



**Re-thinking the State apparatus of Counterinsurgency; its rise to classical terrorism: A case study of Boko Haram in Nigeria.**

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**Abstract**

This paper explores the political-cum-military forces at play between the Nigerian state and the sect called 'Boko Haram'. It investigates the instruments of counterinsurgency earlier employed by the Nigerian state against Boko Haram during its formative stage. In this order, questions like: is there more or less Boko Haram insurgency after the government crackdown? What would have been the situation, if there was no government crackdown on the group? Has Boko Haram become much more committed in its fight against the Nigerian state? Has the sect become more influential, larger or even infiltrated the Nigerian government? Has their tactics been changed and upgraded? It was discovered that counterinsurgency has a possible negative effect of fuelling insurgency.



**Map of Nigeria showing its 36 states and the Federal capital territory.**

### **Introduction**

It is no longer news that Nigeria, Africa’s most populous and oil rich country, has for some time now been faced with security issues. The country who twice was awarded country with the happiest people on earth<sup>1</sup> has in recent times faced situations that on occasions, left more than two-third of its citizens saddled in melancholy. The Christmas Day bombing in which about 40 people were killed is worth mentioning. Put differently, from an oil-rich-poverty-stricken but peaceful Country, Nigeria has now been classed as one of those Countries experiencing terrorism and the major group responsible for this is the ‘Boko Haram’ militant sect, which came into prominence in 2009. In fact citizens of Nigeria are much more conversant with the name ‘Boko Haram’ than with the name of the Nigerian president. Similarly pastors in Nigerian churches now preach under tight security.

### **Nigeria in Brief**

Nigeria is a federal constitutional republic comprising 36 states and its Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The country is located in West Africa and shares land borders with the Republic of Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north. The Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo are the

<sup>1</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/3157570.stm>

three largest and most influential ethnic groups in Nigeria. In terms of religion Nigeria is roughly split half and half between Muslims and Christians with a very small minority who practice traditional religion.

The total population in Nigeria was last reported at 158,423,180 million people as at Jan.24, 2012.<sup>2</sup> Nigeria has 2.29 per cent of the world's total population which means that one person in every 44 people on the planet is a resident of Nigeria. In this order, it is the most populous country in Africa, the seventh most populous country in the world, and the most populous country in the world in which the majority of the population are black.<sup>3</sup> After years of military rule altered shortly by civilian rule, Nigeria finally returned to democracy in 1999 and has since been in democracy.

## **Terrorism**

The big problem with the term 'terrorism' lies in the fact that, it is not academic but a political term and there has not been a universally agreeable definition to it. This allows for different interpretations depending on the purpose of the interpreter and on the political demands of the moment.<sup>4</sup> Also, the term became much more popular among international actors after September 11, 2001.

Common definitions of terrorism refer only to those violent acts which are intended to create fear (terror), are perpetrated for a religious, political or, ideological goal; and deliberately target or disregard the safety of non-combatants (civilians). I will consider a few definitions, at least for the purpose of this paper.

According to Dr Ekaterina, "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."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, GTD gave three basic criteria for an act to be described as terrorist and they include: I: The act must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal. II: There must be evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) than the immediate victims. III: The action must be

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<sup>2</sup> [http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators?cid=GPD\\_WDI](http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators?cid=GPD_WDI)

<sup>3</sup> Library of Congress – Federal Research Division (July 2008). Country profile: Nigeria. pp. 9. Retrieved 28 December 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Stepanova, E., *Terrorism in Asymmetrical Conflict: Ideological and Structural Aspects* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2008), p.5 : <http://books.sipri.org/files/RR/SIPRIIR23.pdf>

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<sup>5</sup> Stepanova, *Op. cit.* p.2.

outside the context of legitimate warfare activities, i.e. the act must be outside the parameters permitted by international humanitarian law (particularly the admonition against deliberately targeting civilians or non-combatants).<sup>6</sup> In view of the above, Boko Haram is a terrorist group as this has also been recently asserted by the US.

## **Counterinsurgency**

An insurgency is an armed rebellion against a constituted authority (for example, an authority recognized as such by the United Nations) when those taking part in the rebellion are not recognized as belligerents<sup>7</sup> (Oxford English Dictionary). Counterinsurgency is just the opposite of insurgency or we can say it is retaliation by a constituted authority. To put it differently, COIN as it is often abbreviated, involves actions taken by the recognized government of a nation to contain or quell an insurgency taken up against it.<sup>8</sup>

## **What is Boko Haram? Who are they?**

Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad ("People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad"), better known by its Hausa name Boko Haram, is a Salafist jihadist terrorist organisation based in the northeast of Nigeria,<sup>9</sup> in the areas predominated by the Kanuri people. Loosely translated from the local Hausa language, 'Boko Haram' means 'Western education is forbidden' or that it is a sin. Considering the modus operandi of Boko Haram in the past few years, it is no doubt that the group has no clear structure or evident chain of command. There are however some few structural information about the group

