



International Response and Support in the Prevention of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria

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Abstract: *The outbreak of the Boko Haram insurgency in 2009 has steadily become the greatest social problem to global community. This study therefore examines international response and support to the prevention of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. The paper adopted analytical research design where evidential documented secondary sources of data collection were used to investigate into the international response and support in addressing Boko Haram menace in Nigeria. Using thematic, analytical and explanatory techniques to analyze the data that were available, the paper observed the efforts made by the international organizations and groups in curtailing the activities of the Boko Haram in Nigeria but suspected however that such efforts were not sufficient to assist the country in ending the insurgency. The paper also envisaged a lot of shortcomings in Nigeria's efforts and approaches in dealing with insurgency as the country over-relied on hard approaches in addition to other variables such as corruption; lack of political will; ethnic, cultural and religious sentiments; conspiracy; lack of safety of members; poor leadership; lack of cooperation and community involvement; illiteracy etc that always stand as stumbling blocks against some of the international programmes and supports which also contributed to the withdrawal of some of the international supports. The paper concluded with a strong conviction that Nigeria will get maximum supports from the international organizations and groups capable of defeating Boko Haram insurgency only if the country itself demonstrates sincere commitment devoid political, cultural, religious and ethnic sentiments; corrupt tendencies; in addition to provision of adequate security cover for international groups' members; and adequate involvement of the community members.*

Keywords: *International Response, Support, Prevention, Boko Haram, Insurgency*

Introduction

One of the biggest security challenges Nigeria is battling with since a decade ago is the Boko Haram insurgency. The escalation of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has had increasingly harmful impacts on the security and lives of the Nigerians. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2016) report estimated that 7 million Nigerian children have been internally displaced and exposed to frequent violence, which has implications for their mental health. Despite mental health concerns related to these children's experiences, they are rarely assessed and provided with mental health treatment. Events associated with the Boko Haram insurgency severely undermine the psychological and educational outcomes of children in northeastern

Nigeria (Amnesty International, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2014; Oxfam, 2015). A survey conducted by UNICEF (2016) showed that 7 million Nigerians have been displaced as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency, of which 57% are children (International Organization for Migration IOM, 2015).

The outbreak of the Boko Haram insurgency in 2009 according to United Nation High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR, 2017) has steadily become the single greatest cause of displacement in the Lake Chad Basin region, with more than 2.3 million people becoming refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) or returnees as a result. In Nigeria, the number of IDPs has more than doubled in the span of three years, from some 868,000 people identified by the Nigerian Government in the north-eastern regions at the end of 2014 to 1.7 million people by June 2017, according the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) report released by IOM.

Socioeconomic inequalities, injustice, corruption, ethnic intolerance and religious extremism are some of the vices which have culminated and metamorphosed into fanatical movements demanding radical change. Insurgencies, and the terrorism that them, have become the order of the day thus posing complex challenges threatening political and social stability and defying military attempts to suppress or defeat them.

In response to the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, the Nigerian government has developed counterterrorism and post conflict recovery policies. A report from the World Bank on Northeastern Nigeria that focused on recovery and peace building covering the period 2015-2016 showed that Nigeria had recorded significant successes in the fight against Boko Haram (Quick & Demetriou, 2017). The World Bank report also revealed that the military campaign had been stronger and better coordinated. Boko Haram is now a less potent military threat compared to 8 years ago, when the terrorist organization killed tens of thousands of people, uprooted millions, damaged local economies, destroyed cross-border trade, and spread to the Lake Chad states of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. The Boko Haram group has in recent months carried out fewer attacks and has chosen softer targets such as remote villages, churches, and markets (Onapajo, 2017). This is a dramatic departure from December 2013, when hundreds of Boko Haram fighters overran a Nigerian air force base in the Borno state capital, Maiduguri.

Methodology

This research adopted analytical research design to examine the international efforts and collaboration in addressing the issue of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria. Evidential documented secondary materials relevant to this work were used as sources of data collection in this paper. Thematic, analytical and explanatory techniques were used in the analysis of the secondary data in the context that better addresses the concern of the paper.

Understanding Insurgency and Terrorism

Terrorism has become one of the most security challenges for many countries in the world. Due to the threat terrorism poses to international peace and security, it has attracted a lot of attention globally. Although there are international instruments which condemn terrorism and call for its suppression and elimination, there remains the primary challenge of a lack of a universally accepted legal definition for terrorism. The lack of specificity in definition has continued to pose the risk of nonstandardized, insufficient or incorrect application and implementation of counterterrorism measures. There is a long-standing consensus in the academic community over the disagreement surrounding the conceptual and operational definition of terrorism. Both the theoretical conceptualization and the empirical manifestation of terrorism are highly contested based on state, national, political, geopolitical, religious and even ideological constellations, giving rise to not one but many manifestations of terrorism, differing from one region to another, one sub-region to another and one country to another (Bartolotta, 2011).

However, even though there is still lack of agreement on what terrorism is, attempts at arriving at a definition have been made. At the 1999 Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) defined an act of terrorism as “any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage” (OAU, 1999). Similarly, the 2015 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report defines terrorism as “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by non-state actors to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation”. In addition, Forest and Giroux (Forest and Giroux, 2011) defined terrorism as a tactic that uses violence or threat of violence as a coercive strategy to cause fear and political intimidation.

