



## ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF BOKO HARAM ATTACKS ON CHRISTIANS IN NIGERIA

**Dominic Shimawua**

*Veritas University, Nigeria*

**Igbum Victor and Daniel Asue**

The issue of Boko Haram insurgency has gained fabulous national and international attention since 2009. Within this period, scholars have also been interested in examining the impact of the activities of the sect on the Nigerian society. However, the impact of the activities and operations of the sect on Christian in Nigeria remains a serious issue that needs in depth interrogation. As a result, this paper investigated the impact of Boko Haram attacks on Christians in Nigeria. The paper was built on the structural functionalism theory. The paper revealed that the activities of Boko Haram insurgency have created a negative impact on the Christian liturgical worship in Nigeria, particularly in the Northern part of the country as it leads to gratuitous destruction of lives and property of Christian members; destruction of their worship places such as churches; reduction in the membership of the Christians; displacement of Christian members; fear of being attack by the sect members among Christians; poverty; hunger among others. The paper drew a conclusion that the activities of Boko Haram insurgency have negatively affected the Christians Nigeria, The paper opted for a Clear separation of the state and religion; the need to create employment for the teaming youths; the need to address the challenges facing the North; the need for dialogue; Setting up of a commission for Religious Affairs; use of intelligence network; application of full weight of the la; educating and enlightening members of the various religious groups; Prohibiting the use of inflammatory statements; Impartiality by the leaders in handling religious conflict; Keeping to the ethics of their religions; The need to eschew corruption; Determination and deep political-will by the leadership among others as solutions to addressing challenge Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Assessment, Impact, Boko Haram, Attacks, Christian.

### **Introduction**

One of the issues devastating the global community and has attracted scholars' interest for interrogation in recent years is insecurity and terrorism. There is hardly a day passes without a record of one incidence of terrorist attack and the other in the global community thereby jeopardizing the peace in the society. Okoli and Iortyer (2014, p. 38) affirm that terrorism, arguably, is the biggest threat to global peace and stability in the contemporary times. Since the dawn of this millennium, the incidence of the terrorism has been on a steady rise worldwide. Bell (1985) and Brynjar (2006), cited in Osita-Njoku and Chikere (2015, p. 101) have averred that:

Terrorism is one of the frequently used words in contemporary national and international discourse. It is arguably the most serious threat to global peace and stability. During the early 20th century, terrorism was mostly restricted to regional and national boundaries. Most of the terrorist acts in that era were based on revolutionary nationalism (that is, the use of political violence by the colonized group(s) as a tool for fighting against western colonial power). The Irish republican army, the Zionist groups Hayannah Irgun and Iehi, and Muslim brotherhood all used bombings and assassination to try to free their people from colonial control.

However, terrorism gained unprecedented global attention on September 11, 2001, when Osama Bin Laden, the leader of the dreaded terrorist group Al Qaeda bombed the twin towers (World Trade Center) in New York, United States of America. Imasuen (2015, p. 284), citing Awake (2008) supported that:

Insurgency which has been seen as the most common type of armed conflict has posed the greatest threat to global peace and security in the 21st century. A few years ago, insurgency was limited to a few isolated places, such as Northern Ireland, the Basque country in Northern Spain and some areas in the Middle East, but due to the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks as well as the rise of the Arab spring, insurgency has degenerated into a global menace.

This worldwide manifestations of insurgencies include Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Syrian Islamic liberation front in Syria, Hamas in Palestine, the Taliban's in Pakistan etc; Africa which has not been left out from this menace, has become a breeding ground for various insurgencies such as the Al-shabaab in Somalia, the Lord's Resistance Army in Central African Republic, the M23 Rebels in Democratic Republic of Congo, the National Movement of Azawad (MNL), the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Mali to mention a few (Hughes 2012 in Imasuen 2015).

The phenomena of insurgency in Nigeria have been evident since her independence in 1960, ranging from the twelve-day revolution by Adaka Boro (1964), to the civil war (1967-1970), to the various ethnic militias such as the O'odua People's Congress(OPC), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), the Niger-Delta insurgency and most recently the "Ahl al sunnali al alDa'wawa al Jihad", popularly known as Boko Haram which has been operating in Northern Nigeria since the early 2000, with its origin linked with the widespread of socio-economic and religious insecurity among certain communities in the North (Fwatshak and Larab, 2007; Ikelegbe, 2010).

Nigeria witnessed the first suicide bombings in police headquarters and United Nation's office in Abuja (Blanchard, 2014). The activities of the sect escalated when on 14th April, 2014 the sect kidnapped 250 female students from Government Girl's Secondary school Chibok in Borno State (Zenn, 2014). Also, Boko Haram and Ansaru were designated as Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the United State Security Department in November 2013. Ansaru was the Boko Haram faction that earlier in 2013 kidnapped and executed seven foreigners who were working with international construction companies. Subsequently, the United Nations Committee on Al Qaeda sanction blacklisted the group on 22nd May, 2014 as one of the world terrorist organisations. The United Nation listing entry describes Boko Haram as an affiliate of Al-Qaeda and also one of the organisations of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (Reuters, 2014).

