

## **BOKO-HARAM CRISIS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHERN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*The emergence of the Islamist sect, Boko Haram has led to the flight of safety and security for most Nigerians residing in the North. Indeed, there is an upsurge in the frequency of crime committed as Boko Haram has created widespread insecurity across northern Nigeria, increased tensions between various communities, interrupted development activities, frightened off investors and generated concerns among Nigeria's northern neighbours. Since the commencement of the native operations of Boko Haram, they have adopted several methods to unleash terror on the people. However, the worst and most despicable of these attacks is the ugly strategy of targeting Mosque and churches during worship. Sadly, the activities of this deadly have caused a lot of destructions and damages of lives through bombing, abduction and slaughtering of human beings in Northern Nigeria. It is a fact that the development of any country in the world is dependent on many factors, which may fast-track or retards its growth,*

*among which security is central. Security of lives and property plays a major role in the development of any economy or region as investors want to be assured of the safety of their investments. Also, combating a scourge like Boko Haram necessarily involves a significant drain on the nation's material and human resources. This paper studies the impact of Boko-Haram on the economy of the Northern Nigeria. The study proffers that government as a matter of priority must do everything possible to put an end to Boko -Haram terrorism, and also reduce youths' unemployment to the barest minimum to forestall further easy recruitment into Boko-Haram.*

*Keywords: Insecurity, Threat, Development, Boko-Haram, Security agencies, Nigeria*

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is a known fact that Nigeria since her return to civil rule in 1999, has been battling with series of violent agitations from various geo-political zones in the country. These agitations which have taken terrorist dimensions especially in the Northern Nigeria and have contributed to national security threats and integration. The BokoHaram attacks have resulted in the killings of thousands of people and wanton destruction of property in the area. The socio economic conditions of the North Eastern states especially the villages and villagers have been badly affected. Lives have been lost, property destroyed, banks and business looted, police stations and numerous infrastructure destroyed. Livelihoods have been disrupted, families shattered, education halted, farms deserted, investments scared and chased away, and Agriculture the main stay of the rural dwellers has been distorted in the Northern Nigeria. The list is endless and underscores the dire security situation facing the Country Agbaje (2002), (Abimbola et al 2011).

What we thought was a joke, has today become a monster sending many innocent men and women into unpremeditated graves. This has created palpable fear and sense of insecurity in the polity. It is a fact that the development of any country in the world is dependent on many factors which may fast track or retards its growth, among which security is central. Security of lives and property plays a major role in the development of any country as investors in any economy would want to be assured of the safety of their investments. Investors who facilitate industrial growth and empowerment generation try as much as possible to avoid any unfavorable business environment (Adebayo 2014).

Many have castigated Boko-Haram for making life unbearable for the North by turning the area into a base for carrying out terrible and horrendous activities, which is crippling their economy. Despite all the assistance from other developed countries, the Boko-Haram is more than just another terrorist attack. It was a big crack in the wall of our national integrity and a

breakdown of the weak cohesion that had largely kept the North, South, and East together. It is against this background that the need to study the activities and the implication of this group on the economy of the north becomes very necessary.

## **THE GENESIS OF BOKO-HARAM IN NIGERIA**

Boko Haram is a militant group in North-Eastern Nigeria which means Sunni Group for Preaching and Jihad. The group was founded in 2002, largely to preach an Islamist ideology based on the doctrines of the Taliban as well as groups such as al-Qaeda. The aim of the group include the desire to create an Islamic state in Nigeria and achieve its anti-western education target by stopping all regular schools. Its strength has also grown from the fact that it is seen as providing jobs for the unemployed youths in its area of influence as over 75 percent of the people live below the poverty line in the region. It sought to disassociate itself from the Nigerian state and form a community only of its followers. At the same time, it did believe that a confrontation with the Nigerian state was inevitable due to the fact that it did not follow any state obligations and tried to create a quasi-state of its own followers in northeastern Nigeria (Onuoha 2014).

