Impacts of Terrorism on Nigeria's National Security in Digital Era

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Abstract

Terrorist activities have heightened the insecurity level in Nigeria. The upsurge of attacks by the Boko Haram terrorists has further raised questions about the roles of the government in handling security issues. Given this, the study seeks to investigate government responses to terrorist attacks and examine how political inclinations have influenced the resistance tactics of terrorist groups in Nigeria. The study adopted qualitative research, using trend design and content analysis. The data adopted was based on documented sources such as journal publications, textbooks, and press releases. The study further based its theoretical framework on the frustration-aggression theory. In its findings, the study revealed that terrorism is at its highest level presently in Nigeria and has significantly affected both socio-political and commercial activities in the country. The analysis further exposed the inability of the Nigerian government to apply advanced military technology in the fight against terrorism. The study recommended, among other things, that the Nigerian government must adopt a digital approach to tackle terrorism since the use of mere military forcehas yielded no results, and hence more efforts and resources should be put into the use of ICTs in its military operations, especially to access the hideouts of terrorists.

Keywords: Terrorism, National Security, Digital Era*.*

Introduction

Insecurity has been identified as a major challenge facing the unity of Nigeria today. The political crisis and the recent upsurge of terrorist activities in Nigeria are often traced to the establishment of Boko Haram in 2002 in northern Nigeria, whose objective is to fight against western education. On the other hand, scholars such as Okoye (2017) argued that the high level of insecurity in Nigeria could be attributed to socio-political factors and marginalization, which result in frustration. Corrupt political practices and perceived marginalization over the years by various groups demanding self-determination have heightened and subjected Nigeria's national security to jeopardy.

There are ongoing debates and theoretical assumptions on the causes and implications of terrorism for Nigeria's national security. Some of these debates are the psychoanalytic cultural perspective, the rational choice perspective, the greed and grievance perspective, and socio-political exclusionism. These debates are discussed below to determine the causes and culture of terrorist activities in Nigeria and the implication on national security in Nigeria, taking into consideration the digital approaches to fighting insecurities in the world.

The psychoanalysis championed by Sigmund Freud in the 1800s argued that human behaviors and their resultant effects can instigate violence in any given society. This theory divided the human psyche into the id, the unconscious level for aggressive and impulsive behavior, the superego, which takes charge of moral conscience, and the ego, which negotiates between the desires of the id and superego. This analysis applies to the terrorist acts of the Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria, whose desires could be unconsciously drawn to ideological impulses going beyond morality. The changes in human behavior could be impulsive and violent; this can be attributed to the behaviors of insurgents in Nigeria. However, the behaviors of the terrorist sects in Nigeria have remained constant, as they have constantly attacked everyone, from believers of Islam to Christians, mostly in northern Nigeria.

Rational choice theorists argue that when a person or a group of people make a choice, they calculate it to be right. This theory, popularly attributed to Adams Smith, further believes that there are justifications for every decision and choice made by a group of people, which makes

them strictly abide by it and follow it tentatively. The assumptions of the rational choice theory can be seen in the activists of terrorists who take much cognizance of the Boko Haram sect, whose doctrines and teachings deem western education evil, hence the quest to exterminate western education through every means possible, such as suicide bombing, arson, and kidnapping, among others, as seen in Nigeria. This choice, deemed rational by the insurgents in Nigeria, has significantly increased insecurity issues in Nigeria.

The theory of greed and grievance A theoretical contribution was developed by Collier and Hoeffler in 1998. According to Paolo 2020, the theory is based upon the "deprivation argument," where the cause of war is attributed to either "greed" or "grievance," and the common factor is the perception of a certain deprivation. If it is economic deprivation, the inequality will be "vertical inequality," and the cause of war will be "greed." If, instead, the deprivation is caused by variables such as ethnicity, age, religion, or gender, it will be "horizontal inequality," and the cause of war will be attributable to "grievances." (Paolo 2020)

