

The Boko Haram Terrorist Islamic Sect in Nigeria: Origin and Linkages

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Abstract

Although Boko Haram came as an Islamic sect in 2002, its origin is traceable to a Sahaba Islamic group, formed in 1995. Emerging as one of the historical continuities of a society generally built on centuries of Islamic tradition, with a legacy of Islamic warfare, Boko Haram drew inspiration from romantic visions, transmitted from previous generations, for a return to the old Islamic order in northeastern Nigeria. The confounding rise and sudden strength, audacity, and gains of Boko Haram, an organization that started as a rag-tag militant Islamic sect, are linked to such forces as the radical Islamic ideology of jihad, sharia, and related tenets of fundamental Islam as well as to the contemporary socio-economic problems of poverty, inequality, corruption, unemployment, and illiteracy. They are also due to support from AQIM, ISIS, Global al Qaeda, and Islamists in Mali, and the proliferation of arms in the Sahel. Given these propitious links Boko Haram grew into a formidable force, conquered and occupied much of northeastern Nigeria, and established itself as a threat to Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. In the last quarter of 2015, the sect was routed out of the Nigerian territory, where its operations have been limited to sporadic suicide bombing against soft targets. However, given its links with certain sustaining forces within and outside Nigeria and its bellicose, implacable, and atavistic nature, it is yet ominous to think that Boko Haram is no longer a threat to Nigeria.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Islam, Nigeria, Terrorism

Introduction

In 2002 Nigeria saw the birth of a distinctive, unorthodox Islamic sect, known as Boko Haram. The sect developed conceitedly and opinionatedly, detesting Western-oriented civilization and secularism and most especially abhorring Western education, which it proclaimed as sin. More significantly, the sect postured as an organization with an independent government within the Nigerian state. In 2009 Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of the organization, died in a skirmish with the Nigerian law enforcement agents. This resulted in a change of leadership in which Abubakar Shekau became the head of the sect. Miffed by the death of Yusuf and bolstered by a new, charismatic leader, Shekau, Boko Haram became obviously militant, carrying out activities which pointed to its desire to establish its own independent state and government, based on sharia, within the Nigerian territory by means of jihad.

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The activities of the sect include attacking Christians and orthodox Muslims, bombing and attacking churches, mosques, government establishments, police stations, military formations, schools, markets, shopping malls, banks, public gatherings, entertainment centres, motor parks, human communities or settlements, and international establishments and symbols. The activities also cover killing, kidnapping, and brutalization of women, children, students, and foreigners, especially tourists and investors. Abduction, raping, and sale of women and girls into slavery are also among the nefarious activities of Boko Haram.

The sect's areas of operation and influence are the contiguous states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe on the northeast of Nigeria and such other northern states as Kano, Kaduna, and Bauchi. Up to the third quarter of 2015, Boko Haram occupied a large portion of territory in the northeast of Nigeria, which the sect declared as its Islamic State and from where it occasionally harassed other parts of the northern states of Nigeria and neighbouring Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. Indeed, these activities represent a paradoxical advancement in Boko Haram's capability and have utterly discredited the early efforts of the Nigerian government to trivialize the sect as an entirely local organization, sponsored by disgruntled politicians.

The military, in Jonathan's Nigeria, could not effectively counter Boko Haram and appeared, rather, to have conceded most of the northeastern territory of the country to the sect. However, the fortunes of Boko Haram changed rapidly with the coming of Muhammadu Buhari as the new president of Nigeria on 29 May, 2015. Buhari quickly repositioned the Nigerian military and gave it a three months' target – October to December, 2015 – to defeat the sect. By mid December, 2015 the Nigerian military had liberated all of Nigerian territory from Boko Haram, which is now thriving reluctantly on sporadic suicide bombing of soft targets.

