

# Boko Haram Insurgency and National Security Challenges in Nigeria: An Analysis of a Failed State

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## Abstract

This paper examined the activities of the Boko Haram sect and how it has impeded the economic, political and social matrix of the Nigerian polity. The paper argued that the insurgence of the sect would continually be a national security challenge in spite of the marginal lip-service of the government to curb the heinous activity. The paper relied more on secondary data-journals, magazines newspapers internet and the theoretical framework is Durkheim and Merton Anomie theory etc. The paper concluded that development cannot take place in an atmosphere of insecurity the symptoms of a failed state are made manifest on a daily basis in Nigeria such as poor governance, destruction of lives and properties, population displacement, lack of basic amenities. Hence, the Nigerian government has failed in its social responsibility to secure lives and properties of the populace. It recommends for collective and holistic machinery, not only by the Nigerian state, but also by the entire African nations and United States to curb not only Boko Haram insurgencies, but also any pockets of militia activity threatening the existence of the state. Also, the deployment of neighborhood watch (NW) would be a complimentary effort to the machinery of government to identify and locate the sect for such a time as this.

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**Index terms**— boko haram, insurgents, security, sectarians, development, neighborhood watch.

## 1 Introduction

lobally, the issue of security, peace and development is at the centre stage of local, national and international discourse. States, especially developing ones are constantly in search for security, (Barry, 1983).

Nigeria is post-colonial state in its form and Post -colonial state is tied to the offshoot of imperialism. Over the years, different governments, individuals and institutions in Nigeria have systematically entrenched a culture of marginalization, inequality within the social order. The modern social system has produced widespread violence, arbitrary hierarchies and avoidable deprivation that have snowballed into serious national security challenges, ??Philip, 2008).

Since Nigeria was granted flag independence on October 1 st 1960, it has not been well with her as a nation. Nigeria is buffeted with economic, political, and social crises, metamorphosing into national insecurity; historically ranging from the coups d' etat of 1960s to 1990s. The civil war ??1967) ??1968) ??1969) ??1970) that claimed more than three million lives, the Maitatsine religious riots of the 1980s and early 1990s, the SAP saga and its effects, the 1993 June 12 election and struggle to reclaim mandate, Odi genocide, Sagamu bloody riots of 2000, the Niger Delta perennial crisis, armed robberies, inter and intra communal conflicts, kidnappings and political assassinations among others. These protests are driven for marginalization, resource control, or ethnic conflagration.

Recently, the emergence of the Boko Haram has added to the corpus of violence and insecurity in the country. Boko Haram is an extremist Islamic sect that is said to have a link with the Al Qaeda terrorist group. Its

ideology presumably is to Islamize Nigeria. In today's Nigeria, the fear of Boko Haram is the beginning of wisdom, (TELL October 17, 2011), as they have created an atmosphere of violence and insecurity in the minds of Nigerians through actions that have left many dead, property worth billions destroyed and many displaced. Yet, the government does not have the magic wand to stop and/or protect lives and properties of the citizenry. From January till now, Human Right Watch says 425 people have been killed by the sect, (TELL November 21, 2011). The activities of Boko Haram have paralyzed commercial activities particularly in the northern part of the country with waves of threats across the nation. It becomes very dicey to situate the problems or agitation of the sect whether it is a religious agenda or not. Their mayhem cut across religious and non religious persons and institutions.

In a work titled "BOKO HARAM: History, Ideas and Revolt", Shehu Sani traced the emergence of Boko Haram to radical Islamic teachings in Nigeria. He looked at the Maitatsine uprising in Kano in 1980 which claimed 4,177 and left another 8,712 with varying degree of injuries as a watershed of large-scale ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria. He went on to examine the emergence and activities of Yobe Talibans and states;

There was confusion as to the true identity of the group that enacted the bestial act that held Yobe hostage for three weeks. Therefore, the paper argued that the activities of the Boko Haram sect have impeded the economic, political and social matrix of the Nigeria state. Its activities has created orgy of destruction of lives and properties and displacement of persons in the country.

