

# COUNTER TERRORISM IN YERIMA'S *PARI* AND OSOFISAN'S *MOROUNTODUN*

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## **Abstract**

Globally, terrorism has posed as a bane to human existence and development especially in developing countries where such menace seem abound despite various approaches deployed by security agencies and personnel to counter terrorism. It is no news that Nigeria is bedevilled with various acts of terrorism, especially those threatening the unity and peaceful co-existence of the Nigerian people. Activities of Boko Haram insurgents, armed herdsmen, and Niger Delta militia, among others, have become threats to lives of Nigerians and the nation's economy. It has also resulted to divisions among tribes and ethnic-nationalities in the country. As a result, Nigerian playwrights, having understood the functionality of the art of playwriting in the society, adopt the medium as a tool to express their thoughts, ideas and visions of tackling the hazard. Using analytical method of research, this paper explores how Yerima and Osofisan discussed in the selected plays, *Pari* and *Morountodun* respectively, the menace of terrorism and counter terrorism. Furthermore, the paper interrogates the approaches and platforms suggested by the playwrights to ensure possible subjugation of the plague in Nigeria. The paper concludes that individuals and government should be responsible and responsive to their social obligations to help counter terrorism.

## **Introduction**

Since it has been argued that the nature and events in a society influence its arts, Nigerian playwrights, having understood the functionality of the art of playwriting in the society, adopt the medium as a tool to express their thoughts, ideas and visions for tackling hazard like terrorism in Yerima's *Pari* and Osofisan's *Morountodun*. This brings us to agreement with Obafemi that their works urgently deal with contemporary social problems in Nigeria with the aim of raising mass awareness of a positive alternative for addressing the social decadence (24). Playwrights most times articulate historical, political, cultural,

social and religious issues, and emphasise their position by questioning and proffering probable solution to societal issues.

The contemporary Nigerian playwright bears a mark of ideological commitment and patriotism in his plays. The thematic concerns of his plays invariably reflect the historical and socio-political situations especially that of topical issues like terrorism in Nigeria. It is no news that the country is bedevilled with various acts of terrorism, especially those threatening the unity and peaceful coexistence of the Nigerian people. Activities of Boko Haram insurgents, armed herdsmen, and Niger Delta militia, among others, have become threats to lives of Nigerians and the nation's economy. This menace, therefore, has also resulted to divisions among tribes and ethnic-nationalities in the country. To this end, this paper examines the approaches highlighted by Ahmed Yerima and Femi Osofisan in *Pari* and *Morountodun*, respectively, to help curb, if not contain the menace of terrorism in Nigeria.

### **Terrorism and Counter Terrorism in Nigeria**

Nigeria, right from independence, has been rocked by one form of terrorist attack or the other, but compared to the current trend of terrorist attacks rocking the nation. The damage has been more devastating than that of previous times. Terrorists in Nigeria never openly lay claim to their deeds, but in some cases, like the Independence Day car bomb explosion in 2012, they do. Nigeria and Nigerians have low tolerance level and little or no sympathy for terrorist attacks or terrorism, even when the attack is aimed at the government by an insurgent group. The reason is based on the fact that the victims of such attacks are the masses who also happen to be victims of bad and corrupt leadership, not forgetting the fact that an average Nigerian man or woman loves to live out his or her life to its fullest, no matter how hard the situation of life may be. As a result of this, any terrorist attack that results to loss of life, especially innocent lives, is condemned by Nigerians at all levels. However, some terrorist organisations hide under the guise of religion to unleash terror attacks on the Nigerian populace; an example of such is the Boko Haram group in North Eastern part of the country, which has so far claimed lots of lives and destruction of properties.

Ameh Akoh notes that, "there has been a growing concern over the increasing trends of violent crimes and terrorist activities especially the use of improvised explosive devices by criminal elements" (264). For keen observers and discerning minds, terrorism is predominant and is not a new trend in Nigeria; it is conducted by those that wield the power either legitimate or illegitimate at one time or the other and in different places. Udama argues that acts of terrorism are being carried out at homes, in government and private offices, and on the roads either by government officials or private individuals. Many terrorist acts go unnoticed and the victims suffer and endure in silence without the power to react (105). He adds that, "the preponderance of terrorists' activities in recent times especially in the northern part of the country does not mean that it is limited to that section of the country alone" (106).