While we are being increasingly tempted to think, that Boko Haram is no longer a threat to Nigeria, it is absolutely necessary to continue to investigate the enigmatic emergence and survival of this terrorist Islamic sect in a Nigeria that has been progressively secularizing along Western lines for over a century. Moreover, the changing nature of Boko Haram and the dynamism of its subterranean forces necessitate its repeated study. It is also our opinion, that this study will equip us with greater capacity to deal with the sect in case of a recrudescence of its hostilities. Thus, this paper is our humble contribution to the continuing endeavours by scholars and other experts to unravel the nature and ramifications of a most bestial and audacious terrorist organization, Boko Haram, which has rattled Nigeria and the international community for some time.

In preparing the paper, we have as much as possible made use of the historical approach, which is scarcely found in equal measure in earlier studies on the subject. It is our hope, therefore, that this study will take us, in our understanding of the nature and complexities of Boko Haram, beyond the precincts of the contemporary dynamics associated with the sect.

Origin

Boko Haram is a terrorist Islamic sect, based in Nigeria, where it operates mainly in the states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, with occasional strikes in Kano, Kaduna, and Bauchi States. Its origin has been located in a Sahaba Islamic group, formed in 1995 and led by Abubakar Lawan.¹ Under Lawan the group conducted its proselytisation on orthodox Islamic doctrine. When Lawan left for further studies at the University of Medina, the clerics decided that Malam Mohammed Yusuf, a younger member of the sect, should assume its leadership.

Yusuf had the reputation of being a brilliant and favourite student of Sheik Jafar Mohammed, a Maiduguri based Islamic cleric, who was assassinated in Kano in 2007, while leading an early morning prayer with his adherents in mosque.² It would appear that in spite of his exposure to the highly influential orthodox Islamic teachings of Sheik Mohammed, Yusuf basically retained the primordial radical doctrine of the Islamic jihad. Thus, after he took over the leadership of the Sahaba Islamic group, he abandoned both its clerics and orthodox Islamic doctrine to adopt a new, radical doctrine, which abhorred Western education and enjoined the enthronement of an Islamic dispensation by means of jihad.

Based on this doctrine, Yusuf founded and inaugurated a new Islamic sect in 2002, which, because of its avowed abhorrence of Western education, became widely known as "Boko Haram", meaning "Western education ... is a sacrilege,"³ or "Western education is a sin."⁴ "Boko" is the Hausa word for Western education, while "Haram" is the Arabic word for sacrilege or sin. In his interview with the BBC in 2009, Yusuf pointed out certain issues in Western education that he deemed contrary to the tenets of Islam. He said: Western style education is mixed with issues that run contrary to our beliefs in Islam. Like rain.

We believe it is the creation of God rather than an evaporation caused by the sun that condenses and becomes rain. Like saying the world is sphere. If it runs contrary to the teachings of Allah, we reject it. We also reject the theory of Darwinism.⁵

Despite the death of Yusuf in 2009, the sect, which now came under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, Yusuf's successor, continued to operate along the ideas on which it was founded.

Abhorrence of Western education has been presented in most studies as the central element in Boko Haram's doctrine. It should be pointed out, however, that the most fundamental element and driving force in Boko Haram's doctrine is the jihad. It is for this reason that members of Boko Haram refer to themselves not as "Boko Haram" but as "Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad", meaning "The Congregation of the People of Tradition for Proselytism and Jihad." Yusuf's idea of forming an Islamic organization, whose doctrine is centred on the jihad, must have been inspired by the 1980 to 1985 Maitatsine uprising in Nigeria, which was radical and jihadist in nature. Indeed, it has been indicated, that many of the Boko Haram's "senior radicals were reportedly partially inspired by the late Islamic preacher known as Maitatsine."⁶ This preacher, whose original name was Muhammad Marwa, was a Cameroonian, who settled in Kano.