Supporters of this theory suggest that greed, grievances, and a feeling of deprivation might have been the reasons for the incessant terrorist activities in Nigeria. The activities of the Boko Haram insurgents are seen by many scholars as politically motivated due to the inability of the Nigerian government to fight the attacks of the terrorists. Hence, the assumptions of this theory are not functional, as no terrorist group in Nigeria has openly stated their grievances. Withstanding the terrorist group Boko Haram, it has leveraged the joblessness of many Nigerian youths to recruit thousands of ardent followers.The theory of social and political exclusion argues that minorities and marginalized groups create a susceptible scenario for conflict. In Nigeria, the majority of the over 250 ethnic groups are considered minorities, except for the Igbo, Hausa/Fulani, and the Yoruba. A minority group is seen as a group of people sharing an ethnic, cultural, religious, and/or linguistic identity that is distinct from that of the majority of the population. One of the main characteristics of minorities is that they are usually in a non-dominant position. Many of the members of Boko Haram are drawn from the large minority tribes in northern Nigeria and neighboring countries like Chad, Benin Republic, and Cameroon. The proponents of this theory argued that political exclusion could equally have informed the decision of the terrorists in Nigeria.

These debates only highlight the various causes of terrorism; hence, this study sets out to assess the recent terrorist activities by the Boko Haram terrorist group, based on the following research questions: how has the Nigerian government responded to terrorist attacks in the country; what are the implications of the advancement in digital technology on Nigeria's security?

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the Frustration-aggression theory. Consequently, Dollard, Miller, and Doob (1939) gave an apt elucidation of causes of violent crime such as terrorism. Based on their frustration-aggression theory. Baron and Richardson (2004), frustration is defined as the blocking of goal attainment, which then leads to aggressive behavior that is comparable to the extent of bridging the opportunity to attain goals or realize dreams. Subsequently, aggressive behavior requires the existence of frustration for it to be triggered and the existence of frustration leads to aggressive behavior. Gurr (1970), Margolin (1977) and Nachmias (2004) agreed that relative deprivations of political, economic, and personal needs and denial to achieve those expectations can spike violent civil conflicts. However, Frustration is the expected result if attainments of these expectations are blocked. Agnew (2010), also noted that present strain theories of terrorism attribute terrorist acts to various grievances associated with relative economic deprivation, religious and socio-cultural issues relating to modernization, neo-imperialism, and neocolonialism. Agnew (1985) and Dollard et al. (1939) further expressed claimed that crime results from anger and feelings of frustration that develop when one experiences strain resulting from blocked opportunities. While Agnew (2006) contended that frustration is a type of anger, Dollard et al. (1939) argued that frustration precedes aggression. Therefore, blocked goals and opportunities lead to frustration, and frustration eventually transfers to aggression.

The various activities of terroristsin Nigeria, are believed to be influenced by grievances, they are angry over particular issues and feel frustrated because their cause has been exploited by the government in power; at the same time, they are frequently economically marginalized, unemployed, and in some other cases feel ostracized. Thus, the principles of frustration-aggression theory appositely fit the scenario in most terrorist torn countries today like Nigeria,

where some of the terrorists in 2015 were granted pardons and reintegrated into the society. The bokoharam activities in Nigeria is relative to the postulations of these analytical frameworks, unemployment, and marginalization has given room for the terrorist groups to draft new members from the society whose disappointments and emotion are transferred to aggression inform of terrorist activities.

Methodology

To carefully analyze the problems identified by this paper, the study adopted the Trend and content analytical using the Qualitative approach. This is because Terrorism has been a constant trend yearly in Nigeria. Data were, related publications, texts, Libraries, internet sources, periodicals, and press statements. This is in bid to obtain the information necessary in the proper analysis of data. Information adopted was all extracted from a logical chain of documentary evidence.

Conceptual Clarification

Terrorism

The US State Department of terrorism,(2002) defined terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience". The federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (2005) equally defined terrorism as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives". Despite problems with defining the terrorism, some scholars have presented definitions from a different perspective. Weinberg (2005), for instance, viewed terrorism as "a snare and delusion, a way of diverting the public's attention from the failings of Western governments, the American and British ones especially" Others have viewed terrorism as the rational and objective opposition of the people against state terrorism, neocolonialism, mercantilism, liberalism, racism, colonialism, and domination (Herman & O'Sullivan, 1989). In other words, a justified and excusable reaction to oppression. Weinberg (2005) revealed how terrorism has become an aggressive presence that affects

government policy, military actions, and the security and peaceful existence of individuals in various nations. He defined terrorism "as the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change" Terrorism is the use of unmitigated forces against a certain group of people, governments, or a nation, intending to achieve a specific political or selfish interest. the Bokoharam terrorist in Nigeria claim their aim is to fight against western education, yet the activities of the groups have been politically motivated giving them a leeway to increase their attacks mainly in the northern part of the country, targeting the harmless populace.

