



Studies in Politics and Society

A Journal of the Nigerian Political Science Association

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Eddy Akpomera, Ph.D. and Endurance O. Edafewotu

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Table of Contents

Re-Assessing Cyber Security and National Development: Examples from Nigeria	<i>Eddy Akpomera, Ph.D. and Endurance O. Edafewotu</i>
The Amotekun Corps and Federal-State Security Relations in Oyo State, Nigeria	<i>Afeez Kolawole Shittu and Abdullahi Abiodun Oyekanmi</i>
Public Health Care Policy and Bio-Security during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Nigeria.....	<i>Akinsola A. Agagu, Okpanachi L. Odiji and Margaret Inikpi O. Usman</i>
Pastoralist-Farmer Conflict in Nigeria and its Potential Implications for Regional Insecurity in Africa	<i>Angela Ajodo-Adebanjoko</i>
Military Approach to Internal Security: Comparative Perspectives of Fighting Militancy, Insurgency and Banditry in Nigeria	<i>Abubakar Mohammed</i>
Governance, Protracted Violence of Boko Haram and national security in Nigeria	<i>Abdulrasheed A. Muhammad and Kamal O. Lamidi</i>
Nigeria and the Challenges of Human Security, Human Rights and Development	<i>Mary Anuoluwapo Adediran and Lucky Isaac Yargwa</i>
Separatist Movements and Secessionist Agitations in Nigeria: The Then... and The Now.....	<i>Tunde Agara</i>
Federalism, Insecurity and Community Policing in Nigeria	<i>Kamar Hamza</i>
Community Policing and Security Provision in South West Nigeria: A Focus on Amotekun	<i>Adedoyin Jolade Omede and Arinze Ngwube</i>
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GOVERNANCE, PROTRACTED VIOLENCE OF BOKO HARAM AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined the pervasive violence perpetrated by Boko Haram in Nigeria as a direct response to inadequacies in governance. Literature suggests that Boko Haram has continued to grow and render security situation in the country more worrisome. Records show that Nigeria has been the scene of several humanitarian crises due to violence perpetrated by the Boko Haram group in the north eastern part of the country as they use mostly virulent instruments to achieve their objectives. Also, despite various counterinsurgency initiatives by the government, which in most cases are combatant, to curb their violent activities, the violence has continued to date, thereby raising critical questions about the effectiveness of the government's counterinsurgency initiatives. By examining and analysing documents and evidence on the Boko Haram saga, this paper argued that perpetration of violence by Boko Haram is informed by frustrations arising from inadequacies in Nigeria's governance. It is suggested that a reform of domestic governance will on the one hand, go a long way in curbing the insurgent activities and on the other, ameliorate its worst effect on Nigeria's national security and its image in the international system.

Keywords: Violence, Governance, Security, Boko Haram, Counterinsurgency

Introduction

Nigeria is a country of many complexities occasioned partly by its historical past and partly by the nature of its governance environment. Since the inception of democratic government in 1999, security situation in the country has been risome. Historical records have shown that Nigeria has been the scene of political strife, communal clashes and population displacements with several humanitarian crises since independence (Alaku & Nwankwo, 2017). While it may be difficult to keep

track of the various violent occurrences in the country, violence generally has become pervasive with attendant social, political and economic implications for the country both in its domestic governance and its relations with the global community.

The internal security environment in Nigeria is characterised by widespread violence and contestations among different ethnic groups that make up the country. These contestations have violent dimensions while each geo-political zone is known for one security problem or the other. For example, while there exist series of militia groups such as the Niger Delta Avengers, Ijaw National Congress and Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in the South-South region, the Southeastern part of the country has the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) among others. Similarly, the Arewa Youth Congress (AYC) exists in the North while the Odua Peoples' Congress (OPC) operates in the South-West of Nigeria. The geo-political militia intensify their campaigns using all instruments from the most virulent; such as wanton attacks on citizens, bombings, kidnappings and political assassinations; to the most pacific, to achieve their objectives, thus threatening the sovereign existence of the country.

