

**THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE BOKO HARAM  
INSURGENCY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIA'S  
NATIONAL SECURITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

In April 2014, an Islamic fundamentalist group in the northeast of Nigeria kidnapped over 200 schoolgirls in Chibok town, Bomb State. That action, more than anything else, attracted global attention to the Boko Haram Islamic sect in Nigeria. Admittedly, the group had previously carried other terrorist acts that claimed dozens of lives in parts of Nigeria, especially in the predominantly Moslem North. But it was the Chibok kidnappings and the formation of a non-governmental organization, "Bring Back Our Girls" that sparked off a series of protests in Nigeria and several parts of the world. The official response to the activities of the Boko Haram sect also became more serious and Nigeria, along with her immediate neighbours and mercenaries from South Africa mobilized troops and turned the heat on the insurgents. Materials for this essay were obtained mainly from documentary sources and the research methodology is essentially content analysis and historical descriptive examination. It is submitted that the involvement of Nigeria's neighbours in the fight against Boko Haram as well as the support she received from other countries have not only exposed her illusion of superiority but also portend great dangers for the country's national security.

**Keywords:** Borders, Conflict, Insurgency, Religion, Security, Terrorism

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Despite its contributions to human development, religion has always been subjected to abuse, exploitation and immoderation. In Nigeria, religious fanaticism has generated a series of riots

and bloodletting over the years. The same is largely true of other parts of the globe. Indeed, sectarian violence which came on the heels of the so-called Arab Spring of 2004- 2006 has continued to reverberate in some parts of North Africa and the Middle East. In West Africa, Mali has had to contend with insurgency from its Tuareg citizens. This particular rebellion, coupled with the crisis in neighbouring Libya, have resulted in the heavy flow of small arms and light weapons into Nigeria, a situation that has been capitalized on and manipulated by the Boko Haram.

Although Islamic fundamentalism has a relatively long history in Nigeria, it gained notoriety following the formation of Boko Haram in Maiduguri, in 2002. Maiduguri is the capital city of Borno State in north-east Nigeria. Formed ostensibly to ensure full Islamization of the Nigerian state in accordance with its leaders' interpretation of the Koran, Boko Haram started its initial attacks against Christians and southerners living in the northern part of Nigeria. Later on, it spread its activities to include killing other Muslims who did not subscribe to its view of Islam. Thus, among its victims have been prominent Muslim clerics, including Sheik Ibrahim Gomari.<sup>1</sup>

Following a string of successful operations in Nigeria, the group felt emboldened to extend its activities beyond Nigeria's borders. Neighbouring countries like Cameroun, Chad and Niger Republic soon became targets of the insurgents who made incursions into their territories, killing and looting the property of their citizens. By March 2015, these countries began to collaborate militarily to contain the menace posed by Boko Haram insurgents. Within the first two months, and aided by South African mercenaries<sup>2</sup>, troops from Nigeria, Cameroun, Chad and Niger were able to penetrate the Sambisa forest which had previously been the training ground for the insurgents. The ferocity of the bombardment from these West African neighbours disorganized the insurgents who have, nonetheless, continued to terrorize hapless villagers in many parts of north-east Nigeria and neighbouring countries.

This paper brings to focus the reasons for Nigeria's inability to, on its own, deal decisively with the Boko Haram group. It also examines the obvious security implications of Nigeria's decision to seek the assistance of other countries in the fight against the group. Accordingly, the paper has been divided into four parts, namely, a historicisation of Islamic fundamentalism in Nigeria; the internationalization of the Boko Haram insurgency, and the security implications of Nigeria's decision to involve other countries in the fight against Boko Haram.

## 2.0 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

It has become an accepted tradition for academics to clarify the meanings of some of the words, terms or concepts which they employ in the course of writing or presenting papers. It is against this background that certain key concepts will be defined in this section of the paper. Embarking on such an assignment will serve the dual purpose of making the readers key functionally into the message in the paper as well as creating the enabling environment for the writer to present an essay that is both intellectually stimulating and entertaining.

### 2.1 Border/Boundary:

More often than not, border and boundary are used as synonyms. However, boundary represents a line that delineates the physical limits of two contiguous territories, while a border connotes an area or part of a territory which lies adjacent to a boundary. In other words, both terms are used in relation to marks that separate the territories of two neighbouring geopolitical entities.