The cradle and base of Boko Haram is Maiduguri in the Borno State of Nigeria. It has other satellite bases in Gwoza in the same State and Geidam and Kanamma in Yobe State. From the beginning, the group had a well educated and informed leadership, made up of such clerics as Mohammed Yusuf, Muhammad Ali, and Abubakar Shekau. Given its geographical origin and base, as well as its informed leadership and *modus operandi*, it is possible to locate the ideas and thoughts that inspired the formation and operations of Boko Haram beyond the Maitatsine events of the 1980s. The renowned anthropologist Murray Last notes: "My argument is that today's dissidents, such as the notorious Boko Haram, are part of a tradition of dissidence, and that neither are they a new phenomenon nor will they be the last of their kind."⁷

Boko Haram must have been inspired by nostalgic ruminations on the past theocratic Borno era, during which northeastern Nigeria generally came under an Islamic dispensation. The desire, borne out of such ruminations, to establish another Islamic dispensation of the old Borno vintage must have been a pull in the rise of Boko Haram. In this respect Boko Haram could be seen as a revivalist and backward-looking Islamic movement. Indeed, in its broad meaning, Boko Haram is a conflict between Islamic revivalism and Western modernism as well as between conservatism and change. However, the savage violence and bestiality with which Boko Haram has conducted itself against soft targets have rendered it incongruous with the established orthodox Islam and transmuted the sect into a terrorist organization with enabling linkages within and outside Nigeria.

Linkages

Boko Haram has a nexus with certain ideological, socio-economic, and political forces, which account for its emergence and survival as a terrorist Islamic sect. It is rooted essentially in a radical Islamic ideology, which upholds with profundity a system of governance based on sharia and other principles of fundamental Islam. J. Spencer Trimingham, in his classical study of Islam in the West African region, points out, that Islam "tolerates no authority other than its law in the government of individual social life."⁷ He also notes that Islam holds an "exclusive claim for the supremacy of its system of moral conduct."⁸ As an Islamically driven organization, Boko Haram is ruled by these and other tenets of fundamental Islamic ideology. It is therefore incorrect to assert, as Ferdinand Agu has done, that the ideology behind Boko Haram's terrorist activities is alien to Nigeria.⁹ Indeed, Olusegun Obasanjo, former president of Nigeria, has correctly explained, that Boko Haram is seeking the enthronement of sharia in Nigeria.¹⁰ This means that although it is terrorist in nature, Boko Haram maintains links with Muslims who believe in a renascent Islamic society in which governance is based entirely on sharia and other fundamental principles of Islam. Indeed, a recent study on global terrorism index, undertaken by the Institute for Economics and Peace in London, points to the conclusion, that Boko Haram has its "roots in fundamental Islam."¹¹ Owing to its linkage with fundamental Islam, which pleads the cause of Allah, Yusuf's message had much appeal among the people and attracted followers from different backgrounds. As Shehu Sani has noted: In Bauchi, Yobe and Borno States, many young people dropped out of school, including university students to join them (Boko Haram), workers including highly placed administrators and tertiary institution lecturers also joined them... It was gathered that most people sold their belongings to contribute to the coffers of fighting the cause of Allah to save Islam from the clutches of Western influences and domination.¹²

In fact, the success with which Boko Haram, which started as a smouldering passion of innocuous romantic realists, with no foothold anywhere, had seized and established itself in one Nigerian territory after the other in a blitz operation in 2014 explains not only its link with the Muslim population but also its popularity among them. By mid November, 2014 about 21,545 square kilometers of Nigerian territory had come under Boko Haram's control.¹³ This was exclusive of Chibok, which, on 15 November, 2014, was reported by *Reuters* to have been recaptured by the sect. There is also a relationship between Boko Haram and such Nigeria's socio-economic problems as poverty, inequality, corruption, unemployment, and little or no education, with its intrinsic ignorance and credulity. Occasioned by many years of failed policies and a natural resistance of Islamic culture and civilization to modernization along Western lines, these socio-economic problems have been highly indexed in the Islamized northern half of Nigeria in general, and especially so in the northeastern and northwestern parts.