### **a) The origin of Boko Haram**

Boko Haram is believed to have been founded by a self-proclaimed Nigerian spiritual leader named **Mohammed Yusuf** in the city of Maiduguri in 2002. The aim of course, was the establishment of a Shari'a government in Borno State under the then Governor Ali Modu Sheriff.<sup>10</sup> Mohammed Yusuf established a religious complex that included a mosque and a school where many poor families from across Nigeria and from neighbouring countries enrolled their children.<sup>11</sup> The centre had ulterior political goals and soon it was also working as a recruiting ground for future jihadist to fight the

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/>

<sup>7</sup> Oxford English Dictionary second edition 1989 "insurgent B. n. One who rises in revolt against constituted authority; a rebel who is not recognized as a belligerent."

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Cook David, The Rise of Boko Haram <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-rise-of-boko-haram-in-nigeria>

<sup>10</sup> Johnson, Toni (2011-08-31). "Backgrounder: Boko Haram". Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved 2011-09-01.

<sup>11</sup> Op. cit. Chothia, Farouk

state.<sup>12</sup> The group includes members who come from neighbouring Chad and Niger and speak only Arabic.<sup>13</sup> And in 2004 the complex was relocated to Yusuf's home town called Kanamma in Yobe state near the Nigerian-Niger border.<sup>14</sup>

#### **b) Ideology of Boko Haram**

As noted above, Boko Haram is an indigenous Salafist group which only turned itself into a Salafist Jihadist group in 2009.<sup>15</sup> The group propagates that not only interaction with the Western World is forbidden, but it is also against the government of Nigeria and wants the establishment of Sharia in the entire Nigeria.<sup>16</sup> The group publicly extols its ideology despite the fact that its founder and former leader Muhammad Yusuf was himself a highly educated man who lived a lavish life and drove a Mercedes Benz.<sup>17</sup> The members of the group do not interact with the local Muslim population<sup>18</sup> and have carried out assassinations in the past on anyone who criticises it, including Muslim clerics.<sup>19</sup>

In a 2009 BBC interview, Muhammad Yusuf, then leader of the group, rejected scientific explanation for natural phenomena, such as the sun evaporating water being the cause of rain, Darwinian evolution, and the Earth being a sphere "if it runs contrary to the teachings of Allah".<sup>20</sup> Before his death, Yusuf reiterated the group's objective of changing the current education system and rejecting democracy.<sup>21</sup>

#### **c) Symbols**

The group as at the time of writing this paper has no symbol of identification.

#### **d) Group Type**

Extremist Political (Terrorist)

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Captives freed in Nigerian city, BBC, 2009-07-29

<sup>14</sup> Deadly Nigeria clashes spread, Al Jazeera, 2009-07-27. See <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2009/07/2009727134953755877.html>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Bartolotta, Christopher (2011-09-23). "Terrorism in Nigeria: the Rise of Boko Haram". The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations. Retrieved 2012-01-12.

<http://blogs.shu.edu/diplomacy/2011/09/terrorism-in-nigeria-the-rise-of-boko-haram/>

<sup>17</sup> "Nigeria's 'Taliban' enigma". BBC News. 2009-07-28. Retrieved 2009-07-28.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8172270.stm>

<sup>18</sup> Dozens killed in Nigeria clashes. London, England: BBC. 2009-07-26. Retrieved 2010-01-02. See

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8169359.stm>

<sup>19</sup> Chothia, Farouk (2012-01-11). "Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists?" BBC News. Retrieved 2012-01-25. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13809501>

<sup>20</sup> Op.cit. Nigeria's 'Taliban' enigma".

<sup>21</sup> Op. cit. Dozens killed in Nigeria clashes.

**e) Area of operation**

Nigeria. Specifically, the group enjoys popular supports in the predominantly Muslim northern regions of Nigeria. The states include Bauchi, Kano, Yobe and Borno. Most of its attacks have been in the city of Maiduguri which is the Capital of Borno state.

**f) Targets/Opponents**

The group has primarily targeted the Nigerian policemen. It has shown no compunctions, killing traditional leaders who they considered informants. Its blog has triumphantly praised attacks on Nigerians who have visited drinking bars and those who publicly criticise it. More recently, Boko Haram has channelled its attacks on Christians in the North and in this order; churches have been their latest target. They have also targeted media houses.

