

Implications of the Boko Haram Insurgency on Democratic Consolidation and Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Democratic principles are universal principles and as an embodiment of the historical experience of humankind, their contribution to development wherever and whenever allowed to thrive has been significant. If democracy contributes largely to the development of such advanced countries as Britain, USA, France, Germany, Japan, etc. it can also guarantee speedy development in Nigeria, if it is allowed to thrive under a congenial atmosphere. The dynamics and sophistication of the Boko Haram operations have raised fundamental questions about national security, governance issues, and Nigerian corporate existence. Thus the trend of domestic terrorism as exemplified by the nefarious activities of the dreaded Islamic sect popularly known as Boko Haram has become a major concern not only to the Nigerian government but to the international community in general. The study identifies the current Boko Haram insurgency ravaging Nigeria, especially the North Eastern part of the country as a key challenge to democratic consolidation and national development in the country. The major thrust of this paper, therefore, is to investigate the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria - the origins, chronology of major incidents of Boko Haram insurgency, the Government's response to the insurgency, and analysis of its debilitating effects on democratic consolidation and national development in Nigeria. The work is rounded off with policy recommendations and a conclusion.

KEYWORDS

Boko-haram, Insurgency, Democratic Consolidation, National Development, Suicide-bombing.

Introduction and Conceptual Background

Democracy is the world's most popular

and acceptable system of government while militocracy (or military rule) is regarded as an aberration. This standpoint is predicated on the ground that sustainable development could be better realised through a constitutional, representative, and legitimate governance and the series of advantages democracy has over other types of government, especially militocracy. Democracy is generally described as the "government of the people, by the people and for the people" as contained in the Gettysburg Address of Abraham Lincoln.¹ According to Adeyemo, the conceptualisation of democracy took two forms before 1991, which were: liberal democracy as represented by Western Europe, and democratic centralism as in communist Europe.² However, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the new conceptualization revolved around procedural and normative or ideal democracy. Procedural democracy sees a political system as democratic to the extent that its most powerful collective decision-makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all adult population is eligible to vote. Diamond calls this procedural definition electoral democracy.³

While it seems there is consensus on the procedural definition (conception of democracy), there is no such agreement on the ideal definition of the concept since ideal democracy has been a victim of definitional pluralism. Nevertheless, an attempt shall be made to consider definitions that are broadly relevant to this paper. Ideal democracy has been defined by Simbine as a system of government that establishes certain institutional and procedural characteristics designed to facilitate mass participation in the decision-making process and to guarantee

accountability and the basic material needs of the people.⁴

Another scholar, Seargent, quoted in Abiola and Olaopa defines ideal democracy as a political system with the following elements:

- (a) Citizens involvement in political decision-making;
- (b) Some degree of equality among citizens;
- (c) Some degree of liberty, freedom granted or retained by the citizenry;
- (d) A system of representation; and
- (e) An electoral system of majority rule.⁵

It is clear from the above that democracy whether procedural or ideal must provide for a credible electoral process; freedom and liberties for the citizens; involvement of citizens in decision-making, acceptability, and transparency in governance, and must provide the basic material needs of the people. This conceptualisation of democracy brings in the idea of democratic consolidation. Democratic consolidation could be defined as the sustenance of democracy which is a product of many factors or conditions operating together.

According to Ojo, “democratic consolidation means the capacity of the polity to nurture and sustain democratic experiment in all ramifications and in the African context with visible dividends of democracy in terms of improving the lot of the citizenry within which there may be a catalyst to democratic sustenance”.⁶ Democratic consolidation is conceived by Ogundiya as a concept for addressing the challenges of regime stabilisation.⁷ This implies a process of eliminating opposition to democracy or the process of legitimising democracy. In the view of Ojo, democratic consolidation is enabling democracy to stand against the threat of authoritarianism making it secure and extending its life expectancy beyond a short time.⁸

As earlier stated, factors affecting democratic consolidation are varied and many. These include politics and problems of succession, widespread poverty and high unemployment rate in the country, endemic corruption, growing debt profile, terrorism,

and armed struggle, among others. As these factors affect democratic consolidation, they also have spiral effects on national development. This paper shall focus on terrorism, and armed struggle especially the Boko Haram insurgency and its effects on democratic consolidation and national development in Nigeria.