Scholars and theorists have given different definitions of insurgency. While some of these definitions are closely related, others are not so related though contain common elements and this still makes the subject technically difficult. Perhaps insurgency is best understood by first considering what it is not. Insurgency is not terrorism or conventional war for example, though it shares with them some similarities such as the use of force or guerrilla tactics to achieve an end which is often political. Basically, the difference between insurgency and terrorism lies in the scope and magnitude of violence. While for instance, terrorism rarely brings about political change on its own, insurgency attempts to bring about change through force of arms. Similarly, terrorists often apply a wide range of damages when compared to insurgents. On the other hand, while conventional war involves adversaries more or less symmetric in equipment or training, insurgency involves adversaries that are asymmetric, weak, and almost always a sub-state group. Traditionally however, insurgencies seek to overthrow an existing order with one

that is commensurate with their political, economic, ideological or religious goals (Gompert & Gordon, 2008).

Insurgency is a strategy adopted by groups which cannot attain their political objectives through conventional means or by a quick seizure of power. Insurgency could also be defined as any kind of armed uprising against an incumbent government (Calvert, 2010). It is characterized by protracted, asymmetric violence, ambiguity, the use of complex terrain (jungles, mountains, and urban areas), psychological warfare, and political mobilization which are all designed to protect the insurgents and eventually alter the balance of power in their favor. In his book titled *Globalization and Insurgency*, Mackinlay (2013) defined insurgency as the actions of a minority group within a state who are intent on forcing political change by means of a mixture of subversion, propaganda and military pressure, aiming to persuade or intimidate the broad mass of people to achieve their aim. Insurgency could start as a social protest, from a given group of people, who feel continuously marginalized in the affairs of government. According to Kilcullen (2006), insurgency is a struggle to control a contested political space, between a state (or a group of states or occupying powers), and one or more popularly based, non-state challengers. Kilcullen also try to draw a line between classical and contemporary insurgencies thus: while the latter seek to replace the existing order, the former sometimes strive for the expulsion of foreign invaders from their territory or seek to fill an existing power vacuum. The British Army counter-insurgency manual, Army Field Manual (AFM) (2001, p. 34) defined insurgency as:

The actions of a minority group within a state who are intent on forcing political change by a means of a mixture of subversion, propaganda and military pressure, aiming to persuade or intimidate the broad mass of the people to accept such a change. It is an organised, armed political struggle, the goals of which might be diverse.

This definition also conform with the US Army-Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24) which defined insurgency as “an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control” (Petraeus & Amos, 2006). In all, insurgencies connote an internal uprising often outside the confines of state’s laws and it is often characterised by social-economic and political goals as well as military or guerrilla tactics. Put differently, it is a protracted struggle carefully and methodically carried out to achieve certain goals with an eventual aim of replacing the existing power structure. To launch their anger on the state, insurgents often target civilians and infrastructures. However, other than the violence of insurgency are its political and social-economic dimension, where often lies its causes and effects.

From the foregoing, Apau and Banunle (2019) explained that terrorism and insurgency arise generally from similar causal conditions, terrorism often being employed as a tactics within a broad framework of an insurgent campaign. For example, groups like Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria are known to employ a mix of insurgent and terrorism tactics. It is

also clear that terrorism can stand alone as in the case of known terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and Islamic States (IS) (Apau and Banunle, 2019; Liolio, 2013).

Emergence of Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria

Boko Haram is a militant organization based in north-eastern Nigeria and also active in Chad, Niger and northern Cameroon (Chandler, 2015). The group was founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf upon the principles of the Khawaarij advocating Sharia law. It turned into a violent extremist group in 2009 and has been responsible for loss of lives in many parts of Northern Nigeria. Boko Haram previously existed as Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād (Chandler, 2015). One of the goals of the Boko Haram group is to champion for the establishment of an Islamic State, ruled by strict sharia law especially in the Northern part of Nigeria where the majority of the populations are Muslims. Boko Haram believes that democracy is too lenient and violates Islam. It also opposes the Westernization of Nigerian society and also the concentration of the wealth of the country among members of small political elite, mainly in the Christian south of the country (Bartolotta, 2011; Farouk, 2013; Vanguard, 2011).

The roots of Boko Haram lie in the Islamic history of Northern Nigeria, in which for some 800 years powerful sultanates centered on the Hausa cities close to Kano and the sultanate of Borno (roughly the region of the states of Borno and Yobe together with parts of Chad) constituted high Muslim civilizations. These sultanates were challenged by the jihad of Shehu Usuman Dan Fodio (that lasted from 1802- 1812), who created a unified caliphate stretching across northern Nigeria into the neighbouring countries (Bartolotta, 2011). Dan Fodio's legacy of jihad is one that is seen as normative by most northern Nigerian Muslims. The caliphate still ruled by his descendants (together with numerous smaller sultanates), however, was conquered by the British in 1905, and in 1960 Muslim northern Nigeria was federated with largely Christian southern Nigeria (Apine, 2014).

The Muslim response to the Christian political ascendancy was the move during the period of 2000-2003 to impose Sharia in 12 of the northern states in which they predominated (Cook, 2011). For the most part, imposition of Sharia brought the previously feuding Muslim groups together, and there was no further use of takfiri (accusations of being non-Muslim) (Cook, 2011). While the imposition of Sharia did satisfy the official manifestations of Islam in the north (both Sufi and Salafi), it is clear that radicals who were takfiris doctrinally such as members of Boko Haram were left outside (Adesoji, 2010).

