TERRORISM AND BUSINESSES IN NORTH EAST: IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *Since the beginning and escalation of terrorism, various sectors of the economy have been affected as a result of the negative peace and fatalities associated with the Boko Haram terrorism. The situation has caused rapid inflation and decline in the availability of basic human needs. Containing the threat and related displacements has been challenging to the state security providers, who are also affected by the Boko Haram activities. This study examines the implications of terrorism for business activities in North-eastern Nigeria. Apart from direct attack on businesses, the activities of terrorists are inimical to economic growth. Consequently, most displaced people have continued to suffer malnutrition. This paper argues that timely containment of the terror is the only way to save the economy from total collapse. This requires the joint military task force to stop the terrorists from snatching vehicles loaded with foodstuffs on the highway, burning of villages and mounting of road blocks.*

KEYWORDS: businesses, Boko Haram, northeast, terrorism

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism has never been helpful for any state in the world. The threat of terror has become a source of insecurity in many parts of the world. It portrays how enemies within countries fight against both the innocent and the people they accuse of being responsible for any perceived bad situation in their societies. The situation in Nigeria has become a source of negative image to the country, considering how it is associated with insecurity, which manifests in internal displacement and numerous deaths. Terrorists across the world are known for the use of bombs and other weapons to perpetrate human rights abuses. This has motivated countries to initiate various control mechanisms, such as security sector reforms and bilateral relations with neighbouring countries.

Terrorist vices have been in existence for many decades, precipitating increased use of expensive and powerful weapons (Imosemi, 2019). Since the terrorist attack on World Trade Centre, no continent can be said to be free from terror. As noted by Falaiye (2008), the September 11, 2001 event changed the global perception about terrorism owing to the intensity of the attack and the audacity displayed by the terrorists, which remain remarkable in the history of international economic and political relations. In Iraq and other Middle East nations,

car bombs and mortar attacks kill people almost weekly. Arguably, terrorists do not strike without adequate information of their target locations and the type of people found in such places. Most groups capitalise on various reasons to intensify their efforts against governments, some of which are economic, political, ethnic or religious.

In some countries, especially in Africa, security forces often lack logistics that enhance anti-terror training, bomb sniffing dogs and equipment such as bomb detectors and scanners (Tejan-Cole, 2013; Okolie-Osemene, 2021). This has also enhanced the sophistication of terrorist groups, thereby making it more problematic for the military to counter and contain terrorism (Okolie-Osemene, 2016; Okolie-Osemene, 2019; Okolie-Osemene and Aluko, 2019). The increase of terrorism in most African countries is attributable to the proliferation of arms and insurgent groups. Their modus operandi includes recruitment of foot soldiers, establishment of training camps, suicide bombing, attack on wedding convoys, attack on schools, aiming at security posts/checkpoints, hijacking of vehicles conveying foodstuffs, targeting and bombing of facilities of military and paramilitary agencies. The seemingly endless terror incidents precipitated the global war on terror and diplomatic manoeuvres by different nations to tame the influence of terrorist groups across international borders.

Various terms are used to explain acts of terrorism. These include terrorist conflicts and delegitimizing terrorists (Toros, 2008), terrorist financing, which is said to have links with money laundering (Golwa, 2010; Kessler, 2011:202), suicide bombings (Brym, 2010; Brown, 2011), suicide terrorism (Capell, 2007), home-grown terrorism (Spiker, 2013) and multinational networks of terrorism. Others are export of terrorism, transporters of terrorism, Nigeria's Terror Group, Islamic Terror Group, proscription of terrorist organisations, university terrorism (the use of cultists or security officers to unleash terror on students and lecturers) and war on terror. Most of these terms have one thing in common, violence. Most of them are also sustained by terrorist financing, which has to do with groups and individuals that fund all activities that promote terror through mobilisation and recruitment of foot soldiers. It will be difficult to export terror across international borders without funding aspect that facilitates their logistics. Terrorists use the recruitment of new members to plot more attacks against any section of society they target with the aim of creating risk and perception of insecurity.

Various factors have contributed to the intractability of the Boko Haram insurgency. These include politics (security governance), poverty, conspiracy, group sympathy by some community members for religious reasons, and lack of unity that led to formation of splinter terrorist groups which pay allegiance to other international terrorist organisations.
With primary and secondary sources, this paper examines the effects of terrorism. It also considers management of terrorism.