The continued increase in the spread of the nefarious activities of the Boko Haram sect in North East Nigeria since 2009 has created adverse consequence to the North Eastern region. Life in the various communities of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, such as Kawuri, Baga, Konduga, Bama, Shuwa, Ajigin, Gamboru, Giwa, Chibok, Gwoza to mention a few, have been characteristically nasty, brutish and most times short (Salkida, 2012 in Imasuen 2015). The region has ceased to know civil normalcy as a result in the dire humanitarian situation as evident in human casualties, human right abuses, population displacement, refugee debacle, loss of means of livelihood, food insecurity, limited medical facilities and other social amenities. The increasing influx of refugees and the spillover of Boko Haram violence to neighbouring countries over the years had resulted to serious regional security implications, despites the establishment of a Joint Border Patrol Command to address the increasing security challenges attributed to the insurgency (Thursday, April 16th, 2014).

The above observations by different scholars are pointed to the fact that Nigeria is one of the countries in the global community seriously affected by the activities of the dreaded sect called Boko Haram. One of the groups seriously affected by the incidences of the Boko Haram is the Christian. However, while there are numerous materials examining the impact of Boko Haram sect in other areas in the society, there existed, the scarcity of scholarly materials that focus on the impact of the sect on Christian liturgical worship in Nigeria, particularly the affected Northern states.

It is in view to close this research gap that this paper is set out to interrogate the impact of Boko Haram activities on Christians in Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this study is to assess the impact of Boko Haram attacks on Christians in Nigeria. Specifically, therefore, the study is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- i. To review the activities of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.
- ii. To determine the causes of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.
- iii. To investigate the impact of Boko Haram attacks on Christians in Nigeria.
- iv. To suggest ways of addressing Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

### **Clarification of Concepts**

#### **Boko Haram**

The nomenclature 'Boko Haram' is derived from a combination of Hausa word 'boko' (book) and the Arabic word 'haram' (unlawful). Combined, Boko Haram means 'Western education is unlawful.' Boko Haram was derived as a nickname given to the movement by outsiders by truncating a slogan repeated by the late Mohammed Yusuf on video discs, prohibiting not just the colonial European format of literacy but any collaboration with the neo-colonial state (Manfredi, 2014, p. 2).

In any case, Boko Haram has even rejected the designation, 'Western education is unlawful', and instead, prefers the slogan, 'Western culture is forbidden.' As a senior member of the group explained, 'culture is broader, it includes education but not determined by Western education' (cited in Onuoha, 2012: 136). In northern Nigeria, a distinction is often drawn between makarantan boko (schools providing 'Western' education) and makarantan addini (school for religious instruction) or makarantan allo (school of the slate understood to be Koranic schools) (Danjibo, 2009, p. 8).

Across northern Nigeria, makarantan boko continues to be linked to attempts by evangelical Christians to convert Muslims who fear the southern economic and political domination. Isa (2010, p. 322) observes that Boko Haram implies a 'sense of rejection' and 'resistance to the imposition of Western education and its system of colonial social organisation, which replaced and degraded the earlier Islamic order of the jihadist state (the Sokoto Caliphate)'. According to Isa (2010, p. 332):

The Islamic scholars and clerics who once held sway in the Caliphate State and courts assigned the name 'boko' to northern elites who spoke, acted, ruled and operated the state like their Western colonial masters. It is not uncommon to hear in discussions among Islamist scholars and average northerners that poverty and collapse governance – the bane of the region – can be blamed on the failures and corrupt attitudes of 'yan boko' (modern elites trained at secular schools) who have acquired a Western education and are currently in positions of power. As such, the system represented by the 'yan boko' is unjust, secular and has no divine origin. It is, therefore, un-Islamic, which in turn accounts for its ineptitude and corruptness.

There seem to be some consensus in the literature that the Boko Haram movement is an outgrowth of the Maitatsine uprising of the 1980s and the religious and ethnic tensions that followed in the late 1990s (Hickey, 1984, pp. 251-256). Mohammed Yusuf – born on January 29, 1970, in Girgir village in Yobe

State, Nigeria-started Boko Haram in 2002 in the city of Maiduguri with the goal of establishing Sharia government in Borno state. Yusuf established a religious complex in his hometown, which included a mosque and a school, where many poor families from across Nigeria and neighbouring countries enrolled their children. However, Umar (2011) argues that the centre had ulterior political goals and soon it was also working as a recruiting ground for future jihadists to fight the state. The Boko Haram group, which initially called itself the 'Nigerian Taliban', adopted a 'live-off-the-land' lifestyle and set up a camp in a remote area of northeast Nigeria, which the group dubbed 'Afghanistan' (Agbibo 2014). Like Maitatsine of the 1980s, Boko Haram 'strove for self-exclusion of its members from the mainstream corrupt society by living in areas outside or far away from society in order to intellectualize and radicalize the revolutionary process that would ultimately lead to a violent takeover of the [Nigerian] state' (Umar 2011).