However, the emergence of the Boko Haram heralded a new dimension of security challenge in Nigeria. The Boko Haram uprising has proved more dangerous than other militia groups in the sense that they deploy the lethal strategy of suicide bombing – hitherto unknown in the country. Thousands of people have been killed and property worth millions of dollars destroyed since 2009 when Boko Haram first appeared, suggesting that the security function of the Nigerian state is now threatened, especially with the unencouraging attitude towards governance by the ruling elites in the country (Duru & Ogbonnaya, 2010).

For example, between 2009 and 2014, Njoku & Nwachukwu (2015) noted that over 600 people were killed, close to a thousand prisoners set free, several people injured and property worth millions of Naira were destroyed including the bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Abuja during Boko Haram attacks in different parts of the country. Similarly, over 200 girls were kidnapped from Government Secondary School, Chibok in Bornu State in 2014 most of whom were later returned after negotiation with Nigerian authorities about four years later. These attacks have continued to date. The activities of Boko Haram clearly indicate that the security function of the Nigerian state has been taken for granted by the ruling elites in the country (Duru & Ogbonnaya, 2010).

Indeed, there is a general feeling among the populace that the Nigerian government through its security forces has failed to play its own part of the social contract with the people. This perhaps explains why the people are more sceptical in providing

information to security agencies about the Boko Haram sect. Moreover, it is a known fact that there is an intricate link between economic forces and political actions. That is, the dimension of governance is likely to trigger socio-political and economic outbursts which tend to manifest in series of challenges for a country. In Nigeria, this could be said to have manifested in the Boko Haram insurgency.

In a monograph series by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), many Nigerians have lost confidence in the politicians who are in charge of the country's governance. They seem to have very little faith in politicians, who are seen as not only the catalysts of socio-economic and political problems of the country but also are considered to be the financiers of the extremist groups (Botha, Ewi, Salifu, & Abdile, n.d.). Therefore, this paper examines, within the context of good governance, the pervasive violence perpetrated by the Boko Haram in the country as well as its implications for the country's security and by extension, the larger international community. This is achieved through a systematic examination of documented evidence relating to *Boko Haram insurgency*, national security moves and governance architecture in the country.

Theoretical Discourse on Governance and National Security

Governance depicts the process of overseeing the responsibility of transparent and effective achievement of national or organisational goals. Katsamunskia (2016) noted that the meaning of the word "governance" is slightly confused in the literature and this results from the dual meaning of the concept. Citing Pierre (2000), he noted that on the one hand, it refers to the empirical manifestations of state adaptation to its external environment and on the other hand, governance is a conceptual or theoretical representation of co-ordination of social systems and, for the most part, the role of the state in that process (Katsamunskia, 2016). The Mo Ibrahim Foundation conceptualised governance as the provision of the political, social and economic public goods and services that a citizen has the right to expect from the state; and that a state has the responsibility to deliver them to its citizens (Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), 2013). The import of these statements is that governance has to do with decision-making and implementation in the state.

Vahyala (2017) delineated, theoretically, the term governance from government. "Governance" to him can be said to be what a government does. Government is expected to provide basic needs such as provision of public infrastructure and protection of lives and property of the individuals living in its territory. This signifies that security is a major public good that has become a key benchmark for measuring government performance. Ojo (2002) observed that maintenance of order and rule of law is *sine qua non* to governance. Similarly, Fukuyama (2013) conceptualised governance as a government's ability to make and enforce rules and to deliver services, regardless of whether that government is democratic or not. On

the one hand, he also made a distinction between governance and government and on the other hand, he has not tied governance to a particular system of government. In other words, governance is about execution or action on the part of government.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) noted that "governance" implies both the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented) and can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance (UNESCAP, n.d). In this case, it cannot be exclusively appropriated by democratic practice as noted by Fukuyama (2013) who observed that an authoritarian regime can be well governed, just as a democracy can be mal-administered. A connecting rod for all the above perspectives is that governance is an activity initiated and implemented by the state in the interest of the citizens. It is an activity that encompasses both security and welfare functions of the state.