National Security

In the words of Holmes,(2015),"National security is the safekeeping of the nation as a whole. It highest order of business is the protection of the nation and its people from attack and other external dangers by maintaining armed forces and guarding state secrets. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, the defense of the homeland from terrorists and other attacks, broadly understood as homeland security, has risen as a major national security concern.National security encompasses collective efforts by every mechanism of a state to ensure equitable protection of a nation from internal insurrections and external aggressions. The subject of National Security in Nigeria is a malaise due to the inability of the government to protect her citizenry from the series of insurgent attacks by terrorists, bandits, and secessionist groups scattered all over the country and the political incompetence of the government to perform making the national security a weak enterprise.

Digital Era

A digital era is the adoption of Mobile technology in day-to-day activities by corporate bodies, institutions, governments, the military, and terrorists. "Digitization has advanced considerably in the last decade" Carmen and Murphy (2019) Devices that years ago would have been deemed close to science fiction, are speedily at our disposal, increasing the means through which we can relate with the world, nations of the world are leveraging on this to produce various nuclear weapons to enrich their arsenals, terrorists have increased the potency of their attacks through the application of the digital approach in their attacks

Data presentation and Analysis

Upsurge in Terrorist Attacks in Nigeria and Implications on National Security.

Aamo, Raymond, Dugeri, Beatrice, Akumba,& Samera (2021) argued that 'Terrorist activities in Nigeria in the last decades have negatively affected economic growth and have drastically reduced the possibilities of foreign investments in Nigeria. According to the Global Conflict Tracker (2021), terrorist activities have killed nearly 350,000 people in North-East Nigeria and rendered over 310,000 refugees in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Nigeria (Global Conflict Tracker, 2021)

Oluwole (2021).assessed that despite government efforts and tactics, the security situation in Nigeria is deteriorating and increasing the height of insecurity in the country. Kidnapping, arson, and suicide bombings by terrorist groups have become a trend in Nigeria. He further argued that the northeast and northwestern Nigeria has become a haven of increasingly active terrorist groups, including the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS); Jama'atNusrat al Islam walMuslimin (JNIM); Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb; a splinter of BokoHaram known the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), and the Fulani herdsmen of West Africa once rated the fourth-deadliest terror group in the world (Oluwole 2021).

Joshua(2021) in his research on terrorist sects in Nigeria, argues that the causes of terrorism in Nigeria are multidimensional in nature and scope, suggesting a multi-stakeholder approach to stemming the tide in the polity. The study anchored the upsurge of terrorism on the religious inclination and ideologies of terrorists in Nigeria.

