

INSURGENCY, ARMED HERDSMEN AND INSTABILITY IN NIGERIA: A SEARCH FOR THE WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT: *The history of modern Nigerian State between 1960 and 2020 is characterized by violent and bloody conflicts such as the political crisis of the First Republic, the Nigerian civil war, the ethno-religious violence of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, the Niger-Delta crisis, the Boko-Haram insurgency and the armed herdsmen menace. All these antecedents have tremendous adverse effects on the nation's social, political and economic development with attendant consequences and costs on the art of governance in the nation and on other African countries. It is against the aforementioned concerns that this article isolates and examines the consequences of the activities of Boko-Haram insurgency and armed herdsmen, not only particularly in North-Eastern and Northern region of Nigeria, but the whole country at large. The paper adopts a multi-disciplinary approach and analyzes the effects of the two phenomena on the Nigerian people and government. The paper establishes the fact that Boko-Haram insurgency and armed herdsmen attacks in North-Eastern region of Nigeria have led to social, political and economic instability, not only on the Northern region, but Nigeria as a whole. The paper concludes by suggesting among many ways, a robust security network to completely neutralize the activities of the two groups in North-Eastern Nigeria.*

KEY WORDS: armed herdsmen, Boko-Haram, insurgency, instability, violence.

INTRODUCTION

Since independence in 1960, the foundation of the unity and development of Nigeria has been shaken by several ethnic, religious and institutional crises of various degrees and magnitude (Gilbert 2013). This is coupled with the politically and economically motivated crises which led

to the destruction of lives and property, causing doubt about the unity of the country, as well as distrust on the competence of successive administrations by the Nigerian people. For instance, between 1960 and 1966, few years after independence, Nigeria experienced serious political crises that resulted in the first and second military coups of 1966 (Mohammed 2014). The coups divided the Nigerian military on ethnic, regional and religious lines (Ojiako 1979 & Ademoyega 1981). The complications that arose from this unfortunate development led to the outbreak of a civil war in the country between 1967 and 1970 (Adejo 2008).

Since the Second Republic to date, Nigeria has been battling with ethno-religious conflicts which have divided the country on ethnic and religious lines (Otite and Albert 1999; Babalola and Onapajo 2018). Even though insurgency and other violent crises has started at the close of Goodluck Jonathan's administration, the tides changed for the worse when President Muhammadu Buhari was re-elected as Nigerian president. Since 1999, Nigeria experienced devastating security challenges in forms of crises and violent conflicts such as the Sharia crisis in the North (Angerbrandt 2011; Alao & Mavalla 2016), OPC Movement in the South-West (Akinyele 2001), and Bakassi Boys in the Eastern region (Harnischfeger 2003 & Meagher 2007); the Niger-Delta crisis (Osagie, & Samuel 2010; Abang 2014), the ethno/religious conflicts in the Middle-Belt region (Alubo 2006; Otite & Albert 1999), the Boko-Haram insurgency in North-East (Abubakar 2012) and the Armed Herdsmen attacks on communities all over Nigeria (Obi, Uzochukwu & Chukwuemeka 2018; Enor, Magor & Ekpo 2019; Agbu, Anuye & Nyajo, 2019). There are also the issues of cattle rustling and armed-banditry attacks on communities in North-Western Nigeria (Abdullahi 2019; Azeez & Aliyu 2016). All these conflicts and many that are unheard of, threaten national unity, integration and development of Nigeria.

The foregoing suggest that the issue of security challenge and threat to national unity is no longer new to Nigeria as a nation. The case of the Northern region of the country is the same. Getting close to two decades now (2003-2020), the region of Nigeria has been experiencing security challenges, affecting the unity and development of not only the region, but Nigeria in general.

METHODOLOGY

The data for this article is sourced primarily from a multi-disciplinary approach. Primary and secondary sources were consulted before arriving at the conclusion. The primary sources includes interviews, observation and Open Group Discussion (OGD) with people knowledgeable of the two phenomena. The secondary sources include the print and electronic media; the internet and official documents from relevant bodies, Non-Governmental and governmental organizations/institutions. Others include published books, journal articles, and unpublished materials. The multi-disciplinary approach is not restricted to the methodology of information and data collection. It is also extended to the methodology of analysis, interpretation and presentation of data, thus giving way to a presentation that is not only historical but also descriptive and analytical in nature.

Boko-Haram Insurgency

Since 2003, Nigeria has continued to come face to face with security challenges, prominent among which are Boko-Haram terrorism and armed herdsmen violence in the North-Eastern region and

the entire. The activities/operations of these two groups over the years have been with impunity, leaving in their trails, blood, death, wailing and destruction. This have devastating social, political and economic effects on the progress and stability of not only their direct victims, but the entire Northern region and Nigeria at large. These incidents have transfer effects on some African countries sharing boundaries with Nigeria such as Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

