

BOKO HARAM: A THREAT TO NIGERIAN NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract

We live in a world that violence now is the order of the day and prevalent in human relations. One of the greatest threats that the globe is facing today is terrorism. Our nation, Nigeria, is at the instant, confronted with intimidation from Boko Haram. The security of any nation is very important in that where peace, safety lives and properties are not guaranteed; there can be no meaningful development. This work showed that the insurgent is a threat to National Security in Nigeria. This work will also attempt to examine the state of affairs in Nigeria with regard to security by means of looking at carefully a number of the major factors so as to have helped to bring about the common growth in social dissatisfaction, with which the insurgent Boko Haram has been skilful to take advantage of.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Threat, National Security, Terrorism, Nigeria

Introduction

We reside in a world liable to crises. No country is gratis as of crises. Aggression has become now the command of the day and prevalent in human associations. The worldwide warning of coming danger of violence regards no borders or boundaries. Our country Nigeria is not gratis from these terrorizations. The Nigeria state is, at the instant, confronted with terrorizations coming from the insurgent - Boko Haram (Vanguard 1).

Boko Haram (figuratively, “Western or non-Islamic education is a sin”)

“Is a Nigerian terrorist Islamic fundamentalist group that seeks the imposition of Shariah law in the northern states of Nigeria? The group presently has an undefined structure and chain of command. The official name of the group is Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati Wal-Jihad, which in Arabic means “People committed to the propagation of the Prophet’s Teaching and Jihad”. It is an Islamic movement which strongly opposes man-

made-laws. Founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 in northern Nigeria” (FRANCE24.1).

The group, “whose name in the Hausa words Boko Haram translates the same as “Western education is blasphemy” or “a sin”, is divided into three factions and in 2011, was accountable for more than 450 killings in Nigeria” according to an AP count (ALJAZEERA 1). Boko Haram has become a menace to Nigerian society. This terrorist organisation strikes with such ferocity that both national and international attention is drawn to a puzzling question such as: who are the Boko Haram and why they do what they do?

This paper will try to examine the security state of affairs in Nigeria by looking at carefully a number of the major factors that have share in the common growth in social dissatisfaction, along with which the insurgent Boko Haram has in every direction skilful to make use of. It will as well offer a number of backdrop knowledge on the confrontational group itself, and therefore weigh up the danger that it give rise to.

Etymology

People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad was taken by the insurgent as its official name, which is the English conversion of Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati Wal-Jihad. Although, people of Maiduguri, where it was fashioned in 2002; nicknamed it Boko Haram. The word “Boko Haram” comes from the Hausa language **boko** connoting “western education” and the Arabic phrase **haram** metaphorically connotes “sin” (literally, “forbidden”)” (Florian 196). According to Chothia, “the name, indefinitely give the meaning from Hausa, means “Western education is forbidden”. The insurgent, got this fame, owing to its powerful resistance to everything Western; which it understands as humiliating Muslims" (1).

The emergence of boko haram: the origin

The source of this movement (Boko Haram) can be traced back to the Yan Tatsine violent outburst of lawlessness close to the beginning of 1980s (Adesoji 95-108). What started basically as a disagreement between two Muslim movements according to Farrel, grow fuller into all out-cry violent in Maiduguri, Yola and Kaduna. The law enforcement along with military at last succeeds to suppress the violence which left 4,000 persons death. However their clumsy reply give rise to an enormous height of disbelieves from inside the district and a developing opposition in the direction of the secularist state (2). According to Adesoji:

The aftermath of the Yan Tatsine riots was that a number of conservative Islamic groups began to emerge and gain

popularity in Borno State. Amongst one of these was Mohammed Yusuf. A school dropout, he had undertaken religious studies in Chad and the Niger Republic before returning to Maiduguri where he established a local mosque and religious school. Yusuf became the local head of one such group called Jama'atul Tajdidi Islam before leaving it as a result of a dispute over its strategy and tactics (95-108).

