

The Boko Haram Insurgency and Nigeria's International Relations

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Abstract

This work examined the Boko Haram Insurgency and Nigeria's external relations. As the activities of the Boko Haram religious group assumed a dimension that promoted it to the level of terrorism, it received international response. The aim, of the study was to determine how this international response to this local insurgency impacted on Nigeria. We relied on secondary sources of data collection to analyze the implications of forces on Nigerian's external relations. Our theoretical framework was on the collective security doctrine which sees the entire international community as one threat to peace in any state is a threat to peace everywhere. The Boko Haram insurgency which started as a local resistance group evolved to a terrorist group with external connections with the al-Qaeda, ISIS and others. Their operations even extended to Nigeria's neighboring states. The attraction of the international community impacted negatively on Nigeria's external relations in the economic, political and security realms. Nigeria's borders became fortified to avoid infiltrations and escalations of the insurgency and fallouts. Human and materials resources were lost. Investment opportunities were threatened. Relations between Nigeria and other countries were bridged. So much politics played out both at the local and international levels. Based on these findings, the study recommends internal cohesion between the government and "All", as well as closer ties and collaboration between Nigeria and her neighbors and the international community giving the fact that the world has become so integrated, so interconnected and so interdependent that what happens in any part of the world is instantly felt everywhere.

Keywords:

Boko haram,
Insurgency, Nigeria's
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Background to the Study

In recent years, there has been surge in both tempo and range of global insurgencies that get transformed into terrorists activities. Nigeria became one a recent addition to the list of states affected through the activities of the Boko Haram sect. According to Aderele 2012, insurgency is rebellion against a constituted authority. It is a movement unlawful by virtue of not being authorized by or in accordance with the law of the land. Insurgence can be cloaked in politics, economic, religious, ethnic or a combination of factors. Each share different specifics but have the propensity to disrupt the central government by means considered illegal by the government.

Insurgent groups have emerged at different points and in different forms in Nigeria's political history. Some of these insurgent groups include.

1. The then Eastern Nigeria Biafran Sectarian Group of the Civil War
2. The Movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)
3. The Odua people's Congress (OPC) in the South West
4. The now Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the East.
5. The Northern region has always been a very fertile ground for religious activism, beginning with the Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio in the early 18th century.

The situation in the north is more manifest because of its relatively monolithic character. Many fundamentalist religious groups, the most prominent being the Maitatsine sect had evolved through several religious uprisings. The Maitatsine movement under the leadership of Alhaji Marrwa Maitatsine, an immigrant, was made up of a bunch of religious fanatics. Their modes of operation was assault and murder of both the rich and poor, irrespective of religious learning, who in their reasoning were not conducting themselves according to the dictates of the Quran.

According to Ajayi 2012, the half –hearted implementation of the sharia laws especially the double standard or duplicity involved in the Northern States of Sokoto, Kano and Bornu elicited the justifiable anger of the puritanical Maitatsine group which proceeded to spearhead religious uprising in Kano (twice in 1950) and later Yola and Maiduguri in 1982 and 1983 respectively. Evidently, the Boko Haram sect has its root and drew inspiration from the Maitatsine in terms of objectives, but its organization, planning, armed resistance and modus operandi are more in tune with the Taliban in Afghanistan. The actual date when Boko Haram evolved in Nigeria remains unresolved. The years 1995, 1999, 2000, 2002 and 2003 have been freely ascribed to it. The root of the Boko Haram is traced to a group known as Shabaab Muslim Youth Organization in 1995 that later became the Boko Haram in 2000. Boko Haram by translation means Western Education is forbidden, is officially known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Liddalawati Wail –Jihad, meaning people committed to the propagation of the prophet's teachings and Jihad. It was established by an Islamic cleric Mustapha Modu Jon, but popularly called Mohammed Yusuf.

Boko Haram maintained a shadowy existence until 1999 when Mohammed Yusuf was extrajudicially executed in 2009 while he was in the police custody. Yusuf successfully radicalized the group and exposed them to foreign collaboration with other fundamentalist Islamic group like the Al-Qaeda. With this inspiration from Yusuf, the group stepped up its activism. Yusuf established his own mosque in Maiduguri which became the headquarters of the group as well as the dispersal center of the doctrine which sees Western education and democracy as corruptive and immoral. His followers were largely illiterate youths, some of whom are school drop outs or petty itinerant traders and array of jobless drifters, especially the Almajiris who bonded and escalated their activities especially after the death of Yusuf their leader.

