

## Socio-psychological deconstruction of fear of Boko Haram in Nigeria: The Nigerian media perspective

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### Abstract

“I defecated in my trousers when I heard the sound of bombs”... Adebayo

“It was catastrophic. Wallahi, I thought it was the end of the hour because I have never heard such a disturbing blast before”... Sani

This paper examines the language of fear and anxiety as an adaptive response to Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. In particular, the paper is interested in investigating the various contexts of fear, horror and terror, and assessing issues surrounding the linguistic significance of them. Using data drawn mainly from the Nigerian print media, it explores issues which lie at the interface of fear, horror and terror. In this regard, a theoretical underpinning of language of insurgency as a source of fear and horror in the Nigerian context is attempted. We examine the issues from the perspective of direct and indirect victims of Boko Haram acts of terrorism and insurgency who have been provoked by experiences of fear, horror and terror to give verbalise them by utilizing the immense linguistic resources at their disposal. By adopting a kind of flight response to the Boko Haram insurgency, the victims manifest the three basic conditions, which elicit anxiety- over-stimulation, cognitive incongruity, and response unavailability. For the direct victims, their cognitive, behavioural and physiological responses become debilitating as some optimal level of stimulation is aroused due mainly to failure to release benzodiazepines, which are necessary for the amount of Gamma Amino Butyric Acid (GABA) needed to regulate neuronal transmission. As regards the indirect victims represented by the Federal Government, the allurements of verging on the anvil of defence mechanism, illusion, and denial to simulate a semblance of national security in the face of raging Boko Haram inferno loses its appeal. This rude awakening summoned on the part of Government a renewed kind of political will, temerity and galvanic purposefulness to tackle the Boko Haram challenge with the full complement of its defence, security, and intelligence infrastructure. The paper's optimistic projection is that the success of the 'carrot and stick' campaign aimed at decapitating Boko Haram insurgency will go a long in stemming the corroding tide of fear and anxiety racking Nigerians and indeed the international community.

### 1. Introduction

The primary thrust of sociolinguistics as a sub-field of linguistics is accounting for language in society, that is, how human beings utilise their intuitive knowledge of language (linguistic competence) and knowledge of appropriate use of language (communicative competence) to achieve their communicative needs. In the present study, we examine the various ways Nigerians and members of the international community exploit the rich mines of language to express their feelings of fear and anxiety deriving from the terrorist activities of Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria. Kelvens (1997) drew the distinction between fear and anxiety. Anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotional state with qualities of apprehension, dread, distress, and uneasiness. Fear is similar to anxiety except that fear has a specific object. When some optimal level of stimulation or arousal is exceeded, one experiences anxiety. It can be an adaptive healthy response or a debilitating one. In the latter case mentioned, one may lose a large measure of ability to think, act, and perform. Anxiety is manifested in three ways: in a person's thoughts (cognitively), in a person's actions (behaviorally), and in physiological reactions.

According to Rachman (1990:3), "fear describes feelings of apprehension about tangible and predominately realistic dangers." The three components of fear, Rachman continues, are described as "the subjective experience of apprehension, associated psycho-physiological changes, and attempts to avoid or escape from fearful situations." Psychological research has demonstrated that fear can be acquired either through a conditioning process or by vicarious experiences. The conditioning theories, notes Mowrer (1939:554), postulate that fear is a learned response "occurring to signals (conditioned stimuli) that are premonitory of (i.e., have in the past been followed by) situations of injury or pain (unconditional stimuli)".

The Jame-Lange Theory offers another perspective of fear and anxiety as an adaptive response by suggesting that the basis of emotional experiences are based on peripheral and physiological sensations such as

heart rate and blood pressure. Fear and anxiety can be an adaptive response when one is confronted with an event that threatens their survival. Humans experience a kind of *fight or flight* response. Overall, sensory feedback controls emotional expression. Although, it is clear that high levels of anxiety and fear can lead to impaired psychological functioning, intellectual errors, and disturb concentration and memory, nonetheless, there is evidence that suggests that moderate levels of anxiety may serve as an adaptive function. As Kelvens (1997) further observes, it is believed that moderate anticipatory anxiety about realistic threats is necessary for the development of coping behavior. From an existentialist perspective, moderate anxiety is an appropriate response as an adaptive function to particular events or threats in one's life. This anxiety can be used as a motivation to change oneself or adapt to the situation.

In this work, we shall adopt an aspect of the theoretical framework, which sees fear as an adaptive response to threat to life. To this effect, the threat to life is represented by Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. In pursuance of this objective, we seek to deconstruct the communicative character of this psycho-social behaviour of Nigerians and the international community at large, that is, accounting for the ways they exploit the rich resources of language to express their apprehensions, anxiety and fears about Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Thereafter, we examine the perception of this climate of fear as depicted in the media.

## 2. Fear as an adaptive response to Boko Haram insurgency

In this section, we account for how Nigerians and the international community respond to the threat of Boko Haram insurgency either as direct or indirect victims.

### 2.1 Direct Victims of Boko Haram insurgency

From the onset, the evidence pointing to Boko Haram as motivation of fear among the direct victims of the insurgency derive from personal accounts of terribly horrific experiences, which they had. Let's illustrate this surging sea of fear, trauma, and anxiety that had suffused Nigerians, with the tales of horror told by victims of Boko Haram's terrorist attacks on the Living Faith Church building in Damaturu, Yobe State in November, 2011 as reported by the *Compass* newspaper hereunder:

When Boko Haram members and other Muslims here attacked us on that 4th of November, it was like the end had come for Christians in this settlement. Bullets were fired indiscriminately into our houses. I and my family locked ourselves in my house. Bullets were dropping on rooftops like ice blocks from a rainstorm. The trauma my 10-year-old son had as a result of sounds from guns and explosions has not left him, as he has refused to eat ever since the attack... Rev. Idris Garba

I defecated in my trousers when I heard the sound of bombs. I purged in my trousers when the bombs started exploding at the Federal Secretariat, but I never knew until the following day when I did not hear gunshots again because I live behind the Federal Secretariat. I even missed my way; instead of going inside YTV premises, I saw myself going back to the secretariat where the bombs were exploding. It is still a miracle how I escaped —Corps member Adebayo

It was catastrophic. Wallahi, I thought it was the end of the hour because I have never heard such a disturbing blast before... Sani

By the time we came out of the gate of the church, there was shooting everywhere. I did not see my wife and children until the following day. I did not even know where they were. We both ran in opposite directions. My heart kept thumping each time there was an explosion... An elder of Cherubim and Seraphim church.

