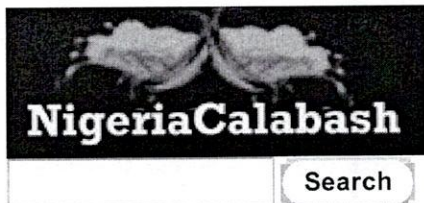


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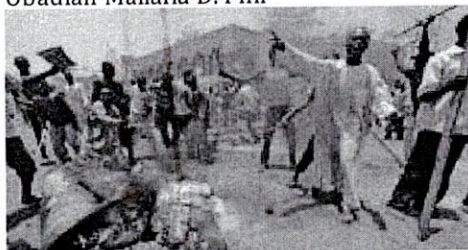
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## CONFLICT AND INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA

Tue, 09/25/2012 - 17:20 -- publisher

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With a population of 165 million, Nigeria is Africa's largest country in terms of demographic size. With a GDP of US\$415 billion, it is the second largest economy after South Africa. Nigeria holds the record for being the largest oil producer on the continent and the sixth in OPEC. The country is well endowed with petroleum, gas and yet-untapped mineral resources. Its agricultural potentials are considerable, although the country remains a net importer of food. Over the last decade growth has averaged 7.4% and is projected to be 6.9% by year's end 2012

CONFLICT AND INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA

IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

AND NATIONHOOD

• **By Obadiah Mailafia D. Phil**

### Introduction

With a population of 165 million, Nigeria is Africa's largest country in terms of demographic size. With a GDP of US\$415 billion, it is the second largest economy after South Africa. Nigeria holds the record for being the largest oil producer on the continent and the sixth in OPEC. The country is well endowed with petroleum, gas and yet-untapped mineral resources. Its agricultural potentials are considerable, although the country remains a net importer of food. Over the last decade growth has averaged 7.4% and is projected to be 6.9% by year's end 2012.[1]

Nigeria remains a paradox, if not an enigma, to many observers. A country of energetic and highly entrepreneurial peoples and with an embarrassment of natural riches, the bulk of the population remain impoverished. Although per capita income has improved in recent years to about US\$2,500 (in PPP terms), more than 60% of the people live below the poverty line while income inequalities are also widening, with an estimated gini coefficient of 43.7 percent. Unemployment stands at a national average of 24%, with an estimated 54% of the youth population without jobs. A recent World Bank study depicts the country's

development trajectory in terms of 'jobless growth'. [2] Massive revenues from oil earnings have gone into consumption and recurrent expenditure, with little left to finance the yawning gaps in physical infrastructures. Corruption is widespread in public life while capital flight is an endemic feature of the political economy. As a result, the vast majority have no access to electricity, water and basic social services. Life-expectancy stands at 51 years, which is well below the average for sub-Saharan Africa.

After decades of military rule, the country returned to democratic rule in 1999. The writer Fareed Zakaria's concept of 'illiberal democracy' [3] perhaps best describes Nigeria's current governance situation, where the culture of impunity reigns supreme and the rule of law and constitutionalism remain very much work in progress. Nigeria is an ethnically diverse country, with some of the most ancient civilisations known to man. In the context of widening inequalities, joblessness and poverty, it is inevitable that social tensions -- most of which are exploited by politicians -- will tend to find expression in ethno-religious conflict.

This paper discusses the nature, origins and impact of terrorist insurgency in Nigeria. We situate this phenomenon not only in the context of globalisation but also in poor governance and the failure to devise effective policies to meet the country's daunting challenges. [4] The presentation is in four main parts. Part one addresses the issue of definition and conceptualisation of terrorism as a social phenomenon. The second discusses the global context for the proliferation of terrorist violence. In the third section we analyse the incidence of ethno-sectarian conflict in Nigeria which provides the context for the rise of the Boko Haram insurgency. The fourth part discusses the economic and social consequences of terrorism. We then provide a general summary and conclusion.

## 1. Theoretical and Conceptual Considerations

The analytical approach of this paper is premised on the theory of social constructivism. According to this approach, it is not only empirical reality that determines social outcomes; differences arising from conflicting construction of worldviews, ideas, identities and historical experiences are influential in shaping the structure of politics and public policy. Constructivist epistemology goes as far back as the renaissance scholar Giambattista Vico, Immanuel Kant, Max Weber and the philosopher John Dewey. According to this approach, human consciousness is shaped by the shared meanings that shape the worldviews of a people and the meanings they give to events and symbols. Reality is thus shaped less by truth than by conditioned learning and received tradition. In the field of International Relations, one of the eminent theorists in this tradition is Alexander Wendt. [5] Socially constructed interpretations of national challenges shape how different segments of society perceive issues and what solutions they proffer. In the words of Kalu and Oguntoyinbo, "perceptual differences in terms of relative political and socio-economic issues generate disparate and competing templates for finding solutions to national problems. When one premises these differences on fundamental ideological and cultural foundations, they oftentimes become irreconcilable and hence less amenable to long lasting and durable solutions". [6]

From the viewpoint of social constructivism, the idea of a universal Muslim *Ummah*, the political categories known as 'The North' or 'The Middle Belt' are socially constructed concepts. While remaining conceptual myths, their potency as idea and rallying banner cannot be under-estimated. Part of the contestations shaping the structure of politics in contemporary have to do with the force of these constructed. Solving them will require returning to the fundamentals of nationhood and reinventing the grammar and syntax of political discourse.

From the viewpoint of social constructivism, the idea of a universal Muslim *Ummah*, the political categories known as 'The North' or 'The Middle Belt', to give a few examples, are socially constructed concepts. While remaining conceptual myths, their potency as idea and rallying banner cannot be under-estimated. The contestations shaping the structure of politics in contemporary Nigeria have to do in part with the constructed concepts and symbols of ethnicity, religion and community. Addressing them will require returning to the fundamentals of nationhood and reinventing the grammar and syntax of political discourse.

### Defining Terrorism

Terrorism is a rather emotional topic. Not only do people differ on questions of conceptual definition; they also disagree on interpretation of facts in specific cases of terrorist activity. The American leftist intellectual, Noam Chomsky, points out two different and conflicting approaches to the study of terrorism. One is the literal approach and the other is the propagandistic approach. While the one seeks a rational-scientific understanding of terrorism as a social phenomenon with specific empirical causal factors which lead to particular societal impact, the latter prefers to view terrorism as "a weapon to be exploited in the service of some system of power". [7] While the scientific approach is interested in finding lasting remedies, the propagandistic is more interested in labelling and demonising for the sole purpose of deploying hegemonic military power to score strategic advantage over perceived enemies.

We have to take on board the caution by the late Charles Tilly, a social scientist of the highest integrity, who pointed out that terrorism as a social phenomenon surfaces in a wide variety of cultures, institutions and political forces; and that it is certainly not a preserve of Muslims as the American neo-conservatives would have us believe. Indeed, the governments of world powers and developing countries have also practised some form of terrorism or other, not to talk of a whole brigade of environmentalists, liberation fighters and anarchists. According to Tilly, "Terrorists range across a wide spectrum of organisations, circumstances and beliefs. Terrorism is not a single coherent phenomenon. No social scientist can speak responsibly as though it were." [8]

Terrorism is not just a Nigerian problem; it is a global problem. Nor is it an exclusively Islamic problem. Extremists are to be found in all religions. Our central thesis is that the increasing salience of Islamist terror may be explained by the unique experiences of Arab-Muslim societies and how religion has often been deployed as a weapon of political struggle. Globalisation and the technologies associated with the increasing internationalisation of production, capital and markets has facilitated the capacity of terror groups to mobilise, network and implement their violent projects across nations and communities.

Curiously enough, nobody has ever been known to describe himself or herself as a terrorist. Terrorism is a rather value-

loaded term that people often use to describe those who are pursuing goals or deploying methods that they do not agree with. It can even be a term of abuse. Equally problematic is the fact that it is often deployed as a political term to categorise people or countries that have been already identified to be enemies.[9] A major challenge in seeking to understand terrorism is the fact that perspectives differ, depending on where we stand on a particular issue. The well-worn cliché that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" rings as true today as when it was first used in terrorism discourse. For example, both Ronald Reagan in America and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in Britain dismissed the imprisoned Nelson Mandela and his colleagues as "terrorists". To their own people and to most Africans, however, they were 'freedom fighters'; heroes of a historic struggle for liberation against Apartheid and racial humiliation.

Given these complexities, it is not surprising that there are probably as many definitions of terrorism as there are organisations and governments working to counter the menace.[10] Several definitions have been on offer, most of them expressing nuances and perspectives deriving from the type of agency in question or the historical experiences of the government proffering the definition.

According to the United States Department of Defence, terrorism is "the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological". Inherent in this definition are the three key elements of *violence*, *fear*, and *intimidation*. All three elements coalesce in instigating terror in the victims or those at the receiving end. The American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), on its part, defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of force and 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". The U.S. State Department, on the other hand, understands it as the deployment of "premeditated politically-motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience".

The British Government, as far back as 1974, officially defined terrorism as "the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public, or any section of the public, in fear". [11]

The African Union (AU) Convention on Prevention and Combating Terrorism 1994 defines terrorism as "any act which is a violation of the criminal law which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to: (a) intimidate, put in fear, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint or to act according to certain principles; or (b) disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or (c) create general insurrection in a State.[12]

Perhaps the 1992 definition by the United Nations could be regarded as being the more authoritative and more definitive one, given its universal appeal. The UN defines terrorism as an "anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets." [13]

For our purpose, therefore, we understand terrorism to mean all forms of violent action by clandestine and semi-clandestine actors aimed at achieving criminal, military, religious, political or other objectives, with such actions often directed at government and non-combatant populations with the deliberate objective of spreading fear, anxiety and terror.

### Box 1: Terrorism in the Sahel Region

Following the fall of the Libyan capital of Tripoli in early September, it was discovered that a gigantic cache of advanced anti-aircraft rockets were missing from a raided storage space in Tripoli. Among the missing weapons are the most advanced Russian surface-to-air missile, the SA-24, and an earlier version called the SA-7. Highly accurate, the heat-seeking weapons are easily launched from a shoulder or a truck bed and are able to take down low-flying aircraft. This confirms fears that the Gaddafi regime's weapons had been smuggled into neighbouring Niger, Mali or Mauritania by al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the terrorist network's quickly growing arm in the Sahel, a region that has become an ungoverned haven for militant activity. Long seen as a fringe branch of the global terrorist operation, AQIM can no longer be viewed as merely a local menace. This problem isn't local," says one analyst of terrorism in the Sahel. "We're going to see AQIM become more assertive, taking over entire areas and consolidating its presence. And we'll see more armed actions against the Mauritians, Algerians, Mali and Niger."

A jumble of weak governance, rampant drug smuggling and deep-seated economic frustration, the region has long been a powder keg waiting for this kind of match -- and it's easy to see how the region's vast deserts and rugged, remote mountains, which have allowed AQIM to fuel its own steady growth, could provide shelter to even the most hunted man on the planet. For the past few years, the group has used hefty ransoms from the kidnapping of Westerners to build its nest egg and has focused on ingratiating itself financially with rural tribes who feel marginalized by their governments. On the streets of Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, a storekeeper said he was so poor that he would welcome Gaddafi "or anyone else who will give me money." Though the exact figure of AQIM's wealth is unknown, an average ransom runs in the millions. Last month, the group negotiated the release of two Spanish hostages for roughly \$10 million.

The region "provides al Qaeda the optimum conditions it has traditionally sought — weak states, vast areas outside the purview of the government and disaffected ethnic groups," says Barak Barfi, a New America Foundation fellow based in Libya. "It should come as no surprise AQIM has established bases in the area." Paul

Melly, an analyst at the London-based think tank Chatham House who specializes in West Africa, says the group "has been able to operate with relative ease in the central Sahara," physically difficult for small, poorly equipped national armies to control. To squash AQIM would be a formidable task, even for stronger armies. The group's dominance in the region extends from its control of drug-smuggling routes across the Libyan border and throughout the region — which could potentially have been used to smuggle rockets too — and alliances with dangerous local terrorist organizations like Nigeria's radical Islamist sect, Boko Haram, whose operatives train with AQIM in the Mali mountains.

Source: Time, Washington DC, 12 September, 2011.

## 1. Global Proliferation of Terror

The resurgence of radical political Islam has been one of the key features of the African scene in recent times. In East Africa, it has been suggested that discrimination against Muslims during the colonial era and after has been a key factor in the radicalisation of Muslim groups.[14] Equally crucial has been Saudi-sponsored Wahabbism in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere. Among the predominant Muslim nations of Africa, Senegal stands out by its unique blend of Islam and modernity and the spirit of tolerance which defines the national culture. This is so despite the prevalence of social and religious conservatism and the widespread influence of the *mourides* in social and political life.[15] Since the 1998 bombing of US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam by Al-Qaeda, there appears to be an exponential growth in the spate of terrorist attacks, including the kidnapping and killing of Western aid workers. Since the 1990s, the collapse of Somalia has spurred an army of pirates and lawless gangsters who have become a menace to their neighbours and merchant vessels on the Red Sea.

It is evident that the American military campaign in Afghanistan may have succeeded in breaking the back of the Taliban and their al-Qaeda comrades. As a consequence they may be turning to Africa. There is evidence that Al-Qaeda has taken a strategic decision to re-locate to Africa as a safe haven for its global operations. The Taliban, al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Shabab from Somalia have joined forces with Tuareg insurgents and drug barons, taking over vast territories in the Sahara desert (see Box 1). It has been suggested that fleeing mercenaries from Libya may have also brought with them substantial weapons which could supplement what the Sahelian terrorists already possess.

The crisis which broke out in Mali in April 2012, whereby the northern part of the country around Timbuktu was taken over by Islamists is the latest in this unfolding drama. It has been reported that the al-Qaeda, in connivance with Latin American drug lords, have taken islands off the coast of Guinea Bissau. They have turned them into centres where private planes bring in drugs, dollars and arms. Former US Ambassador to Nigeria, Princeton Lyman, has noted that Africa's "combination of relatively weak states, ethnic and religious diversity...its poverty, and in many places, its ungoverned space"[16]

At the heart of contemporary terrorism is globalisation and how it impacts national systems, cultures and faith-communities.[17] By globalisation, we are referring to the internationalisation of production, markets and capital and the virtual emergence of a single global marketplace. It also entails the trans-border diffusion of knowledge and information through new technologies such as the worldwide web, the Internet and mobile telephony. There are good as well as bad aspects to globalisation.

Most economists would agree that globalisation has brought with it several positive fallouts in terms of improved international trade and investments; providing an impetus to growth and enhanced global welfare. Indeed, the emergence of new economic powers such as China, India and Brazil would not have been possible without the relaxation of domestic as well as global barriers to the movement of people, goods, services and capital. Thanks to liberalisation and digital technologies, our world has become the proverbial 'global village'. The internationalisation of world markets, the expansion in global trade and the movement of capital through instantaneous communication and the impact of electronic media such as CNN and Al-Jazeera have brought the world closer as never before. Today, information travels at the speed of light. Governments can no longer hide information from their own citizens as they have done in the past in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Cuba and Myanmar.

On the negative side, however, globalisation has engendered new forms of vulnerabilities for nations and communities. Financial contagion and the spread of epidemic viral diseases pose greater risks than ever before in our borderless world. Communities that have hitherto lived in cultural cocoons have suddenly found themselves exposed to new habits and mindsets. Terrorist networks such as al Qaeda have become transnational organisations that thrive on the opportunities opened by new technologies and communications channels. Not only are they able to coordinate their activities through such channels, they are also able to raise funds, network and coordinate their activities across national borders and frontiers with greater ease than would have been considered feasible just two decades ago.