Security on the other hand implies protection of the state, its institutions and its assets from internal insurrection and external aggression. Although this definition recognises the internal and external dimensions of security, it however sees security in terms of military capacity. A more flexible conception is, therefore, to see it as discouraging circumstances or issues that may result in the disruption of an existing order or that may result in conflict. This was the view of Dunmoye (2020) when he observed that:

Security is not military hardware, though it may include it, security is not military force, though it may involve it, security is not traditional military activity, though it may encompass it. Security is development, and without development, there can be no security (McNamara, quoted in Dunmoye, 2020, pp.37-38).

The significance of this perspective lies in the fact that security in this context is linked to the arena of governance because development can only take place through good governance and committed leadership. Dunmoye (2009) identified three important aspects of governance that has organic relationship with security. First is raising people's living standard, their incomes and consumption of food, medical services, education, shelter etc. Second, through relevant economic processes; creating conditions that are conducive to the growth of people through the establishment of social, political and economic systems and institutions which promote human dignity; and lastly through increasing people's freedom to choose by enlarging the range of their social, economic and political opportunities.

Viewed in this context, good governance helps to prevent conflict and ensures peace and stability. In other words, the character of the state and its rulers determine the type of governance which affects the security of the nation state (Dunmoye,

2020). The link between governance and security was earlier emphasised by Kant two centuries ago when he said "people who feel secure and free" are people governed by the rule of law not of men and are much less likely to go to war with each other, either within or across borders, than those who do not (cited in Razia, Rehman & Muhammad, 2013). This implies that if government responds to the needs of its people and utilising whatever resources available to the benefit of its population, such government will win the trust of the people to promote and sustain peace and stability. In this case, conflict is not a likely option for the people and to that extent national security is guaranteed. There is, therefore, the need to refocus the conception of security and security strategies from military centred to people centred affair.

Overview of Governance in Nigeria

From the preceding analysis, it is evident that governance is about making positive changes in the lives of citizens through people - oriented policies. Such meaningful impact in the lives of citizens can be equated with good governance, that is, the responsible conduct of public affairs and effective management of public resources by the government. Good governance manifests in areas of the rule of law, transparency, accountability and citizens' participation in decision making among others. Rightly or wrongly, this has been accepted by many as the goal of democracy. Consequently, when people's expectation from the practice of democracy becomes dashed, the issue of good governance enters the centre stage of agitations. This is the Nigerian malady where agitations by the people have centred on the attainment of good governance in the country.

Nigeria attained independence in October 1960. It remained a democracy until January 1966 when the democratic practice was truncated by a military coup that ushered in the first phase of military rule in the country. It returned to democratic practice in 1979 but that was again truncated by another military coup in 1983. The 1983 coup ushered in the second phase of military regime in Nigeria which lasted until May 1999 when a new democratic administration was installed. In the early 1990 to mid-1990, there was attempt to restore democratic practice but it eventually remained moribund (Third Republic).

The various dimensions of these historical epochs have been well engaged by scholars (see, Osaghae, 1998; Diamond et. al. 1997; Dare, 1988, Muhammad, 2015; Orjiako, 1981; Jega, 2007; Oyediran, 1988; Babawale, 2007a and 2007b; Momoh and Adejumbi, 2002). Most of the changes of government, especially under military rule, had been informed by failure at good governance. For example, the masterminds of the first military coup in 1966 claimed that they seized power to stamp out corruption, nepotism, tribalism and general misrule in the country (Akinola, 2000). Similar account could be read for other changes of governments. In other words, regime change under the military has to do with the nature of

political fragmentation and institutional decay that often drift the country towards instability and give no room for good governance. Nigeria, however, re-democratised in 1999 with the swearing in of President Olusegun Obasanjo. It is instructive to note that at the beginning of Nigeria's democratic practice in 1999, there were high expectations from the citizens that democracy would impact positively on governance. This hope began to fade with the appearance of several traits that contradicted the people's aspirations. These included rising poverty, economic down turn, mounting inflation and loss of purchasing power by the people and, increasing unemployment rate, among others. For instance, as at 1996, poverty level in Nigeria was 54.3% while unemployment rate was 3.0% (Aiyedogbon and Ohasofa, 2012). However, poverty level skyrocketed by 2018 and Nigeria was said to have the highest rate of poverty with 86.9 million people living in poverty (Kazeem, 2018) despite an exit from recession in 2017. Equally, in a study by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), an increasing number of Nigerians were living in absolute poverty averaging 40.1% in 2019 (NBS, 2019). The same account could be read for unemployment figures in Nigeria which, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, stood at 23.1% in the third quarter of 2018 (cited in Nnorom & Adegbesan, 2018). The summary effect of all these is decreasing welfare and loss of confidence by the citizens in the ability of the government to improve their living conditions. The tragedy of this declining trust was emphasised by Botha, Ewi, Salifu & Abdile (n.d., p.iii) when they remarked that:

...with the exception of the president, there seems to be very little trust in the institutions of the federal government, such as the National Assembly and the Senate... Nigerians seem to have very little faith in politicians, who are seen as the catalysts of socio-economic and political problems in Nigeria. Most Nigerians believe that violent extremism, and especially Boko Haram, escalate because of the failings of politicians, who are also considered to be the financiers of the extremist group.

This scenario also created opportunity for citizens to engage in deviant behaviours such as drug peddling, human trafficking, kidnapping and the rise of militia groups in different parts of the country. It is also instructive to note that the weakness on the part of the state to address these problems by engendering good governance led to higher levels of criminality such as terrorism, bombing and guerrilla warfare by various agitating groups. There seemed to be competition for the soul of the state between the government and the various separatist/terrorist groups. The rise of terrorist organisations such as the Boko Haram is situated within this context.

Emergence and Perspectives on the *Boko Haram* Insurgency in Nigeria

As already noted, Boko Haram is a direct response to inadequacies in Nigeria's governance environment but its effect transcends the country's borders. Scholars have agreed that its activities started on a low scale but later transformed into a

voluminous conflagration with the group contesting the political space with the state. The emergence of Boko Haram in Nigeria has triggered two divergent perspectives. The first perspective argued that political ideology is the key propellant of the emergence and growth of *Boko Haram* in north east Nigeria.

The political shift of power from the hands of the northern political elites after the death of President Umar Yar'Adua in 2010 to the Southern part is believed to have fuelled the emergence. The Nigerian political space became over-heated when the then Vice President, Goodluck Jonathan became the substantive President. He also defeated General Muhammadu Buhari in the 2011 presidential election and as well contested the 2015 presidential election against General Buhari and some others, although, he lost the election even as an incumbent owing to myriad of reasons (Adeniyi, 2017; Abdullahi, 2018).

The political elites from the northern part of the country alleged that President Jonathan signed an agreement for a single term in office after completing the tenure of the late President Yar'Adua. However, this was vehemently denied by President Jonathan. Following this disagreement, the political elites from the north that lost power were perceived as forces behind the establishment of Boko Haram in order to undermine President Jonathan's chances of contesting the 2015 presidential election (Mohammed, 2014). The promoters of this argument posited that Boko Haram enjoy the full support of the Northern political elites who want the north to dominantly occupy the seat of the presidency.

The second perspective which resonates among political elites from the north perceives the insurgency as part of plans of the Jonathan presidency to destabilise the north and subject it to perpetual crisis (Nyanko, 2014; and Mohammed, 2014). The perspective views the sect as a weapon used by various interest groups, including the Presidency, to cause violence, mislead and confuse Nigerians in order to achieve their selfish political agenda. The accusations and counter accusations, however, became a cover up on the part of the political leaders to justify their failure to protect lives and properties.

The lack of political will to punish previous perpetrators of violence is another factor that aided the emergence and sustenance of the Boko Haram in Nigeria. There is no record of people punished for perpetrating violence despite series of panel of reports indicting groups and some individuals in the society. The inability of the government to make public and implement the findings of panels of enquiry or judicial commissions which investigate various crises fuelling insecurity in Nigeria is, therefore, a causal factor in conflict recurrence (CLEEN Foundation and the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) 2002). For example, several of these panels barely submit their report and when they do, the government most times lack the political will to implement them. As observed by Aghedo & Osuma (2014, p. 210):

despite several probe panels, ethno-religious violence has continued in Plateau State since 2001, resulting in more than 4000 deaths. The non-indigenous Igbo and Yoruba in that State alone claim they have lost property worth Nigerian Naira 970 billion (US\$ 6.4 million) due to these incessant conflicts.