## **2.2 Diplomacy:**

Although diplomacy is a well-known concept in international relations, it is nonetheless a contested term. In times past, it was used in reference to the adjustment of inter-state differences through negotiation. In contemporary times, the concept has come to be defined as communication and negotiation between global actors (state and non-state) who seek a cooperative solution to problematic issues instead of resorting to the use of force and violence.

## **2.3 Foreign policy:**

This refers to the official course of action which decision-makers take on behalf of their state in reaction to events in the external environment. It also has to do with actions or statements intended to precipitate events in the international system to which other actions would react.

## **2.4 Insurgency:**

The act of militarily opposing and fighting the de jure government of a given state by a group of rebels is what this term refers to. Such opposition could be inspired either by religious or political motives or even by both. Insurgents have been given a variety of labels, including rebels, terrorists, or militants.

## **2.5 National interest:**

Every sovereign state, no matter how small or strong, developed or developing, has values and ideals which it so cherishes that it will rather go to war than compromise. These constitute the national interest of such a state for which it formulates and implements policies to defend and maximize. Thus, survival and prosperity, as well as the defence of its territorial integrity and relations with other countries, constitute the fulcrum of every nation's foreign policy.

## **2.6 National Security:**

This refers to the ability of a state to protect its citizens and territory from both internal and external fears and threats. In other words, the concept means a nation's willingness and ability to withstand challenges to its core values, whether such challenges emanate from outside its borders or from within. In advancing its national security, therefore, a state should be able to safeguard its territorial, cultural or ideological integrity, as well as the well-being and progress of its citizens.

## **3.0 HISTORICIZING ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN NIGERIA**

The intensity of religious identity in Nigeria is certainly one of the highest in the world. The country has two major religions, namely, Islam and Christianity. There are also many

adherents of traditional religion. However, it is relations between Muslims and Christians that have exhibited tensions over the years.

But such tensions are not a recent development: they date back to the colonial era and indeed to the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914. Put differently, the historical roots of religious tensions in Nigeria predate even the 20th century and could be traced to the jihadist movement of Othman dan Fodio and his Fulani kinsmen. Under dan Fodio's leadership, the Fulani had waged a religious war in Northern Nigeria, ostensibly to sanitize the Islamic religion from their perceived prevailing state of neglect. This involved conquering the indigenous peoples (especially the Hausa), converting them to Islam, and imposing the Sharia law in the area. Those who were already Muslims were made to adopt a more puritanical brand of Islam according to the dictates of the jihadists.

Partly because the people of the then Bornu Empire were already Muslims before the advent of Othman dan Fodio, and partly because the jihadists realized the futility of attacking a militarily strong empire like Bornu, the Fulani recognized Bornu as an independent polity. On the other hand, they directed their military activities against non-Muslim groups in the North who were, of course, militarily weak vis-a-vis the jihadists. In such non-Muslim areas as Hadejia, Katagum, Bauchi, Gombe, Keffi, Lafia, Nasarawa and Ilorin, they created emirates and incorporated them into the Sokoto caliphate in some kind of Islamic confederacy.

However, the attempt by the Fulani jihadists to proselytize the so-called pagans in parts of the upper north and lower north met with stiff resistance. The non-Muslim groups of Birom, Angas, Tarok, Tiv, Idoma, Igala, Ebira, Kaje and Kataf, as well as the Sayawa, the Zuru and the Biu could not be subjugated by the jihadists up to the time of the British conquest of these areas. But the British were later to allow the Fulani emirs to extend their rule to these areas and incorporate them into their emirates. Though the Angas, the Pyem as well as the Igala and Ebira were not incorporated into any emirates, the British nonetheless allowed nearby emirates to exercise political authority and collect taxes from such places<sup>3</sup>. This was not without protests and opposition from the affected non-Muslim groups who instead, chose to become Christians. Such protests and opposition were later to find expression in the formation of the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) in the 1950s as a political party strongly opposed to the Hausa-Fulani Muslim dominated Northern People's Congress (NPC) which had been formed following the introduction of the Macpherson constitution in 1951.