Globalisation has to some extent altered the character of the Westphalian territorial state as we have always known it. In a liberal market economy, the state is expected to restrict itself to playing the role of umpire while looking after public goods such as law and order, transport and infrastructures, education and control of communicable diseases. There is a sense in which globalisation has eroded the traditional 'parental role' of the state while undermining its capacity, authority and legitimacy.[18]

With globalisation, the boundaries between the domestic and the international are becoming increasingly blurred. It has also **engendered new inequities between the rich and the poor. In the advanced industrial nations as well as in low-income developing, all the relevant indicators show that income inequalities are reaching alarming proportions.**[19] Deepening inequalities are, on their part, fostering new forms of anxiety and frustration among dispossessed groups, especially in the developing world. **We see this phenomenon in countries such as oil-rich Nigeria, where the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. In the context of an increasingly desperate young, educated and unemployed urban youth, we have a ready army of people who can easily be mobilised for ethnic or religiously inspired violence.** As we have seen in the recent history of the Niger Delta, government and transnational oil companies have earned staggering amounts of profit while the local populations have seen nothing other than increasing poverty, land and water degradation and ecological catastrophe. In other parts of the world, land grabbing for cultivation of biofuels and other commercial

products has dispossessed peasant farming communities, leading to widespread misery and anger.[20]

There is no denying that sociological factors deriving from rapid urbanisation and modernisation can and do contribute to spurring alienation and, ultimately, political violence. The French sociologist Emile Durkheim identified *anomie* as a major psychosocial malady in industrialising societies. The sprawling slums of cities such as Kaduna, Abuja, Lagos and Maiduguri are cesspools of crime, prostitution and violence. When youths drift to cities and lose the traditional moorings that provided meaning and signification to their lives, they could fall easy prey to extremist ideologies. It has been estimated that in Northern Nigeria there are over 9.5 million *Almajiris* (itinerant youths who attend traditional koranic schools). Most of such children are the cannon fodder for ethno-religious conflicts that do spring up from time to time.

There is also the impact of new information and telecommunications technologies (ICT). Such technologies connect disgruntled and alienated groups that may not even know each other. Groups such as al-Qaeda are highly networked organisations linked together on a world-wide basis. They share information, strategies and tactics and they disseminate propaganda materials as a means of recruitment and socialisation into their theology of death. The historian Michael Burleigh observes that the Internet "has become the broadband river whereby noxious ideologies...can be accessed in the privacy bedroom or study in provincial towns and major cities of the West by young people, of whom significant numbers applaud the actions of al-Qaeda and other Islamic terrorists".[21]

It is also evident that a country with historical antecedents of political violence, civil war and dictatorship nurtures an environment that is more susceptible to terrorism. Nigeria's rather long history of civil strife makes it more understandable why terrorism could easily thrive in the country. Over the last decade alone, more than 10,000 people have died as a result of ethnic and sectarian conflict in Nigeria. Nigerians are beginning to accept random violence as their lot and destiny.

Linked to this is the new architecture of global power and the insecurity that it engenders. The Cold War created two major centres of power, one based in Washington DC and the other based in Moscow. China and the group of Non-Aligned countries provided a shield for those nations who chose to side with neither camp. Today, we live in a largely unipolar world in which the United States is the dominant economic, military and political power. During the era of George W. Bush, Washington did not hesitate to use its military pre-eminence in pursuit of narrow national goals and purposes. The retreat from multilateralism and the almost religious faith in 'American Exceptionalism' and the pursuit of unilateralist folly has incurred the resentment of many across the world. In the Middle East, educated youths, alienated intellectuals and dispossessed communities in Palestine see the fate of their nations as the end result of American 'hegemony'. Most believe that the survival of Israel would not have been possible without American military and financial support.

In November 2001, barely two months after the attack on the Twin Towers, the late French philosopher, sociologist and intellectual Jean Baudrillard, in an influential article, "The Spirit of Terrorism", argued that contemporary terrorism has its roots in the contradictions arising from the global system that has emerged with America's Atlantic hegemony.[22] Declaring that "*le terrorisme, comme les virus, est partout*", Baudrillard pointed out, quite correctly, that the Bush administration, as late as the summer of 2001, had been fully in touch with the Taliban. He also noted that Washington had over the years provided support to Osama bin Laden and the mujahideen in Afghanistan. He sought to proffer an anti-intellectual antidote to the blind nationalism and wholesale demonization of terrorists that greeted the 9/11 attacks. His own compatriot, the economist and historian Alain Minc, has, however, challenged this view as being in itself a form of 'intellectual terrorism'.[23]

In a highly influential 1994 article, the American journalist and public intellectual Robert Kaplan identified West Africa as the signifier in his premonition of a future of chaos and global disintegration.[24] Kagan believes "West Africa is becoming the symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental, and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real strategic danger." He points to trends such as disease, uncontrolled population growth, criminal violence, resource scarcity, refugees and the "increasing erosion of nation-states and international borders" as factors likely to speed up the inevitable process of societal collapse in Africa. Kaplan makes oblique references to Nigeria as one of those countries destined to fail, prophesying, in effect, that terrorist groups and criminal bandits are likely to fill the political vacuum that will emerge.[25]

Kaplan paints a rather apocalyptic picture of a new international disorder; a coming age of impending chaos: "To understand the events of the next fifty years...one must understand environmental scarcity, cultural and racial clash, geographic destiny, and the transformation of war". He is right obviously right about the pressures exerted on national systems by demographics, unchecked urbanization and lack of adequate infrastructures, in addition to poor leadership and lack of effective governance. Some of these weaknesses no doubt account for the rise of groups such as Boko Haram. But Kaplan is also the victim of the classic syndrome of 'Afro-pessimism' which constitutes the prism from which commentators of his ilk view the continent of Africa. He was writing in 1994 when Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau were enmeshed in violent conflict. Today, West Africa represents one of the regions with the fastest rates of growth in the world. The guns have fallen silent in Sierra Leone as most of the countries in ECOWAS make bold efforts to consolidate their democracies and restore confidence to their people. Nigeria is the leader of West Africa and is bound to be one of the leading countries in the world, if only the leadership could get their act together.

### **Poverty and Youth Unemployment**

The dramatic unfolding of events in the Middle East at the beginning of 2011 reinforces this hypothesis about the political consequences of economic deprivation. It is evident that deepening frustrations occasioned by poverty and economic stagnation, coupled with the absence of political expression and dwindling socio-economic opportunities were the key elements that explain the recent upheavals in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen. The countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have probably the worst records of youth joblessness in the world, averaging some 25 percent.[26] This largely explains the upheavals that have come to be known as 'the Arab Spring' in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Libya. The once 'fertile crescent' has remained trapped in the Middle Ages since the end of the Ottoman Empire. According to one account, if you subtract earnings from oil, the entire exports of the Middle East are merely equal to the total exports of Switzerland.

Few developing countries illustrate the spiral of decline in human welfare as Nigeria has experienced in the past four decades. Peter Lewis has undertaken a fascinating comparative study of economic development in Nigeria and Indonesia.[27] Although

both countries began with the same initial conditions in 1960 and both experienced instability and military dictatorships, Nigerian elites bled dry their country while the equally corrupt elites of Indonesia make the critical choice of investing at home. It is clear that poverty is a major factor explaining the current wave of terrorist insurgency. Table 3.1 Shows that the incidence of poverty at national level has grown from 27.2% in 1980 to 69% in 2010. When one realizes that the population has more than doubled during those years, we get a better appreciation of the magnitude of the problem. Figure 3.1 illustrates trends in poverty headcount over the same period. It shows that the higher the population the higher the poverty incidence and the population of the poor. This implies that adequate plans were not put in place to provide basic facilities for the increasing population, thus over stretching the existing facilities, particularly physical infrastructures such as water, electricity, roads and housing.

Table 1: Poverty Incidence and Population Trends in Nigeria, 1980—2010.

Year	Poverty incidence e %	Estimated population (Million)	Population Poverty (million)
1980	27.2	65	17.1
1985	46.3	75	34.7
1992	42.7	91.5	39.2
1996	65.6	102.3	67.1
2004	54.4	126.3	68.7
2010	69.0	163	112.47

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, August 2012.

Figure 1: Relative Poverty Headcount in Nigeria, 1980 - 2010

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Abuja, 2010.

Table2: Zonal Incidence of Poverty by different poverty measure

Zone	Food Poor	Absolute Poor	Relative Poor	Dollar Per Day
North Central	38.6	59.5	67.5	59.7
North East	51.5	69.0	76.3	69.1
North West	51.8	70.0	77.7	70.4
South East	41.0	58.7	67.0	59.2
South-South	35.5	55.9	63.8	56.1
South west	25.4	49.8	59.1	50.1

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, June 2012.

Figure 2: Zonal Incidence of Poverty in Nigeria, 2010

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Abuja, August 2012.

Table 3: Nigeria, Percentage Change in Income Inequalities by Geopolitical Zone (2004 to 2010)



Zone	% change from 2004 to 2010
North Central	-5.4
North East	8.6
North West	0.7
South East	18.1
South-South	12.8
South west	0.2

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Abuja, August 2012.

Figure 3: Percentage Change in Income Inequalities in Nigeria, 2004—2010

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, August 2012.

The breakdown for Food Poor, Absolute, Relative and Dollar Per Day measurement of poverty in Table 2 and Figure 2 shows that North-West has the highest incidence of poverty based on the four types of measurements followed by the North-East. The North-Central zone is third with high number of poverty using all measurements except on food poor measurement. The South-East zone has more incidence of poverty than South-South while South-West has the lowest compared to the five zones.

Table 3 shows the percentage change in income inequalities broken down by geopolitical zone over the period 2003/2004 to 2009/2010. From these data, the South-East has the highest income inequality, with 18.1 per cent increase, followed by South-South and North-East having 12.8 and 8.6 per cent respectively. Income inequality increased by 0.7 per cent in the North-East while South-West fell lower with 0.2 per cent. The North-Central experienced unprecedented decrease in income inequality with -5.4 percent as shown in Figure 3. On all the poverty indices, it is clear that the North is comparatively more impoverished than the rest of the country. The North East in particular has some of the worst indicators. Related to this is the major challenge of Climate Change. Desertification is a real threat to rural livelihoods among northern communities, and among the worst are hit are the communities in rural Borno and the North East in general.[28]

**Having considered the foregoing, we have to caution that this question of poverty and youth disenchantment as one of the determinants of the emergence of terrorism must be put in context. Young Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab who attempted to bring down a plane on US soil on Christmas Day 2009 came from a wealthy background. His father was a former minister and Chairman of a commercial bank in Nigeria. Most of the young men who hijacked the planes during the 9/11 attacks were articulate people from privileged upper and middle class backgrounds. Poverty in this case could not have been the direct trigger for terrorism. Indeed, it has also been pointed out that the 19 poorest countries in the world have no recorded incidences of terrorism. A more credible explanation is that the prevalence of poverty makes it easier for extremist groups to mobilise disenchanted mobs in pursuit of their own political goals. In northern Nigeria, where over 70 percent of the population lives under the internationally defined poverty line, it is easy to see how any demagogue or religious extremist can mobilise the poor and destitute as instruments for his own political goals. There is the added factor of youth unemployment, especially within the growing stratum of university graduates.[29] When people are pushed to the lowest levels of desperation and hopelessness, they can fall easy prey to religious demagogues who offer them a sense of belonging.**

**It is equally true that unjust and corrupt governments provide a fertile ground for terrorism.** Some would argue that non-democratic governments breed conditions that terrorists can exploit in furtherance of their own objectives. While this is highly probable, social science provides no evidence that undemocratic governments necessarily lead to proliferation of terrorists. In fact, the opposite appears to be the case. The likelihood of terrorism surfacing in countries such as North Korea, China and Cuba is quite remote. What seems obvious is that in fledgling democracies where corruption is rife and institutions are weak, there is a higher likelihood of terrorist activities emerging. Examples would be countries such as Nigeria, India and Indonesia. And if a particular section of the country feel short-changed politically in the context of a state apparatus that is considered weak as well as corrupt – and where there is widespread social alienation due to poverty – you have a tinderbox waiting to explode.

**Another theory that has been put forward is that of the “alienated intelligentsia”. Terrorist movements are always led by well-educated and, in some cases, highly privileged people. Osama bin Laden hailed from an affluent Saudi background, having studied economics and engineering at university. His deputy, Ayman Mohammed Rabie al-Zawahiri**

is a qualified surgeon from an illustrious Egyptian family of intellectuals. Hassan al-Turabi who had invited the late Osama bin Laden to set up base in Khartoum is a celebrated Muslim philosopher and jurist, with degrees from Oxford and Cambridge. Mohammed Atta, the kingpin of the 9/11 plane hijackers, studied architecture in Germany and wrote a supposedly brilliant thesis on conflict between tradition and modernity in urban planning in the medieval Syrian city of Aleppo.[30] Whilst most terrorist groups may be led by 'alienated intellectuals', but they are not always led by well educated people. Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf was a reasonably articulate individual, but he was not what one would call an 'intellectual'.

While this theory may have some elements of truth in it, it begs the question as to why some of those intellectuals and not the others become alienated in the first place. This would suggest other factors relating to individual psychology, personality types, dynamics of socialisation, environmental influences and the specific conditions in which such individuals find themselves.

### *State Failure and the Fragility of Nations*

Another important factor is the problem of state failure, defined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD as a situation where "state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their populations".[31] State failure can be said to prevail where public institutions are no longer able to deliver positive political goods to citizens and that such failure prevails on a scale likely to undermine the legitimacy and the existence of the state itself. The most critical areas of state failure relate to inability to provide a wide range of public goods especially in terms of law and order, security, provision of economic and communication infrastructures and supply of basic welfare services.[32] Some of the indicators of state weakness that could potentially lead to state failure include emergence of disharmony among communities, inability to control borders, growth of criminal violence, corrupt institutions and decaying infrastructures. A good number of countries in Africa have been categorised as 'failed states', the most obvious cases being Somalia, Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau.

For several years now, Nigeria has been featured among the unhappy band of Failed States. A November 2009 intelligence report from United States caused a furore when it predicted that the country will disintegrate by the year 2015.[33] The number of people killed in communal violence in India outstrips that of Nigeria. Poverty in India still surpasses what obtains in Nigeria. Yet, nobody refers to India as a 'failed state'.

Nigeria may not be a 'failed state', but there is no doubting that it is speedily relapsing into the band of failing states. The symptoms of state failure are to be seen in the inability of the state to maintain law and order; in the random outbreak of gratuitous, nihilistic violence; in the widespread practice of cultism among some members of the ruling elites; in the inability to provide stable electricity for all its people; in the parlous state of infrastructures; in the failure to build and maintain refineries, in being a net importer of refined petroleum; in the inability to effectively patrol its borders; in the failure to control corruption; in the high prevalence of lawless violence and criminality; all the carnage in its highways; and in the abject failure to keep the common peace and to secure the lives and properties of its citizens. Millions of youths wonder the streets with no hope on the horizon. A good number are finding succour in cultism, prostitution, kidnapping, robbery and other forms of violent criminality.