While the violent deeds of Boko-Haram, with threatening effects on peace and national security, came to public notice in Yobe State in December 2003 (Abubakar, 2012 p.7), the turn of the first decade of the 21st century witnessed violent attacks by armed herdsmen which have been in the increase in Nigeria (Enor, Magor & Ekpo 2019, p.267). The activities of what came to be known as Boko-Haram started when a group of Islamic fanatics who called themselves the 'Nigerian Taliban' established settlements at Kanama, on the banks of the River Kumadugu-Yobe and at a forest near Gaidam (Abubakar 2012, p.7; Mohammed 2014, p.12). These comprised members from various parts of Northern Nigeria, who deliberately migrated from the 'Sin and Corruption' prevalent in the wider society to the area of Yobe State, so as to live a 'life of Piety and Justice' and pursue lawful means of livelihood and engage fully in Islamic religious studies (Muhammed 2010, p.41). Mohammed (2014, p.12) notes that members of this group were mostly young people in their twenties, who also included females assigned domestic chores such as cooking and fetching firewood and water. Mohammed (2014) stated that some of the members were children of notable public figures, including a nephew of the then serving Governor of Yobe State, a son of the Secretary to Borno State Government and five children of a local wealthy contractor. Thus, one could say that the group initially was not made up totally of poor members. This agrees with Abubakar (2012, p.7) who notes that even before GSM, the members had close contacts with other groups of like-minds found in different parts of the World through Thuraya phones.

The activities of the Boko Haram members in their immediate environment brought them into open confrontation with not only members of the community, but security agents in places like Kanama, Geidam, Babangida, Dapchi and Damaturu, among others. The arrest of two of their members by the police was met with violent reaction against the police during which they launched attacks not only on police stations and government buildings, but generally wreaked havoc on Yunusari, Tarmowa, Borsari, Geidam, Kanama, Dapchi and Damaturu Local Government Areas of Yobe State between 21st December 2003 and 1st January 2004 (Abubakar 2012 & Mohammed 2014). Citing Cook (2011, p.10), Mohammed (2014, p.12) further notes that between January and September 2004, this tiny group resurfaced and terrorized the inhabitants of Damaturu, the Yobe State capital, and Damboa, Bama and Gwoza in neighbouring Borno State, attacking police stations and attempting prison breaks. In these attacks, police officers were killed and about 12 policemen held hostage in Kala Balge in October, 2004 and not much was heard about the captives for a long period.

The publicity that followed the attacks on the police, government buildings and the surrounding communities, spread public knowledge about the existence of the Islamic sect, particularly on its capability to wreak havoc on the society. The intervention by the Yobe State government failed to make any impact as the initial victory spurred them to further action such as distributing leaflets, announcing their names and intention to set up an independent Islamic State in that part of the

country. As a result of this treasonable act, the military, reacting strongly, moved against the sect, flushed them out of their settlements in the bush, killed twenty-eight (28) members, arrested and jailed many (Abubakar 2012, p.8). This opened the first phase of insurrection that engulfed the North-Eastern region of Nigeria, leading to the flight for safety and security of most Nigerians residing in the region.

Consequent of the 2003/2004 fracas, the Yobe and Borno States governments declared Muhammed Yusuf, the leader of the group, wanted, forcing him to flee to Umra, only to return in 2004 when he was persuaded by Sheikh Jafar to send to the government a statement in writing renouncing his fatwa on *boko* being *haram* (Abubakar 2012, p.8).

Between 2004 and 2009, Muhammed Yusuf gradually built support, trained his men, established channels for acquisition of weapons and carried out pockets of attacks on government institutions such as the police and military outfits. Abubakar (2012), notes that:

After the 2004 episode, Yusuf pronounced that his sect had no interest in attacking civilians, as it had no quarrel with the public, but with the authorities. Basically, the sect maintained that *boko* is *haram* and forbidden, Muslims should stop work as public servants and that the sect would continue to be an anti-establishment organization fighting against government institutions, such as the police and military. In short, the leader re-affirmed the position of the sect as a radical Islamic group opposed to western education and all institutions of public authority.

On 27th July, 2009, uprising took place in Maiduguri between the members of the Sect and the Police. The violence spread to Biu where a bomb exploded and killed a senior member of the Sect. In Bauchi, sixty members of the Movement, armed with guns and grenades, attacked a Police station at Dutsen Tanshi on 26th July, and fifty (50) lives were lost. On 27th July, the violence spread from Bauchi to Borno, Yobe and Kano States. Hundreds of people, including very senior Police officers, died. Abubakar (2012, p.10) again states that:

In Maiduguri, for example, members of the Sect directed their attentions to three important government institutions – the State headquarters of the police, the Nigeria Prison Service and Lamisula, Gomboru and Damasak police stations.

In the course of these confrontations, members of the sect were killed, Police stations and quarters were set ablaze, Police men and Prison Service men were killed, and about three hundred and fifty (350) inmates were freed. Similarly, Wudil Police station in Kano State was attacked by about fifty (50) Sect members, killing two men and they carted away sophisticated rifles; in Potiskum, Yobe State, fifty (50) youths in support of the Sect attacked and burnt public buildings such as offices of Federal Road Safety Commission, National Population Commission and Divisional Police Headquarters, leaving the entire town in confusion. The aim of the uprising was to take-over governments in the Northern States and Southern Nigeria and then establish an Islamic government in Nigeria (Abubakar 2012, p.10).

