



Terrorism and Security Challenges in Nigeria's Socio-Political Development

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism is a global phenomenon. It is the use of violence and intimidation to coerce for various reasons. In recent times, the spate of terrorist attacks by various groups seeking political and religious reforms in Nigeria is alarming and has become worrisome as they pose a serious threat to Nigeria's security. Furthermore, they are gradually destroying public confidence in the nation's security system. Conditions which support the development and growth of terrorism in Nigeria range from socio-economic factors such as poverty to religion. This paper examines terrorism in Nigeria, its causes and implications for Nigerian Democracy. Data for the study were drawn primarily from secondary sources as well as the authors' knowledge of the Nigerian political scene. The paper argues that terrorism has adverse implications for Nigeria's security. Socio-economic transformation, security awareness and sensitization and collaboration among security agents among others are advocated as possible solutions to the menace.

Keywords: terrorism, conflict, crises, democracy, national security

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INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is the use of violence and intimidation as a means of coercion for political purposes. It is a form of political violence that targets civilians deliberately and indiscriminately and a shadowy world of faceless enemies with irregular tactics marked by extreme brutality and bestiality (Magstadt 2011). Terrorist attacks have taken a heavy toll on humanity, especially innocent civilians at different forms and dimensions. Incidentally therefore, about 80% of victims of such oppression and anti-human acts in the recent years have been the vulnerable civilians, mainly women and children (Njoku 2011).

Since the September 11, 2011 terror attacks in United States which led to the death of many American citizens and nationals of other countries, governments, Non-governmental organisations, Inter-governmental Organisations and ordinary people have paid more attention to the issue of terrorism than ever before. As a result, the need to prevent or respond to acts of terror has radically transformed the policing and security landscape of countries which is often marked by the enactment of new laws, creation of new security agencies or departments, fostering inter-agency intelligence sharing and technology provision of new resources, development of technologies, and intensification of bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation on policing and security. The ability of governments to deter, defeat and respond decisively to terrorist attacks is one of the priorities of our times. In

Nigeria, Africa and indeed the world over, terrorism has become a daily occurrence and a challenge. In short, Nigerian democracy has been challenged by daily terrorist occurrences which the government has not found solutions to and this has left the masses disillusioned and disheartened. Though the government was cautious in the beginning in branding any group terrorist, in recent times following the spate of barbaric attacks on innocent citizens, it has come out to denounce all acts of terror stating that "terrorism is worse than civil war". Nigerian democracy has witnessed series of crises including a Civil War in 1967-1970 but none has led to wanton destruction of property and loss of lives as is currently going on in the country. Bomb blasts have become common feature in Nigeria and this take place on a daily basis in the news; in fact, it is now the headlines of most tabloids. Terrorist groups have continued to unleash terror on the country and its citizenry while the government is helpless as to what to do. Recently in 2014, over 200 school girls were abducted from a secondary school in Chibok village in Borno State leading to public and international outcry against it. While the government was still seeking for means of recruiting them, other girls numbering over a hundred have been abducted. These young girls are not only denied their fundamental human right to education, but the right to liberty which democracy guarantees. What started as an innocent protest against some policies of government has blossomed into a full-blown terrorism condition. This paper examines the security threats posed by terrorism in Nigeria. The paper is divided into four sections and begins with a conceptualization of terrorism, its historical

evolution, types, characteristics and causes. Furthermore, it examines the issues of terrorism in the country with a focus on various terrorist groups. Finally, it contends that terrorism poses a challenge to the country's democracy and security and makes recommendations.

TERRORISM: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

From the etymological concept, the word terrorism comes from the Latin and French words: *terrere*, and *terrorisme*, meaning "to frighten," (Campbell 2001). The words "Terrorist" and "Terrorism" were used for the first time during the French Revolution (1793 to 1794). "Terrorism" was used in 1795 to refer to the Reign of Terror by the Revolutionary government while agents of the government who enforced the barbaric policies of the regime were referred to as "Terrorists."

Terrorism remains an elusive concept as it is often very difficult to define because the term is often politically and emotionally charged as 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.' Among academics there are ongoing debates and instead of defining it what we have are arguments about its meaning (White 2011). Despite this challenge however, the following definitions will help us to understand acts that constitute terrorism.