The Nigerian government's establishment of the multinational joint task force in 2015 is very less effective and the terrorists have devised digital approaches to perpetrate their acts.
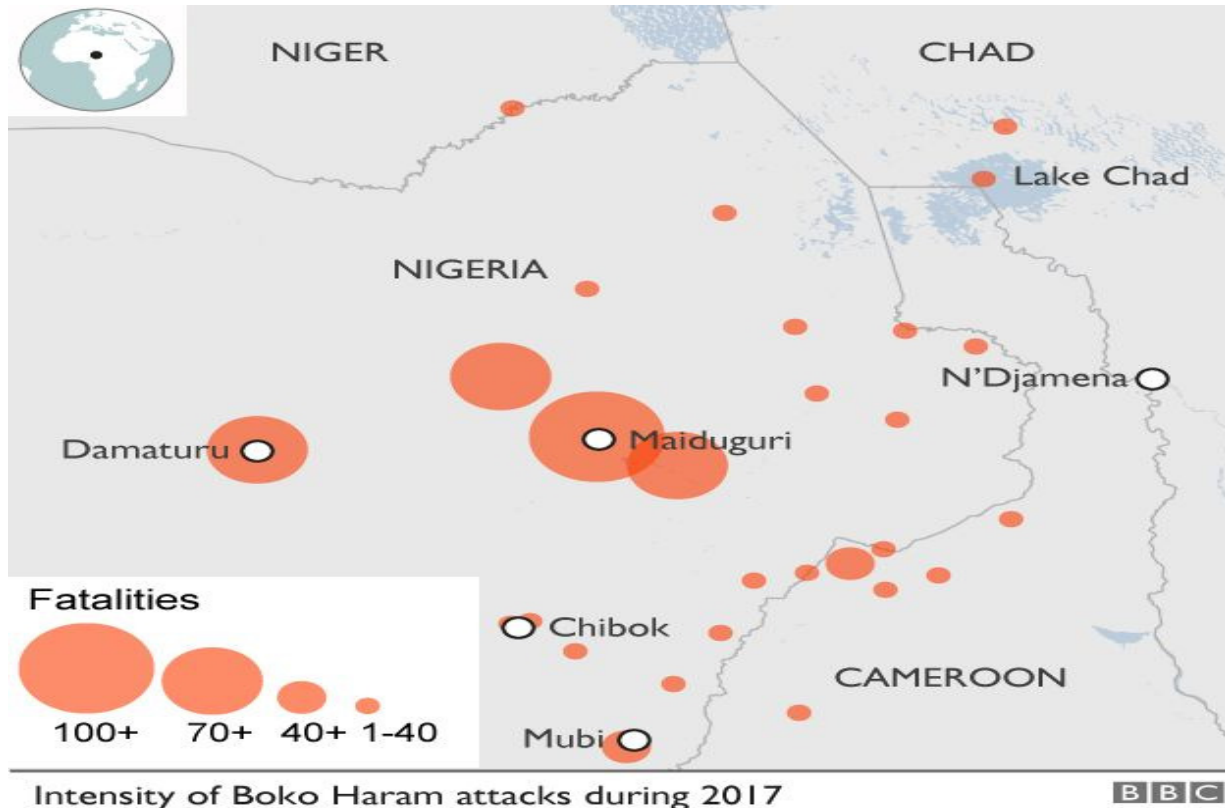
Table 1:Rate of BokoHaram Terrorist Attacks and Deaths Recorded, from July 2009- July 2016

Year	Number of attacks	Number of deaths
2009	4	29
2010	4	340
2011	35	430
2012	37	601
2013	26	720
2014	28	1950
2015	20	2569
2016	4	74
Total	**158**	**6763**

 Source: Compiled by Nkwede and Nwogbaga (2016)

Table 1. Illustrates the number of attacks in Nigeria from 2009-to 2016, in which a total number of 6,763 were killed by terrorist attacks in Nigeria. This analysis exposes the inefficiency of the government to protect its national security; furthermore, it shows the level of corruption in the government who spends billions of dollars yearly on security and arms. The table reveals that terrorists' activities are increasing each year in its attacks on the masses.

Plate 1. The intensity of Bokoharam terrorist attacks in 2017

Intensity of Boko Haram attacks during 2017

BBC

Source BBC, 2017

The above data shows the activities of the BokoHaram within and across the Nigerian Border, the activities of the Bokoharam insurgents cut across Nigeria borders of Cameroon Chad, Niger, and the northeast states of Nigeria;Damaturu, Maiduguri, Chibok, Mubi, Borno. These areas are the operating zones of the terrorists. The Nigerian military has failed in many attempts to access these areas as the terrorists continue to repel their attacks killing and kidnapping the local villagers, many are being converted to Islam others are converted to sex slaves many others are killed. This is the height and state of insecurity in Nigeria today.

Table 2. Major Terrorist Attacks in 2021

2021	Attacks	Number of casualties
20thApril	Greenfield University Kaduna State attack	22 peopleabducted
5th July	Bethel Baptist School attack	121 abducted
February	Government Secondary School Kagara	42 abducted
June	FGC Yauri abduction	30 abducted
December	Burnt passengers in Sokoto	40 dead
April	Owerri Prison break	1844 freed inmates
February	Maiduguri rocket attack	10 dead
December	Giwa Attack in Kaduna	38 dead
December	Farmer's attack in Nassarawa	45 dead
		Total of 2152 casualties in 2021

Data compiled by Alita Emmanuel 2022   **total of 2,152 casualties**

These attacks and deaths are the highlights of terrorist activities in Nigeria in 2021 and the sheer inability to contain these attacks by the government which is occasioned by corruption and tribal politics. Many of the school children adopted by the terrorist have not been recovered to date; in some cases, the government paid ransom to secure their release signifying a serious concern about the government's ability to counter-terrorism.

