

The Menace of Terrorism in Fourth Republic Nigeria: A Political Economy Analysis (2011-2015)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is the use of violent action in order to achieve political aims or force a government to act. The United States Department of Defense cited by Terrorism Research (Undated), defines terrorism as “the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological.” The people or individuals that carry out acts of terrorisms are known as terrorists.

Characteristically, terrorism involves the following:

- Use of unlawful violence believing that violence will usher in a better system
- Use of unlawful and assorted dangerous weapons
- Motivated by goals that might be political, religious or ideological
- Secretive in membership recruitment and locations of residence
- Fewer in number comparable to the larger society they attack
- Have strong will and could die for the course they uphold
- Most times, operate as syndicates
- Derive financial and military supports from national and international loyalists
- They are militant, they use coercion, intimidation and instill fears in people

Their tactics involve:

Suicide bombing, car bombing, rocket propelled grenades, assassinations, abductions and kidnapping, disguising and hijacking.

Their targets are extermination of human lives and destruction of properties. These are achieved by attacking: Public squares, government buildings and installations, churches and mosques, schools, bridges, police stations, military barracks and installations as well as market squares and prisons to free inmates particularly their incarcerated members.

The Nigerian State is no stranger to acts of terrorism. The fourth republic has witnessed outbursts of violence and direct attacks from organized groups such as the **Boko Haram sect**, **MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta)**, **IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra)** although only Boko Haram and IPOB were classified by the Nigerian government as terrorist groups in 2013 and 2017 respectively.

This presentation focuses on the menace of terrorism between the period of 2011-2015, the activities of the **Boko Haram** terrorist group.

1.1 STRUCTURAL AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Boko Haram, a radical Islamist group is formally known as “Jama’atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda Awatiwal Jihad”. Its origin can be traced back to 2002 when its members organized around a charismatic leader, Mohammed Yusuf, in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital. Yusuf instilled in the group an extreme Islamic ideology and a high degree of disdain for western principles and culture. Boko Haram, simply translated from Hausa to English, means “western education is forbidden.” It aims to create an Islamic state, impose sharia law in Northern Nigeria, do away with western principles and culture, and rid society of bad governance, corruption and moral depravation.

The movement started with a strong criticism of northern Muslims for engaging in un-Islamic practices, but it remained largely non-violent until July 2009 when violent crackdown by the Police led to the arrest of some key members, including, Mohammed Yusuf, who was subsequently killed by the police. The killing of Yusuf and other members of the sect ignited anger amongst the group, leading to violent attacks against police forces and innocent civilians under the de-facto leadership of Abubakar Shekau.

According to Wikipedia, over 106 attacks have been launched by the sect between 2011-2015 with drastic escalation in 2014 where a death toll of 10,849 was recorded.

2.0 DRIVERS/ PROMOTERS

Boko Haram: Emergence and Emancipation for (Northern) Nigeria?

Most radical elements believe that Boko Haram will herald the emergence of a “new northern Nigeria” and emancipation from the corrupt Northern elites who they believe now have strong affiliations with their counterparts from the Southern part of the country.

Political Interests and Elite Exploitation

Some studies blamed the emergence of Boko Haram on the country’s elite politics. Botha et al. argued that “Boko Haram is a political construct, sponsored by politicians.” According to Mbah et al., Boko Haram emerged from the struggle among northern and southern political elites to gain control of state political power, especially after the death of President Yar’Adua. The re-election of Jonathan Goodluck in 2011 then led to the use of Boko Haram as an instrument of destruction by northern political elites.

There have been allusions to the fact that some politicians curry favor from the terrorists, arming and using them as thugs against their political opponents and securing their support for election to political positions.

Socio-Economic Drivers: Poverty and Underdevelopment

One significant factor that has stimulated the drive towards violent extremism, recruitment and support for Boko Haram is economic deprivation. Abject poverty and economic dislocation of livelihoods have drastically reduced the options of many young Nigerians in the northern region. In May 2013, the Nigerian government released dozens of women and teenagers previously detained as relatives of suspected Boko Haram members. Among the youths were individuals who confessed to previously accepting payments of 5,000 Nigerian Naira from Boko Haram militants, who in turn provided them with kegs of fuel to set schools ablaze in Maiduguri, Borno State. This is indicative of the economic desperation expressed by thousands of youths who have been rendered vulnerable by the shortcomings of Nigeria's leadership over several decades. According to Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the measure of relative poverty is most apparent in the northern region. In comparison with the southeast and southwest zones, which have relative poverty rates of 67.0% and 59.1% respectively, the north-east and north-west zones have higher figures of 76.3%.