**g) Group Affiliations/Training**

Many experts on Boko haram noted that the group's suicide bombing on 26 August 2011 that destroyed the UN building in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, reveals a link with al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM). Before the attack, an internal Nigerian intelligence document had discussed possible links between Boko haram and AQIM. General Carter Ham, the general in front of United States African Command (AFRICOM) speculated that Boko Haram might want to establish partnership with the Somali terrorist group, al-Shabaab, in addition to AQIM. In January 2010, the leader of AQIM, Abd al-Malik Droukdal, released a statement offering to provide training and material assistance to Boko Haram. In spite of these connections however, as of September 2011, several experts doubt the actual alliance between the two groups, noting the lack of public hard evidence linking Boko Haram and AQIM. However, the Republic of Niger's Foreign Minister, Mohamed Bazoum, on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011 said Boko Haram received training and weapons from Al-Qaeda's North African wing. In his words, "there is no doubt that there is confirmed information that shows a link between Boko Haram and AQIM (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), and it consists primarily of the training given to elements of Boko Haram."<sup>22</sup>

It is important to state here that a press statement dated August 09, 2009 and signed by the then acting leader of the group, Mallam Sanni Umaru, had confirmed Boko Haram ties with al-Qaeda. In his words, "Boko Haram is an Islamic Revolution whose impact is not limited to Northern Nigeria, in fact, we are spread across all the 36 states in Nigeria, and Boko Haram is just a version of the Al

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Qaeda which we align with and respect. We support Osama bin Laden, we shall carry out his command in Nigeria until the country is totally Islamised which is according to the wish of Allah.”<sup>23</sup>

#### **h) Finance**

Nothing is presently confirmed of the annual budget of Boko Haram and its source of income. But it has been said that the group is been funded by some Governors in Northern Nigeria. Similarly, there are indications that the group also receive funds from al-Qaeda<sup>24</sup>. Also different confirmations coming from sources in Boko Haram had indicated clearly that a group known as Al-Muntada Trust Fund, with headquarters in the United Kingdom, had extended some financial assistance to the sect.<sup>25</sup> But there is no hard evidence to buttress these claims yet.

#### **i) Strategy/Tactics**

In order to reach an internet savvy audience, Boko Haram operates a blog at <http://yusufislamicbrothers.blogspot.com/> where it extols the virtues of jihads.

They also have an email to communicate with intending members; [nigjihadist@yahoo.com](mailto:nigjihadist@yahoo.com).

A March 15, 2011 BBC article stated that Boko Haram’s main tactic is a drive-by assassination using a motorbike. The 26<sup>th</sup> August 2011 suicide car-bombing was the first successful suicide bombing in Boko Haram history.

### **Nigeria/Boko Haram before the killing of Mohammed Yusuf by the Nigerian state**

The group conducted its operations more or less peacefully during the first seven years of its existence.<sup>26</sup> Prior to July 2009 when the sect’s notoriety waxed strong, its members had been involved in dastardly incidents in Yobe in 2003 and in Kano in 2004. In April 2007, 10 policemen and a divisional commander’s wife were killed in an attack on the police headquarters in Kano. On 13 November 2008, Yusuf was arrested following an attack on a police station in Maiduguri, in which, 17 of his followers were killed. On 20 January 2009, an Abuja high court granted him bail. Perhaps this was a mistake.

On July 26, 2009, Boko Haram launched mass uprising with attack on the Dutsen Tanshi police station in Bauchi in retaliation for the arrest of its leader and thus starting a five-day uprising that

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/08/boko-haram-ressurrects-declares-total-jihad/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://tribune.com.ng/index.php/front-page-news/35888-boko-harams-funding-traced-to-uk-sarabia-sect-planned-to-turn-nigeria-into-afghanistan-arrested-kingpin-opens-up>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Op. cit. Cook, David

spread to Maiduguri and elsewhere. This attack referred to as the '2009 Nigerian sectarian violence' was a conflict between Boko Haram and the Nigerian security forces. The attacks spread and by the next day corpses were located at police stations, people were fleeing their homes and some were being pulled from their cars to be shot dead as police stations burned to the ground.

Nigerian troops then surrounded the home of Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri on 28 July after his followers barricaded themselves inside. On July 30, 2009, Mohammed Yusuf, leader of Boko Haram, was captured by Nigerian security forces and was shot dead while in police custody, possibly while attempting to escape.<sup>27</sup> The violence resulted in 700 deaths between 26 and 29 July 2009 across four cities in north east Nigeria.<sup>28</sup> Though, the Red Cross later said that 780 bodies had been taken from the streets of the city and buried in mass graves.<sup>29</sup> It is the worst sectarian violence the country has experienced since November 2008.<sup>30</sup> Below are two video clips which show the execution of members of Boko Haram by the Nigerian military:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HItqhm24LVM&feature=related>

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2009/07/2009727182749635965.html>

On August 2, 2009, another group of women and children abducted by the Boko Haram sect were found locked in a house in Maiduguri.<sup>31</sup> In a statement dated August 9, 2009 and made available to Vanguard newspaper, the sect declared that their leader Yusuf, who was killed in controversial circumstances during the crisis, lives forever.<sup>32</sup> In what looked like a declaration of war on the rest of the nation, the then acting leader, Mallam Sanni Umaru noted that the sect will unleash terror in Southern Nigeria beginning with the bombing of Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt and Enugu.<sup>33</sup>

The Vanguard newspaper reproduces the statement below as issued by Boko Haram:

### **WE SPEAK AS BOKO HARAM**

For the first time since the Killing of Mallam Mohammed Yusuf, our leader, we hereby make the following statements:

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<sup>27</sup> McConnell, Tristan (2009-07-30). "Islamist sect leader shot dead after 600 killed in Nigeria siege". London: The Times. Retrieved 2009-08-01.

