

Dynamics of Religious Fundamentalism: A Survey of Boko Haram Insurgency in Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

A curious feature of Nigeria is religious intolerance, especially in the Northern and the Middle Belt regions of the country. Religious fundamentalism in the Northern part of Nigeria has been hidebound and its spread is unbridled. For over two years, cities like Maiduguri, Bauchi, Damaturu and Gombe has worn a cloak of fear due to the Boko Haram insurgencies. Religious violence has been unleashed on many innocent citizens of this country. There is palpable apprehension among the citizens due to the Boko Haram insurgencies in the different parts of the Northern region. Although it has led to huge loss of lives, destruction of property and untold human misery, governments, policy makers and the political class do not seem to give the challenge the attention that it deserves. Boko Haram literally means "Western Education is sinful" or "Education is forbidden". Exploring in some depth the religious fundamentalism and the Boko Haram violence, we find unexpected dynamics in the approach and targets of the Boko Haram sect as well as the culture of denying difference, rigid thinking and a defensive spirituality. While scholarly interest in the crises has increased in recent times, there is need to undertake rigorous empirical analysis of the phenomenon to unravel the political intrigues behind the perennial religious upheavals in the country. Therefore this paper will basically look at the factors behind religious fundamentalism in Northern Nigeria and examine its impact on the harmonious existence of different religious sects in the country. We shall do this by first looking at the emergence of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria. When that is done, we shall address the psychodynamics of religious fundamentalism vis-à-vis Boko Haram attacks on government agencies and machineries. This development is considerable and topical, for it is part of the pattern of mayhem and pogrom and spiritual revolutions that is sweeping across Northern Nigeria.

Keywords: Religion, Fundamentalism, Boko Haram, Violence, Dynamics, Spirituality

1.0 Introduction

The emergence of democratic governance in 1999 sprang up with a most turbulent start for Nigerians as the country's democracy started experiencing growing political tensions. Several contextual elements concur in plunging the Nigerian state into such an existential crisis. The first crisis was the religious violence that broke out in 2001 which pitted Christians against the Muslims in the northern city of Kaduna against the backdrop of fears that the Kaduna State government was on the verge of introducing Islamic Sharia Law across the state (Omotosho, 2005). Afterwards, we started witnessing different communal strife and new security threats all over the country, for instance, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) insurgencies in the Niger Delta, Odua People's Congress (OPC) revolt in the Western parts of the country, the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) protest in the Eastern parts of Nigeria, as well as with other segments of the nation deteriorates the peaceful co-existence and mutual confidence that would have been amongst all the diverse ethnic tribes in the country (Omotosho, 2009a). Much of the news emanating from the northern parts of Nigeria and the Middle Belt of the country has almost without exception had to do with episodic outbreaks of intra-religious, inter-ethnic conflicts and Islamic militant insurgencies, resulting in the death of thousands over the corresponding period. Historically, the ethno-religious conflict and the militant insurgencies have broken out for reasons which include but are not limited to ideological concerns, for instance, the pursuit of vendetta, religious intolerance, asserting political dominance or exclusivity and the emergence of isolationist fringe groups dedicated to fundamentalist interpretations of scriptural matters (Egwu, 1993; Babangida, 2002; Eberlein, 2009).

Over the last three years attention has focused, *inter alia*, on the Boko Haram and its Islamic militancy, fundamentalism and the rapid growth of politically quietist Boko Haram sect in Northern parts of the country. The recent Boko Haram's campaign of suicide bombing both to intimidate systematically all opposition to it and to revenge itself on the authorities who sought to destroy its fundamental doctrines of Islam is indeed new. Many would have noticed that the recent Boko Haram militant insurgencies seem to shift from the traditional religious protests to another wave of revolts in form of suicide bombing in the North Eastern parts of the country and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The activities of the Boko Haram are not surreptitious, this sect used sophisticated weapons and explosives, such as car-bombs and grenades, often launched by men driving vehicles or riding motorbikes. Some targeted assassinations, however, have been carried out in private houses, by men entering on foot (Last, 2011). This development, no doubt is dangerous and a threat to the security of the Nigerian state. Although we need to acknowledge that the Boko Haram revolt finds its *raison d'être* in local contexts and on national issues, their expressions are more diverse and are explicitly articulated as religious

politics (Nnanna, 2011). Boko Haram wants a stronger implementation of Sharia and the purification of our society which has been marked by dictators at the service of western economic and political interests. This revolt is not just against the tyrants but also against the 'system'. However, the emergence of Boko Haram is not an isolated phenomenon but as one of the many responses to the challenges of Nigeria's nascent democracy which still leaves us with the pressing question about the sincerity of our political leaders (Tell, May 16, 2011).

