

Terrorism and Insurgency in Northern Nigeria: A Study of the Origins and Nature of Boko Haram

Omobuwajo Olufemi Ajibola

Nigeria Defence Academy, Kaduna (Postgraduate Researcher)

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to unravel the characteristics of the Boko Haram sect in northern Nigeria. The activities of the group became profound in 2009; terrorism and insurgency were identified as its major strategies. This paper engaged qualitative methods and made broad use of secondary sources. The group made greater impact in Nigeria than previous extremist groups such as Maitatsine and Shiite group, hence the need to understand its evolution, ideology and motivation. The group was discovered to have expansionist tendencies with foreign support of other Islamic fundamentalist organizations. Three motivations of the sect were pointed out to include religious extremism, resentment over the killing of their members and poverty. Among its famous attacks were the bombing of Nigeria Police Force Headquarters and the UN House both in Abuja and in 2011. It also carried out the Christmas day bombing at St Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla near Abuja on 25 December, 2011. The federal government, the international community and other stakeholders took initiatives to end the onslaught through coercion, sanctions, offers of dialogue, negotiation and amnesty but all these have so far failed to bring an end to the hostilities. This study gave a number of recommendations to mitigate this prolonged crisis and concluded by underlining the importance of addressing the root causes of the problems such as poor governance, poverty among others.

KEY WORDS: Boko Haram, Terrorism, Insurgency, Northern Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The Boko Haram sect is alleged to have killed over 5,000 people in various attacks since 2009. In tracing the origins of the sect, Xan Rice wrote that “in northern Nigeria, Sharia law was already in place before Boko Haram launched in 2002. But it was applied mildly and failed to check the unbridled corruption, inequalities and unfairness. Poverty levels were high and growing, and for most youthful people there were not many job prospects. Boko Haram was founded on beliefs, but poor governance was the catalyst for it to spread. If there had been appropriate governance and a functioning state, Yusuf would have found it very difficult to succeed”. It was further revealed that before Yusuf’s execution, Boko Haram had a microfinance system, operated a farm and its own ruling councils and emirs, the followers stretched far beyond Maiduguri and Borno state, across northern Nigeria, as well as into neighbouring Niger, Cameroon and Chad. Ahmad Salkida, a journalist with close links to the sect reported in an interview days before the death of Yusuf, that he was growing increasingly militant and said “Democracy and the current system of education must be changed otherwise this war that is yet to start would continue for long” (Rice, 2012).

Violence, terrorism, insurgency and in Northern Nigeria escalated with the extra-judicial killing of Boko Haram leader, Muhammad Yusuf in 2009 at a detention facility in Maiduguri. He was accused of trying to escape which necessitated his death according to the Nigerian Police. The crises came to a head with the declaration of State of Emergency by President Goodluck Jonathan on May 14, 2013 over three North-Eastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe by invoking the provisions of Section 305, sub-section 1 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, as amended. The erstwhile Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Olusegun Ashiru later explained that Adamawa was included in the emergency rule because of its proximity to Cameroun and the need for the military to have a wide area of coverage, to hinder the insurgents from having any hiding place (Ikuomola, 2013). Analysts and scholars have come to the conclusions that the aims and ambitions of the Boko Haram are unlimited compared to earlier groups such as Maitatsine and Shiite Islamists. Albert Horsfall, a retired Director of the Nigeria’s National Intelligence Agency (NIA) articulated that: “the terrorists intend to stay in this country, establish themselves and then pursue a political agenda. In the past we have dealt with such terrorist elements” (Bassey, 2013).

ANALYTICAL PROCESS

This paper employed qualitative methods, secondary source of data such as internet, text books, newspapers, journals, recorded information and so on were extensively used. It also made use of both historical method and descriptive analysis. Qualitative methods are used to discover and facilitate the understanding of relationships between variables while quantitative methods are useful for recounting social phenomena, especially on large scale. Qualitative methods allow social scientists to offer richer explanations and metaphors of societal apparent fact regularly on a smaller scale. By using two or more approaches, researches may be able to determine their findings and provide a more legitimate representation of the social world. This study utilized the internet to collect extensive data on the subject matter of the study. Data collected from all these sources

were complemented by the logical observations and judgment of experts on the subject matter (Ogunbameru & Ogunbameru, 2000: 197,205).

A descriptive approach to research is called as groundwork for research. Its reason is based on the figures of the research analysis. So, the descriptive research cannot take into details the validity of the research results, because it does not explain the causes of the result. On the other hand, Analytical approach focuses on the process of the final result rather giving significance to the result. Analytical approach stands appropriate in all stages of research, right from the articulation of thesis to the formulation of arguments on the issues mentioned in the research (Kalpesh, 2013). This study also made use of content analysis, a method of studying data in a methodical, objective and quantitative manner to measure variables. It identifies precise distinctiveness unemotionally within passage and works (Ogunbameru & Ogunbameru, 2000: 273).