Conceptual and Theoretical Explanations

Terrorism

In spite the problem of definition, scholars have tried to define terrorism. According to Awoniyi (2002), there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism. This is because "terrorism is a moral problem" (Wardlaw, 1982, cited in Oshanugor, 2004:7). Stepanova (2008) maintains that terrorism is the form of violence that most closely integrates one-sided violence against civilians with asymmetrical violent confrontation against a stronger opponent, be it a state or a group of states (Imosemi, 2019).

Imohe (2010:242) describes terrorism as a "transnational phenomenon which increases threat to human life, state stability and international security. Some notable acts of terror include night/day assassinations at residential areas or public places (including motor parks, markets, airports), suicide bombing, hostage-taking, sabotage of economic infrastructures, like oil pipelines, attack on religious institutions during worship among others." The American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines 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"(Awoniyi, 2002:14).

Apart from the apparent disconnect between territorial sovereignty and self-determination, the roots of "counter-hegemonic acts that motivate terrorist threats are sustained by religious and political ideologies that challenge the supremacy of the dominant Western ideologies, inability of international community to mitigate food insecurity, poverty, unemployment, deprivation, human rights violations" and weak/poor early response to state failure in some regions (Richmond, 2003:304). From the foregoing, it is obvious that some schools of thought explain terrorism based on economic factors, including the inability of policymakers to address poverty and unemployment. The far-reaching implication is the aggravation of frustration that could lead to aggression in communities, which will undermine public order. From their attacks in most parts of the world, it is clear that terrorist groups consistently disregard the rule of law as well as municipal and international laws.

According to Babanoski (2019:1), "members of terrorist groups, tend and work to radicalize individuals, often young people, by encouraging them to leave their homes and to travel to the conflict zones in the Middle East." Many scholars of security studies link the activities of terrorist across the world, including Africa, to Middle East, where they claim to have strong affiliation with those operating there.

Another school of thought identifies terrorism as a global challenge that finds explanations in sociological theory, which explicates the social conditions that are linked with acts of terrorism (Boyns and Ballard, 2004). Such social conditions manifest in behaviours or actions that inspire terror. This means that the driver of terrorism and proliferation of terrorist organisations could be rooted in social factors which motivate frustration-aggression (Dollard et al., 1939; Faleti, 2006), sustained by relative deprivation (Gurr, 1970), and the inability of aggrieved groups to embrace non-violent approach to dispute resolution. Brewer et al. (1996:37) present the Crime

Control Model of human and national security, which "incorporates assertive patrol activity, a prominent street-level police presence, abstractive street contact caused by an extensive use of stop and search powers, and a somewhat attitude to civil rights." In their efforts to contain terrorism, various security approaches are adopted by governments. Some of these approaches by special operations forces can affect businesses.

Objectives of Terrorists
Terrorists, wherever they operate, are known for the following aims they intend to achieve:
➢ They are interested in planting the seeds of primordialism and disunity through their nefarious activities. For instance, in 2012, the Boko Haram issued an ultimatum to all Christians and Southerners to leave the North or face attack. The ultimatum was greeted with controversies, hostility perceptions and condemnations from various quarters.
➢ They employ massive unprecedented attacks on the people, thereby inflicting very huge losses and sorrows on families;
➢ They contend with the state for control of the country in order to portray constituted authorities as weak or incapable of containing them;
➢ They ensure that security forces are overwhelmed;
➢ They want to attract the attention of media, enhance their publicity and boost their psychological strength in the polity;
➢ Their aim is to prove that militarism or confrontational strategy is not an antidote to terror;
➢ They are interested in spreading the network of terror and suicide in all parts of the world to win more sympathisers or recruit oppressed groups;
➢ Every terrorist organisation creates fear and declares media war against governments;
➢ Terrorists have the objective of creating public's sense of insecurity;
➢ They create unstable socio-economic and political environment;
➢ They want to force foreigners and non-indigenes out of a particular region/ethnic group.