<sup>28</sup> Nigeria survivors describe night of terror by sect, Associated Press via The Guardian, 2009-08-04

<sup>29</sup> Red Cross finds 780 corpses in single Nigeria city, Press TV, 2009-08-03. Accessed 2009-08-27. Archived 2009-09-07.

<sup>30</sup> "Nigerian forces shell sect leader's home". The Sydney Morning Herald. 2009-07-29. Retrieved 2009-07-29.

<sup>31</sup> Nigerian police find sect women". BBC News. 2009-08-02. Retrieved 2009-08-02.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/08/boko-haram-ressurrects-declares-total-jihad/>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.



- 1) *First of all that Boko Haram does not in any way mean 'Western Education is a sin' as the infidel media continue to portray us. Boko Haram actually means Western Civilisation is forbidden. The difference is that while the first gives the impression that we are opposed to formal education coming from the West, that is Europe, which is not true, the second affirms our believe in the supremacy of Islamic culture (not Education), for culture is broader, it includes education but not determined by Western Education.*  
*In this case we are talking of Western Ways of life which include; constitutional provision as it relates to, for instance the rights and privileges of Women, the idea of homosexuality, lesbianism, sanctions in cases of terrible crimes like drug trafficking, rape of infants, multi-party democracy in an overwhelmingly Islamic country like Nigeria, blue films, prostitution, drinking beer and alcohol and many others that are opposed to Islamic civilisation.*
- 2) *That the Boko Haram is an Islamic Revolution which impact is not limited to Northern Nigeria, in fact, we are spread across all the 36 states in Nigeria, and Boko Haram is just a version of the Al Qaeda which we align with and respect. We support Osama bin Laden, we shall carry out his command in Nigeria until the country is totally Islamised which is according to the wish of Allah.*
- 3) *That Mallam Yusuf has not died in vain and he is a martyr. His ideas will live for ever.*
- 4) *That Boko Haram lost over 1000 of our Martyr members killed by the wicked Nigerian army and police mostly of Southern Nigeria extraction. That the Southern states, especially the infidel Yoruba, Igbo and Ijaw infidels will be our immediate target.*
- 5) *That the killing of our leaders in a callous, wicked and malicious manner will not in any way deter us. They have lost their lives in the struggle for Allah.*

*Having made the following statement we hereby reinstate our demands:*

- 1) *That we have started a Jihad in Nigeria which no force on earth can stop. The aim is to Islamise Nigeria and ensures the rule of the majority Muslims in the country. We will teach Nigeria a lesson, a very bitter one.*
- 2) *That from the Month of August, we shall carry out series of bombing in Southern and Northern Nigerian cities, beginning with Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu and Port Harcourt. The bombing will not stop until Sharia and Western Civilisation is wiped off from Nigeria. We will not stop until these evil cities are tuned into ashes.*

- 3) *That we shall make the country ungovernable, kill and eliminate irresponsible political leaders of all leanings, hunt and gun down those who oppose the rule of Sharia in Nigeria and ensure that the infidel does not go unpunished.*
- 4) *We promise the West and Southern Nigeria, a horrible pastime. We shall focus on these areas which is the devil empire and has been the one encouraging and sponsoring Western Civilisation into the shores of Nigeria.*
- 5) *We call on all Northerners in the Islamic States to quit the follower ship of the wicked political parties leading the country, the corrupt, irresponsible, criminal, murderous political leadership, and join the struggle for Islamic Society that will be corruption free, Sodom free, where security will be guaranteed and there will be peace under Islam.*
- 6) *That very soon, we shall stir Lagos, the evil city and Nigeria South West and South East, in a way no one has ever done before. Al Hakubarah*

**IT'S EITHER YOU ARE FOR US OR AGAINST US**

**Mallam Sanni Umaru**

**Acting Leader Boko Haram**

**Signed: August 09, 2009**

(Source: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/08/boko-haram-ressurects-declares-total-jihad/> )

Well the group actually keep to this publication that many thought was a threat.

**Nigeria/Boko Haram after the killing of Mohammed Yusuf**

The latter part of 2009, did not really witnessed Boko Haram attacks, perhaps this was a period when the group decided to go back to the drawing board and map out modalities to terrorise the Nigerian state in the years to come. For instance it was believed that the group sent out some six members to Algeria to learn how to make Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Events in the following year clearly show that the students learnt well. In sequential order below are Boko Haram attacks after the crackdown.