The Federal Government, considering the inability of the Borno State government to nip the uprising on the bud, intervened by directing the military to move in and crush the rebellion on 30th July, 2009. In the events that unfolded, Muhammed Yusuf was captured and handed over to the Police, who did not respect due process and rule of law, but shot him dead. Others summarily killed by the Police included Alhaji Buji Foi, one of the financiers of the Movement; and Alhaji Ba'a Fugu, one of the father-in-laws of Muhammed Yusuf, killed on 5th Aug 2009.

Mohammed (2014, p.10) notes that the third phase of the Boko Haram Movement began with the 2009 suppression of the Movement and killing of its leadership in gory and barbaric form by the Nigerian security agencies. Following this development, members of the Movement went underground, re-organized, and resurfaced in 2010 with a violent vengeance spirit. They did not only target perceived opponents, but indiscriminately attacked security officials, politicians associated with the ruling All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP) government in Borno State. They also resorted to bombing high profile targets in Abuja such as the Nigerian Police Headquarters, as well as United Nations' Offices, in June and August, 2011, respectively. Shuaibu, Saleh & Shehu (2015, p.254) further state that the violent re-emergence of the group in 2010 came up with new tactics that included suicide bombing, kidnapping, attacks on Islamic Clerics, Mosques and Churches in the country.

As the military crackdown on the Movement intensified, members of the group became desperate and more militant. They resort to more desperate measures which they had despised in the past such as burning of school buildings, attacks on telecommunication base stations, killing and kidnapping of foreigners, slaughtering as opposed to shooting of opponents, and killing of health officials at routine vaccination clinics, as well as random shooting of pupils and teachers at schools (Mohammed 2014, p.10). Consequently, between 2010 and 2020, Boko Haram unleashed fear and terror in the minds of the people of Nigeria, particularly in the North-Eastern region of the country. This development affected every aspect of the peoples' social, economic and political life. Following the very inhumanly violent nature the Movement assumed, in November, 2013, the group was designated as Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the United States Security Department. Similarly, in May, 2014, the United Nations Committee on Al Qaeda sanction blacklisted the group (See Shuaibu, Salleh & Shehu 2015, p.255). Since then, the Movement has prosecuted deadly havoc on Nigerian communities as reflected in the table below:

Table 1: Sample of Boko Haram Attacks on Nigerian Communities, 2010 to 2020.

S/n	Date	Place	Nature of Attack & Consequences
1	24/12/2010	Jos	Multiple bombings, killing scores of people.
2	16/06/2011	Abuja	Bomb explosion in Nigeria Police HQ, killing dozens of people.
3	26/08/2011	Abuja	Bomb explosion at UN Office, killing 23 & many injured.
4	24/12/2011	Madalla, Niger State	Bomb explosion at St. Theresa catholic Church, Madalla, killing over 40 persons & several injured.

5	11/03/2012	Rayfield, Jos	Bomb explosion at St Finbar's Church, Rayfield, killing more than 20 persons.
6	30/04/2012	Jalingo, Taraba State	Suicide bomb-blast on the convoy of CP Taraba State, killing 10 persons & 22 injured.
7	02/12/2013	Maiduguri, Borno State.	Attack on Maiduguri town & NAF base, destroying 5 Aircrafts.
8	20/12/2013	Bama, Borno State.	Attack on military barrack, Bama, killing many soldiers, wives & children. Many injured & military hardware carted away.
9	14/04/2014	Chibok	Kidnap of 276 School-girls @ GGSS Chibok.
10	14/04/2014	Nyanya, Abuja	Bomb explosion at Nyanya District, killing about 75 persons & 215 injured.
11	03/01/2015	Baga, Borno State	Attack on Baga town, burning the whole town and 2000 people massacred.
12	27 & 30/01/2016	Dalori, Maiduguri	Multiple attacks, killing about 186 persons & several injured.
13	07/01/2017	Buni Yadi	Attack on Army base killing 5 soldiers
14	19/02/2018	Dapchi, Yobe State	Abduction of 110 School girls including Leah Sharibu.
15	01/03/2018	Rann, Borno State	Attack on military base, killing 11 persons including 3 aid workers.
16	01/05/2018	Mubi, Adamawa State.	Suicide bomb explosion killing 86 persons & several injured.
17	22/12/2019	Maiduguri-Damaturu Road	Attack on the highway resulting to several deaths & injuries.
18	24/12/2019	Near Chibok	Attack on passengers, killing 7 persons.
19	25/12/2019	Maiduguri	Execution of 11 Christians abducted earlier along Maiduguri-Damaturu road.
20	26/12/2020	Gwoza Road	Attack on travelers along Gwoza road killing one Esther Bulus and her friends on their way to Yola for her wedding which was to hold on 31/12/2019.
21	02/01/2020	Michika, Adamawa State.	Attack on the town & abduction of Rev Lawan Indimi, CAN Chairman of Michika LGA.
22	09/01/2020	Maiduguri-Damaturu Road	Abduction of Ropvil Daciya Daleb a student of Unimaid from Plateau State & was later shot dead by a child-terrorist.
23	20/01/2020		Release of video showing the gruesome execution (beheading) of Rev Lawan Indimi, CAN Chairman of Michika LGA, Adamawa State.

