

**TITLE: TERRORISM IN GLOBAL POLITICS AND THE BOKO HARAM  
UPRISING IN WESTERN AFRICA**

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**Introduction**

Today, trend in global politics is overshadowed by extreme violence occasioned by groups that utilized violent tactics otherwise tagged terrorism, to advance their purposes in a world of conflicting interests. The BokoHaram group is a classic example of such violent organizations. Originally, it started as a political and religious organization that openly operated in Northern Nigeria. As their intentions became violent, the governmental attempt to clamp down on the group, made it to go underground. They have since resorted to insurgent tactics and violent attacks, particularly on unharmed civilians, to advance their objectives which were purportedly to reverse the influence of western education, enthrone theocratic sharia rule to address the problem of corruption and moral decay in the society. However, today, the weakness of the government and the military as enabled the group to expand its operations to three other adjoining countries –Niger, Chad and Cameroon. They have also negatively impacted on farming, education, business and socio-political stability of the affected states and societies. Currently, tens of thousands of peoples and well over a million others are displace and languishing in camps, while also, huge funds have been wasted by governments in the region to combat the menace of terrorism. This work is aimed at examining the impact the BokoHaram's terrorism had on the economy, politics, and human security in the affected areas. It would also examine how governance in the affected states would cope with the violence.

**Key words:** Terrorism, ideology, insurgency, theocracy, western education, governance.

## **Motive of Terrorist organizations**

The need to assert the rights, identify and demands of people who desire to resist the political and cultural domination of another sovereign power has always been an important factor that inspire violent insurrections which manifest as terrorism in many parts of the world.

Human institutions and structures primarily, since the birth of Greek empire and other classical civilizations have been shaped by diverse interests which may be political, economic, cultural or religious , depending on what the gladiators wanted to achieve in their domain. Among pragmatic motives of groups that have been described as terrorist organizations is the determination to reject values, ideology orientation and cultural practices that are not consistent with their worldview and group ideology. For example Irish Revolutionary Army (IRA) emerged from Irish Volunteers who fought against British forces between 1919 and 1921. The demand of IRA fighters was political because of the long-time grouse it had nursed against the occupation of Northern Ireland territory by the British armed forces. Although the Irish Volunteers were initially divided as a group close to support the war efforts of the British armed forces while another refused to support these efforts. After the WWI, IRA mainly became the defenders of the Catholic minority against sectarian attacks because of the failure of the police and the army to stem the unfortunate trend. The IRA waged terrorism attacks on British Military forces in order to press their withdrawal from Northern Ireland by the British government. The peace accord that ended the acrimony between the two countries was affected in September 2005.

The vicious animosity between Israel and the people of Palestine started between 1947 and 1949. After the creation of the nation of Israel in 1948, Israelis began to acquire more land especially after the battle that Israel fought between 1947 and 1949 against the people of Palestine. In 1967, some Arab nations like Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and people of Palestine attacked Israel but Israel repelled

and dealt a devastating blow to the arsenal and the armed forces of these countries within six days.

Under the leadership of Yasir Arafat, Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the spate of violent attacks against Israel became ferocious as the people of Palestine remained resolute at regaining control of West Bank and Gaza strip which were seized by Israel during the war with Arab nations. The Arab-Israeli conflicts is a major defining crisis that continue to shape the angle and position of global politics as political leaders across the global take sides while some work hard to profer solution to the bitterness generated over decades in the wake of the dispute.

Considering the global impact of al-Qaeda terrorist movement founded by Osama bin Laden, a Saudi Arabian born multimillionaire, whose objective was to reject the America's pervasive cultural imperialism in Muslim dominated and Arab countries, and institute the adoption of Sharia legal code in the countries where al-Queda has got a foothold. Regardless how al-Qaeda's objective is viewed, its impact in all spheres has been tragic and of humanitarian crises and political unrests especially in Nigeria and many countries in the Lake Chad basin.

### **Operations and Ideology of Boko Haram**

Fundamentally, the ideology of Boko Haram which was founded in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria is to replace democracy by an Islamic version of a theocratic state where the judicial system and constitution have their foundation in Sharia Islamic Law. Boko Haram sect members believe that the corruption and immoral behavior which have become widespread in the Nigerian Society is the impact of Western education and civilization. In order to arrest the trend of the negative impact of Western education. It must be rejected in its entirety. The name Boko Haram is a combination of the adulterated Hausa pronunciation of "book". While the word Haram is Arabic meaning "forbidden" or "abominable". The group was established in 2002 as a non-violent religious organization in Maiduguri by Mohammed Yusuf, a Muslim cleric whose charisma and preaching attracted youths and adults in the metropolis. In 2009, the sect began to exhibit some radical tendencies that lead to some uprising in the city of Maiduguri in its attempt to establish a state that is run by Laws of sharia. The military action that crushed the uprising lead to the death of many people and this attracted the sympathy of