In addition, some probe panels often indict those generally referred to as 'untouchable' thereby making the government ineffective in taking action against them. This was the case of the Zango-Kattaf crises in Kaduna State in which the probe panel indicted some members of the government and powerful elites including members of the armed forces who took sides in the crises. In such circumstances, it became difficult for the government to take action on the report of such a panel. The way and manner the government handled such reports is a clear indication that the panel is an avenue for the government to escape its responsibility to protect the lives and properties of the citizens. The consequence is that the hands of the perpetrators are strengthened and their impunity reinforced (Sonni, 2006).

Indeed, Boko Haram could be said to be an outgrowth of the Maitatsine Movement and riots of the 1980s which were the first major uprisings of fundamentalists Islam in Nigeria. The reason for this interpretation is that some of the key actors of the Maitatsine crisis, who were unpunished, were also implicated in the contemporary Boko Haram formation, thus creating a link between the same old objectives of the Islamic crisis of the 1980s with that of the Boko Haram terrorism (Adesoji 2010). Indeed, there are several dimensions of linkage between Boko Haram and Maitatsine on which scholars have produced insightful analysis (Thurston, 2016; Adesoji, 2015; Olaniyan & Asuelime, 2014; Agbiboa, 2014; Aghedo, 2014; Loimeier, 2012). Adesoji (2015) observed that fundamentally, both were fanatical Islamic sects wishing to foist their beliefs on the rest of the society.

In philosophy and objectives, both rejected western education, civilisation and its products and both receive inspiration from the Shite Movement (Adesoji, 2015). He commented further that at the outbreak of the Maitatsine riot in Kano in the mid-1980, Muhammed Yusuf's father had the intention of joining the group before he was caught in the crossfire. Therefore, it could be reasoned that Muhammed Yusuf merely continued from where his father's effort stopped.

In addition, the failure of the state to uphold the rule of law and fundamental rights of citizens may make citizens deploy violence. It may even increase aggressive tendencies of the citizens. This argument seems plausible when we consider the argument that frustration often leads to aggression. Therefore, constant frustration in getting redress for wrongdoing from the state leads to further frustration and the tendency to be aggressive. Recent demonstration by the Shite Movement in Kaduna and Abuja over continued detention of its leader despite court injunctions

against such could be seen in this regard. There is no doubt that extra judicial killing of the leader of the Boko Haram sect, Muhammed Yusuf, by the police in 2008 may have increased the aggressive tendencies of the sect (Adesoji, 2015). This is plausible because little was known of the group before its leader was killed in July 2009.

However, shortly after the killing of Muhammed Yusuf by security agents, the group began to grow in the orgy of violence against the state and anyone who believes in it. The killing and ineptitude on the part of the state in bringing perpetrators of the act to justice created the impression that it was an act that was masterminded by the state. Thus, a line of enmity was drawn between Boko Haram and the state and its agencies. This demonstrates that the failure on the part of the Nigerian state to follow due process, which is a major component of the rule of law, was partly responsible for the proliferation of Boko Haram terrorist activities in northern parts of the country.

Economic crisis is another factor that may be responsible for the emergence of Boko Haram in Nigeria. After over six decades of independence (1960-2021), majority of Nigerians still cannot meet their basic human and socio-economic needs. It can be argued that Nigeria has not recorded any substantial economic growth since the inception of democracy in 1999 that will impact positively on the life of ordinary Nigerians. For instance, the rate of poverty in the country is as high as over 70 percent of the population and is classified poor with 35 percent living in abject poverty on less than \$1 per day (Yemi, 2012). The north has the highest poverty rates in the country with 77.7 percent and 76.3 percent respectively (Yemi, 2012). Recent reports by the World Poverty Clock show that Nigeria has overtaken India as the country with the most extreme poor people in the world with 86.9 million people (about 50 per cent of the population) living under extreme poverty (Kazeem, 2018).