- On January 2010, the group launched its first terrorist attack after the death of its leader, Yusuf. The attack which took place at the Dala Alemderi ward in Maiduguri, Borno State, resulted in the killing of four people.<sup>34</sup>
- On September 7, 2010, the group freed about 721 inmates from a prison in Bauchi State and threatened reprisals against those they accused of persecuting their members.<sup>35</sup>
- October 6, 2010: Gunmen assassinate two security guards outside a politician's home and, several hours later, assassinate ANPP leader Awana Ngala in Maiduguri.<sup>36</sup>
- October 9, 2010: Gunmen assassinate Muslim cleric Bashir Kashara and one of his students in Maiduguri. Separately, gunmen assassinate a police officer in Maiduguri.<sup>37</sup>
- October 11, 2010: Bombing/gun attack on a police station in Maiduguri destroys the station and injures three.<sup>38</sup>
- December 24 and 27, 2010: A series of attacks claimed by Boko Haram and reprisals in the central city of Jos and Maiduguri in the northeast of the country kill at least 86 people.<sup>39</sup>
- December 28, 2010: Boko Haram claims responsibility for the Christmas Eve bombing in Jos that killed 38, but police are skeptical; Boko Haram also tied to an attack on churches in Maiduguri.<sup>40</sup>
- December 29, 2010: Islamists suspected of belonging to the sect kill eight people in Maiduguri.<sup>41</sup>
- December 31, 2010, there was a bomb attack on a barracks on the outskirts of Abuja, the Federal capital territory. Four people were killed, including a pregnant woman, and 26 were injured; according to defense minister Adetokunbo Kayode, all of the dead were civilians, as were most of the injured. The attack was the second in Abuja in three months, and was the

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<sup>34</sup> Brock, Joe (2011-06-17). "Nigerian Islamist sect claims bomb attack: paper". Reuters.

<sup>35</sup> <http://allafrica.com/stories/201009090034.html>

<sup>36</sup> <http://sahelblog.wordpress.com/2011/07/01/incomplete-list-of-boko-haram-attacks-in-nigeria/>

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-11523131>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/01/catalogue-of-attacks-blamed-on-boko-haram/>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2010/12/20101228123525363633.html>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

first near a barracks in the country since its return to democracy in 1999.<sup>42</sup> That same month, the police arrested 92 members of Boko Haram after a market bombing.<sup>43</sup>

- January 3, 2011: Gunmen assassinate a policeman in Maiduguri.<sup>44</sup>

- Friday January 28, 2011: the sect kills Borno State governorship candidate of the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), Mr. Modu Fannami Gubio, his brother Alhaji Goni Sheriff, four police officers and a 12-year old boy.<sup>45</sup> Gubio was executed at his family residence in Maiduguri, after performing Friday Juma'at prayer.

- February 15, 2011: Gunmen attack a church in Maiduguri, no casualties confirmed.<sup>46</sup>

- February 20, 2011: Gunmen assassinate a policeman (in Maiduguri?).<sup>47</sup>

- February 23, 2011: Gunmen assassinate a policeman (in Maiduguri?).<sup>48</sup>

- March 3, 2011: Three people are killed and 21 injured by an explosive device thrown from a car at an election rally near Nigeria's capital, Abuja.<sup>49</sup>

- March 13, 2011: Gunmen assassinate Muslim cleric Imam Ibrahim Ahmed Abdullahi in Maiduguri.<sup>50</sup>

- On 29 March, police "thwarted a plot to bomb an ANPP election rally" in Maiduguri.<sup>51</sup>

- April 1, 2011 sect attacked a police station in Bauchi.<sup>52</sup>

- April 7, 2011: An explosion hits a polling booth at Unguwar Doki, Maiduguri, Borno State injuring more than 10 people.<sup>53</sup>

- April 8, 2011: Bomb explosion at the Independent Electoral Commission office in Suleja, kills 11.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Many dead in Nigeria market blast - Africa - Al Jazeera English

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/01/man-of-the-year-2011-the-scurge-of-boko-haram/>

<sup>44</sup> <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2011/01/03/nigeria-violence-idUKLDE7020TK20110103>

<sup>45</sup> <http://writezakama.wordpress.com/2012/01/23/boko-harams-long-trail-of-sorrow-tears-and-blood/>

<sup>46</sup> <http://sahelblog.wordpress.com/2011/07/01/incomplete-list-of-boko-haram-attacks-in-nigeria/>

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> <http://writezakama.wordpress.com/2012/01/23/boko-harams-long-trail-of-sorrow-tears-and-blood/>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/03/13/AR2011031302923.html>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/01/man-of-the-year-2011-the-scurge-of-boko-haram/>

<sup>52</sup> <http://writezakama.wordpress.com/2012/01/23/boko-harams-long-trail-of-sorrow-tears-and-blood/>