If therefore, Islamic fundamentalism refers to any movement that favours a strict observance of the teachings and tenets of both the Koran and the Sharia law, then the 19-century jihadists' movement of Othman dan Fodio fits into this definition. Dan Fodio's jihadists replaced the indigenous Habe (Hausa) after overthrowing them, having accused them of corruption<sup>4</sup>. Its leaders would appear to have been dogmatic to the extent that they condemned the practices and beliefs of the pre-Islamic societies in the north of present-day Nigeria. Ahmadu Bello, a direct descendant of Othman dan Fodio and Northern Nigeria's foremost Muslim leader and politician, never hid his disdain for non-Muslims. For instance, in 1944, he had, in reaction to a memorandum from the West African Students Union (WASU) on the imperative of concerted pan-Nigerian opposition to British colonial rule, insisted that southern Nigerians should first embrace Islam if they were desirous of a united Nigeria<sup>5</sup>. Even in the early years of Nigeria's flag independence (1963), Ahmadu Bello's

campaigns of forcefully converting traditionalists in his region to Islam created fears and apprehension among Christians in the former Northern region. Similarly, a proposal to create a Federal Sharia Court of Appeal was debated in the Constituent Assembly in 1977-1978. This polarized the country along a religious divide, with Christian members from the North and South pitted against Muslim members from the North and Yorubaland<sup>6</sup>.

In the late 1980s, Islamic fundamentalism was reenacted in the activities of an extremist Islamic sect led by one Mohammed Marwa or 'Maitasine' The sect unleashed terror in Kano metropolis, the commercial nerve-centre of Northern Nigeria, and more than four thousand lives and property worth millions of Naira were lost. A Commission of Inquiry set up by the government in the aftermath of the Maitasine Islamic uprising blamed it on the fanaticism and gross ignorance of the belief of one's faith and that of others<sup>7</sup>. The findings of that Commission fell short of admitting the truth, namely, that prominent Northern Muslims, politicians, businessmen, and retired military officers, have, at one time or the other, individually and collectively, financed these modern-day jihad against Christians, especially in the North. There were reports that armed Muslim youths were sent to kill Christians in their homes. Ironically, when the situation was eventually brought under control, the murdered Christians were said to have been victims of riots<sup>8</sup>.

Although the Maitasine sect would appear to have been the first to take Islamic fundamentalism to a disturbing and alarming level in Nigeria, its suppression did not put an end to Islamic religious fanaticism in the country. Since 1990, for instance, there have been more than four religious uprisings in Kano city alone involving Muslim youths against Christians. These so-called 'riots' have sometimes threatened the very existence of the Nigerian state'. Muslim youth often loot and burn private property and businesses of Christians during such 'riots'. At other times, they have had the temerity of displaying the heads of slaughtered Christians in the course of their murderous jamborees. This was the case in 1997 when an Igbo Christian pastor, Gideon Akaluka, was beheaded in the presence of security operatives in Dutse prison and his head, dripping blood, was hung on a spike and carried round the city of Kano<sup>10</sup>.

Thus, religion and politics have often interacted in Nigeria, and such interactions have generated conflicts which are rooted in bigotry, intolerance and poverty. Politicians and even academics from the North have never hidden their conquistador mentality and desire to Islamize Nigeria. That explains why Nigeria's first military president and a Muslim, Ibrahim Babangida, in 1986, surreptitiously registered Nigeria, a constitutionally secular state, as a full member of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) (now Organization of Islamic Conference). This action, no doubt, has created the impression in other countries, that Nigeria is an Islamic state. More painfully, it has emboldened the already arrogant Northern Nigerian Muslim elite to have scant regards for the opinions of Christians. For instance, at a meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference (formerly the Organization of Islamic Countries, OIC) held in Saudi Arabia in August 2012, a junior Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nurudeen Muhammadu, is quoted as having said that Nigeria was the only Muslim country with a Christian as President<sup>11</sup>. He made that unfortunate statement in his official capacity as a representative of the Government of the then Nigerian President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. To say, therefore, that Babangida's registration of Nigeria as a member of

the O.I.C. and Muhammadu's utterances in Saudi Arabia smack of Islamic fundamentalism is to state the obvious.