State failure provides a good excuse for terrorist groups to question the legitimacy of the state and to seek to impose an alternative vision of political order. With regard to Boko Haram, for example, the writer was surprised to hear from many well-educated 'Northerners' that they sympathise with the movement and would join the group if they had enough guts to do so. In a country that does not offer its citizens any hope and denies its youth all the opportunities, it is no surprise that extremists such as Mohammed Yusuf were able to mobilise such a formidable following.

Equally important is the politics of competitive ethnicity and the dynamics of inter-group relations within the Nigerian federation. The geometry of power places awesome powers in the federal centre. This makes the Presidency the most coveted political prize of all; a zero-sum game in which the winners view state power as an opportunity to corner the nation's wealth for themselves and their small coterie of acolytes. Most development experts have tended to dwell on vertical inequities as measured by the Gini Coefficient as the only real yardstick for determining socio-economic inequality. Important as this is, it is becoming more evident that inter-group inequities are also vital and could actually prove even more politically explosive. Professor Frances Stewart of Oxford, for example, has done important work on the dynamics of 'horizontal inequities' developing countries which may be as important as 'vertical inequities' in undermining long-term political stability.[34] Cross-country cases from Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Nigeria and Malaysia show that decision-makers need to give more attention to issues 'horizontal inequities' which have the potential of leading to conflict and civil strife. Nigeria is an ethnically-divided society. Nigerian politics is increasingly taking on ethno-regional and religious dimensions. In a situation where the North fill that they have lost power even as poverty wears a predominantly 'Northern face', we may not be hard put to explain how violence and political extremism can become the characteristic feature of the region.

There is also the culture of violence which characterises politics in developing societies such as those of Africa. Violence, as we have seen, has been endemic to Nigerian politics since independence. It has been suggested that the roots of this tradition of violence go back to the colonial state itself, which was founded and maintained by violence. It also took violence to dislodge it. A tradition so established was quite easy to perpetuate in the post-independence period, from the 'Agbekaya riots' in the Western region in the 1960s to the skirmishes between the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the Northern Elements' Progressive Union (NEPU) to the post-election violence that followed the April 2011 presidential elections.

External influences are also major factors in terrorist activities, particularly in countries such as Nigeria. Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, before his demise, was known to have financed certain extremist groups in Nigeria. There is anecdotal evidence that Iran and Saudi Arabia have provided considerable financial support over the years to Islamic groups in Nigeria. Not all the money has been used for building mosques, schools and clinics. It has been estimated that Saudi over the last 30 years has been spending an annual average of US\$2.5 billion on Islamic activities across the world. The Islamic Republic of Iran has shown an undue interest in Nigerian politics over the last couple of years. There is no doubting that some of their money has gone into financing terrorist activities in Nigeria. The discovery of 12 containers highly sophisticated arms that were traceable to Iran in October 2010 was perhaps only the tip of the iceberg.

### 3. The Roots of Ethno-Sectarian Conflict in Nigeria

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. There are some 200 ethnic groups and over 500 dialects within the country. Although national census enumeration exercises have always excluded religion from the headcount, it is generally accepted that the country is almost evenly divided between Christians in the South and Muslims in the North; with the predominantly Christian Middle Belt straddling north and South. The structure of politics in Nigeria has often reflected the fissures, regionalism, identity politics and competitive ethnicity inherent in such a diverse polity.[35]

Most Nigerian Muslims are Sunnis, with some of the elites belonging to rival *Qadiriyya* and *Tijanniya Sufi* denominations. Other denominations include the *Tariqa*, the Malikiya, the Ahmadiya, and the Islamiya. One of the latest denominations to make an entry into the religious landscape in northern Nigeria is the Shi'i religion. Following the Iranian revolution of 1979, several Nigerian students went to study in Iran and returned as Shi'i adherents and proselytisers. One of the new denominations that draw the young educated Muslim intelligentsia is the *Jama't Izalat al Bid'a wa Iaamat as Sunna* (Society of Removal of Innovation and Reestablishment of the Sunna).[36] Another new group is the *Da'awa*, sometimes used interchangeably with the *Hisba* whose role is to enforce Shari'a law.[37]

In a country of such diversity, ethnic and religious cleavages can easily be exploited by unscrupulous elites to inflame latent tensions, leading to inter-communal violence. In this respect, Nigeria is not any different from other multiethnic developing societies where power elites often prefer to exploit what the eminent American political scientist Crawford Young terms "the politics of cultural pluralism".[38] Outbreaks of communal violence have characterised multi-ethnic nations such as India, Malaysia and Kenya. In the context of poverty and dwindling economic opportunities, horizontal inequities, whether real or imagined, can aggravate latent tensions, leading to violence and conflict. Politicians who lose out in power struggles do often resort to religion and ethnicity as banners for political mobilisation. This largely explains why violence has been a characteristic feature of the Nigerian political scene since independence.

Political violence has rather long path-dependent trajectory in Nigeria.[39] British occupation was accomplished largely through force and violence. For much of the first decade of independence, politics in Nigeria was characterised by widespread political violence, including violent coups d'état and, ultimately, civil war during 1967--1970. The traditions of democratic politics have been marked by electoral violence and occasional bloodletting between rival political parties.[40] Succeeding governments, whether civilian or military, have sometimes engaged in what could only be defined in terms of 'state terrorism'.

During the Second Republic, the federal government under Shehu Shagari used the police force to suppress protests by local peasant communities who were demonstrating for their rights that were trampled upon during the construction of the Bakolori Dam, leading to the death of over 386 people[41]. Military rule bolstered the culture of impunity, corruption and state terror as part of the culture of rulership in Nigeria. The violent suppression of communities in the Niger Delta who were protesting the environmental catastrophes that engulfed their ancestral lands were often met with brutal violence, as exemplified by the massacres at Odi in Bayelsa State by the military in November 1999. This was to be repeated at Zaki-Biam during the Tiv-Jukun conflict in during January 2001.

With the widespread misery occasioned by Structural Adjustment Reforms and the ensuing repression and political decay in the 1980s, Nigerian ethnic communities began to seek succour in new primordial associations. Regional and ethnic militias became the order of the day. Notable among these were groups such as the Movement for the Actualization for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Egbesu Boys and O'Oduna Peoples' Congress (OPC) in the West, Niger-Delta Volunteers Force, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and the Ijaw Youth Organisation in the Niger Delta. Complicating matters further has been the so-called politics of 'resource control', as groups in the Niger Delta turned increasingly militant in agitating for a greater share of the resources from the oil sector. These militant groups on their part resorted increasingly to violence and kidnapping in their struggle to ensure 'resource control', in addition to participation in oil bunkering valued at over US\$1 billion annually. The military administration of Sani Abacha had responded with a heavy hand, sending the likes of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his colleagues to the gallows and drawing worldwide condemnation. It was under the late President Umaru Yar'Adua that an amnesty programme was brokered in 2008 and the region witnessed a gradual return of normalcy.

On the specifically religious dimensions of social conflict, northern Nigeria has remained the most troubled region in the country. For much of Nigeria's history since independence, northern elites have found it expedient use religion as a means of consolidating their power and ensuring their ascendancy over the peoples of the Middle Belt.[42] The latter have felt that the rhetoric of 'One North' rings increasingly hollow and that, in fact, it was never intended to apply to them in the first place. The infamous remarks, rightly or wrongly attributed to the Premier of the Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, has been a cause of much grief, if not paranoia among middle belt peoples: "This New Nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great grandfather Uthman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We must use the minorities in the North as willing tools, and the South, as conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us, and never allow them to have control over their future".[43] While the late Premier was actually more liberal in practice than his words would suggest, the near-forcible conversion campaigns towards the end of his life in the Middle Belt further reinforced fears of domination by the peoples of central Nigeria.[44]

Whatever his shortcomings, Sir Ahmadu Bello was certainly more liberal and more accommodating of others than those pretenders who imagined themselves his legatees. Not only were they infernally corrupt, they were lacking in moral scruples and had absolutely no vision of Nigeria as a nation other than their own narrowly defined class interests. The shadowy group which came to be known as 'the Kaduna Mafia' was seen as the vanguard and protector of northern interests, which were essentially defined in terms of elite access to patronage, public appointments and other forms of preferment.[45] The Northern Nigerian Development Company (NDDC) and affiliates such as the former Bank of the North were the economic legacy institutions that provided the financial base for the northern ruling class. During the days of the northern commodity boards, the Middle Belt, which is the bread basket of the country, felt increasingly short-changed as the commodity boards monopolised the marketing of commodities, imposing prices that amounted to creaming off the profits accruable to local farmers.[46] Rightly or wrongly, the peoples of the Middle Belt felt increasingly treated as second class citizens by the northern oligarchy, leading to embitterment and alienation.

As far back as the 1980s, the north east, like the rest of the North, fell under the sway of the Maitatsine sect. Thousands were killed and considerable properties and infrastructures were destroyed during months of mayhem perpetrated by Maitatsine followers.[47] The re-introduction of Sharia criminal law in several of the northern states during 2000/2001 yet again provoked widespread unrest in the northern states. Sharia criminal law had been the dominant legal culture since the Fulani revolution spearheaded by Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio in the early nineteenth century. It was more or less abolished when the British conquered Nigeria. The common law was made to replace all those practices that were deemed to affront the British sense of 'natural justice, equity and good conscience'. During the constitutional debates in the late 1970s, the controversy over Sharia had almost threatened to scuttle the political transition process.[48] Protests by minority Christian communities over Sharia led to violent confrontations in Kaduna and other northern capitals, leading to the death of thousands of people. For many, the issue is not whether or not Sharia should operate, but that the manner of its operation could lead to implicit discrimination and harassment of non-Muslims. The then President, Olusegun Obasanjo, had dismissed it as a form of 'political Sharia' which would 'fizzle out' in no time. But fizzle out it did not. Instead, it has become increasingly entrenched and has effectively divided Nigeria into two separate jurisdictions; the one governed by Islamic Sharia and the other by the common law tradition.[49]

Ethno-sectarian conflicts have continued to characterise the political landscape.[50] Examples include the conflicts between Ife and Modakeke in the West to the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict in the East and the fight between Tiv and Jukun in Taraba State. In the northern part of the country, the outbreak of the Maitatsine riots in Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi and Yola in 1980s were the precursors of all sorts of violent unrest based on religious millenarianism. They were the precursors of the sort of rampaging violence that has turned the North into what the social activist Shehu Sani has described as "the killing fields".[51] One of the most troubling of these conflicts was the Zangon-Kataf crisis between the Kataf people and the Hausa-Fulani during May 1992. While it was fundamentally about land rights; it was equally about a sense of historic injustice as a result of being ruled under an emirate system by people they perceived as alien minorities. These so-called 'religious riots', from the Sharia riots in Kaduna State to religiously inspired killings in Kaduna, Maiduguri and Bauchi have taken the lives of probably 35,000 Nigerians between 1999 and 20011.

Further complicating the situation has been the emergence of state-sponsored vigilante groups that were purportedly set up to prevent armed robbery and other forms of violent criminality. Some of these groups often resorted to extra-judicial methods of tackling crime and in meting out summary justice to alleged criminals. Among such groups were the Bakassi Boys in Abia State, the Onitsha Traders' Organization and the Anambra State Vigilante Service. The proliferation of these armed militias reinforced a culture of violence and lawlessness as these groups capitalised on legitimate grievances to justify bank robberies, assassinations and kidnapping.

Another key feature of the culture of violence is that, under the pretext of keeping the common peace, vigilantes and groups such as the 'Hisba' in the Shari'a States have sometimes served as enforcement agents for powerful elements in pursuit of narrow selfish ends. Some of the activities of the occasionally overzealous *yan Hisba* Sharia law enforcers in places like Kano and other Sharia States have caused concern among Christian communities who feel they are being compelled to subscribe to religious tenets that they cannot identify with.[52] From Maitatsine in the 1980s to Boko Haram in 2011, some State Governors have been known to patronise religious teachers with potentially extremist views. We are led to believe that the Nigerian political culture does not exert a cost on those who perpetrate acts of political violence.

### ***The Plateau Crisis as a Metaphor***

Perhaps the crisis on the Jos Plateau is the most tragic of these conflicts because of its enduring character, the venom with which it has been fought and, increasingly, the involvement of Islamists from neighbouring countries[53]. Violent killings have taken place in 1994, 2001, 2002, 2008 and 20210. The Jos crisis has been interpreted variously as a religious, ethnic and political crisis. At the heart of it is the acrimonious question of 'indigene versus settler' which has pitted one group against another. The Hausa-Fulani who have settled in the town would like to lay claim to ownership as much as the Berom, Afizere, Anaguta and others who claim to be the original 'owners' of Jos.

The creation of Jos North Local Government by the military administration of General Ibrahim Babangida was seen by indigenes as a piece of mischief making. While the area has a substantial population of Hausa traders, it is also the seat of the Gbong Gwom Jos, the paramount ruler of the Berom people. The Berom insist that just as no Berom person could ever lay claim to standing for elections in the Local Government which seats the Emir of Kano, they would not accept a 'foreigners' lording over them on their own turf.[54]

It has become increasingly difficult to provide a dispassionate analysis of the so-called 'Jos crisis'. There is no doubting that the 'settlers' have encountered some form of discrimination by succeeding administrations in the State. But Plateau people would insist that it is not a problem peculiar to their State, but, rather, a problem that is widespread throughout the federation. The attempt to reduce the matter to a conflict between Fulanis and Berom people is equally inaccurate. Although not an 'indigene', the author grew up on the Jos Plateau and does not recognise the Plateau that is portrayed in the study by Philip Ostien, who has gone so far as to invent a fictitious ethnic group called the "*Jasawa*"; a group that exists neither in the encyclopaedia of world languages nor in the tomes of colonial surveys of African 'tribes' and, indeed, in the entire cornucopia of world ethnological studies.[55]

In the north, non-Muslims have always been kept apart in *Sabon Garis* and enjoy neither rights nor privileges that the majority enjoy. The 'indigene-settler dichotomy is not a Plateau problem. It is a national challenge. The people of Plateau State have paid a heavy price not only in blood but also in terms of the massive destruction of the physical and social infrastructure. While some dozens of Muslims were savagely butchered in places such as Kuru Karama and their bodies hidden in village wells, the killing of over 700 defenceless women and children in the village of Dogonahawa in January 2010 brought a new definition to the concept of savagery.

Plateau State is located in the central savannah of the middle belt of Nigeria; at the confluence between north and south, east and west. Like the rest of the middle belt, the vast majority of the people are Christians. This is so by virtue of the fact that, unlike the Hausa city states of the north, they were never conquered by the Fulani Jihad of the early nineteenth century. The imposition of British colonial rule and its indirect administration foisted the feudal emirate system upon these people who had

never been conquered in war and who were themselves heirs of the great Nok civilization of ancient times.[56] With a population of 3 million, Plateau State is a mountainous region with altitudes ranging from 1,200 metres (about 4,000 ft) to a peak of 1,829 metres above sea level. These high altitudes give it a near temperate climate, with an average temperature of 18 and 22 degrees centigrade. It is a region of scenic beauty, with hanging rocks, natural springs and breathtaking waterfalls.

Although tin mining has virtually disappeared, Plateau State has proven reserves of solid minerals such as cassiterite, clay, kaolin, columbite, gemstone, galena, quartz and feldspar. For nearly a century, tin mining was the mainstay of the economy. Tin mining began on a commercial scale in 1902, with British colonial firms playing a dominant role. The outbreak of the First World War during 1914—1918 led to increased demand for tin, requiring massive additional labour on the mines.[57] Among the early arrivals were the Yoruba, Efik, Ibibio and Ijaw. Labourers were also brought in from the Hausa communities further north. The Plateau was governed under the British indirect rule system as part of Bauchi Province until 1920, when it became Plateau Province. At independence in 1960, it remained part of the old Northern Region, although the area had a reputation for voting for the opposition. For this and other reasons, the Plateau remained largely 'marginalised' by the Northern Region Government.