Terrorism in Nigeria have come a long way and have been carried out by different individuals, groups, locations and at different times. While some people are the main target of the terrorists, some of the victims are not the main targets but to draw out

attention of others. Most people resort to terrorist attacks when they fail to achieve their goal through dialogue or their inability to win the people's mind over to their cause through verbal persuasion or conviction, or when military victor cannot be attained. Terrorism which has been classified by some social scientist as the "weapon of weakness" is unfortunately what most aggrieved Nigerian people, especially those in politics, resort to in order to win the target populace over to their side. While the key players sit back at home, they employ the services of unemployed youths in the society to unleash terror in its worst form on selected victims. Most terrorist attacks are localised and the immediate victims killed or kidnapped irrespectively of the number involved is of no importance to the terrorists.

Terrorism is almost a part of human condition. Terrorism is a weapon of coercive intimidation designed to make established authority and government to submit to demands. It is often undeclared covert warfare and it has plagued mankind for centuries but today it has moved beyond simple assassinations and bombings. It has multiplied its lethal capabilities many times and is capable of killing thousands of people at a time and threatens the entire nation. The phenomenon of terrorism has become a major concern of the international community and of nations around the world, because of its accelerated frequency and with more brutal methods and tactics, causing far wider casualties and destruction. Terrorism is the aggression practiced by individuals, groups or states oppressing human beings' religion life, money and honour. It includes all forms of fear, hurt, threat, killing without right, banditry and all actions of violence and threatening committed by individuals or collectively aiming to frighten, hurt or risk people's lives. Also it includes environmental damage and destruction of public and private utilities. Ekaterina therefore explains that "terrorism is the form of violence that most closely integrates one-sided violence against civilians with asymmetrical violent confrontation against a stronger opponent, be it a state or a group of states" (5).

Without doubt, terrorism has suddenly become a serious challenge Nigeria has been grappling with. The contemporary Nigeria society is engulfed by terrible acts of terrorism, be it kidnapping by the Niger Delta militants or bomb attacks by members of the Boko Haram sect. These acts of terrorism have seriously caused untold hardship to the Nigerian populace. The haemorrhagic acts of the Boko Haram and Niger Delta militants in Nigeria warrants an exhaustive discourse on terrorism and counter terrorism in Nigeria. Ate points that for the Nigerian nation, the threat of the terrorist activities of Boko Haram has brought to the front-burner issues of core interests of national security in her foreign policy with her immediate neighbours (2). In recent times, in Nigeria, there had been several killings of innocent civilians by the Boko Haram sect, most especially targeted killings of Police and Army security forces and bombing of police stations.

Nigeria is currently experiencing a new wave of violence which is terrorism conducted in different forms, means and places. These includes bombing and killing of persons and targeting certain persons and places such as worship centres, living homes, commercial buildings, telecommunication masts, government installations and infrastructure, kidnapping as well as depriving people of their legitimate entitlements. Udamu supports the fact that, "these terrorist activities are carried out by non-state actors and do not exclude politicians and government functionaries including security agency

that ought to protect lives and properties” (110). It can be argued that the environment in which Nigerians live and their experiences of governance practices could be contributory factors to the emergence of terrorism. It is this that gives groups the initiative to take on the Nigerian State because of its perception as unjust, demeaning to the citizen, without guarantees of individual safety and security and exploitative. There is a widespread disenchantment with the Nigerian State arising from its failure to meet its obligations to the people and the perception that State policies are implemented to advance private interests for personal accumulation.