## 4.0 THE BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY

Boko Haram was founded and led by one Muhammed Yusuf who, until his conversion to radical Islam in 2003 by Muhammed All, was a regular Muslim cleric. When he was converted to Talibana-style Muslim fundamentalism, Yusuf founded his own sect which resents western education because it is considered sinful. In fact, when loosely translated from the Hausa language, Boko Haram means 'western education is forbidden'. Initially based in the town of Kanama in Yunusari Local Government Area of Yobe State, North-east Nigeria, Boko Haram is a splinter group from Muhammed All's the group. Over time, it began to open branches along with its so-called emirs in Cameroun, Chad and the Niger Republic.<sup>12</sup> One of the major objectives of the sect is to establish a "pure" Islamic State in Nigeria to be governed according to the precepts of Sharia. It is also aimed at containing the perceived "evils" of western civilization.

In the beginning, Boko Haram was a radical but non-violent group. Its members conducted their affairs more or less peacefully in the group's first seven years of existence. But this posture changed in 2009 when members of the sect decided that they were no longer going to obey a law in Yobe state which required motorcycle riders to wear helmets. To them, such a law was un-Islamic. As a result, several members of the sect were arrested for flouting the law. An action of civil disobedience by members of the Boko Haram ensued and triggered a riot which led to the death of about one thousand persons. Police stations, prisons, government offices, schools and churches were destroyed during the riot<sup>13</sup>.

Mohammed Yusuf, the leader of Boko Haram, was captured by the Nigerian military and taken to the police headquarters where he was executed extra-judicially. Thereafter, Abubakar Shekau became the leader of the sect and transformed it into a very violent terrorist group which pitted itself against the Nigerian state and Christians. Under him, Boko Haram turned into a blood-thirsty fundamentalist group. In September 2010, it launched an attack on a prison in Bauchi, killing five persons and freeing over seven hundred inmates. Under Shekau's leadership, the group improved its operational capabilities by not only acquiring sophisticated small arms and light weapons but also manufacturing improvised explosive devices (IEDs). With these, it was able to launch a series of deadly attacks on selected targets in Nigeria, especially in the northern parts. Suicide and car bombings are the trademarks of the group's nefarious activities.

Some of the attacks linked to Boko Haram between 2009 and June 30, 2015, include the following:

- a) The December 31, 2010, bombing of the Mammy market at the Mogadishu Barracks in Abuja;
- b) The May 2011 explosions at the Mammy market in Shandawanka barracks in Bauchi, and the attack on Baga market in Maiduguri.
- c) The June 25, 2014 bombing of a crowded shopping centre in Abuja, as well as the September 19, 2014 gun attack in Mainok, Borno and the December 1, 2014 suicide bombing of a market in Maiduguri.

- d) Churches, bus stations, mosques, schools public places and military and security personnel were also targeted by Boko Haram. For instance, between March 21, 2011, and February 25, 2015, no fewer than twenty-three military and security posts and dozens of personnel were attacked by Boko Haram.

Similarly, between July 9, 2011, and December 27, 2014, about nine deadly attacks were initiated by Boko Haram insurgents against Christians and churches. The most heart-rending and reprehensible of these attacks were the December 25, 2011 bombing of a Catholic Church in Madalla, Niger State (which claimed the lives of fifty persons), the February 14, 2014 attack on Konduga, Borno State, (where one hundred and twenty-one Christian villagers were slaughtered), and the February 15 gun attack on the Christian village of Izghe, Bomb state,( where more than a hundred Christians were killed). The same was true of Gwoza where at least ninety Christians were slaughtered<sup>14</sup>.

## 5.0 THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY

Following the sophistication of Boko Haram insurgents and the successes they recorded in their campaigns, some observers began to speculate that the group had links with Al Qaeda in the Maghreb. Indeed, it was believed that some of its members had been trained in Al Qaeda camps. According to a report from the United States House Committee on Homeland Security released in April 2013, Boko Haram had undoubtedly embraced the international brand of terror associated with Al Qaeda<sup>15</sup>. In 2015, the group pledged allegiance to the notorious terrorist group, I.S.I.S or ISIL (Islamic State in Syria and the Levant) whose activities in the Middle East have resulted in thousands of deaths in Iraq, Syria and Turkey, as well as Libya.