According to Ogonor 2000, international relations in very broad terms refer to all activities, public and private, that extend or have the potential of extending beyond the territorial boundaries of a state. Ogaba 2002, see it as a field that embraces all intercourse and interactions among states and all movements of people, goods and ideas across national frontiers. It is a field that analyzes foreign policies and political processes between States. States can be said to be the major actors in international relation hence it can be seen to be concerned with the processes by which sovereign states adjust their national interests to one another. The consequences of the Boko Haram activities no doubt have gone beyond the territorial boundaries of Nigeria and impacted on Nigeria's external relations. In response to the escalating violence perpetrated by the group, the Nigerian government responded with military force. However, after many years of these responses without success, especially as Nigeria's borders with Cameroun, Chad and Niger provided escape routes for the insurgents, Nigeria sought the cooperation of these neighbours to checkmate a growing menace. Moreover, the initial nonchalant attitudes of these neighbours were overwhelmed by the Boko Haram attacks exposing their vulnerability. The African Union, though did not intervene directly, their influence were invaluable in getting military co-operation of these States after an authorization for the establishment of a Multi-national Joint Task Force (MNJF), requested by member states of the Lake Chad Basin.

Eventually, between fifth to seventh of February, 2015, a Planning Conference was held in Yaoundé, Cameroun to develop the MNJF's concept of operations. It was agreed that an 8,700 international stirring force headquartered in N'Djamena, Chad be established and authorized to exercise the right of hot pursuit. Other countries like South Africa, Brazil, U.S.A, Russia and Israel have been involved through promises and assistance ranging from supply of weaponry, financial supports, military training on insurgency and sharing of security intelligence.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to examine the external connections and fallouts from the activities of the Boko haram sect in Nigeria. Specifically, the work is aimed at the following:

- a. Examining the activities of the Boko Haram Sects in Nigeria.
- b. Analyzing the response of the Nigerian State to these activities.
- c. Determining the external impact to these responses by the Nigerian state.
- d. Studying the external driving force in the Boko Haram operations.

- e. Analyzing the implications of the activities of the Boko Haram Sect on Nigeria's external political, economic and social relations.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework on which this study is anchored is the Collective Security Doctrine of international relations. Theories of international relations are images and perspective that serve as mechanical tools to describe and explain the dynamics of world events. Foreign policy decisions seek to reflect policy perspectives on existing theories because decisions and actions are shaped and influenced by the interacting domestic, international and psychological settings in the world stage. (Ogaba2000:6-16). The activities of the Boko Haram sect as an internal crisis expanded to Nigeria's neighboring states that the responses of the Nigerian government were influenced by the interacting domestic, international and psychological exigencies of global politics.

The collective security theory according to Ogonor (2000) is an old theory of global pacification. Certain aspects of the Amphictyonic Council of Ancient Greece and the Truce of God in the middle Ages bear traces of limited collective security. However, the first adoption of the theory in a global level was with the establishment of the League of Nations in 1919 and the United Nations in 1945. The theory revolves around the principle that all nations share primary interest in maintaining peace that a threat to peace anywhere is a threat to peace everywhere. All threat to peace anywhere must be treated as the concern of "All". The UN as an organization whose aim is to maintain world peace through collective efforts hold this theory so highly.

According to Organski (1958), the idea is to provide and reject all aggressive use of force in international relations. For Inis 1962, collective security is a specialized instrument of international politics intended to forestall the arbitrary and aggressive use of force in international relations. According to him, "the stock in trade of collective security is diplomatic, economic and military sanctions to induce rational decision and avoid threatened damage to national interests. Collective security for Inis assumes the satisfaction of an extra ordinary complex network of requirements which might involve the sacrifice of national interests. These are the traditional bases of the collective security theory that got refined with the evolving technological transformations that have affected global politics.

According to Baylis 2000, advance in technology as a result of globalization now pose serious security challenges on transnational threats, and national vulnerabilities. The dangers associated with these threats and efforts to deal with them are so complex that states have developed new forms of co-operation on the building blocks of collective security doctrine. While states like the U.S find ways to survive and live in the turbulent transition, other states have imploded, leaving armed militants, non-governmental corporation and international agencies to play increasing and more complicated role in providing security. The ravaging complexities of war that formed the basis of the collective security doctrine have now been replaced by other security threats prominent of which is terrorism. Super power rivalry and fear of nuclear holocaust so prominent during the cold war have receded and overtaken by fear of terrorism especially since Sept, 11 2001.