## 2 II.

### 3 The Problem

Security and development are very cardinal to the peace, unity and development of any nation. Every nation does have a security system put in place to unleash the individual and collective potential of its people as a nation. This security system must be holistic, that is, embrace the military and socioeconomic, cultural, environmental, political and technological aspects of security. These cardinal elements of security are well encapsulated in Nigeria's Grand Strategy for National Security. It provides that;

The primary objective of national security shall be to strengthen the federal republic of Nigeria and to advance her interests and objectives to contain instability, control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development, progress and growth, and improve the welfare and wellbeing and quality of life of every citizen, (cited in Dike, 2010). This, according to Dike (ibid), entails the followings; 1. State security and human security, 2. The preservation of the safety of Nigerians at home and abroad and the protection of the sovereignty of the country and asset.

The perennial and pervasive nature of unemployment, poverty, armed robbery, conflicts-(Niger Delta, ethno-religious, Jos, pre/post-election) and the menace, seems to have launched a frontal attack on this Grand Strategy and a challenge to Nigerian motto of Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress.

Obviously, the alarming rate of violence and insecurity, among others, prompted a US Security Report in 2000, to predict the disintegration of Nigeria as political entity in 2015, about four years away. And recently, John Campbell, former US ambassador to Nigeria, in his book titled "Dancing on the Brink" warned that Nigeria might fail as a united country. He described Nigeria as tottering at the brink of failure as a result of poverty amidst plenty. He blamed this on a set of dysfunctions: "a weak government and rigged election; a ruling elite who view the state as a dispensary of petro-profits; endemic corruption; bloody sectarian violence between radical Muslims and Christians and the curse of oil wealth, which encourages Nigeria to ignore industrial development and agriculture", (TELL October 17, 2011).

Nigeria has been engulfed with one form of problem or another. The most reoccurring is the challenge of security. This, no doubt, prompted the dissolution and restructuring of Nigeria's National Security Organization (NSO) by Ibrahim Babangida's administration in 1986 through decree ??9. In its place, three other security organs were created. These include the State Security Service (SSS), responsible for domestic intelligence, National Intelligence Agency (NIA), responsible for foreign intelligence and counter Intelligence and Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) responsible for military intelligence.

The 21st century creeping menace of Islamic sect manifesting into Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, has put the nation's security apparatus on the spot; opening to public doubt and scrutiny of an intelligence community that has enjoyed shadow coverage and handling since the nations return to democracy. According to Okujagu (2004) these prevailing era of insecurity to life and property experienced so far cuts across many facets that include political, economic, social and even in the religious arenas. Also, ??aul (2008) saw the overwhelming challenge of the internal security in postcolonial Nigeria and averred that;

Nigeria's national security is threatened by the problem of Inefficiency, collusion and despondency of its major institutions and structures as instruments of social action and rectification. This has ensured that the various governments and the state agencies have been unable consistently and institutionally to guarantee the adequate protection, peace and wellbeing of the citizens. This lapse has occasioned serious conflicts, situations of uncertainty, helplessness and instability that have compromised the very territorial and national integrity of this nation and exposed the bulk of the citizens to unnecessary fear, deprivation and chaos. Thus in setting up a framework for the critical and discursive analysis of the national security problem in Nigeria, we are in need

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of a new idea or vision of security that can effectively ensure the redemption and rectification of the Nigerian situation.

Consequently, this social virus engulfed the South-eastern part of the country where as observed by Agwanwo and Onwukwe (2010) that in the south east, old and young, rich and poor, even little children are kidnapped for ransom ranging from #5,000 to millions of naira. This came to national glare when members of Nigeria Union of Journalist (NUJ), who were on an official assignment, were kidnapped in Abia State. In a recent survey conducted by Campaign for Democracy, a Non-Governmental Organization, states that no fewer than 938 persons were kidnapped in Southeast between January 2008 and August 2012 and a ransom of about N 1.2 billion paid by families whose members were kidnapped, (Okodili n.d).

Boko Haram, an Islamic insurgent sect, whose heinous activities came to the fore when its foremost leader, Mohammed Yusuf was ingloriously killed by the Nigerian Police in 2009. Before his death, Yusuf had pioneered pocket of violence in the north that had its toll on the lives and property of the people. After his death, a number of observers thought that the violence by this radical Islamic fundamentalist would abate. But, later events seem to have proved them wrong. What has happened and still happening is an intense reverberations of orgy of violence in the country particularly in the North. This has threatened the existence of the state and the Federal government does not have the magic wand to control the insurgency.