The new trends of bombing portend danger, even thought was foreseeable, and avoidable. To him, in the history of terrorism, bombing is a grotesque weapon of resentment. And from the view point of terrorists, it remains an effective strategy for invoking lawlessness and bringing any government to its knees. Eburn-Amu argues that unlike robbery and kidnapping, which are directed at individuals, and are intended to surgically extract money/material gains from victims, bombing is directed at a state, and it derives from spite, malice, vindictiveness, and is aimed at causing damage and mayhem (34). The ability of government to deter, defeat and respond decisively to terrorist attacks is one of the most challenging priorities facing nations today. Nigeria is no exception to this situation as terrorism, a hitherto alien phenomenon in Nigeria, recently emerged as the leading national security issue, attracting many and varied comments in contemporary national discourse, terrorist attacks recorded in the country include drive-by-shootings, bombings, use of improved explosive devices (IEDs) as well as suicide attacks. In response, a number of measures, both passive and active, have been instituted by government to defeat this threat.

It has recently become more difficult for governments to defeat insurgencies, as in a more globalised world, cooperation, arms supplies, training and fund-raising are not limited to an insurgency’s particular territory of operation. The Nigerian government has adopted a number of legal measures in the wake of Boko Haram’s terrorist activities, including the 2013 proscription notice, which officially declared the acts of Boko Haram and *Ansaru* illegal and labelled them acts of terrorism. In the short term, countering terrorism within the framework of the law remains a major challenge in Nigeria. However, the situation is likely to improve in the long run in light of several on-going initiatives by governmental and non-governmental organisations to build the capacity of the security and intelligence agencies, although funding remains a major challenge.

### **Exploring Approaches to Counter Terrorism in Ahmed Yerima’s *Pari***

Written in 2016, the play presents a dramatic account of one of the dreadful acts of Boko Haram insurgents specifically in Chibok, North-East, Nigeria, where over two hundred (200) school girls were abducted in April 2014. Through a family, comprising Tada, Ama, and Hyelapari (the victim), Yerima explores and comments on the menace of terrorism in Nigeria. He uses these characters, and later Ibrahim (a member of the insurgent) to capture the participation of individuals, community, government, and even religion in the inhumane act. According to Yerima:

*Pari* investigates the Northern Nigeria crises from the prism of a family thrown into despair by the loss of their only daughter. In simplified language and engaging dialogue, the play examines the complicity of religion, government and individuals in the Boko Haram menace in a way that tugs at heartstring (Blurb of *Pari*).

Apparently, Yerima believes that various attacks from the killer group are instigated and corroborated by the aforementioned social forces. Although he never emphatically claims they have conscious relationship with them, he observes that they carelessly provide them with the platforms to exhibit their horrendous projects. It is therefore imperative to explore Yerima's exemplification of the complicity of the significant social components on the subject matter, as this will make us understand his ideology and submission on how to restrain and conquer the Boko Haram insurgents.

Yerima indicts the Nigeria government of neglecting her responsibility of protecting lives and properties of the citizens by questioning their lackadaisical attitude towards provision of adequate and reliable security in the country. He argues that the attitude towards this crucial duty provides the terrorist group with the gateway to perpetrating their awful acts. This position is best captured by Ama, while expressing her displeasure on the level of insecurity in the government owned school where her daughter, Hyelapari was abducted:

**Ama:** ... I never liked that cheap school, you know? But for my husband, it was cheap enough for his pocket. I wanted my only child to go to one of those schools where there is so much security even the angels of God would struggle to enter. Not that cheap school with dark environment, so that dark gun-tottering souls can just drive in trucks in the darkness of the night where children fall prey to them as animals... forcing them into slavery. This country is dying... gradually, through corruption everywhere. I tell you someone is benefitting from this madness (31).

Apart from insecurity, Ama's voice is used to highlight some inadequacies of the Nigerian government such inadequate power supply and conspiracy of some government officials on the issue. Ama believes government is not responsive to the cause and as such, she becomes hostile in her conversation with Kalagu: a local government chairman, who brings with him, the abducted child:

**Kalagu:** I want to see the mother of this house. We received a paper from Chibok Local Government that your daughter, Hyelapari Shettima was one of the girls kidnapped from the Government Girl Secondary School, Chibok on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, 2014. Is it true? (*Ama does not answer.*) Please, answer Madam (29).

**Ama:** I am tired of answering these same questions every time. For two years now, your men have asked me the same questions. I am beginning to feel that you are thinking that our cries are for nothing (30).

