

Contextualizing Indigenous Knowledge in Africa and its Diaspora

Edited by

Igbolade Aderibigbe, Alloy Ihuah
and Felisters Jephchir Kiprono

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	viii
Chapter One.....	1
Electoral System and its Impact on Democratization Process: A Comparative Analysis of Benin and Togo Edoh Agbehonou	
Chapter Two	29
Resolving Natives and Settlers Controversy as a Major Tool for Conflict Resolution and Good Governance in Africa: The Challenge for the Diaspora Avosetinyen Michael Sonayon	
Chapter Three	39
Preserving the Traditional Measures of Preventing Conflict in Africa Olateju Animashaun Rofiah	
Chapter Four	51
Traditional Rule (Chieftaincy) and Peace-Building in Ghana: Challenges and Prospects Joseph Kingsley Adjei	
Chapter Five	62
Traditional Morality and Governance: Oath-taking in Nigerian Politics— A Yoruba Example Olakunle Kehinde Coker	
Chapter Six	74
Post Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Africa and African Diaspora: Perspectives on Religious Traditions' Competitive Advantages and Disadvantages Ibigbolade S. Aderibigbe and A. O. Johnson-Bashua	

Table of Contents

vi

Chapter Seven.....	95
A Re-Interpretation of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade in Europe in the 18th century and New Trends in Nigeria	
Rotimi Omotoye	
Chapter Eight.....	108
A Religious Appraisal of the Christian Attitude to Traditional and Western Medicine in a Changing World: Evolving a Paradigm of Holistic Healing	
Afaor Dorothy Nguemo	
Chapter Nine.....	121
Syncretising African Religion in the Candomble Faith	
Atinuke O. Okunade	
Chapter Ten.....	136
Religion and Terrorism in Black Africa: An Insight into the Boko Haram Phenomenon in Nigeria	
Sulaiman Muhammad Jamiu	
Chapter Eleven.....	148
A Retrospective Look at Nigerian Christians' Experience of Religious Riots and Terrorist Attacks	
Lydia Bosede Akande	
Chapter Twelve.....	159
Village-Level Participatory Video for Documenting and Disseminating Agro-Indigenous Knowledge	
B. T. Isiaka, Tola Olujuwon and D. N. Ella	
Chapter Thirteen.....	178
Rethinking Teacher Education Curricula in African Universities through Indigenous Contents and Learning Experiences	
Saheed Ahmad Rufai	
Chapter Fourteen.....	195
Classroom Application of ICTs in a Developing Economy: A Roadmap for Capacity Building among Teachers	
Silas Eniola Egbowon	

Contextualizing Indigenous Knowledge in Africa and its Diaspora

vii

Chapter Fifteen.....	205
The Importance of Training and Supervision of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) in the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV in Africa	
Sotunsa John Obafemi	
Chapter Sixteen.....	222
African Sexual Ethics: A Panacea for the Prevention and Management of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria	
A. O. Johnson-Bashua	
Chapter Seventeen.....	233
Workforce Education and Development Systems in Kenya	
Felisters Jephchirchir Kiprono	
Contributors.....	254

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT NIGERIAN CHRISTIANS' EXPERIENCE OF RELIGIOUS

RIOTS AND TERRORIST ATTACKS

LYDIA BOSEDE AKANDE

Introduction - Understanding Terrorism

The Word "Terrorism" has been viewed differently from various angles, but they all point to the fact that terrorism has led to the wanton waste of lives and the colossal loss of properties. Terrorist attacks have a very serious implication on the economy of the affected country. Columbus and Wolfe (1986:79), when comparing terrorism with war, were of the view that "terrorism involves the use of violence as a weapon to pursue certain political objectives".

The World Book Encyclopedia, (1981:199) defines terrorism as "the use of threat or violence to produce fear in people and weaken their resistance". Similarly, the new *Encyclopedia Britannica* -vol. II (1987:120) - views terrorism as "the systematic use of terror, or unpredictable violence, against governments, the public, or individuals, to attain a political objective".

