

Activities of the Boko Haram Sect as Threat to Nigeria Security

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Abstract: *Since 2009 when Boko Haram was dispersed by a military operation in Borno State and its founder, Yusuf Mohammed killed, the sect has launched untiring violent attacks on security agents, civilians, personnel and any imaginary opponents of its insidious teaching. More than a thousand people have since been killed by the sect members. The painful thing is that the security agencies have failed woefully to prevent this outright incidence from a local fringe sect, to its current ascendancy as an affiliate of Al-Qaeda. While the political leaders and security agents remained perturbed in the politics of denial, the international terror network has begun pulling the country to its hall of infamy as far back as 2003 when Osama bin Laden reportedly declared that Nigeria was ripe for Jihad. Thus, the study explained acts of terrorism as well as addressed the activities of the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria and its impacts. Secondary source from published books, magazines, newspapers and internet materials were basically used and inferences drawn qualitatively for the study. The activities of the Boko Haram had posed great challenges as well as negative impacts on the nation. However, there have been so diversions of resources into internal security duties of the country. This has led to the rapid increase in internal security budgets which depicts no sign of abating and the private security industry is tremendously involving itself in internal security type operations. Nigeria's security agencies should redouble their efforts to make Nigeria safer than it is now. Also, the security agents should be well equipped in order to confront these insurgent groups in the country.*

Keywords: Terrorism, security, national security, Boko Haram, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Terrorism and counter-insurgency have become global concepts no doubt, but not many nations have witnessed the kamikaze act of suicide bombings as been experience in some parts of northern Nigeria. It is regrettable however, that terrorism has given Nigeria a bad publicity. Without mincing words, Nigeria is already part of the PAIN countries (that is, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Nigeria) where polio virus still holds its sway. Yet, the country has added to the acronym of PAINS countries (that is, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Somalia) where suicide bombings have evolved and have been classified as terrorist nations. This may not be the best time for any citizens of Nigeria, either at home or in Diaspora. Boko Haram, an Islamic sect, which frowns at any form of western education, has become a thorn in the flesh of not only the federal government, but the whole nation. From hatching and executing local violent attacks within some states in the north, the group has demonstrated unusual resilience as an emerging threat to the sovereignty of the Nigeria Republic. The group's members have dared powerful institutions and personalities, using a suicide approach believed by many to be a globally dreadful method and unfamiliar in the history of Nigeria.

Terrorism is mostly considered as a threat or use of physical coercion, primarily against non combatants, mainly innocent civilians, to create fear in order to achieve various political objectives (Jenkins, 1995) [1]. The definition of the concept is controversial and ambiguous to individuals, groups as well as states. However, since World War II, guerrilla warfare together with terrorism by diverse insurgent groups (that is, a rebel in a group involved in an uprising against authority or leadership) has spread extensively. For instance, between 1969 and 1985, the number of major international terrorist incidents alone increased from two hundred to

about eight hundred per year, leaving more and more people afraid and polarised in their opinions (Audu, 2011:16) [2].

All over the world, terrorism reinvents itself in new and more dangerous forms. As older groups are defeated or exhausted, more radical and more violent successors often take their place. According to military historians (quoted in the Punch Newspaper, Tuesday June 21, 2011:16)³, the scenario of insurgencies over the years have usually followed this pattern. First, the building up of cells, subversive operations such as strikes, demonstrations and riots; insurgency with attacks by bombs and guns on persons and property; as more sympathisers are gained, groups take control of parts of the country and finally, outright civil war followed by the collapse of the government, or the governments fall without civil war. As a matter of fact, nobody wants to associate himself/herself, group with actions of terrorism. Thus, groups that are involved in terrorist acts rather regard themselves as freedom fighters. But the contradiction between terrorists and freedom fighters is a false one since the term freedom fighter has to do with ends while terrorism connotes the means of achieving this goal. Therefore, one can be a freedom fighter who uses terrorism to achieve his purposes.