Religious Radicalization

It is common belief that religious tension and religious fundamentalism cause terrorism. There is empirical evidence to support this argument. With respect to Boko Haram, religion plays a vital role in their discourse. The group holds extreme religious ideology, which they use as the basis to commit their heinous crimes, for example, the group aims to promote Sharia law and create an Islamic state in Northern Nigeria. As a result, it has waged war on any group or western idea, which they believe is against Islam. A common occurrence is the brainwashing of neglected children(almajiris) by radical scholars.

This has created the notion that terrorism is linked to religion fundamentalism. In the study, why do people join Boko Haram? Onuoha found that, "ignorance of religious teaching is the leading factor influencing the adoption of extreme religious views, especially among youth" in all the northern states surveyed.

Perverse Incentives

There are lots of people in high places that financially benefit from the insecurity. For such people, it becomes their goal to maintain the status quo rather than encourage an improvement. There is now a massive industry around insecurity in Nigeria and it is not in the interest of those benefiting from it to support efforts to provide more security.

As exemplification, hostage negotiation is a new and booming career for some Nigerians. When a member of a family is kidnapped, the security agencies put the family in contact with hostage negotiators who are paid not only to negotiate downward the massive ransom demanded by the hostage takers, but also help deliver the ransom.

Many people in our official security agencies also corruptly enrich themselves through security-related procurements. Although all these powerful people are few, they are influential enough to perpetuate insecurity as that is more profitable for them than tranquility.

3.0 SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS OF TERRORISM

Effect on Population

The effect of terrorism on the population is obvious. Insecurity depletes the population as innocent, young and productive member of the population are wasted during periods of uprising. For instance, between 2011 and 2013, a whopping 1,007 lives have been lost due to the activities of Boko haram in North Eastern part of Nigeria. A breakdown of that figure shows that the highest casualty was recorded in 2011 with 469 deaths as shown below;

Death due to Boko Haram attacks

Year	No killed
2011	469
2012	369
2013	169
Total	1007

SOURCE: Compiled from Achumba and Ighomereho (2013)

Effect on Unemployment

Insecurity results in the shutdown of businesses and the relocation of companies from unsafe to safe havens. Whereas the labour force continued to increase drastically but to 77.0 million in 2015, from 73.0 million in 2014, representing an increase of 5.5 per cent, employment generation has not kept pace with that increase. Hence, the period witnessed continued increase in the number of unemployed. As shown, the number of unemployed in the labour force increased to 10.4 percent, compared to 7.8 per cent in 2014, representing an increase of 2.6 percentage points.

Labour force & Unemployment Statistics

Year	Labour force (Millions)	Unemployment (%)
2011	67,256,090	6.0
2012	69,105,775	10.6
2013	71,105,800	10.0
2014	72,931,608	7.8
2015	76,957,923	10.4

Source: CBN Annual Report, 2015.

Effect on Agriculture

The agricultural sector was never spared during uprising but particularly badly hit, especially as people were forced to move in the course of the conflicts. Agricultural activities have been brought to a complete halt in Borno State since the beginning of Boko Haram disturbances in that area. This is so because the people in some areas of the State have since relocated from

their homes and farm land to internally displaced person's (IDP) camps for safety.

Effect on Foreign Investment

The amplification of news coverage on insecurity in a nation can make things look worse to outsiders than they really are. This can reduce the confidence of foreign investors in such a nation that has massive security challenges. Investor confidence can worsen, particularly where there is weak and ineffective government response to the security challenges.

Disruption of Economic Activities

With pervasive insecurity comes internal displacement of people and the crippling of economic activities in the worst-affected areas. We have witnessed the virtual death of economic activities in the north-eastern states of Nigeria over the last decade due to the violent Boko Haram insurgency.

Insecurity in these states has also created internal refugees within the country. As a result, people in the refugee camps are not able to contribute to economic activities.