Ama seizes the meeting to register her disgust towards the delayed government intervention on the abduction, thereby creating the platform for government officials, individuals and groups to redirect rescue efforts into money making enterprise. She bitterly explains this after accepting Kalagu's plea for her identity and relationship with Hyelapari:

**Ama:** Our daughter whose name you just mentioned has been missing for two years. And government has done nothing. The last local government chairman was useless to our cause. He played with our matter until he was removed disgracefully from office. His wife was a bigger clown. She invited us, including the teachers, in order to share blood money to us. How much is my daughter worth? We hear that even some, who do not know how we feel, who have never stepped one foot here, afraid of being kidnapped, go all over the world, taking photographs and begging for money in the name of our daughters (30).

The character makes us realise the complex nature of corruption in Nigeria through the practice of some citizens who exploit such horrible event to perpetrate their unholy acts. Corruption without doubt, is a bane to our development as a nation. However, it is a microscopic representation of other social problems such as unemployment and poverty, which are undoubtedly and equally serving as veritable platforms for the Boko Haram insurgent to recruit innocent citizens into the group. Yerima explains this aspect using the character of an escapee terrorist, Ibrahim, who recounts what informed his membership of the group to Tada and Ama:

**Ibrahim:** It all started the night my mother was buried. I regretted her death more. I blamed myself for her death because it wasn't I was away when she died. I was there... useless... but I was just a dead person there. She needed food and medicine... and none was within my reach ... so I watched her ... with tear-filled eyes, I watched life ebb out of her veins... then eyes closed... her heart stop beating... and she was gone.... I could not cry and I did not even try. Even if I had, there would be no tears. My friends, Zaki and Yakubu had begged me to join them.

**Tada:** Join who?

**Ibrahim:** The Jihad. The Sunna Lidda' Awah Wal-Jihad

**Tada:** Boko Haram?

**Ama:** Who?

**Ibrahim:** Yes. Young men living in hopelessness, angry at nothing in particular, all smoking and drinking, then we were thoroughly soaked in everything and the talk started. They sounded so wise... so profound. At the end of the day, between the women and drinks, talks and dreams, I felt I could do something. What it was, I did not even know. All I knew was that I was angry at everything.

**Tada:** Sad indeed. What about options? You could have refused to join.

**Ibrahim:** What options? The poor and the forgotten do not have much option. You either die poor or you live poor (46).

Having realised the prevalence of high poverty rate in the country specifically in the northern part of Nigeria where they operate, members of the insurgent exploit the situation to cajole hungry, angry and helpless innocent youths into their group. Ibrahim's case is just a fraction of several cases of such. The region according to statistics has the highest poverty rate compare to other regions in the country. This cannot be dissociated from the uncontrolled growing population and limited resources from state governments and parents to cater for the basic needs of the youths and their children respectively. As a result, parents send their male children to Islamic school and neglect them, expecting them to fend for themselves.

The playwright, Ahmed Yerima created reliable voices through Ama and Ibrahim. The former represents the victim while the latter belongs to the abductors or insurgent. He uses these characters to extrapolate politics of government, individuals, and religion in the uprising. Yerima however projects and emphasises religion as the major cause of the terror. He implicitly posits that religion could be used to counter or thwart terrorism. This can be seen in the opening and the closing scenes of the play. In the introductory scene Yerima presents us with his voice, Ama, who becomes a Muslim convert after her daughter's abduction by the Boko Haram insurgents. Just like the identity given to them by media reports, the playwright portrays the terrorists as Muslims who are propagating the cause of Islam. Ama affirms this when Tada questions her faith having started praying as a Muslim: "This must be madness... speaking in their forceful tongue, with their harmful mind" (8). Ama responds thus:

**Ama:** All I know is that the dreaded village masquerade of Mbalala dances to the sound of the drums his followers play. From now on I swear by Allah, this is what I want to do. I believe it is the right thing to do. If you take what is mine forcefully, and claim that is right in the sight of a god... your god... and you get away with it, then I want to know why? I want to know what language your god understands (9).