Goldstein and Pevehouse (2012), define terrorism as 'political violence that targets civilians deliberately and indiscriminately'. A United Nations Security Council report (2004) defines terrorism as any act "intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act.' The FBI's definition is similar to this as it sees terrorism 'as the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives' (www.terrorism.com). Furthermore, Chaturvedi (2006) defines it as 'the use of violence or indulgence in violent activity for any political end or in order to put the public in fear,' while to Karacasulu (2005) 'it is the act of violence committed against innocent persons or non-combatant that is intended to achieve political end through fear and intimidations.' The AU Convention on the Prevention and Combating Terrorism article 1 (3) defines terrorism as any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to:

- (i) intimidate, put in fear, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint or to act according to certain principles; or
- (ii) Disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or
- (iii) Create general insurrection in a State.

Terrorism is also defined as the use of violence to obtain political demands from a government. It has often been described as the weapon of the weak against the strong and terrorist attacks are often designed to undermine support and confidence in the existing government by creating a climate of fear and uncertainty. Terrorists therefore use

violence as a form of psychological warfare to drive home their demand. Traditionally, the purpose of terrorism is to demoralise a civilian population in order to use its discontent as leverage on national governments or other parties to a conflict. Related to this is the aim of creating drama in order to gain media attention for a cause. 'Terrorists with a cause' are often said to be the most dangerous to the society and according to Magstadt (2011) more than 600 identifiable terrorist groups exist worldwide with most of them found in the Middle East.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Violence is the result of many factors and as a result, one theory may not be sufficient to explain it. A combination of theories is therefore adopted in this study namely de-individuation, social learning theory and frustration-aggression theory. It is hoped that a combination of these theories would help our understanding of the subject-matter of terrorism.

De-individuation theory focuses on collective behavior. It postulates that people tend to lose their sense of individuality and identity and take on the identity of the group to which they find themselves at a particular time and in such a moment can commit acts of aggression that they would not have ordinarily committed as an individual believing the group would take responsibility for their action. This theory helps in understanding the rationale behind a group taking responsibility whenever an attack has been launched but does not really explain the causes of terrorism.

Social Learning theory is one of the theories of violence which seeks an explanation of the phenomenon of terrorism. The core of this theory is that aggressive behavior is learnt. People are abusive, aggressive and violent because they have learnt these behaviors. Bandura (1973) believes most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling. For instance, if children and even adults are exposed to abusive and violent scenes through movies and games, they model such behavior. In the case of terrorism, would-be terrorists are often radicalized via violent movies of 'jihad' by some terror groups or individuals. While this is true to an extent, exposure to violent crimes does not always predispose an individual to crimes because empirical evidence has shown that those who have been exposed to violence in their childhood often do not want others to experience it.

Frustration Aggression also known as Frustration-aggression-displacement theory was developed in 1939 by John Dollard and Neal Muller and others. The theory associates the root cause of aggression to the frustration which results from an individual's inability to attain their goals. It is believed that individuals who find themselves in frustrating environments often seek ways of transferring their aggression. In the case of terrorism, empirical evidence supports this; in Nigeria for instance, jobless youths and the poor who are frustrated because of the socio-economic situation of the country often prey to the appeals of terrorism and easily radicalized by terrorists themselves who are disgruntled by the moral, social and political life of the country. Such people feel that society has cheated them, that life is unfair, and that they deserve far more, they are unwilling to wait or work for something better and believe that the only way to get is to take (Magstad 2011).

ORIGIN AND CASES OF TERRORISM IN HISTORY

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon as acts or the threat of such actions has been in existence for decades. All through history, there have been cases of violence against civilian populations. The Zealots of Judea, also known as dagger-men which carried on an underground campaign of assassination of Roman occupation forces, as well as any Jews they felt had collaborated with the Romans and the Assassins a group which rose in the late 13th century and assassinated leaders of enemies groups were the earliest terrorist groups. With the rise of the modern nation state after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, terrorism assumed a wider dimension as politics, religion, insurrection, ethnic strife led to open warfare. The late 19th century, which witnessed radical political theories and improvements in weapons technology led to the formation of small groups of revolutionaries who effectively attacked nation-states while in the first half of the 20th century, the two World Wars led to the intensification of nationalism as members of ethnic groups whose states had been absorbed by others chose terror as a method to conduct their struggle and make their situation known to world powers (www.terrorism-research.com/history/earl...).