In 2009, Boko-Haram engaged in clashes with the Nigerian state as per its expectations. After that, around 2010, it remerged with a new leader because its founder was killed during the 2009 clashes, and since 2010 it has been engaged in violent battles with the Nigerian state. It has targeted Christian communities in northeastern Nigeria as well as Muslim traditional leaders who object to the group's violent tactics or ideology. The group's leader Abubakar Shekau is from Northeastern Nigeria and is an ethnic Kanuri who speaks Kanuri language as well as Hausa, Arabic and a decent level of English. This suggests that he does have some level of education beyond primary school otherwise he would not be so versed in these languages. He labels other people as infidels and believes that as a result they should be targeted violently (Adesoji 2010).

There are various factions within Boko-Haram, and debates about whether Boko Haram is a loosely knit group of various cells or whether it has a controlled command structure. Boko haram is controlled, despite the fact that there are many cells who might operate independently. It is observed that despite having various disparate cells throughout northeastern Nigeria and some neighboring countries, they tend to follow a similar operational methodology, they tend to be able to bring together many cells for coordinated attacks. There have been certain factions that appear less interested in waging a war against Nigeria, but more interested in waging a war against international targets in Nigeria, such as foreign workers in the country, the UN building and so forth.

A lot of survey carried out reveals that poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and weak family structures contribute to making young men vulnerable to radicalization. Itinerant preachers capitalize on the situation by preaching an extreme version of religious teachings and conveying a narrative of the government as weak and corrupt. Boko-haram can then recruit and train youth for activities ranging from errand running to suicide bombing. Poverty in the twelve most northern states is merely twice that of the rest of the country. Children in the far north are almost four times as likely to be malnourished. Child mortality is over 200 deaths per 1000 live births, leading to lower life expectancy (Chinwokwu 2012).

Education standards are just as bad. Literacy in the far north is 35 percent as opposed to 77 percent in the rest of the country. Seventy seven percent of women in the far north have no formal education compared to only 17 percent in the rest of the country. In the Northern Nigeria, primary school attendance is only 41 percent, while youth unemployment is extremely high. All of this contributes to the joblessness and a deepening cycle of poverty (Carson 2012). The violent uprisings in Nigeria are ultimately due to the fallout of frustration with corruption and the attendant social malaise of poverty and unemployment (Cook 2011). The North lacks infrastructure such as reliable power. Since the end of military rule, much of the region has felt excluded from the system of patronage that fuels Nigerian politics. The Boko-Haram onslaught in the northern part of the country employs the use of suicide bombing, outright shooting and abduction in its activities and this has led to loss of many lives and property.

## **TRENDS AND ACTIVITIES OF TERRORISM IN THE NORTHERN NIGERIA**

Boko Haram is a well-known agent of destruction in the North today. The group's methods have evolved from poorly planned and open confrontations with state security forces to increasing use of improvised explosive devices, targeted assassinations, ambushes, drive-by shootings, suicide bombings, and kidnappings. There is no exact figure on casualties from Boko Haram attacks, though President Goodluck Jonathan has stated that the group has so far claimed over 12,000 lives, with more than 8,000 persons injured or maimed, not to mention the displacement of thousands of innocent Nigerians.

The activities of the group became even more worrisome in 2004 when students, especially in tertiary institutions in Borno and Yobe states, withdrew from school, tore up their certificates, and joined the group. On September 21, 2004, members attacked the Bama and Gworza police stations in Borno state, killing several policemen and stealing arms and ammunition. The group continued with intermittent hit-and-run attacks on security posts in some parts of Borno and Yobe until the July 2009 antigovernment uprising in Nigeria. The remote cause of the July 2009 revolt is often traced to the fatal shootings of sect members on June 11,

2009, by security forces involved in Operation Flush13 following a clash with sect members for not wearing crash helmet while on their motorbikes for a funeral procession. In retaliation, the members attacked and destroyed the Dutsen Tanshi police station on July 26. This raised the curtain for a wave of unrest that swept through Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Katsina, and Yobe states. The revolt ended on July 30, 2009, when Mohammed Yusuf was finally captured in his residence in Maiduguri. After a few hours in police custody, the police killed Yusuf extra-judicially; police officials claimed that he was trying to escape. Over eight hundred people, mainly sect members, were killed during the revolt, and hundreds more were arrested (Onuoha 2012).