### 4 III.

## 5 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The theoretical framework adopted in this paper is the Anomie theory of Durkheim and Merton. Durkheim opted that the source of anomie is the collapse of the social structure caused by rapid social change, (Wosu, 2013). The social structure normally regulates the infinite human drives. If the social structure collapses, these drives are no longer regulated. Thus, valid regulation and norms of behavior lose their function which eventually leads to deviant behavior in one form or another.

While Merton asserted that it is not the breakdown of the social structure that is responsible for anomie but that anomie is an inherent part of a society itself. Anomie emerges when the culture of a society prescribes specific goals to the majority of his members, but the social structures do not provide the legitimate means to achieve these goals to a portion of them. Hence, anomie results from the discrepancy between goals and means. Therefore, deviant behavior or action (behavior that is considered as illegitimate by the respective society) is caused by social pressure as people are expected to reach certain goals but do not have the means to do so. The predisposition to anomie depends on a person's specific position in a particular society -defined by age, sex, ethnicity, religion etc. Anomie can occur on different systemic levels (i.e in different subsystems to which an individual belongs) and can also be of varying degrees, ??Wosu, ibid) The import of the study is to examine the state of anomie or insurgency caused by Boko Haram sect as a complete breakdown of consensual norms and values of the people. The possession of arms, ammunition and small light weapons by the sect for supposedly to Islamize Nigeria has caused orgy of destruction of lives and properties and so many people displaced. More so, the economic the cultural and economic heritage of the people is destroyed. The terrorist attack which is now a global phenomenon has created tremendous consequences that have destroyed the communities in the North yet is still not abating. Therefore, the relevance of anomie theory has being justified in the research on the emergence and maintenance of non-state armed groups such as the possession of arms and ammunition by the Boko Haram insurgent group.

The methodology of this work is simply hinged on secondary data -literature, journals, magazines, internet etc. The essence of relying on secondary data is due to the complex nature of the sect. the area is unsafe to carry out interview or administer a questionnaire as people are scared and do not know whom to trust. The paper relied more on information from television, radio, newspaper etc. So, in analyzing the data, the study adopted qualitative (descriptive) , rather than quantitative method. The reason is simply because qualitative method does not pose the problem of obscurantism and therefore makes clearer the critical elements contained in the study. In other words, it obviates unwarranted manipulation of figures which sometimes defeats the aim of social researches, (Wosu and Anele, 2010).

IV.

## 6 Findings

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## 7 Global Journal of Human Social Science

The above table is endless and shows the height of mayhem caused by the Boko Haram sect in Northern Nigeria from 2009 to March 2012. No wonder the President of Nigeria alleged that insecurity in the polity creates a difficult situation to accomplish his electioneering promises to the people due to the activities of the Boko Haram sect. The recent and heart aching one is the abduction of Chibok secondary school girls in April 2014. This has left the populace with mixed feelings. Development cannot strive in an atmosphere of insecurity. It is now a daily debate in the media but no concrete solution to the problem.

The Nigerian state has failed in its social responsibility to provide security to the populace. The present situation has witnessed an increasing number of varying degrees of state weakness and ineffectiveness; hence the state is unable to deliver basic public good to the people. Fragile involves weak institutions and poor governance, which threaten their existence and that of their neighbors and global security, PPT Peace building Centre (2005) ? Forced migration and displacement population. Therefore, a cursory examination of insurgency in the Northern states revealed a tremendous destruction of lives and properties. Millions of people are living on less than \$1 a day, high level of child mortality and maternal mortality. It becomes impossible to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the Northern States, unless progress can be made to restore peace in the fragile states. Otherwise, with this situation we are gradually getting to the state of anarchy and / or disintegration.