Terrorist Resistance and Political Implications in Nigeria.

In their assessment, (Chukwurah, Okechukwu, &Ogbeje, 2015). Argued that political implications of terrorism and insecurity have been traumatizing in Nigeria, while many political gladiators hide under the decoy of BokoHaram insurgency to terrorize the existing political regime in Nigeria which makes it difficult to actualize governmental policies and programs in Nigeria. Their research further reveals that Bokoharam activities are politically inclined.
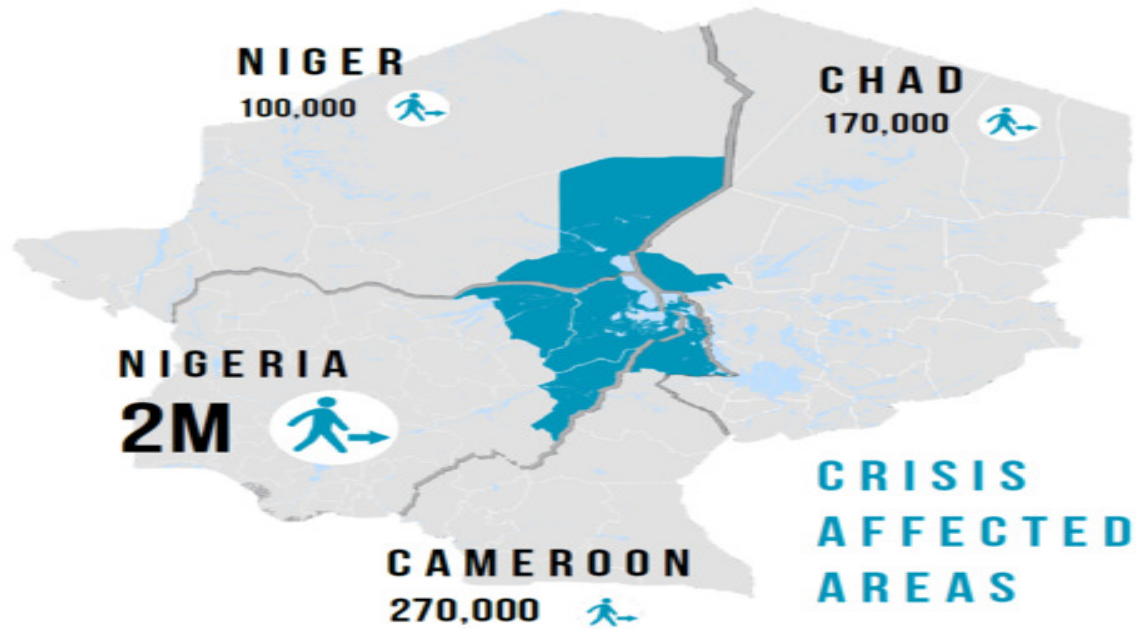
Duke, Agbaji&Bassey, (2017) analyzes the level of corruption in the armed forces of Nigeria, the study argues that the level of corruption and nepotism in the government has been able to disrupt the war against BokoHaram terrorists in Nigeria. It shows misery, corruption and injusticeare the factors responsible for the growth of Bokoharam in Nigeria. The study further reveals that corruption has infected the armed forces of Nigeria and weakened the war against Bokoharam by stealing security budgets, the procurement of under-standard arms, the development of bogus military agreement and the lack of logistical support for and desertion of frontline soldiers. (Duke, Agbaji&Bassey, 2017)

In a study carried out by Chukwurah et al (2015), it was found that before the emergence of the BokoHaram group, the economy of northern Nigeria was vibrant and bubbling. This was crucial as a sort of synergy is needed between the economies of various regions of Nigeria for the country to develop peacefully and securely. However, since the establishment and the upsurge of attacks by BokoHaram on the civilians, things have taken a bad turn for the country, and other neighboring states (Onuoha 2014). Also, the transport, commercial, tourism, and agricultural sector of northern Nigeria has been dealt a severe blow by the BokoHaram menace (Chukwurah et al 2015). The group has disrupted the security and peace of not just northern Nigeria but the entire country.

Opeoluwa (2021) in his research categorically stated that terrorist activities have stalled peace and heightened insecurities in Nigeria, especially northern Nigeria. He argued that migration has increased over the years as well as the humanitarian crisis in northern Nigeria. This has affected food insecurity and freedom of movement.

