

BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

¹Eudora U. Ohazurike & ²George I. Okoroafor

¹Political Science Department, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria

²Public Administration Department, Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo Ohaji, Nigeria

Email: georgeokoroafor@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: With the major aim of propagating and preserving Islamic teachings and doctrines through violent eradication of western values, Boko Haram insurgency constitutes a serious threat to national development. It puts the unity of the country at a cross road, and undermines her social, political and economic stability. In view of the above, this paper tries to unravel the activities of Boko Haram and its implications on national development. To achieve this objective, the research depends on narrative methodology, with reliance on secondary source of data, and adoption of conspiracy theory in its discourse. While Boko Haram insurgency undermines national development, the paper calls for constructive dialogue between government and the group. It also recommends efficient equipment of Nigerian security and the training of the security operatives in the modern anti-terrorism. Finally, there is also an overriding need to institutionalized good democratic governance. Only this can guarantee peace and justice in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Boko Haram, Insurgency, National Development, Conspiracy Theory*

INTRODUCTION

It remains controversial whether the emergence of Boko Haram is a conspiracy project of certain individuals or groups in Nigeria, what is obvious is that Boko Haram is an acclaimed Islamic group that believed and preached the supremacy and superiority of Islamic culture, and the propagation and preservation of same through forceful eradication of the Western culture and civilization, which is believed have polluted the sanity and sacredness of Islamic religion (Okoroafor, 2015, p.55).

Although the origin and the causes of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has a long history, the group came to prominence in early 2000s but heightened its violence attack following the death of its leader, Mohammed Yusuf in 2009. The death of Yusuf triggered a lot of reactions leading to the bombing of buildings and the killing of some Boko Haram members and innocent Nigerians. This shows that the state is currently under siege by acts being perpetuated by Boko Haram. The government and the security apparatus have not relented in fighting the scourge. While a school of thought is of the view that government and Nigerian security have failed, another holds tenaciously that the fight is a continuous process. However, the coordinated assaults from the Boko Haram sect in the northern part of Nigeria has made life miserable for Nigerians, and has continued to undermine efforts toward national development. Boko Hara did not only threaten Nigeria's political and economic development, but created a vacuum on the

twin principles of territoriality and sovereignty which Westphalia system established as the basis for the existence of modern state. Thus, Nigerian statehood is in question as the cancerous Boko Haram menace also widened the North and South dichotomy in Nigeria and put Nigeria's unity and oneness in jeopardy by raising concern on the eminent disintegration of the most populous black nation in the world. The democratization of Nigeria in 1999 brought hopes of political, economic and social development in Nigeria, but the activities of Boko Haram sect for the past decade in Nigeria have grossly dashed those expectations as they continue to undermine efforts towards national development. It is against this background that this paper seeks to examine Boko Haram insurgency and its implication on national development in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Since 2009, Boko Haram activities have been unprecedented in its nature and magnitude. The activities of the terrorist group continues to pose threat to national development making life in Nigeria akin to the Hobbesian state of nature where life is nasty, brutish, insecure and short. Accordingly, the Nigerian status in the international community continues to go through a turbulent trajectory from a "hybrid state" to "weak state" and to nearly "failed state" as Boko Haram continues to terrorize Nigeria. The persistence bombardment of the Nigeria political landscape by the dreaded Boko Haram terrorist group has placed Nigeria as the second most terrorized country in the world by 2016 Global Terrorist index. This continues to undermine the possibility of political, economic and social growth to the extent that national development is hampered. Against this background, this study will periscope the implications of Boko Haram insurgency on national development in Nigeria.