Despite Nigeria's steady economic growth, most of its citizens have been living in extreme poverty. In 2010, when Boko Haram was still in its incipient stage of development, 112.47 million of Nigeria's total population of 159.7 million people were living in abject poverty. In 2012 the northeast of Nigeria, where Boko Haram is based, and the northwest, where it has spotty presence, recorded poverty rates of 76.3% and 77.7% respectively.¹⁴

Such high rate of poverty, as indicated supra, has combined with many years of Islamically driven resistance to Western civilization and discriminatory colonial social policy to sustain a low literacy rate. Thus, in 2011 the northeast and northwest regions of Nigeria had as low literacy rates as 32% and 37% respectively.¹⁵ Given the widespread poverty and low literacy rate, the northeast region of Nigeria has always borne a greater share of Nigeria's ever increasing number of unemployed people, which stood, for example, at 19.7% in 2009, 21.10% in 2010, and 23.9% in 2011.¹⁶ Any efforts or initiatives that had been made to address the problems of poverty, low literacy, and unemployment especially in the northern region had been vitiated by large scale corruption with which Nigeria, the 39th most corrupt nation in the world, has been identified. Corrupt practices and nepotism in the region, as in other parts of Nigeria, had for long been the order of the day, frustrating genuine initiatives and endeavours towards development and perverting due processes, laid down rules, norms, and values of a progressive society. Between 2008 and 2012, Nigeria's youth unemployment in particular, of which the northern region had a greater representation, rose to 76.6% among the male and 58% among the female.¹⁷ Thus, a terrorist movement like Boko Haram is most likely to find a region with this rendition of youth unemployment a fertile ground.

The linkage between Boko Haram and the socio-economic problems pointed out dovetails into certain conclusions from empirical studies of conflict situations by scholars and research oriented organizations. It is now being increasingly accepted from such studies, that there is a matrimony between worsening socio-economic conditions, as those in the northern region of Nigeria, and ethno-religious and other forms of social conflict.¹⁸ Abdulkarim Mohammed has also arrived at a similar empirically derived conclusion from conflict study. He points out, that violent conflict in Nigeria has a linkage with "the fallout of frustration with corruption and the attendant malaise of poverty and unemployment."¹⁹ Public reactions in Maiduguri against the Nigerian government's reprisal on Boko Haram on the 16 and 17 of April, 2013 underscores this postulation. It is on record, that "the people of Maiduguri were unhappy with the declaration of war on the group and instead said the issues of poverty and inequality needed to be tackled first."²⁰ Along this emerging reality, the BBC Africa analyst Richard Hamilton has correctly suggested, that there is a nexus between the rise of Boko Haram and severe poverty and other conditions of underdevelopment in northern Nigeria.²¹ Corroborating Hamilton, Goodluck Jonathan, as president of Nigeria, blamed the Boko Haram insurgency on lack of education and employment for the citizens of northern Nigeria.²² Atiku Abubakar, former Vice President of Nigeria and Muslim from the northern region, also links the emergence of Boko Haram with unemployment and ignorance arising from little or no education. He argues that most of the members of the insurgent group are used because they are ignorant and uninformed.²³ Boko Haram quickly identified itself with the poor, the underprivileged, the unemployed, the ignorant, and the disgruntled to whom it made an appeal for a revolution against the government and its Western system, offering, as an alternative, a more responsible, responsive, protective and accommodative Islamic government.

Politically, Boko Haram can be linked, not with political opposition in Nigeria as has been assumed by many Nigerians,²⁴ but with the personal ambition and desire of its founders and leaders to establish an Islamic state, where they could reign as political and religious leaders. The political tentacles of Boko Haram started to manifest with the smouldering ambition of its founder, Yusuf, to enthrone an Islamic government in the Borno State of Nigeria.