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

For the purpose of conceptual explanation and to limit the level of uncertainty, which is among the rules and characteristics of academic research, it is important to examine some of the concepts and terms that are used in this study i.e. Boko Haram, Terrorism, and Insurgency.

Boko Haram

The group is known in the Arabic language as Jamā'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lādda'awatih wal-Jihad (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad). The name "Boko Haram" is a Hausa name which only the Hausa peoples understood and is a compound name comprised of Hausa and Arabic. The Hausa applied the term "Boko" to western forms of education so when the term "Haram" is appended to it the intent is: 'the Western education system is haram', haram meaning forbidden. It is based on the principles which the group constantly repeats as a form of advice to Muslims, mainly parents, university students and all linked to the educational system. The set had no ideological agenda until 2002. The practical and procedural instruction of the movement is outlined by its view that the accomplishment of the Sharia can only be achieved through armed conflict to remove a tyrannical government. The group also argued that the Islamic system of education was wide spread within the country before the arrival of the missionaries and continued until the colonialists fully took over. This in their view affected every aspect of life in particular the educational system thereby eroding some doctrines of Islam (Murtada, 2013:4-5, 15, 17). In his preaching, Yusuf criticized northern Muslims for participating in what he believed to be an unlawful state and encouraged his followers to protest and pull out from the society and its politics. Both the Maitatsine and Yusuf's followers rejected Western civilization and called for the severe enforcement of Sharia law (Johnson, 2011). Over time, the group's members saw themselves increasingly at odds with the secular authorities, whom they came to view as representatives of a fraudulent, illegal, Christian-dominated federal government. Their disappointment in local government leaders was worsened in the summer of 2009, when authorities in Bauchi refused to allow them to preach and recruit publicly (Onuoha, 2010: 58).

Terrorism

It is understood to be an illegal and violent activity, mostly directed against governments. The U.S State Department defines it as "the use or threatened use of violence for political purposes to create a state of fear that will aid in extorting, coercing, intimidating, or otherwise causing individuals and groups to alter their behaviour"; It is also seen to "consist of illegal attacks and threats against people or property by a group for the purpose of weakening a hated political authority". Also, terrorism assumes an international dimension when the victims, targets, terrorists, and location of the incident or the means to carry out the act involve more than one country (Roskin & Berry, 1990:243). In November 2004, a United Nations Secretary General report described terrorism as any act "intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act"(UN, 2005).

Terrorism has been practiced by a wide range of political organizations to promote their objectives. It has been practiced by right-wing and left-wing political parties, nationalistic groups, religious groups, revolutionaries, and ruling governments otherwise known as State Terrorism. The most widespread image of terrorism is that it is carried out by small and secretive cells highly provoked to serve a particular cause and many of the most deadly operations in recent times, such as the September 11, 2001 attacks; the London underground bombing, and the 2002 Bali bombing were planned and carried out by a close circle, composed of close friends, family members and other strong social networks. These groups benefited from the free flow of information and resourceful telecommunications to thrive where others had failed (Sageman, 2004: 166-167).

Insurgency

It is an armed upheaval against a constituted authority. The nature of insurgencies is an indefinite concept. Not all rebellions are insurgencies. There have been many cases of non-violent rebellions, using civil confrontation, as in the People Power Revolution in the Philippines in the 1980s that ousted President Marcos

and the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 (Robert & Timothy, 2009). Anywhere an uprising takes the form of armed rebellion; it may not be viewed as an insurgency if a state of belligerency exists between one or more independent states and rebel forces. For example, during the American Civil War, the Confederate States of America was not recognized as a sovereign state, but it was recognized as an aggressive power, and thus Confederate warships were given the same rights as United States warships in foreign ports (Hall, 2001: 246). Insurgency always carries an implication that the rebels' cause is unlawful, whereas those rising up will see the authority itself as being illegal and unconstitutional (Osanka, 1962).

The Iraq insurgency is one example of a recognized government in opposition to multiple groups of insurgents. The use of the phrase insurgency does recognize the political incentive of those who partake in an insurgency, while the term brigandry implies no political motivation. If a rebellion has diminutive support, for example those who continue to resist towards the end of an armed conflict when most of their allies have admitted failure, then such a resistance may be described as brigandry and those who participate as brigands (Lieber & Hartigan, 1983:95). The United States Department of Defense (DOD) defines Insurgency as “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict”. Insurgency and its strategies are as old as warfare itself. Joint doctrine defines an Insurgency as “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict” (U.S DOD, 2007).