Evolution and Meaning of Boko Haram

Debate is rift on the origin of Boko Haram, in fact, there are two broad schools of thought on the origin and causes of Boko Haram in Nigeria. A school posits that Boko Haram originated in the attempt of radical Muslim fundamentalist to spread Sharia in Nigeria by establishing a caliphate. Thus, Walker (2012) enthused that Boko Haram grew out of a group of radical Islamist youth who worshipped at the Al-Haji Muhammadu Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri, capital of Borno state, in the 1990's. Its leader, Mohammed Yusuf, began as a preacher and leader in the youth wing of Shababul Islam of Ahl-Sunnah, a Salafi group. His literal interpretation of the Quran led him to advocate that aspects of western education he considered in contradiction to that holy book, such as evolution, the big bang theory of the universe development and elements of chemistry and geography should be forbidden, in Hausa. While critical of the government, Yusuf was involved in official efforts to introduce and implement Sharia in several northern states in the 2000s. The failure to achieve this fully helps to explain Muslim youths' anger with government deception and insincerity and the call for an authentic Islamist revolution (Awortu, 2014). Another school is sub-divided into two, the first sub-school maintained that Boko Haram is an internal political malaise created by the northern oligarchy and their southern counterpart to discredit Good Luck Jonathan Administration and as such gain more ground to regain political power, the second subgroup forcefully argued that Boko Haram is a western creation in other to actualize their imperialist calculation in Nigeria such as dividing Nigeria as the CIA report

predicted. Whatever argument that is more superior, it still falls within the conspiracy doctrine or theory of this study.

Some scholars such as Cook (2011, p. 8), and Abade and Chilaka (2015, p. 105) agreed that it is very controversial and problematic to establish the correct and true name of Boko Haram. Studies conducted in the recent time showed that the official name of Boko Haram sect is “Jama’atu Ahlis Suma lidda’awali wai Jihad”, meaning people committed to the propagation of the prophet’s teachings and jihad” (Achonwa, 2012, p. 60), Okpaga, Ugwu & Eme, 2012, p. 82; Abada & Chilaka, 2014, p. 105).

Abada and Chilaka (2015, p. 105) recorded that Boko Haram is a derogatory name which embodies two concepts, “Boko” and “Haram”, while “Boko” means western education, “Haram” means sin or forbidden. Boko Haram is translated in Hausa to literary mean Western education is sin. However, Boko Haram may go beyond this meaning. But it is a group which believed strongly in Islam. Mallam Sulaiman (cited in Oritsejiafor, 2014, p. 13) for saying that;

Islam is the only way of life, the only civilization with all capability to upset neo-colonialism and produce a greater and stronger nation from wreckage left by the Europeans. True Islam has received great blows from the west and its institutions seriously subverted. But nevertheless, Islam now exhibits signs of steady recovery from its wounds and its appearance on the centre stage of the struggle for a better society and greater nation is but a matter of time.

It is implied from the foregoing that the objective of some “true Muslim” is to resist and shake off western civilization and culture. In other words, Boko Haram insurgency is a strategy of circulating and preserving Islamic culture through violent eradication of western culture or way of life.

Theoretical Framework

For a better appreciation of this study, its analysis would be anchored on the conspiracy theory of Popper Karl, who used the term conspiracy to describe ordinary political activity in the classical Athens of Plato. In his critique of the twentieth century totalitarianism, Popper wrote: I do not wish to imply that conspiracies never happened. On the contrary, they are typical social phenomenon (Wikipedia, 2016). The advocates of the theory assume that major evil events have been orchestrated and planned, and cannot have happened accidentally or as unintended consequences (Wood, 1982).

Conspiracy theory entails that a phenomenon occurs as a result of a conspiracy between or among interested parties. It is a belief that some covert but influential agency (typically political in motivation and oppressive in intent) is responsible for an unexplained event. Conspiracy

theory is a marriage of interest between people who are determined to make an impact, although they may not always be successful but are satisfied with their activities.

The generalizations from conspiracy theory are:

- Conspiracy is a tool of nation-state and other political actors.
- Events and outcomes are planned and intended in a political system.
- Conspiratory actions have economic incentives and potentials.
- Propaganda and secret diplomacy are means of pursuing goals.