I went to buy a ram for the Sallah celebration when my friend whispered in my ears that the town had been taken over by Boko Haram. Before I knew it, my wife had called me and asked me to stay wherever I was and not to come home. I had to enter the bush crawling like a wild animal, and each sound of explosion made my heart to jump. It was terrible!... Yakubu

I gave a policeman my clothes so that he can escape". "I saw a lot of them (policemen) naked, climbing trees; some were crawling on their stomachs like reptiles. There were many of them without their uniforms where we were hiding. What I saw was terrible. I pray it would never happen again... Bulama

This is my first time of knowing what passing through a psychological trauma really looks like. Even though I'm seated in my house now, I can't still bring myself together. The fear that they are still around, that they would strike any moment is still strong in me. I jump at any slightest sound. I can't even close my eyes because I would be seeing the whole thing again"...Female youth corps member

I saw an angel covering me and one police woman. We slept at the roof of the Police Headquarters. Only God knows why the place we were hiding wasn't bombed. It was a miracle that we survived. My phone started ringing when we were hiding; I switched it off and smashed it on the wall... a resident

The multiple bomb blasts that rocked Kano, northwestern Nigeria on 20 January 2012 and claimed over two hundred lives elicited pathetic expression of fear from residents and other well-meaning Nigerians. Farouk Mohammed, who lives near one of the bombed Police Stations, drove home the fear-drenched ancient city in the following words: "That's the scary part, not knowing what's going to happen next. No one thought this would ever happen here. There's a general sense of despair." The bombing of St. Finbarr's Catholic Church, Rayfield Jos Plateau State north central Nigeria on 11 March 2012, which claimed over 19 lives, drew the same expression of fear and horror from victims. The Parish Priest, Rev. Father Peter Umoren relayed his horrific experiences thus:

I don't know how to describe this; I'm short of words. We just commenced the 10 am Mass when the incident occurred. We finished the early Mass and those who attended it were on their way out of the church while those attending the 10am Mass were trooping in. I was right on the pulpit when we heard the heavy explosion. I did not know when I shouted 'Jesus'. The church building almost collapsed on the congregation, but God saved us; the roof did not come down but the ceiling was shattered.

In his eye-witness account, Sebastine Adah, said:

The car driven by the suicide bombers forced itself through the main gate of the church and let off the bomb right in front of the church. The mystery in this particular attack is how the suicide bombers were able to get through all the military check points in Rayfield without being noticed. I'm afraid there is no security in Jos in spite of the state of emergency...

One of the Youth Corps members deployed to Plateau State, Alexander Mathew relived his fears:

Our fear is deep because, each day, we see signs that we are not safe in this camp. A few days ago, 10 strange boys were arrested from our midst by security agencies. Those boys could be spies of Boko Haram and Boko Haram hates Corps members. We started this orientation barely two weeks ago and within two weeks, there have been two suicide bombings in Jos.

Dogo Danjuma, a victim of the bomb attack receiving treatment at the Plateau State Specialists Hospital, said:

I thank God mine is injury. Many have died. My worry now is what sort of security we have in Jos? There are soldiers at every check point and they stop and check vehicles coming in and out of Rayfield; why did the soldiers fail to see the explosives in the bombers' car. There is a kind of conspiracy here. And they say Jos is under state of emergency, yet we are not safe; we are not safe to worship; why?

In an interview with a British tabloid, *Telegraph* and re-published by the Nigerian newspaper, *The Nation* ([www.thenationonline.net](http://www.thenationonline.net) 12 March, 2013), former kidnap victim Robert Fowler, who spent 130 days in the hands of al-Qaeda's African 'monsters' warns that the killing of British hostage Chris McManus in Nigeria is a wake-up call to the threat posed by Islamic militants in Africa. He expressed his fears thus:

One of my captors was a young Nigerian from Kano; clearly what we would call an 'exchange officer'. The threat to the stability of the northern half of Africa posed by militant jihadi Islam is present and real. It has been exacerbated by the fall-out from our Libyan adventure, which has caused weapons in untold quantities to spew across one of the most fragile parts of the

world. Not only do Al Qaeda's predations endanger the development gains of the past half-century in the upper part of Africa, but chaos there will very directly impact Western Europe as human emergencies of immense proportion bloom, and illegal refugee flows multiply by orders of magnitude. Our African friends need help to defeat such a scourge, and we, throughout the West, need to get a lot more serious — and very quickly - about discouraging the Saudis and Gulf States from their generous funding of radical Salafist madrassas across the world, and most immediately in Africa where they are providing the recruits to Al Qaeda's African franchises. After intensive diplomacy on the part of all manner of regional players, Louis and I were freed after 130 days of captivity, along with the two female members of a group of European tourists who had been kidnapped by a separate AQIM faction. Six weeks after we returned to Canada, another of that group, the Briton Edwin Dyer, was killed by his captors. I welcome this opportunity to extend my deepest sympathies to the families of Chris McManus and Franco Lamolinara, who were not so fortunate. They were murdered this past week following their kidnapping in north-western Nigeria last May. So often during my captivity did I worry about the risks of a rescue attempt, only to fear that it might not be made, so I also extend my empathy to the brave professionals who made the attempt, for I know the extent of their distress at the failure of their enormously risky mission.

The foregoing is a sample of direct victims of Boko Haram insurgency, whose first-hand accounts of the ordeals passed in the hands of the murderous Islamic sect members provide useful insights into how fear-soaked Nigerians and non-Nigerians express fear as an adaptive response to a life-threatening situation. In the next section, we see how indirect victims resort to fear as adaptive response to Boko Haram insurgency.