There is no doubt that the suppression operation of 2009, and the killing of Muhammad Yusuf by Nigerian security forces in July of that year, was a turning point for Boko Haram. The group was frequently said at this time to be defunct. In September 2010 (coinciding with Ramadan), however, Boko Haram carried out a prison break (said to have released some 700 prisoners) (Adesoji, 2010) and thereafter, the group began operations again. The targeted assassinations are the most revealing, involving political figures, such as Abba Anas bin `Umar (killed in May

2011), the brother of the Shehu of Borno, and secular opposition figures (Modu Fannami Godio, killed in January 2011), but also prominent clerics such as Bashir Kashara, a well-known Wahhabi figure (killed in October 2010), Ibrahim Ahmad Abdullahi, a non-violent preacher (killed in March 2011), and Ibrahim Birkuti, a well-known popular preacher who challenged Boko Haram (killed in June 2011). The shootings of these prominent clerics seem to be in accord with Boko Haram's purificationist agenda with regard to Islam (Ewi, 2013).

Boko Haram related violence has largely been confined to Nigeria's northeast, in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states. It has been most heavily concentrated in Borno, with the brunt of the violence borne by Maiduguri, Gwoza, and Kukawa. Violence has also become common south and east of Maiduguri, along the border with Cameroon's Far North Region, and around Lake Chad. There have been sporadic incidents in places such as Nigeria's Middle Belt and the capital of Abuja that have been attributed to Boko Haram. Boko Haram has adopted suicide attacks as an important tactic in its struggle against government authority (Apau and Banunle, 2019).

Over the past seven years, Boko Haram has demonstrated flexibility and remains a formidable threat to the Nigerian state despite losing much of its territory. Though the group is undoubtedly less powerful than it was in 2015, there is no sign that the government will defeat it in the foreseeable future. In the meantime, the pervasive threat of violence sharply curtails the ability of international aid organizations and donor countries to provide humanitarian relief. The extent of the group's popular support and the extent to which the security services are fuelling Boko Haram recruitment needs to be properly assessed (Apau and Banunle, 2019).

Ideology and belief

As noted above, Boko Haram is an indigenous Salafist group which only turned itself into a Salafist Jihadist group in 2009. According to Toni (2011), Paul Lubeck of the University of California noted that Yusuf was also a trained salafist (a school of thought often associated with jihad) and was heavily influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah, a fourteenth century legal scholar remarkable for Islamic fundamentalism and considered a "major theorist" for radical groups in the Middle East. According to Liolio (2013), Boko Haram propagates that not only interaction with the Western World is forbidden, but it is also against the Muslim establishment and the government of Nigeria, the latter of which they accuse of political corruption and weak judicial structure. To sanitise this, they initially fought for the establishment of a Shari'a government in Borno State under the then Governor Ali Modu Sheriff, but after 2009, their aim was directed to the Islamization of the entire Nigeria (Toni, 2011).

Boko Haram school of thought considers anything western as completely unislamic, and as such the basis for religious weakness. According to one AbdulMumuni Ibrahim Muhammad, a leader of a group of 33 members Boko Haram factions, "we are fighting westernization to protect adulteration of Islam" (Vanguard, 2011). For this reason, BBC News (2013) posits that Boko Haram thus adopted a 'non-western' lifestyle by wearing non-western clothes, eating basic foods, and worshipping in their own mosque in Maiduguri, all of which also separate them from

other Muslims in the North. In fact, its members do not interact with the local Muslim population and have even carried out assassinations in the past on anyone who criticises it, including Muslim clerics (Farouk, 2013). According to BBC News (2009), the group publicly extols its ideology despite the fact that its founder and former leader Muhammad Yusuf was himself a highly educated man who lived a lavish life and drove a Mercedes Benz.

During a 2009 interview conducted by BBC, the late Muhammad Yusuf rejected scientific explanation for natural phenomena, such as the sun evaporating water being the cause of rain, Darwinian evolution, and the Earth being a sphere “if it runs contrary to the teachings of Allah.”¹⁴² Before his death, Yusuf also reiterated the group's objective of changing the current education system and rejecting democracy.

Organizational and political Structures

The group, at least before 2009 had no clear organizational or political structure and consequently little or nothing was known of its command and control system. However, by 2011 and 2012 it became somewhat clear that members of Boko Haram are organised in complex cell structures from where they operate both locally and internationally. These cells which are about 26 are headed by regional commanders who in turn take commands from Abubakar Shekau, their current number one leader, a situation which makes it difficult for the Nigerian security forces to fish out and dismantle the group. The group also has a sophisticated leadership structure comprising departments headed by highly trained personnel whereupon designated assignments are effectively executed. Such departments also include bomb manufacturing, suicide bombers, intelligence, research, welfare/healthcare and other logistics needed for proper execution of their goals. It has also been said that the highest decision making body of Boko Haram is called the “Shura Council” (Liolio, 2013)

Area of Operation

The group specifically enjoys popular supports in the predominantly Muslim northern states and regions of Nigeria. Such states include Bauchi, Gombe, Kano, Katsina, Yobe and Borno. Most of its early attacks have been in the city of Maiduguri which is the Capital of Borno state. However, after 2009, they extended their attacks to virtually any part of Nigeria where they have the slightest opportunity, including the Nigerian Federal capital territory, Abuja. Additionally Boko Haram now boasts of about 540,000 members to which included militants from neighbouring Chad, Niger and Cameroon.