While accounts are disputed, there is evidence that around 2002, Yusuf was co-opted by the then Borno state gubernatorial candidate, Ali Modu Sheriff, for the support of his large youth movement, in exchange for full implementation of Sharia and promises of senior state government positions for his followers in the event of an electoral victory. As the group rose to prominence, the state religious commissioner was accused of providing resources to Yusuf, while the government never implemented full Sharia (Africa Report, 3 April 2014). Having used Yusuf's support as a vote-catching device, these politicians then discarded Yusuf. Feeling used, an embittered Yusuf went on to form Boko Haram in 2002 (Solomon 2013). To be sure, the hiring and arming of youths for political ends is a common phenomenon in Nigeria (Aniekwe and Agbibo, 2014). More often than not, these jobless youths are used for political and economic gains and later dumped. For example, evidence from the 2003 elections in Nigeria shows how the incumbent state governor of Rivers, Peter Odili, through the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), subverted the electoral process by exploiting youths and later dumping them. In an interview with Human Rights Watch, Tom Ateke, a leader of the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), acknowledged the role he played in the 2003 elections when he noted: 'Governor Odili had promised cash and jobs in great quantities for me and my boys and in return any place he sent me I conquered for him' (cited in Aniekwe and Agbibo, 2014, p. 10).

In Gombe state, a group of boys known as 'Kalare' have proven 'easy prey for politicians who offer them small amount of money, drugs, alcohol and weapons in exchange for engaging in acts of intimidation and assaults or simply to accompany their campaign in a demonstration of muscle' (Aniekwe and Agbibo, 2014, p. 10). In 2003 elections in the Niger Delta, Gaskia noted that:

Politicians from the major political parties mobilized and surreptitiously armed groups of unemployed and disenchanted youths, and deployed them to cause mayhem and manipulate the electoral process. In this contestation and competitive arming of young groups, the party, which controlled the State government, got the upper hand. These political elite rivalries, coupled with a struggle for turf, contributed immensely to the rise of armed militancy and inter-militant armed violence, which preceded the 2003 elections and became consolidated in the period between the 2003 and 2007 general elections in the Niger Delta (cited in Aniekwe and Agbibo, 2014, p. 10).

Moving on, Boko Haram draws its members from a diverse group of people, including migrants from neighbouring Chad and Niger, disaffected youths, unemployed high school graduates, politicians, and street children (the almajiris<sup>6</sup>) (Onuoha 2012). A recent analysis of 144 imprisoned Boko Haram members shows that the median age of the group's members is thirty years (Onuoha 2012). This youthful membership is hardly surprising if we recall David Pratten's (2013, p. 3) point that 'In Nigeria, "youth" has come to occupy a category of risk, it labels a dangerous, insurgent and unpredictable force which threatens the social and political fabric.'

In her research on the adoption of the 'negative identity' among incarcerated terrorists, Knutson argued that 'a young person who, for reasons of personal or social marginality, is close to choosing a negative identity, that young person may well put his (or her) energy into becoming exactly what the careless and fearful community expects him [or her] to be – and make a total job of it' (cited in Arena and Arrigo, 2006, p. 20). Boko Haram members are also drawn from the Kanuri tribe, which makes up roughly 4 percent of the Nigerian population, and is concentrated in the northeastern states of Nigeria,

including Bauchi and Borno, as well as from the Hausa-Fulani (29 percent of the northern population) who are spread throughout most of the northern states. Already, Campbell (2013) argued that:

The revolt's foot soldiers likely are drawn from unemployed youth in Northern Nigeria, a region of profound poverty. Many of them attended Islamic schools where they learned little other than to memorize the Quran. Often they are children of peasants, rootless if not homeless, in a big city. They can bond through a common radical Islamic sensibility, inchoate rage, and the prospect of earning a little money as terrorists.

Mustapha (2012) argues that Boko Haram 'provides education, basic services and informal-sector jobs to its supporters, most of who are marginalized people with little education, or lower middle-class elements with some education but with few prospects in the oppressive competition and corruption of Nigerian society.' Governor of Borno state, Kashim Shettima, explains that despite its 'misguided ideology,' Boko Haram's slain leader Mohammed Yusuf:

retained the loyalty of his supporters by providing one meal a day to each of his disciples. He also had a youth empowerment scheme, under which he helped his disciples to go into petty trading and wheelbarrow pushing. He also arranged cheap marriages between sect members, which enabled many of them to marry, which gave them personal dignity and self-worth (Shettima, cited in Mustapha, 2012).