THE EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF BOKO HARAM

There are differences in opinion over the accurate date and conditions under which the group that became known as Boko Haram was first established. A senior Nigerian military officer has suggested that the group has existed in some form or another since 1995, while others have written that it was founded in 2003 or 2004 (Gusau, 2009; Onuoha, 2010:55). However, Boko Haram has been in subsistence since 2002 but became popular and notorious in July 2009 when its members had a brutal and prolonged clash with security agents who had wanted to dismantle the group, comparable to what it did to the Maitatsine group in 1981 and 1984. However, Boko Haram fought back obstinately and the death toll on both sides was estimated at about 500 in 2009 alone. The major centre of violence around this time was at Bayan quarters in Maiduguri. There was a recurrence of the group in July 2010 at northeast Nigeria, starting with low-intensity violence and subsequent transformation into sophisticated methods of operation that was not identical with the sect in the past. They killed policemen, soldiers, politicians; burnt schools, churches, the Electoral commission's office (INEC) in Maiduguri, they evolved to suicide bombings, and in June and August 2011, they launched series of bomb attacks on the Nigerian police headquarters and United Nations office, both in Abuja. In September, 2010 the sect took its operation to another level by undertaking a successful 'prison break' operation, to set its members in confinement free (TSA, 2011:42).

Similarly, Adeniyi (2011:106-109) suggested that the origins of Boko Haram dated back to 2002 when Muhammad Yusuf, the spiritual leader and founder of the sect, an indigene of Jakusko in Yobe State, rose to recognition within the Salafi Islamic circle (Wahabites) preaching against western education, the government and calling for Jihad with a special focus on the youths. He moved from Muhammadu Ndimi Mosque to Daggash Mosque both in Maiduguri, before he finally got a piece of land at the Railway quarters to build a mosque and house from his father-in-law, Baba Fugu. He was seen as a crusader for the poor and thereby got numerous followers which increased his influence and authority. A splinter group among Yusuf's followers went on to form the 'Taliban' and attacked police stations in Yobe Stations in September 2004, with succeeding attacks on policemen in Bama and Gwoza in Borno State. They were to escape into the Mandara mountains on the border with Cameroon upon a crackdown from Nigerian security agents. Yusuf reconciled with this faction in 2005 who had accused him of being too flexible in his approach to the Islamic jihad campaigns; from April 2007, violent attacks stemmed from Yusuf's group with assaults on public buildings and police posts in parts of Bauchi, Borno, Kano and Yobe states.

It was recorded in another account that Muhammad Yusuf was born on January 29, 1970 in a rural village known as Girgir in Yobe State. He was a Tsangaya Qur'anic teacher, once a Shi'ite faithful and afterwards joined the Izalatul-Bid'a wa Iqamat al Sunna (Izala) movement and again left to be with the Shababul Islam. His radical point of reference was linked to Ibn Taymiyyah after whom he named his mosque in Maiduguri, seeking to eliminate Nigeria's secular system of government and establish a Sharia law in the State similar to Taleban agenda in Afghanistan. Yusuf was charged to court in 2006 for receiving funds from an Al-Qaeda linked organization but later released; he was able to enlist Buji Foi, a former commissioner of religious affairs in Borno state, as well as foreign nationals as militants from Somalia and Sudan. The sect deployed a guerrilla warfare method by using the civil population as shields from attacks by security agents, established its cell in Yobe State called 'Afghanistan', stockpiled arms and ammunition at Fadama Madawas in Bauchi state, used a school as training ground for its fighters in Jalingo, Taraba State and used a mosque in Kano to preach its

doctrines and ideologies. Moreover, they made attempts to penetrate the South-West Nigeria when 38 of its members were arrested on their journey to Lagos in 2009 (Olomjobi, 2013:222-225).

Boko Haram became latent for more than a year after their leader's death but re-emerged under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, who was described by Salkida as always studying and writing, and was more devoted and modest than anyone else. In June 2011, the first suicide bomber struck, with an attack on the Police headquarters in Abuja while a second suicide bomber followed two months later, in August 2011 which exploded at the United Nations building in Abuja too, a move interpreted by Salkida as an attempt to tighten existing links with al-Qaeda in the Maghreb by illustrating Boko Haram's competence to strike "western" institutions. Salkida asserted that the sect's campaign is not against a Christian President but sees the northern governors and emirs as part of the institutions (Rice, 2012). Simon Kolawole, recalled that Boko Haram launched retaliatory attacks on the personnel of Nigerian police in Maiduguri after the killing of their members and burning of their mosques in Bauchi state on the night of July 25, 2009 and rioted in the Federal Low-cost Housing Estate and Dutsen Tanshi areas of Bauchi; adding that it was beginning of the group's attacks. He identified three motivations of the sect to include religious extremism, resentment over the killing of their members and poverty. He went further to classify three main targets of the group as (i) the Northern establishment (ii) the moderate Muslims (iii) the Christian; elucidating further that "the security agencies are, inevitably, in the line of fire. Boko Haram's grouse against the Northern establishment is well documented. They have killed Northern politicians and launched attacks on the Shehu of Borno and Emir of Kano. When the Sultan of Sokoto called for amnesty recently, he probably was the next target" (Kolawole, 2013:104).