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

- April 9, 2011: A polling centre in Maiduguri was bombed.<sup>55</sup>
  
- April 15, 2011: The Maiduguri office of the Independent National Electoral Commission was bombed, and several people were shot in a separate incident on the same day.<sup>56</sup>
  
- April 20, 2011: Boko Haram killed a Muslim cleric and ambushed several police officers in Maiduguri.<sup>57</sup>
  
- April 21, 2011: Two suspected bomb makers die in a blast in Kaduna.<sup>58</sup>
  
- April 22, 2011: Boko Haram freed 14 prisoners during a jailbreak in Yola, Adamawa State.<sup>59</sup>
  
- April 24, 25, 2011: Four bomb blasts rip through a hotel and a motor park in Maiduguri killing at least three persons. Two blasts went off at a hotel and one at a transport hub on Sunday night. There was a fourth blast at a cattle market on Monday morning.<sup>60</sup>
  
- May 17, 2011: Gunmen kill a policeman in Maiduguri.<sup>61</sup>
  
- May 29, 2011: Boko Haram blamed for a series of bombings in northern Nigeria that killed 15 persons.<sup>62</sup>
  
- June 6, 2011: Gunmen assassinate Muslim cleric Ibrahim Birkuti in Maiduguri.<sup>63</sup>
  
- June 7, 2011: Teams of gunmen launch parallel attacks with guns and bombs on a church and police stations in Maiduguri, killing five.<sup>64</sup>
  
- June 16, 2011: The group's suicide bomber bombed a portion of the police headquarters in Abuja. Over thirty cars were destroyed and at least two persons reported dead and several others injured.<sup>65</sup> Though casualty reports, vary.
  
- June 26, 2011: The sect bombed a beer garden in Maiduguri, killing about 25 people.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> <http://writezakama.wordpress.com/2012/01/23/boko-harams-long-trail-of-sorrow-tears-and-blood/>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/boko-haram-raids-yola-prison-frees-14/90140/>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13185667>

<sup>61</sup> <http://allafrica.com/stories/201105190665.html>

<sup>62</sup> <http://writezakama.wordpress.com/2012/01/23/boko-harams-long-trail-of-sorrow-tears-and-blood/>

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13679234>

<sup>64</sup> <http://sahelblog.wordpress.com/2011/07/01/incomplete-list-of-boko-haram-attacks-in-nigeria/>

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/Blast-Hits-Nigeria-Police-Headquarters-123996399.html>

- June 27, 2011: Another bombing in Maiduguri attributed to the group killed at least two girls and wounded three customs officials.<sup>67</sup>
- July 03, 2011: Another bombing in a beer garden in Maiduguri killed about 20 people.<sup>68</sup>
- July 10, 2011: A bombing at the All Christian Fellowship Church in Suleja, Niger State.<sup>69</sup>
- July 11, 2011: The University of Maiduguri temporary closes down its campus citing security concerns<sup>70</sup> related to Boko Haram threats.
- August 12, 2011: A prominent Muslim Cleric Liman Bana was shot dead by Boko Haram.<sup>71</sup>
- August 26, 2011: A suicide car bomber, leaving at least 21 dead and dozens more injured, blew up the UN headquarters in Abuja.<sup>72</sup>
- October 16, 2011: Boko Haram shot and killed politician Modu Bintube outside of his home in Maiduguri.<sup>73</sup>
- October 22, 2011: Boko Haram slew Alhaji Zakariya Isa, a Nigerian Television Authority journalist, claiming that he was a government informant.<sup>74</sup>
- November 4, 2011: A series of coordinated attacks in Borno and Yobe states, primarily around Damaturu, killed at least 67 people, leaving a new police headquarters in ruins, and government offices burned.<sup>75</sup> This figure later increased to over a 100.<sup>76</sup>
- November 11, 2011: Explosion in Bauchi left five people injured.<sup>77</sup>
- December 8, 2011: Bomb blast at a market in Kaduna claim 15.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13920980>

<sup>67</sup> <http://writezakama.wordpress.com/2012/01/23/boko-harams-long-trail-of-sorrow-tears-and-blood/>

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> <http://saharareporters.com/news-page/university-maiduguri-shut-down-boko-haram-linked-killings-increase>

<sup>71</sup> <http://writezakama.wordpress.com/2012/01/23/boko-harams-long-trail-of-sorrow-tears-and-blood/>

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15605041>

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/01/catalogue-of-attacks-blamed-on-boko-haram/>

<sup>77</sup> <http://writezakama.wordpress.com/2012/01/23/boko-harams-long-trail-of-sorrow-tears-and-blood/>