Perhaps no other event attracted the attention of the international community to the activities of Boko Haram as the April 2014 kidnapping by the sect of two hundred and seventy-six female students from the Government Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State. A campaign group "BringBackOurGirls" was formed and took the centre stage in putting pressure on the Nigerian government to ensure the release of the kidnapped students. Over time, the campaign spread to major cities in the United States and Europe. Meanwhile in, the wake of the abduction of the Chibok girls, a chronicle of false narratives and inconsistencies began to be peddled by the government on the veracity of the abduction and the actual number of the kidnapped school girls. <sup>16</sup>

In October 2014, the four member-states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), namely, Nigeria, Cameroun, Chad and Niger, agreed to set up a joint military force to fight the Boko Haram insurgents, together with a contingent from Benin, Nigeria's neighbour to the west. This came on the heels of Boko Haram's 2012 incursion into Cameroun where it kidnapped a French family of seven who were on a vacation near the town of Dabanga, about six kilometres from the Nigerian border. The victims were later taken to Nigeria. On December 28-29, 2014, Boko Haram again launched an attack on Cameroun's far North Region, killing eighty-five civilians and two Camerounian soldiers, while it lost ninety--four of its militants. On June 16, 2015, the group launched two suicide bomb attacks on the Chadian capital city of N'Djamena, targeting the police headquarters and police academy. About twenty- four persons were killed and more than one hundred were injured. Similarly, on

February 13, 20015, Boko Haram insurgents attacked the village of Ngouboua in Chad, and on March 21, 2015, they attacked the border town of Gamboru, killing eleven persons. Earlier, the insurgents had, on February 4, 2015, attacked the Cameroonian town of Fotokol, killing scores of people. They had also kidnapped about eighty persons and killed others from villages in northern Cameroun in January 2015. <sup>17</sup>

Nigeria and her neighbours soon realized that the activities of the Boko Haram sect had assumed a transnational dimension and that the development could snowball into unmanageable proportions if not adequately and promptly contained. That was why some form of collaborative networking among the security agencies of these countries became imperative. But in 2014, mistrust and disagreement between Nigeria and Cameroun over how to deploy troops, stalled efforts to set up a regional force against Boko Haram.

The failure to launch the 2,800 strong missions as planned in November 2014, left the insurgents in control of large areas of northeast Nigeria from where they continued to launch more attacks<sup>18</sup>. The disagreement centred on how to deploy the troops. Cameroun insisted that because Boko Haram was an internal Nigerian issue, foreign troops should not be sent into the country. Cameroun was also concerned about allowing the Nigerian army to chase the insurgents into its own territory because of the poor human rights record of the Nigerian army. On its part, Nigeria deplored what is called Cameroun's reluctance and passivity or lack of interest in the war against the Boko Haram insurgents.<sup>19</sup>

On assumption of office as Nigeria's new president in 2015, Muhammadu Buhari, visited his country's immediate neighbours. The aim was to mend fences, as it were, and seek their support and cooperation in the war against Boko Haram. Before Buhari's visit, Nigeria's relationship with countries like Cameroun, Chad, Niger, and Benin, was more adversarial than cordial because they had been traditionally giving sanctuary to Boko Haram fighters. According to Ekhomu,

*...because of the new rapprochement,  
Boko Haram fighters are now  
being denied that sanctuary  
which has been giving them safe  
haven; after they attack Nigeria, they  
run across the border because  
the borders are porous.* <sup>20</sup>

The truth is that Boko Haram had extended its activities to Nigeria's neighbours, especially Chad and Cameroun. That explains why the 35th edition of the ordinary meeting of the Chiefs of Defence Staff (CDS) of ECOWAS member-states which opened on September 10, 2015, in Dakar, Senegal, had as its major objective, the search for a multi-national approach to end security challenges in the region. Some days earlier, Nigeria's Chief of Defence Staff, Olonisakin, had attended a similar meeting in Mali, where regional efforts to curb terrorism and insurgency were extensively discussed. <sup>21</sup>



Outside the West African sub-region and the African continent, the United States, France and Britain, among other countries, have also responded to the threat of Boko Haram. Terrorism knows no national boundaries and it does not discriminate on the basis of colour or social, economic and political backgrounds. It is a threat to global peace and security. That is why on Monday, October 12, 2015, the United States began to deploy troops to help fight Boko Haram. This was under an agreement with the government of Cameroun.<sup>22</sup> President Barack Obama of the United States is quoted as having informed the U.S. Congress that he would be sending 300 military personnel to Cameroun as part of a stepped-up effort by his country to counter the violent Boko Haram sect.<sup>23</sup>