SPATE OF ATTACKS

The Boko Haram sect has carried out a number of attacks. A number will be highlighted in this work. The famous incidences were the June 16, 2011 Nigeria Police Force Headquarters bombing in Abuja. The UN House in Abuja was also bombed on August 26, 2011 while the Christmas day bombing at St Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla near Abuja on 25 December, 2011 made major headlines around the world. The Headquarters of the 1 Division Nigerian Army and Kawo bridge were also bombed in Kaduna on 7 February, 2012 (Omale, 2013: 98). There was multiple bomb blasts in Kano on Friday January 20, 2012 with Zone One of the Nigeria Police Force headquarters along BUK road, badly hit by a suicide bomber, also affected was the headquarters of the State police command Bompai, Divisional police stations at Yar'akwa, Farm Centre and Sabon Gari. Others places attacked were the State Security Service (SSS) headquarters office at Giginyu and Immigration's Passport office at Farm Centre. Boko Haram's spokesman Abdul -Qaqa claimed responsibility (Weekly Trust, 2012: January 21:2&3). The death toll was later estimated officially at 185 and unofficial sources put it at 250. The Kano State Police Command reported that it lost 29 personnel, the SSS lost 3, while the Immigration Service lost 2, 150 civilians were reportedly lost which included Channels Television reporter, Eneche Akogwu; no figures were given for the wounded (Shuaibu, 2012). Yet, there were three different explosions in Bauchi on Sunday, January 22, 2012 two days after the deadly blasts in Kano, killing 8 civilians and two security agents were also killed in confrontations with suspected Boko Haram foot-soldiers (Awofadeji, Shuaibu & Adinoyi, 2012).

The operations of Boko Haram and its splinter group, the JAMBS or ANSARU (Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan -Vanguard for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa), became very knotty. It abducted seven expatriates in Bauchi, five Lebanese, a Briton and an Italian, all working for construction company, SETRACO. It is believed that they are generally aligned with Al-Qa'ida and responsible for the murder of British national Christopher McManus and his Italian co-worker, Franco Lamolinara on March 8, 2012 in Sokoto, while working for a construction company in Birnin Kebbi. Ansaru claimed responsibility for the kidnap of a French national in Katsina state on 20 December 2012. It also claimed liability for the attack on a detention facility of the police Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in Abuja on 26 November 2012. The insurgent's tactics are evolving toward the style of internationalist jihadism such as kidnapping and suicide bombs (Famutimi, 2013).

There was an attack in Daura, Katsina state on 16 May, 2013 where four banks were robbed, police stations and a prison facility were set alight. Major-General Garba Wahab, the former General Officer Commanding (GOC) 1 Division, Nigerian Army, said several of the invading gunmen were killed. Three soldiers were confirmed dead and a vehicle loaded with the stolen cash was recovered, in addition to four AK-47 rifles. At a separate press briefing in Abuja on the Daura attack, the Director of Civil- Military Affairs, Major-General Mobolaji Koleoso, said the assailants wore fake army uniform. Five members of the gang later died in the exchange of gunfire with soldiers from the 35 Battalion, Katsina (Ogunwale, Akowe & Adeyemi, 2013). The Sect included another strategy on May, 2013 with the adoption of the kidnapping of women and children. Leader of the group, Imam Abubakar Shekau, declared in a video recording that the kidnapping would serve as a reprisal for the imprisonment of wives and children of Boko Haram by the security forces, 12 children believed to have been kidnapped were seen in the video footage (Noboh, 2013).

The Boko Haram sect was able to recuperate a little over a month after the declaration of state of emergency on May 14, 2013. Refugees fleeing the troubled areas of Borno recounted seeing the terrorists getting better and attacking the people living in Gwoza and Bama districts. They were also alleged to have written letters threatening government workers to quit their jobs or face death. Further reports noted that the sect killed 16 high school students and two teachers in two attacks around June 19, 2013 while the Borno State commissioner for Primary Education, Tijjani Abba Ali attributed the destruction of over 50 primary schools in 2012 to the insurgents (The Nation, 2013: June 23). On Saturday, July 6, 2013 gunmen suspected to be members of Boko Haram or its splinter groups attacked Government Secondary School, a boarding school at Mamudo, on the outer edge of Potiskum in Yobe State. Lieutenant Lazarus Eli, the spokesman of the Joint Task Force confirmed that 20 students and 1 teacher were killed, with 4 others injured in the attack. While sources at the Potiskum General Hospital confirmed that 42 dead bodies were deposited at the hospital. The insurgents also attacked civilians, health workers, government workers and drove farmers from their land and this could lead to food shortages in the area. Another attack was reported on a police station and a bank in Karim Lamido, Taraba State, killing three policemen. Another report by the Yobe State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), revealed that 99 persons were killed transversely in the state in 2013 and 135 others were either injured or had their houses burnt during different attacks (Alli, Joel, Oluwasegun, Anofi and Agency reports ,2013:2).