## 2.2 Indirect victims' response to Boko Haram insurgency

The defeatist resignation of the Federal Government as explicitly expressed by the open confession of Mr. President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan about the seamless ubiquitousness of the Boko Haram operatives reveals how indirect victims cling to fear as an adaptive response to life-threatening challenges posed by Boko Haram. Mr. President stunned the nation when he declared during the inter-denominational service to mark the 2012 Armed Forces Remembrance Day at the National Christian Centre that members of Islamic fundamentalist group have infiltrated the three arms of government and the military. His words:

This is a particular time when the country has major security challenges. There are explosions every day. People are dying and are being killed daily without any reason...The situation we have in our hands is even worse than the civil war that we fought. During the civil war, we knew and we could even predict where the enemy was coming from, you even knew the route they were coming from, you could even know the calibre of weapons they would use and so on. But the challenge we have today is more complicated...I remember when I held a meeting with elders from the Northeast and some parts of the Northwest where the Boko Haram phenomenon is more prevalent, somebody said the situation is so bad that even if one's son is a member, one will not even know. That means that if the person will plant a bomb behind your house, you won't know. Some of them (Boko Haram) are in the executive arm of government, some of them are in the parliamentary/legislative arm of government while some of them are even in the judiciary. Some are also in the armed forces, the police and other security agencies. Some continue to dip their hands and eat with you and you won't even know the person who will point a gun at you or plant a bomb behind your house. That is how complex the situation is...

As if to lend credence to President Jonathan's defeatist resignation in the face of rising terrorist activities of Boko Haram, the then National Security Adviser, General Andrew Owoye Azazi (now late) declared that security agencies in the country were not prepared for the current wave of terrorism in the country. He sounded even more damnable when he declared that terrorism had come to stay in Nigeria. he made the statement while briefing State House Correspondents at the end of an emergency National Council of State meeting called by President Goodluck Jonathan to review the security situation in the country following bombing of the United Nations building in Abuja by the militant Islamic sect, Boko Haram in August, 2011. He underscored the hopelessness and helplessness of the security situation and by implication underlined the fact that Nigeria neither has requisite security infrastructure nor improved existing facilities needed to fight and contain terrorist inclinations of such sinister organisations in the country.

As earlier observed, response unavailability refers to when a person does not know how to handle a difficult situation. The parlous state of insecurity and fear has triggered a ripple of anxiety on the part of the government as evident in the knee-jerk official responses to serial acts of terrorism by Boko Haram masterminds. In essence, the combined effects of over-estimation, cognitive incongruity, and response unavailability have tended to reduce the response capacity of the Federal Government to security challenges to the pitiful and fitful level of vows. When President Jonathan was at the palace of Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero to commiserate with him over the bomb attacks of 20 January, 2012, he was reported to have ‘vowed to wipe out Boko Haram’, stressing that the Federal Government would not rest in its oars until the menace of the group was exterminated.

The President was not unmindful of the fact that his practised ‘vows to wipe out Boko Haram’ had become a mere choric refrain, an empty official rhetoric, which made no sense to the roundly traumatised Nigerians. His words:

When I say that, Nigerians begin to misunderstand; we are just sleeping, to wait, that it will come and go like wind, no. We say that countries have faced it, US has faced it and other countries too did. They were able to conquer it. We are working very hard, our security services are working very hard and we will conquer it”.

In his statement wherein he declared state of emergency rule in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States in northeast Nigeria, President Jonathan gave vent to this foreboding sense of fear when he bemoaned the activities of insurgents and terrorists, who as he observed, have been reprehensible, causing fear among our citizens and a near-breakdown of law and order in parts of the country, especially the North. “We have taken robust steps to unravel and address the root causes of these crises, but it would appear that there is a systematic effort by insurgents and terrorists to destabilise the Nigerian state and test our collective resolve,” Mr. President noted.

The President equally appreciated the sense of despair and despondency ripping through the psyche of Nigerians and friends of Nigeria and felt the overriding need to reassure them of his administration’s capability to end the spate of mindless attacks and killings in parts of the country and guarantee their security and safety. According to Ikuomola (2012), the President, speaking through his spokesman, Dr Reuben Abati, urged Nigerians not to despair or be discouraged by the persistence of the attacks, in spite of government’s efforts to deal decisively with the menace of terrorism within the country’s borders because despite seeming appearances to the contrary, government is indeed winning the war against the terrorists and will continue to progressively destroy their ability to unleash murderous attacks on peaceful, law-abiding Nigerians. His words:

It is worthy of note that in recent weeks, national security agencies have identified and arrested more of these agents of darkness than at any other time. Their hideouts and modus operandi are also being consistently exposed. President Jonathan assures all Nigerians that Government will continue to build on these recent successes by our security agencies until terrorism is totally defeated in the country with the support, cooperation and solidarity of all patriotic citizens. The President therefore calls on the populace to remain patient and refrain from taking matters into their own hands through actions such as reprisal attacks, as Government continues to take the battle to the merchants of terror and close in on their locations, funding and sponsors.

These reassurances received extra fillip from the President’s Senior Special Assistant on Public Affairs, Dr. Doyin Okupe, who insisted that the country remained safe in spite of bombings, and urged Nigerians not to entertain any fear in their daily activities. Dr. Okupe stressed that insurgents worldwide audaciously attack institutions to kindle maximum fear among the citizenry. “It is not surprising therefore that as a consequence of the recent activities of the insurgents; some dailies reported that ‘nowhere is safe in Nigeria.’ In truth and in reality this statement is not correct. “President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, wishes to assure Nigerians that in spite of this situation, the country is still largely safe and secure. “President Jonathan wishes to state categorically of his unwavering commitment and determination to fight insecurity wherever they are found in Nigeria.” He assured that the Jonathan-administration was prepared to enhance and ensure the security of lives and property of all Nigerians, irrespective of their locations within the country. Okupe 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. : “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.”

While moving a motion on the floor of the senate to condemn the Baga massacre in Borno State in April 2013, Senator Maina Lawan said: “My hometown of Baga is today in ruins, with 180 to 200 human lives lost and numerous others unaccounted for. About 2000 homes, 62 cars and 284 motorcycles and tons and tons of foodstuffs were also destroyed... Whoever did it, that level of atrocity is condemnable and is hereby condemned. I call for a full scale investigation to unearth the truth as this has become a recurring decimal in all such past instances in Borno State. On 6 January 2012, the twelve indigenes of Adazi-Nnukwu Anambra State southeast Nigeria, who were killed by Boko Haram insurgents in Mubi Adamawa State, northeast Nigeria were buried. In his homily at the Saint Andrew’s Catholic Church, Adazi Nnukwu during the funeral mass, the Catholic Bishop of Awka, Bishop Paulinus Ezeokafor bemoaned the prevailing fear in Nigeria. He said: “We are living in hard times, we need courage and faith. We should live without fear but we are saying that enough is enough. We cannot continue like this. It is our responsibility to save life and not to destroy it. Security agencies should rise up to the challenges and their responsibilities. The forces of darkness are on the prowl.”