Thus, it would seem Shaw was right when he argued that, 'The terrorist identity offers the individual a role in society, albeit a negative one, which is commensurate with his or her prior expectations and sufficient to compensate for past losses. Group membership provides a sense of potency, an intense and close interpersonal environment, social status, potential access to wealth and a share in what may be a grandiose but noble social design' (cited in Arena and Arrigo, 2006:23-24). Shaw further argues that, 'The powerful psychological forces of conversion in the group are sufficient to offset traditional social sanctions against violence... to the terrorists; their acts may have the moral status of religious warfare or political liberation' (Arena and Arrigo, 2006, pp. 23-24). Besides from this, some reports in 2012 strongly linked some senior members of the Nigerian security sector to Boko Haram (Punch 9 January 2012; Vanguard 22 February 2012).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This theory is relevant to the present work because structural functionalism, or simply functionalism, theory sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a macro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole, and believes that society has evolved like organisms. This approach looks at both social structure and social functions. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions, and institutions. In the most basic terms, it simply emphasizes "the effort to impute, as rigorously as possible, to each feature, custom, or practice, its effect on the functioning of a supposedly stable, cohesive system. Structural-functionalism" came to describe a particular stage in the methodological development of social science, rather than a specific school of thought.

### **Attacks by Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria**

Since the inception of the sect, Boko Haram insurgency has carried out different attacks in Nigeria. Below is the table summarizing the activities of the Boko Haram in Nigeria and the effects of such activities on human lives and property:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Incident</b>	<b>Effect</b>
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

September29,2013	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
Februay14,2014	Borno massacre in konduga	121 Christian villagers were killed
February15,2014	Izghe 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 sliting 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
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.
January 3-7, 2015	Baga massacre and Raze	Militants razed 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 31st, 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 Bosso and Diffa towns	It marked the first time the Boko Haram attacked the country. The Chadian Military assisted the Nigerian Armed Forces to repel the attack. 5 Nigerian 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 Nigerian Army	Baga which had fallen to Boko Haram on January 3rd was recaptured by Nigerian Army.
February 24, 2015	Recapture of Malam Fatouri and Damasak (North East Nigeria) by Chadian and Nigerian Forces	Insurgents dislodged from Fatouri and Damasak while Chadian and Nigerian 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 1st at one mosque in Kakawa and 17 wounded in the attacks. 97 others mostly men were killed in numerous mosques on the 2nd 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

**Figure 1.** Summary of the Incidents of Boko Haram Insurgency and the Effects on Human lives and Property since 2009

Source: Cited in Akinbi, O. J. (2015). 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*, 3(8), 32-45.

**Causes of Boko Haram Attacks IN Nigeria**

According to Ensign (2012), cited in Omomia (2015, p. 168), the following can be identified as some of the root causes of violence and insecurity in Nigeria. They could overtly or covertly account for the continuous Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. They include the following:

- a. Unemployment: The issue of unemployment in the country is so alarming in Nigeria especially among the youths. Because a lot of youths are not employed or underemployed they are easily manipulated and used to perpetrate evil such as Boko Haram.
- b. Poverty: This is quite palpable in every segment and stratum of the nation's life.
- c. Inadequate security: In most situations of violence, it would have been perpetrated most devastatingly before help come from the security apparatus.
- d. Depletion of cultural values- This is seen in the fact that man no longer attaches the expected value to the sanctity of life. The African virtue of being your brother's keeper has been eroded.
- e. Unchecked movement of persons via the border posts - No doubt, people from other neighboring parts of Nigeria have infiltrated the country. Such persons, whose identities cannot be vouched for, and do not also feel they have anything at stake, are ready tools for unleashing mayhem once the opportunity arises.
- f. Political divisions- A clear experience that occurred in 2011, with the declaration of the former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan as the winner of the Presidential election, stands out as a vivid point in this regards. Churches, shops, and houses were burnt in most of the northern states by supporters of General Muhammadu Buhari (the current Nigerian president) of then the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). Police Stations, Electoral Commission Offices, and some Federal establishments were also destroyed (Blue Printing.com, 2012). There were also

reprisal attacks by youths from predominantly Christian communities in Kaduna State, who reportedly killed Muslims, burnt their Mosques and destroyed property.

- g. Lack of adequate information- In our contemporary information age, adequate security must explore relevant information. The contemporary time and age eschew brute force and barbaric approach to information gathering. The right information gathering strategies should be employed as this would consequently nip any anticipated violence in the bud. To say the least, our information gathering mechanism is both outdated and crude. This may be the reason our security outfits hardly have any clue before most of the violence are hatched.
- h. Politicization of the security system: Apart from the factors considered above,

Adoke (2012) argued that another important factor that is militating against the success story of Nigeria's security system is the "politicization of the security system as well as corruption". Those involved in the security arm of the nation are sometimes dichotomized along tribal and religious stand.