One problem of this theory is usually lack of scientific proof and difficulty in ascertaining the conspirators. Many scholars have criticized it, but it remains rational in the understanding of political phenomena.

In relating this theory to this study, it is important to note that the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency could not have been accidental. The nature of their activities has suggested that it is politically motivated and represents an interest of an undefined group in the northern part of Nigeria. The proof to this may appear unclear. But the utterances of the former Governors of Borno, Gombe and Bauchi states, Ali Modu Sheriff, Mohammed Goje Danjuma, and Mallam Isa Yuguda respectively showed that they are either apologists or sympathizers of Boko Haram sect. It was also reported that Nigeria's former Finance Minister, Alhaji Adamu Ciroma, who spoke under the umbrella of the Northern Political Leaders Forum warned that "Jonathan becoming the president may ignite a serious of events, the scope and magnitude of which we can either proximate nor contain (Source, Magazine, July 4, 2011, p. 72).

It follows from the above that the rise of Boko Haram insurgency is a conspiracy project. Hence conspiracy theory will provide the guide for a proper analysis and understanding of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is simply narrative in methodology. Issues raised were critically discussed and the conclusion reached were based on logical deductions. In doing this, the work derived its strength from secondary sources of data.

Major Factors that Contributed to the Rise of Boko Haram Insurgency

- **Religious Dimension.**

An objective examination of Boko Haram insurgency seems to establish a nexus with Islamic religion which has a long history of radical Islamic movements starting with the Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio in the 19th century. Julius Adekunle (2014) has noted that fighting to promote Islam and to suppress innovation has remained a constant one for northern Muslims. It was also unveiled that even before independence, northern Muslims under their charismatic leader,

Ahmadu Bello had aspired to return to Sharia as a legal basis for Muslim, and even Nigerian society (Paden 1986). A remarkable reference to the above observation is the Maitatsine fulfillment of Muslim objective of taking Sharia round the country. Even after the death of Maitatsine, the followers were determined as they continued to show active presence into the 1980s and 1990s (Falola & Heaton, 2008, p. 206).

It is pertinent to note that the agitations and struggle by the various Muslim sects appeared to be responsible for the introduction of Sharia in the northern Nigeria between 1999 and 2007, during President Obasanjo's administration. The adoption and practice of Sharia within some core northern states like Zamfara, Adamawa, Yobe, Borno suffered a setback because of being conflictual with the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria. There is also the challenge of the absence of a body in the north for enforcing and implementing Sharia penalties. Also, there was no mechanism by which a Muslim who did wish to be judged by Sharia could opt out of it, coupled with the international condemnation and pressure from the world that the punishments associated with the violation of Sharia laws amount to gross violation of human rights.

Based on the above premise, the practice of Sharia in the northern states appeared ineffective and inefficient. This probably was part of the reasons that sparked off the activities of Boko Haram who felt that Islam has been insulted and downgraded. That notwithstanding, the Muslim clerics and faithfuls have always disclaim Boko Haram describing their activities to be against Muslim religious doctrines and beliefs. This is a contradiction.

- **The Al-Qaeda Factor.**

Some scholars appeared to have described Boko Haram insurgency as an extension of some Muslim terrorist groups like al-Qaeda. Although it may be very difficult to prove, studies of Szroom and Harnish (2011) and Cook (2011) have showed that Boko Haram was not completely free from external influence, hence they enjoyed sympathy and patronage from al-Qaeda and Somalia's AlShebaab. This was made manifest on August 9, 2009, about a week after Yusuf death, following the statement of Boko haram temporary leader, Sani Umar that: "Boko Haram is just a version of al-Qaeda which we align and respect. We support Osama bin laden, we shall carry out his command in Nigeria until the country is totally Islamized which is according to the wish of Allah" (Cook, 2011, p. 14).