There is the need to point out here that terrorism has been used, not only by political organizations to gain or keep power, but also by nationalists, religious and ethnic groups, by revolutionists, and by the armies and secret police of governments themselves. Gutteridge (1986:67) says:

"Terrorism is employed as a weapon of psychological warfare to help create a climate of panic, or collapse, to destroy public confidence in government and security agencies and to coerce communities and movement activities into obeying the terrorist leadership".

Daniel (1988:55) opines that: "terrorism is mainly used to achieve political objectives." Based on the various views above, terrorism has most commonly become identified with individuals or groups attempting to destabilize or overthrow existing political or religious institutions. The evil acts have been practiced throughout history and the world over, but modern terrorism today differs from that of the past because its victims are now frequently innocent civilians who are chosen at random, or merely happen to walk into terrorist situations by accident.

Terrorist Attacks and their Attendant Fatalities

There are various acts of terrorism committed at one time or another. Individuals like Daniel, believe that terrorism is mainly used to achieve political objectives. This is, however, an understatement because at both international and local levels there have been cases of religious terrorism. *The Guardian Newspaper* of 11th September, 2001, reported the suicide plane crash at the World Trade Centre in New York, and the US Defense Headquarters, The Pentagon. These acts led to the loss of lives and properties; it was in fact an unprecedented event in the history of terrorism in the world.

Victims of this occurrence were from different parts of the world, Nigeria included. From the Nigerian perspective, records show an increase, in the cases of terrorist attacks, from over 400 between 1974 and 1976, to approximately 1,000 in 1978 (Idris 2002). Today, the numbers are too numerous to be counted.

The table below shows a number of terrorist cases ranging from the political to the religious as stated in the periodical, *Awake!* (2001), and *Abubakre* (1993:152):

No.	Country	Town	Dates	Nature of incident
1	Nigeria	Kano	Dec. 1980	Maitatsine sect versus Government and People
2	Nigeria	Kaduna	Oct. 82	Maitatsine sect versus Government and People
3	Nigeria	Yola	Feb., 84	Maitatsine sect versus Government and People
4	Nigeria	Gombe	April, 85	Maitatsine sect versus Government and People

5.	Nigeria	Kafanchan	6 th -10th March, 1987	Christian/Muslim fight
6	Nigeria	Kaduna	March, 1988	Muslim Students/Christian Students fight at Kaduna Polytechnic
7.	Nigeria	Bauchi	June, 1980	Muslim/Christian Pupils Secondary School fight over worship
8.	Nigeria	Katsina	March/April, 1991	Shiite group versus the authorities and people
9.	Nigeria	Tafawa Balewa	19-26 April, 1991	Sayawa/Fulani Riots
10.	Nigeria	Toro, Ningi	22-26 April, 1991	Muslim/Christian Riots
11.	Nigeria	Kano	14/10/91	Muslims Youths riot against Bonke's crusade
12.	Argentina Buenos	Bueons	17/3/92	Car bomb hit Israel's Embassy
13.	The U.S.A.	New York	11/09/2001	Religious extremists caused bomb explosion at World Trade Centre
14.	Nigeria	Lagos	6/10/93	Pa. Alfred Rewane Killed
15.	Nigeria	Lagos	19/12/96	Toyin Onagoruwa Slain
16.	India	Columba tore	14/2/98	A series of bombings by religious militants The US Embassy bombed
17.	Nigeria	Lagos		Alhaja Kudirat Abiola was murdered
18.	Nigeria	Ibadan	23/12/01	Chief Bola Ige struck to down
19.	Nigeria	Jos		Burning of churches and killings
20.	Nigeria	Kano	"	"
21.	Nigeria	Ilorin	"	"
22.	Nigeria	Zaria	"	Zango Kafan Religious Riots
23.	Nigeria	Maidalla, Suleja	26/12/2011	Christmas Day Bomb Blast.