The power of Communism as a competitive international ideology has vanished and new concerns about Islamic fundamentalism like the Boko Haram Sect in Nigeria have emerged. The world has become so tightly connected and integrated as technology has expanded the capacity to generate and manufacture information and knowledge. There is a rise in global network of problem solving Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to address the evolving challenges in global politics. All these efforts are anchored on the very fact that a threat to peace anywhere is a threat to peace everywhere which is the basic foundation of collective security. This is the idea behind most of the external connections to the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. This group committed various human rights abuses, destructions and killings of innocent civilians, engaged security forces in armed confrontation leading to casualties and destruction of lives and property that are against international humanitarian law which all states in the world are bound to protect.

Activities of the Boko Haram

The operations of Boko Haram within Nigeria created the theatre for external dimensions, bearing in mind our definition of international relations as all activities that extend or have the potential of extending beyond the territorial boundaries of a state. The Boko Haram sect based in the North eastern region of Nigeria comprising Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states has real support bases in Cameroun, Niger Republic and Republic of Chad. Support bases in these neighbouring countries have made Boko Haram activities elusive and rendered Nigeria's borders porous creating room for infiltration of people, arms and ammunition in Nigeria. The activities of the Boko Haram sect have brought untold danger and insecurity in the North east and created countless tension in the entire country. The attacks have come in various dimensions, some of which are captured in a table.

Table 1: Boko Haram attacks in Frequencies and Fatality

S/N	Year	Attacks	Death	Injured	Displaced	Property Destroyed
1	2009	4	Over 51	Over 167	Over 321	Not less than 15 buildings
2.	2010	10	Over 400	Over 356	Over 459	Not less than 30 building
3.	2011	43	Over 481	Over 273	Over 150	Over 50 buildings, 12 churches, over 43 cars.
4.	2012	37	Over 564	Over 519	Over 423	Over 26 cars
5	2013	23	Over 515	Over 708	Over 3080	Over 99 buildings and 10 cars burnt
6	2014	39	Over 2000	Over 354	Over 550	Over 40 building destroyed
7	2015	56	Over 3076	Over 500	Over 10,000	Not less than 1000 building & over 500 cars destroyed.
Total		Over 203	Over 5741	Over 2877	Over 14983	Over 1825 property

Source: *British Journal of Art and Social Sciences*. ISSN: 2046-9578 Vol. 17 No. 1 (2014),): Sani 2011:7, Okpaga et al 2012:86 *Arabian journal of Business and management reviewer* 1(9):77-98,

The figure given have “over” attached to them showing it is in minimum. From the table above, we can see that the number of Boko Haram attacks in 2009 was 4 that increased to 10 in 2010 after their leader Mohammed Yusuf was killed. The attacks increased in 2011 but reduced in 2012 from 43 to 37 and 23 in 2013 and 39 in 2014. The over 51 death recorded in 2009 excludes the 29th July 2009 attack at the All-night battle with combined security operatives at a Railway Terminus in Maiduguri where we had unreported scores of deaths. In March 2010, about 300 people were killed in the Northern part of Jos, plateau State. In July 9, 2011, 31 people were killed in attacks at Maiduguri and Suleja. In October 1st 2012, attacks were carried out in Adamawa State University, Federal Polytechnics, the school of Health Technology and the University of Maiduguri all in Bornu State and about 43 students were killed. By October 7th 2012 a confrontation between the military and the Sect in Damaturu Yobe State recorded 32 deaths. March 18 2013 recorded over 70 deaths from a Bomb explosion from the sect in a Luxurious Bus Park in kano. The Baga clash between the Joint Task Force and the Sect killed over 200 people in April 2013 and as much as 2000 in January 2015. The May 5th attacks in Gamboru and Ngala towns in Bornu also recorded as high as 300 people killed. 2015 recorded alarming figure of 3076 deaths. The implications of these calamities are just obvious. The injuries recorded and displacement including destructions are also indicated.

Responses to the Boko Haram Activities

These responses will include internal and external reactions. As earlier stated, insurgent groups have emerged at different points and forms in Nigeria's political history. The frequency and intensity of these crisis have always challenged the government into actions that have internal and external consequences. These responses are also in line with the transformation of these activities into act of terrorism by virtue of the sophistication of their operations. The international condemnation of the act of terrorism is a major external dimension to the Boko Haram operations and consequences on Nigerian's external relations. Boko Haram activities have earned external avowal in influence and technology in terms of money, small and heavy ammunition, gorilla attack techniques etc. The Nigerian government has made frantic and desperate efforts to curb the activities of the sect. The government has responded with hard security measures to weaken the rebels. In 2011, the Terrorism Prevention Act was signed but amended in 2012. In June 2013, the government proscribed the sect and classified them as terrorist by virtue of the operations.