It is asserted, that “Yusuf officially founded the group in 2002 in the city of Maiduguri with the aim of establishing a Sharia government in Borno State under then Senator Ali Modu Sheriff.”²⁵ When this aim appeared unachievable, Yusuf, together with his deputy, Shekau, conceived their own state within Nigeria. They created a new state on paper. The state had a cabinet, departments, brigades of guilds, a military body, a large farm, and a microfinance scheme, with Yusuf as its supreme arbiter.²⁶

It soon became obvious, that the ambition of its leaders to run an Islamic state would remain both the driving force and ultimate goal of Boko Haram, which has, since 2011, preoccupied itself with the struggle to bring the northeastern region of Nigeria under its direct political control. In the areas which came under their occupation, Boko Haram hoisted flags, which symbolized its Islamic state, with Gwoza in Borno State as the capital.²⁷

When in 2015 the Boko Haram forces entered Damaturu, the capital of Yobe, the home state of Yusuf, its founder, they hoisted their flag there and renamed the city “Medina.” The 21, 545 square kilometer Nigerian territory that came under the control of Boko Haram was administered by its leaders as an Islamic state until it was liberated in the last quarter of 2015 by the Nigerian military. In spite of this, Boko Haram, whose striking capacity has been reduced to suicide bombing against soft targets, still sees northeastern Nigeria as its Islamic state. It is extrapolatable from the foregoing, that the aim of Boko Haram is to bring all of Muslim Nigeria under its state and then push southwards to occupy the rest of the country. Furthermore, it would seem that with support from its sponsors, including ISIS and al Qaeda, the ultimate goal of Boko Haram is to conquer Cameroon, Chad, and Niger and bring them along with Nigeria under a large caliphate to be called Islamic State of West Africa.²⁸

For the historically minded, the Boko Haram jihad is not strange. It could have occurred at any other time since the colonial era. Historically, there is a connection between Boko Haram and the Islamic resistance to the British conquest and occupation of what became Northern Nigeria and to Christian missionary enterprise and Western education and secularization of the Muslim society. It will be recalled, that when Attahiru, the Sultan of Sokoto and Serikin Muslimin, was defeated by the British conquistadors in 1903, he fled Sokoto and enjoined all Muslims not to seat in peace with the new infidel colonial regime but to join him in a hegira. Although Attahiru’s movement against the colonial government eventually collapsed, opposition to non-Muslim regimes and Western acculturation and secularism had since then been a continuum among Muslim extremists in Nigeria. Seen from this perspective, Boko Haram is simply a continuation of this opposition. In fact, a most recent analysis from the same perspective has concluded, that “Boko Haram has historical roots in resistance to the West.”²⁹ Thus, the Boko Haram insurgency could be positioned as a historical continuity.

While Boko Haram is located essentially within the Nigerian society and experience, it is significant to note, that the group did not begin and thrive as an organization entirely isolated within Nigeria. From the beginning, Boko Haram evolved with elements of external linkages in its membership, soldiery, ideology, arms, and funding. In 2002 Yusuf established a mosque and a school in Borno, where many children from poor families in Nigeria, Chad, and Niger were enrolled. Both the school and mosque offered the students a jihadist orientation and prepared them as recruits for the militant wing of Boko Haram. Thus, as *Tranquil* reports, “The group includes members who come from neighboring Chad and Niger and speak only Arabic.”³⁰ Given the 28 December, 2014 invasion and temporary occupation of 5 towns and a military camp in northern Cameroon by about 1000 Boko Haram troops,³¹ there is the possibility that the group is also obtaining its drafts significantly from northern Cameroon.

Although the idea of creating a state with an Islamic government by means of a jihad is rooted in Nigeria’s historical experience, Boko Haram is further supported in the actualization of this idea by radical Islamic movements outside Nigeria with similar ideas. The group is known to have been collaborating with al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Abu Musab Abdel Wadoub (also known as Abdelmalek Droukdel), the emir of AQIM, first revealed the collaboration in an interview with Al Jazeera on 14 June, 2010. He stated that AQIM would provide Boko Haram with weapons, training, and other support in order to expand its own reach into sub-Saharan Africa not only to gain “strategic depth” but also to “defend Muslims in Nigeria and stop the advance of a minority of crusaders.”³² The other support, which Boko Haram receives from AQIM, is funding. It has been recently established by the United States, that the group obtains limited, not substantial, financial aid from AQIM.³³ Even though the aid is not substantial, it is significant in sustaining Boko Haram, which does not really require much funding to carry out its operations.