Source: Electronic, Print Media & Published Materials.

24	09/02/2020	Auno, Borno State	Attack on stranded passengers, killing 30 persons including a child, abduction of many others & burning of several vehicles.
25	21/02/2020	Garkida, Gombi LGA of Adamawa State.	Attack on the town, burning down property including EYN & Living Faith Churches.
26	23/03/2020	Goneri in Yobe State.	Ambush on Nigeria Army leading to the death of 50 military personnel.
27	06/04/2020	Kirchingi, Madagali LGA of Adamawa State	Attack on the community, burning down of several houses and food/provision stores.
28	09/06/2020	Foduma Kolomaiya village, Gubio LGA, Borno State	The terrorists came into the village in the name of preaching, but while the villagers gathered to listen to their sermon, the opened fire on all citizens for more than 2hrs, killing over 80 people including children, injuring about 1,000 persons and rustled over 300 cattle.

The table 1 above indicates that between 2010 and 2020, Boko Haram insurgents did attack Nigerian communities, causing loss of thousands of lives, destruction of property (both government & private), and disruption of social, economic, religious and political activities of the Nigerian people in not only the North-Eastern region, but the whole of Nigeria.

Armed Herdsmen Terrorism

The activities of armed herdsmen who have been terrorizing, particularly farming communities in the Middle-Belt region of Nigeria (Plateau, Benue, Taraba, Adamawa, Nasarawa and Southern Kaduna States) have equally been a grave concern. Since 2013, they crossed over from the Middle-Belt region to the Eastern and Southern parts of Nigeria. Some scholars refer to the menace as Farmers/Herders conflicts (Gani, 2018, Pp.173- 175).

Since their emergence, the armed herders have terrorized, kidnapped, killed, raped, burnt farming communities, property and taken-over lands belonging to the farming communities for their grazing activities. Their activities have also resulted in the loss of revenue by the States, threatened national unity, diversion of budgetary allocations for the maintenance of internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps, loss of human capital and damage to the country's international image (Enor, Magor & Expo 2019, p.268). Find below a sample of attacks by armed herdsmen on Nigerian communities, as extracted from some of the sources used in this study.

Table 2: Sample of Armed Herdsmen Attacks on Nigerian Communities, 2013 to 2020.

S/n	Date	Location	Nature of Attack & Consequences
1	Feb 2013	Agatu LGA of Benue State	Communities attacked by armed-herdsmen in military uniform, killing about 500 persons, several injured, houses and food items burnt down.
2	09/11/2013	Guma LGA of Benue State	Several communities in Guma LG were attacked by armed-herdsmen killing 22 persons & property worth millions of Naira destroyed.
3	20/02/2014	Gwer West LGA of Benue State	Attacks on farmers in 6 wards by armed-Fulani herdsmen killing 35 & displacing many.
4	23/03/2014	Gbajimba, Guma LGA of Benue State	Attack by armed-Fulani herdsmen, killing 25 persons & injuring 50.
5	March 2013 to Jan 2015	Communities in Wukari LGA of Taraba State	Attacks on farming communities by armed-Fulani herdsmen, killing more than 100 persons & over 5000 displaced. Homes & farms destroyed.
6	24/05/2015	Ukura, Gafe, Per & Tse-Gusa in Logo LGA of Benue State	Attacks on these communities by armed-Fulani herdsmen, killing 100 persons & displacing many.
7	10/04/2016	Dori & Mesuma Villages in Garbabi Ward Gashaka LGA of Taraba State	Attacks on the communities by armed-Fulani herdsmen, killing 40 persons, injuring many & burning of houses.
8	25/04/2016	Nimbo, Enugu State	Attack on the community by armed-Fulani herdsmen, killing 40 persons, destruction of homes & farms.
9	04/12/2017	Numan & Demsa LGAs of Adamawa State	Attacks on farming communities in the two LGAs, killing over 80 persons, many injured, burning of houses and food items. Many displaced.
10	31/12/2017 to 02/01/2018	Benue Communities of Gaambe Tiev, Ayilamo, & Turan in Logo LGA; Umenger, Tse-Akor & Tomatar in Guma LGA	Attacks on these communities by armed-Fulani herdsmen, killing over 50 persons, several others injured & displaced. Property (houses) & farm land destroyed.
11	06-15/01/2018	7 Communities in Lau LGA of Taraba State	Attacks on farming communities in Lau LGA of Taraba State by armed-Fulani herdsmen, killing over 80 persons, destruction of homes & farms; displacement of high number of persons.