Government intensified efforts in training and retraining of military personnel in urban warfare, counter terrorism and counter insurgency. By 2013, the Nigerian government had trained over 7000 military personnel from the Army, Police and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) within and outside the country. Government was open to dialogue with the Sect that it set up various committees. From 2011, the Nigerian government deployed 36,000 military personnel as Joint Task Force (JTF) to Maiduguri, the heart point of the Boko Haram attacks and also other major North –East towns. There was also a Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Maiduguri which also became an instrument in the anti-insurgent campaign of the government. This CJTF was under the supervision of the JTF sector commander.

Nigerian government efforts at combating the Boko Haram operations forced it to move its Military Command Centre to the North East city of Maiduguri. The overwhelming nature of confrontation with the military forces both within and outside Nigeria forced the Boko Haram sect to appeal to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to absorb it, thereby enhancing their international status. The emergence of the ISIS, a protean Salafi Jihadist organization whose brutal violence, ability to capture and hold territory and financial resources and impressive strategic acumen is a big threat to the international society. International assistance has been sought from the international community especially the neighbouring countries to strengthen their borders and constantly check movement of people and materials. These borders made easy access also for refugees fleeing attacks from the insurgents. After the January 2015 Baga massacre by the Boko Haram sect in Bornu State, about 7,300 inhabitants of the area fled to Chad and over 1,000 were trapped in the Island of Kangala in Lake Chad.

Kolofata town in Cameroun also was raided in January by the Boko Haram insurgents but the Cameroun Military was able to kill them that about 143,000 of the rebels died. This incidence made Chad authorities to send troops to Nigeria and Cameroun to assist them repel the insurgents. In February 2012, Cameroun signed an agreement with Nigeria to establish a Joint Trans Border Security Committee. In May 16, 2014, 10 Chinese workers were abducted in a raid on a construction company camp at Waza near the Nigerian border. Vehicles and explosives were recovered in the raid and one Cameroun soldier was killed. In January 2016, The Russian Ambassador to Cameroun also pledged support with more modern weapons. With supports and assistance, the Nigerian Military in January 29 2015 was able to recapture Michika, a border town in Bornu from the rebels. The African Union Convention on the prevention and combating terrorism, Article 1(3) instigated her support for the regional military personnel to tackle the Boko Haram insurgency. In January 30, the African Union pledged 7,500 international troops to aid Nigeria's fight against the rebels. By February 12, the West African Allied force led by Nigeria, Cameroun, Chad and Niger invaded the stronghold of the Boko Haram rebels in Sambisa, a large space of land with huge forest. From this point, the rebels increased attacks in Chad, Cameroun and Niger. By early March 2015, the Sect formally declared allegiance to the ISIS.

The activities of the Boko Haram Sect no doubt overwhelmed the Nigerian government to the extent that it admitted in March 13, 2015 of using foreign mercenaries. The August 2011 bombing of the UN office at Abuja that killed 21 people and injured 73 obviously enhanced the external dimension of the Boko Haram activities. This was the first attack on an international organization as it was seen as not just an attack on Nigeria but the global community. According to the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, the attack was "an assault on those who devote themselves to helping others". The fallout of these attacks and subsequent ones made international organizations limit their support from troubled spots in the country making it difficult for the people to access essential health and education programs. Notwithstanding, the United States government in its own effort has provided advisory support through on the ground technical assistance and expanded intelligence sharing and supports to populations affected by the attacks.

According to the United States 2014 Fact Sheet from the office of the Press Secretary, United States government had made concerted efforts to help Nigeria through on-the ground technical assistance and expanded intelligence sharing. In June 2012, the United State government designated Boko Haram's top commanders as specially Designated Global Terrorist. In June 2013, the Shikuru, Boko Haram's official leader was added to reward for justice programme and offered up to 7 million U.S dollars for information leading to his capture. The United State government also donated 24 Armored vehicles worth 11 million dollars to the Nigerian government to fight the Boko Haram menace. The U.S has worked closely with Nigeria to pursue various proposal on terrorism at the U.N Security Council.

The former U.S President, Bill Clinton, commenting on the activities of the Boko Haram sect attributed it to poverty. The Nigerian government has introduced several economic reform programmes to alleviate poverty that is most stricken in the North East of Nigeria as theorists have also posited. The continuous emerging nature of the activities of this Sect have impeded the success of these programmes as government has been more involved in confronting and combating their operations with minimal resources and efforts.