When the regional administrative system was replaced by a twelve-state structure in 1976, the Plateau and Benue Provinces were unified under a single unit known as Benue-Plateau State. In 1976, Plateau State was again carved out of Benue under the nineteen-state structure. Nasarawa State was later to be carved out of Plateau during the 1993 round of state creation, which took the number of states in the federation to thirty-six.

The Plateau has a rich and fertile soil that supports livestock as well as cultivation of temperate vegetables and fruits. The establishment of the Federal Capital of Abuja, two hundred kilometers away, has boosted the demand for the agricultural produce from the Plateau. With the worsening crisis of climate change in the far north, pastoralists have moved into the Plateau and other parts of the middle belt in search of better grazing land for their livestock.

Historically, the city of Jos was probably the most cosmopolitan urban centre in Nigeria. It was the centre of missionary activity in the middle belt, bringing as Christian missionaries from different parts of the Western world. The large presence of expatriates meant that physical infrastructures in the city were second to none. This was further enhanced under the late Joseph Dechi Gomwalk, the military administrator of the old Benue-Plateau during 1967—1975. Gomwalk was a master-builder who constructed roads, expanded housing, clinics and schools. He built a newspaper and a new radio house and television station. The northern oligarchy were uncomfortable with these developments, seeing in them a direct challenge to their dominance and hegemony. When General Murtala Mohammed was assassinated in the failed coup of February 1976 led by Col. Bukar Suka Dimka and predominantly Plateau and middle belt officers, Joseph Dechi Gomwalk was roped-in on false charges, as were Col. A. D. S. Wya and a couple of others who were also lined up and executed. Gomwalk died a martyr for sins he did not commit, his only crime being that he was a kinsman of the ousted General Yakubu Gowon.[58]

The Dimka coup further soured the relations between Plateau and the core north. Although Plateau officers dominated the high echelons of the military, they did little for their state, having been politically outwitted by the likes of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha. Plateau, like the rest of the middle belt, also has a lot of retired soldiers from the common ranks which can easily be mobilized during times of social crisis.

For nearly two decades, the people of the Plateau have known little or no respite from conflict and violence. While some have interpreted the conflict in religious terms, others insist it is all about politics. Yet others see it in terms of ethnicity and the struggle over land and limited resources. We regard this as a fruitless debate. The truth is that most human conflicts are deeply embedded in a complex web of forces. In the case of the Plateau, they may have been triggered off by local political factors relating to the willful creation of Jos North Local Government by the Babangida military administration, but they have also taken on the coloration of religion, thanks to the rise of Global Jihad and the re-location of al-Qaeda from Afghanistan to the Maghrib and the Sahel. The demographic movements occasioned by climate change and desertification are also another major factor. When all these are linked to dwindling job prospects among the youths and increasing impoverishment among the general population, you get a fatal cocktail ready to implode at the slightest opportunity.

The first outbreak of violence occurred in 1994. The *casus belli* was the appointment of Aminu Mato, a Hausa, as the Caretaker Administrator for Jos North Local Government. It was to lead to twenty-four hours of mayhem in which hundreds lost their lives and buildings and vehicles were razed to the ground. The 2001 conflict was said to have been provoked by the attacks on a Berom woman who had insisted on her right of passage on a road that had been blocked during Friday prayer by Muslims. Earlier, the appointment of a Hausa Coordinator for the State's Poverty Eradication Programme had led to renewed tensions. Given these realities, violence could have been triggered by any random event. Again, thousands were killed and many were rendered homeless.

During 2002—2004, the violence moved southwards into rural areas of Yelwa, Langtang, Shendam, Wase, Kanam, Kanke and Mikang. Fulani pastoralists became the vanguard of the new Jihad, increasingly armed with sophisticated weapons from AK47s to submachine guns, Mark4s and G3 rifles. Masters of the bush, they were a moving target and were able to inflict maximum damage to the settled communities of the area. Casualties were heavy on both sides. In February 2004 Muslim youths killed over 70 people who were taking refuge inside a church. In April, 'reprisals' followed, leading to the killing of over 700. These killings sent shockwaves throughout the north. In Kano, over 200, predominantly Christian immigrants were killed. President Obasanjo declared a state of emergency on the Plateau for six months.[59]

The November 2008 uprising was also centred on the issue of Jos North Local Government. Elections had not been held there since 2002, but the new Governor, Jonah David Jang, was determined to hold them. According to one view, the so-called 'Jasawa' had made efforts to reach out to the Governor on the issue of political representation but had been rebuffed.[60] Mosques and churches had openly urged their members to vote only for people of their own faith. It has been suggested that all sides were involved in rigging the elections. The emergence of an 'indigene' as the Chairman of the Local Government led to yet another bloodbath. More than 850 people were killed. Human settlements from this time were becoming increasingly segregated. There have also been silent killings of people who have the misfortune to be driving through the wrong side of town.

The violence of 2010 took place on the Sunday of January 17th, because a Muslim who was trying to rebuild his home near a church was attacked by Christian youths. What is remarkable is that this individual chose precisely the worship hours of a Sunday to start rebuilding his home. And when he was cautioned about the bedlam that he was causing, his friends descended on the local Roman Catholic church with heavy sophisticated weapons. There is no doubt that this particular attack was premeditated. The 2010 violence was probably the bloodiest, with an estimated 4,000 people killed and over 180,000 displaced. The Federal Government was compelled to bring in the army to keep the peace.

In spite of the heavy presence of the army throughout the capital, some attackers infiltrated from neighbouring Bauchi State at dawn, killing over 700 people – most of them defenseless women and children -- in the villages of Dogo Nahauwa, Rasat and Zot in Foron District, barely a stone throw from Governor's home. Major-General Saleh Maina, the General Officer in Command, claimed that the Governor had never alerted him on the impending crisis. He has been alleged to be "a killer, villain, supporter of Muslim against Christian, one who has asked soldiers to turn the other way when Fulanis are killing Christians and one who has directed soldiers under his command to protect Muslims against Christians whenever Christians attack Muslims, thereby exposing Christians to army gunfire".[61] The use of sophisticated weapons and widespread use of army uniforms during these killings speak of possible complicity by the military in these episodes of violence. The Dogo Nahauwa killings were exceptional by their venom and brutality. Torching a sleepy village at dawn and gunning down the fleeing women and children amounted to an abuse of Humanity and could properly only be described in terms of genocide.

Since 2011, there have been sporadic attacks, mainly by Hausa-Fulanis on local villagers. Local youth militias have also waged their own campaigns of reprisals and counter-reprisals. The rise of Boko Haram in the north east and intensification of activities by al-Qaeda in the Sahel and the Maghrib may pose a renewed danger for the Plateau which has come under such a heavy onslaught for nearly two decades. Indeed, Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for recent suicide attacks on churches in Jos and other parts of the middle belt. During July 2012, suspected Fulani attackers descended on mourners in Barkin Ladi during a requiem service for 63 people killed in a previous massacre. It would seem that the people of the Plateau are not even allowed to mourn their dead. More than 200 were killed, prominent among them were two serving federal legislators from the State, Senator Gyang Dantong, a distinguished consultant surgeon turned politician, and a Member of the House of Representatives, Danfulani Gyang.[62]

While much of the conflict may have originated from the problem of political representation, it has snowballed into a religious conflict with global dimensions. The Vatican has condemned the atrocities that have taken the lives of so many; and so has UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. Global media have reported the unfolding of the tragedy with increasing interest and alarm. Media such as Al-Jazeera have also orchestrated a line of reporting that pitches the entire Muslim world against a small group of people -- the innately peaceful Berom people -- as the principal villains in a tragic drama that they neither desired nor created. The people of the Plateau feel, quite justifiably, under siege by forces go as far afield as Niger, Chad and the Arabian Peninsula, in the context of a government that has shown clearly that it cannot protect them. It also seems evident that the leaders of the Plateau have failed their people abysmally. With a penchant for 'tribal' politics, they have come out neither with creative solutions to the crisis nor have they aimed to make a difference to the whole thing.

It would seem that part of the agenda of Boko Haram and other such jihadist groups is the 'cleansing' of the Christian presence in the north. It is a known fact, for example, that there hardly any churches left in Yobe State. Christian communities in Borno have resorted to praying at home instead of meeting at a place of worship. When they fully succeed in this 'ethnic cleansing', the next logical step would be to intensify their activities in the middle belt so as to break the spirit of those communities through the grand strategy of *fitna* and to ensure that their ideology prevails throughout the 'Old North'. The fundamental contradiction of this movement is that they entertain a strictly narrow definition of the 'the North', but at the same time they insist that the Middle Belt must also remain in the historic North.

Since they will stop at nothing, it is self-evident that the embattled people of the Plateau and the middle belt will have to defend themselves and the values that they hold most sacred. What is at stake is nothing less than the future of Nigeria itself. Given the complete breakdown of trust, the failure of efforts to find a just and lasting solution, and the existential threat which they face, local communities will probably have to resort to self-help to protect themselves and their families – at least until such a time that government takes concrete steps to protect them. The right to self-help by communities that face an existential threat to their very survival is a recognised principle under all the norms of global ethics and international law from John Locke to Hugo Grotius and John Rawls.[63] For this to be justified, it must be clear that they face an imminent radical existential threat by an identifiable aggressor (*the jus ad bellum*). At the same time, they must deploy methods that satisfy the criteria of proportionality, legitimate means, right intent and reasonable hope of success (*the jus in bello*).[64]

Governments at State and Federal level have attempted to hold peace summits and institute interfaith dialogues, but these efforts have borne little fruit. Military intervention has only succeeded in maintaining a Carthaginian peace. We have seen neither original thinking nor bold initiatives that would address the situation and rescue the benighted people of Plateau from the jaws of catastrophe. Judicialism has also failed. Between 2004 and 2010 no less than five judicial commissions of inquiry have we established to address the Plateau crisis. The five judicial panels were (1) Justice Aribiton Fiberisima Commission of Inquiry into the 12th April 1994 clash in the Jos Metropolis; (2) Justice Niki Tobi Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Civil Disturbances in Jos and its Environs of September 2001; (3) Prince Bola Ajibola Commission of Inquiry into the November 2008 Crisis; (4) General Emmanuel Abisoye Panel of Inquiry of 2009; and Chief Solomon Lar Presidential Administrative Panel. None have yielded any meaningful results. For some strange reason, government have not taken bold steps to publish the findings of the commissions as a means of building a framework towards a just and lasting peace.[65]

### **Origins of the Boko Haram Sect**

The origin of the Boko Haram sect goes back to 2001 when a Muslim cleric, Mohammed Ali, succeeded in attracting a large following at his mosque in the north eastern city of Maiduguri. They had decided to move to neighbouring Yobe State because they found Maiduguri to be too decadent and corrupt. In 2003 the group were involved in a local dispute which led to a shootout and the death of its leader, Mohammed Ali and several of its members. Known as 'the Nigerian Taliban', on account of their Puritanism, the group later moved back to Maiduguri under the inspiration of their new leader, a charismatic young man by the name of Mohammed Yusuf.[66] The group acquired a piece of land in the northern part of Maiduguri previously owned by Yusuf's father-in-law Baba Fugu Mohammed. The new mosque became known as *Ibn Tamiyyah Masjid*, in honour of the medieval Arab theologian Sheik ul-Islam Ibn Tamiyyah (1263—1328 AD).

## Box 2: Time lines of Boko Haram Activities

- 2002: Founded by Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf
- 2009: Hundreds killed, Maiduguri police stations stormed
- 2009: Mohammed Yusuf captured by army, later found dead
- Sep 2010: Freed hundreds of prisoners from Maiduguri jail
- Sep 2010: Attack on Bauchi prison leading to escape of 721 prisoners
- Dec 2010: Bombed Jos, killing 80;
- Dec 2010: New Year's Eve attack on Abuja barracks
- 2010-2011: Dozens killed in Maiduguri shootings
- May 2011: Bombed several states after president's inauguration
- June 2011: Police HQ bombed in Abuja
- Aug 2011: UN HQ bombed in Abuja
- Aug 2011: Prominent Muslim cleric Liman Bana killed by the sect
- Nov 2011: Coordinated bomb and gun attacks in Yobe/Borno
- Dec 2011: Christmas bombing, St. Theresa's Church, Madalla
- Jan 2012: Massive attacks in Kano, killing over 200.
- Feb 2012: Attacks on Church of Christ in Nigeria, Jos, 35 killed
- Feb 2012: Suicide bombing of army headquarters, Kaduna
- March 2012: An Italian and Briton kidnapped by a splinter group of
- April 2012: Taraba attacks, with 11 killed
- June 2012: Bombing of Bauchi church, 15 casualties
- June 2012: Attacks on Kaduna and Zaria churches, 50 casualties
- June 2012: 130 bodies found in Plateau State, killed by the sect
- July 2012: Massacre in Jos funeral church service, 60 killed
- Aug 2012: Suicide bombing, Damuturu, Yobe, 6 soldiers killed

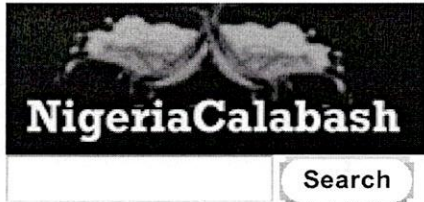
Source: Various Newspapers

## Box 3: Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists?

Boko Haram promotes a version of Islam which makes it "haram", or forbidden, for Muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with Western society. This includes voting in elections, wearing shirts and trousers or receiving a secular education. Boko Haram regards the Nigerian state as being run by non-believers, even when the country had a Muslim president. The group's official name is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, which in Arabic means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad".

Since the Sokoto caliphate, which ruled parts of what is now northern Nigeria, Niger and southern Cameroon, fell under British control in 1903, there has been resistance among the area's Muslims to Western education. Many Muslim families still refuse to send their children to government-run "Western schools", a problem compounded by the ruling elite which does not see education as a priority. Against this background, the charismatic Muslim cleric, Mohammed Yusuf, formed Boko Haram in Maiduguri in 2002. He set up a religious complex, which included a mosque and an Islamic school. Many poor Muslim families from across Nigeria, as well as neighbouring countries, enrolled their children at the school. But Boko Haram was not only interested in education. Its political goal was to create an Islamic state, and the school became a recruiting ground for jihadis to fight the state.