youths, and young adults in mostly North-Eastern states in Nigeria, North-Eastern States in Nigeria, Chad and Niger who saw a good opportunity to express their sentiments, and vent their anger on the Nigerian government. The ideology of Boko Haram spread among the unemployed, uneducated, almajiris-pupils in Quranicschools who beg on streets for alms, which have become vehement in their rejection of anything that represents Western civilization. In a nutshell, Boko Haram reviles every cultural or institutional practice that promotes the ideals of the ideals is evil, corrupt and must be fought to the point of disintegration. Besides the open revulsion of Boko Haram sect members for education and leaning, which is regarded as sin, Yusuf Mohammed had expressed his allegiance to Osama bin Laden, the founder of al-Qaeda terrorist network. His allegiance to Osama bin Laden followed his sworn determination to wage Jihad against the government of Nigeria and those who dare express their disapproval of the activities of the group.

In the meantime, it is also expedient to interrogate the ideology of Boko Haram and what it represents with respect to its claim of knowing and having solutions to all the ills that assent the modern Nigerian society.

We can recall the members of Boko Haram sect launched an unsuccessful deadly attack of the late Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero who was regarded as one of the prominent Islamic leaders in the Northern Nigeria. His offence according to Boko Haram was that he was one of the collaborators with the federal government who worked to thwart all the efforts of the sect to propagate its ideals and ideology. Some policy commentators have divided the Boko Haram into three categories: those who are involved in insurgent activities, some who use the name to commit criminal activities and the last, perhaps the most dangerous are those who have become political insurgents thereby using the violent tactics of Boko Haram to promote insecurity. Ironically, leaders of Boko Haram have never made any demand to compensate for any wrong done to the group, however the grouse of the group is often expressed through videos that are posted on You tube channel where AbubakarShekau Launches his vitriolic attacks and verbal threats vowing to deal brutally with government officials, representatives of Western powers, those who collaborate with government to fight the sect and teachers who instill ideals of Western civilization in pupils and students. Based on the explanation given above, the contradictions in the logic of Boko Haram are is glaring. If Boko Haram members

believe that violence is the only strategy that is available to them to register their displeasure and to them to righteous standard on the "heathen world" what then are the criteria that define true Muslims?

More so, all the equipment they use to prosecute their insurgent activities were made in Russia, Western or Eastern Europe where Islam is not a predominant religion, but secular societies where religious code of ethic is not placed beyond the dictate of the Law of respective countries.

Having said all these it is obvious that the ideology of Boko Haram is based on uniformed parochial sentiments that arose from a flawed perspective of modern society, its dynamics, complexity and fundamental precepts of human rights. Meanwhile, this problem may not be unconnected with the ideological pessimism that is fueled by the lack of understanding of the complex structure because of illiteracy. This will be discussed in the next sub-heading.

### **Membership and funding of Boko Haram**

Some sources claim that Boko Haram was started in 1995 as *Sahaba* and was led initially by LawanAbubakar, who later left Nigeria for the University of Medina in Saudi Arabia. Yusuf Mohammed who took over from Lawan changed the principles and dogma of the organization. Before he was killed in 2009 by the men of Nigeria Police Force in a controversial circumstance, he had mobilized about five hundred thousand members who were compelled to pay one naira per day. Because of the ubiquitous *almajiris* in the North, the mass army of the unemployed, different groups of the disillusioned street urchins, it was easy to recruit these peoples, get them indoctrinated and fed them with sensational teachings that were mostly based on Sharia Law. The preponderance of low level people who form the mass of followership of Yusuf Mohammed and later AbubakerShekau did not deter sponsors from giving support to the cause of Boko Haram terrorist movement. Normally, the nature of the operation of Boko Haram attracted the sympathy of other terrorist groups like al-Queda who constantly donated to Boko Haram to prosecute its violent agenda.

Locally, politicians, merchants, scholars and influential people who were not only wealthy but possessed the clout to manipulate the course of politics secretly

supported and donated to sustain the deadly activities of Boko Haram. Among these people were Alhaji Buje Fai, an ex-commissioner in Bornu State. Kachiru Atiku, a former university lecturer, Bornu Walid, a Bornu –based contractor and by extension, because of the involvement of one of his former commissioner, the former governor of Bornu State, Ali Modu Sheriff who supposedly, for political reasons founded the group that metamorphosed into Boko Haram. It was reported that Mohammed Abubakar Shekau met Osama bin Laden in 2011 and obtained huge financial support from the former. Boko Haram members also augmented their income through bank robbery. Most Boko Haram suspects who were arrested in the past confessed to the crime of incessant bank robbery with the purpose of raising money to fund their nefarious operations. For example, suspects like Kabiru Abubakar, Dikko Umar, Kabiru Sokoto and Sheriff Shetima have confessed to the crime of robbery and raiding banks in order to raise money to finance Boko Haram activities.

