

**International Journal of Arts and Humanities
(IJAH)
Bahir Dar- Ethiopia**

Vol. 4(1), S/No 13, January, 2015:31-45
ISSN: 2225-8590 (Print) ISSN 2227-5452 (Online)
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijah.v4i1.3>

**Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: A Nation-State in Search
of Cohesion for National Development**

Obamwonyi, Samson E.

Faculty of Law

University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

E-mail: samsonobamwonyi@yahoo.com.

GSM: +2348056734299; +2348092835123

&

Owenvbiugie, Robinson O.

Department of Vocational and Technical Education

Faculty of Education,

University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

E-mail: robowen59@yahoo.com

GSM: +2348156468434

Abstract

For any nation to attain development in all aspects of its life there is need for it to have cohesion, which is a state of unity and orderliness. The absence of cohesion especially in the face of insurgency and insecurity spells doom. Hence this paper attempts to state the need why Nigeria, in the present state of the nation's insecurity occasioned by the Boko Haram terrorist group, should be cohesive so that it can fight the insurgency. All the segments of the nation – military, regions, governments

(states and federal), the religious groups – need to unite to be able to fight the insurgency in order to enable the country attain national development. The historical and content analysis method was used in the paper. The paper reveals that in spite of the state of emergency declared in the three states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe, the government does not seem to be on top of the situation; and the armed forces are being blamed for not demonstrating enough professionalism in handling the war against the insurgency. The paper further reveals that both the former president and the present president are not in good term; and the military services are up arms against the minister of finance for non-release of funds. The paper recommends, amongst others, that the morale of the military should be kept high, all citizens should be security conscious at all times, while more budgetary allocations be given to the military to enable it fight the insurgency.

Key words: Boko Haram, cohesion, insurgency, Nigeria, Yusuf Mohammed

Introduction

Nigeria, since the year 2009, has been enmeshed in terrorism and insurgency. But the rate of the menace increased since the year 2012. Between 2013 and May 2014, the activities of the deadly sect became more alarming as more lives were lost almost on daily basis unlike the previous years. All the segments of the Nigeria-nation state have been tormented by the deadly and heinous acts of the dreaded Boko Haram sect. All have been tormented in one way or the other, from the top hierarchy of the highest organs of government, the top hierarchy of the military, the religious segment and to the ordinary citizens of the country.

The general society is no longer at ease. One segment blames the other. The blame game seems to go round, namely – the military, the government headed by the president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, the religious groups (Christians and Muslims), the regions, that is, north and south – all blame one another for the situation the country found itself. Due to the blames being passed from one section to the other, people are no longer at ease as there seems to be no trust among the general populace; even among the top echelon of governments (federal and states) and the military, including other security agencies in the country; the country itself is no longer at ease, especially security-wise.

The citizens who once resided in certain parts of the country, particularly the north-east and some other parts of the north of the country, are relocating. The relocation is affecting their daily lives as their economic mainstay have either been destroyed completely or the relocation negatively affected their businesses (means of livelihood) which is occasioned by the insurgency and terrorism caused by Boko Haram sect.

All these have affected the generality of the people and governments – federal, states and local governments in the affected states of the north. Not quite long, ethnicity and politics have been introduced into the whole scenario. Due to the uneasy situation and mistrust in many circles of the national life, the country is longer in its usual self. Things are no longer at ease; the country is no longer cohesive in order to find its feet and rhythm to seek and pursue national and collective development. Economically, the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) must be surely affected sooner or later. The absence of cohesion portends great danger to the entire country and the citizens are not left out of the bad situation.