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## CONFLICT AND INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA

Tue, 09/25/2012 - 17:20 -- publisher

**Written By:**

Obadiah Mailafia D. Phil



With a population of 165 million, Nigeria is Africa's largest country in terms of demographic size. With a GDP of US\$415 billion, it is the second largest economy after South Africa. Nigeria holds the record for being the largest oil producer on the continent and the sixth in OPEC. The country is well endowed with petroleum, gas and yet-untapped mineral resources. Its agricultural potentials are considerable, although the country remains a net importer of food. Over the last decade growth has averaged 7.4% and is projected to be 6.9% by year's end 2012

CONFLICT AND INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA

IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

AND NATIONHOOD

- **By Obadiah Mailafia D. Phil**

### Introduction

With a population of 165 million, Nigeria is Africa's largest country in terms of demographic size. With a GDP of US\$415 billion, it is the second largest economy after South Africa. Nigeria holds the record for being the largest oil producer on the continent and the sixth in OPEC. The country is well endowed with petroleum, gas and yet-untapped mineral resources. Its agricultural potentials are considerable, although the country remains a net importer of food. Over the last decade growth has averaged 7.4% and is projected to be 6.9% by year's end 2012.[1]

Nigeria remains a paradox, if not an enigma, to many observers. A country of energetic and highly entrepreneurial peoples and with an embarrassment of natural riches, the bulk of the population remain impoverished. Although per capita income has improved in recent years to about US\$2,500 (in PPP terms), more than 60% of the people live below the poverty line while income inequalities are also widening, with an estimated gini coefficient of 43.7 percent. Unemployment stands at a national average of 24%, with an estimated 54% of the youth population without jobs. A recent World Bank study depicts the country's



products has dispossessed peasant farming communities, leading to widespread misery and anger.[20]

There is no denying that sociological factors deriving from rapid urbanisation and modernisation can and do contribute to spurring alienation and, ultimately, political violence. The French sociologist Emile Durkheim identified *anomie* as a major psychosocial malady in industrialising societies. The sprawling slums of cities such as Kaduna, Abuja, Lagos and Maiduguri are cesspools of crime, prostitution and violence. When youths drift to cities and lose the traditional moorings that provided meaning and signification to their lives, they could fall easy prey to extremist ideologies. It has been estimated that in Northern Nigeria there are over 9.5 million *Almajiris* (itinerant youths who attend traditional koranic schools). Most of such children are the cannon fodder for ethno-religious conflicts that do spring up from time to time.

There is also the impact of new information and telecommunications technologies (ICT). Such technologies connect disgruntled and alienated groups that may not even know each other. Groups such as al-Qaeda are highly networked organisations linked together on a world-wide basis. They share information, strategies and tactics and they disseminate propaganda materials as a means of recruitment and socialisation into their theology of death. The historian Michael Burleigh observes that the Internet "has become the broadband river whereby noxious ideologies...can be accessed in the privacy bedroom or study in provincial towns and major cities of the West by young people, of whom significant numbers applaud the actions of al-Qaeda and other Islamic terrorists".[21]

It is also evident that a country with historical antecedents of political violence, civil war and dictatorship nurtures an environment that is more susceptible to terrorism. Nigeria's rather long history of civil strife makes it more understandable why terrorism could easily thrive in the country. Over the last decade alone, more than 10,000 people have died as a result of ethnic and sectarian conflict in Nigeria. Nigerians are beginning to accept random violence as their lot and destiny.

Linked to this is the new architecture of global power and the insecurity that it engenders. The Cold War created two major centres of power, one based in Washington DC and the other based in Moscow. China and the group of Non-Aligned countries provided a shield for those nations who chose to side with neither camp. Today, we live in a largely unipolar world in which the United States is the dominant economic, military and political power. During the era of George W. Bush, Washington did not hesitate to use its military pre-eminence in pursuit of narrow national goals and purposes. The retreat from multilateralism and the almost religious faith in 'American Exceptionalism' and the pursuit of unilateralist folly has incurred the resentment of many across the world. In the Middle East, educated youths, alienated intellectuals and dispossessed communities in Palestine see the fate of their nations as the end result of American 'hegemony'. Most believe that the survival of Israel would not have been possible without American military and financial support.

In November 2001, barely two months after the attack on the Twin Towers, the late French philosopher, sociologist and intellectual Jean Baudrillard, in an influential article, "The Spirit of Terrorism", argued that contemporary terrorism has its roots in the contradictions arising from the global system that has emerged with America's Atlantic hegemony.[22] Declaring that "*le terrorisme, comme les virus, est partout*", Baudrillard pointed out, quite correctly, that the Bush administration, as late as the summer of 2001, had been fully in touch with the Taliban. He also noted that Washington had over the years provided support to Osama bin Laden and the mujahideen in Afghanistan. He sought to proffer an anti-intellectual antidote to the blind nationalism and wholesale demonization of terrorists that greeted the 9/11 attacks. His own compatriot, the economist and historian Alain Minc, has, however, challenged this view as being in itself a form of 'intellectual terrorism'.[23]

In a highly influential 1994 article, the American journalist and public intellectual Robert Kaplan identified West Africa as the signifier in his premonition of a future of chaos and global disintegration.[24] Kagan believes "West Africa is becoming the symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental, and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real strategic danger." He points to trends such as disease, uncontrolled population growth, criminal violence, resource scarcity, refugees and the "increasing erosion of nation-states and international borders" as factors likely to speed up the inevitable process of societal collapse in Africa. Kaplan makes oblique references to Nigeria as one of those countries destined to fail, prophesying, in effect, that terrorist groups and criminal bandits are likely to fill the political vacuum that will emerge.[25]

Kaplan paints a rather apocalyptic picture of a new international disorder; a coming age of impending chaos: "To understand the events of the next fifty years...one must understand environmental scarcity, cultural and racial clash, geographic destiny, and the transformation of war". He is right obviously right about the pressures exerted on national systems by demographics, unchecked urbanization and lack of adequate infrastructures, in addition to poor leadership and lack of effective governance. Some of these weaknesses no doubt account for the rise of groups such as Boko Haram. But Kaplan is also the victim of the classic syndrome of 'Afro-pessimism' which constitutes the prism from which commentators of his ilk view the continent of Africa. He was writing in 1994 when Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau were enmeshed in violent conflict. Today, West Africa represents one of the regions with the fastest rates of growth in the world. The guns have fallen silent in Sierra Leone as most of the countries in ECOWAS make bold efforts to consolidate their democracies and restore confidence to their people. Nigeria is the leader of West Africa and is bound to be one of the leading countries in the world, if only the leadership could get their act together.

### **Poverty and Youth Unemployment**

The dramatic unfolding of events in the Middle East at the beginning of 2011 reinforces this hypothesis about the political consequences of economic deprivation. It is evident that deepening frustrations occasioned by poverty and economic stagnation, coupled with the absence of political expression and dwindling socio-economic opportunities were the key elements that explain the recent upheavals in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen. The countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have probably the worst records of youth joblessness in the world, averaging some 25 percent.[26] This largely explains the upheavals that have come to be known as 'the Arab Spring' in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Libya. The once 'fertile crescent' has remained trapped in the Middle Ages since the end of the Ottoman Empire. According to one account, if you subtract earnings from oil, the entire exports of the Middle East are merely equal to the total exports of Switzerland.

Few developing countries illustrate the spiral of decline in human welfare as Nigeria has experienced in the past four decades. Peter Lewis has undertaken a fascinating comparative study of economic development in Nigeria and Indonesia.[27] Although

development trajectory in terms of 'jobless growth'. [2] Massive revenues from oil earnings have gone into consumption and recurrent expenditure, with little left to finance the yawning gaps in physical infrastructures. Corruption is widespread in public life while capital flight is an endemic feature of the political economy. As a result, the vast majority have no access to electricity, water and basic social services. Life-expectancy stands at 51 years, which is well below the average for sub-Saharan Africa.

After decades of military rule, the country returned to democratic rule in 1999. The writer Fareed Zakaria's concept of 'illiberal democracy' [3] perhaps best describes Nigeria's current governance situation, where the culture of impunity reigns supreme and the rule of law and constitutionalism remain very much work in progress. Nigeria is an ethnically diverse country, with some of the most ancient civilisations known to man. In the context of widening inequalities, joblessness and poverty, it is inevitable that social tensions -- most of which are exploited by politicians -- will tend to find expression in ethno-religious conflict.

This paper discusses the nature, origins and impact of terrorist insurgency in Nigeria. We situate this phenomenon not only in the context of globalisation but also in poor governance and the failure to devise effective policies to meet the country's daunting challenges. [4] The presentation is in four main parts. Part one addresses the issue of definition and conceptualisation of terrorism as a social phenomenon. The second discusses the global context for the proliferation of terrorist violence. In the third section we analyse the incidence of ethno-sectarian conflict in Nigeria which provides the context for the rise of the Boko Haram insurgency. The fourth part discusses the economic and social consequences of terrorism. We then provide a general summary and conclusion.

## 1. Theoretical and Conceptual Considerations

The analytical approach of this paper is premised on the theory of social constructivism. According to this approach, it is not only empirical reality that determines social outcomes; differences arising from conflicting construction of worldviews, ideas, identities and historical experiences are influential in shaping the structure of politics and public policy. Constructivist epistemology goes as far back as the renaissance scholar Giambattista Vico, Immanuel Kant, Max Weber and the philosopher John Dewey. According to this approach, human consciousness is shaped by the shared meanings that shape the worldviews of a people and the meanings they give to events and symbols. Reality is thus shaped less by truth than by conditioned learning and received tradition. In the field of International Relations, one of the eminent theorists in this tradition is Alexander Wendt. [5] Socially constructed interpretations of national challenges shape how different segments of society perceive issues and what solutions they proffer. In the words of Kalu and Oguntoyinbo, "perceptual differences in terms of relative political and socio-economic issues generate disparate and competing templates for finding solutions to national problems. When one premises these differences on fundamental ideological and cultural foundations, they oftentimes become irreconcilable and hence less amenable to long lasting and durable solutions". [6]

From the viewpoint of social constructivism, the idea of a universal Muslim *Ummah*, the political categories known as 'The North' or 'The Middle Belt' are socially constructed concepts. While remaining conceptual myths, their potency as idea and rallying banner cannot be under-estimated. Part of the contestations shaping the structure of politics in contemporary have to do with the force of these constructed. Solving them will require returning to the fundamentals of nationhood and reinventing the grammar and syntax of political discourse.

From the viewpoint of social constructivism, the idea of a universal Muslim *Ummah*, the political categories known as 'The North' or 'The Middle Belt', to give a few examples, are socially constructed concepts. While remaining conceptual myths, their potency as idea and rallying banner cannot be under-estimated. The contestations shaping the structure of politics in contemporary Nigeria have to do in part with the constructed concepts and symbols of ethnicity, religion and community. Addressing them will require returning to the fundamentals of nationhood and reinventing the grammar and syntax of political discourse.

### Defining Terrorism

Terrorism is a rather emotional topic. Not only do people differ on questions of conceptual definition; they also disagree on interpretation of facts in specific cases of terrorist activity. The American leftist intellectual, Noam Chomsky, points out two different and conflicting approaches to the study of terrorism. One is the literal approach and the other is the propagandistic approach. While the one seeks a rational-scientific understanding of terrorism as a social phenomenon with specific empirical causal factors which lead to particular societal impact, the latter prefers to view terrorism as "a weapon to be exploited in the service of some system of power". [7] While the scientific approach is interested in finding lasting remedies, the propagandistic is more interested in labelling and demonising for the sole purpose of deploying hegemonic military power to score strategic advantage over perceived enemies.

We have to take on board the caution by the late Charles Tilly, a social scientist of the highest integrity, who pointed out that terrorism as a social phenomenon surfaces in a wide variety of cultures, institutions and political forces; and that it is certainly not a preserve of Muslims as the American neo-conservatives would have us believe. Indeed, the governments of world powers and developing countries have also practised some form of terrorism or other, not to talk of a whole brigade of environmentalists, liberation fighters and anarchists. According to Tilly, "Terrorists range across a wide spectrum of organisations, circumstances and beliefs. Terrorism is not a single coherent phenomenon. No social scientist can speak responsibly as though it were." [8]

Terrorism is not just a Nigerian problem; it is a global problem. Nor is it an exclusively Islamic problem. Extremists are to be found in all religions. Our central thesis is that the increasing salience of Islamist terror may be explained by the unique experiences of Arab-Muslim societies and how religion has often been deployed as a weapon of political struggle. Globalisation and the technologies associated with the increasing internationalisation of production, capital and markets has facilitated the capacity of terror groups to mobilise, network and implement their violent projects across nations and communities.

Curiously enough, nobody has ever been known to describe himself or herself as a terrorist. Terrorism is a rather value-

loaded term that people often use to describe those who are pursuing goals or deploying methods that they do not agree with. It can even be a term of abuse. Equally problematic is the fact that it is often deployed as a political term to categorise people or countries that have been already identified to be enemies.[9] A major challenge in seeking to understand terrorism is the fact that perspectives differ, depending on where we stand on a particular issue. The well-worn cliché that “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter” rings as true today as when it was first used in terrorism discourse. For example, both Ronald Reagan in America and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in Britain dismissed the imprisoned Nelson Mandela and his colleagues as “terrorists”. To their own people and to most Africans, however, they were ‘freedom fighters’; heroes of a historic struggle for liberation against Apartheid and racial humiliation.

Given these complexities, it is not surprising that there are probably as many definitions of terrorism as there are organisations and governments working to counter the menace.[10] Several definitions have been on offer, most of them expressing nuances and perspectives deriving from the type of agency in question or the historical experiences of the government proffering the definition.

According to the United States Department of Defence, terrorism is “the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological”. Inherent in this definition are the three key elements of *violence*, *fear*, and *intimidation*. All three elements coalesce in instigating terror in the victims or those at the receiving end. The American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), on its part, defines terrorism as “the unlawful use of force and 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”. The U.S. State Department, on the other hand, understands it as the deployment of “premeditated politically-motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience”.

The British Government, as far back as 1974, officially defined terrorism as “the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public, or any section of the public, in fear”. [11]

The African Union (AU) Convention on Prevention and Combating Terrorism 1994 defines terrorism as “any act which is a violation of the criminal law which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to: (a) intimidate, put in fear, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint or to act according to certain principles; or (b) disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or (c) create general insurrection in a State.[12]

Perhaps the 1992 definition by the United Nations could be regarded as being the more authoritative and more definitive one, given its universal appeal. The UN defines terrorism as an “anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets.”[13]

For our purpose, therefore, we understand terrorism to mean all forms of violent action by clandestine and semi-clandestine actors aimed at achieving criminal, military, religious, political or other objectives, with such actions often directed at government and non-combatant populations with the deliberate objective of spreading fear, anxiety and terror.

### Box 1: Terrorism in the Sahel Region

Following the fall of the Libyan capital of Tripoli in early September, it was discovered that a gigantic cache of advanced anti-aircraft rockets were missing from a raided storage space in Tripoli. Among the missing weapons are the most advanced Russian surface-to-air missile, the SA-24, and an earlier version called the SA-7. Highly accurate, the heat-seeking weapons are easily launched from a shoulder or a truck bed and are able to take down low-flying aircraft. This confirms fears that the Gaddafi regime's weapons had been smuggled into neighbouring Niger, Mali or Mauritania by al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the terrorist network's quickly growing arm in the Sahel, a region that has become an ungoverned haven for militant activity. Long seen as a fringe branch of the global terrorist operation, AQIM can no longer be viewed as merely a local menace. This problem isn't local," says one analyst of terrorism in the Sahel. "We're going to see AQIM become more assertive, taking over entire areas and consolidating its presence. And we'll see more armed actions against the Mauritians, Algerians, Mali and Niger."

A jumble of weak governance, rampant drug smuggling and deep-seated economic frustration, the region has long been a powder keg waiting for this kind of match -- and it's easy to see how the region's vast deserts and rugged, remote mountains, which have allowed AQIM to fuel its own steady growth, could provide shelter to even the most hunted man on the planet. For the past few years, the group has used hefty ransoms from the kidnapping of Westerners to build its nest egg and has focused on ingratiating itself financially with rural tribes who feel marginalized by their governments. On the streets of Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, a storekeeper said he was so poor that he would welcome Gaddafi "or anyone else who will give me money." Though the exact figure of AQIM's wealth is unknown, an average ransom runs in the millions. Last month, the group negotiated the release of two Spanish hostages for roughly \$10 million.