According to Emewu & Yesufu (2012), sounds of despondence, hopelessness and failed expectations rang loud at the 50th birthday celebration of the Publisher of the Leadership newspaper, Mr. Sam Nda-Isaiah on 1 May 2012, as the former Defence Minister, General Theophilus Yakubu Danjuma, declared openly that the nation had become another Somalia. His words:

The Somalianization of Nigeria nation is taking place right now. And for those of us from the North, I say it here that the North is on fire. Let us tell ourselves the truth and stop deceiving ourselves, the Chief Security Officer of every state is the governor, but I ask all of us here, where are the governors of the northern states that the region keeps burning and nothing seems to be done. The North has failed just like the entire nation. “Borno State as an instance has failed completely. Jigawa State has failed also and worst of all, Kano of all places is about to fail. So, where exactly are we going? We hear and see multi-million naira fences erected around Government Houses, but what about the citizens? Where is their security?

In his speech, former Lagos State governor and national leader of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, lambasted the Federal Government and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for destroying Nigeria. Tinubu said the nation is at its worst point and never had it so bad in her entire history. “We are sinking in insecurity, hopelessness, fear, poverty, corruption and despondency and the PDP government is not doing anything about it. PDP has destroyed the nation and has failed also to confront the problem and that has exposed us to reaping the same common poverty, fear, death, unsafe society and lack of hope for tomorrow.”

The President of CAN, Pastor Ayo Oritsejafar at a press conference in Abuja, as Kalu & Ayansina (2012) reported, said the persistent attacks on individual businesses, churches and masses by Boko Haram insurgents is intended “to instill fear with the subsequent aim of eradicating religious freedom, democratic liberties with the church and Christianity as its primary target”. He continued, “My first call to all peace loving Nigerians is to remain calm in the face of all the insecurity challenges as I am aware that the greater part of the overall design is to instill fear in the populace. I will now make final call to the Nigerian government to use all resources available to it to clearly define and neutralize the problem as other nations have done.” On its part, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria lambasted the Federal Government for being too weak to deal with growing threat from the Boko Haram terrorists waging a campaign of terror against Christians. Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama, President of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria, and Archbishop John Onaiyekan of Abuja both denounced government’s response to the growing threat from Islamist groups, saying Christians were increasingly at risk of attack. Archbishop Onaiyekan said:

At first we were ready to be patient with the government when it was saying that this kind of Islamic terrorism is new. They have had adequate time to learn how to deal with this situation, gathering intelligence about those directly involved and bring them to book. It has become clear that we have a weak government that has put together a whole lot of compromises; that means that the action that should be taking place is not taking place...The government was too divided to muster the political will to deal with the crisis.

Archbishop Kaigama, in his reaction said: “The rampant attacks show that government security is not working. The government is not able to cope with the security situation and we feel quite apprehensive as a result. Why the government cannot identify the people involved baffles the imagination. We pay tax and we have a right to know what is being done about the problem.”

The same tone of apprehension rang out stridently during a special sitting of the Plateau State House of Assembly on 9 July 2012, during which a minute silence was observed as a mark of respect for the 104 victims

of the weekend of bloodbath in the State. Among the victims who died during a stampede after an attack on mourners during a mass burial of victims of attacks in Maseh village in Barkin Ladi local government area were Senator Gyang Datong and Hon. Gyang Fulani, Majority Leader of Plateau State House of Assembly. According to Idegu, et. al. (2012), the 23-member House, presided over by the Deputy Speaker Johnbull Shekarau declared that the Federal Government has failed the state in security. Shekarau said: "It is with deep feelings of pains that we converge for this emergency sitting. This is because since the beginning of this political dispensation in 1999, we have never experienced what we are going through today. One of us in this House, the member representing Barkin Ladi Constituency, died in the attack at a time he went to bury members of his constituency killed in an earlier attack. "More worrisome to us is the fact that one of the three senators representing the state in the National Assembly also died in the same attack. These are too heavy to bear. This is more than a tragedy; it is a calamity of immense magnitude and I believe the best honour we can do for our slain legislators is to come here, put our heads together to review the state of Plateau State."

The member representing Pankshin South Constituency, Istifanus Muansat, said: "I fear for Plateau State; I fear for Nigeria; I fear that we are going the way of Republic of Mali where rebels have taken parts of the country. It is high time the Nigeria police and army confessed to all Nigerians that they are incapable of securing Nigerians. The loss of lives to terrorism in Nigeria is growing each day and something urgent must be done by the Federal Government to stop this trend." The Speaker of Osun State House of Assembly, Hon. Najeem Salaam "We are in trouble in this country and our sovereignty is being threatened so seriously. If tribal clashes could claim hundreds of lives despite the presence of a Special Task Force of military and police, and bombings boom sporadically in some parts of the country, who says we are not on the edge?" In a broadcast, the Governor of Plateau State, Jonah Jang declared that Plateau is under siege by foreigners. He said the spate of killings in Plateau is threatening the security of the country. He said: "Today, several weeks and months before now, Northern Nigeria and indeed Plateau State, has witnessed deadly challenge to the people's way of life, threatening our National Security." "The guns and machetes that have dealt a heavy blow to the lives of innocent victims in our villages and cities say a lot about the threat to our collective security. This threat on ordinary, defenceless citizens is today a common danger to the people of Plateau State and Nigeria..."

The Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, His Lordship Matthew Hassan Kukah expressed fear of looming religious war as Boko Haram insurgents bomb churches and kill Christians. According to Onwuamaeze (2012), Bishop Kukah expressed worry for the future of Nigeria and asked a critical question: "How long is this going to go on? Is it going to be until mosques are bombed before we know what to do?" "Are we Christians to stop worshipping or am I going to live in a country where every Sunday when I am going to the church I have to be looking behind? Is it really that we are going to continue to remain like this?" Gabriel Osu, a monsignor and director of communications, Catholic archdiocese of Lagos, believes that Nigeria is gradually sliding into a religious war if the current trend was not checked. "If it is not checked, that is what it may turn out to be. But God forbid. And for God to forbid, it means we must take action. You don't need to be a prophet to foresee that we cannot wait too long with this." The Anglican Bishop of Enugu Diocese, Emmanuel Chukwuma noted that the church has resolved to resist the threat. "We can't keep silent and we cannot be intimidated. We are no longer free to worship God every Sunday as worshippers are filled with fear. What have we done that every Sunday our churches will come under bomb attack?" he queried. Also, the Senate President, Senator David Mark expressed fears that Boko Haram's sustained attacks on the churches was a sure recipe for igniting a full-scale religious war. His words: I believe they want to ignite a religious war and threaten our national unity. How long will the people listen to their church leaders because if a bishop says leave vengeance to God to his congregation and he has no church anymore because the church has been demolished, where will he preach? So, there is a limit to patience and we must say that in very clear terms."