- i. Poor access to quality education: Ensign (2012) argued that poor access to high-quality education and health care, especially in the north, is responsible for the unabated security challenge. Someone had once asked a rhetorical question: "Show me one of the Children of the elites who are participating in the Boko Haram sect? After all, they are all studying abroad".
- j. Ethnic politics and mutual distrust: Okafor (1997) had observed that, —the unhealthy ethnic politics and mutual distrust among various cultural linguistic and ethnic groups in Nigeria are the main causes of Nigeria's social and political upheavals. Uka (2012) concurred by arguing that:
- k. the political behavior of Nigerians is still greatly influenced by the hyperbolic assumption that one's political destiny is intrinsically and exclusively linked with one's ethnic, linguistic, and to some extent, religious identity.
- l. The negative roles played by some religious leaders: Obioha (2008) submitted that, the occurrence of these conflicts cannot be divorced from the activities of religious leaders, both of Christian religion and Islam According to him, some of them present their religion as the best, while others are no religion, or worse still, false religions.

Following the position above, Gwamna (2011) and others also identified the following as some causes of the spate of violence and insecurity in the nation and especially, the north:

- i. Religion is sometimes used to make people unleash terror against others: According to George, cited in Gwamna (2011), every religion has its own zealots and people have used religious books to entice followers to kill others in the name of God.
- ii. The promise of a blissful hereafter: Gwamna (2011) had posited that martyrdom complex and suicide mission hold much attraction to their terrorist activities with all the promise of a blissful hereafter which will reverse and compensate them for their lost good things of this life. This could be said to be one of the main re-enforcers, as they engage in suicide bombings. ing dividends to be enjoyed by the citizens. The consequence is that the citizenry is then easily manipulated and gullibly recruited to perpetrate all forms of havoc and violence.

### **Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on Christian in Nigeria**

The impact of Boko Haram insurgency on Christians in Nigerian is widely examined by different scholars. Though at present, the Nigeria is gradually winning the war against insurgency, the impact of the activities of the sect is well felt even today. Ohiwerei (2014, p. 168) clearly outlined the following as the impact of Boko Haram attacks on the Christians Nigerian:

They have killed innocent civilians whom they claimed have collaborated with state security; They have killed innocent critic's especially Muslim clerics; They have killed innocent Christians or forcibly convert them; They have bombed and killed members of churches and prevented conventional worshipping by Christians; They have bombed and killed security infrastructure; They have killed

innocent security personnel; Rob banks and churches; They have organized jail breaks to free imprisoned members and other criminals; They have threatened politicians who opposed their political patrons; They have threatened Southerners and Christians to relocate from the North; They have burnt different schools and killed students; They have killed traditional rulers.

Generally speaking, the activities of the sect have a negative impact on the Christian liturgy celebration or worship in Nigeria, particularly in the North. The impact of this on Christian worship is that it has reduced the number of members of the church community. Many Christian lives have been lost as a result of the activities of the sect. There is generally the gratuitous destruction of church buildings by the sect, leaving the members displaced and without anywhere to worship. For instance, between 9,000 and 11,500 Christians have been killed in religiously related violence in Northern Nigeria. Christians displaced and churches destroyed in March 2015, according to the United Nations Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), 1,235,295 people in total were displaced in Northern Nigeria. Ninety-two per cent (1,136,470) of them are displaced by Boko Haram related violence and the remaining eight per cent (98,824) of them are mainly displaced by Muslim Hausa-Fulani herdsmen attacks (OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) (2015).

However, many more Christians have left Northern Nigeria all together and have integrated into communities in Middle Belt states or migrated (back) to Southern Nigeria. Based upon the number of destroyed churches, it is estimated that up to 1.3 million Christians have left their place of residence between 2000 and 2014. The Christian communities in the Far North (e.g. Borno -87.3 per cent, Yobe -77.8 per cent and Kano -63.4 per cent) have the most Christians that flee. While Christian communities in the Middle Belt (e.g. Benue +forty per cent, Plateau +75.6 per cent, Nasarawa +44 per cent and Benue +forty per cent) receive the most fleeing Christians. Between 2000 and 2014, over 13,000 churches have been abandoned, closed, destroyed and/or burnt, predominantly in the Far North. It has been estimated that this has affected 1.3 million Christians. Amongst them, there are internally displaced persons, people that have been forced to relocate and people who are no longer able to go to their normal place of worship. Nearly 3,500 new churches have been established by relocating Christians, predominantly in Middle Belt states.

The rise and fall in numbers over the years is essentially due to the displacement and relocation of Christians to different states. March 2015, an estimated 468,226 Christians in Northern Nigeria were displaced by Boko Haram related violence and 40,716 Christians were displaced mainly by Fulani herdsmen attacks. The Christian communities in northern Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states are the most affected by Boko Haram violence. The Christian community in Nasarawa State was the most affected by Fulani herdsmen attacks. Christians apparently relocate to Middle Belt states (e.g. Plateau, Kogi, Kwara) and relative peaceful Sharia states (e.g. Sokoto, Kebbi, and Zamfara).