The region "provides al Qaeda the optimum conditions it has traditionally sought — weak states, vast areas outside the purview of the government and disaffected ethnic groups," says Barak Barfi, a New America Foundation fellow based in Libya. "It should come as no surprise AQIM has established bases in the area." Paul

Melly, an analyst at the London-based think tank Chatham House who specializes in West Africa, says the group "has been able to operate with relative ease in the central Sahara," physically difficult for small, poorly equipped national armies to control. To squash AQIM would be a formidable task, even for stronger armies. The group's dominance in the region extends from its control of drug-smuggling routes across the Libyan border and throughout the region — which could potentially have been used to smuggle rockets too — and alliances with dangerous local terrorist organizations like Nigeria's radical Islamist sect, Boko Haram, whose operatives train with AQIM in the Mali mountains.

Source: Time, Washington DC, 12 September, 2011.

## 1. Global Proliferation of Terror

The resurgence of radical political Islam has been one of the key features of the African scene in recent times. In East Africa, it has been suggested that discrimination against Muslims during the colonial era and after has been a key factor in the radicalisation of Muslim groups.[14] Equally crucial has been Saudi-sponsored Wahabbism in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere. Among the predominant Muslim nations of Africa, Senegal stands out by its unique blend of Islam and modernity and the spirit of tolerance which defines the national culture. This is so despite the prevalence of social and religious conservatism and the widespread influence of the *mourides* in social and political life.[15] Since the 1998 bombing of US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam by Al-Qaeda, there appears to be an exponential growth in the spate of terrorist attacks, including the kidnapping and killing of Western aid workers. Since the 1990s, the collapse of Somalia has spurred an army of pirates and lawless gangsters who have become a menace to their neighbours and merchant vessels on the Red Sea.

It is evident that the American military campaign in Afghanistan may have succeeded in breaking the back of the Taliban and their al-Qaeda comrades. As a consequence they may be turning to Africa. There is evidence that Al-Qaeda has taken a strategic decision to re-locate to Africa as a safe haven for its global operations. The Taliban, al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Shabab from Somalia have joined forces with Tuareg insurgents and drug barons, taking over vast territories in the Sahara desert (see Box 1). It has been suggested that fleeing mercenaries from Libya may have also brought with them substantial weapons which could supplement what the Sahelian terrorists already possess.

The crisis which broke out in Mali in April 2012, whereby the northern part of the country around Timbuktu was taken over by Islamists is the latest in this unfolding drama. It has been reported that the al-Qaeda, in connivance with Latin American drug lords, have taken islands off the coast of Guinea Bissau. They have turned them into centres where private planes bring in drugs, dollars and arms. Former US Ambassador to Nigeria, Princeton Lyman, has noted that Africa's "combination of relatively weak states, ethnic and religious diversity...its poverty, and in many places, its ungoverned space"[16]

At the heart of contemporary terrorism is globalisation and how it impacts national systems, cultures and faith-communities.[17] By globalisation, we are referring to the internationalisation of production, markets and capital and the virtual emergence of a single global marketplace. It also entails the trans-border diffusion of knowledge and information through new technologies such as the worldwide web, the Internet and mobile telephony. There are good as well as bad aspects to globalisation.

Most economists would agree that globalisation has brought with it several positive fallouts in terms of improved international trade and investments; providing an impetus to growth and enhanced global welfare. Indeed, the emergence of new economic powers such as China, India and Brazil would not have been possible without the relaxation of domestic as well as global barriers to the movement of people, goods, services and capital. Thanks to liberalisation and digital technologies, our world has become the proverbial 'global village'. The internationalisation of world markets, the expansion in global trade and the movement of capital through instantaneous communication and the impact of electronic media such as CNN and Al-Jazeera have brought the world closer as never before. Today, information travels at the speed of light. Governments can no longer hide information from their own citizens as they have done in the past in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Cuba and Myanmar.

On the negative side, however, globalisation has engendered new forms of vulnerabilities for nations and communities. Financial contagion and the spread of epidemic viral diseases pose greater risks than ever before in our borderless world. Communities that have hitherto lived in cultural cocoons have suddenly found themselves exposed to new habits and mindsets. Terrorist networks such as al Qaeda have become transnational organisations that thrive on the opportunities opened by new technologies and communications channels. Not only are they able to coordinate their activities through such channels, they are also able to raise funds, network and coordinate their activities across national borders and frontiers with greater ease than would have been considered feasible just two decades ago.

Globalisation has to some extent altered the character of the Westphalian territorial state as we have always known it. In a liberal market economy, the state is expected to restrict itself to playing the role of umpire while looking after public goods such as law and order, transport and infrastructures, education and control of communicable diseases. There is a sense in which globalisation has eroded the traditional 'parental role' of the state while undermining its capacity, authority and legitimacy.[18]

With globalisation, the boundaries between the domestic and the international are becoming increasingly blurred. It has also **engendered new inequities between the rich and the poor. In the advanced industrial nations as well as in low-income developing, all the relevant indicators show that income inequalities are reaching alarming proportions.**[19] Deepening inequalities are, on their part, fostering new forms of anxiety and frustration among dispossessed groups, especially in the developing world. **We see this phenomenon in countries such as oil-rich Nigeria, where the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. In the context of an increasingly desperate young, educated and unemployed urban youth, we have a ready army of people who can easily be mobilised for ethnic or religiously inspired violence.** As we have seen in the recent history of the Niger Delta, government and transnational oil companies have earned staggering amounts of profit while the local populations have seen nothing other than increasing poverty, land and water degradation and ecological catastrophe. In other parts of the world, land grabbing for cultivation of biofuels and other commercial

both countries began with the same initial conditions in 1960 and both experienced instability and military dictatorships, Nigerian elites bled dry their country while the equally corrupt elites of Indonesia make the critical choice of investing at home. It is clear that poverty is a major factor explaining the current wave of terrorist insurgency. Table 3.1 Shows that the incidence of poverty at national level has grown from 27.2% in 1980 to 69% in 2010. When one realizes that the population has more than doubled during those years, we get a better appreciation of the magnitude of the problem. Figure 3.1 illustrates trends in poverty headcount over the same period. It shows that the higher the population the higher the poverty incidence and the population of the poor. This implies that adequate plans were not put in place to provide basic facilities for the increasing population, thus over stretching the existing facilities, particularly physical infrastructures such as water, electricity, roads and housing.

Table 1: Poverty Incidence and Population Trends in Nigeria, 1980—2010.

Year	Poverty incidence e %	Estimated population (Million)	Population Poverty (million)
1980	27.2	65	17.1
1985	46.3	75	34.7
1992	42.7	91.5	39.2
1996	65.6	102.3	67.1
2004	54.4	126.3	68.7
2010	69.0	163	112.47

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, August 2012.

Figure 1: Relative Poverty Headcount in Nigeria, 1980 - 2010

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Abuja, 2010.

Table2: Zonal Incidence of Poverty by different poverty measure

(1) Budgetary enforcement of govt from tax.  
 (2) Dutch disease  
 (3) de

① Poor employment performance.  
 ② The Rent State.  
 ③ Communal competition.  
 ④ Institutional decline.

Zone	Food Poor	Absolute Poor	Relative Poor	Dollar Per Day
North Central	38.6	59.5	67.5	59.7
North East	51.5	69.0	76.3	69.1
North West	51.8	70.0	77.7	70.4
South East	41.0	58.7	67.0	59.2
South-South	35.5	55.9	63.8	56.1
South west	25.4	49.8	59.1	50.1

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, June 2012.

Figure 2: Zonal Incidence of Poverty in Nigeria, 2010

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Abuja, August 2012.

Table 3: Nigeria, Percentage Change in Income Inequalities by Geopolitical Zone (2004 to 2010)

Zone	% change from 2004 to 2010
North Central	-5.4
North East	8.6
North West	0.7
South East	18.1
South-South	12.8
South west	0.2

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Abuja, August 2012.

Figure 3: Percentage Change in Income Inequalities in Nigeria, 2004—2010

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, August 2012.

The breakdown for Food Poor, Absolute, Relative and Dollar Per Day measurement of poverty in Table 2 and Figure 2 shows that North-West has the highest incidence of poverty based on the four types of measurements followed by the North-East. The North-Central zone is third with high number of poverty using all measurements except on food poor measurement. The South-East zone has more incidence of poverty than South-South while South-West has the lowest compared to the five zones.

Table 3 shows the percentage change in income inequalities broken down by geopolitical zone over the period 2003/2004 to 2009/2010. From these data, the South-East has the highest income inequality, with 18.1 per cent increase, followed by South-South and North-East having 12.8 and 8.6 per cent respectively. Income inequality increased by 0.7 per cent in the North-East while South-West fell lower with 0.2 per cent. The North-Central experienced unprecedented decrease in income inequality with -5.4 percent as shown in Figure 3. On all the poverty indices, it is clear that the North is comparatively more impoverished than the rest of the country. The North East in particular has some of the worst indicators. Related to this is the major challenge of Climate Change. Desertification is a real threat to rural livelihoods among northern communities, and among the worst are hit are the communities in rural Borno and the North East in general.[28]

**Having considered the foregoing, we have to caution that this question of poverty and youth disenchantment as one of the determinants of the emergence of terrorism must be put in context. Young Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab who attempted to bring down a plane on US soil on Christmas Day 2009 came from a wealthy background. His father was a former minister and Chairman of a commercial bank in Nigeria. Most of the young men who hijacked the planes during the 9/11 attacks were articulate people from privileged upper and middle class backgrounds. Poverty in this case could not have been the direct trigger for terrorism. Indeed, it has also been pointed out that the 19 poorest countries in the world have no recorded incidences of terrorism. A more credible explanation is that the prevalence of poverty makes it easier for extremist groups to mobilise disenchanted mobs in pursuit of their own political goals. In northern Nigeria, where over 70 percent of the population lives under the internationally defined poverty line, it is easy to see how any demagogue or religious extremist can mobilise the poor and destitute as instruments for his own political goals. There is the added factor of youth unemployment, especially within the growing stratum of university graduates.[29] When people are pushed to the lowest levels of desperation and hopelessness, they can fall easy prey to religious demagogues who offer them a sense of belonging.**

**It is equally true that unjust and corrupt governments provide a fertile ground for terrorism.** Some would argue that non-democratic governments breed conditions that terrorists can exploit in furtherance of their own objectives. While this is highly probable, social science provides no evidence that undemocratic governments necessarily lead to proliferation of terrorists. In fact, the opposite appears to be the case. The likelihood of terrorism surfacing in countries such as North Korea, China and Cuba is quite remote. What seems obvious is that in fledgling democracies where corruption is rife and institutions are weak, there is a higher likelihood of terrorist activities emerging. Examples would be countries such as Nigeria, India and Indonesia. And if a particular section of the country feel short-changed politically in the context of a state apparatus that is considered weak as well as corrupt – and where there is widespread social alienation due to poverty – you have a tinderbox waiting to explode.

**Another theory that has been put forward is that of the “alienated intelligentsia”. Terrorist movements are always led by well-educated and, in some cases, highly privileged people. Osama bin Laden hailed from an affluent Saudi background, having studied economics and engineering at university. His deputy, Ayman Mohammed Rabie al-Zawahiri**



is a qualified surgeon from an illustrious Egyptian family of intellectuals. Hassan al-Turabi who had invited the late Osama bin Laden to set up base in Khartoum is a celebrated Muslim philosopher and jurist, with degrees from Oxford and Cambridge. Mohammed Atta, the kingpin of the 9/11 plane hijackers, studied architecture in Germany and wrote a supposedly brilliant thesis on conflict between tradition and modernity in urban planning in the medieval Syrian city of Aleppo.[30] Whilst most terrorist groups may be led by 'alienated intellectuals', but they are not always led by well educated people. Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf was a reasonably articulate individual, but he was not what one would call an 'intellectual'.

While this theory may have some elements of truth in it, it begs the question as to why some of those intellectuals and not the others become alienated in the first place. This would suggest other factors relating to individual psychology, personality types, dynamics of socialisation, environmental influences and the specific conditions in which such individuals find themselves.

### *State Failure and the Fragility of Nations*

Another important factor is the problem of state failure, defined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD as a situation where "state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their populations".[31] State failure can be said to prevail where public institutions are no longer able to deliver positive political goods to citizens and that such failure prevails on a scale likely to undermine the legitimacy and the existence of the state itself. The most critical areas of state failure relate to inability to provide a wide range of public goods especially in terms of law and order, security, provision of economic and communication infrastructures and supply of basic welfare services.[32] Some of the indicators of state weakness that could potentially lead to state failure include emergence of disharmony among communities, inability to control borders, growth of criminal violence, corrupt institutions and decaying infrastructures. A good number of countries in Africa have been categorised as 'failed states', the most obvious cases being Somalia, Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau.

For several years now, Nigeria has been featured among the unhappy band of Failed States. A November 2009 intelligence report from United States caused a furore when it predicted that the country will disintegrate by the year 2015.[33] The number of people killed in communal violence in India outstrips that of Nigeria. Poverty in India still surpasses what obtains in Nigeria. Yet, nobody refers to India as a 'failed state'.

Nigeria may not be a 'failed state', but there is no doubting that it is speedily relapsing into the band of failing states. The symptoms of state failure are to be seen in the inability of the state to maintain law and order; in the random outbreak of gratuitous, nihilistic violence; in the widespread practice of cultism among some members of the ruling elites; in the inability to provide stable electricity for all its people; in the parlous state of infrastructures; in the failure to build and maintain refineries, in being a net importer of refined petroleum; in the inability to effectively patrol its borders; in the failure to control corruption; in the high prevalence of lawless violence and criminality; all the carnage in its highways; and in the abject failure to keep the common peace and to secure the lives and properties of its citizens. Millions of youths wonder the streets with no hope on the horizon. A good number are finding succour in cultism, prostitution, kidnapping, robbery and other forms of violent criminality.

State failure provides a good excuse for terrorist groups to question the legitimacy of the state and to seek to impose an alternative vision of political order. With regard to Boko Haram, for example, the writer was surprised to hear from many well-educated 'Northerners' that they sympathise with the movement and would join the group if they had enough guts to do so. In a country that does not offer its citizens any hope and denies its youth all the opportunities, it is no surprise that extremists such as Mohammed Yusuf were able to mobilise such a formidable following.

Equally important is the politics of competitive ethnicity and the dynamics of inter-group relations within the Nigerian federation. The geometry of power places awesome powers in the federal centre. This makes the Presidency the most coveted political prize of all; a zero-sum game in which the winners view state power as an opportunity to corner the nation's wealth for themselves and their small coterie of acolytes. Most development experts have tended to dwell on vertical inequities as measured by the Gini Coefficient as the only real yardstick for determining socio-economic inequality. Important as this is, it is becoming more evident that inter-group inequities are also vital and could actually prove even more politically explosive. Professor Frances Stewart of Oxford, for example, has done important work on the dynamics of 'horizontal inequities' developing countries which may be as important as 'vertical inequities' in undermining long-term political stability.[34] Cross-country cases from Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Nigeria and Malaysia show that decision-makers need to give more attention to issues 'horizontal inequities' which have the potential of leading to conflict and civil strife. Nigeria is an ethnically-divided society. Nigerian politics is increasingly taking on ethno-regional and religious dimensions. In a situation where the North feel that they have lost power even as poverty wears a predominantly 'Northern face', we may not be hard put to explain how violence and political extremism can become the characteristic feature of the region.