12	04/04/2018	Takum LGA in Taraba State.	Attacks on Mbiya & Bassan communities in Takum LGA by armed-Fulani herdsmen, killing 5 persons, displacement of many & destruction of farms & property.
13	05/05/2018	Gwaska, Kaduna State	Attack on the community by armed-Fulani herdsmen, killing over 55 persons, destruction of houses & farms.
14	23-24/06/2018	Communities in Barkin Ladi, Riyom, Bokkos, & Mangu LGAs of Plateau State	Multiple attacks on farming communities by armed-Fulani herdsmen leading to 233 deaths, several injured & property destroyed. High number of IDPs
15	June & July 2018	Communities in Numan & Demsa LGAs of Adamawa State.	Attacks on farming communities in the two LGAs by armed-Fulani herdsmen, killing over 100 persons, many injured, burning of houses and food items. Many displaced.
16	10-11/02/2019	Kajuru, Kaduna State	Attacks on farming communities by armed-Fulani herdsmen, over 151 killed, several persons injured, property & farms destroyed and many displaced.
17	05-07/05/2019	Kona Communities in Ardo-Kola LGA of Taraba State.	Attacks on Jukun-Kona communities by armed-Fulani herdsmen, killing of 20 persons, burning down of houses & farm produce; displacement of persons.
18	09/01/2020	Kulben Village of Kombun District of Mangu LGA of Plateau State.	Attack on the community by armed-Fulani herdsmen, killing more than 12 persons.
19	26/01/2020	Kwatas, Bokkos LGA	Attacks by armed-Fulani herdsmen, over 26 persons killed & several persons displaced.
20	13/02/2020	Avwon, Agadama, Ohoror, & other communities in Ughelli LGA of Delta State	Attacks by armed-Fulani herdsmen, killing 10 persons; property & farms destroyed.
21	12/05/2020	Gom in Numan LGA.	Attack on the community by armed-Fulani herdsmen at 2am, killing more than 10 persons & burning of houses.

Source: Electronic, Print Media & Published Materials.

In 2014, an estimated 1,200 persons died as a result of herdsmen attacks (Adeyemo, 2018); in 2015, Global Terrorism Index (GTI) ranked herdsmen as the World's fourth deadliest militant group for having been responsible for about 1,229 human fatality in 2014 (Oli, Ibekwe & Nwankwo 2018, p.13). Between June 2015 and January 2016, five hundred and twenty-five (525)

persons were killed, not less than one thousand and seven hundred (1,700) deaths in 2017 and not fewer than one thousand, seven hundred and fifty (1,750) human fatality in the first six months of 2018, totaling five thousand, two hundred and seventy-five (5,275) human fatality between 2015 and June 2018 (Enor, Magor & Ekpo 2019, p.267). However, Herbert and Husaini (2018, p.17), citing International Crises Group (ICG), notes that in 2016 alone, an estimated two thousand and five hundred (2,500) people were killed by Fulani armed-herdsmen and have led to the displacement of at least sixty-two thousand (62,000) people, most of them women and children, in the hardest hit States of Kaduna, Benue and Plateau (ICG 2017, p.7).

In fact, based on figures from Global Terrorism Index 2019: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism, deaths from terrorism in Nigeria rose to two thousand and forty (2,040) in 2018, a 33% increase. This increase follows a steady decline in deaths since 2014. Terror-related incidents increased to 37%, from four hundred and eleven (411) in 2017 to five hundred and sixty-two (562) in 2018. The increase was due to a substantial escalation of violence by Fulani extremists. Violence between Nigerian herders and farmers intensified in early 2018 with approximately three hundred thousand (300,000) people fleeing their homes. In Nigeria, terrorist activity is dominated by Fulani extremists and Boko Haram insurgents. Together, they accounted for 78% of terror-related incidents and 86% of deaths from terrorism (GTI 2019, p.21).

Contending Perspectives on Boko Haram Insurgency and Fulani Armed Herdsmen Attacks on Nigerian Communities.

Boko Haram and Fulani extremists may encompass many realities; they have many perspectives and explanations depending on how Nigerians see the phenomena. Thus, Olaniyan & Asuelime (2014, Pp.97-102); Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos (2014); Shehu (2014); and Shuaibu, Salleh & Shehu (2015), among others, discuss Boko Haram on the perspectives of either a consequence of poverty and unemployment; an Islamic army of inquisition; a design to discredit Islam; a conspiracy against the North; a creation of PDP; a Northern designed strategy to discredit Jonathan's administration. On the other hand, Herbert & Husaini (2018, Pp.17-18); Obi, Uzochukwu & Chukwemeka (2018, p.67); Akpor-Robaro & Lanre-Babalola (2018, p.50) and Enor, Magor and Ekpo (2019, Pp.269-279), among others, examine Fulani herdsmen attacks on the premise of either terrorism; climate change; population rise; religious extremism or jihadism; resource conflict; acts of criminality; question of ethnic, religious and political conspiracy and general insecurity in the nation, among others. While some of the perspectives outlined have been discarded, some are currently too sensitive to discard in respect of the events happening in the country between 2018 and 2020. These include the perspectives of poverty and unemployment; religious extremism and the question of ethnic, religious and political conspiracy. Discussion on these perspectives would establish the fact that Nigeria is seriously facing the challenge of instability causing disunity and threatening national integration.

The Poverty and Unemployment Perspectives: Poverty and unemployment have been identified by some literature as common causes for Boko Haram insurgency in North-East Nigeria. The general belief of the security and intelligence community is that people who are economically deprived are more likely to resort to violence on a way to express their grievances. Thus, poverty and unemployment create terrorism (Ayegba 2015, Pp.96-98; Olabanji 2015, p.11; Adelaja, Labo

& Penar 2018, p.37). This means that a very important dimension to the Boko Haram narrative is to see it as a reaction of extreme poverty prevalent in Northern Nigeria as it was once mooted by former Governor, Kashim Shettima, and the current Governor, Babagana Zulum, of Borno State, the home base of the group in 2012 and 2020 respectively (Olaniyan & Asuelime 2014; Zulum 2020).