Terrorism could be seen as the extreme use of violence or terror to actualise political goals, with such goals contravening the ideal of a liberal state. This may include any illegitimate use of force to thwart the efforts of a state in protecting people's rights to life, liberty, and property.⁹ Thus any form of unrestrained violence against a liberal or democratic state which inevitably results in human rights abuses and a legacy of brutalization and anarchy is best tagged as terrorism. The paper is delineated into six parts. The first is the introduction and conceptual background. The second part examines the nexus between democracy and development. The third part interrogates the Boko Haram insurgency as the latest manifestation of domestic terrorism in Nigeria. The implications of Boko Haram insurgency on democratic consolidation and national development in Nigeria constitute the fourth part. The fifth part consists of policy recommendations, while the study is rounded off with the conclusion.

The Nexus between Democracy and Development

Democracy, if rightly practised, is a pre-requisite for national development as the experience of the developed Western countries have shown. Democracy implies or entails the retention of inherent powers (sovereignty by the people, to at intervals, return or change those entrusted with ultimate power as overseers of their welfare. This retention of sovereignty by the people has been a big weapon to propel development in democracies across the globe. This implies that in a democracy, a regime derives its authority from the will of the people (since democracy could be defined as “rule of the people” through the electoral process) unlike

a military regime that derives its authority through the 'gun' or force.¹⁰

Bryce sees democracy as “a state of society” that gives citizens and state rights to enjoy and duties to perform.¹¹ These rights and duties of the citizens under a democratic dispensation constitute the elements of democracy that are lacking in a military regime and which makes democracy a better option than militocracy. These essential elements form the ideal essence of democratic practices and contribute to making democracy a harbinger of development. They include: (a) Respect for the rule of law (b) equality before the law (c) promotion and defense of human rights, (d) periodic and orderly succession through secret ballot (e) freedom of choice, (f) freedom from ignorance and want (g) creation of appropriate political machinery (h) sustained political communication to create truth and confidence amongst leaders and the populace (i) empowerment and capability (j) decentralisation of the political power and authority (k) accountability of the leadership to the followership, and (l) freedom of the press.

It is clear from the above that respect for the rights of the citizens is fundamental in a democracy; while the citizens also have some duties to perform. There is no doubt that democracy if rightly practiced in Nigeria, will go a long way to facilitate national development in the country; as it has done in the developed world. Development has been conceived as the gradual expression of available facilities and resources both qualitatively and quantitatively so as to produce a better and greater state.¹² It is therefore clear that National Development cannot be devoid of the individual and this quality of life in society. This scenario was captured vividly by Balogun¹³: “National Development entails producing more and better food to eat, healthier and happier individuals, better living conditions, improved transportation and communication system, sound education and enlightenment among the populace and generally more money flowing around”.¹⁴

Democracy has numerous advantages over military government.¹⁵ First, there is

freedom of expression, which means the citizens have the right to speak their minds or express their opinions on developments in the country without any fear of being punished. Through this medium, the government will be able to mirror the effects of its policies and peoples' reactions to such and make adjustments where necessary. This would undoubtedly contribute to good governance in the country. Such a right is lacking in a military regime. Closely linked to the above point is the freedom of the press in a democratic system. The press through the instrumentality of the mass media is free to make constructive criticisms of government policies, unlike in military dispensation.

Finally, when democracy is properly implemented, the attendant fraudulent practices in dictatorships are reduced and put in check because each arm of the government serves as a watchdog on the other. Inbuilt in the democratic system is the principle of separation of powers as well as checks and balances.

Boko Haram Insurgency as Manifestation of Domestic Terrorism in Nigeria.