Boko-Haram subsequently developed new violent tactics: bombings, targeted assassinations, ambushes, drive-by shootings, and slitting victims' throats. Since the July 2009 revolt, the sect has evolved into a more dynamic and decentralized organization, capable of changing and combining tactics as well as expanding or reordering target selection. Boko Haram has attacked a variety of groups, including security agents, Christians, traditional rulers, politicians, schoolchildren and teachers, Islamic scholars, public servants, traders, and, lately, anyone who is not a member. Most of the attacks have occurred in Maiduguri, the capital city of Borno state. The group also has claimed responsibility for several attacks in Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kogi, Niger, Plateau, and Yobe states, as well as the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The group leapt onto the world's agenda in August 2011 when it bombed the UN compound in Abuja, killing twenty-three people (Emeh 2012).

Even a casual observer who doesn't live in Nigeria has heard of Boko Haram's kidnappings of about 276 Chibok school girls in Borno state. These girls were between 17 to 18 years old. The 2014 like other years has been violent, with bombings, massacres, and mass shootings being committed on a near-weekly basis. In July 2014, Human Rights Watch estimated 2,053 people had been killed in 95 separate Boko Haram-linked attacks in the first half of 2014 alone and the number is likely much higher by now. Thousands more have been displaced by the violence (Bagaji 2012).

The Nigerian militant group Boko Haram conducted a series of bombing attacks and armed assaults on January 20 in the northern city of Kano, the capital of Kano State and second-largest city in Nigeria. The attacks, which reportedly included the employment of at least two suicide Vehicle-Born Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs), targeted a series of police facilities in Kano. These included the regional police headquarters, which directs police operations in Kano, Kastina and Jigawa States, as well as the State Security Service Office and the Nigerian Immigration Service Office. At least 750 people died in the Kano attacks, according

Mark (2011). The group have carried out series of attacks in Bauchi State, Borno, Yobe, etc killing innocent people and destroying properties (Stewart 2012).

Boko Haram was involved mostly in fermenting sectarian violence. Its adherents participated in simple attacks on Christians using clubs, machetes and small arms. Boko Haram came to international attention following serious outbreaks of inter-communal violence in 2008 and 2009 that resulted in thousands of deaths. By late 2010, Boko Haram had added Molotov cocktails and simple Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) to its tactical repertoire. This tactical advancement was reflected in the series of small IEDs deployed against Christian targets in Jos, Plateau State, on Christmas Eve 2010. Boko Haram conducted a number of other armed assaults and small IED attacks in early 2011. The IEDs involved in these attacks were either improvised grenades constructed by filling soft drink cans with explosive - which were frequently explosive-which were frequently thrown from motorcycles or slightly larger devices left at the target. This attack paradigm was shattered June 16, 2011, when Boko Haram launched a suicide VBIED attack against the headquarters of the Nigerian National Police in Abuja (Adeyemi 2012b).

Boko Haram conducted its second suicide VBIED attacks in Abuja in August 26, 2011, this time targeting a U. N Compound in the city's diplomatic district. This attack proved far more deadly because the driver was able to enter the compound and reach a parking garage before detonating his device near the building's entrance. The attack against the U.N compound also marked a break from Boko Haram's traditional target set of government and Christian facilities (Gambrel 2012).

There have been a lot of attacks and abductions in various states in the north in 2014. The Nigerian government has sought to tighten control on commercial explosives in response, but its efforts so far do not seem to have affected the group's ability to procure large quantities of explosives. Boko Haram also appears to have competent bomb makers. Bomb making is an art that normally follows significant learning curve absent outside instruction from a more experienced bomb maker. Boko Haram's proficiency suggests the group's bomb maker(s) indeed received training from experienced militants elsewhere. The group also appears to have had no problems recruiting militants, including suicide bombers.

However, It is abundantly clear from the available evidence that the sect is against anything that has to do with western values in the country in general and northern part in particular. This could be seen in a large number of attacks being unleashed on the Nigerian State with a view to achieving their objectives. It is pertinent to have a glimpse of the number of attacks on Nigeria for the past for six years.