This voice gives us further insight into the sentiment shared by Ahmed Yerima about religious colouration of the identity of the Boko Haram group. Ama tells us more that she is unperturbed with using "the language of the angered... the language of those who took her" (14) to pray for the return of her daughter. She continues:

**Ama:** There must be a God out there. Their God. He must be alive and well. He must...because he must have been, when he guided them to where they took those girls. So, I figured it out. I just need to find a way to talk to Him. Reach Him; speak His language like they do. Wear His hijab like their women do. Beg Him...kneel before Him, grovel if I have to and by whatever other means they used when they broke into the Chibok school (14).

From the foregoing, the playwright apparently shares the sentiment of indicting religions in the unholy act, despite the fact that reports have it that the terrorist group kill and abduct without considering any religious affiliation. This is to say it will be wrong and unjustifiable, if not defaming that the group represent any religion specifically Islam as mentioned by the playwright's mouth piece, Ama that, "I became a Muslim like the abductors of my daughter" (24). Again, in the closing scene, Yerima embraces religion as a measure to curtail possible chaos that may arise in the process of conveying Ibrahim from Askirau-Uba to Darak. Through Ama, the playwright plays politics of religion making Ibrahim a Christian convert. He clearly confirms his preference for Christianity as Ama calls Ibrahim and proclaims that he must "change his faith to find salvation" (66).

Although, Tada is shocked with the pronouncement, yet, he does nothing to stop the process. In fact, Ibrahim, who is projected as an extremist equally succumb too easily to the proclamation and becomes Abraham, having made to realise that he can only 'live', if such change occurs. This is captured thus:

**Ama:** Good, so listen well, this time your life depends on it. Recite the Lord's Prayer which I taught you yesterday.

**Ibrahim:** What?

**Ama:** The Christian *Fatiha*

**Ibrahim:** Our father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. thy kingdom come...

**Ama:** Very good. Indeed you learn fast.

**Ibrahim:** Mother, will your God save me?

**Ama:** I don't know. But if He brought you this far, I suppose He has a purpose you. He also likes to save lost souls. Here, you can keep my small Bible. Now you are a Christian (67).

The above dialogue projects that Yerima's shares religious sentiment in giving his narrative of the event at Chibok. He reveals this through Ama, whom we empathise with because of her experience with the insurgents but suddenly begins to create opposing identities for the two major religions in the country. The playwright projects Christianity as a pathway to salvation while he ridicules or condemns Islam by identifying it with the Boko Haram terrorists. The identity representations however dissociate us from the implied author whom he created to render his voice on the causes and possible ways to subjugating terrorism because events have shown that victims of the insurgent are not solely Christian faithful. This implies that the playwright should not pretend that Muslims are never victims of the terrorist acts thereby making the insurgency appear as religious war.

### **Exploring Approaches to Counter Terrorism in Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun***

Morountodun, literally means, 'I have found a sweet thing' revolves around the legend of Moremi of Ile-Ife. The play dramatises the Agbekoya peasant uprising in the then Western Nigeria in 1969. In the play, Osofisan recreates the Moremi myth of struggle and injustice in order to meet the contemporary need of the Nigerian society; peasants struggle, therefore, is the main conflict of the play. This conflict is between a peasant



community in revolt against an oppressive state authority. The peasants are fighting to surmount the forces of exploitation and injustice perpetuated on them by this ruling class. This conflict is causing a serious concern for the authority which finds it increasingly difficult to contend. Osofisan has recreated the myth of Moremi in this play to portray how such cultural heritage could be employed to serve contemporary social need. The play opens in a rather non-formal *rehearsal* setting in the “Dressing area” with “a flurry of activity: actors making up, trying costumes, reading script, rehearsing gestures, miming some of the actions in the play. Director then emerges to give a resume of the play, which is about the Agbekoya uprising, in which ordinary farmers rose up and confronted the state.