Furthermore, the Boko Haram group was suspected to have launched an assault on a Mosque in Konduga town, about 35 kilometres outside Maiduguri. The aggressors reported to be wearing military camouflage uniforms, killed 44 people praying in the mosque with about 26 injured, four members of the Vigilante group were also killed. In another attack at Ngom village, 5 kilometres after Maiduguri, 12 people were killed (Famutimi, 2013). In early August, 2013 there were multiple bomb explosions in a mostly Christian neighbourhood of Sabon Gari in Kano, in which at least 15 people were killed. As well, scores of military and other security forces were killed in the operation (Onuorah, 2013). Boko Haram has continued to wage series of attacks in spite of onslaught from the Joint Task Force (JTF), the suspected Islamic extremists attacked an agricultural college in the dead of night into the early hours of, September 29, 2013 gunning down dozens of students as they slept in dormitories and torching classrooms. Reports have it that as many as 50 students may have been killed in the attack that began at about 1 a.m. Sunday in rural Gujba, Provost Molima Idi Mato of the Yobe State College of Agriculture, told The Associated Press. "They attacked our students while they were sleeping in their hostels, they opened fire at them," he said. Further reports said the Nigerian military has collected 42 bodies and transported 18 injured students to Damaturu Specialist Hospital, said a military intelligence official, who insisted on anonymity because he is not authorized to speak to the press (*Times of Israel*, 2013:September 29).

INTERNATIONAL LINKS OF BOKO HARAM

It is understood that the Boko Haram sect have been greatly permeated by outside forces and external terrorist groups whose intention is to take over parts of Nigeria as the Tuareg militants were able to do in northern Mali before French forces recovered the affected areas. The terrorists cells and organizations thrown out from different parts of the Middle East and North Africa such as Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania among others, are all searching for territories and shelters to prepare and carry out their activities, they must be prevented from having a place of refuge in Nigeria (The Nation, 2013: June 16). There was a portion of the U.S Senate investigation report on September 11 2011, attacks that indicated that the desert regions of Nigeria and other West African countries could become havens for the Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. The report has these to say:

The intelligence community has prepared a world map that highlights possible terrorists havens, using no secret intelligence-just indicating areas that combine rugged terrain, weak governance, room to hide or receive supplies, and low population density with a town or city near enough to allow necessary interaction with the outside world. Large areas scattered around the world meet these criteria. In talking with American and foreign government officials and military officers on the front lines fighting terrorists today, we asked them: If you were a terrorist leader today, where would you locate your base? Some of the same places come up again and again on their lists: western Pakistan and the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region; southern or western Afghanistan; the Arabian Peninsula, especially Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and the nearby Horn of Africa, including Somalia and extending southwest into Kenya; Southeast Asia, from Thailand to the southern Philippines to Indonesia; West Africa, including Nigeria and Mali; European cities with expatriate Muslim communities, especially cities in central and eastern Europe where security forces and border controls are less effective (WashingtonPost, 2004:September:366-367).

In a similar vein, Ambassador Uche Okeke, a former Director General of Nigeria Intelligence Agency (NIA), once outlined Nigeria's vulnerability to terrorism, noting that Nigeria's large Muslim population makes it probable for terrorists to persuade fixated Islamists among Nigerian Muslims, listing other countries with

comparable threats to include Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Syria. He also mentioned Nigeria's close ties with the United States as another reason for terrorist attacks, explaining that Osama Bin Laden has singled out Nigeria as a country ripe for a jihad because of the nation's close ties with Washington. Quoting a U.S expert and former Ambassador to Nigeria, Princeton Lyman, the position of Nigeria as a major supplier of oil to the U.S makes her susceptible to terrorist attacks. Okeke argued that "it is further believed that disrupting the source of oil to the Western world is a major plank of Al-Qaeda's terror tactics, and that by hitting oil targets overseas, including those of Nigeria, terrorists can impact U.S economic interests ... Already, there are credible reports that diverse outside radical Islamists continue to test opportunities to form local partnerships to strike at Western targets", (Oji, 2005). Nigerian security agencies revealed the detention of a three-man horror cell including Abdullahi Berende (leader), Sulaiman Saka and Saheed Adewumi. Berende, the police said, was taught in handling weapons and explosive devices in Iran, and had studied there but police did not say how they established a connection between the suspects and Iran. Nevertheless, they were suspected to be planning attacks on the administrative center of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Peace Corps, as well as the Israeli cultural center in Lagos. Haaretz (an Israeli newspaper) separately reported that the men staked out Zim, a major Israeli shipper. Also targeted were important Nigerian Muslim and military leaders. The government of Iran has denied connivance but the allegations have to be painstakingly investigated (*Times of Israel*, 2013: February 21).