Strategy/Tactics

Boko Haram before 2009 was mainly involved in attacks with clubs, machetes, Molotov cocktails as well as drive-by and ride-by assassinations, often with small arms. They sometimes

shot sporadically at their targets (who might be civilians or police officers drinking alcohol in beer parlours) before running into hiding. This however changed after 2009 as the group started using bombs and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on strategic places. Their tactics now also includes suicide bombings and the August 26, 2011 suicide car-bombing became the first and successful suicide bombing in Boko Haram history. Currently Boko Haram conducts bombs operations with flexibility and maximum effectiveness and has claimed responsibility for over twenty bombings in Nigeria. Its arsenal now also boasts of Ak-47 style rifles, grenades, rocket propelled grenades, automatic rifles, surface-to air- missiles, vehicle mounted anti-aircraft machine guns, machine guns with anti-aircraft visors, and explosives such as Semtex, all of which might have been smuggled into the Sahel from Libya during its 2011 war (Liolio, 2013).

Targets/Opponents

The group has primarily targeted the Nigerian policemen. It has shown no compunctions, killing traditional leaders who they considered informants. Its blog has triumphantly praised attacks on Nigerians who have visited drinking bars and those who publicly criticise it. More recently, Boko Haram has channelled its attacks on Christians in the North and in this order; churches have been their latest target. And also, with the bombing of the UN building in Abuja, Nigeria, it is now clear they might be targeting foreign or international organisations.

Group Affiliations/Training

Many experts on Boko haram noted that the group's suicide bombing on 26 August 2011 that destroyed the UN building in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, reveals a link with al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM). Before the attack, an internal Nigerian intelligence document had discussed possible links between Boko haram and AQIM. General Carter Ham, the general in front of United States African Command (AFRICOM) speculated that Boko Haram might want to establish partnership with the Somali terrorist group, al-Shabaab, in addition to AQIM. In January 2010, the leader of AQIM, Abd al-Malik Droukdal, released a statement offering to provide training and material assistance to Boko Haram. These connections notwithstanding, as of September 2011, several experts doubt the actualised alliance between the two groups, noting the lack of public hard evidence linking Boko Haram and AQIM.

However, the Republic of Niger's Foreign Minister, Mohamed Bazoum, on 25th January 2011 said Boko Haram received training and weapons from Al-Qaeda's North African wing. Bazoum, who spoke at a regional security summit in Mauritania's capital, Nouakchott, said members of the sect received training in camps in the Sahel region of West Africa as well as explosives from Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. In his words, "there is no doubt that there is confirmed information that shows a link between Boko Haram and AQIM (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), and it consists primarily of the training given to elements of Boko Haram. One group has been received in AQIM bases here in the Sahel and another group got training, based on information we've gotten, with the al-Shabaabs in Somalia (cited in Liolio, 2013).

It is important to state here that a press statement dated August 09, 2009 and signed by the then acting leader of the group, Mallam Sanni Umaru, had confirmed Boko Haram ties with al-Qaeda. In his words, "Boko Haram is an Islamic Revolution which impact is not limited to Northern Nigeria, in fact, we are spread across all the 36 states in Nigeria, and Boko Haram is just a version of the Al Qaeda which we align with and respect. We support Osama bin Laden, we shall carry out his command in Nigeria until the country is totally Islamised which is according to the wish of Allah." In the same vein, Boko Haram's spokesman, Abu Qaqa while speaking via phone to a handful of reporters on November 2011 noted, "We are together with al Qaeda...they are promoting the cause of Islam, just as we are doing. Therefore they help us in our struggle and we help them, too." Only recently too, it has been alleged that Boko Haram has training base in the north of Mali as well as strong ties with the Tuaregs of Mali.

Finance/Funding

Not much is presently known of the annual budget of Boko Haram. According to Liolio (2013), at its early stage, Boko Haram was financially supported by wealthy members from Borno and Yobe States. The group has also financed its operations by robbing a lot of banks in the North as well as sending threatening text messages to top members of the society to deposit certain amount of money into specific accounts. It has also been reported that Boko Haram was paid millions of Nigerian naira on monthly basis by some Governors of Northern Nigeria, especially those of Kano and Bauchi states. Such payments are deep rooted in an agreement to which Boko Haram was not to attack the respective governors' states.

It was alleged that the group receive huge financial supports from strong Nigerian politicians as well as former Nigerian heads of state. Even some members of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) has been named as sponsors. There are also indications that the group receives funds from external forces such as al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab. But there is no hard evidence to buttress this claim yet.

Recruitment

Boko Haram recruits members from Northern Nigeria as well as militants from neighbouring Chad, Niger and Cameroon. Their targets are usually youth between the ages of 17 to 30 who are often passionate and excessively enthusiastic for Islamic knowledge. The bulk of these youth, (especially those who execute their operations) are illiterate, poor, frustrated and jobless. This thus paves the way for successful recruitment based on "indoctrination". The leaders persuade these youth by quoting verses from the Quran. Their former leader, Yusuf for instance, technically implants the group with extremist ideology often contrary to westernization and backed by passages from the Quran, a reason which also made many youths dropped out of school to join his supposed cause. A good example of such passages is Chapter 5, verse 47 of the Quran which reads, "Let the followers of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein, and those who do not judge by what Allah has revealed are the transgressors" (Liolio, 2013).

Additionally, the late Yusuf argued that western education or “boko” had brought but poverty, suffering, political corruption and injustice to the region and for these reasons, it is tabooed, or “haram,” in Islam. And like Eric Guttschuss, Human Rights Watch researcher opined, Yusuf gained supporters “by speaking out against police and political corruption.” Consequent upon these factors, which are true of the Nigerian polity, more members were recruited and some even had to sell their belongings in order to financially contribute to the cause of delivering Islam from the supposed shackles of westernization as well as sanitising the Nigerian polity which they believed can only be done through sharia laws. As time passes by, more educated people such as bankers, university students, lawyers, doctors and uniformed men were recruited and like conflict resolution expert, Rev. Oladimeji Ladi Thompson noted, Boko Haram have strong ties with some top government officials as well as other powerful members of the society. In order to also maintain their loyalty and commitment especially from the illiterate and poor members, Boko haram gives rewards in money and material gains. Lastly, Boko Haram recruits members by breaking into prisons and setting prisoners free. In return, most of these prisoners become part of the group.