On the contrary, apart from Korea, most military operations since 1945 have been reactions to the guerrilla, the insurgent or the terrorist. This entails how unavoidable in the modern age, these major actors and the war they proclaim have become. In discussing guerrilla, insurgency and terrorism as types of warfare, one should note that their campaigns are more likely to continue since it is the only form of war that suits the conditions of recent time, while being at the same time well suited to take merit of social discontent, racial ferment and nationalist fervors.

In recent times, the terrorist group operating in some states in the northern part of the country has threatened the Nigeria nascent democracy and a lot of efforts, both physical and personal resources have been directed towards resolving it but to no avail. Their activities have significant impacts on the nation. This work therefore, discussed the activities of this terrorist group often refer to as *Jama'atul Ahlus Sunnati lidda'awati wal jihad* (aka Boko Haram) meaning 'western education is wrong' and its impact on the nation. The work is therefore, divided into different parts (sections) which consist of introduction, clarification of related terms, brief history of the sect, activities of Boko Haram, timelines of attacks, its impacts, recommendations and conclusion.

2. Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the activities of the Boko Haram insurgency to National security in Nigeria. Furthermore, the research will provide a conceptual framework that will clarify the problems of insecurity and identify the gaps in the field of this research. Thus, the study is intended to establish how Boko Haram terrorism has exacerbated threat to Nigeria's National Security and development.

3. Significance of the Study

This study will stimulate further research by other scholars who might be interested in this area of study. Furthermore, it will explore fresh options to contain the spread of terrorism; sectarian violence, religious intolerance, and Islamic fundamentalism in the northern region in particular and Nigeria in general. The research will also serve as a good source of information by Nigerian policy makers, security agencies, and professionals in humanitarian and conflict management.

4. Scope of the Study

As indicated in the topic, this study involved the activities of the Boko Haram sect in some states in the northern part of the country, Nigeria. The study covered the period between 2009 and 2013.

5. Methodology

The study adopted the analytic cum historical research design. Data were collected through secondary sources. The source included published books, journals and internet materials among others.

6. Clarification of Concepts/Literature Review

6.1 What is Terrorism?

Terrorism as a concept does not accede to a universal definition as it evades definition due to its complexity and bastardized usage. According to Jenkins (1995:27) [4] the term terrorism has been the most promiscuously used term in recent times. In conformity with the above statement, the centre for non-proliferation studies (www.ict.org) [5] argued that governments use it while describing their foes and avoid

it when describing allies. Its complexity again reflects in the popular maxim that 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter'. Thus, a lot of relativity is embedded in an adequate comprehension of the term.

Etymologically, 'terror', the root word of terrorism has its origin in the Latin verb '*terrice*' which means 'to frighten'. According to James Poland, a professor of criminal Justice, terrorism is the premeditated, deliberate, systematic murder, mayhem and threatening of the innocent to create fear and intimidation in order to gain a political or tactical advantage, usually to influence an audience (www.cfr-usa.org) [6]. This definition's emphasis on the premeditation and systematisation of terrorism unfolds it as an entirely rational which is at the same time, an act. The definition has some defects despite its purpose of gaining political merits as it lists features like the creation of fear. The author's assessment of terrorism as being meant to influence an audience gives the hint that terrorism is only perpetrated by sub-national groups. White (2002) [7] see terrorism as violence or threatened violence intended to create fear or change. In essence, every violent action produces fear and change which is of thinking and the status quo at other times.

The Nigeria Anti-Terrorism Prevention Act describes terrorism as an attack upon a person's life, which may cause bodily harm or death, kidnappings as well as the destruction of government facilities or private properties in a manner likely to endanger human life or result in a major economic loss (Anti-Terrorism Prevention Act, 2011 cited in Umukoro 2011:52) [8]. The anti-terrorism Act therefore prescribes measures for the prevention, prohibition and combating of acts of terrorism and its financing. It also provides for the effective implementation of the convention on the prevention and combating of terrorism as well as the convention on the suppression of the financing of terrorism and therefore, prescribes penalties for the violation of its provisions.