In 2012 Mohammed Bazoum, foreign minister of Niger, also indicated, that Boko Haram was linked with al Qaeda's North Africa wing. He reported: There is no doubt the two organisations are connected and they have the same objective of destabilising our region. 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. One group has been received in AQIM bases here in the Sahel and another group got training, based on information we've gotten, with the Shabaabs in Somalia.³⁴

General Carter Ham, commander of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), which coordinates U.S. military activity across the continent, joined the fray when he said: Most notably I would say that the linkages between AQIM and Boko Haram are probably the most worrisome in terms of the indications we have that they are likely sharing funds, training and explosive materials that can be quite dangerous.³⁵

Indeed, AQIM has never hidden its ambition to bring into its fold Nigerian Islamists in order to exploit tensions between Nigerian Muslims and Christians. Thus, in 2008 Droukdel did not scruple to accept, in an interview with the *New York Times*, that AQIM had a discrete number of Nigerian recruits.³⁶

Boko Haram members are also known to have received military training in Mali, while they were fighting there on the side of the Islamists. They were given training in the use of sophisticated heavy weapons, fabrication of improvised military equipment, and new methods of warfare. This is evident in the vehicles used by Boko Haram, some of which the sect has transformed into fighting machines. More evidence of the military link between Boko Haram and AQIM has been provided in the reports of France and the United States based media. While in April, 2012 the *Agence France-Presse* announced that "dozens of Boko Haram fighters were assisting AQIM and others in Northern Mali," the *Washington Post* proclaimed in early 2013, that "the Islamist insurgency in northern Nigeria has entered a more violent phase as militants return to fight with sophisticated weaponry and tactics learned on the battlefields of nearby Mali."³⁷

Beyond its relationship with AQIM, it is most likely that Boko Haram has gravitated into the global al Qaeda movement. The successful establishment or acquisition of an active affiliate in sub-Saharan Africa has been the goal of the global al Qaeda for some time.³⁸ In June, 2006 for example, *Sada al-Jihad (Echo of Jihad)* – a magazine issued by what was then al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia – published an article by Abu Azzam al-Ansari, entitled "Al Qaeda is moving to Africa." In this article Ansari stated:

There is no doubt that al Qaeda and the holy warriors appreciated the significance of the African regions for the military campaigns against the crusaders. Many people sense that this continent has not yet found its proper and expected role and the next stages of the conflict will see Africa as the battlefield.³⁹

The emergence of Boko Haram in Africa's most populous country, Nigeria, has vindicated Ansari in his extrapolation, as it appears, indeed, that in ideology, posture, and strategy, the sect has aligned with the wider al Qaeda movement as well as created a major battlefield in sub-Saharan Africa. Its linkage with the global al Qaeda correctly explains Boko Haram's adoption of such methods of terrorist acts as suicide bombing, the use of vehicles borne improvised explosive devices (IEDs), attacks on state and international establishments and other soft targets, and kidnapping of aliens (especially Europeans) for ransom.

In July, 2010 Abubakar Shekau made utterances which suggested a possible alliance between Boko Haram and the wider al Qaeda movement. He issued an online statement, praising al Qaeda and offering condolences to al Qaeda of Iraq for its loss of Abu Ayyub al Masri and Abu Omar al Baghdadi. He also threatened the United States: "Do not think jihad is over. Rather jihad has just begun. O America, die with your fury."⁴⁰ Indeed, by February, 2014 the relationship between Boko Haram and al Qaeda had gone beyond the realm of speculation, as LabaranMaku, Nigeria's supervising minister of defense, revealed that Boko Haram was funded and equipped by al Qaeda.⁴¹ In recent times Boko Haram's most potent and enduring link appears to be with the newly carved Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In March, 2015 *Reuters* reported, in an audio clip pasted online, that Boko Haram had pledged its allegiance to ISIS.⁴² In fact Boko Haram is not just being supported by ISIS but is also being administered as its organic part. Angela Thompsell, in a most recent study, has pointed out, that ISIS has recognized Boko Haram's territory, which has recently been liberated by the Nigerian military, as its integral part and has gone further to designate it as the "Islamic State's West Africa Province"⁴³ Thus, although operating in Nigeria, its central command, as suggested by Deepack and SeemaRao, is located in ISIS.⁴⁴