Causes of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria

While the incidence and spread of terrorism in the Sahel cannot be attributed to any single factor, reference is copiously made by scholars and practitioners on causal factors such as political grievances, relative deprivation and actual or perceived injustice which tend to act as catalysts and exploited by terrorist groups to justify the need to distrust government and to cause a change through violent means. While many authors have alluded to the vast geographic nature of the Sahel belt as fertile grounds for insurgencies and insurrections, others have cited the meeting of different and occasionally hostile creeds and ideologies. Nomadic pastoralists come into contact with agrarians, while predominantly Muslim northerners meet with Christian and animist southerners. Arabs, Berbers and Tuareg meet subSaharan (black) Africans. This meeting of different peoples has resulted in violence, and further created historical tribal rivalries and conflicts with occasional clashes. The inter-communal/ethnics violence has been exacerbated due to the rise in extremist groups (Apau and Banunle, 2019).

Some proximate causal factors identified include poor communication and mistrust between government and local communities, lack of government presence in local communities, inability of government to provide the basic needs of local communities, lack of opportunities, unemployment, lack of accountability by political office holders, corruption, injustice, impunity, discrimination, exclusive politics and other context-specific good governance deficits. These create conditions of disillusionment, hopelessness and frustration in local communities and facilitate radicalization as well as resort to acts of violent extremism and terrorism. Also, the lack of economic and financial capacities of Sahel countries to deliver on the expectations of the citizenry are also proximate causal factors to the state of disillusionment, hopelessness and frustration in a number of instances (Apau and Banunle, 2019).

The incidence of militant religious extremism, the presence and activities of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs), the running of criminal/illicit economy, and the trafficking of weapons and drugs are considered as key external causal factors. The threat of terrorism in the Sahel continues to evolve around local terrorist groups and insurgencies with a Militant Salafi-Jihadism worldview and an affiliation to either Al-Qaeda or Islamic State. The world view dimension of the terrorist groups also facilitates the provision and receipt of support. These groups, tend to profess an extremist religious world view with a strategic terrorism objective. In both of these cases, an examination of the Ways, Mean, and Ends employed and pursued by these groups reveals that external factors play a major part in sustaining their activities. There appears to be an externally driven grand strategy to suppress Islamic Sufism and aggressively diffuse and propagate a Salafist-jihadist ideology in the Sahel through militancy. The activities of most terrorist groups in the Sahel indicate consonance with this grand strategy. The Salafist-jihadist ideology projects a deviation of the dictates of the Islam faith and strict adherence contrary to what the local African communities have practiced over centuries and which is tolerant of other faiths and cultures. This is a recipe for confrontation (Apau and Banunle, 2019).

Other empirical and theoretical studies have examined the root causes of terrorism and the objectives of terrorists. Identified root causes can be classified as follows: economic, social, religious, ethnic and political. We now examine these studies in more depth.

Economic and Social Root Causes

Poverty and unemployment have been identified by some studies as common causes of terrorism. The general belief of the security and intelligence community is that people who are economically deprived are more likely to resort to violence as a way to express their grievances. That is poverty and unemployment creates terrorism (Aland & Jitka, 2003). The theory of relative deprivation explains that when people feel deprived of something they are expect to have, they become discontent, hence could use violence to express their grievances. Parida (2017) argued that poor economic conditions such as lack of employment opportunities and poverty create the condition for people to join terrorist organizations. A study by Kavanagh (2011) found that poor but highly educated people were the ones likely to participate in terrorism. Bhatia and Ghanem (2017) in their study that examined the relationship between education, unemployment and violent extremism, however, found that unemployed educated youth are more likely to be radicalized by terrorist groups due to the unemployment and lack of employment opportunities in Arab countries.

Similarly, the lack of economic opportunities has been found as a root cause of terrorism. A study by Gassebner and Luechinger (2011) found a negative relationship between lack of economic opportunities and terrorism. The study further shows that countries that restrict economic freedom are susceptible to more terrorist attacks than countries that promote economic freedom. For example, Mohammad (2005) argued, “the deterioration of socio-economic conditions in the Middle Eastern societies has contributed in many ways to the

eruption of terrorism.” In his study that examines the relationship between poverty, minority economic discrimination and domestic terrorism, Piazza (2011) revealed that countries that subject minority groups to economic discrimination are more likely to experience domestic terrorism than countries where minority groups are not affected by economic discrimination.

Religious and Ethnic Causes of Terrorism

It is common belief that religious tension and religious fundamentalism cause terrorism. There is empirical evidence to support this argument (Gassebner & Luechinger, 2011). With respect to Boko Haram, religion plays a vital role in their discourse (Haldun & Odukya, 2013). The group holds extreme religious ideology, which they use as the basis to commit their heinous crimes. Akinola (2014) argued that the rise of Boko Haram is embedded in Islamic fundamentalism, which they use to justify their actions. 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. This has created the notion that terrorism is linked to religion fundamentalism (Campbell & Asch, 2018). In the study, why do people join Boko Haram? Onuoha (2014) 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.