Table 1. YEARLY SUMMARY OF INCIDENCES OF BOKO HARAM 2009-2014

Year	State																											
	Bauchi		Abuja		Plateau		Kaduna		Niger		Borno		Adamawa		Gombe		Kano		Taraba		Yobe		Sokoto		Kogi		Jigawa	
	Attacks	Deaths																										
2009	1	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2010	-	-	2	25	1	32	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2011	-	-	2	34	-	-	3	18	3	64	7	99	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2012	1	12	1	6	1	10	3	45	-	-	6	51	3	86	1	14	1	215	1	4	1	60	1	5	1	26	-	-
2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	240	-	-	-	-	9	591	-	-	2	38	-	-	-	-	1	5
2014	-	-	2	146	5	145	9	268	-	-	53	2378	12	534	1	2	5	35	6	191	3	64	-	-	3	64	-	-
Total	2	212	7	211	7	187	15	331	3	64	68	2768	15	620	2	16	15	841	7	205	6	162	1	5	1	28	1	5

Source: Author's Compilation from various Nigeria Newspapers

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To say that the deadly activities of the Islamic sect, Boko Haram, are killing the economy of the North is an understatement. In most states in the North, the devastating socio-economic effects of the sect's serial killings and bombings, especially in Borno, Yobe, Niger, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau Kogi, Bauchi and recently, Sokoto, has destroyed economic and commercial activities with many people relocating to other places. In Maiduguri, Borno State, where the sect originated, the frequent bombings and clashes between Boko Haram and security agents have weighed down seriously on commercial and businesses activities in the city as many business have reportedly crumbled while many people have fled the state. The Maiduguri Monday Market is reported to have been seriously affected as hundreds of shop owners, especially Southerners are said to have closed their businesses and left the troubled city. About half of the 10, 000 shops and stalls in the market were said to have been abandoned by traders who have fled the city (Alechenu 2013). Banks and their customers are also said to be operating under difficult situation and have reduced their business hours to guard against being attacked by members of the sect.

The attacks on Kano has been very devastating because the city has always been the commercial center of western Sudan for the past 500 years. The city had been the economic base of the North even before the evolution of the Nigerian nation. But today the story is different as business and commercial activities have taken a turn for the worse in the city as a result of the security problems occasioned by frequent killings and bombings. Investors who have been doing business in the city for ages are now relocating their businesses due to the unending security challenges in the City. Kano, which is reputed to be the hub of business and commercial activities in the entire 19 Northern states and beyond, is gradually losing steam.

The further upshot is that more of our national resources are now going into the fight against Boko Haram with consequential negative impact on the amount of resources available to other sectors of the economy. The result is a general decline in GDP, lower expenditure on social infrastructure per capita and a growing disregard for those essential economic variables that drive growth and productivity. The traumatized cities and states of North Eastern Nigeria, where Boko Haram is strongest cannot speak of any meaningful productivity, or of any serious economic activities, that can add to the GDP and aid national development. The farmlands are desolate as the people have either fled to other parts of the country or have been killed. Factories are shut – down, many of them of them for over 2 years now. Most cottage industries are no more and there are no schools in session, as these too have also been shut down by Boko haram.

The absence of factories, farmlands and cottage industries automatically translates into lower input into overall GDP, all ensuring a precipitous decline in overall productivity. The ultimate casualty in all of this is of course is national development as no new knowledge, skill or technology can be acquired or deployed where schools are either shut down or are not able to function because of insecurity. This is what Boko-Haram is inflicting on most cities of North-Eastern Nigeria today, leading gradually to retrogression or knowledge retardation. With no new knowledge, there will be no new skill or technology. The shock received by any environment wherein the economy is wrecked and schools are closed translates into a social dysfunctionality that could last for many years thereafter (Mefor 2014).

The security challenges have impacted negatively on both the private and public sectors of the economies of the north, as many business men and traders have relocated their businesses from the cities. About 35 per cent of the over three million Igbo businessmen and traders in the city who engaged in both small and medium scale businesses are reported to have fled to Abuja and the South-east due to the growing insecurity posed by the activities of Boko- Haram. The indigenous business community in the city especially the textile merchants are not faring better as they count their losses as their customers who used to patronize them

no longer go to Kano for fear of the unknown. The Durbar Festival in Kano which used to attract local and international tourists was canceled because of security issues even though it was attributed to the Emir's failing health. The Kano State government lost huge revenue from this singular decision.