Acts of terrorism unleashed on the nation by the nefarious Boko Haram sect have assumed wider proportions since 2009. The activities of the sect have constituted a major security threat to the country and made the North Eastern part of the country the most unsafe region to live in. “The nature of their dastardly acts include bombings (including suicide), kidnapping of innocent people especially women and students (like the 276 Chibok girls kidnapped in 2014), shooting victims at close ranges, throat-slitting, daylight and nocturnal attacks”.¹⁶ It was believed that the slain Mallam Mohammed Yusuf (leader of Boko Haram) successfully radicalised the group and opened it to foreign collaboration, especially with the *Al-Qaeda* in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).¹⁷ Boko Haram means *Boko* - book, Western or foreign, while the word *Haram* is an Arabic derivative meaning forbidden, sinful, or ungodly. Thus, in its deeper meanings, it connotes “forbid

everything Western” and Western education is sinful, sacrilegious, or ungodly and should therefore be forbidden. The implication of this explanation is that of outright rejection of Western education, values, and culture by the movement which constitutes one of the factors that led to the emergence of the sect.

Another reason is religious bigotry and the imposition of its ideals. This is because Boko Haram is informed by the nature of religious belief, practice, and the high capacity to impose and assert its perspective on the country's political agenda. The movement seeks to impose sharia across all Nigerian states as it believes that the moral decadence and problems in the society are engendered by the embrace of Western culture, and values.¹⁸ It, therefore, believes that in order to checkmate such decadence, there must be the entrenchment of an Islamic society on the nation through destroying modern political institutions and infrastructures.¹⁹ This belief is compounded by the ideological fanaticism of the sect that

any member who dies in the course of propagating the above belief would automatically go to *Aljana*-paradise or heaven, where 72 virgins await such.²⁰

Poverty, unemployment, and ignorance also contribute significantly to the spread of the sect activities in Northern Nigeria. This is because the majority of the followers of the late Mallam Muhammed Yusuf were largely illiterate youths who engaged in petty trading or school drop-outs, and the *Almajiris* - Quran trainees - who depended on their *Mallam* - teachers - for knowledge, inspiration, and their daily survival.²¹

The government's response to the insurgency ranges from the option of dialogue, military expedition, declaration of a state of emergency in the North Eastern states, to call for international assistance and relocation of the military command centre to Maiduguri especially under the civilian dispensation of President Muhammadu Buhari.²² But all these efforts have so far yielded no meaningful results as the crisis appears intractable for the government and seems to be escalating every day.

Chronology of Major Incidents of Boko Haram Insurgency from 2009 to July 2015

Date	Incidents	Effects
July 26-29, 2009	2009 Boko Haram Uprising marking the Beginning of the insurgency in northern Nigeria.	Nearly 1,000 people were killed in clashes between Boko Haram Militant and Nigerian Soldier
July 30,2009	Execution Of Muhammed Yusuf, Spiritual Leader Of Boko Haram by Nigerian soldiers following the recent uprising.	Abubakar Shekau takes control of the group
September7,2010	Bauchi prison break	5 people were killed and 721 inmates freed from Bauchi prison.
October 11,2010	Bomb Attack on Maiduguri Police Station	The police station was destroyed and three person injured
December31,2010	Attack at Mammy Market at Army Mogadishu Barracks, Abuja	11 people died

May 29,2011	Bomb explosion in Abuja and Bauchi (during Goodluck Jonathan's swearing in as new President)	15 people killed
June 16,2011	Failed Abuja police Headquarters Bombing (Nigeria's first instance of suicide Bombing)	2 people died (the suicide Bomber and a traffic policemen)
August 4,2011	Damaturu Attacks	Between 100 to 150 people were killed
December22-23,2011	Boko Haram and Nigerian Army clashes in Maiduguri and Damaturu	68 people, of whom are 50 militants, at least 7 soldiers and 4 civilians were killed
December25,2011	Bombing of St. Theresa's Catholic church, Madalla	46 people killed
January 21,2012	Kano multiple bombs blast	185 people feared dead
April 29,2012	Attack Bayero University, Kano	13 Christian worshipers, 1 non-teaching staff and 2 Professors were killed
June 17,2012	Kaduna church Bombings	19 people were killed
August 7,2012	Deeper Life church shooting	19 church members killed.
December25,2012	Maiduguri and Potiskum church shootings	27 Christians were killed
January1,2013	Nigerian Army Raid on Boko Haram	13 militants were killed
March 18,2013	Kano Bus Bombing	Between 22 and 65 people were killed.
April 16,2013	Baga Massacre (Borno state)	187 people were killed
July 6,2013	Yobe state school shooting	Over 42 persons were killed
August 12,2013	Attacks on Maiduguri Mosque	56 people killed
September12,2013	Ambush by Boko Haram	40 soldiers died.
September12-18,2013	Nigeria Army offensive against Boko Haram sect	150 militants and 16 soldiers died
September19,2013	Benisheik Attacks by Boko Haram	16 people were killed