In addition, religious and ethnic tensions are found to cause terrorism. Historically, Nigeria has experienced intermittent ethno-religious clashes (Haldun & Odukya, 2013). Although, it is hard to claim that the emergence Boko Haram is related to religious or ethnic conflict, some studies have found a positive relationship between religious and ethnic tensions and terrorism (Basuchoudhary & Shughart II, 2010). This implies that societies experiencing religious tension can become a breeding ground for terrorists to operate.

Political Causes of Terrorism

With respect to the political root causes of terrorism, several studies have indicated that the lack of civil liberties, corruption, weak political institutions, political instability, weak government, high level of repression, civil wars can foment the incidence of terrorism (Eubank & Weinberg, 2001). In addition, a study by Piazza (2011) shows that society with large complex multiparty systems are more prone to terrorist incidence than those with few homogeneous systems. Also, democratic countries, which are assumed to be in a better position to stop terrorist attacks, are more prone to terrorist attacks than autocratic countries. Krieger and Meierrieks (2014) argued that democratic countries are prone to terrorist attacks due to the promotion of democratic ideals like respect for civil liberties and free press, which open doors for terrorists to operate and also hinder counter-terrorism measures. On domestic terrorism in Northeast Nigeria, some studies blamed the emergence of Boko Haram on the country’s elite politics.[64] Botha, Salifu & Abdile (2011) argued that “Boko Haram is a political construct, sponsored by politicians.” According to Mbah, Nwangwu and Edeh (2011) 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 (OKoro, 2012). However, these claims cannot fully explain the emergence of Boko Haram, since other political and social phenomenon could contribute to the rise of the group. For instance, some scholars have argued that emergence of the group could be linked to bad governance, corruption and economic deprivation in northern Nigeria, which has fostered the rise radical extremist groups.

International Response and Support to the Prevention of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria

In terms of countermeasures, attempts at containing Boko Haram has attract national and international responses, giving the trans-border or transnational nature of its activities. At the national level, the Nigerian government came up with Terrorism (Prevention) Bill, 2011 as part of the efforts in tacking terrorist activities. The Bill, signed into law in 2012 was amended in 2013 to accommodate ways of dealing with other terrorism-related crimes (Terrorism Prevention Amendment, Act, 2013). The Terrorism (Prevention) Act, 2013 authorities death penalty for any individual guilty of terrorist acts. In giving effect to the central object of the Terrorism Prevention Act, 2013, the Goodluck Jonathan's administration gave unreserved powers to the state security in the fight against Boko Haram.

As part of the anti-Boko Haram measures, the Federal Government also declared state of emergency in Borno, Yobe, Plateau and Niger states in December 2011; Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states in May 2013, and a military shut down of mobile telephone network in the three North-Eastern states, which communication within the group (Jocab & Akpan, 2015). Whereas these measures destabilized the group's effectiveness for a short period, it provoked negative reactions from the people of the region, due to the negative socio-economic impact it had on their lives (Jacob & Akpan, 2015).

Similarly, the Nigerian National Assembly also demonstrates its commitment to live up to its responsibility, by preparing to act in was to enhance the protection of the lives of the citizens. The highest body of the Nigerian Legislature vouched to ensure the passage of good laws as well as carry out effective oversight on government expenditures especially on defence and internal security (Goyel, 2018).

Nigeria also collaborated with the United Kingdom on counter-insurgency measures (Premium Times, 2013). France's assistance was also requested in the fight against the group, following the Yobe state school attack on February 25, 2014 (Goyel, 2018). The Nigerian government also acknowledged the dispatch of a US team to aid the recovery of the abducted school girls by Boko Haram in May 2014. The United States, France and China also had their teams on the ground in Nigeria to assist with these efforts.

At the regional level, countries such as the Republic of Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, on March 5, 2014, signed an agreement with Nigeria on a massive joint offensive against Boko Haram (Festus, 2014). The aim of the agreement is to improve the coordination of security, effective border policing and exchange of intelligence among states within the West African sub-region. Following the signing of the multinational agreement was a meeting of the Ministers of the Defense from the six countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). The meeting which took place in Yaounde ended in the signing of the agreement on the establishment a multinational force to strengthen in the region (Lake Chad Basin Commission LCBC, 2014).

Groupings such as the African Union (AU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) were not left out in the search for countermeasures against Boko Haram. For example, the Africa Union's Peace and Security Council, in January 2015 authorized the MNJTF (Aljazeera, 2015). Under the auspices of the AU, African leaders also agreed to send 7,500 troops to fight the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. The decision to create MNJTF was strongly supported by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

In the same way, the ECOWAS also issued a statement condemning the activities of Boko Haram. ECOWAS (2014) identified proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SLAW) as the root cause of insecurity caused by Boko Haram and also affirmed the need for collaborative efforts in ending terrorism in the region. In March 2014, the ECOWAS' Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security confirmed the partnership between ECOWAS, the UN and the Nigerian government to embark on a new Weapon Collection Programme for the Northern Nigeria (Iroegbu, 2014). This measure was adopted as part of the more concrete steps towards overcoming Boko Haram.

