun down those who oppose the rule of Sharia in Nigeria.

To match words with action, Boko Haram has been inflicting incalculable havoc on the country, particularly, in the north where the sect is based. Statistics have shown that between July 2009, and January 2012, Boko Haram conducted about 160 attacks, leading to the death of over 1000 persons and displacing hundreds. The main targets of the zealots include government buildings and infrastructures, Police stations, Churches, Schools, Banks, and UN office and so on. Their attacks have occurred mainly in Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Yobe, Kano, Kaduna, Jigawa, Niger, Plateau including Abuja (Onuoha, 2012).

Boko Haram has carried out attacks on symbolic targets. Their symbolic targets include buildings and important anniversaries. Examples of their symbolic targets where attacks have occurred were Christmas and Easter celebrations. In addition, the sect has carried out or threatened to carry out attack on important Ceremonial days such as Independence Day. Particularly disturbing in the Boko Haram terrorism, is its targeting of those who it regards as infidels or non-Muslim worshippers (Nees, 2013:505).

In 2005, Boko Haram attacked over 50 churches and barbarically beheaded pastors who refused to convert to Islam. In December 2010, the zealots killed a gubernatorial candidate of the All Nigeria People Party. In the same year, over 29 churches were burnt and pastors killed To display its sophistication, in August 2011, the sect effectively used suicide bombing on the United Nations headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, killing 23 persons. In addition, a horrendous Boko Haram killing spree occurred between January 20 and January 22, 2012 when the group massacred 300 people in Kario through suicide bombings and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (IED).

In March 2012, Boko Haram attacked a Catholic church in Jos and killed 6 people who were worshipping. On Easter Sunday, the sect killed 38 Christians while worshipping, using a vehicle bomb (Al Jazeera, 2012).

The orgy of violence against Christians in the north continued in 2013 in Kogi State when Boko Haram raided a church and killed worshipers. The situation alarmed the Christian Elders Forum of Northern States (NOSCEF), compelling them to raise their voices against the atrocities of the sect. The Forum revealed that between January 2014 and February 9, 2014, 367 persons had been killed in Adamawa, Benue, Borno, Kaduna, Katsina and Plateau States (NOSCEF, 2014).

To prove Boko Haram really mean “western education is evil”, since March 2012, the insurgents had set on fire over 12 primary and secondary schools in the three most affected States in the North. In September, 2013, the sect attacked students' dormitories in Momudo village, Yobe State, killing about 39 students In February 2014, 59 children of the Federal Government College, Buni Yadi, Yobe State were killed (Udumebra, 2014:45).

In April 14, 2014, Boko Haram Islamic sect carried out the worst dastardly act of terrorism when they abducted 276 female students at Government Girls' Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/chibok-schoolgirl-kidnapping](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/chibok-schoolgirl-kidnapping)). As the search for the Chibok girls continues, attacks have occurred severally in Abuja and elsewhere in the North. The offensive embarked upon by the combined troops from Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria has resulted in the killings of many of the insurgents. In addition, some villages taken over by Boko Haram have been reclaimed.

Boko Haram uses sophisticated weapon such as AK 47 rifles, Fusil Automatique Léger, (FAL), Belgian made, self-loading rifle rocket launchers, R.P.G., improvised explosives device (IEDs) and bombs. Some members of the sect received training from outside. Intelligence report has also shown that the sect recruits

fighters from outside, mainly from the neighbouring Countries, such as Chad, Cameroon and Niger Republic. The porous borders is not also helping matters as they facilitate the escape of insurgents after carrying out attacks (Uwerunonye, 2014:38-39).

### **Economic Implications of Boko Haram Threat**

The Boko Haram insurgency has adversely affected the economy of the north and by extension Nigeria generally. Every sector of the economy is disrupted in one way or the other by the sect's continued violence and insecurity in the Country. The economy of the country has been plunged into recession. According to the Human Rights Watch (HRW), Nigeria has lost more than 935 of its human capital between 2009 and 2012. The World Investment Report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimated that the domestic economy lost a whopping N 1.33 trillion Foreign Directs Investment (FDI), as a result of the activities of the Boko Haram (Okereocha, 2012:46).

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), 2010 Annual Report showed that the total foreign capital inflow into the Nigerian economy stood at \$5.99 billion. The FDI represented about 78.1 percent drop from \$3.31 billion in 2009. The insecurity in the country has been clearly reflected as several other economic indicators have shown. For instance, Nigeria was ranked 14th in the list of the most failed states in the world out of the 177 Countries surveyed. Nigeria ranked 15th in 2009, 18th in 2008, 17th in 2007, 22nd in 2006, 54th in 2005. This shows that the country's ranking is getting worst over the period. Nigeria's worst scores were recorded in categories such as: Group Grievance (9.6), Uneven development (9.0), Legitimacy of the state (9.0), Public services (9.0) Security Apparatus (9.1), and factionalized Elite (9.5) (Eme and Jide, 2012).