6.2 The Concept 'Security'

Security in a general sense is regarded as freedom from characteristics which generate uneasiness for human beings as well as animals. Some of these characteristics include fear, violence, war, threat and hostility to mention but a few. However, safety is the most outstanding of all the derivatives of security in its fundamental source. Thus, Nwoli (2012:12) [9] concluded that whoever talks security, talks safety, and whoever talks safety talks survival. Security should therefore not only be seen as the prima value for every person, group, nation and the entire world, but also, the most sacred and ultimate values as well as the values that consider every other value. Zabadi (2001 cited in Nwoli) [10] stated that unless one can be assured of his physical security or safety, everything else will be meaningless. Nwoli quoted Imobighe saying that, without security, individuals within a state will find it difficult to engage in productive activities. Similarly, without security, the state is bound to experience great difficulty in harnessing its human and material resources towards meaningful development and the promotion of the general well being of the people (Imobighe 2001 quoted in Nwoli 2012:12) [11].

It is from the above that the concept 'National Security' derived its meaning. In essence, national security was made, according to Nwolise (2012) [12], a mono-variable concept which was simply about the protection of the territorial integrity, preservation of sovereignty and survival of the state. National security was thus perceived as state good. Scholars such as John Mroz (1991) [13] defined security as the relative freedom from harmful threats while Ian Bellany regarded it as relative freedom from war, coupled with a relative high expectation that defeat will not be an outcome of any war that should occur (Ian, quoted in Nwolise 2010:157) [14]. In conformity with the above, Walter Lippman (quoted in Imobighe 1998:14) [15] opined that national security rises and falls with the ability of a nation to deter an attack or defeat it.

7. Discussion

7. 1 A Brief Historical Background of the Boko Haram Sect in Nigeria

According to Gargon and Bean (2012) [16] the Boko Haram sect has been in existence under various names since 1995. Boko Haram, 'which means westernization is forbidden', also known as '*Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-jihad*', translated in Arabic to mean "people committed to the propagation of the prophet's teachings and jihad" was founded by a group of Islamic fundamentalists known as 'the Sahaba' and their leader was Abubakar Lawan (Forest, 2012) [17]. When Abubakar Lawan went to Medina University for further studies, a committee of Shaykhs appointed Mohammed Yusuf, a native of Girgir village in Yobe State, to be the group new leader. In essence, the sect started in Yobe State from where it spread to other parts of the north such as Borno, Kaduna, Adamawa, Gombe among others with its headquarters at Kanamma in Borno State. This movement did not gain public recognition until 2009 when it wanted to free itself from the burden of corruption in Borno State by creating its own government and territorial boundaries within which it could practice its own religious and political ideology. Ademowo and Ojo (2012:9) [18] stated that by 2009, more than 54,000 followers have been recruited by this group from different parts of the northern states. According to Gargon and Bean (2012) [19] their targets were mostly the uneducated, poverty stricken youths between the ages of 11 and 40 pretending to expose them to Islamic teachings and doctrines.

In recruiting its followers, Yusuf urged the wealthy and the rich politicians and businessmen to donate generously for weapons and food for the poor in order for them to share in the divine vision of the group. He also encouraged them to exercise their religious membership by surrendering themselves to the achievement of the group's objectives. Gargon and Bean went further to state that the group attacked several police stations in January, 2004 and carted away police arms and ammunitions to create their own arsenal. Unfortunately, Yusuf Mohammed was arrested and allegedly killed on July, 2009 after he was captured by the army and handed over to the police in Maiduguri. Since then till date, the Boko Haram sect has become a thorn in the flesh of the Nigerian State.

7.2 A Timeline of Some Key Attacks by the Boko Haram Sect in Nigeria, 2003 To 2012

It is fundamental for us to have an insight for a broader knowledge of the activities of this radical sect through a chronology of attacks perpetuated by the sect since 2003 in order to establish the enormous challenges pose by the activities of the Boko Haram to Nigeria's National Security.

23-31 December, 2003: A group of about 200 Boko Haram militants launched attacks on police stations in the towns of Kanamma and Geidam in Yobe State from their enclave outside Kanamma on the Nigerian border with Niger. Boko Haram had killed several policemen and requisitioned police weapons and vehicles. Following the deployment of military troops to contain the insurrection, 18 Boko Haram members were killed and others were arrested (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [20].