The Boko Haram insurgency has also attracted responses from the wider international community. These encompass efforts by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). It is believed by the ICC that the Nigerian military and the extremist Boko Haram have committed possible crimes against humanity and war crimes in the past years of insurgencies in the North East region (Nicholas, 2015). According to the ICC's Preliminary Examination Report on Nigeria in Goyel (2018), the Prosecutor's office finds the Nigeria Military and the Boko Haram wanting on eight identified possible cases of crimes against humanity and war crimes Article 7 and 8 of the Rome Statute (Nicholas, 2015). The ICC declared Boko Haram to have committed crime against humanity on the grounds of the random attacks it unlashes on the civilian population. Such attacks include those carried out against civilians through suicide bombs and in the course of its raid on towns and villages. According to the report, from January 2013 to March 2015, 356 reported incidents of killings can be attributed to Boko Haram in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Plateau, Kano, the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), Gombe, Bauchi in Nigeria...occasionally in Cameroon (since February 2013) and Niger (Dumba and Diffa, since January 2015) which led to the killing of over 8,000 civilians, and "following military operations since February 2015 during which territory previously held

by Boko Haram was recaptured, mass graves or other sites with decomposed bodies were discovered allegedly containing the bodies of civilians killed by Boko Haram (Nicholas, 2015).

The ICC recorded 55 incidents of committed by the Islamist sect involving not less than 1,885 abductees from Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, between January 2014 and March 2015; in 2014 alone 1, 123 people were abducted, 536 of the abductees (Nicholas, 2015). The Islamic sect is also alleged to have detained thousands of civilian in the Sambisa Forest, the Lake Chad area, and near the Gorsi mountains in Cameroon (Goyel, 2018). The group is also alleged to have held hundreds of men and finally executed them. The court explains that any crimes committed by the Nigerian Army would also fall under its security. Once again, Nigeria is remained of its obligation for being a State Party to the Rome Statute, the fact that crimes of grave consequence to the conscience of humanity do not go unpunished (Star Africa, 2014).

Noteworthy, previous governments, most specifically under President Goodluck Jonathan, opted to pursue a highly militarized response in countering the threat of Boko Haram as consolidating additional support from international organizations proved futile. This is because donors struggled to find viable partners to support civilian stabilization efforts. However, under President Buhari, there have been a paradigm shift by adopting diverse efforts to attract donors. For example, the government sought the assistance of the World Bank and the European Union in facilitating a Recovery and Peace Building Assessment (RPBA) in northeastern Nigeria (Nyadera, Kisaka & Agwanda, 2019).

The war against terrorism is coined under a fight against a broader global threat (Chaliand and Blin, 2007; Thurston, 2017), providing governments with an opportunity to legitimize the use of excessive force on whoever is deemed as a 'terrorist' in the international arena. Indeed, governments have benefited from regional and international support to fight of groups whose activities boarder on terrorism. It would be facile for one to quickly dismiss government's response and the growing solidarity by heads of states in combating terror across the world. Needless to say, terrorism has caused devastating human and economic losses in different countries and with terrorist groups keen on targeting civilians in places and time that governments cannot expect and in such instances the frustration of policymakers and security agencies tasked with protecting people comes to bear. Similarly, terrorism continues to expose governments as incompetent and unable to protect its citizens during such attacks and the anticipated political consequences explains why governments are quick to respond with brute force against any group deemed to be terrorists.

Lebovich (2017) looks at the international collaborative efforts and concluded that in as much as Nigeria is the most affected by the activities of Boko Haram, the upheaval covers the larger Lake Chad Basin region. Yet little success can be seen it terms of collaboration among the regional countries. The G5 Sahel operation which stands as the possible regional response to Boko Haram has been facing several challenges. For example the lack of an elaborate Boko Haram strategy within the G5 Sahel framework combined with insufficient resources and personel are major obstacles. In addition intelligence gathering a key component of counter

terrorism has not been forthcoming due to weak intelligence capacity created by lack of modern intelligence gathering equipment like drones. Dependence on other operations particularly the French-backed Operation Barkhane which the G5S forces have continuously relied on raises serious questions on sustainability and capacity of the countries (Lebovich, 2017).

Challenges of Counter-Insurgency/Counter-Terrorism in the Sahel

Faced with the complex and sophisticated terrorist attacks, stakeholders in the Sahel region have responded by deploying troops aimed at combating terrorism. Given the level of terrorist activities, it comes as no surprise that the region as a whole has undergone a process of securitization in recent years, which has resulted in a multitude of forces on the ground. The current deployment in the Sahel includes G5 Sahel Joint Force, Operation Barkhane, Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and well as the national armies of the respective countries. The trends in terrorist activities and counter-terrorism efforts observed in the Sahel are rather not encouraging. Counter-Terrorism response has been fraught with a lot of difficulties and challenges leading to the worsening and deterioration of the security situation in most countries of the Sahel. This has the potential of spreading to other neighbouring countries. A number of shortcomings could be cited (Apau and Banunle, 2019).

Undermining the success of the counter-terrorism efforts, is the discontent among troops, as exemplified by instances of military personnel refusing to take part in operations or abandoning their posts. This is further compounded by the mistrust among troop contributing countries with some troops always in a hurry to announce victory without crediting the entire force.

This has often led to disagreements among countries contributing troops to the counter-terrorism efforts thereby derailing the progress of the force. The lack of capacity to confront the challenge by state security apparatus is another issue (Aning and Pokoo, 2014). Inappropriate training, ill-equipped and a lack of ammunition, together with militants' prowess, contribute to low morale. Counter-terrorism operations require specific training, equipment, intelligence, logistics, capabilities and specialized military preparation. It would seem unrealistic to expect any significant improvement on this front in the short and medium terms, partly because of funding constraints and delays in deployment for some of the missions, such as G5 Sahel Joint Force.

Lack of financial capability of troop contributing countries to effectively resource personnel has resulted in logistical constraints of deployed troops (Frowd and Sandor, 2018).