## **6.0 NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY**

As a concept, national security is subject to many interpretations. Basically, it can be categorized into two broad classes, namely hard national security and soft security. While the former implies the use of military force to contain external aggression and check subversion internally, soft national security, on the other hand, has to do with economic development and political security. In other words, issues relating to economic development, social justice, environmental protection, human rights, as well as democratization and the rule of law, all come under soft-national security. In this context, therefore, an examination of the implications of the internationalization of the Boko Haram insurgency on Nigeria's national security has to be situated within the ambit of both hard national security and soft national security. That is to say that, the internationalization of the insurgency has both domestic and external implications for Nigeria's national security.

### **6.1 Domestic implications:**

At the domestic level, the insurgency has resulted in the largest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in West Africa since the end of the Cold War. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, the number of IDPs as of December 31, 2015, stood at one million, eight hundred and seventy (1.870m)<sup>24</sup>. Meanwhile, several thousand have fled to neighbouring countries, with about 6,200 moving into Niger from Northern Nigeria. Lack of accessibility to the basic necessities of life such as clean water, health facilities, food and shelter, has worked untold hardship on the IDPs and refugees. High infant mortality is a natural outcome.

Economically, the ripple effect of Boko Haram activities is immense. On the one hand, the displaced persons are mostly farmers and their dislocation has resulted in food shortages not only in the conflict zones but throughout Nigeria. On the other hand, there has been an inevitable disruption in economic activities as many businesses have had to fold up. Many Nigerians from the southern parts, for instance, had to move out of places like Maiduguri because of insecurity. In fact, banks in that city had to close down because of insecurity. There is no doubting the fact that the mass movement of both Nigerian and foreign businesses out of northeast Nigeria has had a deleterious effect on the economy of that part of the country.

Prior to the election of 2015, the Nigerian polity was unduly and unnecessarily heated up by the country's political entrepreneurs. While the then ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP)

accused the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) of using Boko Haram to destabilize the political system, the APC accused the PDP of trying to exterminate northern Muslims in the guise of fighting Boko Haram. Thus, personal political gains became the priority of political campaigns rather than addressing the menace of the insurgents. In the end, the Nigerian political system became deeply fractured because of the politicization of the Boko Haram insurgency.

A fall-out of the ineptitude exhibited by the political class in containing the insurgency in northeast Nigeria is the resurgence and multiplication of militant groups in the southern part of the country, especially in the oil-rich Niger Delta region and the Igbo-speaking area. These groups were, no doubt, emboldened by Boko Haram's successes against the Nigerian military and security agencies. The situation is such that until recently, there was a general perception that these agencies are poorly trained, weak and corrupt. Indeed, even the cohesiveness of the security and intelligence agencies as well as that of the military began to wobble as a result of the daily humiliation of the military by the insurgents. Low-ranking soldiers began to doubt the ability of their superiors to make the right decisions. In short, the inadequacies of the Nigerian military were exposed. According to Nwosu:

*the insurgents dealt with the military, exposing its inadequacies in conducting internal security operations and the lack of will to fight and defend the country's territorial integrity.*<sup>25</sup>

When ill-equipped soldiers fled the battlefronts, they often accused their field commanders of sabotage. In Borno, they even raised their rifles against their General Officer Commanding (GOC) and had to be court-martialed and sentenced to death.<sup>26</sup>

On their part, some Nigerians also began to doubt the leadership capacity of the government. After all, a government that cannot or is unable to secure the lives and property of its citizens will find it difficult to govern and command their respect. The resort to self-help became the natural outcome of such a situation. Mistrust grew among ordinary Nigerians because the government came to be seen as weak, incompetent and uncaring.

## **International Implications:**

Since the resurgence of the Boko Haram insurgency under Shekau in 2010, Direct Foreign Investment (FDI) into Nigeria has plummeted. This, of course, had to do with the spate of violent attacks by the sect and the attendant insecurity, especially in the north. According to the World Investment Report (WIR) of 2013, FDI flows into Nigeria dropped by 21.3% in just one year, from 8.9 billion U.S. dollars in 2011 to 7 billion U.S. dollars in 2012. The substantial loss in FDI over a short period of time will, no doubt, have dire consequences for Nigeria. For instance, the flow of Direct Foreign Investment into the country has a direct impact on trade, assuring progression of economic growth and by extension, ensuring job creation and soft national security. Not only does FDI inflow to Nigeria supplement the

available domestic capital by stimulating the productivity of domestic investments, but the country's Gross Domestic Product will also increase as a result of unit increases in FDI into the oil and gas sector which is the mainstay of the Nigerian economy. By obvious implication, therefore, it is not enough to degrade the insurgents. Rather, they should be completely wiped out if Nigeria's oil-independent economy is to be sustained.