Tertiary institutions were not spared either. For example, *The Nigerian Tribune* of Friday 6th February, 2002 reported that about 20 students lost their lives, with many wounded, in rival clashes between cult groups; this is just one case out of many. Similarly, terrorist acts assumed more dangerous dimensions during the reign of the late General Sanni Abacha, who hunted his critics like rats, and slayed his perceived enemies like fowl.

In Jos, terrorist attacks have become commonplace. The beautiful city, which used to be a tourist attraction, has become a place that Nigerians and members of the international community now dread to visit for fear of becoming victims of terrorist attacks; thousands of people who live there have been reported killed and the residential buildings, and places of worship, that have been destroyed cannot be numbered. It was reported during national news broadcasts, by a Plateau State Spokesman, Gregory (2010) that:

"Officials would conduct mass burials for the victims. The bodies of the dead lined dusty streets in three villages south of the regional capital of Jos. At least 200 bodies had been counted by Sunday afternoon. However, on Monday Dan Manjang, an adviser to the Plateau State government, put the death toll at 500. We have been able to make 95 arrests but at the same time over 500 people have been killed in this heinous act".

He went on further to say that;

"The bodies of children tangled with each other in a local morgue, including a diaper-clad toddler. Another young victim appeared to have been scalped, while others had severed hands and feet. One woman victim in the morgue appeared to have been stripped below the waist, but later covered by a strip of black cloth".

In another report, in the same national news broadcast, by a Police spokesman, Emmanuel Ojukwu, said:

"Nigerian police plan to charge 162 people for their role in sectarian clashes that killed hundreds in Plateau State earlier this month. Locals gather at a mass burial of their kinsmen killed during religious clashes in the village of Dogo Nahawa south of Jos".

Going on further, he said:

"Some of those arrested could be sentenced to death following the deaths of over 200 people during riots around the central city of Jos. Forty-one of the suspects are to be charged with terrorism and culpable homicide, which

are punishable by death. The remaining detainees would be charged with unlawful possession of firearms, rioting and "mischief by fire" for the burning of buildings during the attacks".

Other acts of terrorism against Christians include the burning of the statue of the Resurrected Christ outside the Chapel of the Resurrection and the demand, by Muslims, for the removal of an almost 40 year old Cross from opposite the chapel at the University of Ibadan. More important terrorist acts were steps allegedly taken by some state governments in Nigeria. For instance, in Kaduna, the state government changed the name of the two acquired Roman Catholic Institutions: The Queen of Apostles College and St. John's College, to Queen Amina College and Rimi College respectively. The various attacks received by Christians in Churches are too numerous to enumerate.

Terrorism assumed another terrible dimension with the emergence of Boko Haram, an Islamic Sect in the north since 2009. ('Boko Haram' means 'western education is forbidden or evil'). The following are just a few cases out of the many attacks of this sect against Churches, individuals, and national and international establishments, between December 2010 and February, 2012, as stated by Forest (2012:135-142)

"December 24, 2010: In Jos, 38 people were killed and 74 others were injured when militants detonated four improvised explosive devices made with dynamite in the Kabong Shopping Market just minutes apart from one another. Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the attack. Meanwhile, a private security guard in Maiduguri was killed by militants in two vehicles when they fired on him with unknown firearms and threw an unknown number of petrol bombs at the Sinimari Church of Christ. The group also threw petrol bombs at the Dala Baptist Church, setting it on fire. Five people including a pastor were killed and 25 other people were injured when militants attacked the Victory Baptist Church with firearms and petrol bombs. Boko Haram claimed responsibility for these attacks as well".