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Plate: 2. Affected areas and BokoHaram Resistance in Nigerian Borders
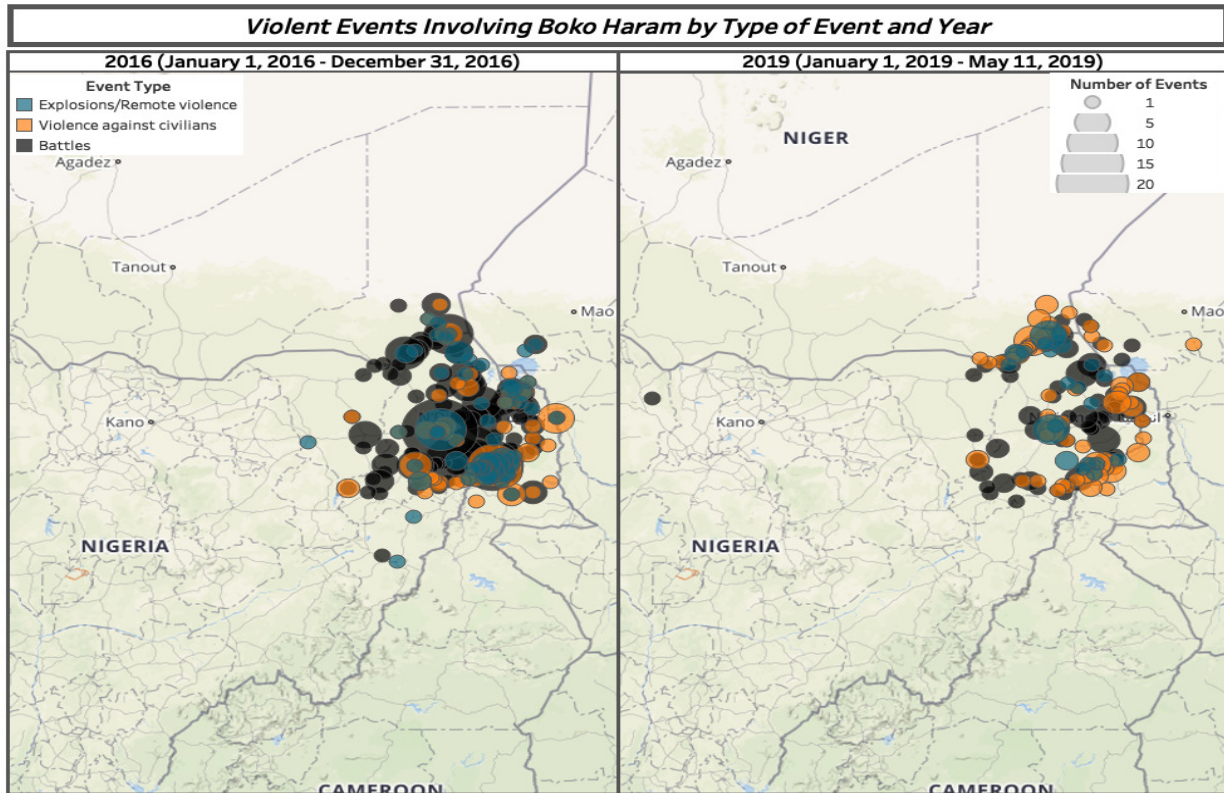

Source: global conflict tracker, 2022

These figures show the high rate of BokoHaram Resistance and affected areas with Nigeria and its borders with Niger and Chad. It further highlights the resistance ability of the terrorist groups who have carved a haven in the northern part of Nigeria.