Despite efforts made by the federal government to hammer out an amicable solution to the ethno-religious conflict in the country, unfortunately, religious conflict and Islamic insurgencies continued unabated. For instance, the interfaith dialogue which is expected to be beneficial at all levels of religious hierarchies and across all segments of religious communities and the state and federal governments' efforts have suffered a great setback, the religious fundamentalists indulged in more and more indiscriminate killings in a desperate bid to prove their existence and to boost the sagging morale of their remaining cadres (Omotosho, 2009b). In fact some of the religious leaders do not want the peace process initiated by the government to succeed as they have perpetrated the gruesome violence to derail the country's nascent democracy (Little, 2010). Basically, this paper is concerned with an analysis of religious fundamentalism with reference to recent insurgencies by the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria. To do this meaningfully, we will discuss the basic tenets of Islamic fundamentalism against the backdrop of various socio-political dimensions of Nigeria polity. Furthermore, the paper will examine the implication of the new Boko Haram fundamentalism and the conflicting dynamics of political interests of the political elites in the country. Also, the paper seeks to address the spiritual revolutions and the survival of the Nigerian state, as there is no doubt that all these issues are considerable and topical.

2.0 Psychodynamics of Islamic Fundamentalism – A Conceptual Analysis

The designation 'religious fundamentalist' was first applied by conservative evangelicals inside the mainstream Protestant denominations in the early years of the twentieth century, as a generic term, though it is now widely applied to a multitude of groups outside the corpus of Christianity, especially, but not exclusively, to Judaist and Islamist entities (Caplan, 1987; Woodhead and Heelas, 2000). A defining character of religious fundamentalism is that it is always socially but not necessarily politically conservative. Cox (1984) and Haynes (1993) also observe that, Islamic fundamentalist groups seek an overthrow of the socio-economic and political order by the use of various means, including: violence or terrorism, incremental reform of existing political regimes or by winning elections through the mobilisation of a political party. Milton-Edwards (2005) in her presentation adopted a broad survey of Islam and its history and using both its chronological and theoretical approach, she traced the origin and growth of Islamic fundamentalism and its impact on global politics. She argues that, Islamic fundamentalism is the product of both external and internal factors that operate in Islamic societies. The religious resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism is often further explained as a defence against outside modernity's threats to a religious group's traditional identity (Marty and Appleby, 1991). The psychology becomes further complicated when national, ethnic and religious identities intertwine, and the restoration of past traditions becomes a mechanism for national self preservation and cultural purity; this can occur even when the threats to a group's identity are not externally generated. The radical Islamic fundamentalist is often described as an acutely alienated individual, with dogmatic and rigid beliefs (Monroe and Kreidie, 1997).