June, 2004: Four members of Boko Haram were killed by prison guards in a foiled jail break in Yobe State capital, Damaturu (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [21].

07 January, 2004: Seven members of Boko Haram killed and three others arrested by a team of local vigilantes outside the town of Damboa, Borno State, near the border with Chad. Bags containing AK-47 rifles were recovered from sect members (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [22].

23 September, 2004: Boko Haram militia attacked police stations in the towns of Gwoza and Bama in Borno State, killing four policemen and two civilians. They escaped to the Mandara Mountains along the Nigeria-Cameroon border. Soldiers and two gunships were deployed in the mountains and after two days of battle, 27 sect members were killed while the rest slipped away. Five Boko Haram members who crossed into Cameroon were arrested by Cameroonian gendarmes who had been alerted by Nigerian authorities. The five were deported and handed over to Nigerian authorities (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [23].

10 October, 2004: Boko Haram gunmen attacked a convoy of 60 policemen in an ambush near the town of Kala-Balge on the border with Chad. The militants took 12 policemen hostage and police authorities presumed they were killed by the gunmen because all attempts to trace them failed (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [24].

2005-2008 Boko Haram went underground, reducing its attacks and focusing on recruiting new members and shoring up resources (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [25].

26 July, 2009: Boko Haram launched a short-lived uprising in parts of the north, which was quelled by a military crackdown that left more than 800 dead - mostly sect members, including Boko Haram leader Mohammed Yusuf. A mosque in the capital of Borno State, Maiduguri, that served as a sect headquarters was burned down (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [26].

7 September, 2010: A group of Boko Haram gunmen freed over 700 inmates including around 100 sect members from a prison in Bauchi. Four people including a soldier, one

policeman and two residents were killed in the raid (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10; Militant Leadership Monitor 2012:3) [27].

24 and 27 December, 2010: A series of attacks claimed by Boko Haram in the central city of Jos and Maiduguri killed at least 86 (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10; Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [28].

31 December, 2010: A group of Boko Haram attacked mammy market at army Mogadishu Barracks, Abuja and 11 people were reported dead (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [29].

03 January, 2011: A group of Boko Haram gunmen attacked police station in Maiduguri and killed a police officer (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [30].

28 January, 2011: Suspected Boko Haram gunmen shot dead in Maiduguri, governorship candidate of the ruling All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in Borno State, his brother and four police officers (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [31].

15 February, 2011: Suspected members of Boko Haram attacked a church building in Maiduguri killing some worshipers (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [32].

20 February, 2011: A group of Boko Haram attacked police squad in Maiduguri killing one police officer (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [33].

23 February, 2011: Attacked on police station and people in Maiduguri killing one person (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [34].

28 February, 2011: Members of the Boko Haram attacked police station in Maiduguri killing two policemen (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [35].

13 March, 2011: Suspected members of the dreaded Boko Haram attacked a Muslim cleric in Maiduguri (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [36].

27 March, 2011: Suspected members of Boko Haram attacked and killed one politician in Maiduguri (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [37].

09 March, 2011: A group of Boko Haram carried out bomb attack in Maiduguri killing one and injured several people (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [38].

01 April, 2011: Suspected Boko Haram members attacked a police station in Bauchi (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [39].

08 April, 2011: A twin bomb explosion in Niger and Kaduna States on the eve of the botched April 9 2011 National Assembly general elections which reportedly claimed lives of several National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) who were serving their father's land (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [40].

09 April, 2011: Another bomb explosion in a polling unit in Maiduguri near Monday market which left the suicide bomber dead (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [41].

15 April, 2011: The Maiduguri office of the Independent National Electoral Commission was bombed and several people were shot in a separate incident on the same day (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [42].

20 April, 2011: Boko Haram killed a Muslim cleric and ambushed several police officers in Maiduguri (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [43].

22 April, 2011: Boko Haram freed 14 prisoners during a jail break in Yola, Adamawa State (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [44].