There were reports that Mallam Bello Damagun, an indigene of Damagun in Yobe State reputed to be the first state in Nigeria where youths openly accepted that they were 'Talibans'. Damagun was first arrested in 2002 over complications in the trip of three young men to Mauritania for Islamic education and he was later assumed to have received \$300,000 from Al Qaeda World Network, Sudan; purported to be used for acts of terrorism. Muhammad Yusuf, the late Boko Haram leader is said to have received various forms of support from Damagun which includes sums of money, a 10-seater bus and loud speakers; the former is suspected to have links with the Nigerian Taliban while the latter was also accused of recruiting, sponsoring and transporting 14 members of a militia group to a camp in Mauritania for training in combat and terrorism (Omidipidan, 2007). There were reports that Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has extended an offer of training to extremist groups in the country. This might have helped the operations of the Boko Haram group, as it became more vicious in its activities. Think Security Africa, a security think-tank, observed that "there are number of former and current military personnel with explosives training. Their expertise maybe misapplied to assist violent extremists in carrying out their plans, particularly those ex-military personnel that are not obtaining their pensions and other benefits in a timely fashion and/or those with grievances towards the Nigerian government"(TSA, 2013:42).

Moreover, a Mauritanian and four others were detained in Kano on Tuesday, March 27, 2013 over the abduction of a German engineer, Edgar Raupach who works for Dantata and Sawoe Construction Company in January, 2013 on the outskirts of Kano. The suspects were arrested at a superstore belonging to the Mauritanian, *AFP News Agency* (cited by Pindiga, 2012: March 28: 1& 5) reported thus: "Guns and a laptop were recovered in the store and documents found in the computer included an AQIM operation manual, showing that suspects are linked to AQIM and were involved in the kidnap of the German engineer in January". Furthermore, a security source alleged that the architect was Abu Muhammad, who was associated with AQIM and Boko Haram, adding that the kidnappings were done in order to get money for the operations of the latter; Abu was later arrested in Zaria on March 6 in a raid in which he sustained some injuries and subsequently died in SSS custody. Yet, another report in March, 2010 indicated that the AQIM offered to assist Boko Haram with training and capabilities for mayhem (both sects use similar symbols), (Olomjobi, 2013:223).

EFFORTS TOWARDS TRUCE AND PEACE

Northern elders including the Sultan of Sokoto, Sa'ad Abubakar, advocated for dialogue and amnesty to be offered to Boko Haram and other Islamist sect which the government subsequently accepted. Consequently, the President instituted the "Committee on Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of Security Challenges in the North" with 26 members, headed by Mallam Kabiru Taminu Turaki, the Minister of Special Duties on April 24, 2013. The Borno Elders and Leaders of Thought (BELT) had made a similar plea in 2012 (Adewumi, 2014:8). A major problem was identified by scholars which could have prevented crises from reoccurring in Nigeria, that is, the non-implementation of the recommendations of Commissions of Inquiries. In various crises across Nigeria and especially in the north, reports of probe panels have not been implemented, these includes the crises in Kano, Kaduna, Jos and other conflicts in the country (CGA, 2010). Lack of political will on the part of government has been identified as another factor for the neglect and abandonment of probe reports. At other times the reports are alleged to be biased, yet some were not implemented because of fears that it will further escalate the crises as was the case during the Kaduna 2000 Sharia crises. Former Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai in an interview blamed the government of President Jonathan for not implementing the report of the Galtimari Committee on Boko Haram. Former Vice President, Abubakar Atiku also alleged that the federal

government did not implement the recommendations of the Sheik Lemu Committee report on post-elections violence of 2011.

President Jonathan in June 2013 banned Boko Haram and ANSARU, its splinter group; the prohibition order was contained in Section 5(1) of the law, it prescribes a minimum of 20 years imprisonment for “any person who knowingly, in any manner, directly or indirectly, solicits or renders support for the commission of an act of terrorism or to a terrorist group”, while the U.S government also placed a reward of U.S \$7million on the head of Abubakar Shekau, the leader of the Boko Haram sect. Analysts are of the opinion that this development signaled a new preparedness by the American government to confront Islamic extremism in Nigeria more directly and argued that “the American reward should be accompanied by increased assistance in the form of intelligence, logistics and training, as well as robust diplomatic backing. The comprehensive defeat of the terrorist scourge in Nigeria is as much a desirable outcome for the international community as it is for the country itself” (The Nation, 2013: June 13). Ex-President Obasanjo told the CNN that he had tried to reach out to Boko Haram in 2011 through a lawyer who acted as the group’s intermediary, and had asked if they had external backing. He said the lawyer told him that the group was receiving support from other Nigerians who have resources overseas or “other organisations from abroad.” Obasanjo had in 2011 made a widely-reported contact with the sect; and the killing of the in-law to the late leader of Boko Haram, Mohammed Yusuf, barely 24 hours after, was seen as rejection of Obasanjo’s intervention. Obasanjo said resolving the issue was central to the country’s progress. “Boko Haram undermines security, and anything that undermines security undermines development, undermines education, undermines health, and undermines agriculture and food and nutrition security” (The Punch, 2013: January 9).