### **Criminal activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria**

The sworn dedication of the group to brutal attacks and ferocious ambush which have left civilians members of the armed forces dead relate the danger that such group poses to national security and political stability. Among several attacks launched by the Boko Haram sect are stated below:

January 2010, four people killed in an attack at Dala Alenderi Ward in Maiduguri

September 7, 2010, group freed over 700 inmates from a prison in Bauchi State

January 28, 2011, group murdered All Nigeria People's Party candidate, Fannami Gubio, his brother, four police officers and a 12 year old boy

April 8, 2011, bomb explosion at the Independent Electoral Commission Office in Suleja, killing 11 people

April 15, 2011; The Maiduguri office of the Independent Electoral Commission was bombed

April 20, 2011: Boko Haram murdered a Muslim cleric and ambushed several police officers in Maiduguri

April 22, 2011, Boko Haram freed 14 prisoners in a jailbreak in Yola

July 10, 2011, All Christian Fellowship church in Suleja was bowbed, killing 38 people

August 26, 2011, The United Nations headquarters in Abuja was blown up by a seucide car bomber leaving about 21 people dead

October 22, 2011, Boko Haram murdered Zakariya Isa, a Nigerian Television Authority reporter

December 25, 2011, St. Theresa Catholic Church Suleja was bombed leaving about 43 people dead

January 22, 2012, coordinated bomb explosions in Bauchi that left about II people dead

April 20, 2014 – abduction of 276 school girls at Chibok, Bornu State.

Series of suicide bomb attacks at markets, mall and public places that have killed and mained innocent Nigerians.

In a nutshell, Boko Haram represent a present danger that constitute serious threat to the economy, security and social wellbeing of Nigeria and her people in all areas.

### **Boko Haram and the context of global terrorism**

It is a disheartening development that Nigeria occupies a single digit position in the global terrorism index placing her in the same bracket rating with countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Syria and Iraq. The nefarious exploits of terrorist organizations like Hezbollah in Lebanon, Al shabab in Somalia, Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Taliban in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda in the Maghreb have encouraged Boko Haram in Nigeria to launch incessant deadly attacks on government establishments as a way of fighting institutional authority in Nigeria.

These terrorist organizations have given substantial financial assistance to Boko Haram especially from Al Qaeda to execute some brutal attacks on people, institutions and government-controlled organization, especially those who are regarded as fronts and representatives of Western culture and values. By implication, the global trend of terrorism has affected the social structure in Nigeria in the sense that the phenomenon of internally Displaced Persons (IDP) has become part of the on the security of the nation. Since politics and economy has assumed a

structure that reflect the impact of globalization, the terrorist of Boko Haram has placed Nigeria in the global spot of a country that is rated as being prone to terrorist attacks.

## **Recommendations**

Having related the danger and diverse socio-economic problems that are posed by Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, and in line with studies that scholar have conducted on insurgency around the world, we can agree that terrorism is a monster must not be allowed to thrive in any society. The solution to the insurgency of Boko Haram definitely should not be political, because the group has never presented any logical or credible demand that reflect institutional Laxity or injustice as the case may be, but a concerted effort is required, that is devoid of any primordial sentiment to tackle the problem head on.

In the light of this, well-coordinated inter-agencies collaboration among armed forces and Para-military agencies is required to foster formidable security and surveillance system that is able to counter and repel all the tactics of Boko Haram.

Related to this is the adoption of the community policing philosophy that allows people to be involving in surveillance, monitoring and reporting of abnormal activities in their respective communities. Government should make basic education compulsory while activities like street begging and sundry activities should become punishable under the law of Nigeria.

The Nigeria Police Force should train its men to be proactive in intelligence gathering and apply pragmatic solutions to solving crimes.

## **Conclusion**

It is obvious that Nigeria is at war with agents of terrorism who are bent on destruction of life and property; it is also relevant that corruption, injustice, inequality and deprivation of all sorts that breed bitterness should be tackled at individual and institutional levels.

The government should muster the will to punish every agent of terror and encourage those who sacrifice their lives to safe our country from being seized by terrorists. Every Nigerian should also accept the fact that whatever we accept is

condoned and whatever is repelled is rejected. Therefore, for Nigeria to be called a land of prosperity where citizens and visitors are free to conduct their businesses without fear, tranquility and security must be allowed to be part of daily experience of people.