24 April, 2011: Bomb attack on a hotel building in Maiduguri killing three people (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012:18) [45].

09 May, 2011: Boko Haram rejected an offer for amnesty made by the governor elect of Borno State, Kashim Shetima (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [46].

17 May, 2011: Boko Haram attacked people in Maiduguri and one person was reported dead (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012:18) [47].

29 May, 2011: Boko Haram sect carried out a spate of bomb attacks in Bauchi and Maiduguri and 15 people were reported dead (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [48].

30 May, 2011: Suspected Boko Haram carried out bomb blast in Bauchi where sixteen people were killed and almost twenty five injured (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012:18) [49].

31 May 2011: Boko Haram carried out bomb blast in Bauchi and one person was killed (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012:18) [50].

27 May, 2011: A group of around 70 suspected Boko Haram gunmen killed eight people including four policemen in simultaneous gun and bomb attacks on a police station, a police barracks and a bank in Damboa, Borno State, near the border with Chad (Militant Leadership Monitor 2012:3) [51].

29 May, 2011: Three bombs ripped through a beer garden in a military barracks in the northern city of Bauchi, killing 13 and wounding 33 others. Boko Haram claimed responsibility (Militant Leadership Monitor 2012:3) [52].

01 June, 2011: Sheu of Borno's brother, Abba El-Kanemi, killed by the Boko Haram group (Punch Friday, June 17 2011:10) [53].

6 June, 2011: Muslim cleric Ibrahim Birkuti, critic of Boko Haram, was shot dead by two motorcycle-riding Boko Haram gunmen outside his house in Biu, 200km from Maiduguri (Militant Leadership Monitor 2012:3) [54].

07 June, 2011: Attacks on a church and two police posts in Maiduguri, blamed on the sect, left at least 14 dead (Militant Leadership Monitor 2012:3) [55].

16 June, 2011: Boko Haram targets national police headquarters in Abuja, killing two (Militant Leadership Monitor 2012:3) [56].

20 June, 2011: Seven people including five policemen killed in gun and bomb attacks on a police station and a bank in Kankara, Katsina State (Militant Leadership Monitor 2012:3) [57].

27 June, 2011: Boko Haram's gun and bomb attack on a beer garden in Maiduguri left at least 25 dead and dozens injured (Militant Leadership Monitor 2012:3) [58].

03 July, 2011: Gun shots in Maiduguri and seven people were killed (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012:19) [59].

06 July, 2011: Bomb blast in Maiduguri affecting buildings, vehicles and people and about seven people were killed (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012:19) [60].

25 August, 2011: Gun and bomb attacks by Boko Haram on two police stations and two banks in Gombi, Adamawa State, killed at least 16 people, including seven policemen (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:2) [61].

26 August, 2011: Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a suicide bomb blast on the UN compound in Abuja, killing 23 people and almost 116 others sustained injuries of varying degrees (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [62].

01 September, 2011: A shootout between Boko Haram gunmen and soldiers in Song, Adamawa State, killed one sect member while another was injured and captured (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [63].

04 September, 2011: Muslim cleric Malam Dala shot dead by two Boko Haram members outside his home in the Zinnari area of Maiduguri (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [64].

12 September, 2011: Seven men including four policemen were killed by Boko Haram gunmen in bomb and shooting attacks on a police station and a bank in Misau, Bauchi State (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [65].

13 September, 2011: Four soldiers shot and wounded in an ambush by Boko Haram members in Maiduguri shortly after the arrest of 15 sect members in military raids on Boko Haram hideouts in the city (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [66].

17 September, 2011: Babakura Fugu, brother-in-law of Boko Haram leader, Mohammed Yusuf, was shot dead outside his house in Maiduguri by two members of the sect, two days after attending a peace meeting with Nigeria's ex President Olusegun Obasanjo in the city (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [67].

01 October, 2011: A butcher and his assistant were killed by Boko Haram gunmen at Baga market in Maiduguri in a targeted killing (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [68].