Roxanne Euben (1995) discussed Islamic fundamentalism in the wider framework of a theory of fundamentalism. He argued that, Islamic fundamentalism needs to be properly delimited as an analytic category to be useful within the overall analysis of the religious phenomenon called fundamentalism. Euben's challenge of fundamentalism offers a clear and analytically interesting version of Appleby's fundamentalism and modernity thesis (Appleby, 2001). His position provides authoritative guidelines delineating the philosophical discourse of Islamic fundamentalism. Euben is both an apologist for Islam as a religion and a 'hawk' when it comes to its fundamentalist manifestation. He argues that, the philosophical roots of Islamic fundamentalism are largely the result of a conscious attempt to revive and restate the theoretical relevance of Islam in the modern world. In contrast to the above is Lawrence's (1998) discussion on Islamic fundamentalism, his work, no doubt is most compelling, and the one that most directly approaches the kind of perspective on Islamic fundamentalist. Lawrence argues that there is a cognitive collision between Western and fundamentalist worldviews, a stance also taken in historical work by Furniss (1954). Lawrence focuses on Islamic fundamentalists and argues that their goals are perceived not as interests but rather as moral imperatives. Moreover, the goal of the fundamentalist is to maximise not self-interest but rather the soul, destiny and moral conditions of their community. Islam and fundamentalism are perceived as a threat to the peace and security of the world. Islam is also seen as a manifestation and the nursery of fanaticism, obscurantism and violence. To many, Islam and Jihad have become synonymous (Milton-Edwards, 2005). The fundamental principles of Islam and the injunctions of its laws are one seamless garment woven by God for his creatures. The Greek as well as the Aristotelian expressed that we are all political animals by nature. Islamic fundamentalism contends that the basic instinct of human beings is intrinsically religious (Islamic fundamentalism). However, the term 'religious fundamentalism' has become increasingly common, both in academic and popular discourse. Numerous journal articles, books

and many scholars have postulated divergent opinions on the topic (Marty and Appleby, 1991; Lawrence, 1995; Pepe and David; 1991). Those accepting the analytical relevance of the term do so because they perceive modern day religious movements and the nature of their religious resurgence, albeit encompassing different religious traditions and various features in common which denote a shared concern with 'fundamentalism'.

3.0 The Emergence of the Boko Haram

The Boko Haram sect originally tagged themselves as *Jamaatul Alissunna lid da a wa wal Jihad* meaning 'People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad', but became widely known as 'Boko Haram' due to the ideology they disseminate. The term 'Boko Haram' literally comes from the Hausa and the Arabic Languages respectively. The Hausa word '*Boko*' means "Western or otherwise non-Islamic education" while the Arabic word "Haram" figuratively means "sin" (literally, "forbidden") (Johnson, 2011). The Boko Haram can be said to have been in silent existence since the early 1960's, but began to gain the attention of the public in 2002. Mohammed Yusuf, a Nigerian youth born in the village of Girgir in Yobe State, Nigeria became its leader in 2002 and in 2004 the group moved to Kanamma, Yobe State. He made Kanamma its headquarters (Shafei, 2011). The Boko Haram sect represents the uneducated casual labourers and the Almajiris in the Northern parts of Nigeria. It set up a religious complex, which included a mosque and an Islamic school.

The emergence of Boko Haram is a horse of another terrorist, and its brand of fundamentalism poses a grave challenge to the unity, security, and stability of the country (Ohaeri, 2011). The restoration of civil rule in Nigeria in 1999 and the consequent liberalisation of the political atmosphere provided an opportunity for the reintroduction of Sharia legal system, first in Zamfara state, and later in many other predominantly Muslim states in Northern Nigeria. Sharia has further reinforced religion in the politics of these states; power is now "in the name of Allah". The Sharia in these states is fully entrenched into laws and policies. It can be argued that Islamic indoctrination and the introduction of Sharia are more fundamental to the insurgency of the Boko Haram (Awosusi, 2011). Islamic indoctrination constitutes the basis of family upbringing and social formation in the Northern parts of the country. The agenda of Islamists are informed by what they are taught, told and preached to in their homes, mosques, at Arabic schools and Quranic indoctrination centres. Children from Muslim homes in Northern Nigeria often have their first form of education and instructions hinged on Islamic Indoctrination and brainwashing. So at a very tender age, the children have their minds infused with radical and fanatical creeds that shape, direct, influence and control their thoughts and conscience for the rest of their lives (Ibrahim, 1987; Kukah, 1993).