Nigeria's international respectability has been negatively affected by its war against Boko Haram. It is true that the country has a rich history of peace-keeping operations. But the embarrassing reverses which it has suffered in the hands of the insurgents have cast aspersions upon its ability to perform its statutory responsibility of defending the country's territorial integrity. Military experts and professionals have blamed the poor performance of the military against Boko Haram on politicians, especially those involved in weapon procurement for the armed forces since 1999. The weapons procurement arm of the government has been accused of embezzling funds and instead of providing obsolete and sub-standard equipment for the military to operate with. For instance, in his valedictory speech at a pulling-out parade organized in his honour, former Chief of Defence Staff, Air Marshal Alex Badeh, observed that:

*Over the years, the military was neglected and under-equipped to ensure the survival of certain regimes, while other regimes, based on advice from some foreign nations, deliberately reduced the size of the military and underfunded it.*<sup>27</sup>

Ultimately, Nigeria's inability to tackle the insurgency led her into initiating a joint multinational military force with her immediate neighbours for that purpose. Yet, the attitude of the Nigerian military and the political class has not helped the country's international image. For instance, Cameroun accused Nigerian forces of abandoning combat and leaving weapons which were later used by the insurgents to launch attacks across the border. Cameroun had to appeal for international help, prompting Chad to send several hundreds of troops to fight the Boko Haram.<sup>28</sup> This is a very serious indictment on the Nigerian political and military leadership.

Also, Nigeria's criminal justice administration system has not been able to condemn a single captured Boko Haram insurgent or financier to either death or long prison terms. Instead, they are usually detained and helped to escape from police custody. This is quite unlike the situation in Cameroun and Chad. On March 17, 2016, Cameroun sentenced 89 Boko Haram members to death on terror charges, while Chad, on August 29, 2015, executed ten Boko Haram members for bombing a police station and killing people in N'Djamena, the capital city. Their trial lasted for just two days, whereas in Nigeria, trials have lasted for years without any conviction. In Nigeria, an alleged financier of Boko Haram (Ali Ndume), was,

until January 10, 2017, the majority leader in Nigeria's House of Senate. His case in the count is virtually forgotten.

More importantly, the fact that Chadian and Camerounian troops have had to cross into Nigerian territory occasionally in pursuit of Boko Haram insurgents is a security risk. It is also ignominious and makes nonsense of Nigeria's illusion of power. The same is largely true of Nigeria's cry for help from the U.S., France, and Britain.

The Americans did not agree to sell weapons to Nigeria when President Obama and Buhari met in Washington in July 2015. Although Obama expressed some strong support for Buhari's war on corruption, the crucial matter of procuring weapons was not successful because of the United States' perception of Nigeria's human rights record, especially by Nigerian troops in the war against Boko Haram. The U.S. government pointed to the Leahy Law of 1999 which forbids the U.S. from selling American arms to armies of foreign countries engaged in human rights violations.<sup>29</sup> Security issues were also on the front-burner when Nigeria's President, Buhari hosted his French counterpart, Francois Hollande, on May 14, 2016.<sup>30</sup>

Nigeria's sovereignty has further been threatened by a large number of her citizens who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. In late August 2015 about 12, 000 Nigerian refugees were deported from Cameroun's border with Nigeria in Adamawa state. According to the Director-General of Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Muhammad Sani Sadi, this was done in the full glare of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR)<sup>31</sup>. Similarly, the Voice of America (radio station) had, on Monday, March 14, 2016, announced that 1,100 Nigerians died between late 2015 and early 2016 in Cameroonian hospitals in Maroua, a border town of about twenty kilometres from Nigeria. The victims died of wounds from Boko Haram insurgents. It was reported that four hospitals with a capacity for three hundred patients were caring for one thousand three hundred patients and victims of Boko Haram. Those Nigerians who went to other countries as refugees may find it difficult to ever identify with a government that did nothing to secure their lives and property. With time, they may find it more convenient to join the insurgents if they can provide for them what the government has not been able to provide.