Disproportionate Defence Spending Vis-à-vis Other Economic Sectors

In responding to the increasing insecurity in Nigeria, the government has been allocating hundreds of billions of naira to defense and security-related expenditure. These are large sums of money that should have been going elsewhere in the economy, especially in the education and health sectors.

The domestic economic impact of this exorbitant defense expenditure is further devalued as long as it is mostly foreign procurement based. This is not helpful to the growth of the economy.

The Struggle for Personal Survival Undermines Innovation

Nigerians are creative people. Nigerians in diaspora are among the leaders in innovation and change in many sectors. But back home, survival has become the overriding consideration for many people. Heightened insecurity has made a lot of people become more risk-averse in terms of the places they go to and the people they interact with. Travelling from one city to another in Nigeria has become a game of chance and death-dodging for many people.

Under such atmosphere; creativity is diminished, and innovation takes a back seat. Whereas, innovation is a vital engine needed to drive change and growth in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. Security is what can give citizens the space to reflect and be creative and innovative.

Increase in Brain Drain

Nigeria is losing its best brains on a daily basis through mass emigration to Western countries. Canada seems to be the country of preference for most Nigerians at the moment, due to its open-door policy for qualified migrants.

A recent poll conducted by NOI Polls, found that: "Almost 9 in 10 respondents (88%) disclosed they are seeking work opportunities abroad." It also found that: "83% of doctors who filled the

survey and are based abroad are licensed in Nigeria, indicating that they had completed their medical education in Nigeria before departing beyond the shores of Nigeria.”

The search for a better quality of life is the main reason for the mass emigration of Nigerian doctors and other professionals. The prospect for the good life is being jeopardized in the country by insecurity and by its negative impact on economic opportunities.

Possible National Isolation

Tourists do not visit unsafe places. Terrorism in Nigeria has led to many countries advising their citizens not to travel to many parts of Nigeria. The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), for instance, advises British nationals against travelling to sixteen states of Nigeria. Extreme caution is also advised when travelling in the rest of the country. With such dire warning, fewer foreigners will make Nigeria a destination of choice.

The moment a national government advises citizens against travel to another country, or parts of it; all travel and other insurance covers automatically become invalid for those who go against the travel advice. Only specialist insurance will be available at very high cost if you travel to such places against the travel advice. Hence, continued insecurity can lead to an isolation of the country by default.

Deepening Corruption at All Levels

The chaos and uncertainties created by insecurity can provide the breeding ground for corruption. On the one hand, insecurity can provide an environment for some government officials to corruptly enrich themselves as stated earlier; on the other hand, fighting insecurity can spread the government too thin, limiting its ability to fight corruption effectively.

4.0 ALLEGED SPONSORS OF BOKO HARAM

Internal Sponsors

Australian “crisis negotiator”, Stephen Davis set the media ablaze with his allegations regarding Boko Haram sponsors. Davis aroused sleeping consciousness when he alleged in an interview with the Australian Broadcasting Company (ABC) that Islamic terrorist sect, Boko Haram, was being funded by Nigerian politicians. But this wasn’t the main news as many Nigerians are aware of that fact. In a subsequent interview with Arise TV, Davis went further to name former Borno State Governor, Modu Sheriff and former chief of army staff, Lt. Gen. Azubuike Ihejirika, as sponsors of the group.

Davis had visited Nigeria to negotiate the release of the over 200 schoolgirls abducted since April by Boko Haram terrorists. He previously worked as a negotiator for Nigerian government

under ex-Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Shehu Yar'Adua administrations during the Niger-Delta militants uprising in the South-South.

External Sponsors

According to Yossef Bodansky “The strategic-regional context of the Boko Haram’s Jihad changed profoundly in early November 2014. This was a direct result of the evolving geo-strategic grand designs of the key aspirant powers – Sudan, Iran and Qatar – that committed to sponsoring and sustaining an Islamist-Jihadist surge into the Heart of Africa. The surge will rely on two Islamist springboards – the Derna Caliphate in eastern Libya and the Boko Haram Caliphate in Nigeria. The envisioned surge will be a three-prong east-to-west surge – a northern arm along the shores of the Mediterranean originating from Libya, a central arm through the Sahel originating from both Libya and Nigeria, and a southern arm along the shores of the Gulf of Guinea originating from Nigeria. By the time the surge is completed, there will emerge an Islamist-Jihadist bloc from the Red Sea in the east to the Atlantic in the west, and from the Mediterranean in the north to the Gulf of Guinea in the south.