September 29, 2013	Guiba College Massacre (Yobe state)	Over 50 students were killed
October 2013	Government force Raid on rebel	101 Boko Haram fighters were killed
October 29, 2013	Raids on Damaturu	At least 128 people were killed (95 militants, 23 soldiers, 8 policemen and 2 civilians).
January 26, 2014	Northern Nigeria Attacks by Boko Haram	138 killed in total
February 14, 2014	Borno massacre in Konduga	121 Christian villagers were killed
February 15, 2014	Izge attack by Boko Haram	106 persons killed
February 25, 2014	Federal Government College Attack by Boko Haram in Yobe state	59 students were killed some through throat slitting by militants
March 14, 2014	Attack on Giwa Military Barracks in Maiduguri	Boko Haram Detainees were freed from a detention facility and recaptured detainees were executed by the military
April 14, 2014	Abuja twin Bombing Attack	Over 88 people were killed
April 15, 2014	Chibok School Girls kidnapping (Borno state)	276 female students were kidnapped by Boko Haram
May 1, 2014	Abuja Car bombing	19 people killed
May 5, 2014	Gamboru Ngala Attack (Borno State)	At least 300 people were killed
May 20, 2014	Jos Car Bombings	At least 118 Villagers were killed
May 27, 2014	Buni Yadi Attack (Yobe State)	49 security personnel and 9 civilians were killed
June 1, 2014	Mubi Bombing (Adamawa State)	40 people were killed
June 2, 2014	Gwoza Massacre	At least 200, mostly Christians were killed in several villages in Borno State.
June 20-23, 2014	Borno State Attacks	70 people were killed and 91 women and children kidnapped by militants

June 23-25,2014	Central Nigeria (Middle Belt) Attack	About 171 people were killed in series of attacks in the middle Belt of Nigeria
July 26,2014	Nigerian Military Raid on Boko Haram camps	Over 100 Militant were killed
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November28,2014	Kano Bombing and Gun Attacks	At Least 120 Muslim followers of the Emir of Kano, Muhammed Sanusi II were killed during a Suicide bombing and gun attack by Boko Haram. The Four gunmen were subsequently killed By an angry mob.
December13,2014	Gumsuri Kidnappings (Borno State)	About 35persons were killed, while about 185 persons were kidnapped.
December 28 -29, 2014	Failed Boko Haram offensive into Cameroon's far North Region	85 civilians, 94 militants and 2 Cameroonian soldiers were killed.
January3-7, 2015	Baga massacre and Raze	Militants raze d the entire town of Baga in North - East? Nigeria. At least 2,000 were killed. Boko Haram then controlled 70% of Borno State. The worst affected by the insurgency.
January 9, 2015	Refugees flight from Baga, Borno State	7,300 Refugees flee to neighbouring Chad, while over 1,000 were trapped in the land of Kangala in lake Chad (following the Boko Haram Massacre in Baga)
January 12, 2015	Failed Kolofata Raid in Cameroon	The Cameroonian Military claimed the army lost one officer, while the Boko Haram group lost between 143-300 rebels