Church attendance and membership decreased in the Far north violence-ridden areas but increased in the Middle Belt states where many Christians relocated to. The Church has mostly lost the strength and resources to engage in community projects, give offerings and tithes and to support their pastors due to poverty amongst members. Christians have indicated that feelings towards Muslims in their community have been negatively affected by the impact of the persistent violence. Others feel that freedom of speech, association, religion and other human rights have been severely affected, most notably in the Sharia states. Every Christian in Northern Nigeria is born and bred in a 'culture of violence' regardless of when and where they are born in the region. Three out of four Christians in Northern Nigeria see a bleak future for Christians in Northern Nigeria.

The persistent violence has also led to a further segregation of the Muslim and Christian communities. It has become more difficult for Christians in Northern Nigeria to be promoted at work or find employment with the government. At a state level, there seems to be more political involvement among Christians in the southern Kaduna and Plateau states. Nevertheless, it seems to be almost absent among Christians in violence-ridden Borno and Yobe states. Despite this, there seems to be a new dynamic in which Christians are fighting for their freedom through participation in politics.

Accordingly, to eighty per cent of the respondents, the number of Christians who persevere despite the personal loss and trauma has grown. They seem to experience an increase in faith and a greater

solidarity within the church. To understand religious violence and to love your enemies are considered to be the biggest spiritual challenges Christians are facing. To cope with the trauma inflicted by the persistent violence is understood to be the main emotional challenge. The main economic challenge for Christians in Northern Nigeria is to empower themselves to gain a sustainable livelihood.

Christians say the main social challenge for them is to overcome mutual distrust, fear, and hatred between them and their Muslim counterparts.

### **Conclusion and the Way Forward**

Boko Haram attacks have a devastating impact on Christians in both spiritually, mentally, psychological and morally. However, the following is the way forward in addressing the challenge of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria:

There should be a clear separation of the state and religion: This was also the position canvassed by the participants at the 8th All Nigeria Editors Conference that took place at Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. According to Adeseko and Effiong (2012), the participants opined that the —separation of the state and religion implies equal recognition and respect for all religions and favor to or patronage of none. According to them, failure to separate religion and the state, and the continuing politicization and manipulation of religion to gain and retain economic and political hegemony, will lead to the corruption of religion by the state.

The need to create employment for the teeming youths: Mammaga (2012), urged, especially the governors of the states in the North to make judicious use of the available resources to create employment opportunities for the youths. This should extend to other states of Nigeria so as to check the vulnerability of the youths in the perpetrating of crime.

Addressing the challenges facing the North: Tangible efforts should be made to implement the recommendations of the various discussions held on the ways to address the challenges facing the region. This would draw the attention of all and sundry towards the development of the region.

There is a need for interreligious dialogue: The two major religions in Nigeria, which are the Islam and Christian must learn to co-exist among themselves and learn to resolve issues that concern them without resorting to violence. This can help the peace to reign in Nigeria rather violence.

Setting up of a commission for Religious Affairs: According to Attah (2012), this commission is to report to the presidency directly. It should also have offices in all the state capitals and they are expected to coordinate activities at the ward level.

Use of intelligence network: There is the need to develop and make judicious use of the intelligence network to decode the security challenges that the Boko Haram sect is posting (Okolo, 2012). The contemporary level of technological development all over the world calls for the application of such in addressing security challenges.

The full weight of the Law should be applied to anyone who errs, by taking adequate steps and sanctions against violent religious fanaticism. There should be no sacred cows, as this would serve as a deterrent to others.

Educating and enlightening members of the various religious groups on the value of love and tolerance as panaceas for peaceful co-existence. It is said that no religion of the world preaches violence. This should be seen manifesting the Muslim brothers to allow peace prevail in our nation state.

Prohibiting the use of inflammatory statements against other religions.

Impartiality by the leaders in handling religious conflict, no matter their religious leanings.

Keeping to the ethics of their religions. Adherents should keep to the ethics of their religions. It can be safely argued that most religions preach peace; a deviation from this is indicative that we are not complying with the ethics of that religion.

The need to eschew corruption is also important in steaming the ill-tide of insecurity in the country. There is no way a corrupt nation can guarantee the dividends of the abundant natural resources for all. It

then follows that this inequality engenders revolts and conflicts. Those who feel cheated can readily take up arms once any opportunity beckons, even if not justifiable.

There should be determination and deep political-will by the leadership of the nation to confront the security challenge headlong. The government should rise from her present state of stupor and cowardice to confront the issue.

If the above solutions and others are considered, then the challenge of insecurity and especially the Boko Haram insurgency will be eradicated.