Further, the heightening state of insecurity in Nigeria manifesting in shootings, bombings and the destruction of lives and property has been widely acknowledged globally. The sect has as its main targets the police, police stations, prisons, army barracks, churches, mosque, schools, markets and other public places. Nigerians are not safe in their own country, as a lot of people now sleep with one eye open. The activities of this insurgent sect have in no quantifiable proportion undermined the peace, unity and security of the country. One of the attacks of the group that attracted international opprobrium was the bombing of U.N facility in Abuja. According to Scott, (2012) At first, Boko Haram was involved mostly in fomenting sectarian violence. It's adherents participated in simple attacks on Christians using clubs, machetes and small arms. Boko Haram came to international attention following serious outbreaks of inter-communal violence in 2008 and 2009 that resulted in thousands of deaths. By late 2010, Boko Haram had added Molotov cocktails and simple improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to its tactical repertoire. This tactical advancement was reflected in the series of small IEDs deployed against Christian targets in Jos, Plateau states, on Christmas Eve 2010. Boko Haram conducted a number of armed assaults and small IEDs attacks in early 2011. The IEDs involved in the attacks were either improvised hand grenades constructed by filling soft drinks cans with explosives-which were frequently thrown from motorcycles-or slightly larger device left at the target. This attack had a paradigm shift on June 16,2011, when Boko Haram launched a suicide vehicle-borne improved device (VBIED) attack against the headquarters of the Nigerian national police in Abuja.

He further states that; Boko Haram conducted its second suicide VBIED attack in Abuja on August 26, 2011, this time targeting a U.N. compound in the city's diplomatic district. This attack proved far more deadly because the driver was able to enter the compound and reach a parking garage before detonating his device near the building's entrance. The attack against the U.N. compound also marked a break from Boko Haram's traditional target set of government and Christian facilities. If the intelligence that triggered the warnings of hotel attacks in November 2011 is accurate, it appears the group may also have considered transnational targets at least to the extent of seeking to eliminate involvement by the international community in Nigeria in order to undercut Abuja. This shift in targeting raised concerns that the group's contacts with al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and/or al Shabaab had influenced it.

It also raised fears that due to its rapidly evolving attack capability, Boko Haram now was on a trajectory to become the next jihadist franchise group to become a transnational terrorist threat, following the steps of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the Yemen-based al Qaeda franchise group, (p3).

In his stern reaction to the above, the U.N secretary General Ban Ki-moon, opines that the UN agencies operating in Nigeria include the World Health Organization, the UN development programme, the children's organization, UNICEF, the Office of Drug and Crime, the Joint Program on HIV and AIDS and the Development Fund for Women. The building hit by the attack housed 26 UN humanitarian and development agencies. This point to the fact that Nigeria faces development and security challenges as Boko Haram and its attendant collateral damage have ravaged institution enunciated to garner her development. With all these unpalatable events in recent times, Soyinka observed and correctly too that Nigeria is close to breaking up and its leadership has descended into theatre of the absurd. Nigeria is now a "failed state" where ordinary people's anger has peaked with potentially lethal consequences, (TELL, 2010).

V.

## 8 Conclusion

Now, the seamless spate of bombings, killing and other violent act since the second quarter of 2011 in the Northern part of the country seems to suggest that Nigeria and Nigerians are faced with an insurmountable challenge of insecurity. What started like a childish play has dovetailed into serious national security concern and the government is cut in the web of dilemma on how to deal with the issues.

The paper, therefore, collaborate with Ogunyemi (2012) who opted that to fix the security challenges would require, at the barest minimum that we demonstrate a strong commitment to transparency and accountability in the political process, embrace a vibrant social security programme, and remove safety nets for corrupt and corruptible state officials. The take-off point is demystifying a slogan which is gaining increased popularity within and outside government circles; if you fight corruption, corruption will fight back. But, it may be asked; is there a Nigerian leader So, the emerging threats of violence and potentials for violent attack become more threatening these days because, as a nation, it appears we do not have adequate, meaningful and enduring response. Or is it that Nigeria cannot afford a social security regime or that the Nigerian Leadership does not see the need for it? Imagine the trillions and billions of naira that the elite class swindles in the name of petroleum subsidy on

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a yearly basis. Think of the scam fraud that goes on in our banks, ministries, universities, agencies on a daily basis.