Okpaga, Ugwu and Eme (2012, p. 84) wrote that according to British report, the conventional wisdom in intelligence circle is that Boko Haram has received cash possibly large sums of Euros paid to criminal "Jihad" factions in the Sahel, from the al-Qaeda, in the Maghreb. The latter group is fragmented by tenacious, and it also believed to have provided Boko Haram with training in contemporary urban terrorism, particularly suicide attacks. Okpaga et al further maintained that the leader of Boko Haram in Nigeria (Abu Qaqa) confirmed their connection with al- Qaeda. According to him in an interview, "the group members were spiritual followers of al-Qaeda and met senior figures in the network during visits to Saudi Arabia" (Okpaga, Ugwu & Eme (2012, p. 84).

The assumption of this analysis appears correct, it shows that Boko Haram enjoys affinity with some international terrorist groups.

- **The Political Factor**

There is strong speculation that Boko Haram insurgency was a creation of some political class in the north. The allegation is in line with the long held opinion of security operatives and keen watchers of the emergent situation that Boko Haram was the creation of politicians, especially some governors who needed them to win elections, to intimidate opponents, score political points and relevance at the national level. These groups, overtime became larger, unwieldy and difficult to control by their sponsors. In fact, it had become an open secret that the utterances of former Governors of Borno, Gombe and Bauchi states, Ali Modu Sheriff, Mohammed Goje Danjuma and Mallam Isa Yuguda respectively indicated them as strong apologists and sympathizers of Boko Haram sect (Odey, 2011, p. 48).

It was also reported that former Kano State Governor, Ibrahim Shekarau's government reached an agreement with Boko Haram to pay them a monthly payment of N5 million which was later increased to N10 million in 2009. The agreement just as in the one reached in Bauchi State also included infrastructural support. However, both agreements were said to have been broken by the State Governors in 2011 and the payments were stopped. This according to the sect's spokesman warranted the bombings in the two States (Okpaga, Ugwu & Eme, 2012, p. 85).

They also recalled that a sitting Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was held on trial for allegedly funding the groups, so was a High Court Judge. There was also a report that the alleged mastermind of the Christmas day bombing of Madalla Catholic Church, Kabiru Sokoto, took refuge in his State's Abuja Governor's lodge en-route to escaping abroad. A Senior Air Force Officer from the north was featured in the plot to escape him abroad, and when he was finally arrested, his escape from police detention in very suspicious circumstances presented Nigeria with a classical case of official collusion of a most deceitful kind, also traceable to a high police hierarchy.

All these evidences, though largely circumstantial, seem to point to the fact that Boko Haram insurgency is a monster created by some political elite of the north. But it may not be very easy to identify those involved.

- **The Loss of Power by the North and Goodluck's Emergence**

The unprecedented rise of Boko Haram insurgency may not be unconnected with the untimely shift of power to the south. The death of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua, a Muslim in office presented an opportunity for his vice, Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian and a southerner to succeed him. President Goodluck Jonathan did not only finish out the term of late Yar'adua, but also emerged as the PDP candidate for presidential election; an act which the northerners suspected to be a southern and Christian agenda to dominate and marginalize the north. This triggered some reactions. There were at least five major bombings of election events during the

period, March 3, April 8 and 9, and two on April 16 in places as varied as Kaduna, Abuja, Maiduguri and others (Okoroafor, 2015).

Prior to the election, source Magazine (July 4, 2011, p. 72) reported that Nigeria's former Finance Minister, Alhaji Ciroma, who spoke under the umbrella of the Northern Political Leaders Forum warned that Jonathan becoming the president of Nigeria may ignite a series of events, the scope and magnitude of which we can neither proximate nor contain".

The same source Magazine also reported that the former Governor of old Kaduna state, Alhaji Lawal Kaita threatened that "the North would make the country ungovernable for President Goodluck Jonathan or any other southerner who finds his way to the seat of power". Going by the above, one can deduce that the high rise of Boko haram insurgency is part of the manifestation of the grievances of the northern elites over the loss of power.