Immediately after the Christmas day bombing of churches by *Boko Haram* in 2011, continues Onwuamaeze, the trio of Nigeria's foremost first generation writers made up of Chinua Achebe, author of the famous *Things Fall Apart*; Wole Soyinka, Nobel Laureate, and J.P. Bekederomo-Clark, a poet, issued a public statement in January, to warn of the impending disaster. The eminent writers warned:

The fears we have all secretly nursed are coming to reality. The nightmare we have hugged to our individual breasts, voicing them only in family privacy or within trusted caucuses of friends and colleagues – lest they become instances of materialising evil thoughts – has finally burst through into our social and physical environment. Rumbings and veiled threats have given way to eruption, and the first cracks in the wall of patience and forbearance can no longer be wished away. *Boko Haram* is very likely celebrating its first tactical victory: provoking retaliation in some parts of the nation."

A United Nations worker, Bodunrin, captured the foreboding shadow cast over Nigeria by the Boko Haram uprising following the bombing of the UN building in Abuja in the following words: "This is getting out of hand. If they can get into the UN House, they can reach anywhere." For Professor Pat Utomi, Nigeria "veered long ago from the highway to Liberia and was heading to Somalia in 2011. A year later, we are not heading to Somalia any more. We've arrived Somalia. What do you think Jos is? What do you think Bauchi and Borno are? They are Somalia already... The average Nigerian now seems disconnected from the Nigerian state. He doesn't feel that he is worth much. If his life means nothing, the lives of others mean nothing to him also. So, we are all in danger."

From the preceding discussion, we glean the depth of apprehension racking Nigerians about the festering Boko Haram insurgency. In the next section, we see how this sense of fear is depicted by the media and international community.

### 2.3 The media and international community

The tragedy, which befell Maiduguri, Borno State and Damaturu, Yobe State, northeast Nigeria in November 2011, following terrorist attacks launched by Boko Haram insurgents was received gory reportage from both local and international media. According to Joel (2011), the explosions, which occurred in the twilight hours of Friday, November 4, 2011, completely changed the expectant air of joy of the residents who were already in high spirit for their last Sallah preparation into that of fear, panic and despair. Many families never saw each other that day after the sect struck; those who stuck together had to contend with the safety and cries of their children and their loved ones. The Madalla Christmas day bombing of 2011 received no less attention. **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 Dike lost his four daughters to the Christmas day carnage at Madalla. Reporting the same story, *Thisday* quoting Reuters, noted that militants of the Boko Haram sect said they had set off the bombs, raising fears that they are trying to ignite sectarian civil war. In Nigeria, there is a growing fear that Boko Haram is trying to ignite a sectarian civil war in a country split evenly between Christians and Muslims who for the most part coexist in peace. ([www.thisdaylive.com](http://www.thisdaylive.com) 26 December, 2011)

Following the Kano multiple bombings of 20 January 2012, Kolade Adeyemi reporting for *Nation* newspaper ([www.thenationonline.ng.net](http://www.thenationonline.ng.net) 22 January, 2012) captured the climate of fear in Kano thus: "Shell-shocked residents wandered the streets, looking for loved ones. Others hid behind barricaded doors, too scared to leave for fear of more attacks." Also, while condoling with the Emir of Kano in his palace, President Jonathan harped on the sense of fear and foreboding that had suddenly gripped Kano: "Kano has been peaceful, but the insurgence of the Boko Haram has caused fear among residents." In its editorial, entitled 'Boko Haram threat to the nation,' *Nigerian Guardian* (15 January 2012) observed:

People are dying and families are thrown into mourning by the day. The society is being destabilized as large numbers suddenly have to flee areas in which they have lived the better part of their lives. Even now, out of fear of *Boko Haram*, national youth corps members are reported to flee some states that should, in normal times, be regarded as a part of their fatherland.

A similar editorial by the *Nation* newspaper, entitled 'Media bombings,' harped on the sense of fear:

Explosives rang through the Abuja head office of Leaders and Company, publishers of THISDAY newspapers and its Kaduna branch office last Thursday. We think that this latest attack on THISDAY is only one more ploy by the Boko Haram sect to intimidate Nigerians and instill fear into the Nigerian media to make them shy away from reporting their activities boldly and accurately.

In a special report entitled, 'Nigeria: Not easily reversible,' the *Vanguard* ([www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com) 7 February, 2012) noted:

*Boko Haram's* ambition of creating a climate of fear, terror and panic ahead of their plan to re-invent Nigeria, seem close to reality. A visitor to some of the major cities in northern Nigeria – Kano, Bauchi, Maiduguri, Kaduna, etc – will be forgiven to conclude that Nigeria is at war. Indeed, every passing day brings heart-rending stories of cruel killings from *Boko Haram's*



bombs and explosions with panic stricken citizens running from pillar to post. And with police and military check-points conducting widespread stop and search everywhere, the scenario of a nation at war is hardly disputable. Despite all this, what is clear and what we all see is that *Boko Haram* remain on the offensive and their bombs do not discriminate between friends and foes; notwithstanding their propaganda. And in the face of the generalized climate of fear, apprehensions and mistrust, people respond in ways that are neither calm nor measured, precisely the type of reaction that pleases *Boko Haram*.

Another Nigerian tabloid, *Nation* quoted the report on Boko Haram carried by *New York Times*, entitled 'Boko Haram: Fresh insight into a group feared, loathed'. It said:

The New York Times, in a report, paints the insurgent group, Boko Haram, as one which is loved by some who see it as fighting injustice and feared and loathed by others, who perceive it as representing sorrow, tears and blood. The violent Islamist army operating out of these dusty alleyways, ready to lash out and quickly fade back, is deeply enmeshed in the fabric of life in this sprawling metropolis, succoured by an uneasy mix of fear and sympathy among the millions of impoverished people here.