Also, the unemployment rate in Nigeria, for instance, was last reported at 23.1 percent in 2018 (as cited in Nnorom & Adegbesan, 2018) as against 21.1 percent in 2010 and 19.7 in 2009 (Yemi, 2012). In 2017, the unemployment rate increased from 14.2% in Q4 2016 to 16.2% in Q2 2017 and 18.8% in Q3 2017 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). These unemployed popularity especially the graduates among them, were intimidated by the high level of corruption in the country. The high rate of unemployment also witnessed high level of corruption in the country especially among political office holders. Thus, a mismatch between the expectation of many Nigerians for good governance and ability of the government to engage in programmes that will bring benefits to large number of Nigerians resulted in all forms of uprising against the Nigerian state.

More fundamentally as Adesoji (2011) noted, 'despite the time gap between the Maitatsine riots and the Boko Haram insurrection, the socio-economic conditions that sustained the risings in 1980 are relevant to the Boko Haram situation'. It can, therefore, be argued that unfavourable socio-economic factors in Nigeria created room for the Boko Haram insurgency. In a policy brief by the Institute for Strategic Studies in 2017, it was demonstrated that individuals who join Boko Haram do so because 'they want to make money.'

According to the brief, out of the 1 607 respondents, 329 (20.47%), ranked it first and additionally, 239 (16.15%) and 198 (16.27%) respondents ranked it second and third, respectively (Ewi & Salifu, 2017). Similarly, in a World Bank report, Obasanjo (n.d.) contented that 98 per cent of former Boko Haram militants said they joined the group not because of ideology but because of unemployment and the economic situation of the country. Thus, criminality serves as an alternative means of generating income when the legal means for such income is not forthcoming. This malady was captured by Gabriel (2016) when he observed that in Nigeria, cult activity, abduction, and robbery are becoming more common. Across the states, the killing and maiming of innocent people has proceeded unabated. According to research, a large number of young men and women are killed every day by ritualists, kidnappers, and other criminals. Scary reports of crime of varying kinds being committed across Nigeria abound on social media and in publications.

Akin to the above is that the failure of the government to design and implement people's-oriented policies that are capable of improving their poor living condition is another factor being responsible for internal security problems in Nigeria. This is because many policies initiated by the government have little or no impact on public welfare. More often than not, the governing elites, through policy and unwitting leakages deny the poor, the marginalised, and the least educated members of the society the benefits that should ordinarily accrue to them. According to the UNDP (2009), 20 percent of Nigerian population control 65 percent of Nigeria's resources, leaving 80 percent of population with 35 percent to struggle for.

Failure on the part of government to evenly distribute national resources called for the use of violence by the youths, especially as a bargaining tool to obtain concessions from the government, thereby making them ready armies for any insurgency. Consequently, Boko Haram took the advantage of the rising poverty and unemployment to mobilise its membership (Ewi & Salifu, 2017). More so, the people (followers) were made to understand that their state of hopelessness was caused by the government which imposed Western education on them and failed to manage the resources of the country to their benefits. This was also the point emphasised by Agbiboa (2013, p.9) when he opined that "many of the members

attracted by Boko Haram are animated by deep-seated socioeconomic and political grievances such as poor governance and elite corruption”.

Indeed, the late leader of the group and subsequent leaders often devote the best of their sermons on the atrocities of the government and their contributions to the failure of Nigerian state (Omotosho, as cited in Onuoha, 2010). References were often made during sermons to government officials and the atrocities they committed against the people (Albert, 2008). This perhaps explains why Boko Haram is a reflection of people's anger and rise against state authority in order to create an alternative government. In such a context, acquisition of fire power cannot guarantee security but engendering of good governance. Dwight Eisenhower in Briggs (1990, p.313) corroborated this when he said: “no matter how much we spent for arms, there is no safety in arms alone”. Therefore, security is the total product of economic, intellectual, moral and military strength of a state. The point here is that emphasis on military hardware does not necessarily determine national security. The implication of the above discussion is that the faulty Justice system in the country could serve as lacuna to be explored by criminally minded individuals. This, coupled with the frustration occasioned by economic hardship, creates a mind-set of deviation from the norm.