January 18, 2015	Attacks on Villages in North Cameroon by Boko Haram	80 people kidnapped and 3 others killed by Boko Haram
January 25, 2015.	Offensive against Nigerian Forces in Maiduguri	8 civilians, about 53 Militants and unknown numbers of Soldiers died Rebels captured the nearby strategic town of Monguno.
January 29, 2015	Recapture of Border town of Michika by Nigerian Military in collaboration with Chadian Soldiers	Michika recaptured from the Rebels
January 31 st , 2015	African Union Pledged to send 7,500 International Soldiers to Nigerian and Fighting s in North of Cameroon	Chadian Forces Claimed to have killed 120 Boko Haram fighters while they lost 3 Soldier
February 6, 2015	Niger Raid by Boko Haram on Boss o and Diffa towns	It marked the first time the Boko Haram attacked the country. The Chadian Military assisted the Nigerien Armed Forces to repel the attack. 5 Nigerien were killed while the government claimed to kill 109 militants
February 12, 2015	Invasion of Sambisa Forest, Borno State (Boko Haram Stronghold) by West African Allied Forces of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger	Undisclosed number of scores of insurgents were killed
February 13, 2015	Ngouboua, Chad Attack (after 30 insurgents crossed lake chad in 4 Motor Boats)	The first attack on Chad by Boko Haram
February 21, 2015	Recapture of Baga by Nigerien Army	Baga which had fallen to Boko Haram on January 3 rd was recaptured by Nigerien Army.
February 24, 2015	Chadian Boko Haram Rebels clash near Garambu	Over 200 Boko Haram Fighters were killed, one Chadian Soldier lost and nine others wounded

March 9 & 18, 2015	Recapture of Malam Fatouri and Damasak (North East Nigeria) by Chadian and Nigerien Forces	Insurgents dislodged from Fatouri and Damasak while Chadian and Nigerien Forces retook the towns
April 24, 2015	Sambisa Forest last area controlled in Nigeria by Boko Haram Forces	Intensive efforts are still mounted to dislodge the militants and take over the area.
June 16, 2015	Twin Suicide Bomb Attacks in Chad Capital targeted at Police Headquarters and Police Academy	24 people killed and more than 100 wounded in N'Djamena blamed on Boko Haram Jihadists.
June 22, 2015	Maiduguri Mosque Bombing by 2 female suicide bombers	30 killed at crowded mosque as Boko Haram marked the start of Ramadan by targeting a mosque that they saw as falling short in following 'the Prophet'
July 1-2, 2015	Multiple Mosque Massacres	48 persons killed on the 1 st at one mosque in Kakawa and 17 wounded in the attacks. 97 other s mostly men were killed in numerous mosques on the 2 nd July 2015 with a number of women and young girls killed in their homes, while unknown numbers were wounded
July 6, 2015	Jos Bomb attack	At least 44 persons were killed

Source: Culled from: J. O. Akinbi, "Examining the Boko Haram Insurgency in Northern Nigeria and the Quest for a Permanent Resolution of the Crisis," *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences (GJAHSS)*, 3 (8), (August 2015), 36-40.

Implications of the Boko Haram Insurgency for Democratic Consolidation and Development of Nigeria.

Challenges posed by the domestic terrorism of the Boko Haram order to Nigeria's democratic consolidation and National development are enormous.

First, there is no unified standard for crime prevention and control not only in Nigeria but among the West African states. Terrorists hide under the lacuna created by the ECOWAS Protocol to migrate unrestrained across international Borders, while enforcement capability is very weak. The judicial officers are afraid to try terror suspects in their courts.²³

Conspiratorial collusion of some high-ranking state officials with leaders of the terrorist sect to threaten the nation is another. For instance, in 2011, Senator Ndume Abubakar who was also appointed in error by President Goodluck Jonathan as a member of the Presidential Task Force on security challenges in Northern Nigeria, and former Governor of Borno state, Alhaji Ali Modu Sheriff, were fingered as masterminds and financiers of Boko Haram terrorist group in Nigeria.²⁴

