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## COMBATING TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA: AN INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS AGAINST BOKO HARAM

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### **Abstract**

*Security of lives and properties has been considered as fundamental responsibility of government. The attack on Nigerian populace by the Islamist group called 'Boko Haram' has threatened the security of the country. Also, the killing of innocent citizens and foreign investors by 'Boko Haram' sect has called for international collaborations against violent crimes, terrorism and insurgency. The paper argues that poverty, unemployment, weak institutional structure, corruption, proliferation of weapons of war and religious factor are the major causes of terrorism and insurgency. The paper examines the attempts made by Nigerian government as well as international actors towards curbing the menace of terrorism and insurgency. Such domestic measures include the deployment of troops to the affected areas, joint task force by the neighbouring countries, declaration of state of emergency and encouragement of public and media to provide intelligence support. The international actors use economic sanctions to punish the state sponsors of terrorism, the deployment of security assets abroad, the monitoring of the expanding scope and diversity of facilitation networks. It therefore recommends the cutting off of the sources of contact of Boko Haram, an empowerment programme that reduces unemployment, conflict resolution among parties and strict enforcement of law against terrorism.*

**Keywords:** Terrorism; Insurgency; Nigeria; International Collaborations; Boko Haram.

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### **1.0 Introduction**

Prior to September, 11 2001 terrorist attack on United States, terrorism was of minor concern to government, policy makers and academia. The major concern of policy makers during the period bordered on issues like illicit drug abuse, religious and ethnic crises, nuclear proliferation, civil war, etc. However, the past few decades have witnessed terrorist activities in almost all parts of the world and therefore huge resources are invested at both the domestic and international arena to curb terrorism in all over the globe. According to Jackson; Jarvis; Gunning and Breen (2011), terrorism is a major concern of domestic and international policy with truly vast resources in it, but the lives of virtually every person on the planet have been altered in some way by new laws and measures designed to combat it.

Several incidents of terrorism that took place in the 1990s, including the 1993 World Trade Center attack in New York, the 1995 Sarin subway attack in Tokyo, the 1995 Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building bombing in Oklahoma City, the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia, and the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. In the area of international terrorism, the September 11, 2001 attacks were perceived to be the devastating result of the newly developing trends and al-Qaeda as the epitome of a 'new terrorist' organization. It should be noted that several authors who focus on religiously inspired terrorism trace its incipient stages to the

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1980s and to some of the events described by Rapoport as setting the stage for the fourth or religious wave of terrorism (Rapoport, 2004).

In Nigeria, the various acts of violence experienced after independence took a new dimension in 2009 with the emergence of terrorist activities in the Northern part of the country. This act of domestic terrorism which is attributed to an Islamic sect popularly called “Boko Haram” has drawn the attention of Nigerian government and the International Community towards curbing the menace of terrorism. Boko Haram which translates into “western education is forbidden” has an ideology that is based on a fundamentalist Sunni Islam, and their intent is to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria and cleanse the country of any and all Western influence (Uzochukwu, 2014). In an effort to concretize Islamic state in Nigeria, Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for series of bombing, massacres, shooting, abduction and kidnapping in different parts of the country. Notable among these is the car bomb blast on Workers day in Abuja which claimed the lives of 19 people at the bus station. Also, there was the abduction and kidnapping of over 250 Chibok school girls on 15 April 2014.

In spite of the holistic approach that was initially adopted in curbing terrorism in Nigeria, the frequency of occurrence of the incidence of terrorism and insurgency becomes higher, therefore the call for international collaboration against all acts of terrorism and insurgency. Friedlander (1937) observed that international collaboration is needed to curb the menace of terrorism at the global level. This is because every terrorist act has serious implications to the international community. For example, the terrorist attack on World Trade Center on 11 September 2001 led to the killing of nearly 3,000 citizens including British, German, French, Italian and Indians. The assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia and French foreign minister Louis Barthou at Marseilles in 1934 led to France proposing the establishment of an international criminal court to try terrorist criminals. It is against this backdrop that this paper tends to investigate the various strategies employed to combat terrorism and insurgency in Nigeria. The paper is structured into six sections, starting with this introductory part. This is followed by the Literature review. The third section focuses on causes of terrorism and insurgency. Section four discusses Nigerian government attempts at combating terrorism and insurgency. The fifth section considers international collaborations against Boko Haram while conclusion and recommendations are found in the last section.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Conceptual Framework

There are three basic concepts that are central to the title of this paper. These are terrorism, insurgency and Boko Haram. Due to the prevalence of the deadly Islamic sect in Nigeria, the global community tends to perceive the word “Nigeria” as synonymous with “Boko Haram”. It is therefore very important to have a vivid understanding of these three concepts.