Yusuf was powerfully positioned by the fourteenth century law don Ibu Taymiyyah – regarded as a main philosopher intended for basic groups in the Middle East – he produced his own religious group in 2001 (Johnson 2). Yusuf supporters spoke of themselves as Jama'atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda'wati Wal Jihad or persons who are dedicated towards the spread of the Prophet Teachings and Jihad. Interpreted as “Western schooling is transgression”, Soon after that the Government gave the insurgent the name Boko Haram. Yusuf's censure of local Islamic scholars as well as set up political group move the feelings of a lot of discontented persons in his district, and shortly the figure of his supporters increased in sizes considerably. In 2004, a Newswatch magazine article reported that “students in a number of technical colleges in Maiduguri and Damaturu had torn up their certificates of education and left their studies to join up for Qur'anic lessons and preaching” (Danjibo 3). He as well added that, the position and pull of the insurgent rapidly grew to be obvious to local Government officials. Without a doubt, Adi Modu Sheriff, the executive Governor of Borno State, remembered being offered that very day to become a member of the movement by a past commissioner in his government named Alhaji Buji Foi (3).

According to Johnson, the movement was established by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 in the city of Maiduguri with the plan of setting up a Shari'a government in Borno State under previous Governor Ali Modu Sheriff (1). He founded a religious multifaceted that included a mosque as well as a school where a lot of poor people from across Nigeria and from neighbouring countries register their offspring (Chothia 2). From the ongoing, we can deduce that Boko Haram was not merely concerned in teaching of children from poor families. But also to showcase its political aim which was to form an Islamic nation in Nigeria, thus the institution became a enlisting area for Jihadis to repress the state. The faction goals to found a completely Islamic state, in Nigeria, counting the execution of criminal Sharia courts all over the country.

Yusuf has been described by Paul Lubeck, a University of California Professor studying Muslim societies in Africa “as a trained salafist (a school of thought frequently linked with Jihad) and was powerfully affected by Ibu Taymiyyah, a fourteenth century law scholar who propagate Islamic

religious laws very strictly and is look at as a “main theorist” for radical groups in the Middle East” (Johnson 1). A number of examiners say the group is a product of the Maitatsine violent of the 1980s (AfricaToday 2) as well as the religious/ethnic nervous strain that came in near the end of 1990s.

In 2004, the compound was moved to Yusuf’s own state of Yobe in the rural community of Kanamma close to the Niger boundary, where he established a place named “Afghanistan” and employed for a purpose to assault close by police station, murdering law enforcement personnel’s. Yusuf is unfriendly in the direction of democracy as well as the worldly educational scheme, declare solemnly that this warfare that is up till now to begin would carry on for long period if the educational and political structure remain unchanged (Wikipedia 2).

Eric Guttschuss a Human Rights Watch researcher told IRIN News that “Yusuf successfully attracted followers from unemployed youth by speaking out against police and political corruption. Abdulkarim Mohammed, a researcher on Boko Haram, added that violent uprisings in Nigeria are ultimately due to the fallout of frustration with corruption and the attendant social malaise of poverty and unemployment” (IRIN 1).

Obviously, we can agree that the formation or emergence of Boko Haram and a lot of these conflicts are in truth further ingrained in religious identity and extremist beliefs as well as in political and economic tension. Long-lasting battles of who must have power over political power, economic rivalries among different tribal groups often give birth to this aggression. For example, it was largely economic rivalries which give birth to Jos conflict given that the local government had carried out plan of action, which were seen by a lot of people as giving an edge to some and therefore was termed as prejudiced in the direction of non-indigenes that were, for the most part, Muslims.

Boko haram: a real threat to national security

What is the characteristic of this danger? Have the safety agencies handled the state of affairs well? What has left incorrect with the plan in use? In what way should government react to these new terrorist bombings? This paper wills effort to reply these questions.

Recently, the Islamic sect known as Boko Haram gave conditions that must be met by the Federal Government before there could be any ceasefire agreement. The conditions include the resignation of the recently voted Governor, Alhaji Kashim Shettima, trial of his predecessor, Senator Modu Ali Sheriff and severe imposed of the Sharia legal system in not less than 12 Muslim-controlled states in the north and this is equal to one third of the country. The terrorist also asked for the trial, under Islamic law, of a number of politicians, traditional rulers and security staff, who were

accountable for supposed extra-judicial killings of its members in the 2009 uprising in Borno. (The Daily Eagles 1). The suicide bomb explosion at the Force Headquarters Abuja is a real proof that Boko Haram is a serious threat to national security. As a result of this, there have been calls for the Federal Government to engage the fundamentalist Islamic sect in peace talks. This actually shows that Nigeria has no security.

The Boko Haram sect has owned liability in favour of the bombing of the UN edifice in Abuja and given warning of launching further violent following the Ramadan. It threatened to recommence a complete offensive on the Nigerian nation for the reason that their followers were directed to put to death in Kano and Abuja. They added that this is only the tilt of the iceberg, right away following fasting we will begin complete attack against the Nigerian state as well as President Jonathan for directing extra judicial killings of our followers in Kano and Abuja (Ibrahim 1). We can all see that Boko Haram has turned into a huge embarrassment to the nation even with the latest bombing of the UN building.