The killing of the male Israelite children on the order of the Egyptian Pharaoh, the slaying of children in Bethlehem from ages zero to two years by Herod were early acts of terrorism (Exodus 2: 22; Mathew 2:16). In contemporary times, Hitler's holocaust which led to the death of about six million Jews was one of the worst cases of terrorism in the history of mankind while in Africa, the Rwandan genocide which witnessed the killing of about five hundred thousand to one million Tutsis by the Hutus-led government, interahamwe and impuzamugambi militias in 1994, the killing of eight thousand Bosniak men and boys in July 1995 in Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina by army of Republika Srpska under the command of General Ratko Mladic are also acts of terror (en.wikipedia.org/Rwanda_Genocide). These cases are in addition to other myriad examples of terrorist acts that cannot be cited here.

However, terrorist attacks have become more deadly over the past 50 years as their attacks have increasingly employed more violent means to kill or injure civilians. The attack on the World Trade Centre towers in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, DC On 11 September, 2001, by Al Qaeda, the London train bombing, suicide bombing in places like Russia, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nigeria, the recent brutal murder of a British soldier by two Nigerians, the Kenya Mall killings in 2013 by Al Shabab have introduced a new dimension to the issue of terrorism.

TYOLOGIES AND CONTEXTUALIZATION OF TERRORISM

Various types of terrorism have been identified and these include:

State terrorism: This exists when a government perpetrates terrorists tactics on its own citizens such as occurred under Herod, Hitler in Germany, in France and Abacha's regime in Nigeria which witnessed brutal killing and assassination of those who supposedly opposed the government. It may also be referred to as Structural Terrorism defined broadly as terrorist acts carried out by governments in pursuit of political objectives, often as part of their foreign policy.

International terrorism: according to the Federal Bureau of Information (FBI), international terrorism transcends national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished and the persons intended to intimidate or coerce, or the location in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum. It is also known as state-sponsored terrorism and exists when a government harbors international terrorist (as the Taliban Government in Afghanistan did in the case of Osama Bin Laden and the Al Qaeda organization), finances international terrorist operations, or supports international terrorism outside its border. A good example is Al Qaeda.

Domestic terrorism: This is practiced within a particular country by terrorists groups with the aim of influencing the conduct of government through its activities. The group may or may not have ties to any foreign terrorist group. Examples of domestic terrorists are Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al Shaabab in Somalia.

Transnational terrorism: This arises when terrorist groups not backed by any government and operating in different countries cooperate with one another or when one of such groups' terrorist actions cross national boundaries. Example is the bombing of the US embassy in Kenya, bombing of the World Trade Centre in 1993 and 2001 and bombing of Kenyan West Mall shopping complex by Al Shabab in 2013 etc. Examples of transnational terrorists groups are Al Shaabab and Al Qaeda.

Religious terrorism: it is terrorism performed by groups or individuals, the motivation of which is typically rooted in faith-based tenets. Terrorist acts throughout the centuries have been performed on religious grounds with the hope to either spread or enforce a system of belief, viewpoint or opinion. Religious terrorism does not in itself necessarily define a specific religious standpoint or view, but instead usually defines an individual or a group view or interpretation of that belief system's teachings, e.g., Al-Qaeda network, Palestinian Sunni Muslim Organization Hamas, the Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah, Boko Haram etc

Political terrorism: This involves criminal behaviour designed primarily to generate fear in the community, or substantial segment of it, for political purposes as in the case of the military governments of Ibrahim Babangida and Sani-Abacha in Nigeria which witnessed the assassination of many innocent citizens.

Non-Political terrorism: Terrorism that is not aimed at political purposes but which exhibits "conscious design to create and maintain a high degree of fear for coercive purposes, but the end is individual or collective gain rather than the achievement of a political objective."

Left-Wing Terrorism: The major aim of this kind is outright elimination of capitalism and subsequent replacement with a communist or socialist regime. Left-wing terrorism developed following the contradictions of capitalism. With the fall of the Soviet Union and the end to cold war, left wing terrorism is now uncommon.

Right-wing Terrorism: these are groups that seek to do away with liberal democratic governments and create fascist states in their place. Neo-fascist terrorists frequently attack immigrants and refugees from the developing world.