The story is not different in Jos, the Plateau State capital and the unofficial headquarters of the Middle Belt. Plateau has been in the news before the advent of Boko Haram as a result of the persistent ethnic and religious crisis that has continued to engulf the state. The city has witnessed so much carnage that many businesses are no longer thriving, as many business concerns have abandoned the city and moved out their investments. Though the city is not reputed as an industrial city, it is noted for its tourism potentials which have contributed to the national economy (Eric, et al 2008).

However, the tourism destination that was an attraction for local and international tourists is now history as the spate of violence in the state which hitherto prides it as the 'Home of Peace and tourism' seems to have been robbed off of its glory in the tourism industry. Today, Jos is a no go area for tourists as destination marketers and tour operators take their clients to destinations with relative peace. Kaduna the former capital of the defunct Northern region has not fared better as business activities in the city continued to nose dive as a result of the increasing level of insecurity in the state. As a result of the prevailing level of insecurity, many businesses, especially beer parlour operators, night clubs and other places of relaxation are gradually folding up as their owners count their losses. Many residents live in perpetual fear of the unknown as the Boko Haram sect continuous to attack the city as they restrict their business activities to areas where they feel safe.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is a fact of history that investment and development thrive in a peaceful environment. Consequently, all hands must be on deck to ensure peace and stamp out the terrorism, as it is inimical to sustainable development in the northern Nigeria. Therefore, Government at all levels would need to ensure security of lives and property in order to create the necessary enabling environment for investment and industrial growth hence, insecurity is inimical to development. The northern region of Nigeria has rather witnessed intense tension, fear and insecurity to the extent that nobody knows the next victim or where, how and when they will strike. There is great fear in the land. The following are recommended:

a) Government should ensure that the law on terrorism is enforced to the letter without show of sentiment. The Criminal justice system especially the police and the court must relegate

sentiment and allow the full weight of the law to be meted to all offenders equally according to the Act.

b) The security of our country's borders should be reviewed to ensure that all the nooks and crannies of the country's land borders through which aliens can enter the country are properly policed with structures and equipment emplaced with the immigration and customs and other security officials stationed there, to screen immigrants and emigrants accordingly.

c) The security agencies should be equipped and trained with modern technological gadgets for detecting bombs among others, as well as encourage them with life insurance policy that will motivate them to take the risk of dying for the unity and security of the nation.

d) Good governance based on rule of law, justice and equality, freedom and liberty are keys to neutralizing any insurrection, insurgency, subversion and terrorism. Government must strive to remove all indices of corruption and injustice and ensure the dividends of democracy reaches all citizens irrespective of social status. Employment generation for the teeming population should be more aggressively pursued as a matter of priority by government at all levels. If more youths are employed, it automatically depletes the army of youths available for recruitment into various criminal activities. From all indications, the reductions, the reduction of youth unemployment will translate into reduction in crime, and engender sustainable natural development.

g) Security agencies should harmonize their operations to form a strong synergy whereby information are effectively shared and utilized for efficient security service delivery. They should be a centralizing unit to coordinate security intelligence for maximization of information and operational efficiency.

h) Government should embark on veritable poverty alleviation programmes that will impact positively on the lives of the people. The physical, social and psychological quality of life of a society and its members both in domestic setting and within the larger regional and global system will give the citizens a deeper sense of patriotism.

l) Government must look into the Almajiri system in the North. (By implication, the Almajiri is a pupil of traditional quranic schools and largely under 18 years. The Almajiri child is usually trafficked from state and from country to country all in search of knowledge). It should be reformed in order to make the children in the system useful to themselves and the society. To this end, education must be aggressively pursued and made compulsory for the children.

## CONCLUSION

The act of violence and terrorism being experienced in our country does no one good, rather the country is degenerating as a pariah nation soon to be abandoned as people move out in droves as a result of general insecurity. After a decade of violence, the government still does not have

an effective strategy for dismantling the group. The terrorist organization preys on the disillusioned Muslims of the North, who are fed up with corruption, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and lack of economic opportunities. Unless this changes, the audacity of Boko Haram attack will continue to hunt the government. The need for adequate collaboration and partnership between the governments, Non-governmental organizations like the hunters and the vigilante as well as the civil society organization is critical in the crusade towards addressing the challenge of terrorism. The re-evaluation of the country's domestic and foreign policies is also necessary means of combating the menace.

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