IMPACT OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY ON HUMAN SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The spate of violent attacks by Boko Haram in recent times which has been characterized by the abduction and killing of people; destruction of houses, schools, health care centres, churches, mosques and farms has plunged the country into a chronic state of insecurity. The basics of food, health, shelter, education and protection which constitute security to the human individual primarily, has therefore been threatened by the Boko Haram insurgency. The paper therefore examines the threats of Boko Haram insurgency on human security in Nigeria. Findings reveal that insurgency has claimed a lot of lives and property; compounded the food and nutrition insecurity situation in the country; aided the spread of infectious diseases; denied millions of children and youths access to education; increased the number of internally displaced persons with dire need of shelter and has caused people to live in constant fear and anxiety. This paper concludes that Boko Haram Insurgency has negative impact on human security, and recommends that counter-insurgency will be effective only when issues of poverty, corruption and bad governance are effectively addressed.

KEYWORDS: Boko Haram, Insurgency, Human Security, Violence, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary discussions on Nigeria is almost inevitably replete with issues surrounding insecurity, militancy, insurgency, and terrorism, due to the linkages with economic, social, political and governance activities, with spiralling effects on regional and international relations (Adewumi, 2014). Since 1999, when the country returned to democratic rule, there has been an upsurge in violent activities in Nigeria with Boko Haram insurgency being at the forefront. The Boko Haram sect has become a threat to both internal and international security as their activities have now stretched beyond Nigeria to her neigbours. With consistent violent attacks on security forces, civilians, churches and mosques, farms, media houses, schools as well as international bodies such as the United Nations in 2011, it has further compounded several challenges already faced by the nation particularly in the North east. The Boko Haram insurgency poses a threat to national security, "however, it should noted that the concept of national security, in the post-cold war era, has gone beyond securing lives and properties of the people through the protection of territorial integrity of the state against threats of external aggressors (Adedoyin, 2013:455) to encompass the protecting of citizens from the threats of diseases, hunger, unemployment, violation of human rights, displacements and shelter problems, conflict, political repression and environmental degradation, hence, human security. Boko Haram's violent activities which has intensified in recent times has largely undermined human security. According to Gilbert (2014), since the insurgency began, there has been over 12,000 deaths and 8000 persons maimed. Food insecurity has further worsened as farmers have fled their farms in fear of being attacked especially in the northern region which

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is the country's main food-growing region. Insecurity may also trigger long-term consequences in the region, as Nigeria serves as Africa's largest supplier of staples cereals (USAID, 2014). The health sector has also received its own share as the numbers of injured persons are increasing with little or no facilities to cater for them as well as health workers abandoning their post in fear of being killed. The killings and abduction of school children and college student by the sect has forced the closures of schools indefinitely and the withdrawal of children and wards by parents from schools still operating, therefore denying them access to education. There are inadequate shelters for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) and yet, the number of IDPs is increasing drastically. "Agreed that the North-east is the epicentre of the insurgency but its effects reverberates through the entire country..." (Awortu, 2015:213). It is against this backdrop that this paper examines Boko Haram insurgency and its impacts on human security in Nigeria, with a view to proffering viable counter measures to ending the Boko Haram menace.

Insurgency and Human Security: A Thematic Analysis Insurgency

> "The term insurgency conjures often wild disparate interpretation; suffering at the hands of both experts and pundits". Commonly accepted meanings remain elusive, with predictable conceptual confusion" (Moore, 2007:2).

Scholars and theorist have given diverse definitions of insurgency in which some are closely related and others are not so related, but include common elements and this makes the subject technically difficult. According to Moore (2007), the term insurgency continues to be used interchangeably, and inexactly, with warfares such as irregular warfare, unconventional warfare, revolutionary and even terrorism. He further posits that "the interchangeability of terms is understandable, given the diverse nature and adaptability of those who wage insurgency and the overlapping traits of these types of conflict" (Moore, 2007:2). Probably, insurgency could best be understood by first considering what it is not. Insurgency is not terrorism, subversion,

guerrilla war, conventional war, revolution, coup d'état (Liolio, 2014; Curtas; 2006), although some insurgent groups have adopted some of their methods in the achievement of their goals.

> "However, terrorism has become the main commonly adopted strategy by the insurgents. Terrorism in the modern usage is associated with a certain kind of violent action carried out by individuals and groups rather than by the states and with events which take place in peace time rather than as part of conventional war. As a strategy of insurgency, terrorism involves the adoption of some methods to achieve its goals. These include bombing, guerrilla warfare, kidnapping and abduction" (Hassan, 2014: 10).