- December 31, 2010: "In the neighborhood of Jikowyi in Abuja city, unidentified militants detonated an improvised explosive device at the Dunamis Church April 9, 2011. A polling center in Maiduguri was bombed by suspected members of Boko Haram."
- April 15, 2011: "Members of the sect bombed the Independent National Electoral Commission headquarters in Niger state"
- May 29, 2011: "On the day of President Goodluck Jonathan's inauguration, three bombs exploded within minutes of each other at an artillery brigade in Bauchi killing 13 people, and injuring more than 40 others."

- June 6, 2011: During a week of attacks on a church and police stations in Maiduguri, at least 14 people were killed in three explosions, including three people outside St Patrick's Catholic Church; David Usman, pastor of the Church of Christ in Nigeria, was shot dead by gunmen on motorcycles; and Ibrahim Birkuti, a Muslim cleric who had criticized Boko Haram, was shot dead outside his home in the town of Biu, roughly 120 miles south of Maiduguri.
- June 16, 2011: "Four children were killed in a church playground in an explosion in the town of Damboa, south of the state capital Maiduguri, Borno state."
- June 16, 2011: "Boko Haram used a suicide car bomber to attack Nigeria's Police Headquarters (Louis Edet House) in Abuja. The explosion killed eight people, shattered the glass windows of the seven-story police headquarters and destroyed dozens of vehicles in the parking lot."
- July 10, 2011: "A bombing at the All Christian Fellowship Church in Suleja, Niger state, killed three people and wounded seven."
- August 26, 2011: At least 18 people were killed in a suicide car bombing at the U.N. building in Abuja. The driver entered the compound by ramming an exit gate; he then maneuvered his vehicle into a parking garage before detonating it. This attack was Boko Haram's first attack against a transnational target rather than against a government or sectarian target.
- November 9, 2011: Four policemen were killed in Mainok (northern Nigeria), and a police station, and the rescue unit of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), were also destroyed by suspected members of Boko Haram. The group also stormed the residence of the Mainok village head; he was not home, but they killed his brother.
- December 4: "Boko Haram gunmen attacked police area command headquarters in Bauchi state, killing six people and injuring five others."
- December 25, 2011: "At least 42 people are killed at several churches around Nigeria, including St. Theresa's Catholic Church in Madalla, a town near Abuja, there were other attacks at churches in Jos and Gadaka; the attacks are claimed by Boko Haram."
- January 20, 2012: "Bomb attack and shootings in Kano, Nigeria's second largest city, killed 186 people Boko Haram's most deadly attack to date."
- January 29, 2012 "Boko Haram members attacked - a police station in Kano, and issued a warning that if group members who had been captured in the North-Western Sokoto State were not released, a Kano style attack would be launched there."
- February 26, 2012: "Dozens were killed and injured in attacks on churches in Jos and Gombe states, and seven suspects were arrested while attempting to bomb a church in Bauchi."

Christians were not silent on their bitter experiences, for example, the executive committee of the Christian Association of Nigeria, (CAN), on the 24th April, 1991 - after the Bauchi riots - circulated a resolution entitled, "Enough is Enough". It stated thus "The Christian Association of

Nigeria hereby demands, on behalf of the Christians in the whole country, the protection of their fundamental human rights and an end to selective negligence."

Christians in Nigeria cannot pretend and claim that all is well in a nation where the horrible terrorist situations as described above prevail.

The Attitude of Christians to Terrorism

Christians have not been silent on cases of terrorism in Nigeria. The nation as a whole, and Christians in particular, are concerned and filled with anxiety over the situation and prospects for the future. However, the activities of the Christian Association of Nigeria in this regard are well commended. The body has represented Christians well in a number of terrorist acts, and riots, against Christians. For instance, when Rev. Wilson Sabiya, the then CAN chairman (1989) in Gongola State, was arrested on religious issues, CAN vehemently stood by him and secured his release.