It has also been indicated that agencies, commissions, and ad hoc committees that are established to combat security challenges in Nigeria have limited linkages/relationships with one another.²⁵ Their effectiveness and collaboration have also been affected by the paucity of data relevant to scuttling terrorist activities. There is also a poorly paid, insufficient, and ill-equipped security apparatus in Nigeria. These have given the Boko Haram terrorists a free day to launch mayhem against the citizenry. Hence, the failure of security agencies – the military, police, state security service, etc. to secure the lives of innocent Nigerians in the North East in light of the wanton destruction of lives and properties and the almost everyday occurrence of bombings and killings in the North. Killings, destruction, and dislocations that characterise terror attacks have portrayed the state as weak and incapable of maintaining

law and order. Since democracy presupposes the elimination of authoritarian tendencies, and terrorism builds authoritarian enclaves, the Boko Haram phenomenon is grossly undermining democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Furthermore, there is internal displacement of persons as many people in the North including women and students have been displaced within and outside the country. Many have been kidnapped like the Chibok girls, traumatized and their future shattered by the nefarious Islamic sect. Closely linked to the above effects is the infringement of fundamental human rights of people staying in the war-infested zone of Northern Nigeria. Their freedom of movement, association, worship, right to shelter, etc. have been trampled upon.²⁶

From the foregoing, it is evident that the Boko Haram menace constitutes a serious threat to the national interest, peace, and security of the country and, therefore, a great threat to democratic consolidation and Nigeria's corporate existence. Terrorism has once again brought to the front burner the desirability for the continued existence of Nigeria as an indissoluble entity. The CIA's failed test thesis about Nigeria and Muammer Ghadafi's advocacy for the breakdown of the contraption' along religious divides into northern Muslims and Southern Christians are instructive here. While the bifurcation of Nigeria is not been supported, there is an urgent need to address the fundamental stones upon which the federal pillars rest. The dangerous nature of the insurgency launched by the group has pitched Christians and Muslims against each other owing to the wanton destruction of churches in northern Nigeria and lack of respect for the secularity of the nation. This situation portends great danger for religious harmony in the country because if pushed to the wall, reprisal attacks might be elicited against the Muslims in the other parts of the country. The implications of these intractable problems before the federal government might manifest in precipitating another civil war, thereby leading to the disintegration of the country, if not urgently addressed

Moreover, a lot of unaccounted revenue has been spent by the government towards combating the crisis, which has not been very successful. This includes a huge amount of budget for the defense parastatal and the procuring of needed ammunition. The situation becomes precarious in light of the mass unemployment, poverty, economic deprivation, and suffering ravaging the youths of the country.

Finally, there is an international dimension to the crisis as the activities of the notorious sect have infiltrated other neighbouring countries of the West African sub region such as Chad, Cameroon, Benin Republic, etc. It has also contributed to the denting of Nigeria's international image.

Policy Recommendations

At the domestic level, the necessity to address poverty escalation and provide employment opportunities by the government cannot be overemphasised. This is because it has been indicated that the North West and North-East geo-political zones recorded the highest rate of poverty in Nigeria.²⁷ The structural transformation of the nation's economy will no doubt douse the tension of extremism and blindfolded religious obscurantism.

The strengthening of a multinational task force especially in the area of intelligence gathering, effective surveillance, security strategies, etc. through international collaboration with developed countries has been advocated towards totally defeating the sect and 'nipping the problem in the bud', once and for all.²⁸ Also, security agents like the police, civil defense corps, immigration service, the military, etc. need to be proactive and monitor volatile areas with eagle eyes. They need to beef up their intelligence networks to forestall situations where they merely respond after damage is done. The influx of illegal immigrants to Nigeria should be curtailed through vigorous policing of the Nigerian borders by the immigration service, while all sources of illegal arms should be blocked through collaboration with the Customs.

Towards enhancing religious harmony in the country, the secularity of the nation as entrenched in the constitution must be respected, while all culprits of Boko Haram terrorism and their identified sponsors should be dealt with by facing the appropriate music, so as to serve as a deterrent to others. There should be no 'sacred cows'.

Finally, it has been suggested that terrorism and terrorist activities would be curtailed if enough concern is given to true federalism that allows devolution of power, and resources so that development and participation are localized as against the contemporary pseudo-decentralised federal arrangement.²⁹

Conclusion

The paper has identified terrorism of the Boko Haram Sect as a key challenge to democratic consolidation and national development in Nigeria. It argued that the dividends of democracy can only be realized in an atmosphere of peace and harmony in the country. The urgent need for resolution of the crisis is also advocated in order to prevent development that can precipitate another civil war and disintegration of the country

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