However, before the play really starts, Titubi, the ‘spoilt’ daughter of Alhaja Kabirat (the head of the market women) storms into the theatre with her group to disrupt it. The activities of the theatre group in portraying the predatory nature of the bourgeoisie class, which her mother represents, might have become a big threat. She is arrested in the process by Superintendent Salami, symbolising the repressive state apparatus, who challenges her on putting up a showdown on the peasant revolt currently raging in the area against her class instead of proving her gallantry in the theatre and seeking to destroy it. He succeeds in convincing her on the need to crush the rebellion, and wins her alliance. Thus, she decides to collude with the police by serving as a decoy to infiltrate the peasants’ territory to trap their seeming intractable leader. What turns out as Osofisan’s recreation of the ancient Yoruba mythology by invoking the myth of Moremi, as he links Titubi with the legendary Queen of Ile-Ife who risked her life to save her people from the menace of Igbo by serving also as a decoy. The ploy is to have Titubi put into prison where she will be freed by the rebelling farmers when they attack the prison to release their members who are captured by the government forces. Titubi sets upon this ‘heroic’ mission. The rebelling farmers eventually attack the prison and free her with their captured members. She follows them to their camp, settles and interacts with them, only to discover to her disgust their plights for taking up ‘arms’ against the state. Rather than betraying the farmers as planned she veers and subscribes to their cause and identifies and joins forces with them, “committing class suicide” and becomes rechristened as Morountodun, meaning, “I have found a sweet thing”, and transfigures into a spokes-woman for the oppressed.

Stressing on the character of Titubi, Osofisan projects a courageous woman whose love for her community knows no bound as she voluntarily submits herself to embark on a dangerous quest to help forestall peace by acting as a decoy in order to help bring the rebellious militias to book. This is enshrined in the following conversation.

**Titubi:** Salami! (**Superintendent** stops, without turning round.) Salami, suppose I do volunteer?

**Superintendent:** (*Turns now.*) What?

**Titubi:** I said, suppose I offer to fight the peasants?

**Superintendent:** You are not finished with your pranks for tonight?

**Titubi:** It’s their leader you have not been able to capture, isn’t it? That’s why the war drags on?

**Superintendent:** Well-

**Titubi:** (*Hard.*) Yes or no?

**Superintendent:** Well, yes.... And no. Their leader proves elusive, but-

**Titubi:** But?

**Superintendent:** He may not really exist.

**Titubi:** He may not exist! A phantom leader!

**Superintendent:** I mean... there may not be just one leader, maybe a group of Leaders....

**Titubi:** But someone leads that group?

**Superintendent:** Actually...

**Titubi:** You are a liar, Salami. You know he exists. And you know his name. You admitted it in your interview with the press last week.

**Superintendent:** Okay, so I admitted it. They call him Marshall.

**Titubi:** I can bring him to you (14-15).

This portrays the strong will of women in contributing to tackling acts of terrorism bedevilling the society. As such, people who are strong-willed in embarking on such quests should be given a chance to deliver to the society in their own capacity towards engendering counter-terrorism in a conflict inflicted society. The play also captures the heroism of women in tackling terrorism, as Titubi stands her ground to be used as a decoy to bring down the rebels. This is revealed in the lines below.

**Titubi:** Give me two weeks. Give me only two weeks.

**Superintendent:** This is a dream? (*Rubbing his eyes.*)

**Titubi:** Two weeks. And I will bring him here, on his knees.

**Superintendent:** (*After a pause.*) What do you want?

**Titubi:** Can you arrange for me to be captured?

**Superintendent:** What!

**Titubi:** That's all the help I will require from you. (15)

Again, this shows Titubi's readiness to help combat terrorism. This is likened to the assistance rendered by community members through divulging information about terrorist group hideout and operation to security agencies and personnel as well as willingness to partake in condoning terrorist activities. Such act of bravery has enhanced the fight against terrorism the society. Furthermore, in the play, Titubi is arrested in the process by Superintendent Salami, depicting the suppressive state apparatus, who dares her to put up a confrontation on the peasant revolt, rather than demonstrating her thoughtfulness in the theatre and seeking to destroy it. This is captured in the following lines.

**Superintendent:** (*After a pause.*) All right, girl. I am going to call your bluff. An idea has just struck me. Follow me... to prison.