In a special report, entitled 'Boko Haram: Cease-fire or ceaseless fire?', Clifford Ndujihe ([www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com) 15 February, 2013), noted the all-pervasive fears ruling the land:

Eighteen days after a faction of the Boko Haram Islamic sect announced a cease-fire following a 42-month multi-prong attack on military, police and security facilities and churches among others that claimed about 3000 lives there is still fear in the land. Continuing attacks by gunmen and counter-attacks from security forces, which have led to the death of 53 Nigerians including nine policemen and a soldier, indicate that the country is still a long way from bidding terrorism good bye.

Quoting a report, entitled 'Emergency...People still fear Boko Haram,' by *Washington Post*, an online newspaper ([www.new2.onlinenigeria.com](http://www.new2.onlinenigeria.com) 11 June, 2013) noted that despite the war on terror, the fear of Boko Haram still remains the beginning of wisdom for pupils and other people in Maiduguri and other parts of Borno State. "People are afraid to come," said Lawana Bura, 47, the only teacher in the school on a recent day. "That's why the classes are empty." It has been that way, he said, since gunmen entered the school one morning in March and shot and killed a teacher. Three other schools were attacked that day in Maiduguri, leaving a total of six teachers and four students dead. "When I heard the gunshots, I jumped out of the window and ran," recalled Ali Muhammed Abdullahi, 18. "Up until now, I haven't found my school bag." I helped carry Malam Kachala," said Ahmed Usman, 21, a student, referring to the teacher. "He was shot in the head. His brain had burst open." "We just come to school because our parents order us to," said Mustapha Bulama, a student. "In reality, we fear that the Boko Haram will attack again."

A web blogger, Yari Dangari in an article, entitled 'Is Boko Haram a catalyst for change in Nigeria?' observes:

The coming of the deadly sect known as Boko Haram has instilled an inevitable fear among the populace, especially among our ostentatious elite and politicians who until now had been having it smooth and enjoying their stashed looted public funds. The fear of Boko Haram has suddenly become the beginning of wisdom among them and our elite are now scared stiff of publicly uttering their well known charade and selfish remarks. Most of them have even become dumber than a dumb and are contented to *Sidon look* as things unfold across the country... And true to what the famous British thriller writer James Hadley Chase rightly observed in one of his thrilling novels *Want to Stay Alive?* "*fear is the key that unlock the handbags and wallets of the rich*" And how truly one can confidently refer this bold statement to the present situation in the country. The elite and politicians are now more scared due to the fear unleashed by the Boko Haram and as expected their handbags and wallets are now unlocked. Most of them are now talking about the need for adequate security in the country. The fear has made the government unlock its wallets and focus its budgets on security issues, including the long overdue urgency

to train and upgrade the reasoning and capacity of our security personnel across the country...Fear has become the golden key that has unlocked the minds and seriousness of our government officials on the need to create jobs and vocational centres for the teeming youths of this country... Fear is everywhere and it is beginning to unlock the sleeping selfish minds of our leaders across the country

According to a report, entitled 'Boko Haram, Hezbollah and fresh security challenge' by Kola Oyelere and Stephen Gbadamosi of *Tribune* ([www.tribune.com.ng](http://www.tribune.com.ng) 16 June, 2013), the discovery in Kano of a large cache of arms and ammunition allegedly belonging to a Lebanon-based terrorist organisation, Hezbollah confirmed the fears that another terrorist organisation has berthed in Nigeria. Nigerians expressed fears that the local Boko Haram sect and its sister organisation, Ansarul, might have established strong link with international terrorist groups, a development they claimed might make the war against terrorism in Nigeria more herculean than it currently is. More worries for Nigerians, notes the report, include the fact that one of the reported demands of the Boko Haram sect is Islamisation of Nigeria, that is, the group is looking for another country in an already established country. This appears to be analogous to the Hezbollah organization, which some people have called a state within a state.

In another special report entitled, 'Boko Haram: Fear of kidnap grip governors,' Emmanuel Obe, Tunde Odesola, Jude Owuamanam, Sunday Aborisade, Femi Makinde, Akinwale Aboluwade, Mudiaga Affe, Mike Odiegwu, Etim Ekpimah And Success Nwogu ([www.tribune.com.ng](http://www.tribune.com.ng) 5 May, 2013) noted that the fear of kidnapped by the fundamentalist Boko Haram sect has gripped governors in some of the states across the federation forcing them to beef up security in government houses and their homes. While reacting to the invitation to attend the Nigerian Guild of Editors' conference coming up in Asaba, Delta State, south-south Nigeria, one of the governors, Mr. Rauf Aregbesola of Osun State said he was wary of being kidnapped as state executives were not immune from kidnapping. "They kidnapped the chairman of a local council area authority, which is not even up to a council and they demanded \$1m. How much would they demand if they kidnap a governor, \$1bn? You might just stroll to stretch your legs and off you go – you get kidnapped. Where will Osun get that kind of money?" Aregbesola asked.

Another online newspaper, *news.naij* ([www.news.naij.com](http://www.news.naij.com) 19 April, 2013) in its report, entitled 'Fear of Boko Haram killer squad hits Amnesty Committee,' quoted a source in Kano, which confirmed that fear of a Boko Haram killer squad has gripped some people named on the presidential amnesty committee because of the sect's strongly-worded warning conveyed to some individuals they respect to warn the nominees to stay off any mediation talks. In its 20 May 2013 edition, *news.naij* reported that fear had gripped Plateau residents as soldiers pursue Boko Haram insurgents. It added that the police and Special Task Force in Plateau had put their operatives in Jos, the state capital, on high alert following reports that members of the violent Islamic sect, Boko Haram, fleeing from military onslaught in Borno State had been sighted in Bauchi and other neighbouring states. *Premium Time*, in its report entitled, 'Fear of Boko Haram: Yobe tightens security for governor's budget presentation,' noted that the Yobe State Government mounted a water-tight security at the Yobe State House of Assembly in Damaturu, hours before Governor Ibrahim Gaidam presented the state's 2013 budget, ([www.premiumtime.com](http://www.premiumtime.com) 2 January, 2013).