Features of Terrorist Organisations (TOs)
Observations show that terrorism has some notable characteristics of conflict. Awoniyi (2002:18-19) highlights the following findings on acts of terrorism based on case studies in different parts of the world:
➢ Terrorist groups are not unintelligent people. They are aware of their actions even as they carefully select their targets and plan their attacks rationally;
➢ They recruit secondary and university students into their ranks, clandestinely or openly, as in the case of Hamas in Palestine;
➢ Religious or ideological beliefs drive their search for political power;
➢ Their objective in any case is to induce fear in a population in order to force a government or a group to change its practice or policy (such fear manifests in oppression of people through attacks/threats of violence;
➢ They attribute only evil motives to anyone outside their own groups – the lives of others, being absolutely evil in the terrorist value system, can then be destroyed with no remorse;

➢   They reject political compromise and consider negotiation dishonourable. For instance, Nigeria's Boko Haram downplayed the possibility of negotiating with the federal government and also rejected the proposed amnesty for the group, describing it as a ruse;

➢   Terrorist actions include assassination, bombing, arson, looting, hostage-taking, kidnapping, seizure and occupation of buildings, attacks on facilities, sabotage, widespread banditry, extortion of money from companies, robberies, and smuggling. Notable examples are the 2001 9/11 attack in USA, the September 2013 Westgate incident in Kenya orchestrated by Al-Shabaab, and the various attacks by Boko Haram in Nigeria;

➢   Terrorist organisations usually create a support structure of sympathisers and people coerced into helping them – a case in point is the Armed Islamic Group (AIG) in Algeria that succeeded in raising money among sympathisers in Europe, as well as the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C) in Turkey;

➢   Terrorists are known to operate under legal and political covers, such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the clandestine armed wing of Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelan, which operates behind fronts, such as World Tamil Association and the World Tamil Movement;

➢   Terrorists respect no laws of any country other than their self-imposed organisation's decorum or the directives of their fronts/commanders. Examples are Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and AQIM leaders issuing orders to their loyalists; and

➢   Terrorist groups are evolutionary in their development. They change strategies with time.

The modus operandi of terrorists includes kidnapping, attack against security installations, suicide bombing, intimidation of host communities with arms and issuing warnings on consequences of giving security operatives information. Sometimes they dress like combatants or like civilians; it is not always easy to identify terrorists when they camouflage as law-abiding citizens. In Nigeria, for instance, it was reported that some members of Boko Haram dressed like students in Kogi State to threaten students and teachers. Terrorists are fond of showing their pictures while holding AK47 and other weapons in their hands to intimidate people and enhance their psychological strength.

Implications of Terrorism for Businesses

Across the world, terrorism is so serious a problem that investors and business owners are becoming worried about the survival of their businesses. The regrouping of Boko Haram terrorists is a major source of instability (Terpstra, 2020). Terrorism is a threat to businesses in Northeastern Nigeria. Besides manufacturers, most transporters, suppliers and distributors have been affected by Boko Haram terrorism. Even some of the people supplying eggs to the northern states have stopped the business and changed routes owing to several attacks by terrorists. They have lost their capital and goods in the process. The danger of having terrorists attacking markets is that the number of suppliers and distributors will reduce as a result of the deaths recorded and the fear of becoming victims of the attacks. This has the capacity of creating inflation and reduced supply of goods and services in volatile areas. Foreign investors and tourists are also scared of visiting this part of the country.

Containing terror demands that policy makers understand the psyche of the terrorists and find ways of dealing with them (Kwesi, 2013). The danger of terror has made it necessary for people to be searched before being allowed to enter some public places. In the past, it was not a common practice to beef up security at places of worship. It is now part of most religious institutions to provide preventive measures to protect worshipers, especially within and around mosques and churches in Africa and the Middle East. For instance, in Nigeria, the activities of Boko Haram and the alarming fatalities recorded since 2010 made security operatives to mount checkpoints around religious institutions. They even search worshippers before they enter the premises. It was observed that security men searched people at the entrance of a Pentecostal church at the Karu area in Abuja on 18 August 2013, as people came to attend the service of the day. The church that naturally provides society with spiritual security now needs physical presence of security forces for peaceful worship to prevent terrorist attacks and save lives. As security is needed by the church, markets and various motor parks also require attention considering the threat of terrorism. Many traders are usually taken unawares, with many scampering for safety whenever terrorists strike.