4.0 Political Intrigues and Boko Haram Insurgencies

It should be emphasised that the recent Boko Haram insurgencies in the Northern parts of the Nigeria cannot be totally divulged from sensitive political issues in the country. In Nigeria, the politics of religion and Islamic insurgencies in the Northern parts of the country centres on the nature of the state, especially its secular tradition and legal frame work. The contention is that, the Islamic fundamentalist believes that there is no separation of the sacred and the profane and the legal system that governs them. These Muslim actors have found a linkage between Nigerian secular state and Christianity and has vehemently opposed it and demanded for an Islamic state based on Sharia Law (Elaigwu and Galadima, 2003; Abdu, 2008). Also in Nigeria, especially in the Northern parts of the country, the religious fundamentalists do produce extremist sentiment. They tend to view their religious traditions as so closely tied to their community that any threat to any one of them is seen as a threat to their religion and their existence. Therefore, religious fundamentalist respond to threats to Islam by seeking a political entity in which their faith is privileged at the expense of others. In these contexts, it is also likely that religious symbols will come to be used to forward their political sentiments (Eke, 2011).

Every religion has a unique way of responding to different issues involving God, the Boko Haram militant insurgency is a protest and an opposition toward any form of power that is not guided by a divine scripture (Egwu, 2001). They further reiterated that, they were motivated by the neo-imperialism as well as the liberal underpinning of Western culture which is threatening the tradition and also prioritising the individual over the basic tenets of Islam. The Boko Haram insurgencies in Northern Nigeria show that the upswing of Islamism notwithstanding all the international dimensions cannot be comprehended without a consideration of the disastrous social and political situation in the country (Agbo, 2011b; Sheme, 2011). The Boko Haram sect move against everything considered to be 'Western'. Furthermore, the gerontocratic rule and the continued contempt of Islamic tenets by an oligarchy courted by the West will definitely lead to a much stronger proliferation of armed uprisings in different parts of the country (Awosusi, 2011). These so called fundamentalists are one of the grassroots responses to bad governance in Nigeria. That is, the insurgencies and suicide bombing by the Boko Haram sect show that the Islamic fundamentalist are all out for serious business and have lost confidence and hope in the political leadership of Nigeria.

Several reasons have been attributed to the new wave of Boko Haram uprising in Borno State and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. A school of thought argues that the Boko Haram sect engaged in their militant

activities as a reaction to perceived or real loss of power by Northern Muslim elite. That is, there are some disenchantment politicians behind the scene who instigated and supported the Boko Haram in an attempt to use religion to either hold on to power or to destabilise the new civilian government (Abdu, 2008). For Ohaeri, there can be no doubt that the Boko Haram issue and the post-election violence in the North are clearly reactions to perceived or real loss of power by an elite stratum that is predominantly “Northern” and also “Moslem” even if the leading figures in this agenda do not necessarily count religious piety among their greatest attributes. He further argues that, the emergence of Boko Haram insurgencies is a clear manifestation of contest over raw political power: who lost power, who won power, and who wants power back. The processes that threw up President Goodluck Jonathan as the candidate of this elite stratum were intimately bound up with the political crisis that has gripped the ‘northern’ political class (Ohaeri, 2011).

One can surely assume that radical Islamist groups in the North also entertain their contacts inside the state apparatus. Against the back drop of Boko Haram activities in the country, there is a popular allegation against the political class in Nigeria about the roles played by the different political parties and religious leaders (Last, 2011; Johnson, 2011). Taking into consideration some of the personalities arrested in connection with the Boko Haram activities, it is the belief of the populace that the state allowed the fundamentalists to operate for quite some time because some of them were formerly top government functionaries and has connections to the government. For instance, the majority of those assassinated by the Boko Haram sect in Maiduguri are government agents and other dignitaries. For instance, the younger brothers of the Shehu of Borno and the former Governor of Borno State were shot by rampaging Boko Haram. Also, before the 2011 general elections, the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) gubernatorial candidate was killed by the Boko Haram sect (Sheme, 2011; Balogun, 2011). Some of the politicians that have been killed by the Boko Haram sect in the last ten months have been members of one party, the ANPP, not for once has any member of any other party been felled by the bullets of the Boko Haram in Maiduguri and its environs. That gives enough room to conclude that perhaps the targeting of members of a particular political party has a political undertone.