The Northern states had seen crises previous to the new bombings. They had witness the Maitatsine violent in the 1980s in Kano, Bullum Kutu (1982), Kaduna (1982), Jimeta (1984) and Gombe (1985). What is strange in Boko Haram's instance is the plans. In the Maitatsine's instance those who commit the crime were seen and recognized. In Boko Haram's instance, those who commit the crime are unknown. Their exact places are unidentified since it did not pay to clash with the government on equivalent terms, Boko Haram change of direction to remote acts of violence (Vanguard 1). The Boko Haram sect seems invincible because of the failure of intelligence gathering in the country.

It is in this light that Shel opines that “in the past, in our beloved country Nigeria, the sight of bombs and their catastrophic impact used to be a movie scene. As you and I now know, this is no longer the case. The best selling news in town now is the Boko Haram story. He also added the fear of Boko Haram is the beginning of security consciousness” (1). This rising threat pulling sharply apart our peace is becoming not merely out of control other than faster. The insurgent, thought to have been gotten rid of following a fierce rebellion in 2009 in which hundreds of persons were put to death, is resurgent and its followers desire vengeance. They have been fighting for the past months a guerrilla war, putting to death policemen as well as persons they consider assisted the security services in the clash against them. Boko Haram has been fighting for Islamic rule in northern Nigeria.

Boko Haram's Yobe killings expose national security flop which actually testify to the fact that the insurgent is a real threat to national security in nation, Nigeria. Supporting this assertion, Desert Herald writes:

“The well-coordinated siege of the capital of rural Yobe State, Damaturu penultimate week by the dreaded members of the insurgent at a time the chief security officer of the state, Governor Ibrahim Gaidam, and some of his family members were enjoying themselves in the popular and expensive Darul Tawhid Intercontinental Hotel in Mecca and which happens to be the Governor’s fifth visit to the Saudi kingdom in less than three months, has raised serious concerns about the ability, professional and technical competence of the Nigerian security agencies to contain the threat to national security and human lives being posed by the members of the audacious sect” (1).

Desert Herald also adds that the sophistication of the group and the number of deaths and injuries at the end of the operation that lasted about three hours without the intervention of the police largely because they are ill-equipped and ill-prepared for such emergency despite the provision of billions of naira to the Nigeria police force and the office of the National Security Adviser, resulted in disgraceful scenes showing police officers running for their dear lives and in most instances particularly those officers that sought refuge at the General Hospital Damaturu removing their uniforms in a desperate move to escape the attack of the Boko Haram militants (1). From the above, we can see that this has left no one in doubt about the failure of President Goodluck Jonathan and his team of security to contain the uprising despite much noises, assurances and approval of billions of naira to fight the Boko Haram insurgency. This is just a testimony to show how porous our security agencies are in Nigeria and this is why the Boko Haram seems to upper hand in the fight. To show how porous our security agencies are, This Day writes that “the atmosphere of insecurity currently inflicted on the Nation by the Boko Haram crises points to poor use of pre-emptive intelligence and a coherent strategy in the management of the security issues arising therefrom” (1).

The Damaturu attack shows the clear and obvious confusion and contradictory claims and counter claims among the security chiefs. This lack of sincerity on their part and lack of clear or defined policy direction on how best to confront the crisis by the government of the day shows the magnitude of the challenges of Boko Haram threat to national security facing Nigeria under the present government of Goodluck Jonathan. To show lack of sincerity among the security chiefs, Desert Herald writes:

Indeed, there have been desperate but futile attempts by the NSA, General Andrew Azazi (rtd), Inspector General of Police Hafiz Ringimor the Yobe State Police Command and the State Security Service (SSS) through its spokesperson Marilyn Ogar to under-declare the casualty figures and the magnitude and

sophistication of the attack in Damaturu as well as the failure of the security agencies to confront the attackers at the time of the operations (2).

While Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International, Associated Press (AP) and several other credible local and international media outfits and agencies put the death toll of the Boko Haram attacks on Damaturu and Potiskun at over 150, and while others say it is more than 260 considering the inventory of deaths taken immediately after the attack, the police had without justifying their statistics or how they arrived at the figures, claimed that those killed are less than 70 (Desert Herald 2). In the same vein, in its investigation, Desert Herald reveals that the Police alone recorded about 70 deaths of cops following the Damaturu attack (2). This heavy loss did not include the destruction of about two police stations and that of the police command along Gujba road and in all the attacks, as we can testify, there was no resistance or retaliation by the police, this and among other reasons aided the Boko Haram sect to succeed in burning the stations and obviously recorded no casualty during the operation. Boko Haram's quick coming up from being a comparatively unidentified amount to becoming a militant group believed a national threat is on the other hand, a result of some long-standing real cause for protest which had not been correctly handled.

The evolution of Boko Haram proved to be more critical in the year 2009. This was observed by Farrel when he writes:

“A local dispute in Maiduguri between the police and members of the sect over the enforcement of a relatively insignificant motorcycle law led to riots and eventually to the burning down of a number of police stations. During a five-day uprising, more than 700 people were killed in clashes in Bauchi, Maiduguri, and Potiskun. It also led to the deaths of Yusuf and Foi whilst in police custody” (3).

He adds that the insurgent in the new control of Iman Abubakar Shekau started a vast deal of further violent movement in opposition to the federal state. Shootings and assassinations became more or less everyday incidence and the government once more reacted by means of spreading out a great figure of the security forces to the regions attacked. Up till now still although curfews were forced all through the regions and a lot of persons were under arrest, Boko Haram seems to function mainly whenever they want and whatever way they want it and certainly by means of a high amount of impunity. In one high noticed occasion in September 2010, up to 200 Boko Haram militants were caught up in an attack on a prison in Maiduguri. The insurgents succeeded to gratis over 700 persons, as well as 150 of members of theirs (3). Some more important violent event comprised the

murder of an opposed party contender for Borno State and a bomb attack on New Year's Eve in 2010 close to a military quarters in Abuja. The insurgent Boko Haram at last become known to the notice of a lot of global media outlets after a representative called the BBC to assert being accountable for an alleged suicide car bombing on 26 August, 2011 at the United Nations Headquarters in Abuja. This assault left not less than 18 persons dead. The new strong current of violence ever since the Christmas Day bombings has taken the lives of more than 80 persons (2). If these gangs of Boko Haram operate at will and with all amount of impunity, then they are a real threat to the national security. This also means that the country and her citizenries are in big trouble since government can no longer guarantee their safety. The insecurity of the country is also witnessed when the Boko Haram attacks on a prison in Maiduguri. The question one may want to ask is where were the security men that the government is spending a huge amount of money on?

Disappointed with the deficient in advancement reached in answer to the menace, President Goodluck Jonathan just made a speech concerning persons that give financial help to the Boko Haram group remarking that “a number of those involve are in the decision-making division of government; a number of those involve are in the law-making division of the government, at the same time some of them are in the judiciary. A number of them are as well in the armed forces, the law enforcement force, and other law enforcements agencies” (BBC). To show that there are some truths in this report, “in November 2011, Mohammed Ali Ndume a Senator from Borno was under arrest for supposedly having contacts with Ali Konduga the past Boko Haram spokesman” (Leadership 1). Also, “on 14 January 2012, at a residence owned by the Governor of Borno State the Christmas Day bombing key suspect was arrested” (BBC News 1). It will no longer be wrong or surprising to say that a number of politicians have been in some way connected to the religious sect, called Boko Haram or are providing financial aid for it, particularly granting the political competitors reason in the north and all through the country.

Conclusion

The state of affairs was, Mr President alleged, even not as good as the Civil War that we fought. Throughout the Nigeria Civil War, we knew and we might even forecast anywhere the opponent was approaching from... however the problem we contain in our day is to a greater extent complex”. He adds “someone alleged that the state of affairs is thus terrible that still if someone's son is a affiliate, one will not even recognize. This means that, if the individual will plant a bomb at the back of your house, you won't discern (BBC News 2).

Obviously the warning of coming danger from Boko Haram sect is extremely much real. Annoyance at the federal government's incapability to defend her citizens as well as sustain stability has led to warning by some Christian armed movements such as Akhwakt Akwop, who say they will be compelled to hit back. Security is paramount for the survival of any nation and its citizens, the defective security structure with obsolete equipments and visionless approach is no longer effective and is not a good measure for the Nigerian state, any conflict will effect and destabilize the entire West African Sub-religion. For government and its security agencies to contain the menace of Boko Haram, they must adopt Proactive strategies rather than what I term fire-fighting approach which has proved fruitless. The President should as a matter of urgency rid his government of security forces of unquestionable characters.

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