That notwithstanding, the insurgency has remained on the alarming dimension irrespective of the emergence of Muhammadu Buhari, a northerner and a Muslim as the President of Nigeria. What is happening now that the north has taken over power in view of the increase of Boko Haram insurgency could be linked to the pursuit of the broken relationship and agreement between the sect and their sponsors from the north. If it were so, the insurgency would be sustained by the sect.

Government Response to Combat Boko Haram Insurgency

Government has made several attempts toward countering Boko Haram Insurgency. Notable among them is the establishment of anti-terrorism legislation, known as Terrorist Prevention Act. (TPA) 2011 which was later amended in 2012 to establish the office of the National Security Adviser (NSA). There were also establishment of Presidential Advisory Committee on Terrorism and Empowerment of the National Security Adviser to deal decisively with outlaws of the act. Joint military Task Force commonly called Operation Restore Order, and collaborative engagements with Foreign State and International Organization, and the Training exercise on Counter Terrorism (COT) and Counter Insurgency (CON) were all established to tackle the excessive threat and attack of Boko Haram.

Another major strategy employed by Federal Government in countering Boko Haram insurgency in the north is the declaration of state of emergency in 15 Local Government Areas in four States (Borno, Yobe, Plateau and Niger) where the Boko Haram insurgency was very prominent. In addition to this was the establishment of Almajiri schools in Northern Nigeria. This was targeted in shifting the attention of the Almajiris, reorienting and empowering them through education which is believed will reduce the Boko Haram foot soldiers. In combating the insurgency, Federal Government relocated Nigerian Military Command Centre from Abuja to Maiduguri to effectively tackle Boko Haram in June 2015.

The above responses of Nigerian government to counter Boko Haram insurgency appear to be ineffective as can see in the continuing rise of the bombings and destruction of lives and property

by Boko Haram. The reason for the failure in fighting Boko Haram could be connected to insubordination, corruption among the political class for misappropriating and mismanaging of funds meant to effectively combat Boko Haram, porosity of the Nigeria's borders and lack of scientific data base and sophisticated military hardwares (Eke 2013).

Brief Implications of Boko Haram Insurgency on National Development

The implications of Boko Haram insurgency on national development are very grave. Nigerians on a daily basis are learning hard lessons from bitter attacks of Boko Haram. Adebayo (2014) have argued that Boko Haram has brought negative implications on national development. The sect has constituted a serious threat to national security. Government needs adequate security to function. The ultimate goal of government is to ensure peace and security, to promote growth and development and to provide for the welfare of the people. Boko Haram insurgency threatens both life and Nigeria's corporate existence. This is a clear indication of absence of security and national development which is a major feature of a failed state. In this line, Oviasogie (2013) added that the Nigerian government needs to design an ingenious strategy on how to combat Boko Haram challenges.

Boko Haram insurgency is also an impediment to economic development. Their activities in the northern Nigeria particularly the north east have slowed down business activities. Findings revealed that many businesses have winded up due to the insurgency despite the assurance given to the people by government. Apart from that, the insurgency has reduced the inflow of local and foreign investments. Investments that are meant to be sited in the north are either withdrew or relocated elsewhere. Moreso, insurgency has led to increase in unemployment following the closure of business activities. Economic activities are ebbing out. Million of non indigenes in the north, especially the Igbos who are the worst hit have winded up their business to return to their home states to continue life afresh (Okpaga, Ugwu & Eme, 2012, p. 89). This does not encourage national development. However, it will take years for the economy of northern Nigeria to recover.

Also, Federal Government have lost billions of naira fighting Boko Haram insurgency. The resources that were meant to boost Nigerian economy and ensure national development were being wasted in an act that defies logical reasoning (Abade & Chilaka, 2014).