Origin and Brief History of Boko Haram

The Boko Haram sect, the insurgent and terrorist group which is mainly based in the north eastern part of Nigeria, started its heinous crime in 2009, the year it was widely known and gained relevance. But the group has been in existence before this time. The original name of Boko Haram is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnai Lidda'awati Wat Jihad, meaning "people committed to the propagation of the prophet's Teachings and Jihad". Boko Haram is also commonly known as "Western Education is a Sin". Some analysts and commentators are of the view that the deadly sect has been in existence before 2002, and that the sect has been operating with different names, namely, "the Nigerian Taliban; and Yusuffiyya" (Adesoji, 2011). Because its activities have not come to the open, it was not known. What brought the sect to the world and public glare was the extra judicial killing of their leader, Mohammed Yusuf, which triggered anger and vengeance among the sect.

The insurgent group is strongly believed to be pursuing a theocratic agenda which is largely based on the 13th century Turkish Sunni Islamic scholar, Sheik Al-Islam Ibn Tarmiya. Tarmiya is the philosophical focus of Boko Haram sect (Adi, 2014). Hence the mosque built in Maiduguri was named after him.

Boko Haram was founded by two persons, namely, Mohammed Ali and Mohammed Yusuf. Mohammed Yusuf started an armed insurrection on what was known as the Yobe Taliban. Mohammed Yusuf migrated to Maiduguri and started his preachings, campaigns and recruitment drive. According to Almad Selkida (2009), in early 2002, Yusuf was seen by many as a likely heir to the renowned late Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmud Adam in Maiduguri on account of his brilliance and closeness to the late renowned scholar. But all that changed shortly after one late Mohammed Alli approached the late Yusuf with reasons to boycott democracy, civil service and western oriented schools. The late Yusuf then disengaged his service with the Yobe State government.

In a 2006 press release signed by the sect's Shura (Consultative) Council, they stated that Islam permits them to subsist under a modern government like

Nigeria but has explicitly prohibited them from joining or supporting such governments in so far as their systems, structures and institutions contain elements contradictory to core Islamic principles and beliefs (Almad Selkida, 2009).

Incoherence and Blames

Almost all the segments of the country are blaming one another for the Boko Haram menace. The reasons proffered by each segment seem cogent but this does not stop the heinous crime and nihilist tendency of the sect; instead it gives more opportunity to make the group perfect its destructive operations. This should be expected in a situation like this in Nigeria because many people are angry due mainly because they and their loved ones are traumatised by the activities of Boko Haram. Many Nigerians are also angry as they are expressing their anger in physical protests and emotional vituperations. Some of the anger is directed at the president. However, this must be expected as the government appears lukewarm and is seen or seemed not to be on top of the situation in spite of the state of emergency that was declared a year ago in three states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe.

The federal government, headed by the president, is seen not to be doing enough in spite of the enormous resources and structures put in place to fight the insurgency. Similarly, the armed forces are being blamed for not demonstrating enough professionalism and competence in handling the war against terrorism. Most of the criticisms come from the elders and political leaders in the northern part of the country. Unfortunately, the critics gave the impression that Boko Haram was somewhat a political tool to get a share of the national cake. The northern elders and political leaders sometime ago rose in arms against what some of them considered unfair treatment by the federal government through the amnesty programme which gave the youth from the oil-producing area money and training abroad after they renounced militancy (*Tell Editorial, 2014*). Not until the Boko Haram sect attacked the late Emir of Kano, Ado Bayero, almost killed him and his son, killed Mohammed Shuwa in Borno State that these leaders began to find and 'refine' their voices. They failed to realise that the country is fighting for the first time in its history, an asymmetrical war that may take a long time to end. This is because insurgency and guerrilla wars, when they start, do not end soon.

The former president Olusegun Obasanjo and the current president Jonathan are not in alliance in terms of fighting the Boko Haram insurgency. The earlier peace effort made by the former president was not acknowledged by President Jonathan; and his recommendations were not implemented and this is part of their frosty relationship hence the former president is now insisting that President Jonathan must approve of his new peace and mediation initiative to end the insurgency before he can make any move to intervene in the matter (Adi, 2014; Adetayo, Baiyewu, and Akinloye, 2014). On the other hand, President Jonathan was reported to have doubt

about the abduction of the almost three hundred schoolgirls hence he did not act until about eighteen days, otherwise the girls would have been rescued before the deadly sect settled down after the abduction (Adetayo, Baiyewu, and Akinloye, 2014).