Plate: 4 increased activities of BokoHaram Terrorists between 2016 and 2019

Source: Global conflict tracker, 2019

The figures above highlight the dominance of bokoharam terrorist groups in northern Nigeria, especially in the northeast and west. The data shows that states like kano, Borno, and Niger states, have been annexed by the terrorists for over five years. The inability of the government through its joint task force to curtail the activities of terrorists in these regions as goes a long way to demonstrate the high level of political and military corruption in Nigeria.
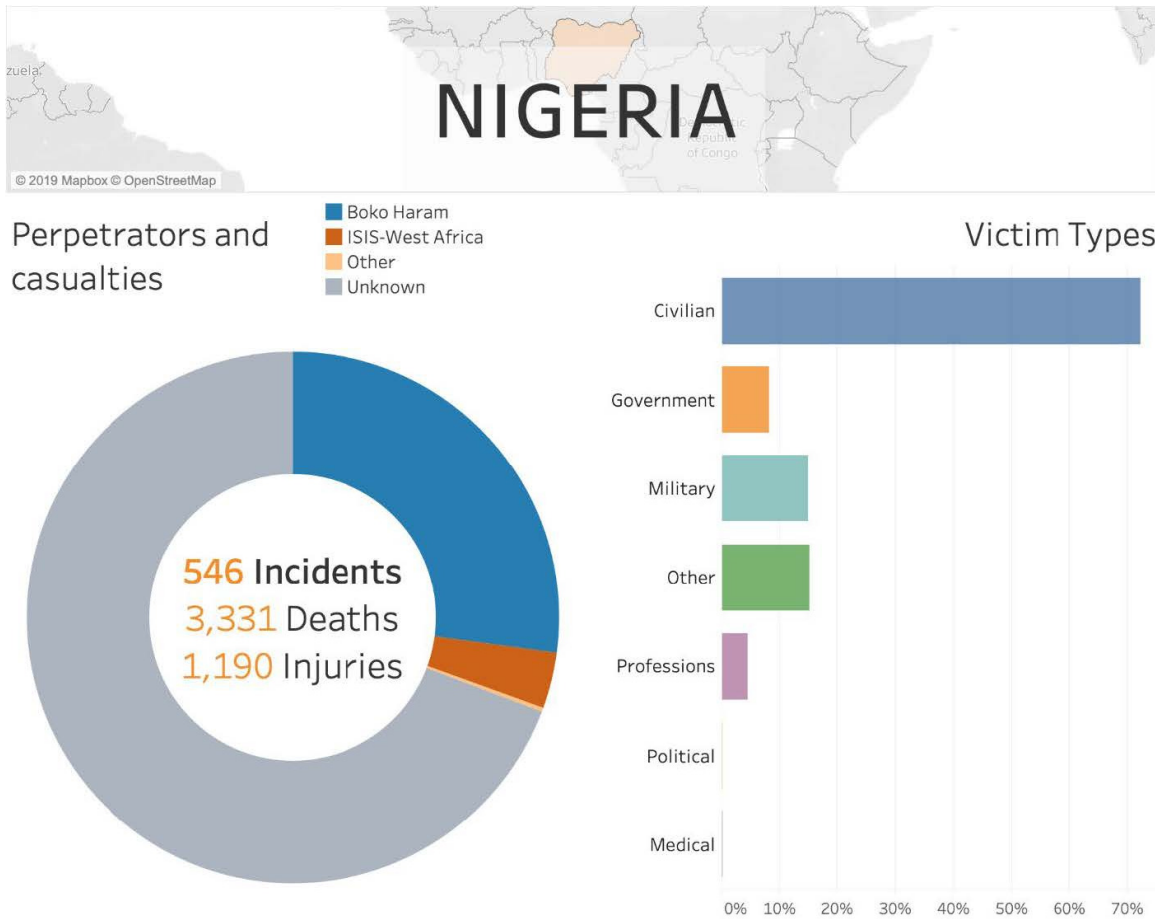
Nigerian Response to Terrorist Attacks:

Abdullahi, 2018) in his assessment of terrorism in Nigeria, highlights the inability of the Nigerian government to apply adequate use of Information and communications technology to combat terrorism. He argued that the 'activities of Boko Haram could be monitored through the collection of data; this could be primary and secondary data, processing of data with modern tools ICT tools like computer software like Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS),

collating the data through different security intelligence units, analyzing the collected data and mobilized resources based on the analyzed data.As corresponded by Alimi(2018), the use of ICT has some application to terrorism, such as Electronic Surveillance: This is one of the key aspects of modern security, in this regard the activities of terrorists are been monitored on a real-life basis and those who are suspected to be security threats. The installation of a closed-circuit camera television(CCTV) and viewing human operations around a geographical area is one of the ways of deploying ICT to security and arrest suspects and their accomplices (Hodson,2016). Odeniyi, &Abdullahi, (2022).Also argued that as far as the terrorist group in Nigeria such as BokoHaram is concerned, their activities could be gotten through the installation of CCTV cameras in strategic places, especially in the Northern parts of the country. This will give security operations a clear view of their deadly acts and make arrests appropriately. The Nigerian military with assistance from a joint Military force consisting of Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger has pushed BokoHaram out of several provinces in northeastern Nigeria, but the group retains control over some villages and pockets of territory and continues to launch deadly suicide attacks and abduct civilians, mostly women and children. (Global Conflict Tracker, 2022)