This connotes that insurgency often use terrorism to pursue the goals of the political movement because an insurgency is merely a movement- a political effort with a particular objective. In this vein, O'Neil (1990:13) defined insurgency as a "struggle between a non-ruling group and ruling authorities in which the non-ruling group consciously uses political resources and violence to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of one or more aspects of politics. The main objective of insurgency is to challenge the existing government for control; and it requires the active support of some segment of the population;"insurgencies do not happen if the population either supports the government or sees nothing to gain from fighting" (Curtas, 2006:1). Hassan (2014:10) notes that "insurgency still remains a political not a military struggle and therefore not amenable to a purely military solution without resorting to a level of brutality unacceptable to the contemporary global environment".

Human Security
        "Before the end of the cold war, scholars have, for many several generations interpreted and restricted the understanding and meaning of the concept security to the security of the nation-state and not the people" (Danjibo, 2012: 486). The idea of human security started gaining attention in the world politics due to the various reports of many independent international

commissions set up by the United Nations and other regional bodies from 1950s through 1980s, occasioned by the growing dissatisfaction with the existing traditional idea of security. Human security is a vague concept with no specific or universally accepted definition; nonetheless, scholars are undisputed of the fact that it centres around the security of persons first. It is basically an emerging concept which seeks to tackle fundamental issues threatening human beings and to find long-lasting solutions to them as its advocates aver that the referent for security is the individual first, rather than the state**.**

Human security is a concept that has been defined in a broad and a narrow perspective. The broad perspective championed by the 1994 United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP)-Human Development Report defines human security "as freedom from fear and freedom from want". "It also elaborates the two aspects of human security: one, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease, and repression; and two, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life whether in homes, in jobs or in communities" (Adedoyin, 2013: 456). The reports further states that human security comprises of seven components- economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security.

In the narrower perspective championed by the Canadian Government under the Foreign Minister of Canada, Lloyd Axworthy (1996-2000) and the academic community, human security is limited to freedom from fear; that is freedom from violent threats against individual such as death, physical and psychological abuse and abduction.

Characterized by universality, people–centeredness, interdependency and early prevention (Omelewa, 2010; Adedoyin, 2013), Human security's main point reverberates around the vital core of human needs which has to do with the removal of fear and want, and in accordance, (Danjibo, 2013:490) posits that, "as far as most citizens are concerned, the basics of food, shelter, education, health and freedom are all they want". Consequently, this paper adopts the broad perspective of the 1999 UNDP-Human Development Report.

Boko Haram Insurgency: A Brief Exposition

Boko Haram sect is not the foremost major group or militia group Nigeria has had, or has faced before; in the 1970s and 1980s, the Maitatsine Fundamentalist sect from the North came on board; in the West, the Odua People's Congress (OPC); in the East, the Bakassi Boys and the Movement of the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), in the South/Niger Delta, the Militants and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).

Jama'atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda' wati wal Jihad, or "people committed to propagating the Prophets's teachings and Jihad", (Abolurin, 2012:261) was established in 2002 in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state as an Islamic group called Boko Haram. The word 'Boko' (Hausa) means 'book', considered to be Western and Haram (Arabic) means sin or forbidden. Hence, interpretation of Boko Haram in Hausa Language is "western education is sin" (Gilbert, 2014). "In a sense it could be argued that Boko Haram, started as a fundamental Islamic sect that intends to supplant government structures that politicized, corrupted and bastardaized proper implementation of Sharia in the north; and to install Islamic regime where Sharia law will be applied to the letters" (Idowu, 2013:86). But with the thousands of people killed and properties destroyed, their objectives remain largely unknown and hitherto their insurgency has intensified. This massive killings and damage on properties has contradicted what their name stands for, that is opposing anything that was concerned with western education.

Conscription of their members has been encouraged by poverty, unemployment, continuous strikes, cult activities; many youths have left school to join them. Olojo (2013) states that brutal radicalism; enrolment and support for Boko Haram have been significantly driven by economic deprivation. However, while terror activities of OPC, INC, MASSOB, and MEND can be explained within the context of politics and economy, the Boko Haram insurgency is an intricate issue; which can be attributed to political, social, economic, cultural, religious reasons (Idowu, 2013). He further attributed the causes of the Boko Haram insurgency to ethnicity, poverty/inequality, crises of the state, political culture and institution, and foreign influences.

The effects of the insurgency are devastating and far-reaching. Despite the massive loss of lives and properties, it has worsened the economic situation of the country as investors are no longer investing but rather

divesting; it has stopped the transportation and distribution of food; it has sowed the seed of distrust, antagonism and disunity between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria; massive depopulation of the North and overcrowding of the south is evident; damaged the infrastructures of the North that were only remnants. Though the effects are numerous, the focus here is on the basic needs of mans survival (human security).