It is unthinkable in the present civilisation for a former and sitting president to think at variance with each other in the face of serious insecurity in the country. It is apparent demonstration of incoherence in the entire polity and lack of coordination in national affairs. The government at federal and state (Borno) level could not state exactly the actual number of schoolgirls abducted. The statistics that have been bandied to Nigerians and the entire world is 'over 200'. This is a dent being inflicted on the image of the country by the nation's leaders. A Divided "House": Lack of coordination and collaboration between the Federal Executive Council, or the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Defence is another ripple in the country which is responsible for the visible in-cohesion in the country hence the nation is like a divided house against itself.

The military, charged with the responsibility to protect the territorial integrity of the country in general and to fight and ensure they win the war against the Boko Haram insurgency in the country in particular, is almost up-in-arms with the finance minister, Mrs. Okonjo-Iweala. Sometime in May 2014, all the service chiefs in the military viz: army, air force, and navy including the chief of defence staff, accused the minister of finance of delaying release of defence votes hence their hiccups in the fight against insurgency. On the other hand, the minister said their votes or funds had been released to them. She added that the sum of ₦130.7 billion was released in four months (Odebode, Soriwei, Olokor, Adepegba, and Onuba, 2014).

Internal Squabbles

Apart from the factors militating against the fight to win the war against the insurgents, the nation is facing other internal squabbles.

- (i) **Lamentation of the President:** The president is unhappy that the insecurity in the country, which is occasioned by the Boko Haram insurgency, are part of the plans to bring down his government. He strongly suspected his compatriots are behind the plans. He equally admitted that the Boko Haram insurgency in general and the adduction of over 200 secondary schools girls in particular have dented the image of the security agencies and the military (Adetayo, 2014). The lamentation portrays the country's leadership as fast falling in its image and failing in the management of the various crises rocking the country.
- (ii) **Poor Response/Delay:** The federal government led by Mr. Jonathan has been variously blamed for the delay, slowness and poor response to the Boko Haram insurgency. Among those who accused the federal government are

the United States and the Arewa Consultative Forum, among others, within and outside the country. The United States in particular criticised the country's leadership for staying action and too slow in adapting in response to the Boko Haram insurgency. The tardiness and poor response to the abduction of the over 200 school girls is where the Area Consultative Forum faulted the government (Negedu, 2014). The federal government acted wrongly for delaying action in the rescue of the girls. It took over two weeks after protests, international reactions by way of condemnations of the abduction before the President took action. It shows tardiness in government's reaction to the people's problems in the country. This is another way of demonstrating bad governance. This is one of the reasons while people or the citizens are not patriotic because the manner which Nigerian leaders conduct government affairs especially as it concerns the well-being and internal security leaves much to be desired.

If the President had reacted promptly immediately after he visited the scene of the Nyanya bomb blast and the victims in the hospitals, Nigerians would have seen him as a leader who feels for fellow Nigerians. Many Nigerians were surprised to see the President in Kano the next day, 15th April, 2014, on national television, after the abduction of the school girls, dancing at a political campaign rally. It took the president two weeks to come out with an official statement on the abduction and initiate action to rescue the schoolgirls. It was after international condemnation and street demonstrations in the country did the president tell the nation that he would take necessary action.

- (iii) Political Game: Some pundits have said that the Boko Haram insurgency is partly political, but the origin is not political. The political under tone is what is said to be responsible for the upsurge and the frequency at which the insurgents kill and maim innocent Nigerians. Hence, some people are of the view, that there are fifth columns in the military and political circles and the Boko Haram insurgency is not only made in Nigeria but meant for Nigeria. It is a fact that the Boko Haram sect started during the administration of late

President Yar'Adua. But the hate campaign pep cropped up when Jonathan emerged as president in 2010 while the campaign went viral after Jonathan was elected president in 2011 (Agbo, 2014). As part of the political game, the presidency under Mr. Jonathan is also of the belief among its officials that the Borno state government was deeply playing politics with the abduction of the girls. Various inferences within government circles have it that the Borno state government may have set up the girls for abduction or is strongly behind

the abduction (Oluokun, 2014). This is part of the blame game which cannot help the nation out of the security quagmire.