Nigeria's political and economic elite who have benefited from the oil political-economy have also created an almost self-sustaining status-quo marked by opulence and conspicuous consumption. At the same time, nearly three quarters of the population in Nigeria's north live in poverty, while the Northeast of Nigeria, the birth place of Boko-Haram, has the worst poverty rate in the country (Herbert & Husaini 2018, p.13). Consequently, the youth who are faced with severe deprivation becomes frustrated and disgusted by the corruption that they continue to see at all levels of government. Thus, in their anger and disillusionment, they have resorted to violence as a way of expressing their grievances and are readily recruited and manipulated by the Boko Haram leadership.

The vicious cycle of poverty and unemployment make it easy for people to become prey for Boko Haram recruitment (Adelaja, Labo & Penar 2018, p.38). Between 2015 and 2020, the poverty and unemployment situation did not improve for better, with Nigeria ranking as the country with the most extreme poor peoples in the World, over-taking India and Democratic Republic of Congo (Kazeem 2018); frustration and aggression increased in the North-East region, the hardest hit and perhaps, no surprise that the extremist group, Boko Haram, re-emerged with its insurgency acts on peoples and communities of the region. The implication has been destabilization of economic and political stability of not only the North-Eastern region where the attacks are taking place, but the entire Northern Nigeria and the country at large.

The Religious Extremism Perspective: This is the most fundamental perspective that is splitting Nigeria recently along religious line. It applies to both the Boko Haram insurgency and Fulani armed herdsmen attacks in the country. With the recent execution of eleven (11) Christian captives by the insurgents on 25th December, 2019, in Borno State, gruesome beheading of Pastor Lawan Indimi, the CAN Chairman of Michika LGA of Adamawa State on 20th January, 2020; the kidnap and later execution of Ropvil Daciya Dalep on 9th January, 2020, along Damaturu-Maiduguri road, attack on Garkida in Gombi LGA of Adamawa State on 21st February, 2020, leading to the burning of EYN and Living Faith Churches; attacks of Christian communities in Plateau, Benue and Taraba States by the Fulani extremists and the 'Prayer walk' organized by Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) all over the country on 2nd February, 2020 (which some referred to as protest), ([http://barnabasfund.org/en/news/full scale jihad unfolds in Nigeria as Fulani kill thirteen Christians amid ceaseless boko haram bloodshed 2020](http://barnabasfund.org/en/news/full%20scale%20jihad%20unfolds%20in%20Nigeria%20as%20Fulani%20kill%20thirteen%20Christians%20amid%20ceaseless%20boko%20haram%20bloodshed%202020); Channels TV and AIT news on 02/02/2020), coupled with attacks on Churches, Christian communities and reprisals, it becomes admissible, though contested by others, that the Boko Haram and Fulani extremists' activities are particularly targeting at Christians in order to wipe them out of the Northern region completely. Boko Haram members have perceived Christians (and other non-Christians) who do not share their religious world view as enemies, and therefore legitimate targets of attacks. Boko Haram members have been attacking Christians and their places of worship, creating tension and disharmony

between Christians and Muslims in the Northern States of Nigeria. The leadership of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has seen the insurgency as another ploy to impose Shariah law and Islam on the country (Mohammed 2014, Pp.19-20).

Though there is the opinion that there are rouge elements acting on their own that are also attacking Christians using Boko Haram-style tactics such as the case of Lydia Joseph and the “Miya Barkate Eight” in Bauchi State (Mohammed 2014, p.20) and the 2nd February, 2020, alleged Kaduna Church attack (Daily Trust, Feb, 8 2020), one cannot just wave aside the fact that Christians have been targeted by the terrorists (Boko Haram and Fulani extremists), and they (Christians) have the right to cry out that there is a conspiracy against them. For instance, looking at the attacks by Boko Haram since 2010 to 2020, and the brutality of the Fulani extremists since 2012 to 2020 on particularly Christian Churches and communities in the Middle Belt region, making pronouncements should not be a difficult thing to do by the leadership of the Christians in the country.

According to Human Right Watch (2012, p.44), Boko Haram attacked at least eighteen (18) Churches and killed 127 Christians between 2010 and 2012. These figures may be under-stated as a Christian leader told HRW that, in Borno State alone, not fewer than 142 Christians were killed between 7th June, 2011, and 17th January, 2012, in what appears to be a systematic plan of violence and intimidation (HRW 2012, p.44). There was an attack on 24th December, 2011 on St. Theresa Catholic Church, Madalla, outside Abuja, killing over forty (40) worshippers and dozens injured (ICG, 2014); another attack on 11th March, 2012, hitting St. Finbar’s Church, Rayfield in Jos, killing nineteen (19) persons; on April 26th, 2012, fifteen (15) Church goers were killed in Bauchi; June 17th, 2012, suicide bombings on three Churches in Kaduna, one hundred (100) worshippers died. (Read Barkindo, Gudaku & Wesley (2013); Agbiboa & Maiangwa (2013) for the atrocities committed against the Christian communities in the North-Eastern and North-Central Nigeria).