There is also the culture of violence which characterises politics in developing societies such as those of Africa. Violence, as we have seen, has been endemic to Nigerian politics since independence. It has been suggested that the roots of this tradition of violence go back to the colonial state itself, which was founded and maintained by violence. It also took violence to dislodge it. A tradition so established was quite easy to perpetuate in the post-independence period, from the 'Agbekoya riots' in the Western region in the 1960s to the skirmishes between the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the Northern Elements' Progressive Union (NEPU) to the post-election violence that followed the April 2011 presidential elections.

External influences are also major factors in terrorist activities, particularly in countries such as Nigeria. Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, before his demise, was known to have financed certain extremist groups in Nigeria. There is anecdotal evidence that Iran and Saudi Arabia have provided considerable financial support over the years to Islamic groups in Nigeria. Not all the money has been used for building mosques, schools and clinics. It has been estimated that Saudi over the last 30 years has been spending an annual average of US\$2.5 billion on Islamic activities across the world. The Islamic Republic of Iran has shown an undue interest in Nigerian politics over the last couple of years. There is no doubting that some of their money has gone into financing terrorist activities in Nigeria. The discovery of 12 containers highly sophisticated arms that were traceable to Iran in October 2010 was perhaps only the tip of the iceberg.

### 3. The Roots of Ethno-Sectarian Conflict in Nigeria

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. There are some 200 ethnic groups and over 500 dialects within the country. Although national census enumeration exercises have always excluded religion from the headcount, it is generally accepted that the country is almost evenly divided between Christians in the South and Muslims in the North; with the predominantly Christian Middle Belt straddling north and South. The structure of politics in Nigeria has often reflected the fissures, regionalism, identity politics and competitive ethnicity inherent in such a diverse polity.[35]

Most Nigerian Muslims are Sunnis, with some of the elites belonging to rival *Qadiriyya* and *Tijanniya Sufi* denominations. Other denominations include the *Tariqa*, the Malikiya, the Ahmadiya, and the Islamiya. One of the latest denominations to make an entry into the religious landscape in northern Nigeria is the Shi'i religion. Following the Iranian revolution of 1979, several Nigerian students went to study in Iran and returned as Shi'i adherents and proselytisers. One of the new denominations that draw the young educated Muslim intelligentsia is the *Jama'at Izalat al Bid'a wa I'amat as Sunna* (Society of Removal of Innovation and Reestablishment of the Sunna).[36] Another new group is the *Da'awa*, sometimes used interchangeably with the *Hisba* whose role is to enforce Shari'a law.[37]

In a country of such diversity, ethnic and religious cleavages can easily be exploited by unscrupulous elites to inflame latent tensions, leading to inter-communal violence. In this respect, Nigeria is not any different from other multiethnic developing societies where power elites often prefer to exploit what the eminent American political scientist Crawford Young terms "the politics of cultural pluralism".[38] Outbreaks of communal violence have characterised multi-ethnic nations such as India, Malaysia and Kenya. In the context of poverty and dwindling economic opportunities, horizontal inequities, whether real or imagined, can aggravate latent tensions, leading to violence and conflict. Politicians who lose out in power struggles do often resort to religion and ethnicity as banners for political mobilisation. This largely explains why violence has been a characteristic feature of the Nigerian political scene since independence.

Political violence has rather long path-dependent trajectory in Nigeria.[39] British occupation was accomplished largely through force and violence. For much of the first decade of independence, politics in Nigeria was characterised by widespread political violence, including violent coups d'état and, ultimately, civil war during 1967--1970. The traditions of democratic politics have been marked by electoral violence and occasional bloodletting between rival political parties.[40] Succeeding governments, whether civilian or military, have sometimes engaged in what could only be defined in terms of 'state terrorism'.

During the Second Republic, the federal government under Shehu Shagari used the police force to suppress protests by local peasant communities who were demonstrating for their rights that were trampled upon during the construction of the Bakolori Dam, leading to the death of over 386 people[41]. Military rule bolstered the culture of impunity, corruption and state terror as part of the culture of rulership in Nigeria. The violent suppression of communities in the Niger Delta who were protesting the environmental catastrophes that engulfed their ancestral lands were often met with brutal violence, as exemplified by the massacres at Odi in Bayelsa State by the military in November 1999. This was to be repeated at Zaki-Biam during the Tiv-Jukun conflict in during January 2001.

With the widespread misery occasioned by Structural Adjustment Reforms and the ensuing repression and political decay in the 1980s, Nigerian ethnic communities began to seek succour in new primordial associations. Regional and ethnic militias became the order of the day. Notable among these were groups such as the Movement for the Actualization for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Egbesu Boys and O'Odun Peoples' Congress (OPC) in the West, Niger-Delta Volunteers Force, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and the Ijaw Youth Organisation in the Niger Delta. Complicating matters further has been the so-called politics of 'resource control', as groups in the Niger Delta turned increasingly militant in agitating for a greater share of the resources from the oil sector. These militant groups on their part resorted increasingly to violence and kidnapping in their struggle to ensure 'resource control', in addition to participation in oil bunkering valued at over US\$1 billion annually. The military administration of Sani Abacha had responded with a heavy hand, sending the likes of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his colleagues to the gallows and drawing worldwide condemnation. It was under the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua that an amnesty programme was brokered in 2008 and the region witnessed a gradual return of normalcy.

On the specifically religious dimensions of social conflict, northern Nigeria has remained the most troubled region in the country. For much of Nigeria's history since independence, northern elites have found it expedient use religion as a means of consolidating their power and ensuring their ascendancy over the peoples of the Middle Belt.[42] The latter have felt that the rhetoric of 'One North' rings increasingly hollow and that, in fact, it was never intended to apply to them in the first place. The infamous remarks, rightly or wrongly attributed to the Premier of the Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, has been a cause of much grief, if not paranoia among middle belt peoples: "This New Nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great grandfather Uthman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We must use the minorities in the North as willing tools, and the South, as conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us, and never allow them to have control over their future".[43] While the late Premier was actually more liberal in practice than his words would suggest, the near-forcible conversion campaigns towards the end of his life in the Middle Belt further reinforced fears of domination by the peoples of central Nigeria.[44]

Whatever his shortcomings, Sir Ahmadu Bello was certainly more liberal and more accommodating of others than those pretenders who imagined themselves his legatees. Not only were they infernally corrupt, they were lacking in moral scruples and had absolutely no vision of Nigeria as a nation other than their own narrowly defined class interests. The shadowy group which came to be known as 'the Kaduna Mafia' was seen as the vanguard and protector of northern interests, which were essentially defined in terms of elite access to patronage, public appointments and other forms of preferment.[45] The Northern Nigerian Development Company (NDDC) and affiliates such as the former Bank of the North were the economic legacy institutions that provided the financial base for the northern ruling class. During the days of the northern commodity boards, the Middle Belt, which is the bread basket of the country, felt increasingly short-changed as the commodity boards monopolised the marketing of commodities, imposing prices that amounted to creaming off the profits accruable to local farmers.[46] Rightly or wrongly, the peoples of the Middle Belt felt increasingly treated as second class citizens by the northern oligarchy, leading to embitterment and alienation.

As far back as the 1980s, the north east, like the rest of the North, fell under the sway of the Maitatsine sect. Thousands were killed and considerable properties and infrastructures were destroyed during months of mayhem perpetrated by Maitatsine followers.[47] The re-introduction of Sharia criminal law in several of the northern states during 2000/2001 yet again provoked widespread unrest in the northern states. Sharia criminal law had been the dominant legal culture since the Fulani revolution spearheaded by Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio in the early nineteenth century. It was more or less abolished when the British conquered Nigeria. The common law was made to replace all those practices that were deemed to affront the British sense of 'natural justice, equity and good conscience'. During the constitutional debates in the late 1970s, the controversy over Sharia had almost threatened to scuttle the political transition process.[48] Protests by minority Christian communities over Sharia led to violent confrontations in Kaduna and other northern capitals, leading to the death of thousands of people. For many, the issue is not whether or not Sharia should operate, but that the manner of its operation could lead to implicit discrimination and harassment of non-Muslims. The then President, Olusegun Obasanjo, had dismissed it as a form of 'political Sharia' which would 'fizzle out' in no time. But fizzle out it did not. Instead, it has become increasingly entrenched and has effectively divided Nigeria into two separate jurisdictions; the one governed by Islamic Sharia and the other by the common law tradition.[49]

Ethno-sectarian conflicts have continued to characterise the political landscape.[50] Examples include the conflicts between Ife and Modakeke in the West to the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict in the East and the fight between Tiv and Jukun in Taraba State. In the northern part of the country, the outbreak of the Maitatsine riots in Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi and Yola in 1980s were the precursors of all sorts of violent unrest based on religious millenarianism. They were the precursors of the sort of rampaging violence that has turned the North into what the social activist Shehu Sani has described as "the killing fields".[51] One of the most troubling of these conflicts was the Zangon-Kataf crisis between the Kataf people and the Hausa-Fulani during May 1992. While it was fundamentally about land rights; it was equally about a sense of historic injustice as a result of being ruled under an emirate system by people they perceived as alien minorities. These so-called 'religious riots', from the Sharia riots in Kaduna State to religiously inspired killings in Kaduna, Maiduguri and Bauchi have taken the lives of probably 35,000 Nigerians between 1999 and 2011.

Further complicating the situation has been the emergence of state-sponsored vigilante groups that were purportedly set up to prevent armed robbery and other forms of violent criminality. Some of these groups often resorted to extra-judicial methods of tackling crime and in meting out summary justice to alleged criminals. Among such groups were the Bakassi Boys in Abia State, the Onitsha Traders' Organization and the Anambra State Vigilante Service. The proliferation of these armed militias reinforced a culture of violence and lawlessness as these groups capitalised on legitimate grievances to justify bank robberies, assassinations and kidnapping.

Another key feature of the culture of violence is that, under the pretext of keeping the common peace, vigilantes and groups such as the 'Hisba' in the Shari'a States have sometimes served as enforcement agents for powerful elements in pursuit of narrow selfish ends. Some of the activities of the occasionally overzealous *yan Hisba* Sharia law enforcers in places like Kano and other Sharia States have caused concern among Christian communities who feel they are being compelled to subscribe to religious tenets that they cannot identify with.[52] From Maitatsine in the 1980s to Boko Haram in 2011, some State Governors have been known to patronise religious teachers with potentially extremist views. We are led to believe that the Nigerian political culture does not exert a cost on those who perpetrate acts of political violence.

### ***The Plateau Crisis as a Metaphor***

Perhaps the crisis on the Jos Plateau is the most tragic of these conflicts because of its enduring character, the venom with which it has been fought and, increasingly, the involvement of Islamists from neighbouring countries[53]. Violent killings have taken place in 1994, 2001, 2002, 2008 and 20210. The Jos crisis has been interpreted variously as a religious, ethnic and political crisis. At the heart of it is the acrimonious question of 'indigene versus settler' which has pitted one group against another. The Hausa-Fulani who have settled in the town would like to lay claim to ownership as much as the Berom, Afizere, Anaguta and others who claim to be the original 'owners' of Jos.

The creation of Jos North Local Government by the military administration of General Ibrahim Babangida was seen by indigenes as a piece of mischief making. While the area has a substantial population of Hausa traders, it is also the seat of the Gbong Gwom Jos, the paramount ruler of the Berom people. The Berom insist that just as no Berom person could ever lay claim to standing for elections in the Local Government which seats the Emir of Kano, they would not accept a 'foreigners' lording over them on their own turf.[54]

It has become increasingly difficult to provide a dispassionate analysis of the so-called 'Jos crisis'. There is no doubting that the 'settlers' have encountered some form of discrimination by succeeding administrations in the State. But Plateau people would insist that it is not a problem peculiar to their State, but, rather, a problem that is widespread throughout the federation. The attempt to reduce the matter to a conflict between Fulanis and Berom people is equally inaccurate. Although not an 'indigene', the author grew up on the Jos Plateau and does not recognise the Plateau that is portrayed in the study by Philip Ostien, who has gone so far as to invent a fictitious ethnic group called the '*Jasawa*'; a group that exists neither in the encyclopaedia of world languages nor in the tomes of colonial surveys of African 'tribes' and, indeed, in the entire cornucopia of world ethnological studies.[55]

In the north, non-Muslims have always been kept apart in *Sabon Garis* and enjoy neither rights nor privileges that the majority enjoy. The 'indigene-settler dichotomy is not a Plateau problem. It is a national challenge. The people of Plateau State have paid a heavy price not only in blood but also in terms of the massive destruction of the physical and social infrastructure. While some dozens of Muslims were savagely butchered in places such as Kuru Karama and their bodies hidden in village wells, the killing of over 700 defenceless women and children in the village of Dogonahawa in January 2010 brought a new definition to the concept of savagery.

Plateau State is located in the central savannah of the middle belt of Nigeria; at the confluence between north and south, east and west. Like the rest of the middle belt, the vast majority of the people are Christians. This is so by virtue of the fact that, unlike the Hausa city states of the north, they were never conquered by the Fulani Jihad of the early nineteenth century. The imposition of British colonial rule and its indirect administration foisted the feudal emirate system upon these people who had

never been conquered in war and who were themselves heirs of the great Nok civilization of ancient times.[56] With a population of 3 million, Plateau State is a mountainous region with altitudes ranging from 1,200 metres (about 4,000 ft) to a peak of 1,829 metres above sea level. These high altitudes give it a near temperate climate, with an average temperature of 18 and 22 degrees centigrade. It is a region of scenic beauty, with hanging rocks, natural springs and breathtaking waterfalls.

Although tin mining has virtually disappeared, Plateau State has proven reserves of solid minerals such as cassiterite, clay, kaolin, columbite, gemstone, galena quartz and feldspar. For nearly a century, tin mining was the mainstay of the economy. Tin mining began on a commercial scale in 1902, with British colonial firms playing a dominant role. The outbreak of First World War during 1914—1918 led to increased demand for tin, requiring massive additional labour on the mines.[57] Among the early arrivals were the Yoruba, Efik, Ibibio and Ijaw. Labourers were also brought in from the Hausa communities further north. The Plateau was governed under the British indirect rule system as part of Bauchi Province until 1920, when it became Plateau Province. At independence in 1960, it remained part of the old Northern Region, although the area had a reputation for voting for the opposition. For this and other reasons, the Plateau remained largely 'marginalised' by the Northern Region Government.

When the regional administrative system was replaced by a twelve-state structure in 1976, the Plateau and Benue Provinces were unified under a single unit known as Benue-Plateau State. In 1976, Plateau State was again carved out of Benue under the nineteen-state structure. Nasarawa State was later to be carved out of Plateau during the 1993 round of state creation, which took the number of states in the federation to thirty-six.

The Plateau has a rich and fertile soil that supports livestock as well as cultivation of temperate vegetables and fruits. The establishment of the Federal Capital of Abuja under two hundred kilometers away has boosted the demand for the agricultural produce from the Plateau. With worsening crisis of climate change in the far north, pastoralists have moved into the Plateau and other parts of the middle belt in search of better grazing land for their livestock.