Quasi-terrorism: The activities incidental to the commission of crimes of violence that are similar in form and method to genuine terrorism but which nevertheless lack its essential ingredient. It is not the main purpose of the quasi-terrorists to induce terror in the immediate victim as in the case of genuine terrorism, but the quasi-

terrorist uses the modalities and techniques of the genuine terrorist and produces similar consequences and reaction.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TERRORIST GROUPS

The following traits according to Madgstad (2011) are exhibited by terrorist groups:

- Oversimplification of issues: terrorists do not have interest in debates but often imagine that people will support their cause.
- Frustration: they feel that society has cheated them, that life is unfair, and that they deserve far more, they are unwilling to wait or work for something better and believe that the only way to get is to take.
- Orientation toward risk taking: many seek situations involving adventure and are easily bored.
- Self-righteousness: they display holier-than-thou attitude, dogmatism and intolerance of opposing views
- Utopianism: they harbour an unexamined belief that heaven or earth is just over the horizon and the only thing standing in the way is the corrupt and oppressive existing order.
- Social isolation: one expert noted that terrorists are often 'people, who are really lonely,' and for some, a terrorist cell may be the only 'family' they have.
- A need to be noticed: terrorists share a need to feel important, a desire to make a personal imprint by getting newsprint.
- A taste for blood: some kill without an ounce of remorse. They are hardened and see victims as mere objects as observed among Nazi guards at extermination camps during the holocaust.
- They are small and tight-knit comprising of family members and close friends in most cases
- They are often ethnically and politically homogenous
- Terrorists cells are often difficult to penetrate because of the composition of members and close friends
- There is utmost secrecy among the group. Some like Al Qaeda operate on a need-to-know basis closely guarding and compartmentalising information within its ranks like intelligence services do.
- They recruit adolescent youths, unemployed graduates and those within the society who are dissatisfied and disenchanting and willing to do anything
- They seldom operate from a fix location.
- The lifespan of most terrorists/group is only about 5 to 10 years while their leaders tend to come and go.
- Terrorist groups are often funded by wealthy individuals while a state can sponsor terrorism by funding or harboring a terrorist organization.

TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is featuring more and more in acts of terrorism. On 25 December 2005, a Nigerian, Farouk Abdulmutallab popularly referred to as the 'underwear bomber' was convicted and sentenced to life in 2012 for attempting to detonate a plastic explosive hidden in his

underwear while aboard a flight to the US. Recently in 2013, Adebolajo and Adebowale murdered a British soldier in London in cold blood in broad day light. While Adebolajo faces life imprisonment, Adebowale was sentenced to forty-five years. Though these are naturalized British citizens of Nigerian descent, there is no doubt that Nigeria is featuring more and more once in international terrorism and this continues to mar the image of the country. Back home in Nigeria, terrorism is not a new phenomenon although its frequency in recent times is becoming alarming. As early as 1985, a case of terrorism was witnessed when Dele Giwa, a journalist with Newswatch magazine was murdered in cold blood through a letter bomb which pointed to a key official in the then government. State terrorism was also displayed during the regime of General SaniAbacha, when SaroWiwa and eight Ogoni men were sentenced to death by hanging for crying against environmental degradation and demanding for resource control. Assassination of political opponents by thugs, kidnapping for rituals etc are all acts of terror in the country. That Nigeria has not been classified with other terrorist nations does not absolve her of terrorism. The use of violence by various groups in the country as is the case of the brutal killing of natives by the Fulani in Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau states for whatever reasons, constitute an act of terrorism. In discussing the emergence of terrorism in Nigeria, it is important to look at two major groups whose activities have elements of terror and violence and constitute a threat to the security of the nation.