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

- December 25, 2011: A series of explosions claimed by Boko Haram targeted at St. Theresa Church, Madalla, Niger State during Christmas day services left at least 40 people dead.<sup>79</sup> There were also bomb blasts and shootings in Jos, Gadaka, and Damaturu.<sup>80</sup>
- January 1, 2012: Boko Haram issues an ultimatum to Christians in the country's north to leave within three days and threatens government troops in the areas where a state of emergency has been declared.<sup>81</sup>
- January 4: Three bomb blasts hit the northern Nigerian cities of Maiduguri and Damaturu.<sup>82</sup>
- January 5 and 6, 2012: A series of assaults on Christian churches and businesses occurred in north-eastern Nigeria. It was followed by attacks on police stations and government offices in the north. This led to hundreds of Igbos and other tribes fleeing the North.<sup>83</sup> Then on January 6, 2012, Gunmen fired on Christian mourners in the north-eastern town of Mubi, killing 17 people.<sup>84</sup>
- January 20, 2012: 20 blasts rock the city of Kano; over 150 lives were lost<sup>85</sup> including Channels TV reporter (one of the independent news stations in Nigeria), Eneche Akogwu. This is about the biggest attacks in the history of Boko Haram. In fact, the death toll was later said to increase to 211<sup>86</sup> or more.
- January 28, 2012: A gun battle between the Nigerian army and members of Boko Haram left 11 of the sect members dead.<sup>87</sup>
- February 8, 2012: A man wearing a military uniform blew himself up outside the army headquarters in Kaduna (barracks) - one of Nigeria's most fortified complexes. A spokesperson for the Boko Haram group also claimed responsibility for an attempted attack on an air force base.<sup>88</sup>
- February 13, 2012: The Nigerian Army killed 12 suspected fighters from the Boko Haram Islamists during a raid in the north-eastern city of Maiduguri, the group's base.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16328940>

<sup>80</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/December\\_2011\\_Nigeria\\_bombings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/December_2011_Nigeria_bombings)

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/01/catalogue-of-attacks-blamed-on-boko-haram/>

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<sup>83</sup> <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/christians-flee-attacks-in-northeast-nigeria/>

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<sup>85</sup> <http://www.mrctv.org/node/109326>

<sup>86</sup> <http://odili.net/news/source/2012/jan/25/334.html>

<sup>87</sup> [http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/28/us-nigeria-violence-idUSTRE8OR0H420120128?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews&utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FtopNews+%28News+%2F+US+%2F+Top+News%29&asid=473fc038](http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/28/us-nigeria-violence-idUSTRE8OR0H420120128?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FtopNews+%28News+%2F+US+%2F+Top+News%29&asid=473fc038)

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16942694>

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/02/army-kill-12-suspected-boko-haram-members/>

- April 26, 2012: The offices of ThisDay, a news outfit were bombed in Kaduna and Abuja and put on video. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efE7aaafYAk>
- June 3, 2012: A Boko Haram suicide bomber attack a church in Bauchi, killed at least 15 and injured 40.<sup>90</sup>
- June 17, 2012: Boko Haram bombed three churches in Nigeria's north-western Kaduna state, killing over 100 people.<sup>91</sup>
- June 24, 2012: Boko Haram stormed a prison in Yobe state, and freed 40 inmates.<sup>92</sup>

So far, there are over 60 major attacks carried out almost successfully by the group, resulting in the death of over 1500 people.

### **Effects of these situations**

In 2012 alone, there have been over 580 deaths instigated by the group attacks.<sup>93</sup> Apart from this or the loss of properties or damage to the Nigerian economy, the Boko Haram situation is creating an intense feeling of the disintegration of Nigeria. Already, several groups have been advocating for a sovereign national conference to discuss this issue. Some others have even warned of retaliation since their relatives have been victims of attacks.

### **Conclusion**

The account of Boko Haram activities before and after the government crack-down is instrumental in looking at the effects of counterinsurgency as a mechanism to avert terrorism or insurgency. Obviously, the Nigerian government's effort at defeating Boko Haram in 2009 was a complete fiasco. **Before the government crackdown, Boko Haram's capabilities were limited to drive-by shootings and improvised explosives. After the crackdown, the group started targeting churches, police stations, news outfits and are now chiefly into suicide bombing. As bomb and gun attacks in Northern Nigeria have shown, Boko Haram - once a small religious sect - is now a flexible dynamic organisation capable of changing tactics and targets.** Also the sect has infiltrated

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<sup>90</sup> [http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2012/06/suicide\\_bomber\\_kills\\_15\\_at\\_nig.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2012/06/suicide_bomber_kills_15_at_nig.php)

<sup>91</sup> <http://post.jagran.com/nigerian-church-attacks-kill-nearly100-1340429043>

<sup>92</sup> <http://news.yahoo.com/nigerias-boko-haram-free-40-prison-break-police-142244827.html>

<sup>93</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/sect-unleashes-multiple-attacks-ne-nigeria-city-16600863#.T-ePcPLAyq1>