The federal government of Nigeria had done very well in the release of innocent women and children detained in connection with the attacks of the Boko Haram sect and should seek genuine reconciliation with the sect, coupled with the hope that the latter also renounces its use of hostility and its crusade to turn Nigeria into an Islamic state, bearing in mind that the country’s constitution is secular and that its laws allows for free will of worship without coercion. Hannatu Musawa (2013: 64) also advised that federal government thus:

Government should further undertake to rebuild and relinquish the Mosques and properties that belonged to the Jam’a Ahl al-sunnah lida’wa wa al-jihad movement before the Borno state government under the leadership of Ali Modu Sheriff launched its offensive against them, before the murder of their leader Imam Mohammed Yusuf. And most importantly, the on-going trial of the security operatives who murdered Yusuf and Alhaji Buji Foyi should be intensified, together with the arrest and prosecution of the government officials who allegedly ordered their execution. Those actions would show the sincerity and commitment of government to tackle the root of this problem and bring it to an end.

Tanimu Turaki, head of the Presidential Amnesty Committee, proclaimed a cease fire deal with the Boko Haram sect on Monday, July 8, 2013 on Radio France International Hausa services, adding that his committee had contacted some top leaders of the group and that there was a constructive answer from the gang leaders that they would drop their arms for peace and unity in the north-east region (Akhaine et al, 2013). But the cease fire agreement was disclaimed by the group’s leader, Abubakar Shekau on Saturday, July 13, 2013 and threatened more attacks on schools. It was equally reported that an influential member of the Shekau-led sect, Imam Muhammadu Marwana corroborated Turaki’s claim, yet Shekau in a video message declared: “there is this wicked rumour making the rounds that we have dialogued with government of Nigeria which led to a ceasefire on our part. We have also heard how some of our operations and attacks are being credited to criminals. As such the security agents have been killing our armed members in the name of criminals, who were out on holy mission, are being attacked and killed with the label of criminals...Western education is a plot against Islam, we will kill school teachers who are teaching western education, western education is sin, and we don’t attack students” (The Nation, 2013: July 14).

The United States government through the US-Nigeria Bi-National Commission held discussions with Nigerian government officials in Abuja on August 15, 2013 to find solutions towards ending the Boko Haram insurgency. Nineteen Northern governors were invited, the American delegation was led the US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Wendy Sherman; an Assistant Secretary in the US Department of Defence, high ranking Deputy Assistant Secretaries of States from the State Department, and officials from the US-Africa Command among others (The Punch, 2013: August 13). Sherman explained that the US government has suggested to her Nigerian counterpart, a comprehensive approach that addresses socio-economic problems, articulates clear rules of engagement and commits to accountability for those who perpetrate violence for both Boko Haram and security forces, adding that America will demonstrate to Nigerians that their future is brighter in a more secure country. This approach she further explained will be a multi-faceted strategy to counter the threats posed by the terrorists and not just the use of force alone (Olajuwon, Chukwu & Okeke, 2013).

On the other hand, observers are of the view that the campaigns against terrorism in Nigeria have not been effectively coordinated by the government, it has not been decisive and sometimes the efforts have been counterproductive. The ransom placed on Shekau and the Amnesty offer by the government at the same time seemed to be contradictory. Colonel Hammed Ali (retired), reacted thus to the contradictory policies of the government, “the declaration of state of emergency in three states and proscription of Boko Haram is a sign of policy inconsistency on the part of the federal government in tackling the sect. The only way to end the activities of the sect is dialogue. Government must meet them for dialogue. Now with the onslaught on them, the sect members are melting into the society and if care is not taken they will regroup after sometime” (Mudashir & Ibrahim, 2013).

The Borno state government paid a sum 100 Million Naira by cheque as compensation to the family of Baba Fugu, the slain in-law of late Mohammed Yusuf on Monday, January 9, 2012; upon a ruling from a Maiduguri High court. The state government also earmarked 89.2 Million Naira to be given to 36 victims identified by the Fannami Committee of Inquiry amidst some controversies (Olugbode, 2012). It is also instructive to know that the victims of Boko Haram received some forms of compensation from the federal government as the sum of N450 million was announced as donation on July 19, 2013 by Alhaji Bukar Tijjani, the Minister of State for Agriculture to victims in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states. A donation of 650 trucks of assorted grains was also given to the three states while business mogul, Alhaji Aliko Dangote offered to give the sum of N1 billion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

John Campbell (2013: 64), former American ambassador to Nigeria, suggested a way to mitigate the northern crises: “in the longer term, decentralization of government authority outlined in the country’s constitution but never really implemented would be a step in the right direction. So too, would be meaningful implementation of the rule of law, such as the arrest, prosecution, trial and punishment of those convicted. Such steps would help address the North’s pervasive sense of alienation from the Abuja government and, increasingly, from the Federation.” Former Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State, a security expert, also advocated for a security summit and underlined the linkage between poverty and violence, stressing that development cannot occur without security. He imagined and wished that money spent on the maintenance of security and peace could have been used for economic development (Ezomon, 2013). Therefore, there is urgent need for all stakeholders to plan and actualize an economic development strategy for northern Nigeria that will diminish poverty, violence, youth unemployment and restiveness; and by extension to cover the entire nation.