Implications of Boko Haram Insurgency for Nigeria's National Security

National security is the preservation of the values a nation holds as related to the defence of its territory from human as well as non-human threats and guides in the pursuit of its national interest in the international system. Scholars (Azama, 2017; Raheem & Babalola, 2016; Njoku & Nwachukwu, 2015; Awojobi, 2014) agreed that activities of Boko Haram posed a threat to Nigerian security and different aspects of governance. Security encompasses issues that can create insecurity of lives and properties as a result of threats to the individual's existence. When conceived in this sense, national security includes issues of good governance and welfare of the people. Therefore, threat to individual's existence implies threat to the state itself. Indeed, emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency has witnessed the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, SALWs. Also, it has led to ingenuity of members of the sect to perpetrate destruction through creation of Improvised Explosive Devices, IED. As observed by Moses and Ngomba (2017) and Uwa & Anthony (2015), one of the security threats confronting Nigeria in the early 21st century is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs).

Their study revealed that proliferation of SALWs in the country relates directly to the regime of mis-governance in the country such as high levels of poverty, struggle for scarce resources, money laundering and corruption among others. Among the factors that have aided the proliferation of SALWs according to Moses and Ngomba (2017) is the fact that heavy weapons are expensive and takes a big toll on national income and development. SALWs on the other hand are cost

effective and therefore, desirable by state and non-state actors. Apart from this, the issue of Nigeria's porous borders, pervasive corruption and proliferation of conflict in the West African sub region and even beyond are factors in the proliferation of SALWs. For example, while proliferation of conflict such as in Suda, Liberia, Chad, Sierra Leone and Libya etc. encourages availability, porous border characterised by smuggling, illicit trade and widespread corruption facilitates their importation into Nigeria. It is axiomatic to think that where this situation exists, the likelihood is an increase in the level of domestic violence and criminality such as armed robbery, kidnapping, violence among others; upsurge in the number of insurgent groups such as Boko Haram in the north, Avengers and other militant groups in the Niger Delta, etc. Although the proliferation of SALWs may not be the root cause of criminality, it serves to accentuate it by making arms readily available. In a 2016 UN report, 70% of the about 500 million of weapons circulating in the West African sub region are in Nigeria (Vanguard Online, August 3, 2016).

Another major impact of the Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria is the toll it has taken on human lives and properties. There is no doubt that since the insurgency began it has continued to increase in intensity. Awojobi (2014:146) noted that 'since the first attack of Boko Haram in 2009 in one of the police barracks in Bauchi State that killed scores of people, including police officers and members of their family, and the subsequent killing of the leader of the sect, Yusuf Mohammed, the coordinated attacks by Boko Haram have intensified'. Unfortunately, these attacks have continued to date.

Some Boko Haram Attacks between 2009 and 2014

s/n	Year	States assaulted	Fatalities
1	2009	Yobe, Bornu, Bauchi and Kano	Killed over 800 persons
2	2010	Borno, Abuja and Plateau	Killed over 3000 persons and freed 700 prison inmates
3	2011	Borno, Kaduna, Yobe, Niger, Bauchi, Abuja, Katsina and Plateau	Killed over 425 persons and over 300 injured. Bombed UN building in Abuja.
4	2012	Adamawa, Kano, Kaduna, Kogi, Bauchi, Plateau, Yobe, Abuja and Sokoto	Killed over 1047 and many persons injured.
5	2013	Borno, Adamawa, Kano, Plateau, Gombe, Yobe and Bauchi	Killed over 732 and several persons injured.
6	2014	Borno, Adamawa and Yobe	Kidnapped over 270 girls from Chibok village in Borno State, Kidnap of some women in Adamawa State, killed over 200 persons and several injured

Source: Njoku & Nwachukwu, 2015

The table above shows the enormity of *Boko Haram* attacks in different parts of the country. Unfortunately, these attacks have continued to date. It also reflects the challenges which the phenomenon posed to the country's national security in the sense that it implies that the country is exposed to internal insurrection. It also reflects the kind of challenges that a country may be exposed to as a result of bad governance and the result of conceiving of security in military sense alone. In reality, security encompasses issues that can create insecurity of lives and properties as a result of threats to the individual's existence. When conceived in this sense, national security includes issues of good governance and welfare of the people. Therefore, threat to individual's existence implies threat to the state itself. Wanton destruction of lives and properties which the *Boko Haram* insurgency, exhibits therefore, calls to question the capacity of the state and its rulers to effectively discharge constitutionally established function of defending the citizens against internal insurrection and external aggression.