Furthermore, Nigeria is a large country covering a total land area of 923,768 kilometres.<sup>32</sup> Most of this vast landmass is porous and the few borders posts are poorly policed. The proliferation in the country of small arms and light weapons through these borders is threatening her national security. The violent conflicts in Libya and Niger made these weapons readily available to Boko Haram members and some other criminal elements in Nigeria. Also, Boko Haram's pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State in Syria and the Levant (ISIL) is worrisome. The import of this is that in no distant future, Nigeria may play host to foreign terrorists from the Middle East and Europe, in addition to serving as a recruitment centre for other Islamic terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and Taliban.

In addition to the inflow of weapons and the concomitant increase in criminal activities, the porous nature of Nigeria's borders has made it possible for Boko Haram members to escape into neighbouring countries. From there, they strategize before moving back to strike at their targets. Like other terrorist groups, Boko Haram has been involved in human trafficking, drug trafficking and abuse as well as violent robberies. These activities constitute a veritable

challenge to Nigeria's national security because not only are many young Muslims likely to become radicalized; they could become drug-addicts and agents of frustrated former members of Boko Haram.

Trans-border terrorism and crimes also constitute real threats to Nigeria's national security. Since Boko Haram has become internationalized and broken into cells in different countries sharing borders with Nigeria, its members will continue to make incursions into Nigeria. Not only will they continue to unleash despicable acts of violence on the citizens, but their activities will also affect Nigeria's international image. It is not in doubt that the inflow of small arms and light weapons has influenced the proliferation of militant groups in the country.

## CONCLUSION

Nigeria's national security has been threatened by the activities of Boko Haram. The lacklustre performance of her military against the insurgents has also diminished the respect which other countries have for it. Similarly, Nigeria's international image and power have been ridiculed by her inability to single-handedly contain what should ordinarily be a domestic crisis. The appeal for foreign military assistance, including the use of mercenaries is, without doubt, a dent on Nigeria's image<sup>33</sup>. Yet, there is no denying the fact that terrorism is today a global problem which needs international cooperative efforts to address. However, Nigeria has enough resources to solve the problem and menace of Boko Haram. Rather than running cap in hand to solicit for assistance from other countries, Nigeria should ask for partnership, given the global nature of terrorism. Such a partnership, rather than begging, is imperative because there are African and non-African businesses that have investments in Nigeria. Thus, the congruence and mutuality of needs should determine Nigeria's approach to tackling the internationalization of the Boko Haram insurgency.

A more pragmatic approach would be to address, in a very dispassionate and realistic manner, the root causes of Islamic fundamentalism in northern Nigeria and frontally attack the ideology which Boko Haram represents. In this regard, the government has to admit its failure to satisfy the citizens' basic human and material needs. These include food, shelter, clothing, education, gainful employment, medical facilities, agriculture, rural development and poverty reduction, among others. More than any other factors, poverty and ignorance have abetted radicalism, and demagogues and Islamic fundamentalists easily find a willing and malleable clientele among the victims of poverty, ignorance and neglect. Official policies by political leaders from the North should not be made and seen as encouraging religious intolerance and the superiority of Islam over Christianity. Nigeria's Secularity should be maintained.

Therefore, the domestic sources of discontent and disillusionment should be identified in order to reduce the possibility of a resurgence of Boko Haram. The government's claim that the sect has been degraded is not enough to think that it will not come up again. Right now, its members have broken into cells, and without a central command structure, the Boko Haram insurgents will become deadlier through identifying soft targets for suicide bombings. Also, poisoning sources of water supply and animals meant for human consumption are possible alternatives likely to be adopted by the insurgents in their desperation to remain relevant.

Pursuing, capturing and punishing fleeing members of the insurgent group, rather than negotiating with them, is one way of restoring people's confidence in the government. Those who eventually surrender to the authorities should be debriefed, rehabilitated and reintegrated into their communities. The same should be the case for the millions of internally-displaced persons and refugees. If they are left on their own without official support, this group of Nigerians would constitute a threat to the country's national security because of the likelihood of their becoming ready recruits for other terrorist organizations both locally and otherwise.

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