The rise of Boko Haram has also been linked with the proliferation of arms in the Sahel,⁴⁵ occasioned principally by the pulverization of Muammar Ghaddafi's Libya. Bredan O'Neill presents Boko Haram as a great beneficiary of the West's invasion of Libya, which resulted in the leakage of Libya's military hardware across the West African region.⁴⁶ Some weapons, including such heavy ones as SAM-7 anti-aircraft and anti-tank missiles, fell into the hands of AQIM, which transferred them into the hands of other Islamists in the Sahel.⁴⁷ It was in this process, as well as in the course of their participation in fighting the jihad in Mali, that Nigerian Islamists, who eventually joined Boko Haram, acquired critical arms of war. For example, when Nigerian troops raided Boko Haram camps in 2013, they found heavy guns, which were traceable to Libya. Thus, as O'Neill caps it, "the audacity of Boko Haram grew, with the proliferation of weapons in the Sahara-Sahel region."⁴⁸

Conclusion

Boko Haram is a terrorist organization, deeply and significantly rooted in fundamental and radical Islam. Its rise and survival in a country like Nigeria, which, for over a century, has come under Western civilization and secularism, generally calls to question the ability of the Western state system to weather the basic problems confronting humanity. From the standpoint of its immediate environment, Boko Haram can be interpreted as the product of a failed policy on social integration in a corrupt driven nation state, Nigeria, which has been tending towards failure and disintegration since the beginning of the 21st century. Viewed from a wider horizon, it is a symptom of the increasing failure of the global leadership to address fundamental conflict issues that had remained potent since the 20th century. Thus, the Boko Haram insurgency is a challenge not only to Nigeria but also to other nations of the world, especially as it is linked with global Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism.

The fact of its external linkage significantly suggests how complex the Boko Haram insurgency is, how persistent it will be, and how difficult it is to find an enduring solution to it. As long as it is integrated with global terrorism and radical Islam, which, arguably, are the most vicious forces in the world today, the veritable end of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria is yet far off.

While it is desirable to put in place measures that could change the minds of both real and potential terrorist in Nigeria, it is important to note Mark Gabriel's admonition, that "a religiously motivated terrorist is not going to negotiate, and he's not going to be satisfied with partial concessions."⁶³ Thus, the only assured approach to the termination of Boko Haram is confrontation.

Notes

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²*Ibid.*

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⁸Trimingham, *Islam*, 63.

⁹Ferdinand Agu, "Reviewing Centenary Conference," Interview, Channels Television News, Lagos, Nigeria, 7:30 p.m., 1 March, 2014. Agu was at the time of the interview, a Senior Special Assistant to President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria.

¹⁰Olusegun Obasanjo, Interview, Channels Television News, 10:00 p.m., 30 May, 2014.

¹¹Editorial, "Nigeria's ranking on Global Terrorism Index," *Daily Sun* (Abuja, Nigeria), Wednesday, November 26, 2014:19.

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¹³See map of "21,545km² Seized by Boko Haram," [https://www.google.com.ng/search?q=diagram+territory+under+book-haram+control+2014+\\$tbn+isch\\$prmd+ivn\\$ci=8QqeVEYLYUMfnq4AI\\$start=0\\$sa=N#mh piv=O](https://www.google.com.ng/search?q=diagram+territory+under+book-haram+control+2014+$tbn+isch$prmd+ivn$ci=8QqeVEYLYUMfnq4AI$start=0$sa=N#mh piv=O)

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