03 October, 2011: Three killed in Boko Haram attacks on Baga market in Maiduguri, Borno State. The victims include a tea-seller, a drug store owner and a passer-by (Militant Leadership Monitor 2012:3) [69].

04 November, 2011: A car bomb exploded outside a building used by Nigeria's military in Damaturu in northeastern Yobe State. The bomb was part of a series of attacks on churches and mosques in Damaturu. The number of casualties from the coordinated assault was not immediately clear, although dozens were presumed dead (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [70].

04 November, 2011: Suicide bombers attacked a military base in Maiduguri, Borno State. Authorities suspected that Boko Haram was behind the violence. The numbers of Casualties were not immediately known (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [71].

13 November, 2011: Algeria's deputy foreign minister said that intelligence reports showed coordination between Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Boko Haram (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [72].

24 November, 2011: A spokesman for Boko Haram claimed to "have links with al-Qaeda...They assist us and we assist them (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [73].

25 December, 2011: A Christmas Day bomb attacks at St. Theresa Catholic Church, Mandalla, Niger State, killing at least 40 people. Boko Haram claimed responsibility (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [74].

18 January, 2012: Gunmen from the Boko Haram sect attacked an army outpost in Borno State, killing two people in the attacks. Eye witnesses said a soldier and a Hospital worker were killed (Militant Leadership Monitor, 2012:3) [75].

20 January, 2012: More than 150 people were killed in bomb attacks and gun battles in Kano in the deadliest single-day strikes ever claimed by Boko Haram (Militant Leadership Monitor 2012:3) [76].

08 February, 2012: Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing at the Army headquarters in Kaduna (Wikipedia, 2012) [77].

16 February, 2012: Another prison jailbreak staged in central Nigeria; 119 prisoners were released, one warder killed (Wikipedia, 2012) [78].

08 March, 2012: During a British hostage rescue attempt to free Italian engineer Franco Lamolinara and Briton Christopher McManus, abducted in 2011 by a splinter group Boko Haram, both hostages were killed (Wikipedia, 2012) [79].

08 April, 2012 (Easter Day Bombing): A car bomb exploded near a church in Kaduna, central Nigeria, where worshippers were celebrating Easter Sunday; in an attack blamed on Boko Haram (Wikipedia, 2012) [80].

21 April, Saturday, 2012: Gunmen suspected to be Boko Haram members, at the weekend, shot dead a soldier allegedly attached to 3 Brigade of the Nigerian Army Kano. He was gunned down at the Sharada Industrial Estate on the outskirts of Kano, where the Boko Haram militants killed a civilian two days earlier (Oyelere, 2012) [81].

26 April, 2012 Suspected members of the *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad* sect also known as Boko Haram attacked three media houses This Day, The Sun and The Moment newspapers in Abuja and Kaduna, killing six persons and injuring many others (Adepegba *et al*, 2012) [82].

29 April, 2012: Gunmen attacked a church building in Bayero University, Kano and fifteen people were reported dead (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012:20) [83].

30 April, 2012: Suspected members of Boko Haram attacked police convoy in Jalingo Taraba State killing ten people and injured several others (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012) [84].

14 May, 2012: Six policemen were killed by gunmen in separate incidents in Zamfara and Borno States while three other civilians were killed in Tukuntawa area of Kano Municipality. Four policemen who were members of the Joint Task Force, JTF in Zamfara State were reportedly killed yesterday by gunmen in Dansadai district in Maru Local Government Area of the state while two policemen were killed in Mafa town, headquarters of Mafa Local Government Council of Borno State" (Muhammad, Ibrahim, and Marama, 2012) [85].

01 June, 2012: Abductors of a German engineer on Thursday, in Kano, shot and killed the expatriate during a rescue mission spearheaded by men of the Joint Task Force on anti-terrorism. The murdered German, Edgar Fritz Raupach, had been seized since January 26 along the Zaria Road, Kano, by gunmen suspected to be members of a terrorist group (Salihu and Josiah, 2012) [86].