It is on this note the paper advocates for a holistic approach for our leaders to have a change of attitude towards governance and restore the dignity and glory of this nation. We have advocated elsewhere the following panacea; first, the revenue from oil should be channeled into maximum utilization by creating job opportunities for the large unemployed youths. This will address the saying that an idle mind is the devils workshop. Second, socio-economic, political and religious issues should be addressed timely as soon as they arise to forestall their escalation and degeneration beyond control. This view seemed important because the state security agencies claimed they gave early warnings on the formation of Boko Haram but no action; hence, the manifestations of destruction of lives and property. Third, the use of dialogue cannot be undermined if the parties are identified. Meaningful dialogue will lead to positive results. Fourth, the fight against terrorism should be a collective responsibility between African nations, Middle East, European Union and America. This is key because terrorism is a global phenomenon, with modern sophisticated technology for mass destruction, Chuku, Wosu & Amugo (2013). Lastly, the deployment of an effective organized neighborhood watch (NW) in conjunction with the state apparatus will not only acts as a panacea, but will complement the effort of the government in curbing the menace of terrorism.

*[Note: The Yobe Taliban emerged around 2002. The group, on emergence, decided to call itself Al Sunna Wal Jamma, which in Arabic language is literally translated as "follower of Prophet Mohammed teaching",?. Security report had it that the group was also engaged in covert military training and warfare, (The Guardian, July 6 2011).]*

Figure 1:

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<sup>2</sup>Boko Haram Insurgency and National Security Challenges in Nigeria: An Analysis of a Failed State

## 8 CONCLUSION

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5/5/2011	Maduguri Government Borno State	1 killed
12/6/2011	house Borno State Bulumkutu Maiduguri	4 killed
9/5/2011	Marri Borno State & Bulabul	2 killed
16/6/2011	wards Maiduguri, Borno Dambon town, (Islamic 4 killed	
	state and Benchi, State Maiduguri Borno State clerics) 1	
Vol-DATE	PLACE OF ATTACK Nigeria police Londi chnki, Maiduguri headquarter Abuja Borno St	
XIV16/6/2011		
Is- 13/5/2011		
sue 20/6/2011		
VII 15/5/2011		
Ver-26/7/2009		
sion29/5/2011		
I 27/7/2009		
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C 29/7/2009		
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C 2010		
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VII 28/1/2011		
Ver-2/3/2011		
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I 1/4/2011		
14 2/4/2011		
16 8/4/2011		
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1/6/2011		
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6/1/2012		
5/1/2012		
4/1/2012		
29/5/2011		
1		
12/6/2011		
16/6/2011		
20/6/2011		
3/7/2011		
9/7/2011		
11/7/2011		
15/7/2011		
23/7/2011		

24/1/2012	Kano	-	-	2 members	killed and a policeman	Local Government
26/1/2012	Sabon-gari, Kano State.	-	-	-		Many millions station Many injured.
27/1/2012	Kaduna	Mandawan	-	1 policeman	4	sect Many
28/1/2012	Kaduna		-	1 police		-
28/1/2012	Maiduguri		-	-	11	1
29/1/2012	Kano		2			
30/1/2012	Bornu		4	2 Airforce	-	Many
6/2/2012	Bormu/Maiduguri		-	-	12	thousands
7/2/2012	One division Nigerian		-	4 soldiers	1	Few Many
14/2/2012	Army Kaduna		-	1		2
15/2/2012	Kaduna (2 diff attacks)		-	1		
15/2/2012	Kogi, Prison	Kotokarfe	-	1 warder	Freed sech members	May
19/2/2012	Niger State		-	-		5 people buildings
23/2/2012	Kano /		-	4 policemen		2
-	Muna Niger State		-	2		1
26/2/2012	Jos (COCIN)		8	-	-	38
26/2/2012	Adamawa		-	3 police men		4
27/2/2012	Bauchi State		-	3 police men		Few
27/2/2012	Maiduguri		5	1	custom-	Bank Few
7/3/2012	Maiduguri		5	officer	-	Few
7/3/2012	Funakaye LGA Gomba State		-	4 policemen	-	-
8/3/2012	Sokoto		2	-	-	-
				foreigners		
				Briton		
				Italian		
11/3/2012	Jos		11	-	4	More
12/3/2012	Adamawa State		2	2	7	than 30
13/3/2012	Kano		-	2	1	Few
		7		They are:		-
				? Weak and declining economic growth		-Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and human Index (HDI);



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