Boko Haram's activities have increased the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Northeast Nigeria since 2009. The records show that there were 12.5 million IDPs in the 21 sub-Saharan countries and Nigeria has the largest population of IDPs in Africa with over four million population forced out of their homes as a result of violent conflicts. Out of this figure, the activities of the *Boko Haram* insurgency accounted for over 90 percent of the IDPs, with less than 10 percent caused by natural disasters in Nigeria (Ibeanu, 2015). This placed Nigeria in the third worst country in the world ranking of IDP numbers after Syria and Colombia (Ibeanu, 2015). The first implication of this on national security is that the resources that can be used to develop other sectors of the economy will be diverted to up keeping of the people in the camp. On the other hand, the contribution of the displaced people to the development of the country is put on hold.

Also, *Boko Haram* insurgency has exposed the weaknesses of the Nigerian security architecture. Prior to the emergence of *Boko Haram*, Nigerian army was one of the respected armies in Africa and the international community in the area of peacekeeping operations. An assessment of the military operation in the North East clearly shows that the Nigerian security apparatus is not coordinated in its approach to tackle *Boko Haram*. The available literature established that men of the armed forces were sent to fight insurgency without adequate preparation. The required hardware as well as morale to carry out this operation is not available. This problem shows endemic corruption within the Nigerian security system, where billions of Naira was allocated to the defence ministry for the fight against terrorism, but the outcome has not yielded any achievement (Thisday Newspaper, 2014).

Only recently, the Chairman of the Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption, Professor Itse Sagay (SAN), urged the Nigerian Government to investigate allegations that funds appropriated for the procurement of arms and other military equipment to prosecute the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency war in the North-East may have been diverted. In a related issue, on 14 May 2014, some of the soldiers fighting the group in Maiduguri attempted a mutiny by firing at their commanding officer and about 500 Nigerian soldiers and refugees fled to Cameroun (Daily Trust, May 31, 2022). The inability of the Nigerian security apparatus to curb Boko Haram exposed the country's weaknesses as well as diminished its potential as a leader in West Africa. The inability of the Nigerian security agencies to curb Boko Haram exposed the country's weaknesses as well as diminishing its potential as *de facto* leader of West Africa. Similarly, Boko Haram insurgency posed a serious security threat that hinders the country to continue its influential role in peacekeeping operations in many countries. The aftermath of this security threat is diminishing of the long bilateral relations between the Nigerian and U.S governments due to the refusal of the latter to render military hardware assistance to the former (Guitta and Simcox, 2014). To the U.S. government, working with the Nigerian security forces, based on series of evidence of a gross violation of human rights, would violate the 1997 Leahy Law that prevents the U.S. defence and State Department from providing such assistance.

The threats posed by the group also undermine the existence of Nigeria. The group captured some local governments in Bornu, Yobe, and Adamawa States. Moreover, the leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau declared the local government areas under the sect's control as a new caliphate that would be governed according to strict Islamic codes (Sahara Reporters, 2014). This development, coupled with the killings, prompted the international community to tag Nigeria as one of the most insecure countries in the world.

Conclusion

This paper examined Nigeria's governance as it relates to Boko Haram and issues of national security. It observed that the threat of Boko Haram to national security is alarming both in human and material terms. The paper also found that the failure on the part of the political elites to cater for the needs of Nigerians provided a safe haven for Boko Haram to operate. This has also made it difficult for the Nigerian government and security forces to defeat Boko Haram operatives. The government, therefore, needs to realise that where people have relatively high standard of living, there is the tendency for less criminal activities in the society. Similarly, where the standard of living is low, there is the tendency that people may seek alternative coping mechanisms including involvement in criminal activities. It is, therefore, suggested that a reformation of domestic governance, through entrenchment of the rule of law, accountability and effective economic management, will go a long way in ameliorating the Boko Haram's effect on Nigeria's national security and international image.

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