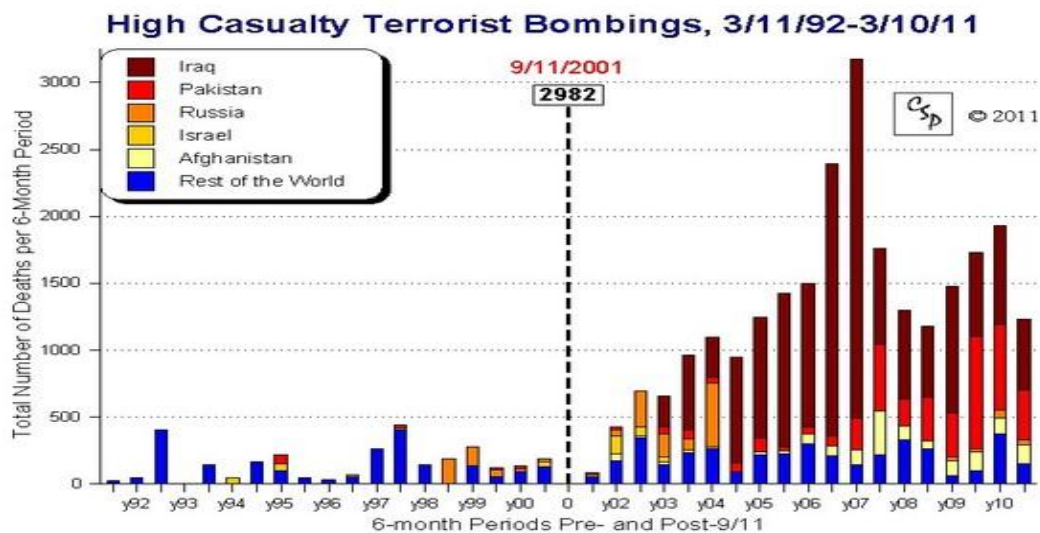


the Nigerian government and President Jonathan has also admitted that Boko Haram sympathisers are in his government and security agencies, hence making the scenario even more complex.<sup>94</sup>

Added to this is the fact that Boko Haram has established strong links with foreign extremist groups, including al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and al-Sheba in Somalia. These external groups have influenced Boko Haram with both tactical knowledge and ideological influence. Hence this is no longer a purely Nigerian problem. It is, at the very least, a regional problem, one that requires a response not only from the Nigerian government, but also from Nigeria's international partners. Indeed the rise of Boko Haram resulted from incompetence, lack of foresight and insensitivity from the Nigerian state."<sup>95</sup>

*My argument is not to make a case for Boko Haram or say they are fighting a just course, of course no one would support a group who were so heartless to kill Christian worshippers in the church on such a day as Christmas.*

My argument therefore is that counterinsurgency as a state apparatus has a possible result of escalating conflict and if proper measures are not taken can result in civil wars or disintegration. This is clear in the Nigerian situation as there are more attacks after the Nigeria government crack-down on Boko Haram. It is apposite to therefore say that, terrorism has increased since the Bush administration declared war on terror. The graph below from the Centre for Systematic Peace perhaps confirms that.



<http://www.systemicpeace.org/conflict.htm>

<sup>94</sup> [http://zeenews.india.com/news/exclusive/boko-haram-no-longer-a-purely-nigerian-problem\\_752678.html](http://zeenews.india.com/news/exclusive/boko-haram-no-longer-a-purely-nigerian-problem_752678.html)

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.africaundisguised.com/newsportal/story/why-nigerian-government-fails-defeat-boko-haram>

So government must really think twice and possibly coin out other mechanisms to address insurgency.

### **Recommendations**

Governments should avoid the continued use of extreme force and actions that would give more justification to perceived terrorist groups. In countries where force had already been used and the problem yet to be solved, I think the governments should adopt **an amnesty approach**.

Top Muslim Imams and all other religious figures in the North also have a great role to play in solving this problem. One truth is that the bulk of Boko Haram members are destitute without any form of education and are easily hoodwinked and lured into terrorist or suicidal acts. Importantly, Boko Haram is operating in an environment which gives all Muslims the comfort that if they are murdered, Allah Subhanahu Wa Taala (the sacred and mighty) will visit their sins on their murderers, and they, in turn, are assured of Aljanna Firdausi, while their killers will be condemned to hell. Also respected Ulama, Imams and other leaders should make effort to reinterpret Chapter 9: 29 of the Quran to the larger Muslim population.

**Finally, I believe that humans are originally compassionate and no one is born a terrorist.** It is not natural that people get involved in suicide attacks. Often times, the people who do, are the bunch of frustrated-unemployed youths. It can therefore be argued that what we now brand as terrorism has its root causes in the socio-political as well as economic atmospheres of nations. In this order, I think government at all levels should adhere strictly to true democracy and most importantly coin out mechanisms to engage the youths in reasonable employment. When unemployment rate is tactically reduced and people fairly engaged, the tendency for getting into acts of terrorism would be minimal. Proper education is however the major tool to achieving this.

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