Such similar news reports, which x-ray Boko Haram-induced fears in Nigeria, include the following: 'Is the fear of Boko Haram the beginning of wisdom in Nigeria?' - Emma Obiwebi; 'Nigeria imposes curfew in fear of Boko Haram' - AFP; 'Nigerians and the fear of Boko Haram' – Babajide Ogunbunmi; 'Fear of Boko Haram: Arsenal scraps visit to Nigeria' - UK tabloid – DailyStar.co.uk; 'Fear in Presidency as Boko Haram rejects amnesty' ([www.nigeriantel.com](http://www.nigeriantel.com) 12 April, 2013). Such reports have equally depicted the prevailing sense of fear in graphic terms, as evident in the following newspapers cartoons:



### 3. Discussions

In the field of psychology, several different theories of the motivation of fear and anxiety abound – the biological, cognitive, and learning perspectives. According to the biological perspective on the motivation of fear and anxiety, there are three basic conditions which elicit anxiety: over-stimulation, cognitive incongruity, and response unavailability. Over-stimulation refers to when a person is flooded with information. Cognitive incongruity is when a person has difficulty reconciling with some event, for example, the loss of a loved one. Response unavailability refers to when a person does not know how to handle a difficult situation. It is quite clear that the three basic conditions aforementioned underscored the expression of fears and anxiety by direct and indirect victims of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

The unending stories of countless loss of lives and incalculable property as a result of the terrorist activities of Boko Haram insurgents constitute a good recipe for over-stimulation. Also, the Madalla Christmas day bombing that almost wiped off the families of Obiukwu and Dike breeds a veritable ground for cognitive incongruity as such a harrowing experience hardly lends easily for any rational explanation. It would be difficult to imagine how the survivors could come to terms with the reality of the loss of their beloved ones within a twinkle of an eye. Since 2011, Boko Haram had launched its deadliest attacks with such meteoric velocity and clinical efficiency that not only overwhelmed the nation's security agencies but numbed their response instincts and reduced their alert level to near zero. The declaration of President Jonathan that Boko Haram insurgents had infiltrated the three arms of government and the defeatist resignation of former National Security Adviser, General Azazi about the intractability of the Boko Haram challenge were evidence of response unavailability. The parlous state of insecurity and fear has triggered a ripple of anxiety on the part of the government as evident in the knee-jerk official responses to serial acts of terrorism by Boko Haram masterminds. In essence, the combined effects of over-estimation, cognitive incongruity, and response unavailability have tended to reduce the response capacity of the Federal Government to security challenges to the pitiful and fitful level of vows.

According to the biological theory of fear, the GABA system is responsible for the motivation of fear and anxiety. Known as Gamma-Amino Butyric Acid, GABA is a naturally occurring transmitter inhibitor, a chemical substance in the body, which helps us to maintain an optimal flow of stimulation or information thereby reducing the flow of neural transmission. There are GABA receptor sites which the GABA will bind and produce certain effects. The ability to bind is not fixed, and is dependent on the presence of benzodiazepine, a kind of natural chemical produced by the body to help regulate neural transmissions. When the benzodiazepines bind to the sites, notes Tallman et. al. (1980), it increases the ability of GABA to bind to its own receptor sites. The GABA receptors then trigger the opening of Chloride channels which leads to a decrease in the firing rate of critical neurons in many parts of the Central Nervous System. Those who experience more anxiety than others, fail to produce or release benzodiazepines, which are necessary for the amount of GABA needed to regulate neural transmission. From the tone and texture of the language, which victims of Boko Haram insurgency deploy to express fear and anxiety, it is clearly evident who among them are eminently disposed to normal neural transmission that makes room for producing benzodiazepines.

From the cognitive perspective, there are three reasons for the motivation of fear and anxiety: loss of control, inability to make a coping response, and state anxiety versus trait anxiety. Loss of control refers to a situation when there are unpredictable or uncontrollable events in one's life which lead to anxiety and/or depression. As a result, feelings of helplessness develop. The unpredictability which may be associated with a task, contends Seligman (1975), may cause anxiety. The inability or perceived inability to make an adaptive response to a threatening event or the fact or perception that no such response is available will lead to feelings of anxiety, which in the opinion of Lazarus (1991), is the key, which prevents the elaboration of clear action patterns to handle the situation effectively. Again, we see this cognitive perspective of fear and anxiety manifest in the way the victims respond to Boko Haram insurgency. In Nigeria, the prevailing state of pervasive insecurity and life-threatening condition derives largely from the terrorist dispositions of Boko Haram, which imposes nerve-jangling fears on Nigerians as an inescapable option. In the human experience of dying and death, if the individual feels that he has no control over dying, death, and what happens after death then it would be expected that there might be some fear associated with the eventuality of this human experience. However, if the individual is prepared to die, has a sense of control over his dying, and some insight into what may follow death then dying may not be as fearful. This option is not open to Nigerians, which is why the expression of fear and anxiety has gripped all Nigerians (both the highly and lowly-placed) with an irresistible lure that shows no sign of sagging.

Going by the learning perspective, Mowrer (1939) avers that anxiety is an acquirable or conditioned drive which functions to motivate avoidance responding. In essence, the avoidance response is assumed to be reinforced by a reduction in anxiety. Fear is a conditioned response to pain. If one experiences pain in a specific situation, as Miller (1948) posits, the stimuli associated with that situation acquires the ability to evoke the same emotional reaction that the pain originally elicited. This is particularly true of the Federal Government's automated or fixated responses to incidences of Boko Haram attacks. First, the Government issues a press statement condemning such terrorist acts. This is quickly followed by passionate condolences to bereaved families, and finally a reiteration of Government's resolve to wipe out the Boko Haram scourge in record time. This is quite archetypical of Government's conditioned response to the Boko Haram pain. In all, the biological, cognitive, and learning perspectives deepen our understanding of the motivations of fear and anxiety as expressed by victims of Boko Haram scourge in Nigeria.

Another defining character of harrowing fear that is seeping through the spines and marrows of Nigerians is that it contravenes all the postulations of the classical Freudian account of the origin of fear. Freud's psychoanalytic theories have attempted to associate the origin of fears to various developmental issues from a person's childhood. He postulated three possible origins for the development of fear in human beings. First, fear can be developed in an infant by the absence of a significant individual whose presence and help were important for the fulfillment of the child's needs. Secondly, Freud posited that the loss of love or the disapproval of an important person in the child's life could facilitate the fear in the child. Thirdly, the fear of castration, intense shame, and unhappiness associated with the oedipal phase could be the genesis of fear both in males and females. Finally, the individual can develop fear as a result of guilt. The prevailing undercurrent of fear racking Nigerians hardly derived from their childhood developmental dysfunction of any kind. Instead, it is a product of Boko Haram scourge.