**Titubi:** Prison?

**Superintendent:** Yes! That's where it is all going to begin. Come, I will explain it all to you. (*The Superintendent leads Titubi into the cell followed by the warder.*) You Understand?.

**Titubi:** Yes. I will wait (16).

The above reveals a strategy to have Titubi put into prison where she will be freed by the rebelling farmers when they attack the prison to release their members who are captured by the government forces. The rebelling farmers eventually attack the prison and free her with their captured members. She follows them to their camp, settles and interacts with them, only to discover to her disgust their plights for taking up 'arms' against the state. This demonstrates how security personnel can work with volunteers to help tackle terrorism, especially with ones that are much familiar with the embattled terrain. It further aids in deciphering adequate information with regards to the motive behind terrorists agitations and mode of operations in the society. Furthermore, Titubi soon became curious as she discovered the anguish that fuelled the rebels struggle. The following lines project her lamentation.

**Titubi:** That was when I began to ask questions. I saw myself growing up, knowing no such sufferings as these. With always so much to eat, even servants feed their dogs.... Yet here, farmers cannot eat their own products, for they need the money from the market. They raise chickens, but must be content with wind in their stomach. And then, when they return weary from the market, the tax master is waiting, with his bill.... It could not be just.... In our house, mama, we wake to the chorus of jingling coins. And when we sleep, coiled springs, soft foams and felt receive our bodies gently. But, I have lived in the forest among simple folk, sharing their pain and anguish (66).

The above lines connotes that some acts of terrorism are product of class struggle and dominance of the ruling class over the poor or less privileged. Titubi's presence in the rebel's camp is a strategy that can help tease out vital information to security agencies about terrorists motives if deployed to counter terrorism. More so, Osofisan's advocacy for collectivism in this social revolution is signified in Titubi's handing over the gun to Marshal with the optimism of forming a new coalition for the progress of the masses for which cause they are fighting. The following lines reveal thus:

**Titubi:** (*Laughs, but shrilly: she's overstretched.*) Mama, our life itself is not important. Nor all these glittering tinsels we use to decorate it.... Ask your friend Salami. He knows the truth now. In another week, he will be asking to negotiate. He won't be in such a hurry to order the massacre of children... for there is no way you can win a war against a people whose cause is just. As long ... (*She's beginning to falter now.*) ... as ... long as the law remains ... the privilege of a handful of powerful men ... ah, I

am tired ... Marshal! ... you didn't believe me, did you? You never believed I was sincere?

**Marshal:** Titu, I ....

**Titubi:** Take the gun. (*She hands it over to him.*) Let a new life begin (70).

We can deduce from the above that Titubi who served herself as a bait to bring down the rebels became convinced that the government cannot win a war against a people whose cause is just. Hence, there is need to apply wisdom in handling such critical cases of terrorism. At the end, Osofisan favours a compromise agreement, a round table negotiation between the revolting farmers and the government. Thus, negotiation is perceived as another means to combat terrorism especially when the terrorist activities are getting out of hand.

### **Conclusion**

In this discourse, we examined Ahmed Yerima's *Pari* and Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun* as a panacea for thwarting terrorism, especially in reference to the wave of activities of the terrorism orchestrated by terrorist groups such as Boko Haram group in Nigeria. In the play texts, both playwrights explore the complicity of government and individuals on the menace of terrorism, which we believe is apt to understanding how same approach can be deployed to counter terrorism in the country. Issues of insecurity, corruption, unemployment, poverty, greed, infidelity and others are emphasised as foundations and factors responsible for the terror acts. Obviously, government and individuals are major culprits in this regard as we have examined in the paper. We, however, observed that if adequate measures are taken by the concerned parties towards curbing the identified social maladies and administrative ineptitude, there will be a breakthrough in containing the insurgency.

However, the paper disagrees with Yerima's claim of religious compromise in the Boko Haram menace. We believe that this position is an assumption that cannot be proven beyond reasonable doubt, as experienced in the play. Rather than making logical exemplification of his claimed complicity of religion, what we experience is just a hypothesis which to us is an ideological representation of religions. On this note, this paper concludes that individuals and government need to be more responsible and responsive to their respective social obligations in order to counter and contain terrorism.

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