In addition, during the heated OIC debate, the government set up an Advisory Council on Religious Affairs (ACRA) on Oct., 2, 1987 during President Ibrahim Babangida's regime. It is interesting to note that Christians boycotted this body. They especially became wary that the body could be used as an instrument for official interference in religious freedom. Many of the Youth members of CAN went against the Christians' participation in ACRA, on the simple logic that: "he who pays the piper dictates the tune". The then CAN Chairman in Abuja Rev. Peter Akinola (1989:7) also pointed out that:

"Government set the pace in matters of religion... when you have government paying your fares from Lagos to Abuja to attend meetings, and government lodges you in hotels and pays your bills to attend religious conferences, then watch out, there is trouble".

Another opinion from Mr. Daniel Gowon, Chief of Wusasa and his elder brother, the former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon (Rtd), told the *Standard Newspaper* that he had no faith in ACRA. Perhaps, he was speaking the mind of many Christians.

Christians have also risen against the Sharia issue. They have put up counter arguments against it in print and electronic media; this protest made the Sharia issue die a natural death in some states. They clearly pointed out to the government that the 1979 Constitution categorically states that: "The Government of the Federation, or a state, shall not adopt religion as a state religion".

Furthermore, Christians have not relented in their efforts with the printing of pamphlets on religious matters to stop any terrorist acts in the state, and even at our various institutions of learning. For instance, a pamphlet published by the youth wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria (YOUTHCAN), (1988:12), gave full details on how to, incapacitate the operation of the Sharia in many states of the federation.

To be acknowledged during this period was the boldness of another Christian leader, Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe, who was the second in command during the Babangida regime. This man openly denounced the participation of Nigeria in OIC when interviewed by journalists. He further stated that the issue was not discussed by the Supreme Military Council, and thus should be regarded as invalid. However, this action cost him his job, but a precedence and legacy has been set for other Christians in positions of authority to emulate.

The aforementioned are some of the attitudes, which Christians have put on, to fight against terrorism in Nigeria. Following are recommendations that can enhance harmony and forestall terrorism in a pluralist religious society, like Nigeria.

Expected Roles of Nigerians in Diaspora to Curbing Terrorism in Nigeria

To safeguard the unity of Nigeria against all acts of violence or terrorism that has continuously pitched Christians against Muslims, and vice versa, all hands must be on deck. Our brothers and sisters in Diaspora should not fold their arms or feel unconcerned. Home is home. Meaningful contributions to sustaining relationships between close, extended relatives and neighbors are some of the ways in which they can assist. The exposure they have had abroad could be employed to right so many wrongs in the homeland. They could therefore, among other things, do the following to salvage the current wave of insecurity, terrorism, and fear in Nigeria.

Nigerians in the Diaspora can be involved in the political programmes of Nigeria. This was the view of Sunkammi and Salami (2011), when they opined that:

"The root cause of violence in Nigeria is political re-adjustment by various ethnic groups masterminded by politicians with self-interest. Nigerians need educated and open-minded politicians to run the state of affairs. In this regard, Nigerians in the Diaspora can play a crucial role in the political system by participation".

In a similar discussion, Idris Ozoya, a Nigerian in Diaspora was of the view that:

"The National Intelligence Agency (NIA), State Security Service (SSS), and Nigerian Police Force should be strengthened by equipping them with advanced technology (which the federal government can definitely afford) and plugging them into the international networks of intelligence gathering, such that when terrorist elements in Nigeria hear the name of any of these entities (talk less of their operation) they would quiver in their boots.

In addition, Nigerians in Diaspora could form a very strong pressure group that will prevail upon the Federal Government of Nigeria to, as a matter of urgency, set up a commission that will attend to the issues of Boko Haram, Kaduna, Jos and similar crises without delay. Also, they can assist the federal and state governments by raising funds for the conduct of free and fair elections in 2015.

For the above to be realized, our brothers and sisters in Diaspora could, in a collaborative endeavor, raise funds to boost Nigeria's efforts to realize the above stated opinion.

Conclusion

It has been clearly shown that terrorism has become a frequent occurrence in Nigeria. It has been seen as a threat and an evil act. It thus becomes very important that Christians build up an attitude that will disallow the terrorists to actualize their plans.