02 June, 2012: No fewer than five persons were killed by gunmen suspected to be members of Boko Haram terrorist group in parts of Maiduguri, the Borno State capital between Thursday 31 May, and Friday, 1st June, 2012 according to spokesman of the Borno State Police Command, Gideon Jibrin (Abiodun, 2012) [87].

16 June, 2012: Suspected Boko Haram members attacked churches in Zaria killing about sixteen and over fifty injured (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012) [88].

20 June, 2012: Gun battle between police and suspected members of Boko Haram in Damaturu, Yobe State left about thirty four people dead while several others were injured (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012) [89].

26 June, 2012: Explosion in police station in Kano left six people dead and others injured (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012) [90].

02 July, 2012: Attack on a Mosque at Bolori area of Kaduna left nine dead (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012) [91].

03 July, 2012: A group of Boko Haram attacked Barex plaza in Wuse-Abuja and one person was reported dead (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012) [92].

27 June, 2012: Gunmen attacked residents of Kano metropolis killing seventeen people and injuring several others (Ademowo and Ojo, 2012) [93].

13 July, 2012: The deputy governor of Borno State, Alhaji Zanna Umar Mustapha, the Shehu of Borno, Alhaji Abubakar Umar Garbai El-Kanemi and other dignitaries narrowly escaped death yesterday when a 15-year old suicide bomber struck at the Shehu's Palace Mosque moments after the Jumat prayers. The Shehu, a hugely popular symbol of Islamic tradition in the North, appeared to be the prime target of the hit man (Abiodun and Ojiabor, 2012) [94].

30 July, 2012: Gunmen early Monday attacked the family residence of the Vice-President Namadi Sambo in Tundun-Wada, Zaria, Kaduna State, injuring the two mobile policemen guarding the house. A cobbler attending to one of the mobile policemen as of the time of the attack was reportedly hit and died on the spot (Salihu and Josiah, 2012) [95].

03 August, 2012: Attempt by a suicide bomber to blow up the Emir of Fika, Yobe State Dr. Muhammadu Abali Ibn Muhammadu Idrissa, failed yesterday after worshippers and the emir's orderly pushed the terrorist away from his target. The suspect was however, killed as the explosive he strapped to his body went off (Joel, 2012) [96].

07 August, 2012: Last night, as the congregation of the Deeper Life Christian Bible Church opposite the Federal College of Education (FCE) in Okene, Kogi State were engrossed in worship, gunmen bearing sophisticated weapons stormed the church covered all entrances and fired sporadically at the worshippers; when the shooting stopped, 16 faithful lay dead, including the pastor of the church (Bashir, and Abiodun, 2012) [97].

20 August, 2012: *Eid-El-Fitr* (An Islamic Feast after Ramadan) celebrations were disrupted in Kano and Plateau States on Sunday after gunshots were heard in Kano metropolis and in Farin Gada, North Jos Local Government, where 12 cars were also destroyed (Owuamanam and Salihu 2012) [98].

03 October, 2012: Attacked on Mubi town, almost 25-46 people were killed.

8. Activities of Boko Haram as Threat to Nigeria Security

The Boko Haram group has been engaging in a bombing campaign against the Nigerian State. The height of this action was the bombing of the Nigeria police headquarters on June 16th, 2011 and the bombing of the United Nations (UN) headquarters on August 26th, 2011 and other several venues of worships, markets, human beings, police stations and security agents in Plateau, Kaduna, Borno, Kano, Bauchi, Adamawa and Yobe to mention but a few.

This group believes that western education has a corrupting influence. Shilgba (2011:65) [99] mentioned the demands of this group if it must cease its operation against the country to include strict implementation of Sharia law in the twelve (12) northern states of Nigeria, release of all its detained members, prosecution of former governor of Borno State, Ali Modu Sheriff (for the extra judicial murder of its leader, Mohammed Yusuf in 2009) and the resignation of the present governor of the state, Kashim Shettima. Shilgba went further to buttress the above points that after the arrest of Mohammed Yusuf in 2009, he was killed in the custody of the police. This led to the accusation on Ali Modu Sheriff by the Boko Haram sect of being the brain behind the killing. This issue raised certain questions such as, why was he (Yusuf) killed? Why has no police been charged to court for the murder since then? Did governor Sheriff instigate his killing in order to hide certain damning information that might have implicated him or is he the invisible financier or one of them?