Impacts of Boko Haram Insurgency on Human Security in Nigeria

The consequences of any act of violence are often despicable and far-reaching. The analysis of the impacts of the insurgency on human security will be based on the broader perspective of human security with particular focus on food and nutrition, health, shelter, education and protection which are the primary needs of every individual.

Food and Nutrition

Boko Haram insurgency has affected agriculture especially in some of the country's main food-growing areas. Yobe, Adamawa and Borno states worst hit by the insurgency are known to produce cowpeas, rice, millet, tomatoes, onions, yams, corns and sorghums, livestock and fish. Farmers are afraid to go to their farms as a result of fear of being attacked. A lecturer in the University of Maiduguri Abba Gambo said, "No one can move a kilometre due to fear, most of them have fled their homes." According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee, more than 1.5 million people, mostly farmers have been forced to flee their homes as Boko Haram intensified its insurgency in the past year. Also, the trade routes between the north east and the south are disrupted, hence making transportation and distribution of food very difficult. The Central Bank of Nigeria stated that the disruptions on food distribution because of the insurgency are among the largest inflationary risks faced by the economy. Eme et al (2014) noted that Boko Haram has stopped the flow of beans. They further noted that two food items, pepper and tomatoes in particular, which mostly comes from the North and are used in most home is in short supply. Consequently, the prices of food have skyrocketed. According to Osagie (2013:24) "A basket of pepper which was sold at the rate of N4000-N5000 (depending on the quality of the

pepper) is now being sold for N8000 including transport charges as well and people who are lucky to get it earn little or no gain after they have been sold in retails."

If these violent attacks by the sect continue, it will plunge the country into a state of chronic food insecurity which is persistent and long-termed. The prices of food will continue to rise making it difficult for individuals and households to purchase sufficient and nutritious food for a healthy life. This will put individuals at the risk of hunger, starvation, malnutrition and even death. Malnutrition rates are high in areas worst hit by the insurgency and conflicts in general. According to the 2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview (2014: 12), "a SMART Survey conducted by the national government and UNICEF in spring 2014 found GAM in Yobe states to be 15.5 percent and 13.6 percent in Borno state. Food and Nutrition insecurity are the fundamental threats to human security and the need to curb this insurgency cannot be overemphasized".

Health

The health of the people is paramount. The World Health Organisation (WHO) Report on Violence and Health launched on October 3rd 2002 *stated* that each year, more than a million lives are lost and many more experience non-fatal injuries as a result of various forms of violence. Boko Haram insurgency has claimed a lot of lives and inflicted injuries on thousands of people. About 75 people died and not less than 215 people were injured on Monday April 14, 2014 when there was a bomb blast in Nyanya District of Abuja Killing (Awortu, 2015). On October 2nd, 2015 there was a twin blast at the Kuje and Nyanya areas of Abuja were scores were left dead and injured as well. The increasing numbers of the injured has led to the overcrowding of health care centres and hospitals with so much pressure on machines leading to their breakdown as well as the health staff working overtime. Briggs (2010: 272) states that;

> *"Studies emanating from the university of Port Harcourt have shown that aside from the physical disability which those who survive violent crimes and warfare sustain, psychiatric disorders are rife and manifest*

commonly as Post Traumatic Stress Disorders as well as other anxiety conditions, hard drugs related ailment, schizophrenia, psychosis, depression and other forms of affective disorders."

This shows that even if the insurgency is curbed, affected persons may still have memories of the violence which will disrupt normal life patterns. Also, the sect has destroyed health care centres and facilities that are needed for proper health of citizens. Health workers themselves who also are targets have fled from their offices. Across the Northeast affected populations are having increasing difficulty in accessing health care services. According to The UN-Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2014), Boko Haram insurgents have attacked numerous health facilities and health workers, meaning that in large areas of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, the health system is barely functioning at all: as of March 2014, only 37% of facilities in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States were functional. In September, 2014, the medical charity Doctors Without Borders treated 4,000 patients after a cholera epidemic broke out in Borno state and as at 16 September 2015, the official count recorded 172 cholera cases with 16 deaths at three camps for persons internally displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency (The Guardian, 16th September 2015).

According to the United States Agency for International Development (2014), an assessment in Chibok community, found that all health facilities had been damaged by armed groups and medical prescription stocks were either inadequate or unavailable in Adamawa. (Cited by the Assessment Capacities Project, 2015). For those that are available, they charge fees, thereby limiting the access for the poor population. There are increasing cases of communicable diseases in the region and among the regions populations displaced into the neighbouring states and countries (Musa, 2015). All these have happened in a region already under-resourced, If this insurgency is not nipped on the bud, health issues will continue with large numbers of people being affected and possible outbreaks of diseases occurring consistently. Access to good health is key in achieving human security.