Assessing the implications of Boko Haram on national development, it must be noted that the sect has put the stability of Nigeria on a crossroad. It is on record that Boko Haram sect took control of 25 Local Government Areas in Borno State out of 27 local government areas, and many others in Yobe State, until when emergency rule was declared in the three states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe in May 2013. Boko Haram rendered political activities in these States less functional. The institutions and governance structures in most part of those states were rendered redundant. (Abade & Chilaka, 2015, p. 112; Simon *et al*, 2013). Despite the fight by the government against Boko Haram insurgency, the scourge has still remained soared. Sadly enough, it has reduced the image of Nigeria in the international environment. Nigeria is now considered as a hostile, volatile and terrorist country. This has led to continuous decrease of Nigeria in global peace and security index.

It is evident that Boko Haram insurgency has led to loss of lives and properties. Between 2009 till date, the number of lives and properties lost in the insurgency was colossal. The number of maimed and displaced Nigerians was alarming. From the report of Wikipedia (2015), Boko Haram insurgency has killed more than 13,000 people from 2009 to 2015 and about 10,000 in 2014, and about 8000 people in 2013. (Abada & Chilaka, 2015, p. 112). Beside, over 4000 building across northern Nigeria has been destroyed. Security and survival are now in serious danger as the sect has inflicted great tension and fear among Nigerians.

Conclusion

No nation can achieve national development in the face of insurgency. The activities of the Boko Haram sect have seriously continued to undermine national development in view of its multidimensional impacts. As acclaimed Muslim movement, Boko Haram has arrogated to itself the mandate of promoting and propagating the core Islamic values through total opposition of western culture and civilization, which the sect conceives as the “Polluter and corrupter to Muslim faithfuls. The sect operates unmindfully of the existence of both national and international laws. The climate of fear and uncertainty which it spreads is real, and the danger it poses can neither be ignored nor overemphasized. Hence, the outraged consequences of its activities are incalculable. The emergence of Boko Haram insurgency has been linked to certain factors such as the long history of the region and the reoccurrence of radical Islamic movements, the economic and social marginalization of a large section of the northern state’s population, the revenge and reprisal attack of the killing of Boko Haram leader, Muhammed Yusuf, and the bitterness of the northern political elite for the untimely loss of presidency to the south. Despite several efforts adopted by Nigerian government towards combating Boko Haram insurgency, there have been no significant results. This has continued to pose threat to national development.

Recommendations

More disturbing to all concerned citizens of Nigeria is the threat to national development which the scourge of Boko Haram insurgency poses in Nigeria. The damage caused by the insurgent group is colossal. To tame the tide, there is an overriding need for government to minimize the use of force and take the option of negotiation and dialogue. Bombs, guns and other explosive hardly end differences but only escalate it. Negotiation and dialogue is the only road to peace as exemplified by president Umaru Musa Yar’adua with the Niger Delta militants.

Again the rise of Boko Haram insurgency and other violent groups in Nigeria seem to have almost led to the failure of governance. The situation calls for good governance in order to reduce poverty, unemployment, extreme hunger and dropping out of schools by the youth which can discourage some of them to engage in terrorist activities.

The study also emphasizes on the urgent need for Muslim clerics, Muslim traditional rulers and Muslim political elite to collaborate and cooperate with Nigerian government in fighting the scourge. They should be committed toward reorientation and education of the youth which will

help to empower them in the northern Nigeria. This will help to refocus and redirect their time and energy to productive venture that will contribute to national development.

It is also important to address the problem of Nigeria's porous borders by government- including both sea and air, and through screening of those manning the borders. To succeed in this, Nigerian government needs the synergy and collaboration of the neighboring countries to counter terrorism and insurgency.

More importantly, the military personnel should be adequately trained and equipped on modern counter terrorism operation. This requires the installation of high tech security technology particularly within the borders.

Again, it must be remembered that money is the oxygen of terrorism. Therefore, government should endeavour to identify the sponsors of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria and also work cooperatively with the financial institutions to help fish illegal funds and money laundering. It is believed that this will help to suffocate all Boko Haram activities.

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