## References

1. Adeogun, O. A. (2012). Security Matters and Quality Assurance in Nigerian Educational System. In A. Oni (ed) *Revitalizing Nigerian Education in Digital Age* (Pp. 1-11). U.S.A: Trafford Publishing.
2. Adesoji, A. (2010). The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria.' *Africa Spectrum*, 45(2), 103.
3. Adoke, A. (2012). *Intelligence Gathering-Bane of Nigeria security agencies*. Retrieved on 28/08/2013. From: [http://www.gamji.com/article/9000/NEWS\\_9487.htm](http://www.gamji.com/article/9000/NEWS_9487.htm)
4. Africa Report No. 216. (2014). Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency. April 3. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/west-africa/nigeria/216-curbing-violence-in-nigeria-ii-the-boko-haram-insurgency.aspx> [Accessed 22 December 2014].
5. Agbibo, D. E. (2014). Boko Haram and the Global Jihad: Don't Think Jihad is Over. Rather, Jihad has just Begun. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, X(X), 1-18.
6. Akanji, O. (2009). The Politics of Combating Domestic Terrorism in Nigeria.' In W. Okumu and A. Botha (eds.), *Domestic Terrorism in Africa: Defining, Addressing and Understanding its Impact on Human Security*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.
7. Akinbi, O. J. (2015). 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*, 3(8), 32-45.
8. Aniekwe, C. C. and Agbibo, D. E. (2014). Civic Engagement and its Role in Mitigating Electoral Violence in Nigeria: Implications for the 2015 General Elections.' Social Science Research Network, Working Paper, December 21.
9. Arena, M. P. and Arrigo, B. A. (2006). *The Terrorist Identity: Explaining the Terrorist Threat*. New York and London: New York University Press.
10. Asal, V. and Blum, A. (2005). Holy Terror and Mass Killings? Re-examining the Motivations and Methods of Mass Casualty Terrorists,' *International Studies Review*, 7(1), 153-155.
11. Attah, D. O. (2011). *Boko Haram, Treat to Nigerian's existence*. Retrieved on
12. Barkindo, A. (2014). Boko Haram: Ideology, Ethnicity and Identity. Tony Blair Faith Foundation. 29 September. [http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/religion\\_geopolitics/commentaries/opinion/bokoharam-ideology-ethnicity-and-identity](http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/religion_geopolitics/commentaries/opinion/bokoharam-ideology-ethnicity-and-identity)
13. BBC News, 2009. Nigeria's Taliban Enigma. 28 July.
14. Blanchard, L. P. (2014, June). Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions. In *CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service* (Vol. 10).
15. Campbell, J. (2013). Should US Fear Boko Haram? John Campbell. CNN, October 1. <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/01/opinion/campbell-boko-haram/> [Accessed 8 July 2015].
16. Cook, D. (2011). Boko Haram: A Prognosis.' James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University.
17. Cronin, A. 2003. 'Behind the Curve: Globalisation and International Terrorism.' *International Security*, 27(3), 30-58.
18. Danjibo, N. D. (2009). Islamic fundamentalism and sectarian violence: The Maitatsine and Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria. Paper presented at the 2009 IFRA (French Institute for Research in Africa) Conference on Conflict and Violence, Zaria, Nigeria. <http://www.ifra-nigeria.org.spip.php?article156> [Accessed 16 June 2013].
19. Egburunu, S. et al. (2012). Tension as Groups Flee Over Boko Haram Threats, *Sunday Nation*, January 29.