The magnitude of the Boko Haram attacks as clearly shown in the Table, no doubt have impacted negatively on Nigeria's external relations. It has portrayed a negative image of the country abroad as nobody or even states will risk making investments in such volatile environment. There cannot be any meaningful progress in any State that is hostage to Security.

1. There has been increased capital flights as nations have continued to withdraw their presence obviously leading to revenue loss.
2. Economic diplomacy seriously pursued by the last government of Nigeria aimed at wooing investors from other countries to Nigeria have receded.
3. Instability and violence especially in the North east has led to balance of trade deficit as facts of the operation of the Boko Haram distorted by government officials for political and selfish gains have eroded the confidence of foreign nations to establish economic agreements.
4. The psyche of Nigerians has been affected as visiting public places have become dreadful. Production ratio of the citizens have reduced that has in turn negatively impacted on growth and development. Many are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.
5. Tourism industries have lost foreign exchange earnings because of low patronage.
6. Foreign countries now issue travel advice to their citizenry against travelling to Nigeria as a result of abduction and kidnaps, reducing Nigeria's economic bilateral relations.
7. Destruction of social and economic infrastructures and disruption of educational services have among other consequences led to mass exodus of the population increasing the problem of refugees and creation of camps where people are rendered idle.

According to Venda 2014, more than 2.5 million people are displaced across the four countries of Chad, Niger, Cameroun and Nigeria. Over 9 million people have been affected and over 173,000 Nigerians have fled to Chad, Cameroun and Niger. In 2014 about 11,000 Nigerian refugees crossed the border into Cameroun and Chad. Attacks expanded beyond Nigeria targeting innocent children, women and men in these countries. These movements across borders have made the borders so porous as it serves as conduit pipe for free movement of "All" including the bandits and their materials that translates to more security threats.

Conclusion

The Boko Haram Sect as an insurgent group that rose up in Nigeria from the 1990s graduated to a terrorist group from 2000 by virtue of their operations. The Northern region of Nigeria; the home base of the Boko Haram which has been a fertile ground for religious activities from the Maitatsine religious uprising made it easy for the Sect to perpetrate atrocities that presented grave consequences to Nigeria's internal and external relations. The activities of the Sect extended beyond the territorial boundaries of Nigeria into Cameroun, Chad and Niger. As neighbouring countries, Nigeria sought their cooperation to checkmate their menace. The African Union authorized the establishment of the Multi-National Joint Force in promotion of the Convention on the Prevention and Combating Terrorism Act 1(3). Other countries like South Africa, the United States of America, Russia, Israel, etc have been involved in financial and military assistance as well as intelligent sharing. These assistances were spurred by the singular reason that the interconnected and integrated nature of the world society today makes a threat to peace anywhere a concern for "All". The ravaging complexities of war of the 20th century upon which the collective security doctrine was built upon have been replaced by other security challenges like terrorism which the Boko Haram operations portrays. Also, the activities of the Boko Haram sect in the various human rights abuses, destructions and killing were obviously acts that the international community cannot ignore. The international condemnation of the act of terrorism forms a major external dimension to the Boko Haram activities in Nigeria. This also made it easy for Nigeria to implore the services of foreign mercenaries to monitor the operations of the insurgents. The 2011 bombing of the UN office at Abuja, the first attack on an international organization also enhanced the external dimensions of the activities of the Boko Haram and the pledge of loyalty to the ISIS gave the insurgent an international status. All these incidences negatively impacted on Nigeria's internal and external relations.

Recommendations

The fact that international relations embodies internal issues that have potential of extending beyond the territorial boundaries of a state as depicted by the Boko Haram activities, more so as it is the internal environment that give impetus for external connection, our recommendations would include the following:

- a. Sincere and objective will by "All" in addressing issues as it unfolds in Nigeria.
- b. Government must embark on programmes that will impact on the physical, social and psychological life of the society and the people to give the citizens a good sense of patriotism.

- c. Effective protection of Nigeria's national security such that issues that tend to threaten it must be adequately addressed and curbed.
- d. Nigeria must strive to have a sustainable economic base, stable and efficient political platform and a strong and dependable armed force with periodical review of territorial boundaries in land, sea and air.
- e. Promotion of effective and strong foreign relations especially with her immediate neighbours for strict boundary checks as well as vibrant relations with All states in the international community as evolving politics of the era calls for more collaborative efforts.

All these will obviously improve Nigeria's status in the international arena.

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