Plate 4: BokoHaram Activities and apparent low response from the Nigerian Government

Source: U.S Department of State, 2018

This data shows the highest number of casualties of terrorist attacks in Nigeria are the civilian populations, this is likely one of the reasons why for the lackluster response to terrorist attacks. Nigerian government's response to the Terrorist attacks by Bokoharam is similar to the approach it applied in responding to the Maitatsine riots of1980's. This entails the use of security agencies to crack down on group members, the imposition of curfews, and state of emergency declaration in the states ravaged by BokoHaramactivities. (Abdulmalik, 2021). Similarly, the Nigerian state has engaged in various negotiation measures with BokoHaram group which in many cases have proven abortive. The prior deployment of security forces in tackling BokoHaram made partial success in killing some sect members between (2009-2012) and pushed them to local areas where there is no presence of security agencies is minimal. (Abdulmalik, 2021). As a

counterapproach, the group has resorted to guerrilla tactics to make its presence and continued existence is known.

Knoechelmann, (2014), explores in his research, that BokoHaram is misidentified by the government of Nigeria as simply a political terrorist group that disregards its ethnic origin and relation. This misassumption has contributed to a military-only reaction that disregards structural as terror causing factors, hence every year, the Nigerian government keeps increasing the security budget, amid the accelerating activities of terrorists.

Tella (2017), emphasized that the Nigerian Government needs to recognize the need to fight the war of ideas rather than relying solely on counter-terrorism efforts that embrace firepower. She however argues that to diminish the group's appeal to the younger population, the war on ideas is as important as the war on terror (Tella, 2017).The Nigerian government has established legal and policy counter-terrorism measures. For example, in 2011, Nigeria enacted the Terrorism (Prevention) Act (which was later amended in 2013). Orji (2019), this is in addition to several policy enactments that are meant to counter terrorist activities such as the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Nigerian National Security Strategy, and the National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. In 2019, terrorist groups in Nigeria were estimated to have killed over 37,500 people and destroyed properties worth over $5.2 billion, Orji (2019), while forcing the displacement of over 2.5 million people from their homes.
UNO(2018) argues that the deployment of various ICT resources like electronic surveillance will enhance adequate information about all areas of Nigeria (UNO, (2018). He revealed that Aerial surveillance will give the Nigerian security operatives the necessary clues to track terrorists and effect their arrest. However, corruption and embezzlement of security funds have hindered the attainment of these tactics. Opeoluwa(2021) The Nigerian government and its security forces have tried several tactics to get rid of terrorism, however, it has proven tougher than envisaged.

Conclusion

The study found that terrorism is at its highest level presently in Nigeria, and the scores of attacks and deaths have exposed the dire state of Nigerian national security, corruption in the government, and the inability of the government to tackle terrorism in Nigeria. While some scholars argued that terrorism is a political manifestation and uses political tactics, others argued that corruption, failed political systems, frustrations, and marginalization have ignited the upsurge of terrorism. This study further revealed the adverse effects of terrorism on the economy, agriculture, and commercial activities in Nigeria. The study shows that the upsurge in terrorist activities relates to the level of unemployment in the country, which has provided a leeway for terrorist groups to draft jobless youths into their groups. This study exposed the government's inability to apply a digital approach to fighting terrorists, which significantly contributes to the high level of attacks.

Recommendations

Following the analysis and findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Nigerian government must adopt a digital approach to tackle terrorism; the use of military force has yielded no results, and hence more efforts and resources should be put into the use of ICTs in its military operations, especially to access the hideouts of terrorists.

2. The study discovered that corruption is a major factor contributing to the inefficiency of the government in tackling the upsurge of terrorism in Nigeria; hence, if the government could embark on a political cleansing of its agencies, perhaps it could generate a more combined force to repress terrorism in Nigeria.

3. Closer border monitoring and control must be given to critical border areas, especially the Nigerian borders with Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. This could in effect checkmate the kinds of entries to and from the country, and this could further curtail the inflow of terrorists by land and sea.

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