Physical violence
Terrorism creates a Hobbesian state of nature, where villages and individuals are attacked, kidnapped or displaced (Mason, 2003), as a result of violence and search for safety. This is obvious considering the nature of the pandemonium that terror produces (Okolie-Osemene, 2019; Okolie-Osemene and Aluko, 2019). The aftermath of any terrorist attack portrays a picture of frightened people running helter-skelter high security alert and emergency response to the situation, but not without restriction of movement, transportation and commercial activities for some time (Brown, 2011). There is hardly any terrorist act that is not associated with violence and sorrow. Such actions usually have debilitating social, psychological and physical implications.

This uncontrolled attack on markets and other business locations continues to generate fear as well as loss of parents, guardians, and family members to terror incidents. The violence causes waste of time and resources which would have been expended on human development. These are channelled into giving of economic packages for the recovery of terror victims in the volatile states.

The attack by terrorists has made markets the centres of human rights violations. This is because during attacks, most people have their freedom of movement denied, while others are killed in the process. This explains why terrorism leads to militarisation of areas occupied by radicalised groups. During this period, citizens suffer, as they are molested by security forces. Some cases are noteworthy. The deployment of various special operations forces to contain Boko Haram turned the Northeast to a place of hostilities. The emergency rule declared in May 2013 to curb the activities of Boko Haram, in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States eventually deprived most citizens of their rights, including limiting freedom of movement, freedom of communication (by restriction of mobile phone networks), creation of negative peace atmosphere through militarism (Okolie-Osemene, 2019; Okolie-Osemene and Aluko, 2019)..

The disconnection of mobile phone networks greatly impeded early response to casualties during emergency situations.

Various businesses suffered setback while people restricted their movement in high-risk areas, especially places previously controlled by Boko Haram. Because of this, the problem exacerbated the poverty rate and increased unemployment within and beyond the affected states. It also produced loss of business opportunities as relocation of careers and businesses became the order of the day. Consequently, most job seekers have shifted attention to other safer regions in the country; any mention of the Northeast generates fear and serious concern, all this to the detriment of institutions that would have needed the skills and services of those relocating.

When state of emergency is declared to contain terrorism, it is called counterterrorism-oriented emergency rule implemented by security forces and monitored by the Ministry of Defence, which is responsible for deployment of personnel and weapons/logistics, including armoured personnel carriers. The operations are usually strengthened by aerial bombardment, mounting of roadblocks and stop-and-search patrols (Okolie-Osemene, 2019). As seen since the deployment of the military taskforce, militarisation and declaration of state of emergency are not sufficient to tame the terror monster and guarantee human security. In essence, grassroots mobilisation, provision of basic human needs, social justice and good governance should be incorporated into counterterrorism.

The war against terrorism cannot be successful without the active involvement of citizens in every country. Security agencies should not carry out daily intelligence gathering without involving residents who may even have more information needed to tame the terrorists than they do. Any collaboration between security forces and civilians must be done in a manner that information given to security institutions do not leak, to avoid unleashing of terror on civilians. The collaborative efforts of civilian Joint Task Force (JTF) and the multinational JTF in Borno State show that the Boko Haram terrorists have a bleak future in Nigeria The enhanced information dissemination, camp raids and destruction of bomb factories by security forces, inter-agency collaboration, as well as support from traditional rulers have greatly helped.

The attack on businesses shows that terror does not have only psychological and political costs; it also has economic costs, as people usually lose their sources of livelihood. Despite the economic implications, Boko Haram still gains the sympathy of some sections of the communities where they operate. For instance, some Christians, Muslims and indigenous people seem to be divided on issues pertaining to the ideology and targets of the sect. Until terror is contained, the economy cannot grow successfully.

Terrorism is responsible for the decline of socio-economic activities in the Northeast. No meaningful occupation, such as trading, farming and fishing, can thrive well in any chaotic environment. The 2016 incident is remarkable because 30 well-armed suspected Boko Haram members on rampage invaded Madagali settlement in Madagali Local Government Area in Adamawa State at about 10 am and carted away about 1000 cows, 70 sheep and 40 goats

(*Vanguard*, February 14, 2016). Many markets in the Northeast and border towns closed down because of insecurity. This was due to the fact that suicide bombers frequently disguise themselves as customers or traders to detonate bombs in the markets as part of the insurgent strategy of attacking soft targets especially women and children (Okolie-Osemene and Okolie-Osemene, 2019). It was the risk associated with Boko Haram's attacks in markets within this region that prompted the Nigerian army to announce its intention to shut down markets in the country's Northeast (*Newsweek* 2016). The effectiveness of this is yet to be seen.