20. Ensign, M. (2012). *Religious tolerance in Nigeria-A view from the North*. Retrieved 20/08/2013. From: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/01/religious-tolerance-in-nigeria-a-view-from-the-north/>
21. Forest, J.J.F. (2012). *Confronting the Terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria*. Florida: The JSOU Press.
22. Fwatshak, S. U. and Larab, A. (2007). Political Assassinations and Nigeria's Political Quagmire: A Historical Anthology. *Journal of Historical Studies*, 1(2&3), 110-120.
23. Gwamna, D. J. (2011). Interrogating the Nexus of Religion and Terrorism in the Jos Crisis in Central Nigeria. *Insight: Journal of Religious Studies*, (7), 1-18.
24. Hassan, I. H. (2010). What is Boko Haram asking the Fodios. *Jos Journal of Humanities*, 4(1), 9-12.
25. Hickey, R. (1984). The 1982 Maitatsine Uprisings in Nigeria: A Note. *African Affairs*, 83(331), 251-256.
26. Hoffman, B. (2006). *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
27. Human Rights Watch, (2012). Nigeria: Boko Haram Widens Terror Campaign. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/01/23/nigeria-boko-haram-widens-terror-campaign> [Accessed 1 October 2012].
28. Ikelegbe A (2010). State, Ethnic Militias and Conflict in Nigeria. *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 39(3), 490-516.
29. Imasuen, E. (2015). Insurgency and humanitarian crises in Northern Nigeria: The case of Boko Haram. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 9(7), 284-296.
30. Isa, M. K. (2010). Militant Islamist Groups in Northern Nigeria. In: W. Okumu and A. Ikelegbe (eds.) *Militias, Rebels and Islamist Militants: Human Security and State Crises in Africa*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies (ISS).
31. Isaacson, M. (2011). Igniting Instability: Al Qaeda's Inroads into Africa. *Sunday Punch*, July 17, 2011, pp.15
32. Juergensmeyer, M. (2003). *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
33. Makinde, M. A. (2007). *African Philosophy: The Demise of a Controversy*. Ile-Ife,
34. Mammaga, I. (2012). *Tackling Security Challenges in Northern Nigeria*. Retrieved on 22/08/2013. From: <http://www.peoplesdaily-online.com/index.php/opinion/opinion/features/2345-tackling-security-challenges-in-northern-nigeria>.
35. Manfredi, V. (2014). *The Phrase Boko Haram contains no Etymologically Hausa Word*. Boston: African Studies Center.
36. Marchal, R. (2012). Boko Haram and the Resilience of Militant Islam in Northern Nigeria.' NOREF Report, July 13.
37. Mohammed, M. (2012). Violence and Threat to Yobe's Economic Growth, *The Moment*, Wednesday, March 7.
38. Mustapha, A. R. (2012). Boko Haram: Killing in God's Name. *Mail & Guardian*, April 5.
39. Nigeria: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
40. *Nigeria's security challenges*. Retrieved on 15/01/2015. From: <http://sunnewonline.com/new/national/media-editors-conference-how-to-overcome-nigerias-security-challenges-rep-others/>.
41. Obumneme, E. (2012). The Creation of Boko Haram, *Sunday Vanguard*, February 19.
42. OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) (2015); 'North East Nigeria Crisis: Humanitarian Snapshot. Retrieved January 30, 2015 from: [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/NE\\_Snapshot\\_Jan30.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/NE_Snapshot_Jan30.pdf)
43. Ohiwerei, F. O. (2014). Effects of Boko Haram Insurgency/Terrorism in Business Education in Nigerian Universities. *Scholarly Journal of Education*, 3(9), 163-171.
44. Okafor, F. U. (2007). New strategies for curbing Ethnic and religious Conflicts in Nigeria. In D. Harura (ed) *Ethnicity in Nigerian Politics* (pp. 98-135) Enugu: Fourth-Dimension.
45. Okoli, A. C. and Iortyer, P. (2014). Terrorism and Humanitarian Crisis in Nigeria: Insights from Boko Haram Insurgency. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science and Political Science*, (14)1, 28-49.
46. Okolo, B. (2009). *The State of Insecurity in Nigeria*. Retrieved on 20/08/2013. From: <http://nigeriaworld.com/articles/2009/aug/052.html>
47. Okpanga, A.; Ugwu, S. C. and Eme, O. I. (2012), "Activities of Boko Haram and Insecurity Question in Nigeria," *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, Vol. 1, No. 9, April.

48. Omomia, O. A. (2015). Religious Fanaticism and “Boko Haram” Insurgency in Nigeria: Implications for National Security. *Journal of Advocacy, Research and Education*, 2(1), 58-73.
49. Onuoha, F.C., 2012. Boko Haram: Nigeria’s Extremist Islamic Sect. *Al Jazeera Centre for Studies*, 29 February, 1-6.
50. Osita-Njoku, A. and Chikere, P. (2015). Consequences of Boko Haram Terrorism on Women in Northern Nigeria. *Applied Research Journal*, 1(3), 101-107.
51. Ovaga, O. H. (n.d). The Socio-Economic Implications of Book-Haram Activities in Northern Nigeria. *Review of Public Administration & Management*, (1)2, 19-37.
52. Piazza, J. (2009). Is Islamist terrorism more dangerous? An empirical study of group ideology, organization, and goal structure. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 21 (1), 62-88.
53. Solomon, H. (2013). Boko Haram, Identity and the Limits of Counter-Terrorism.’ E-International Relations, November 3. [http://www.e-ir.info/2013/11/03/boko\\_haram-identity-and-the-limits-ofcounter-terrorism/](http://www.e-ir.info/2013/11/03/boko_haram-identity-and-the-limits-ofcounter-terrorism/) [Accessed 8 March 2015]
54. Tyessi, K. (2012), “Insecurity Keeps Northern Students from Maths Competition,” *Leadership*, Friday, June 6.
55. Uka, U. M. (2012). *Ethnic, Religious and Communal Conflict in Nigeria: Implications for Security*. Retrieved on 20/01/2015. From: <http://www.academicexcellencesociety.com/ethnicreligious-and-communial-conflicit-in-nigeria.html>.
56. Umar, S. (2011). The Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter Radicalism in Nigeria: A Case-Study of Boko Haram. Northwestern University.
57. *Vanguard* (2012). ‘Amalgamation of 1914: Was it a Mistake?’ May 18. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/05/amalgamation-of-1914-was-it-a-mistake/> [Accessed 8 March 2015].
58. Zenn, J. (2013). Boko Haram’s international connections. *CTC (Combating Terrorism Center) Sentinel*, 6 (1), 7-12.
59. Zenn, J. (2014). Boko Haram and the kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls. *CTC Sentinel*, 7(5), 1-8.