The scenario surrounding the Boko Haram insurgencies is also pivotal issue in national politics; it became highly politicised and used in the contest for power between one group of elite purporting to represent one religious group or the other, especially within the context that Sharia has gained popularity among the masses of Northern Nigeria (Abdu, 2008). It should be noted that, the Boko Haram sect maintain close connections to political entrepreneurs in the Northern parts of the country. On assumption of office, some governors presented Sharia as a panacea to the socio-economic problems. The argument is that, the problems are as a result of governance devoid of the fear of God, and under Sharia, governance and power will be in the name of God and the overall interest of the people. Power will therefore be exercised according to the tenets of Islam and in the interest of all citizens (Kukah, 1993; Kenny, 2004). The Boko Haram saga can be argued to have emerged as a result of the abandoned Sharia project by some northern Nigerian Governors. It should be noted that, when the northern Governors introduced the Sharia legal systems in their states, the Boko Haram leaders thought that the “Sharia governors” were truly interested in the practice of Sharia, but when the governor recklessly abandoned the Sharia and the political dividends had been reaped by the Governors, the Islamists started all manners of projects considered best for deepening Islamic traditions in northern Nigeria (Albert, 2008). One major objective of the Boko Haram sect is generally considered to be the implementation of Sharia law in Nigeria, whose 140 million people are roughly divided between those adhering to Islam and Christianity. Another official position is that the Boko Haram group has a pathological hatred for western education and civilization. Of course, this is suggested by the name of the group. “Boko Haram” means “western education is evil”. From our findings, it has been revealed that, the Boko Haram sect is not opposed to the idea of “western education” as the name “Boko Haram” indicates but Boko Haram leader opposes the leadership style of their governors which rendered western education not too useful to those outside the ruling elite (Agbo, 2011a). These political leaders fail to conduct themselves according to the tenets of Islam as promised during their political campaigns in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 general elections. The fundamentalists are worried by the bad governance that makes the majority of those with western education to be jobless for many years while the few that have captured political powers use the same western education to protect their misuse of state power and ill-gotten wealth. The Boko Haram sect and its followers were influenced by the Quranic phrase which says "Anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors." Boko Haram promotes a version of Islam which makes it "Haram", or forbidden, for Muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with the Western society, including voting in elections, wearing shirts and trousers or receiving a secular education. It should be emphasised that the Boko Haram is not only disinterested in the conduct of western style of education, but part of its political goal is to create an Islamic state, and this Quranic School became a recruiting ground for jihadist to fight the state. As far as the Boko Haram is concerned, it was Nigerian leaders rather than the Islamists that claimed that they are against western education and civilization a bad name (Albert, 2008). Since 2009 when the Boko Haram commenced its act of violence, it has not attacked a single educational institution in any part of the country, its major targets have been the police stations,

governmental installations and eminent politicians.

Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf who headed the Boko Haram group was particularly hated by state officials not for campaigning against western education as the public was told but for devoting the best of his daily sermons to reminding the masses about the atrocities of state officials and their contributions to the failure of the Nigerian state. He and his preachers cursed Nigerian political office holders on daily basis and the size of loudspeakers they have at their mosques betray the seriousness they attach to this issue. Yusuf seemed to have ignited the wrath of some political leaders by calling their names out rightly during his sermons and calling attention to specific things they do against the people (Albert, 2008; Ibrahim, 2010). The popular belief of Nigerians is that the governors in various parts of northern Nigeria were familiar with Yusuf's "nuisance value" but could not call him to order largely because of the roles he and his followers played in their coming into office. For instance, key traditional and religious leaders in Bornu state have not been vocal in condemning the activities of the Boko Haram sect despite the several attacks and killings of private citizens, security officials and Christians (Ohaeri, 2011). Some public analysts have argued that, the speedy execution of Mohammed Yusuf, the Boko Haram leader was a way of ensuring that he did not live to mention the names of their supporters in government in the various parts of northern Nigeria. The truth that is known to many is that, several politicians in the region were given spiritual assistance by the likes of Yusuf for winning elections (Nnanna, 2011; Johnson, 2011).