Similarly, Smith (2019) and Gilbert (2018) report of the over 1000 Christians killed in 2019 as a result of Boko Haram and Fulani extremists attacks. According to Gilbert (2018), by now we know that during 2018, more than 6,000 Christians were killed or maimed by Islamist terrorists affiliated either with notorious Boko Haram group – best known for kidnapping young girls – or Fulani tribesmen, whose anti-Christian brutality goes largely unanswered by Nigerian government. The situation is threatening the unity and integration of Nigeria.

Even though some Christian religious leaders in the North, especially Bishop Matthew Hassan Kuka and Bishop Josiah Idowu Fearon, have continually called for restraints against reprisal attacks (Mohammed 2014, p20), recent attacks on Christians such as the kidnap and murder of Seminarian Nnadi has made Kukah to state clearly that “it is safe to say that Christians in the North are marked men and women today, they had for long become targets of killings by terrorists under the garb of Islam” (Alabelewe 2020). The handwriting on the wall is very clear about the obvious polarization of the Nigerian people on religious line, consequent of incessant attacks on Christian communities all over the country either by Boko Haram or Fulani extremists. Thus, the Federal Government, confirming this perspective through the Minister for Information, Lai Mohammed, stated that “the terrorists were deliberately deploying the antics of attacking Christians and

Churches in order to sow the seed of confusion between the two great religions... They have started targeting Christians and Christian villages for a specific reason, which is to trigger a religious war and throw the nation into chaos. Apparently, they have realized how emotive and divisive religion can be, when exploited by unscrupulous persons” (Daniel 2020).

Ethno-Political Perspectives: The violence perpetrated by the Fulani extremists has been politicized along ethnic/tribal, cultural and religious lines. In the case of ethnic/tribal line, it is not arguable that the herders are predominantly Fulani who are mostly Muslims, while the farmers are predominantly non-Fulani peoples of the mostly Christian dominated Middle Belt region of Nigeria. The government at the center and some States that share similar identities with the former are accused of tacit support for the herders who engage in these marauding attacks (Enor, Magor & Ekpo 2019, p.26).

It is assumed that there is an ethnic conspiracy by the Fulani from top to the bottom, to use violence to strike fear among these farming communities in order to lay claim to land resources. Any time they attack communities, the government of Nigeria dismisses their attack as nothing other than community clash, resource conflict or political conspiracy by opposition elements, and Mr. President, Muhammadu Buhari, seems to be sympathetic to the activities of his kinsmen going by his handling of their terror in the country (Mkom, 2018). This has made several communities to resort to seeking justice through reprisal (Enor, Magor & Ekpor 2019).

Due to the protection the Fulani extremists get from the security agents, there was a loud call by former Minister of Defence, Lt. Gen T.Y Danjuma, for the people to rise up and protect themselves if not, they will all die (John, 2018). Obviously, with this call coming from a retired General and former Defence Minister, the security implication is that if not properly managed, herdsman terror on non-Muslim communities of Nigeria has the potential of setting off in Nigeria a very serious ethnic crisis that would snow-ball into religious crisis with grave consequences.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear that from 2003 when the group which later came to be called Boko Haram started unleashing terror on North-Eastern part of Nigeria, and later spread to other parts of the North; through 2013 to 2019 when the Fulani extremists upgraded their terror on farming communities in the Middle-Belt region of Nigeria (Benue, Plateau, Taraba, Adamawa, Southern Kaduna and Nasarawa States), and extended the terror to South-Eastern and South-Western Nigeria, Nigeria’s unity, integration and national development remained defied. The various perspectives the Nigerian people see the phenomena have placed the stability of the country under question mark. Apart from the death of thousands of people and destruction of communities and property, the phenomena affected food production in the fertile regions of Northern Nigeria, thus impacting negatively on the economy of not only the farmers, but the entire nation. Protests and counter-protests, calls and counter-calls from all over the nation for either state or regional security structure or even division of the country along regional lines have become very serious issues of concern due to the foregoing development.

Generally, the Nigerian people have become overwhelmed by severe poverty as a result of corruption, making them frustrated and aggrieved; the Christians are also aggrieved due to constant attacks on them, either by Boko Haram members or Fulani extremists, and in some quarters, there are reprisal attacks. All these are batons indicating that the socio-economic and political structure of Nigeria is shaking. Nonetheless, be it as it may, all hope is not lost for the Nigerian government and its leadership to right the gaffes that have been made in order for the country not to subvert in the very near future. Thus, this article suggests the following for Nigeria to remain united and develop; and to put the Boko Haram insurgency and Fulani extremists' terrorism in the history bin.

1. From the North to the East, to the West and South-South regions of Nigeria, the complaint is non-functional security architecture and personnel, all over the country. Therefore, the need for the restructuring of the security architecture of Nigeria to meet up the country's current security challenges, prominent among which include insurgency, terrorism, herdsmen attacks, kidnapping, banditry, robbery and so on, is overdue.