Corruption within government and state security apparatus has also contributed to the logistical constraints of the troops as there have been cases of politicians and senior military personnel misapplying funds meant for equipment and retooling of troops (Apau and Banunle, 2019).

Lack of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration among the various deployed troops in the Sahel is a major setback confronting the fight against terrorism. There have been cases of some deployments refusing to share intelligence with other contingents operating in the same theatre, thereby undermining their military capability to curtail the scourge of terrorism. The delay in the response of some nonnational contingents to distress calls from national authorities of the member states in which they are deployed is also another challenge (Apau and Banunle, 2019).

In addition, it has become apparent that the ever-growing focus on counter-terrorism, underscored by significant international (Western) efforts, seeks to abandon the implementation of peace accords and agreements such as the 2015 Algiers Peace Accord in Mali, which is crucial not only for a security solution but also for a political resolution of the conflict. In some cases also, the security situation has made it difficult for governments to implement reforms needed to address root causes fuelling the spread of terrorism. Similarly, the influx of foreign support and resources to address security challenges such as terrorism and human trafficking appears to fail to address much-needed reforms in state behaviour, governance and justice, which are significant factors in driving violence and radicalization (Apau and Banunle, 2019).

Aina (2019), studied on the *“Political Economy of Insurgency in North East Nigeria”* and found that the grievances which have resulted in the use of violent tactics against the government by insurgents, are better addressed through a multifaceted approach, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach which takes into account the specific needs of the region. Apau (2019) assessed *“Terrorism, Violent Extremism and Insurgency in the Sahel Region”* and found a deterioration of security, safety, and stability in the Sahel region. The diversity in the attacks by Jihadist groups, ethnic self-defence groups, and trans-national criminal networks, could be attributed to their domination of territory. The inability of the security forces to deny the Terrorist/Violent Extremist groups and Tans-national Criminal Networks the terrain/choke points they currently dominate on the routes linking the Sahel and Maghreb regions has contributed to sustaining terrorist and criminal activity within the Sahel region countries. A number of political, socio-cultural and economic factors still make conditions very conducive for the spread of terrorism and violent extremism across the Sahel belt. The security forces have remained responsive to the evolving situation. Counter-Terrorism Operations have gained momentum. He concluded that fragility of states within the Sahel belt, porous nature of borders, drug trafficking, transnational organized crimes and the persistent inter-communal violence have contributed to the vulnerability of states to terrorists organization. This is manifest in the terrorist groups’ capacity to carry out devastating attacks against security and civilians alike. However, ensuring future stability will require far more than a purely military approach. Investments in education, infrastructure, poverty alleviation, family planning, youth engagement, good governance initiatives, humanitarian relief and climate change adaptation strategies, among others, are critical to alleviating the pressures on states and addressing the broader causes of insecurity, insurgency, terrorism and violent extremism. By maintaining a more holistic understanding of

the pressures facing states and populations today and in the future, governments in the region and their partners may yet contribute to a more peaceful and stable future for the Sahel in order to ensure community resilience and empowerment. Nyadera, Kisaka & Agwanda (2019), in their study on *“Fragile State, Just War, and the Crisis in Counterterrorism: Reflections on Boko Haram and Nigeria’s War on Terrorism”* have argued that while economic, social and political grievances led to the rise of Boko Haram, government’s excessive use of force is characteristic of a fragile state and has fuelled radicalization of more young people in the region. They concluded by stating that the over-reliance on hard approaches does not guarantee decisive victory and are partly to be blamed for the escalation of the crisis in Nigeria. Boko Haram benefited immensely from governments’ miscalculations to further their ideologies which could have been significantly contained if proper strategies were adopted. Their study therefore underscore the necessity of soft approaches that narrow down to communities’ involvement in government’s counterterrorism measures, addressing the deep-rooted cultural, political and economic grievances, responding effectively to early warnings and improving justice system.

Conclusion

The effect of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria is felt not just by the individual victims, but throughout the country and the world as large. Following the Chibok student abductions, the White House started what has become known as the “Bring Our Girls”. The language of the slogan is appropriate. The abductees are not merely students, daughters, and Nigerian citizens; they represent our humanity and need the world’s assistance to restore their freedom and human rights.

The aid provided to Nigeria in efforts to recover abducted students is insufficient as evidence by the fact that more than three months after the kidnapping, the girls were been not rescued. The study findings revealed that the causes of Boko Haram insurgency is manifest in political, religious/ethnic, economic and social relations. The effects Boko Haram since its emergence in 2009 which over 2 million people becoming displaced, 20,000 deaths, and the wider spread loss of livelihoods and access to essential social services. The efforts of Multi-National Joint Task Force comprising of Military units from Nigeria, Chad, Benin, Cameroon and Niger, to the exclusion of 10 countries which together, makes the 15 countries were international responses and support to the prevention of Boko-Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

Recommendations

To address the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, the following recommendations are suggested.

- i. Nigeria should take the initiative by drawing the attention of states within the West African sub-region to the need for promoting and consolidating a people-oriented comprehensive regional integration process.

- ii. The Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) should be empowered with the required human and material resources to manage the insurgency.
- iii. Countries like Chad, Niger, Cameroon, Benin and Nigeria which constitute the MNJTF should demonstrate the political will to keep to the rules of engagement on the MNJTF agreement, as that would be crucial to the success of the task force. The MNJTF should also be sustained to prevent Boko Haram from regenerating itself.
- iv. The government of Nigeria and that of the MNJTF countries should pay more attention to the global and regional tide of terrorism and identify their connections to local extremism. This will enable governments to detect early warning signs and take precautionary measures against any possible uprising.

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