Speculations are rife that the upsurge in the dastardly activities of the sect is attributed to Mr. Jonathan's second term ambition and interest in 2015 general elections slated for February 2015. Due to the 'hatred' the northern part of the country has for him as a result of the second term ambition, it is believed that the Boko Haram sect is 'engineered to carry on' the onslaught against the Nigerian state so as to make the president withdraw from the presidential race. According to reports, "intelligence suggests that the insurgents are being funded from within and probably assisted with technical support and local knowledge" (Agbo, 2014). The Igbo ethnic group extraction is also warning the nation that Jonathan may be the last president of one united Nigeria. They hinged their warning on the suspected clamour by some northern politicians and retired military officers who are sponsoring the Boko Haram sect to enable them rule the country at all cost (Chigozie, 2014).

It was confirmed that the Boko Haram insurgents are being assisted as helicopters fly in men and supplies to them. In spite of the several reports made to the military authorities about these happenings there has not been attempt to stop them. This shows that Nigerians are fighting Nigeria. This is complete dirty politics and the military is demonstrating deliberate incompetence in the fight against insurgents. It is an indication that the war against insurgency can hardly be won by the country.

- (iv) Belated Government Action: As if the federal and Borno state governments were fed up with the blame game and the politics they played, especially with the abduction of the school girls, the federal government came up with the idea of a committee on the matter. The committee, which was neither a judicial, an administrative panel not a replacement for the activities of security agencies in respect of the abducted girls, has its terms of reference thus:
- (a) To liaise with the Borno State government and establish the circumstances leading to the school remaining open for boarding students when other schools were closed;
 - (b) To liaise with relevant authorities and the parents of the missing girls to establish the actual number and identities of the girls abducted;
 - (c) To interface with the security services and Borno State government to ascertain how many of the missing girls have returned;
 - (d) To mobilise the surrounding communities and the general public on citizen support for a rescue strategy and operation;

- (e) To articulate a framework for a multi-stakeholder action for the rescue of the missing girls;
- (f) To advise the federal government on any matter incidental to the terms of reference (Oluokun, 2014).

In spite of this belated but action in the right direction, some Nigerians still faulted the idea of setting up the committee. Is the country a nation in quandary? Only time will tell.

Why government is failing

Many reasons have been adduced for government's failure at winning the war against terrorism and insurgency in the country. Most of the reasons are caused by citizens of the country who may be called 'enemies within', while few are caused by enemies without. These reasons, among others, are as follows:

- (i) Sabotage: this is a deliberate destruction of an industrial process which includes human being and natural resources as well as public utilities. Sabotage also includes acts of obstruction, deliberate distortion and violation of working and professional ethics (Imobighe, 2003). Many Nigerians, especially those from the northern part of the country are not helping the fight against terrorism and insurgency caused by the Boko Haram sect. It is being suspected that there are saboteurs and subversive elements within the presidency who are possibly moderating policy decisions to help the Boko Haram set in their nihilist adventure (Agbo, 2014). This type of policy decisions may not be unconnected with the manner the Chief of army staff; Lt. General Ihejirika was retired from the military to pave way for a military officer of the northern extraction to head the army. No wonder security personnel insisted that the quality of advice being received by the president must be scrutinised because security under normal circumstances should take precedence over political exigencies and particular interests (Agbo, 2014).
- (ii) Subversion: this is not different from sabotage. Most of the elements and factors which are applicable in sabotage are also applicable in subversion. Subversion includes "all those subtle action meant to undermining not only the military, but also the economic, political, psychological and moral strength of the nation" (Imobighe, 2003). Within the military, particularly the army, there are fifth columnists that have been thwarting their efforts. Instead of inspiring hope and hastening a return to normalcy, the outcome of the one year of intensive and all-out military campaign in the terror-stricken north eastern part of the country has left many Nigerians utterly depressed and disappointed, the one year of emergency rule in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states has failed to stem the alarming rate of bombings, lootings,