Terrorism in Nigeria could be traceable to the fourth republican politicians who armed jobless youths to use them as tugs to win election by using them to intimidate their political opponents during electioneering period. These evil politicians abandoned the tugs who now possess dangerous weapons use them to perpetrate violence on innocent Nigerians. Terrorism in Nigeria takes various forms like suicide bombing, kidnapping/abduction, firing at unarmed innocent citizens etc. Modern day terrorism in Nigeria can be traced to the activities of Niger Delta militants who waged war against the Nigerian government and Multinational Oil Companies over the issues of resource allocation and non-payment of compensations for environmental degradation. Militant groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), MASSOB, Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) led by Mujahid Dokubo – Asari and the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) led by Ateke Tom and many other groups in the Niger-Delta were reputed for hostage taking, kidnapping for ransom, pipeline vandalization, oil-theft, arson and ambush. More than five hundred oil workers, politicians, actors, children, and other important personalities were kidnapped or taken hostage in the process. The argument of the group at the initial stage was that that kidnapping and hostage taking were introduced to force or pressure the Nigerian government to take decisive steps towards ameliorating their situation however with time foreign nationals irrespective of whether they worked in the oil industry or anywhere near the oil-producing areas or not were kidnapped. More than five thousand foreigners, most of whom were from America, Britain, Thailand, Egypt, and the Philippines were kidnapped and taken hostage by Niger-Delta groups. With the introduction of kidnapping by the militants, kidnapping and hostage took another dimension in Nigeria as many Nigerian politicians, university lecturers, kings and their chiefs, musicians and movie industry workers featured among the kidnapped with some dying in the process. With arms surrender by the militants and granting of amnesty by the Federal Government under President Shehu Musa Yar'ádua, the geography of kidnapping-for-ransom changed with

people being kidnapped in different parts of the country. In some cases victims were killed when ransom was not paid or partly paid or to shield the identity of the kidnappers. While Nigerians were heaving a sigh of relief from the Niger Delta militants following arms surrender by the various group as a result of amnesty granted them, the Boko Haram sect emerged on the Nigerian political scene.

Boko Haram is a dreaded group in Nigeria and neighbouring countries. The mention of the name instills fears in the mind of the ordinary citizen. In some circles, people are often warned not to mention the name while in homes; people speak in hush tones while discussing the activities of the sect. Of various groups that have emerged in Nigeria in recent times, the activities of this group are the deadliest and of utmost concern.

Boko Haram was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri in 2002 with the aim of establishing a Sharia government in Borno State. The name of the group which literally translated means 'western education is forbidden' shows its opposition to anything western which it feels is corrupting. Some members of the group were said to have received training in Afghanistan and Mauritania (known to be terrorist enclaves). In addition, Boko Haram is believed to be potentially allied with Al Qaeda (Wikipedia). During the first seven years of its existence activities of the sect was peaceful but this took a drastic turn in 2009 following the launch of an investigation into its activities by the Nigerian government as a result of reports that its members were arming themselves. With the arrest of several members of the group deadly clashes with Nigerian security forces erupted in which the fighters reportedly used fuel-laden motorcycles and bows with poison arrows to attack a police station. The death toll from the fracas was estimated 700. During this period, the group's founder and then leader was killed while still in police custody. This infuriated the followers who carried out their first terrorist attack in Borno in January 2010 leading to the death of four people. From that time, the violence has escalated in frequency and intensity. Major bombings in the country such as the June 2011 Police Headquarters and August 2011 UN House bombings, and recent bombings in Nyanya and Wuse II in Abuja and January 2012 Kano bombing that left over one thousand people dead, Jos 2014 bombing in addition to attacks on individuals and churches were carried out by the group with over 2000 people said to have been killed in the various attacks. A new strategy by the group is the abduction of young schools girls which denies them access to education. Recently in 2013, Boko Haram was proscribed by the Nigerian government while a ransom of \$7 million dollars was placed on its leader Shekau Abubakar by the American government. The Federal Government of Nigeria has also commenced air strikes in three states notorious for Boko Haram activities namely; Borno, Yobe and Adamawa while a state of emergency has also been declared in these states but despite these measures, their activities continue unabated.

CAUSES OF TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

Experts are of the opinion that terrorism is the result of an overlap of concurring and mutually reinforcing factors which manifest in different forms depending on the individual and context (Roy 2003; Bakker 2006; Saggat 2006; Silke, 2008). However, there's a consensus that grievance, ideology, mobilisation and tipping points are ingredients in the radicalisation process. Whereas grievance is understood to be the sense of alienation or disenchantment that

provides a cognitive opening, ideology entails the extreme set of ideas that provides the individual with a new outlook and explanation for the world an individual finds him or herself. Mobilisation captures the process by which the individual is slowly integrated into a community of individuals who are like-minded and create a self-reinforcing community, and finally tipping points are the specific events that push an individual or group from rhetoric to action.

Various factors have been identified as the causes of terrorism in Nigeria. These would be grouped into psychological, economic, political and social-cultural factors.