Terrorism is defined as the systematic use of violence and intimidation to coerce a government or community into acceding to specific political demands (Pearsall & Trumble, 2006). Article 2 of the draft comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism defined terrorism as:

*any person who commits an offence within the meaning of this Convention if that person, by any means, unlawfully and intentionally, causes: death or serious bodily injury to any person; or serious damage to public or private property, including a place of public use, a state or government facility, a public transportation system, an infrastructure facility or the environment; or damage to property, places, facilities, or systems referred to in paragraph 1 (b) of this article, resulting or likely to result in major economic loss, when the purpose of the conduct, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act (Schmid & Graaf, 1980).*

The United Kingdom legislation as contained in the Terrorism Act (2000) defined terrorism as the use or threat of action where the action falls within subsection, the use or threat is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause. The Act states further that action falls within this subsection if it involves serious violence against a person, involves serious damage to property, endangers a person’s life, other than that of

the person committing the action, creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system (Terrorism Act, 2000).

Insurgency has been defined as an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict (Haviland, 2012). The Counter-Insurgency Initiative (2009) has defined insurgency as the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region. Insurgents seek to subvert or displace the government and completely or partially control the resources and population of a given territory. They do so through the use of force (including guerrilla warfare, terrorism, coercion or intimidation, propaganda, subversion, and political mobilization).

Boko Haram which in general terms, simply means “western education is forbidden” was founded in 2002 in Maiduguri in northeastern Nigeria by a charismatic Muslim cleric, Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf. The sect’s philosophy is rooted in the practice of orthodox Islam, and the group’s official name in Arabic, Jama’atu Ahlissunahlidda ’awatiwal Jihad, translates to “people committed to the propagation of the Prophet’s teachings and Jihad” (Chothia, 2012). Boko Haram is an Islamist movement that is tied to Al-Qaeda and its followers forbid Muslims or its groups to be involved in any political or social activity that is related to western education or ideology. The Islamic sect believes that Nigerian society is so corrupt that it is necessary for a devoted Muslim to migrate to a society that is free from deprivation. Akanji (2009) observes that the goals of Boko Haram are to overthrow the Nigerian government, incite religious tensions by acts of terror and eventually declare an Islamic state in Nigeria.

### 2.1.1 Causes of Terrorism and Insurgency

Scholars have argued that terrorism originates from various sources. It is therefore important to investigate this at both individual and group levels. At the individual level, some experts have distinguished rational, psychological, and cultural origins of terrorism. According to Simonsen and Jeremy (2000) rational terrorists think through their goals and options, making a cost-benefit analysis. Psychological motivation for resorting to terrorism derives from the terrorist’s personal dissatisfaction with his or her life and accomplishments. At the group level, terrorism can grow out of an environment of political activism, when a group’s goal is to redirect a government’s or society’s attention toward the grievances of an activist social movement.

Other causes of terrorism and insurgency include the following:

**Religious motivation:** Hoffman (2006) observed that religion has become the key motivator for several terrorist organizations in Africa. Among the organizations and individuals who have been religiously inspired to adopt terrorist violence, those who espouse a radical interpretation of Islam are predominantly singled out. However, the relevance of extreme-right Christian groups is also underscored. According to Gurr and Cole (2005), the proliferation and significance of religiously motivated terrorist groups is notable in the period of time commonly assigned to the emergence of the new terrorism. Evidence of this claim is supported by trends that refer to the percentage of religiously inspired groups in relation to the total number of terrorist organizations. This literature indicates that numbers grew from less than 4% in 1980 to 42% by the mid-1990s (Lesser; Arquilla; Ronfeldt; Hoffman; Zanini & Jenkins, 1999). Substantiating this, Zalman (2014) opined that religion fanaticism creates conditions that are formidable for terrorism.

**Proliferation of weapons of war:** The availability and the use of weapons of mass destruction and or disruption, namely, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons have continued to fuel terrorism. Some argue that the increasing desensitization of audience caused by media trends have forced terrorists to become more violent and spectacular (Neumann, 2009). A point of divergence from the above analysis was given by Zalman (2014) who believed that terrorist attacks are motivated by social and political injustice. People choose terrorism when they are trying to right what they perceive to be a social or political or historical wrong i.e. when they have been stripped of their land or rights, or denied these.