Some Islamist fundamentalists also believe that some of the demands of the Boko Haram sect symbolise people's anger and rejection of their socio economic condition and an attempt to fashion out a system that will give them a sense of belonging. Furthermore, they argue that the failure of the state and those associated with it to cater for fundamental needs and aspirations translate into material deprivation and alienation which made them to begin to question prevailing ideas and institutions that directly affect them (Sheme, 2011; Marama, 2011). Furthermore, the excessive urban and rural abject poverty, whilst excessive wealth lies in the hands of a few aristocrats and the vicious cycle of national underdevelopment has in turn cultivated Islamic fundamentalism amongst the poor. This has consequently encouraged many of them to become jihadists. It is true to note that a great proportion of this feudal upper class is accountable for creating and enforcing such problems in their own country. However, the root of the rise and agitation of the Boko Haram in the Northern parts of the country is the failure of government to propel modernisation in order to deliver its promises of improvement to the mass of ordinary people within the present political dispensation. Some analyst therefore argue that, the Boko Haram insurgencies in different parts of Northern Nigeria and the FCT, Abuja carries within it the disillusionment with progress and the disenchantments of the first twelve years of our democratic dispensation (Ohaeri, 2011).

5.0 Consequences of Boko Haram Rebellion and the Future of Nigerian State

There is no doubt that, the continued insurgencies of the Boko Haram shows that Nigeria is a tinderbox, an unstably equilibrated country, sitting at the edge of a precipice. With the pitiable depth, Nigeria has sunk to in the last decade of religious staccato, many outside the shores of the country had thought that the world's most populous black nation has suffered serious calamity. Boko Haram insurgencies and violence has been a major threat to national security in Nigeria since the 2009 when the group declared its onslaught on some government institutions in the heartland of northern Nigeria, most especially in Bauchi, Borno, Kaduna, Kano and Plateau States (Nmodu 2011; James, 2011). A tour of these states and the Federal Capital Territory revealed how the Boko Haram insurgencies in the region have translated into violent political, ethnic and communal conflicts. In the urban cities in particular there has been a resurgence of religious militant leading to considerable destruction. The Boko Haram militants perpetrated almost simultaneous attacks on churches in Maiduguri (Ibrahim, 2011). Three militants armed with guns and petrol bombs attacked the Sinimari Church of Christ in Nigeria, riddling the walls with bullet holes and killing the security guard, while some 30 jihadists descended on Victory Baptist Church on the other side of the city (Marama and Omafuaire, 2011).

Boko Haram's trademark has been the use of gunmen on motorbikes, killing police, politicians and anyone who criticises it, including clerics from other Muslim traditions and Christian preachers. The situation created high levels of anxiety and most people fled Maiduguri. Many residents were displaced from Maiduguri and Biu areas where great destruction occurred. Also, there was stampede and greater destructions in Maiduguri, Bauchi and Yola. The state government swiftly reacted by imposing a dusk to dawn curfew. The murders of Christian and non indigenes, setting government buildings on fire, bank raid and a shooting-up of a police stations in Maiduguri, Bauchi, Gombe, and Yola, all these attacks were coordinated by the Boko Haram (Femi, 2011).

The continued insurgencies in Maiduguri and the recent suicide attack in Abuja were extremely disturbing. Many loads of Nigerian army personnel were dispatched to the troubled areas. The Boko Haram militant insurgencies took a new dimension when they engaged in suicide bombing, the 26th August 2011 attack claimed many lives and brought untold hardship to citizens, especially the officials and workers in the United Nations building where the attack was launched. It was reported that over twenty five civilians were killed in the

United Nations building suicide attack (Marama, 2011). Movement in the city was restricted, with civilians made to undergo thorough searches with their hands raised up, some suffering beatings with horsewhips from the soldiers. The bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Abuja is the first international target of the Boko Haram sect and this development can forge links with global jihadists, which if not properly tackled may destabilise the country.