Since 2009 when Boko Haram was dispersed by a military operation in Borno State and its leader, Yusuf was killed, the sect has launched untiring violent attacks on security agents and other sectors and personnel and any imaginary opponents of its insidious teaching. More than 3000 people have since been killed since then. The painful thing is that the security agencies have failed woefully to prevent this outright incidence from a local fringe sect, to its current ascendancy as an affiliate of Al-Qaeda. While the political leaders and security agents remained unperturbed in the politics of denial, the international terror network has begun pulling the country to its hall of infamy as far back as 2003 when Osama bin Laden reportedly declared that Nigeria was ripe for Jihad.

The Punch editorial of June 23, 2011:18 had this information that, in November 2007, five Islamist militants with suspected links to Al-Qaeda were arrested by the State Security Service (SSS) with three of them charged with training in Algeria with the Salafist group for preaching and combat between 2005 and 2007. According to the editorial report, these men were held for several months then freed on bail and their case never again heard in court. Besides, before Yusuf went berserk in 2009, he was reportedly charged to court in 2006 for receiving money from Al-Qaeda linked organisation. In 2008, the then Inspector General of police, Mike Okiro raised an alarm over threats by Al-Qaeda to launch an attack using time-bombs on Nigeria soil. Also, the United States intelligence warned over three years ago that having politicised religion, the country was a prime target of global terrorist groups. The

US senate intelligence committee in 2008 named Nigeria, alongside Niger Republic, Mali, Chad and Burkina Faso as countries where Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (the African terror franchise) had infiltrated for the purpose of Islamic holy war (jihad).

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb was said to offer Nigerian extremists with training and weapons to battle the Nigerian state. The report states thus:

We are ready to train your people in weapons and give you whatever support we can in men, arms and munitions to enable you to defend your people in Nigeria (Editorial, Punch Newspaper, Thursday June 23, 2011:18) [100].

According to the paper, on October 2, 2010, an Eid address from one Sheikh Muhammed Abu Bakr bin Muhammed ash Shakwa, referred to as the 'Emir of the Sunni group for the Islamic call and Jihad in some African lands known as Nigeria' was posted on jihadist internet forums. He stated that the group was fully committed to carrying out the programme of the prophet and establishing Sharia law in Nigeria. After this, Ibrahim Haman Ahmed, a terrorist suspected to be a member of Al-Qaeda, who was trying to recruit young Nigerian Muslims into the group was arrested in Nigeria and was later extradited to the US for trial. What happened to him after that is beyond history.

Amazingly, as the terror loop was being tightened around Nigerian's neck, the Nigeria authority and security agencies continued to deny the linkage between Boko Haram and the global terror groups. To worsen the situation, when the sect leader in Nigeria, Yusuf and three top leaders were arrested in 2009, instead of interrogating them to unravel their operations, they were extra judicially killed in police custody. Failure to crush the sect has since spread fear and despair in most parts of the northern states.

It could be argued from the above that the activities of Boko Haram foreshadow danger to the peace and unity of the country. Besides, there are more to the actions of the group than religion. My submission corresponds with Odiegwu (2011:8) [101] argument that a few powerful politicians in the north were responsible for importing the group into the country and have resorted to using the sect to destabilize the present administration. This is because the inimical actions of the group have become deadlier, more daring and more alarming since Jonathan became the president of the federal republic of Nigeria. The group demands the overthrow of the state and its replacement with its own narrow interpretation of Islamic law; an idea which majority of other Nigerian Muslims rejects as not been part of the Nigerian Constitution. This is actually a difficult demand to grant beside its wanton killings, arson and lawlessness which no state should tolerate.

Unfortunately, many writers, political analysis commentators to mention but a few, have over the last few months, made the grave mistake of putting the Niger Delta crisis in the same basket with the Boko Haram issues. Others have placed it in the same cage with the Odua People's Congress and Biafra agendas. They are not in any way birds

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