The federal government has also thought about erecting a barrier along the country’s border with Chad in view of the level of insecurity in the Northeast region. It would be erected along the borders calculated to be ‘easily accessible’ to terrorists and criminals. The fence is intended to restrain the international dimensions of criminality in the area. It was gathered through intelligence reports from the North-East that Nigerians along the borders with Niger and Chad are exposed to recurrent molestations from criminals from these countries, who are in the practice of rustling livestock of Nigerian farmers, stealing their farm produce and assaulting the women. The raid dates back to the Chadian civil war in the 1980s, and has since changed into terrorism, as foreign militants and arms dealers are now believed to be using these routes to stimulate trouble in Nigeria. It is widely believed that AQIM uses this route to enter the country and possibly assist Boko Haram. The government is expected to also install surveillance apparatus along with the fence, replicating what the United States did along her borders with Mexico, to prevent drugs and arms smuggling, called “border fence, rotted fence or border wall”, and ultimately aid border management (Oyegbile, 2013). It is also informative to note that Nigeria has about 480 irregular border crossings in its 4,500 kilometers borders with Niger and Chad (Olomjobi, 2013:224).

Horsfall joined other advocates for the creation of special courts to try suspected cases of terrorism and sabotage. He reasoned that “the judicial arm, in particular, has a major duty to perform in this matter. The dispensation of justice is on the shoulders of the judiciary and the least one would expect from the judiciary in the matter of violent terrorism, economic terrorism and corruption, is to emulate the action taken by their Indian counterpart, a commonwealth country like us, to set up special courts to deal with these dangerous cases that are capable of destroying our country. There are already a number of Boko Haram and other insurgents held in our prison custody awaiting trial. One or two of them are taken to court from time to time and for one technical reason or another are returned to the cell, their cases having been further adjourned! When will these cases be dispensed with and justice done, to the state or the individual or groups concerned? What about consideration for the morale of the officers and men who labour tirelessly, and risk their lives day in and day out in an attempt to bring these alleged culprits to book?” (Bassey, 2013: June 16:25). When alleged terrorists are tried and convicted or otherwise, it will serve as deterrence to would-be perpetrators.

CONCLUSION

The ideology of Boko Haram has spread in measurement because of many socio-economic grievances that have produced an apparent marginalization and insecurity among northern Muslim communities. Further, its bitterness toward the Nigerian government is shared generally among Nigerians, in spite of faith but

predominantly in the north and especially among Muslim communities. The approach of the federal government towards the security challenges posed by the Boko Haram have been described by some observers as confused, oscillating between crackdown and offer of amnesty. Yet, other scholars have advocated for the 'carrot and stick' approach. It became quite clear that the prevalence of violence in northern Nigeria and by extension the whole country is a failure of governance. Successive governments have failed in its role to offer social and economic fairness in the society, a World Bank report once described the country as that of 'thriving poverty in a flourishing economy'. There is need for a re-distribution of wealth in Nigeria. For most members of Boko Haram, the sect became a refuge as government has failed to provide jobs, opportunities and justice, yet the rich and privileged ones displayed affluence with irresponsible abandonment. Unemployment is a global phenomenon but governance in Nigeria lacked the vision and preparedness to provide social welfare and amenities for the citizenry in form of basic necessities such as food and shelter, a lot have been lost to corruption, political patronage and wasteful spending by those in the corridors of power. There is need for an intelligence-driven national security establishment that is trained and equipped to deal with the new set of security challenges facing Nigeria.

The terrorist insurgency in Borno and the north east has shattered not only the local economy; it has further increased the crisis of paucity in the region. Allied to this is the veracity of joblessness, predominantly among young people. Youth unemployment across Nigeria stands at a frightening level of over 60 percent. For a region with declining economic opportunities such as the north east, the figures could surpass 70 percent. The practical absence of youth development programmes is a main deficit in national public management system. Illiteracy and lack of educational opportunities is a faltering wedge to social and economic advancement. The states in north-east Nigeria remains some of the most educationally deprived regions in the Federation. It is estimated that only one out of seven pupils (13.82%) continue from elementary school to secondary education in Borno State. Most of the youths have no access and no prospect to obtain occupational skills that will make them reasonably self-reliant. Poverty is actually a major challenge in Nigeria since hunger and deprivation are catalysts to violence. The masses and the youth, data have shown, are poor. This has led some Nigerians to append no worth and regard to existence itself.

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