Shutting down markets meant suffering for families and communities whose livelihoods depended on the trades and the commercial activities in the affected areas. Likewise, as a result of the Boko Haram threats, most of the Cameroonian markets along the borders of Northeastern Nigeria were closed down. Cameroon has experienced not less than 30 deadly attacks from Boko Haram since the beginning of the year. In one of the deadly attacks blamed on Boko Haram, over 32 people were killed in coordinated bomb blasts in Bodo, a village near the border with Nigeria, on 25 January 2016 (Iaccino 2016). This has reduced the chances of trade and cut access to food. As noted by Oche (286), about 70% of the food consumed in the South is from the North, with Northeastern Nigeria being one of the major suppliers of food items like onion, pepper, yam, tomatoes and cattle. If a high percentage of the foodstuffs consumed in the southern part of the country is planted, harvested and prepared for the market in the North, any form of insecurity will undermine food security across the country. The effect will be galloping inflation which could make it difficult for the ordinary masses to get food. Some northerners were interviewed during this study and they confirmed to the authors that insecurity arising from Boko Haram challenge has discouraged farming in Northern Nigeria to the extent that foodstuffs are now imported from neighbouring countries to cover the inadequacies.

Security crisis occasioned by Boko Haram activities in the Lake Chad basin area, erodes women's livelihoods, and destroys markets. This is a major threat to Nigeria's commercial economy, as it has led to ban on the trade of solid fertilizer in Northeast Nigeria, where they are used to make bombs, and closure of specific transportation routes. This has necessarily led to direct and indirect effects on women's living and security in northern Nigeria.

The terrorists and bandits attacking farms and markets are cognisant of the implications of their actions for the entire country. Their desire is to portray the government in bad light, as being unable to protect the general public. This shows the possibility of terrorists gaining the minds of farmers and businesses to provide them with the protection they need to avoid being attacked. The state cannot claim to still have the capacity to protect the populace when terrorists are busy snatching vehicles loaded with foodstuffs on highways and setting villages ablaze.

The killing by Boko Haram during attack in markets has made businesses, including shops, markets and farms, to become synonymous with untimely death and loss of livelihoods. This also reveals the weakness of intelligence efforts of state actors.

CONCLUSION

Food security is important to economic growth and stability of every society, but terrorism undermines this basic need of man. This paper has examined terrorism and businesses in Northeast Nigeria. Since 2010, Nigeria has been in the throes of human insecurity as a result of the nefarious activities of Boko Haram. The main finding is that Boko Haram is a major threat to businesses and economic growth in the Northeast, considering how the group launches attacks at different locations on a daily basis. It is impossible for any business to grow and break even when the cities and streets do not experience peace. This is because with the threats, people would not like to spend on goods that could be destroyed by violent groups. The ability of state actors to step up efforts to constructively engage terrorists in the Northeast would go a long way in eradicating the hunger, starvation and food insecurity that have become daily experience for different classes of people and organisations. One of the lessons to learn from the situation is that it will be easier and less costly for states and authorities to curb insecurity at the latent stage of the problem rather than waiting for the menace to escalate and become a source of threat to survival of communities. De-radicalisation is always expensive and more difficult than a situation where groups are not given the opportunity to taste violence.

This study has revealed that winning the war against terrorism requires the collaboration of various stakeholders in the communities and the security agencies, especially intelligence sharing, to save the entire society from the crisis of food insecurity associated with terrorism Also early warning signals should be extended to markets and other business areas. Besides, vehicular movements around businesses, including motor parks, should be monitored to easily spot those prepared to threaten the peace. Launching more de-radicalisation programmes will reduce the recruitment of more youths into the act of terror. No matter the challenges Nigeria faces today, Nigerians must remain selfless in service, patriotic in action and focused on nation building. Definitely, serving with honour, dignity and love will facilitate peacebuilding.

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