However, our survey also identified that the Boko Haram militias undermine national stability and peace. Their various activities threatened the nation's unity and development, as well as the lives and properties of other citizens. It should be reiterated that, aside from that, the present violence and terror meted against other members of the communities has led to serious political and economic instability in that region. Finally, their modes of operation are inimical to peace and stability. As a result of the Boko Haram insurgencies, many people in major cities in the North Eastern parts of the country, i.e. Maiduguri, Bauchi and Damaturu were fleeing to safe abode as militants were engaged in fierce gun battles with the government security forces (Ndahi, 2011; Marama, 2011). The clashes saw several communities in the areas invaded by the military and then destroyed. These developments led to scores of deaths among the religious militias, local residents and many of the government security forces. Travels across the three core states of the North Eastern Region of Nigeria, Borno, Bauchi and Yobe states revealed how the instability in the region has translated into violent religious, political and communal conflicts. In the urban cities in particular, there has been a resurgence of the religious animosities leading to considerable violence and destruction (Haruna and Ogbodo, 2011).

It should also be emphasised that the activities of the Boko Haram militias in Maiduguri and environs has a negative impact on Nigeria's nascent democracy. The impact of Boko Haram insurgencies could be seen as a threat to democracy and national unity. Taking into consideration the numerous terrorist attacks by Boko Haram, the sect has emerged as a threat to the nation nascent democracy (Eke 2011; Odiogor, 2011). One major negative consequence of Boko Haram militant activities during the last general elections is that it facilitated election rigging and intimidating voters that came out to perform their civil responsibilities. The report from the election monitoring group in the North East region signifies that the activities of Boko Haram no doubt undermined democracy, because the Islamic militants obstructed the smooth conduct of the 2011 general elections in the region (Iho, 2011; Achi, 2011). It is against this backdrop that many opinion leaders were even more critical of and pessimistic about the role of the religious fundamentalist in the consolidation of democracy in the country.

Sometimes we are being compelled to conclude that not only are these politicians involved in the insurgencies, but perhaps, the brains behind it. Several groups are hiding under Boko Haram to perpetrate crimes. Armed robbers have found an alibi to operate unhindered to loot banks and politicians have found very good cover to kill their political opponents. Suspected members of the notorious radical Islamic sect, Boko Haram attacked a commercial bank and police station in Kankara Local Government Area of Katsina State, slaying five policemen and a civilian (Thewill, 2011). The continued insurgency of the Boko Haram indicates that the internal security is currently mired in a state of obfuscation. Security appointees have failed the nation, if we are to judge by the current state of affairs in the country and the uncontrollable of Boko Haram terrorist attacks. It should be emphasised that, the country is in a state of anarchy and lawlessness. It is a shame when the security could not check the excesses of the Islamic militant in the northern parts of the country. The aggressive posturing of the Boko Haram military recidivism into politics are all realities being faced in the country that requires urgent remediation (Onabanjo, 2011).

6.0 Conclusion

Conclusively, the criminalisation of religious fundamentalism in the country no doubt has been established, and this not only threatens the Nigerian national security but also the survival of Nigeria state. Therefore, to curb or control these internal security problems, our country requires commitment from security personnel and financial mobilisation to strengthen all the security agencies. The National Security Agency (NSA), the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) must have clear and achievable objectives on how to keep this country safe. The objectives as envisaged by NSA, must be articulated to State Security Service (SSS) and the Nigeria Police Force (NPF).

Our expectations are that of redress, harmony, peace as well as an orderly and progressive transformation that will accommodate all dissenting religious, socio-cultural as well as regional dissension that will inevitable precipitate from the application of our home-grown political system and redirect the leadership of our nascent democracy. The Federal Government should not allow the Boko Haram to degenerate to that level of illiberal nationalism that has periodically led to political intolerance and religious conflict in the country. No doubt that the Boko Haram sect considered violence to be a 'duty' and their activities as divinely directed, therefore, the national security agents should ensure that all sorts of religious insurgencies should be eliminated.

With incessant religious conflict in the Northern parts of the country, it is high time all the political stakeholders in the Nigerian state readdressed the issue of systemic and fully participatory manner at a Sovereign

National Conference. More importantly, all stakeholders must deliberate about what ails our country, about what it would mean if we must continue to have Nigeria as a sovereign nation, what its constituent federating units must be, and the relationship both between them and to the centre. We need to discuss the role of religion in the political arrangement of this country, and how we can intentionally grease the inevitable friction between the state and religious fundamentalism.

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