killings, destruction of settlements and kidnapping of innocent secondary school girls. What many people, within and outside the country, had thought would have a fleeting moment of start lessons in the military efficient aimed at putting the shadowy and nihilistic Boko Haram Islamist extremists to rout or at bay has turned into an embarrassing and endless nightmare.

It is surprising to know that the security agencies are being bogged down by the presence of an enemy within, which has been thwarting their bid to root out the terrorists. There are moles, sympathisers and leaks in the country's security system who are collaborating with the terrorists. There was a report which quoted a soldier who told the Hausa Service of the Voice of America that a military unit of the Nigerian army was ambushed while trying to give support to a sister unit in Bama, in Borno State. The soldier said his unit which was tricked into a combat which later turned out to be one-sided and patently suicidal (*The Punch Editorial*, 2014).

- (iii) Corruption: It is well known worldwide that Nigeria is one of the most corrupt countries. The leaders are not doing anything to reduce the scourge. Instead, they are encouraging it to flourish, particularly among the political class and top civil servants. Nigerians, therefore, should not be surprised that insecurity and insurgency is on the increase. They are part of the dividends of corruption.

The manner with which corruption is aiding insecurity in the country is legion. Take the illegal possession of weapons as example, the security operatives often times help in the smuggling of weapons into the country through the porous borders. A former Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Azubuike Ihenjirika (Rtd.) once reported that some customs officers were arrested for assisting the terrorists in smuggling arms into the country (*The Punch Editorial*, 2014).

Need for the country to be cohesive

Any group, be it organisation or institution, society or nation-state, that is in quandary and incohesive cannot progress. Nigeria, as a nation, needs to be cohesive, especially at this period of insurgency and terrorism which has brought insecurity to the country which is a product of the Boko Haram sect. Therefore the much-needed cohesion is required by the country for many reasons among which include the following:

- (a) National Security: security is a prerequisite for progress and orderliness in any society. This is because the protection of lives and property is paramount in the life of man. Similarly, a nation-state requires national security to exist and survive. Many things are embedded in national security. It includes economic security, energy security, environmental security and so forth. National security also involves, according to Macmillan

Dictionary (2010), “the protection or the safety of a country’s secrets and its citizens”.

However, for the purpose of this paper, national security means the protection of a nation’s citizens to ensure political, economic, and social order so as to enable the nation-state prosper along with other nations in order to attain national pride and fulfilment among the comity of nations.

- (b) National Development: there is no nation that does not require national development which is self-reliant in many aspects. It includes development in the economic, political and social life of a nation. The absence of cohesion does not ensure or guarantee national development of progress or prosperity in all aspect of a nation-state. This includes economic development, political development, social development, security development, human capital or resource development.

A nation where there is bickering and insurrection as a result of primordial tendencies in the system, there is bound to be conflict and insecurity which may find the nation-state in quagmire. Speaking with one voice ensure togetherness and unity of purpose.

- (c) Unity: the unity of the inhabitants of a geographical entity call a country or nation guarantees progress and development. Cohesion brings about stability which sure the much-needed unity in all aspects of a nation. The absence of unity can make the best military incompetent in the face of insurrection and insurgency such as the case in Nigeria today. It is the lack of unity of purpose to attain a specific national goal that is causing the Nigerian military to be deliberately incompetent. Otherwise, it is the same military that get accolades whenever it goes for international peace keeping operations and rescue missions in other countries such Liberia and Serria Leone among others. It is the same military that is failing and falling apart to contain insurgency caused by Boko Haram within its territory.