**Corruption:** The corrupt ridden nature of Nigerian society is found in all sectors of the economy (both private and public). The ruling government has failed to perform its duties because officials are busy amassing wealth at the detriment of the society. The pervasiveness of corruption in Nigeria has made the Transparency International in 2012 to rank Nigeria as one of the most corrupt nations in the world, ranking as 139 most corrupt out of the 176 countries measured.

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**Unemployment:** Terrorist activities sprung up as a result of unemployment. This has become a serious issue in the country and has led to joblessness of our graduates for a long time, frustration sets in and this encourages them to involve in activities that are detrimental to the society. The high rate of unemployment in Nigeria in 2014 led to the untimely death of 16 job seekers who were stampede when 500,000 unemployed youths rushed to apply for about 5000 vacancies at the Nigeria Immigration Service. The World Bank estimated in 2014 that about 80% of people under 24 are unemployed.

**Poverty:** The vicious cycle of poverty continues to ravage the Nigerian society to the extent that majority of the citizens cannot afford three square meals per day. Campbell and Bunche (2011) rightly put it that the living standards for the majority of Nigerians have slightly changed since 1970. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2012), 25% of the total population of Nigerians in 1980 lived in poverty and this has increased to 72% in 2010.

**Weak institutional structure:** The institutional structure that are put in place in all the three levels of government in Nigeria are so weak that policy formulated are haphazardly executed, therefore, government cannot provide the society with public goods and this qualifies Nigeria to be regarded as a weak state. According to Wyler (2007), the term “weak state” describes states whose governments have weakened to an extent that they are unable to provide basic public goods such as security, health care, and legitimate in situ for their people. The weak structure of Nigeria state has made it difficult for government to deal with natural disasters and violent upsurge.

### **2.1.2 Nigerian Government Attempts at Combating Terrorism and Insurgency**

Since the inception of terrorism and insurgency in Nigeria, government has developed various strategies towards curbing the activities of Boko Haram. First is the use of brute military force against insurgent groups and deployment of over 8000 troops into affected parts of northern Nigeria, but with no clearly defined Military Code of Justice for the operation. For example, the invasion of and killing in the Baga community in Borno state on Sunday, April 21, 2013 by Nigerian soldiers. The Nigerian soldiers in a single operation killed over 200 civilians suspected to be members of Boko Haram in the aftermath of an attack (Akande, 2013). In the recent time, the federal government deployed the specially trained anti-terrorism combat squad to the terrorist zones in order to suppress the activities of Boko Haram (Okupe, 2015). Second is the acquisition and development of more sophisticated, adequate and appropriate military hardware and the recent approval by the African Union and the violations of a broad-based international coalition to collaborate with our military. Third is the approval given by the international bodies that give authority to neighbouring countries (Chad, Niger and Cameroon) to lawfully deploy troops on Nigerian soil. Nigerian military also operate beyond borders to hunt fleeing terrorists, thus removing their safe haven. Fourth is the declaration of a state of emergency in the three most affected northern states, namely Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe. Although, the absence of a specific Military Code of Justice to clearly identify intended targets and protect civilians has further increased the number of casualties in Northern Nigeria. Fifth is that government encourages both public and media support to provide intelligence regarding terrorist groups or their activities.

### **2.1.3 International Collaborations against Boko Haram**

Most modern terrorism has international outlook and this has called for international dimension towards curbing terrorism. International collaborations against Boko Haram have taken the form of international support for Nigerian government which aimed at putting an end to terrorism. This support is in form of manpower, fund, intelligence, arms and ammunitions (Mishal & Sela, 2000). Terrorism can be curtailed by cutting off their sources of contact and identify their sources of supply of arms and basic essential to terrorists. Counter terrorism strategies as per US government are effective democracy, denying of weapons, and sanctuaries of rogue states, building institutional structures, control of base and landing pads of terrorists. For government, effective use of resources (power, military, land reforms, finance, external alliances and hierarchical structure of organization) determines their countering success (Baylis; Wirtz & Colin, 2006). There are series of international legal measures at global, regional and bilateral levels aimed at facilitating and strengthening international cooperation against such activities as aircraft hijacking, attacks on open source etc.