Psychological factors: some experts are of the view that terrorism is the product of transferred aggression resulting from years of abuse suffered by some individuals which could be sexual, physical (beating, choking, burning etc) and verbal. Some of these people mainly youths who may have been tagged 'good for nothing' for whatever reason, may choose to become martyrs because they want to be regarded as heroes by friends and family members. Their belief is that if they are not good for anything, they are good at evil.

Political factors: it argued that nondemocratic governments breed conditions that terrorists can exploit to further their own agenda. Societies with weak states characterised by bad governance, unstable political structures and fragmented political culture are most prone to terrorism. Even in democracies, disenchantment with the government of the day, absence of legitimacy and alienation of a particular group from governance and the dominance of a particular group could lead to frustration which will result into protests which may eventually degenerate to terrorism.

Economic factors: Economic factors play a significant role in encouraging terrorism. In Nigeria, the rise of terrorist groups and subsequent ease of recruitment of followers is directly related to the failure of governance as seen in the level of poverty, unemployment, crime and the resultant insecurity. Nigeria is acclaimed one the poorest countries in the world despite its oil wealth. Endemic poverty which is the product of corruption among others provides a situation whereby people are willing to do anything to earn a living. Idle and unemployed youths resort to criminal activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping and membership of various cults. Others are readily available for recruitment into terrorist groups. Most of the people recruited as terrorists in the country are usually unemployed youths. Examples of Niger Delta militants and Boko Haram members are a case in point. The issue of widespread official corruption, poverty, moral decadence, injustice, among others, in the country are part of the major sources of grievances harboured by the Boko Haram sect. High rates of poverty have alienated many young people in the area and as a result, many Muslims are becoming increasingly disenchanted with the current system. They therefore believe that poverty and collapsed governance are responsible for the failures and corrupt attitudes of modern elites (trained at secular schools) who have acquired Western education and are currently in positions of power. Consequently, they question the rationale behind Western education if it cannot secure them decent jobs or make political leaders in Nigeria to be accountable and responsive. This environment of frustration made many to fall victims to the appeals of violent extremist ideologies which was why some graduates of tertiary institution store up their certificates in 2004 to join the group. Thus, the 'movement used the term Boko Haram to mobilize unemployed, unskilled and poverty-stricken youths to join its cause to dislodge the secular, Boko (elite)-controlled state in Nigeria.'

Social-cultural factors: Ethnic cleavages and religious fundamentalism play key roles in encouraging terrorism. Unresolved religious and communal disputes have resulted into wars of terror. Nigeria is a country with a population of about 160 million people, with diverse ethnic groups of more than 250. The country is also polarized along religious lines with the Christian followed by the Muslim religion in the majority while other religious groups are in the minority. Religious crises are often between the two dominant groups and such crises in recent times haven taken a terrorist dimension with the bombing of churches. The ongoing 'jihad' by Boko Haram is an attempt to institute an Islamic state in the country. This decision can be traced back to 2000, when 12 of the 36 states in Nigeria, decided to enforce Sharia law in the country (Tisdall 2009). The *Boko Haram* members were mostly angry at the northern Nigerian states for introducing moderate Sharia codes that subsequently allowed the region to suffer from heavy corruption and severe poverty (Gargon and Bean, 2010). The solution in the sect's view therefore was to overthrow the secular Nigerian State and introduce strict application of Sharia law as a moral societal cleanser necessary for the creation of an Islamic state.

TERRORISM AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR NIGERIA'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Terrorism has serious implications for the security of the nation and its socio-political development. The Nigeria state is already insecure owing to the activities of various groups such as armed robbers, kidnappers and cultist among others but the coming on stage of terror groups has heightened this. The activities of these groups in the country particularly the Boko Haram group have continued to generate concern within academic and intelligence circles. Ever since the Islamist fundamentalist movement, the *Boko Haram* began to challenge the security of Nigeria, particularly after the September 11 terrorist attack in New York, US defence and intelligence officials have focused on such Islamic groups in Nigeria and their potential to threaten US national security. One assessment conducted jointly by the Department of Defence and USAID in 2006 concluded that it 'found little evidence that there is an active and growing terrorist threat in northern Nigeria' (Onuoha 2012). Despite this, the threat posed by terrorism in Nigeria is real. The presence of terrorist groups in the country portends danger for Nigeria because the country is not safe from transnational terrorism. With international terror networks such as the al-Qaeda within global reach and the changing security environment in West Africa occasioned by the emergence of terror groups such as Qaeda in the land of Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) operating across the Sahara Desert in Mauritania, Morocco, Mali and Niger, there is growing fear among Western diplomats that a Nigerian sleeper terrorist cell may be emerging (Fabiya, 2008 and Walker, 2009). Nigeria's porous borders with Niger Republic, where al- AQIM is operating, have actually heightened such fears. In addition, the expression of interest in June 2010 by AQIM to assist the *Boko Haram* in staging attacks on Nigeria further complicates the emerging terrorist landscape in Nigeria. Also in an interview with Al Jazeera on 14 June 2010, AQIM leader Abu Musab Abdal-Wadoud claimed that his group has been talking to the *Boko Haram* and intends to supply it with weapons to 'defend Muslims in Nigeria and stop the advance of a minority of Crusaders' (Stratfor2010). He further noted that al-Qaeda has an interest in sub-Saharan Africa for 'its strategic depth that would