The security posed by the Boko Haram insurgency has crippled the economy of the north in particular. As non indigenes moved out of the north, their economic contributions are withdrawn with attendant economic downturn. As this drain is crippling the economy in the north, it has a revibrating effects in the Nigerian macro-economy. This is because, apart from the churches, the sect also attacks commercial places like markets, parks, government agencies and banks (Okereocha, 2012:47).

To further buttress the point above, about half of the 10,000 shops and stalls in the markets, in Mauduguri have been deserted by the traders who fled the city. In the same vein, about 35 percent of the over three million Igbo engaged in both small and medium scale business have abandoned their businesses for other places as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency (<http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/how-boko-haramactivities-destroy-economy-of-the-north/i-22763/>).

The activities of Boko Haram has affected foreign investment not only in the North but Nigeria generally and threatened the Transformation Agenda of the Federal government tremendously. The situation is compelling prospective investors to turn to stable economies to invest their money. When prospective investors hear news of violence and insecurity, they change their plans because issues of security is paramount to international investors. While this is happening, some industries operating in the North are relocating since the region is not safe for industrial activities. Another area affected by the insecurity in the North is tourism. The money accruing to tourism, estimated to be N80 billion annually is disrupted by Boko Haram (Suleiman, 2012:44-45).

The worst effect of the Boko Haram insurrection is, experienced in the agricultural sector. Food items like yam, beans, tomatoes among others are produced in the North and consumed in most cities in the South. But since the Boko Haram menace started, prices of the affected agricultural produce coming from the North have hiked due to scarcity. This is because farmers can no longer go to their farms since they have become havens and battle fields for terrorists.

### **Security implications of Boko Haram Threat**

The Boko Haram menace has had damaging security implications for Nigeria such as giving signal to the international community that Nigeria is unsafe for even ordinary visit Statistics released by Global Peace Index, (GPI, 2012) have shown that between 2011 and 2012, there is a significant decline in peace as Nigeria dropped four places to 146th out of 158 countries in global peace ranking. As a matter of fact, Nigeria has been identified as the least peaceful country in West Africa (Igbuzor, 2011:7).

The widespread insecurity in the North has caused decline in the development of the country with implication for human, economic, political, security and psychological dimensions. There is symbiotic relationship between development and security. Expenditures on security are essential components of the development process. The use of resources to improve a country's security system could be more beneficial in others areas. Therefore, insecurity is a drain on national resources at the expense of people's well being. The adverse effects of insecurity on the economic growth and development of a nation is quite enormous.

Most often when terrorists destroy human lives and property, the government responds by providing relief materials for the victims of terrorism. The huge amount of money that is released in such circumstances is a drain on the public treasury and the nation's economy. For instance, in the 2012 budget, the federal

government allocated 21.91 (US\$5.58) billion to security agencies (Opukri and Etekepe: 2013:377). Therefore, terrorists acts such as the Boko Haram hinders the development of the nation and increases the level of poverty.

Another damaging consequences of the phenomenon of Boko Haram terrorism is that it is tarnishing the image of Nigeria abroad. With the designation of Boko Haram as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) with the potential to kill foreigners; Nigeria is on the list of countries that are unsafe for foreign nationals. This situation is diminishing the integrity or rather the prestige of Nigeria in the comity of nations.

Within Africa, the consequences of insecurity for Nigeria's leadership role is disturbing. John Kufuor, former Ghanaian President, remarked that insecurity is the bane of Nigeria's development and is also making Nigeria unable to claim its rightful leadership position in Africa (Kufour, 2012:8).

The implication of the above assertion is that Nigeria cannot give what it does not have. In essence, Nigeria's leadership position in Africa regional conflicts is questioned as she cannot guarantee her own security that is threatened by Boko Haram.

## Conclusion

From the discussion so far, the Boko Haram insurgency represents the worst threat to Nigeria's peace, security and stability. Boko Haram Phenomenon can be attributed to the failure of the Nigerian government to provide basic social services to the teeming population in the country. Though, this cannot be justification for armed insurrection and violence. The threat posed by the zealots has negatively impacted Nigeria polity, jeopardizing its social, political and economic development. The major aspiration of the sect is to destroy Nigeria's democratic institutions and to enthrone Islamic Sharia rule rather than its existing secular system.

Compelled by the spate of violence and the impunity with which the Boko Haram has been ravaging the North, the federal government responded by mobilizing its security forces to tackle the menace. Though, the sect has shown resilience, the federal government is daily improving its counter-terrorism measures to the effect that the activities of the sect are now restricted to only three states in the North, namely, Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States. Through the combined effort of the troops from Chad, Cameroon, Niger, the Nigeria army is having upper hand in the war against the insurgents. Many of the Boko Haram captives including women and children have been rescued from Sambisa forest, the den of the Boko Haram in Borno State.

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