The U.S. intelligence community is “monitoring the expanding scope and diversity of ‘facilitation networks,’ which include semi-legitimate travel experts, attorneys, and other types of professionals, as well as

corrupt officials, who provide support services to criminal and terrorist groups. In addition, repressive responses in form of covert operations which are secretive operations that include a number of possible counter terrorist measures, such as infiltration, disinformation, and cyber war. Nonviolent covert programs require creative and imaginative methods that are adapted to each terrorist environment. The international community also employs economic sanctions to punish or disrupt state sponsors of terrorism. Sanctions can either selectively target specific economic sector or generally restrict trade. The purpose is to pressure state sponsors to modify or end their support for terrorism. Lastly is the deployment of security assets abroad, these deployments can include ground, air, or naval forces in large or very small operational configurations (Martin, 2010)

## 2.2 Theoretical Orientation

In policy analysis and academic disciplines, social conditions tend to affect people or group access to social services, equal fundamental human rights, liberty, and protection of lives and properties. Applying structural theory to the context of terrorism and insurgency, Barkan and Snowden observed that:

*Structural theories of revolution emphasize that weaknesses in state structures encourage the potential for revolution..... According to this view, a government beset by problems such as economic and military crises is vulnerable to challenges by insurgent forces. Other governments run into trouble when their...policies alienate and even anger elites within the society (Barkan & Snowden, 1986).*

Expanding further on this theory Barkan and Snowden (1986) argues that the state is the key actor in structural theories of revolution. Its status is the precipitating factor for popular revolutions. Popular discontent, the alienation of elites, and a pervasive crisis are the central ingredients for bringing a society to the brink of revolution. The most prominent thinkers of structural theory are Levi-Strauss, Roman Jakobson and Jacques Lacan. The proponents argue that a specific domain of culture may be understood by means of structure that is distinct both from the organizations of reality and those of ideas (Deleuze, 2002).

The structural theory assumption is that behavior and structure are intertwined. In this case, people go through a socialization process and become dependent of the existing social structures, but at the same time social structures are being altered by their activities. This means that social structures are the medium of human activities as well as the result of those activities (Giddens, 1984). Giddens' main claim for this theory is that it draws together two principal strands of social thinking. In the structural tradition, the emphasis is on structure whereas in the phenomenological tradition the human agent is the primary focus (Ross, 1999).

However for the purpose of this study, relative deprivation would be adopted. Relative deprivation theory holds that "feelings of deprivation and frustration underlie individual decisions to engage in collective action" (Grenshaw, 1981). Relative deprivation theory is attributed to a sociologist, Samuel A. Stouffer. In the words of Turner (1990), Stouffer's work on relative deprivation theory is representative of the shift in sociology from a focus on social reform to theory. Turner added that sociologists use relative deprivation theory to explain the origins of social movements. Social movements refer to a deliberate voluntary effort to organize individuals who act in concert to achieve group influence and make or block changes.

The central idea of relative deprivation theory suggests that individuals or groups feel deprived when their current circumstances are negatively compared to the situation of others. In sociology, relative deprivation theory is a view of social change and movements according to which people take action for social change in order to acquire something (for example, opportunities, status and wealth) that others possess and which they believe they should have, too. This condition can engender political violence. One observation that must be made about relative deprivation theory is that it has become a popular theory among experts. However, scholars have questioned the link between relative deprivation and social movements. According to Morrison (1971), much of evidence linking social movements to feelings of relative deprivation is indirect. While absolute deprivation clearly leads to feelings of discontent and ultimately efforts to effect social change, feelings of relative deprivation may or may not definitely lead to

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the creation of social movement and collective identity. Another limitation of relative deprivation theory is that it does not focus on the individual. Critics assert that sociologists using relative deprivation tend to examine individual and collective relative deprivation but ignore self-references (Singer, 1992).

### 2.3 Empirical Evidence

Terrorism and insurgency in Nigeria started with an Islamist fundamentalist, Boko Haram who regarded western education as forbidden. The first attack of Boko Haram came in September 2010 in the Northern part of the country where many lives were lost and properties worth millions were damaged. Band (2005) stressed that insurgency unleashed a wave of violence in northern Nigeria, mostly targeted against government personnel and security officers, Muslim politicians and traditional Muslim religious leaders, and Christians.