Shelter

The number of houses that have been destroyed by the Boko Haram insurgency cannot be quantified. This destruction has left millions of people displaced. According to International Organisation on Migration (2015), over 2.1 million were displaced in Nigeria by the Boko Haram insurgency. These internally displaced persons have migrated and now live in host communities and are in dire need of appropriate shelter and in the long-run resettlement. If the Boko Haram insurgency is not tackled, the number of IDPs will continue to increase drastically with problems of shelter and accommodation becoming a critical security issue. The HNO (2014) noted that most internally displaced people are camped in schools, churches and makeshift accommodations which are mostly uncompleted buildings or derelict houses. "Many of the communal and make shifts shelters are overcrowded and unsuitable in terms of water and sanitation facilities, cooking and privacy, especially for women" (HNO, 2014: 11). The human security of the individual is threatened when such situations occur. Cases of theft, rape are often experienced; transmission of communicable diseases is high and most often women are worst affected in such situations.

Education

Boko Haram insurgency has affected greatly the educational sector as the sect has targeted school and colleges with students and teachers injured, killed or abducted and facilities destroyed. According to the HNO (2014:8), "conflict and insecurity have had a direct and compounding negative impact on children's access to education, the availability of educational spaces and materials and the ability of teachers." The National President of the Nigerian Union of Teachers, Micheal Olukoya speaking on teachers day celebrated on the 5th of October 2015 said that 600 teachers have been killed as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency (Pulse.ng, 2015). As at August 2013, over 882 classrooms in Borno State had been damaged and from June to September 2013, all schools were closed in Yobe state (Awortu, 2015). On April 14, 2014, the abduction of over 200 female students at the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok (Hassan, 2014) has discouraged parents from enrolling their children

and wards in schools and those already in schools have been withdrawn. These have all happened in a region that was educationally backwards even before the insurgency and further attacks will further weaken the region and the educational sector generally in the near future with an increased number of school drop outs, illiterates and unemployed youths who will be vulnerable to being recruited as suicide bombers and terrorists. Consequently, Awortu (2015:217) asserts that "when the rate of illiteracy and school dropout is high, there is tendency that violence will increase and persist in Nigeria."

Protection

HNO (2014: 13) states that "an estimated 2.15 million men, women girls and boys are facing physical and psychological trauma related to insurgency". Recent attacks have seen increasing manipulation of children especially females. The Islamists have carried out fatal ambushes across the borders of Nigeria and in many of them women have been used to stage several attacks. There is high prevalence of early child marriages with health and maternal implications. The humanitarian needs for protection of those affected by the insurgency especially IDPs are not often met. In the case of IDPs, HNO (2014) states that staff lack camp management and protection. Counter insurgency has also been characterized with human rights abuses. In a keynote presentation at Nigeria Development and Finance Forum (NDFF) 2014 Conference, Femi Aribisala, former special Adviser to Prof Bolaji Akinyemi as Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria stated that:

> "*The Nigerian has fought against Boko Haram the Nigerian way, attacks on the innocent; illegal searches and torture; extrajudicial killings; wrongful and indefinite detention of suspects without trial; random burning of homes and farms; revenge attacks on the innocent. This is a blueprint for losing the war. As a result, the military has alienated the local population it is sworn to protect, making it difficult to fight the insurgency.*"

The issue here is that security forces whose primary aim is to protect the citizens from the Boko Haram insurgency have failed in their responsibilities. This has created more fear, pandemonium, anxiety and panic as citizens no longer trust them. Protection is a serious human security issue and must not be undermined

CONCLUSION

The main thrust of this paper is to reveal that the Boko Haram insurgency has negative impact on the human security of the Nigerian citizens. It is therefore evident that as Boko Haram insurgency has claimed lots of lives, aggravated the food and nutrition insecurity, further damaged to health and education sector, and has caused general fear and anxiety; an urgent solution is needed. Boko Haram insurgency is therefore a threat to human security in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Hassan (2014) stresses that establishing security for the people is the first step to counterinsurgency; hence, "this goes to show that no nation is secured which does not guarantee the security of its citizens" (Danjibo, 2012:487). In essence,

- The government should ensure that the basic needs of mans survival are met. There is need to invest in the agricultural sector in order to improve food production; build more health care centres which will be fully equipped; education should be free for all at least at primary level and more schools with quality facilities be put in place. There is need to resettle the internally displaced persons with appropriate shelter as well as compensate persons affected by the insurgency. Provide the citizens with adequate protection from internal and external aggressors and to ensure that the security forces bequeathed with such responsibilities do not fall victims of the same crime or engage in the violation of the citizens human rights.
- Every counter measure undertaken by the Government will also only be effective if issues of poverty, corruption and bad governance are addressed transparently.
- Insurgency is a global phenomenon and a global solution cannot be

overemphasized. The government should strengthen their collaboration with the global community in combating the Boko Haram insurgency.

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