Also, the fear currently ravaging Nigeria and driven by the raving insurgency of Boko Haram, does not yield easily to the concept of 'defence mechanism' or 'repression' as propagated by the Freudian and neo-Freudian psychoanalytic theories. To deal with a threat, fear, or anxiety, Freudian and neo-Freudian psychoanalytic theories apply the concept, which may be employed by an individual to guard against internal and external stimuli that might invoke fear and anxiety (Freud, 1946). This type of defences could be expected to be used when there is a psychologically unacceptable situation that the individual may be confronted. Based upon

psychoanalytic theory, the defence mechanism, of denial or illusion may be employed to overcome the threat, fear, or anxiety. In denial, an individual when faced with a threatening situation will conjure up ways to avoid the issue by denying its existence or possibility. Illusion, on the other hand, is the creation of something that guards the individual from confronting an unacceptable situation by creating, in most cases, an acceptable concept. As an example, when dealing with the fear of dying and death, the use of illusions or repressions are used by some people to create and maintain a belief in immortality or by repressing the consciousness of their mortality and eventual death.

This seemed to be the lazy indulgence of the Federal Government, which disposed it to verge on the anvil of illusion and denial to simulate a sense of security and invincibility in the face of Boko Haram raging inferno. Nigeria's former Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Oluseyi Petinrin, had declared in March 2012 that the days of "Boko Haram" menace were numbered as security forces were decimating their network. Petinrin gave the assurance in an interview to newsmen on the sidelines of a meeting of ECOWAS Chiefs of Defence Staff held in Cote d'Ivoire to stem the rising insecurity in West Africa. His words: "The truth of the matter is that we have decimated the leadership of Boko Haram and most of them are now in detentions... These are people with no clear cut ideology and when you ask them what they want, you will hear very stupid and silly things. So, to me this is a flash in the pan which will be over soon." Ironically, the same Chief of Defence contradicted himself in the next sentence when he acknowledged that it usually would take a while to handle terrorists like the Boko Haram because of the broad network and mode of operations. "The issue of terrorism is not something you can cure in a day, it is not something you do with immediate effect, what I am trying to say is that the issue of terrorism is not something you will say it can end tomorrow, General Petinrin said. Even President Jonathan joined the fray in expressing deflated balloon of optimism about the transience of Boko Haram menace and how his government was on top of the situation.

Incidentally, events that unfolded subsequently not only pointed to the contrary but equally blew into smithereens the walls of illusion and denial adroitly erected by Mr. President and his roundly overwhelmed security operatives. In essence, the fear ignited by Boko Haram is real and cannot be wished away by verging on the denial and illusion wings of the so-called defence mechanism as propounded by the Freudian psychoanalytic theories. The defeatist resignation of the Federal Government as explicitly expressed by the open confession of Mr. President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan about the seamless ubiquitousness of the Boko Haram operatives completely deflates whatever balloon of defence mechanism, which Nigerians may aspire to cling to in the face of life-threatening circumstances.

Finally, it was earlier observed that one experiences anxiety when some optimal level of stimulation or arousal is exceeded. Such cognitive, behavioural and physiological reactions become debilitating when one loses a large measure of ability to think, act, and perform. The tales of nerve-jangling horror told by direct victims and such bizarre acts of defecating in one's pant or seeing angels in broad-daylight mirror the grave unmitigated sense of fatalism, which could only come close to heightened apprehension of a condemned criminal driven before the hangman's noose. Those who finally coalesced into a warm embrace with mortal kiss of death escaped the pains of living with traumatic Boko Haram-phobia. Those who escaped the lethality of Boko Haram insurgents struggle to cope with the dreadful thoughts of living again as potential preys to the prowling predators.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined fear and anxiety as an adaptive response to Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. From the preceding discussions, it is clearly evident that Nigerians have been playing an unwilling host to the three basic conditions, which elicit fear and anxiety: over-stimulation, cognitive incongruity, and response unavailability. To this effect, we call to mind Rogers' (1983) Protection Motivation Theory (PMT), which was originally developed to explain how people respond to fear-arousing health threat communications or 'fear appeals'. According to Sutton (2000), protection motivation refers to the motivation to protect oneself against a health threat; it is usually defined operationally as the intention to adopt the recommended action. Of the determinants of intention specified by the model, the four that have received the most empirical attention are vulnerability and severity response efficacy (the belief that the recommended action is effective in reducing the threat), and perceived self-efficacy (the belief that one can successfully perform the recommended action).

In spite of the extra-ordinary measures driven by the emergency rule proclamation of Mr. President, which empowers the military to put to an end the impunity of the Boko Haram insurgents, fear and anxiety have continued to sear the souls of Nigerians and members of the international community. According to Marama (2013), a member of Boko Haram Islamist sect shocked the people of Ngomari Airport Ward 'Bakin Borehole' area in Maiduguri, Borno State capital, when he confessed to have killed 23 people in two days, including a village head and Police officers in the area. This shocking news was reported in most Nigerian dailies on 27 June

2013, that is, forty-four days after President Jonathan had declared an emergency rule in the three north-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe.

Nonetheless, the good news is that the people of the Boko Haram-infested states have appreciated the overriding urgency of keying into the vision of the Federal Government to stamp out the Boko Haram menace. Going by Roger's Protection Motivation Theory, victims of Boko Haram insurgency appear more motivated than ever before to protect themselves and align with the federal forces deployed to extinguish the roaring Boko Haram conflagration. In other words, the Borno youths have a stronger intention to adopt the recommended action to the extent that they believe that the threat is likely if the current course of action is continued, that the consequences will be serious if the threat occurs, that the recommended action is effective in reducing the likelihood or the severity of the Boko Haram menace, and that they are able to carry out the recommended action.

Going by the news report, the arrest of the blood-sucking Boko Haram insurgent was effected by a youth vigilante group called 'Civilian JTF'. Also, over 50 detained members of the sect have reportedly appealed to Federal Government to give them a second chance as they were ready to assist the government in bringing the crisis to an end. This development represents a significant turning-point in the current efforts at stemming the tide of insurgency and terrorism in Nigeria. What remains is for the Federal Government to sustain the tempo until all the lethal imprimaturs of Boko Haram insurgents are effectively exterminated. Perhaps then, Nigerians and indeed members of the international community would have good reasons to resist the tyranny of fear and anxiety as an adaptive response to Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

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