give it a bigger scope for manoeuvres.' Already there is a report of a growing link between both groups which prompted the US government to announce a ransom of \$23 million to help in capturing five leaders of militant groups spreading terror in West Africa and Nigeria. The ransom placed on Shekau was \$7 million for recently (2013) calling on Islamist nations of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq known for acts of terror to support the sect in creating an Islamist state in Nigeria. Though at this point it cannot be convincingly demonstrated to what extent the *Boko Haram* has any formal links with transnational jihadists, it may not be long before this becomes fully blown as the Nigeria environment characterised by poor governance, low economic output and general frustration among the people provides an enabling environment highly conducive for this. An American scholar recently warned that there is a platform of certain Islamist movements which provide extremist ideologies in Africa that can also create an incubator for international terrorists. If not properly engaged, he argues, 'Africa's active Islamist movements pose a serious danger to security at the individual, national, and international level' (Devlin-Foltz in Onuoha 2012).

CONCLUSION

Terrorism is increasingly being recognized as a threat to Nigeria's foreign and domestic security. The government no longer shies away from calling the Boko Haram a terrorist group following devastating terrorist activities by the sect going on in the country. The threat of terrorism is not just perceived but real and continues to discourage foreign investors while threatening the security and unity of the nation. The benefits which accrue from a democratic government such as freedom of speech, right to life and education are being jeopardized by heartless killings of those who dare to speak out and innocent girls who 'dare disobey' the sect's warning to leave school and go and get married. Furthermore, people cannot freely go about their businesses for fear of bomb blasts. The government must take necessary steps to ensure the security, stability and unity of the country. In view this, the following are recommended:

The country's economy must be revamped and put on a sound footing with the eradication of corruption in all its ramifications. Effective poverty alleviation programme must also be put in place while improvement in welfare of Nigerians, especially young people through provision of jobs is necessary. There should also be an inclusive government devoid of ethnic cleavages. When people have faith in their government and feel a sense of belonging, there will not do anything to sabotage it.

The use of thugs during elections should be discouraged as evidence has shown that some of them are recruited as terrorists when there are no longer jobs for them to do after elections. The rise of Niger Delta militancy and the current Boko Haram sect is a case in point.

Furthermore, every family has a role to play in ensuring that family members are not involved in acts of terrorism. Teachings on patriotism, the fear of God and love and respect for people of other faiths would go a long way to achieve this.

Also, religious leaders should socialize their members on the need for love and tolerance of and respect for other faiths while unwise utterances about other religions which could cause tensions and eventual recourse to terror should be avoided.

In addition, there should be collaboration among security agencies like the State Security Service, the Police, the Armed Forces, the Civil Defence as well as the involvement of more groups beyond uniformed forces while government should train special anti-terrorist squad which could be created out of the Army, Air force, Navy and Police to complement the efforts of the National Intelligence Agency and State Security Service (SSS) in fighting terrorism.

Security awareness and sensitization programmes should be embarked upon for the public. The Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) often does this after its news and this should be emulated by other television stations and the media in general. Awareness should also be extended to institutions of learning as well as governmental and non-governmental establishments. This way, the public would be involved more and more in the fight against terrorism. In addition, security organizations should involve the public and see it as their ally in intelligence gathering.

Finally, fighting terrorism requires collective effort by all Nigerians; it should not be left for the security agents only. Every Nigerian must see security as a collective responsibility and therefore be willing to volunteer information whenever the need arises.

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