It is in this regard that the following recommendations are made: Government holds the key to religious and/or political harmony. They have a lot to do to reduce terrorism in all spheres of life. This is in support of Ambassador Tanko Yusuf's view, in Jimoh Idris (2002), that "Government should strictly abide by the Constitution and not allow any group to trouble others." Holding meetings, giving press releases or press conferences are not enough. Action is what is required.

Similarly, Odumuyiwa (1993:140-162) offers the following suggestions to all stake holders connected with the peaceful coexistence of Nigeria:

- a. State and Federal Governments should not get themselves involved in any of the religious activities of any religion in the country. There should be no favouritism from the government towards any

religion. Every religion should be given equal opportunity and treatment.

- b. No religion should step on the toes of the doctrines of other religions. Conversion into any of the religions should be through appeal and embracement, rather than through force
- c. The teaching of the tenets of Religions should be allowed in all Nigerian schools, colleges and Universities.
- d. Erring adherents of any Religion should be severely disciplined by government agencies without fear of repercussions, and without showing any favouritism.
- e. Religion should be seen and practiced as a forum for unity and peaceful co-existence, and not as a divisible force.

In the same way religious leaders should teach, practice and enjoin their adherents to honestly practice the tenets of their religion. No true Religion teaches wickedness, hostility and vandalism. Religious leaders should also create a forum for inter-faith dialogue, whereby proper understanding of the tenets of every religion could be learnt. Their adherents should be properly guided as regards the belief system of religions other than their own.

Within the prevailing circumstances, Christians are admonished to rely wholly on God and pray fervently, just as the Anglican Bishop of Jos, the Rt. Reverend Ben. Kwashi, (1993:7) rightly said: "God is using terrorist situations to teach us to depend on Him." Therefore, Christians should employ the terrorist impasse to move closer to the place of more dedication and prayer for the political evolution of Nigeria. Christians should be fervent in prayers so that the situation will not degenerate into the same conditions as are found in Liberia, Somalia or Yugoslavia. They are not to become violent, but are simply to wait to see the salvation of God.

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has a lot to do in this regard. They should ensure the unity of all Christians in order to fight any terrorist act. Moreover, Christians' participation in politics should be encouraged, as this will bring them into positions of authority and policy formulations.

When all the aforementioned are adequately taken care of the much needed peace, tolerance, social-economic, moral, and educational development of Nigeria, will advance. They would also go a long way to water down terrorism and bring about harmonious living among the various ethnic and religious groups in the country.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

VILLAGE-LEVEL PARTICIPATORY VIDEO FOR DOCUMENTING AND DISSEMINATING AGRO-INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

B. T. ISIAKA, TOLA OLUJUWON
AND D. N. ELLA

Introduction

Literature has shown that inappropriate documentation of Africa's indigenous knowledge is a major challenge in preserving, transmitting, and having effective access to numerous rich innovations. Equally, the scientific validation of these local innovations is a major issue, and is on the front burner. Furthermore, it is difficult to push these innovations into the mainstream of the formal research and development system. Giving recognition and value to local innovation is crucial to institutionalize them in formal research agenda, in order to contribute to community empowerment and rural development. Village-level participatory video technique is gaining ground in the field of the development of communication being used as a tool for documenting, preserving and disseminating agricultural innovations in developing countries. Most rural farmers are "unlettered". Video technology, in recent times, has become easily accessible to such persons because it is now less complex, compact and less expensive. It is easy to produce video clips of various community activities and experiences. Practically illiterate rural people have acquired the skills of handling a video camera and shooting videos of their experiences. These video clips are used for advocacy; sharing success stories with near or distant neighbours; cultural transformation; awareness and skill acquisition programmes. The chapter therefore highlights the concept, methods, operations, and advantages, of participatory video technique as an effective means of documenting, preserving and sharing