2. There is need to boost the morale of the security personnel in the field such as the Military, the Police and other para-military agents through the provision of modern ballistics and sophisticated weapons that could enable them match the superior weapons of the insurgents and terrorists, particularly Boko Haram insurgents and the Fulani armed herdsmen terrorists.

3. In addition to the provision of sophisticated weapons, the welfare of the security personnel must be handled with all seriousness. Confidence must be restored in the military, Police and Para-military personnel through proper arrangement for their incentives in order to maintain their fighting spirits.

4. Not only providing sophisticated weapons and taking care of the welfare of the security personnel, surveillance on their conduct should also be improved in order to keep them on their toes. The criminally-minded ones amongst them must be identified, investigated, tried and disciplined accordingly. This would assist in a long way by improving the performance and professionalism of Nigerian security personnel.

5. More qualified security personnel should be recruited in order to add strength to the Nigerian security. People of questionable characters should not be recruited among security personnel in order to avoid collusion with terrorists, insurgents and criminals.

6. Government should ensure effective policing of particularly troubled communities in the country through the adoption of community policing policy. If this policy is implemented, perpetrators of these attacks would surely be arrested and prosecuted in order to deter future adherents and ensure the safety of not only the affected communities, but the country at large. More so, trustworthy vigilante groups, youths and retired security personnel should be retrained and assigned specific functions with regards to information gathering, intelligence reporting etc., all over Nigerian communities. This would also boost the morale of the civilians in contributing to crime control in their areas.

7. Border security personnel are also very necessary and fundamental if Nigeria is to decipher the security challenges facing it currently. Nigerian borders are porous either in the North-East, North-West, South-West or South-South. Thus, there is the need for joint-security patrol, which should include the Armed Forces, the Police and Paramilitary agents' at our international borders. Visual sensors and motion detectors must be installed at strategic unmanned border routes for proper surveillance. If all these are done, the issue of illegal immigration by foreign herdsmen and

religious extremists, together with importation of illegal weapons into Nigeria would be a thing of the past.

8. More so, there should be intensification of the use of multi-national security effort comprising neighbouring countries like Cameroon, Niger and Chad Republics. This would also tackle the problem of insurgency/terrorism and arm-banditry, particularly in the North-Eastern and North-Western regions of Nigeria.

9. Nigerian politicians and government must learn to depoliticize security matters affecting the country. Politicians must learn to shun their party/political differences and speak/act in unity in respect to securing lives and property of the Nigerian people. Once their differences are put aside, be it political, religious or ethnic, security issues would be discussed objectively and appropriate decisions taken and implemented to guarantee security to the Nigerian people.

10. Similarly, the government must be seen prosecuting arrested perpetrators of insurgency/terrorism and armed-herdsmen attacks for the purpose of deterring future culprits as well as clearing the controversies of government immersion. Arrested culprits must not be released in the name of repentance, but must stay the stipulated period of time in correctional centers in the country. Their early release only increases suspicion and distrust the people of diverse backgrounds are having on the government.

11. Dialogue and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods should be employed. Traditional and religious leaders should be provided a platform with which they can, in unity, influence their people/followers on the need for tolerance, peaceful co-existence and the avoidance of violence in conflict situation. It is on record that traditional institutions provided a system of administration from which law and order were maintained and stable system of governance during the colonial period. Government should therefore demonstrate the readiness to involve traditional rulers in the search for peace, harmony and effective leadership in the country.

12. Community and religious leaders should put sentiments behind and strive to always expose criminal elements among their followers/people. This would go a long way in restoring the security of Nigeria.

13. There is also the need for government to carry out massive education and orientation of the traditional herders on the need for change from open pastoralism to ranching. This, apart from reducing farmers/herders clashes to the minimum, would improve their productivity. State governments such as Taraba, Benue and Ekiti States should be applauded for enacting the anti-open grazing laws. But more to that, these States' governments and other State governments, including the Federal government, should provide support (financial and material) to the herders who are ready to ranch their animals. Thereafter, any group of herders seen openly grazing, leading to violence between them and farmers should be apprehended, prosecuted and, if found guilty, appropriate law should be applied on them. This would go a long way in checking herders/farmers' clashes in Nigeria and, by extension, the Fulani extremists would not have anywhere to hide and carry out their terror on the farming communities.

14. The three tiers of Nigerian governments (Federal, States and LGs) must, as a matter of policy, improve the living conditions of the Nigerian people who are wallowing in poverty. The governments, private and international organizations should provide employment opportunities to the seething unemployed Nigerian youth, in order to improve their general well-being. Also, amenities such as healthcare and educational facilities, light, water, good road network, etc., should be provided to the Nigerian people. However, this can only be possible if the political and

economic leadership of Nigeria spurn corruption, injustice, nepotism and bad governance, which are some of the reasons the insurgents lay justification for their attacks. Thus, there is need for government and its anti-corruption agencies to rise up above sentimentalities and bring to justice all corrupt officials, irrespective of their political, religious, regional and ethnic affiliations. Good governance should be provided in order to unite the country and save it from disintegration.

15. The Nigeria and International media should be professional in their reporting of violence in Nigeria so as not to aggravate the already delicate situation which is leading Nigeria to disintegration.

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