Since August 2011, there have been increasing signs of international collaboration between Boko Haram and militants outside Nigerian territory, such as in Borno State's border region, northern Mali, the Sahel, Somalia and other countries in the Muslim world. As a result of these international connections, Boko Haram, which in 2009 was known as a "machete-wielding mob," has now matched and even exceeded the capabilities of some al-Qaida affiliates, while also incorporating al-Qaida ideology into the locally driven motives for the insurgency in northern Nigeria (Zenn, 2013). For example, in Mali 100 Boko Haram militants reinforced MUJAO's positions in the battle for Gao and that Boko Haram helped MUJAO raid the Algerian consulate in Gao and kidnap the vice-consul, who was executed by MUJAO on September 2, 2012, and that Boko Haram supported MUJAO, AQIM and AnsarEddine in their January 8, 2013, attack on Kona, central Mopti region.

On May 1, 2014, a car bomb blast in Abuja killed at least 19 people at a bus station. The summer of 2014 has been especially violent, with bombings, massacres, and mass shootings being committed on a near weekly basis. In July 2014, Human Rights Watch estimated that 2,053 people had been killed in 95 separate Boko Haram linked attacks in the first half of 2014 alone, and the number is likely much higher by now (Uzochukwu, 2014). The unprecedented activities of Boko Haram may not be unconnected with the porous nature of our borders which has made them to take advantage of countries like Chad, Niger and Cameroon as places of settlement, training, transit, attack planning and recruitment. Boko Haram appears to have a "diplomatic" presence in Saudi Arabia, in addition to other militant connections. In August 2012, a Boko Haram faction led by Abu Muhammed negotiated in Mecca with a Nigerian government team led by National Security Adviser Sambo Dasuki and advised by General Muhammed Shuwa. President Jonathan has rejected new talks with this faction, however, on the ground that "there can be no dialogue" with Boko Haram because it is "faceless" (Singer, 1992).

In Iraq, Al Qaida has been heavily involved in fomenting violence between various sects and ethnic groups. In that latter role, and unlike insurgencies, it works against the local population and thus cannot look to locals for any sort of support. The reality of that sort of terrorism, whether directed against the local population, the local government, or a foreign occupier, is that it is a movement that lacks local support. That makes dealing with terrorism significantly more straightforward than dealing with insurgencies and explains why terrorist movements are considerably shorter-lived and less successful than insurgencies (Wilkinson, 2006).

### 3.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper examined terrorism and insurgency in Nigeria as well as attempts made by Nigerian government and international communities towards curbing terrorism and insurgency. The conclusions that may be drawn include: First, there is a difference between terrorism and insurgency. Terrorism is an advanced stage of a failed political process that begins with inequities and injustice, and moves from frustrated attempts at reform that breed fear and anger, to political confrontation that erupts in violence, which can be exploited to rationalize the use of any form of violence against any target. The terrorist's objective is therefore more about scaring civil society and making itself known while Insurgent's objectives are military in nature and its tactics is to wear the enemy down through constant attacks against the regular forces while acquiring weapons and support from the disenfranchised population. Second, Boko Haram's ideology is based on fundamentalist Sunni Islam, and their intent is to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria and cleanse the country of any and all Western influence. Third, terrorism and insurgency are caused by corruption, unemployment, poverty, weak institutional structure, ethnicity and social frustration. Fourth, the various acts of terrorism and insurgency lead to dwindling economy, loss of lives and properties, discouraging foreign investment, threatening the country's unity etc. Lastly, both Nigerian government and

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international communities have strived hard to curb the incidence of terrorism and insurgency. Such measures employed include identification and blocking of the sources of Boko Haram funding and weapons, demonstrable and strict enforcement of relevant United Nations and other international sanctions against terrorist groups, joint border patrols and intelligence sharing, intensification of socio-economic cooperation by regional governments and multilateral institutions.

In view of the above, the following recommendations are made: Nigerian government and the International Community need to cut off the sources of contact of Boko Haram. The popular support of Boko Haram in form of manpower, material, fund, intelligence, arms and ammunitions at the domestic and International levels must be cut off. In the same vein, an empowerment programme that aims at reducing unemployment among the young school leavers and university graduates must be effectively implemented. This will further improve the standard of living and wellbeing of Nigerian youths. There is the need for government to ensure that the dividend of democracy is enjoyed by all and sundry, this can be achieved through popular participation of the people. Government should create an avenue to resolve conflicts among any conflicting parties before it degenerates into crisis. Also, government should ensure effective use of resources like power, military, land reforms, finance, external alliances and hierarchical structure of organization to counter-insurgents. Lastly, there must be strict enforcement of law against any act of terrorism and insurgency.

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