In mid-2014, there also began a flow of returning Nigerian and other African volunteers arriving from foreign Jihads. At least 100 Nigerian veterans returned from Syria-Iraq, and dozens of others returned from Somalia, Mali and the training camps in Libya. Over 100 highly trained Nigerians are expected to arrive from the training camps in southern Libya during 2015. A few friends from other west African states accompanied their Nigerian counterparts from foreign Jihads and joined the Boko Haram. In mid-2014, recruiters of the Islamic Caliphate arrived in Nigeria with returning Jihadists from the Middle East. They are seeking Muslim volunteers for the Jihad fronts in Syria-Iraq and Libya. Since summer 2014, the KHI recruited 40-60 such Nigerian volunteers. These volunteers will receive advanced training and, if they survive, will be returning to Nigeria as experienced commanders starting 2016. Since many of these recruits are from the Lagos slums and other cities in the South – they will expedite the spread of the Jihadist struggle to the South.”

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Understand the organizational structure

The Nigerian State and military needs to clearly understand the organizational structure of the Boko Haram sect in order to effectively win this war against terrorism. We need to have more human intelligence assets.

Destabilize Financial Support Network

Not much is known about the financial network of Boko Haram, although several politicians, business men and clerics have been suspected at different times of funding the organization. Unless these financial networks are exposed and disrupted, the organization will continue to grow.

Curb Radicalization

The upsurge of Boko Haram activities is intimately linked to the spread of radical Islamic ideologies. A major characteristic of the doctrine is the notion that the Nigerian state is evil and unworthy of allegiance hence the perceived justification for the violent attacks against the military, politicians and government officials.

Proper Equipping of Police Force and Military

The Police force and Military must be adequately equipped to contend effectively against the Boko Haram sect. Currently there is no database of fingerprints or any form of forensic investigation, the Police only rely on verbal confessions (mostly extracted under duress) which forms about 60% of all prosecutions.

Tame Police Brutality

There have been reports of unlawful killings, dragnet arrests, extortion and intimidation carried out by the JTF against residents of Borno. Such excesses on the part of security services contribute to further alienate citizens from the Government. Nigerian soldiers and Police officers patrolling the North Eastern States are national not local, they do not share ethnic or cultural background with the local population who see themselves as being under siege.

Bridge the Credibility Gap

Government effort does not reflect the urgency to eradicate the terrorist scourge. To restore confidence, there should be prompt trial of arrested culprits, firm implementation of commission reports, classified handling of security reports to prevent leaking and a general responsiveness to issues around security and counter terrorism.

Training

The Nigerian Intelligence community must be adequately trained with appropriate skillset. Kill nepotism by appointing officers to sensitive position based on performance rather than favoritism.

System Overhaul

The entire security system needs to be overhauled, elements within the security services are corrupt or infiltrated by the Boko Haram sect. There have been concerns of sympathizers within the government, all of these must be addressed in order to see results in the fight against terrorism.

Socio-economic Development, Youth Empowerment and Good Governance

Developmental reforms and policies need to be geared towards improving economic infrastructure, stimulating human enterprise and supporting political institutions that are corruption-free and accountable. The socio-economic security of individuals in northern Nigeria certainly, needs a boost. However, this should be implemented along with the development of other regions in the country. Focus should be targeted at educational needs, and in fulfilling this requirement, women must be incorporated into a broad strategy of empowerment. Progress in

these areas will help to undercut the ability of violent extremists who exploit the economically vulnerable in society.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Terrorism in Nigeria is retarding the economic and technological advancement of the nation. Many Nigerians live daily in tensions and suspicion. Many productive lives have been lost, available ones are displaced and live in constant fears and pain of the loss of loved ones. In addition, foreign investors are scared away from the Country.

This paper examines the background, drivers, societal effects of terrorism in Nigeria.

Recommendations have also been made on how to reverse this trend to achieve a peaceful, united and prosperous nation.

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