Table I: Boko Haram Activities from 14th April 2014 to 24th June, 2014

S/N	Date	Activities/Casualties
1.	April 14, 2014	100 people killed, 243 seriously injured 16 luxury buses 24 other vehicles burnt in Nyanya motor park in Abuja.
2.	April 15, 2014	Over 267 pupils of Girls' Secondary School, Chibok abducted.
3.	April 21, 2014	2 APC leaders, Alhaji Modu Janga and Alhaji Abba ambushed and killed on Maiduguri-Dikwa Road, Borno State.
4.	May 1, 2014	30 people killed scores injured in bomb explosion in Karshi Tax Park in Nyanya, Abuja.
5.	May 5, 2014	About 300 people killed in the night, 11 more girls abducted in Gamboru Ngala, border town with Cameroon.
6.	May 8, 2014	Bombed Nigeria-Cameroon bridge, 30 people killed.
7.	May 16, 2014	16 people killed; 5 policemen abducted 10 Chinese workers abducted in Kuseri village between Nigeria/Cameroon border
8.	May 17, 2014	29 people including traders killed in a market in Bama, Borno State
9.	May 20, 2014	150 killed twin bomb blasts in Jos
10.	May 21, 2014	19 killed in Alagbaro village in Damboa Local Govt. Area of Borno State
11.	May 21, 2014	29 persons killed on Wednesday morning in Borno village
12.	May 25, 2014	4 soldiers killed in Jos
13.		
14.	May 26, 2014	20 soldiers 20 policemen, and 9 civilians killed in Yobe and Borno states
15.	May 28, 2014	40 people killed 12 persons injured, on a border community in Borno state.
16.	May 30, 2014	Emir of Gwoza, 2 police escorts killed along Garkida-Biu road 2 Emirs escaped with injuries
17.	June 1, 2014	60 killed in bar and brothel near military base in Mubi, Adamawa State
18.	June 3, 2014	100 killed in three villages of Attagara, Agapalawa and Aganjara in Gwoza Local Govt. Area of Borno State.
19.	June 4, 2014	45 people killed, many injured in Bargari village in Konduga Local Government Area of Borno State
20.	June 17, 2014	Scores feared dead in Damaturu viewing centre, Yobe state
21.	June 26, 2014	21 killed in Abuja bomb blast
22.	June 24, 2014	16 soldiers killed in Bulabulin Ngaura, Damboa Local Government Area, Borno State

Source: Author's compilations from various newspapers, 2014

Conclusion

Cohesion is a guarantee in all aspects of human endeavour, so also in the collectivity of human beings in a geographical location called a nation, a country or society. The absence of cohesion cum orderliness in the life of a nation can possibly spell doom. From the paper, there is ample indication that Nigeria is lacking cohesion in all she does as nation hence she is looking for it to be able to fight the enemy within its territory. From the top, that is, the echelon of the leadership to the bottom, which is the followers and masses, there is no unity of purpose among them. This lack of cohesion and unity has brought about many wrongs in the polity, and this is causing more rifts and helping the common enemy to wreck more havoc in the country

Recommendations

For the country to achieve cohesion so as to fight the common enemy called Boko Haram from further insurgency, the following recommendations need to be implemented:

- (i) The President needs to be less suspicious of people with good intentions to savage the situation.
- (ii) The President and his aides should be less political with terrorism and Boko Haram because the entire country is his constituency.
- (iii) The President should wield the big stick in to reduce corruption drastically in the country.
- (iv) The morale of the military must be kept high at all times, especially among the junior officers.
- (v) Corruption must be wiped out in the military as well.
- (vi) Less emphasis should be placed on regionalism, sectionalism, ethnicity, and religion by all Nigerians.
- (vii) All Nigerians, particularly those in the northern part of the country, must be security conscious at all times.
- (viii) More budgetary allocations should be given to the military especially at this time, while the money already allocated should be judiciously used.

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