Historically, the city of Jos was probably the most cosmopolitan urban centre in Nigeria. It was the centre of missionary activity in the middle belt, bringing as Christian missionaries from different parts of the Western world. The large presence of expatriates meant that physical infrastructures in the city were second to none. This was further enhanced under the late Joseph Dechi Gomwalk, the military administrator of the old Benue-Plateau during 1967—1975. Gomwalk was a master-builder who constructed roads, expanded housing, clinics and schools. He built a newspaper and a new radio house and television station. The northern oligarchy were uncomfortable with these developments, seeing in them a direct challenge to their dominance and hegemony. When General Murtala Mohammed was assassinated in the failed coup of February 1976 led by Col. Bukar Suka Dimka and predominantly Plateau and middle belt officers, Joseph Dechi Gomwalk was roped-in on false charges, as were Col. A. D. S. Wya and a couple of others who were also lined up and executed. Gomwalk died a martyr for sins he did not commit, his only crime being that he was a kinsman of the ousted General Yakubu Gowon.[58]

The Dimka coup further soured the relations between Plateau and the core north. Although Plateau officers dominated the high echelons of the military, they did little for their state, having been politically outwitted by the likes of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha. Plateau, like the rest of the middle belt, also has a lot of retired soldiers from the common ranks which can easily be mobilized during times of social crisis.

For nearly two decades, the people of the Plateau have known little or no respite from conflict and violence. While some have interpreted the conflict in religious terms, others insist it is all about politics. Yet others see it in terms of ethnicity and the struggle over land and limited resources. We regard this as a fruitless debate. The truth is that most human conflicts are deeply embedded in a complex web of forces. In the case of the Plateau, they may have been triggered off by local political factors relating to the willful creation of Jos North Local Government by the Babangida military administration, but they have also taken on the coloration of religion, thanks to the rise of Global Jihad and the re-location of al-Qaeda from Afghanistan to the Maghrib and the Sahel. The demographic movements occasioned by climate change and desertification are also another major factor. When all these are linked to dwindling job prospects among the youths and increasing impoverishment among the general population, you get a fatal cocktail ready to implode at the slightest opportunity.

The first outbreak of violence occurred in 1994. The casus belli was the appointment of Aminu Mato, a Hausa, as the Caretaker Administrator for Jos North Local Government. It was to lead to twenty-four hours of mayhem in which hundreds lost their lives and buildings and vehicles were razed to the ground. The 2001 conflict was said to have been provoked by the attacks on a Berom woman who had insisted on her right of passage on a road that had been blocked during Friday prayer by Muslims. Earlier, the appointment of a Hausa Coordinator for the State's Poverty Eradication Programme had led to renewed tensions. Given these realities, violence could have been triggered by any random event. Again, thousands were killed and many were rendered homeless.

During 2002—2004, the violence moved southwards into rural areas of Yelwa, Langtang, Shendam, Wase, Kanam, Kanke and Mikang. Fulani pastoralists became the vanguard of the new Jihad, increasingly armed with sophisticated weapons from AK47s to submachine guns, Mark4s and G3 rifles. Masters of the bush, they were a moving target and were able to inflict maximum damage to the settled communities of the area. Casualties were heavy on both sides. In February 2004 Muslim youths killed over 70 people who were taking refuge inside a church. In April, 'reprisals' followed, leading to the killing of over 700. These killings sent shockwaves throughout the north. In Kano, over 200, predominantly Christian immigrants were killed. President Obasanjo declared a state of emergency on the Plateau for six months.[59]

The November 2008 uprising was also centred on the issue of Jos North Local Government. Elections had not been held there since 2002, but the new Governor, Jonah David Jang, was determined to hold them. According to one view, the so-called 'Jasawa' had made efforts to reach out to the Governor on the issue of political representation but had been rebuffed.[60] Mosques and churches had openly urged their members to vote only for people of their own faith. It has been suggested that all sides were involved in rigging the elections. The emergence of an 'indigene' as the Chairman of the Local Government led to yet another bloodbath. More than 850 people were killed. Human settlements from this time were becoming increasingly segregated. There have also been silent killings of people who have the misfortune to be driving through the wrong side of town.

The violence of 2010 took place on the Sunday of January 17th, because a Muslim who was trying to rebuild his home near a church was attacked by Christian youths. What is remarkable is that this individual chose precisely the worship hours of a Sunday to start rebuilding his home. And when he was cautioned about the bedlam that he was causing, his friends descended on the local Roman Catholic church with heavy sophisticated weapons. There is no doubt that this particular attack was premeditated. The 2010 violence was probably the bloodiest, with an estimated 4,000 people killed and over 180,000 displaced. The Federal Government was compelled to bring in the army to keep the peace.

In spite of the heavy presence of the army throughout the capital, some attackers infiltrated from neighbouring Bauchi State at dawn, killing over 700 people – most of them defenseless women and children -- in the villages of Dogo Nahauwa, Rasat and Zot in Foron District, barely a stone throw from Governor's home. Major-General Saleh Maina, the General Officer in Command, claimed that the Governor had never alerted him on the impending crisis. He has been alleged to be "a killer, villain, supporter of Muslim against Christian, one who has asked soldiers to turn the other way when Fulanis are killing Christians and one who has directed soldiers under his command to protect Muslims against Christians whenever Christians attack Muslims, thereby exposing Christians to army gunfire".[61] The use of sophisticated weapons and widespread use of army uniforms during these killings speak of possible complicity by the military in these episodes of violence. The Dogo Nahauwa killings were exceptional by their venom and brutality. Torching a sleepy village at dawn and gunning down the fleeing women and children amounted to an abuse of Humanity and could properly only be described in terms of genocide.

Since 2011, there have been sporadic attacks, mainly by Hausa-Fulanis on local villagers. Local youth militias have also waged their own campaigns of reprisals and counter-reprisals. The rise of Boko Haram in the north east and intensification of activities by al-Qaeda in the Sahel and the Maghrib may pose a renewed danger for the Plateau which has come under such a heavy onslaught for nearly two decades. Indeed, Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for recent suicide attacks on churches in Jos and other parts of the middle belt. During July 2012, suspected Fulani attackers descended on mourners in Barkin Ladi during a requiem service for 63 people killed in a previous massacre. It would seem that the people of the Plateau are not even allowed to mourn their dead. More than 200 were killed, prominent among them were two serving federal legislators from the State, Senator Gyang Dantong, a distinguished consultant surgeon turned politician, and a Member of the House of Representatives, Danfulani Gyang.[62]

While much of the conflict may have originated from the problem of political representation, it has snowballed into a religious conflict with global dimensions. The Vatican has condemned the atrocities that have taken the lives of so many; and so has UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. Global media have reported the unfolding of the tragedy with increasing interest and alarm. Media such as Al-Jazeera have also orchestrated a line of reporting that pitches the entire Muslim world against a small group of people -- the innately peaceful Berom people -- as the principal villains in a tragic drama that they neither desired nor created. The people of the Plateau feel, quite justifiably, under siege by forces go as far afield as Niger, Chad and the Arabian Peninsula, in the context of a government that has shown clearly that it cannot protect them. It also seems evident that the leaders of the Plateau have failed their people abysmally. With a penchant for 'tribal' politics, they have come out neither with creative solutions to the crisis nor have they aimed to make a difference to the whole thing.

It would seem that part of the agenda of Boko Haram and other such jihadist groups is the 'cleansing' of the Christian presence in the north. It is a known fact, for example, that there hardly any churches left in Yobe State. Christian communities in Borno have resorted to praying at home instead of meeting at a place of worship. When they fully succeed in this 'ethnic cleansing', the next logical step would be to intensify their activities in the middle belt so as to break the spirit of those communities through the grand strategy of *fitna* and to ensure that their ideology prevails throughout the 'Old North'. The fundamental contradiction of this movement is that they entertain a strictly narrow definition of the 'the North', but at the same time they insist that the Middle Belt must also remain in the historic North.

Since they will stop at nothing, it is self-evident that the embattled people of the Plateau and the middle belt will have to defend themselves and the values that they hold most sacred. What is at stake is nothing less than the future of Nigeria itself. Given the complete breakdown of trust, the failure of efforts to find a just and lasting solution, and the existential threat which they face, local communities will probably have to resort to self-help to protect themselves and their families – at least until such a time that government takes concrete steps to protect them. The right to self-help by communities that face an existential threat to their very survival is a recognised principle under all the norms of global ethics and international law from John Locke to Hugo Grotius and John Rawls.[63] For this to be justified, it must be clear that they face an imminent radical existential threat by an identifiable aggressor (*the jus ad bellum*). At the same time, they must deploy methods that satisfy the criteria of proportionality, legitimate means, right intent and reasonable hope of success (*the jus in bello*).[64]

Governments at State and Federal level have attempted to hold peace summits and institute interfaith dialogues, but these efforts have borne little fruit. Military intervention has only succeeded in maintaining a Carthaginian peace. We have seen neither original thinking nor bold initiatives that would address the situation and rescue the benighted people of Plateau from the jaws of catastrophe. Judicialism has also failed. Between 2004 and 2010 no less than five judicial commissions of inquiry have we established to address the Plateau crisis. The five judicial panels were (1) Justice Aribiton Fiberisima Commission of Inquiry into the 12th April 1994 clash in the Jos Metropolis; (2) Justice Niki Tobi Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Civil Disturbances in Jos and its Environs of September 2001; (3) Prince Bola Ajibola Commission of Inquiry into the November 2008 Crisis; (4) General Emmanuel Abisoye Panel of Inquiry of 2009; and Chief Solomon Lar Presidential Administrative Panel. None have yielded any meaningful results. For some strange reason, government have not taken bold steps to publish the findings of the commissions as a means of building a framework towards a just and lasting peace.[65]

### **Origins of the Boko Haram Sect**

The origin of the Boko Haram sect goes back to 2001 when a Muslim cleric, Mohammed Ali, succeeded in attracting a large following at his mosque in the north eastern city of Maiduguri. They had decided to move to neighbouring Yobe State because they found Maiduguri to be too decadent and corrupt. In 2003 the group were involved in a local dispute which led to a shootout and the death of its leader, Mohammed Ali and several of its members. Known as 'the Nigerian Taliban', on account of their Puritanism, the group later moved back to Maiduguri under the inspiration of their new leader, a charismatic young man by the name of Mohammed Yusuf.[66] The group acquired a piece of land in the northern part of Maiduguri previously owned by Yusuf's father-in-law Baba Fugu Mohammed. The new mosque became known as *Ibn Tamiyyah Masjid*, in honour of the medieval Arab theologian Sheik ul-Islam Ibn Tamiyyah (1263—1328 AD).

## Box 2: Time lines of Boko Haram Activities

- 2002: Founded by Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf
- 2009: Hundreds killed, Maiduguri police stations stormed
- 2009: Mohammed Yusuf captured by army, later found dead
- Sep 2010: Freed hundreds of prisoners from Maiduguri jail
- Sep 2010: Attack on Bauchi prison leading to escape of 721 prisoners
- Dec 2010: Bombed Jos, killing 80;
- Dec 2010: New Year's Eve attack on Abuja barracks
- 2010-2011: Dozens killed in Maiduguri shootings
- May 2011: Bombed several states after president's inauguration
- June 2011: Police HQ bombed in Abuja
- Aug 2011: UN HQ bombed in Abuja
- Aug 2011: Prominent Muslim cleric Liman Bana killed by the sect
- Nov 2011: Coordinated bomb and gun attacks in Yobe/Borno
- Dec 2011: Christmas bombing, St. Theresa's Church, Madalla
- Jan 2012: Massive attacks in Kano, killing over 200.
- Feb 2012: Attacks on Church of Christ in Nigeria, Jos, 35 killed
- Feb 2012: Suicide bombing of army headquarters, Kaduna
- March 2012: An Italian and Briton kidnapped by a splinter group of
- April 2012: Taraba attacks, with 11 killed
- June 2012: Bombing of Bauchi church, 15 casualties
- June 2012: Attacks on Kaduna and Zaria churches, 50 casualties
- June 2012: 130 bodies found in Plateau State, killed by the sect
- July 2012: Massacre in Jos funeral church service, 60 killed
- Aug 2012: Suicide bombing, Damuturu, Yobe, 6 soldiers killed

Source: Various Newspapers

## Box 3: Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists?

Boko Haram promotes a version of Islam which makes it "haram", or forbidden, for Muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with Western society. This includes voting in elections, wearing shirts and trousers or receiving a secular education. Boko Haram regards the Nigerian state as being run by non-believers, even when the country had a Muslim president. The group's official name is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, which in Arabic means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad".

Since the Sokoto caliphate, which ruled parts of what is now northern Nigeria, Niger and southern Cameroon, fell under British control in 1903, there has been resistance among the area's Muslims to Western education. Many Muslim families still refuse to send their children to government-run "Western schools", a problem compounded by the ruling elite which does not see education as a priority. Against this background, the charismatic Muslim cleric, Mohammed Yusuf, formed Boko Haram in Maiduguri in 2002. He set up a religious complex, which included a mosque and an Islamic school. Many poor Muslim families from across Nigeria, as well as neighbouring countries, enrolled their children at the school. But Boko Haram was not only interested in education. Its political goal was to create an Islamic state, and the school became a recruiting ground for jihadis to fight the state.

In 2009, Boko Haram carried out a spate of attacks on police stations and other government buildings in Maiduguri. This led to shoot-outs on Maiduguri's streets. Hundreds of Boko Haram supporters were killed and thousands of residents fled the city. Nigeria's security forces eventually seized the group's headquarters, capturing its fighters and killing Mr Yusuf. His body was shown on state television and the security forces declared Boko Haram finished. But its fighters have regrouped under a new leader and in 2010 they attacked a prison in Bauchi state, freeing hundreds of the group's supporters.

Boko Haram's trademark has been the use of gunmen on motorbikes, killing police, politicians and anyone who criticises it, including clerics from other Muslim traditions and a Christian preacher. The group has also staged several more audacious attacks in different parts of northern Nigeria, showing that it is establishing a presence across the region and fuelling tension between Muslims and Christians. These include the 2011 Christmas Day bombings on the outskirts of Abuja and in the north-eastern city of Damaturu, a 2010 New Year's Eve attack on a military barracks in Abuja, several explosions around the time of President Goodluck Jonathan's inauguration in May 2011, followed by the bombing of the police headquarters and the UN headquarters in Abuja.

Source: Farouk Chothia, BBC African Service, 11 January, 2012

Mohammed Yusuf used his charisma and organisational abilities to build a formidable network of followers. His organisation was run almost like a cooperative, where the well-off contributed funds which were used to help the poor. He was also patronised by the wealthy and the politically well-connected, including the Governor of the State at the time. He drew mass following from the elites as well as the masses. He also performed significant charitable works among the poor and the group was increasingly known as a 'State within the State'.<sup>[67]</sup> In 2007, during the eve of the presidential elections, a cleric and regular preacher at the Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri, Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam, was assassinated while praying in a mosque in Kano.

It was alleged that he was assassinated on the orders of Mohammed Yusuf because of his public criticisms of Yusuf and his followers. More bloody confrontations were to follow in Bauchi in July 2009, with the group becoming more radicalised. The highhanded crackdown by the police simply upscaled the level of confrontation, with the group resorting to the use of more sophisticated weapons.<sup>[68]</sup> The conflict soon metamorphosed from being a clash among Muslim groups to a focus on churches and Christians from Yobe to Maiduguri and Bauchi. On 30 July Mohammed Yusuf was arrested while in hiding and was soon reported dead, presumably executed by the police. Also executed was Buji Foi, a former commissioner of religious affairs in Borno State and a known financier of the group.<sup>[69]</sup>

The death of Mohammed Yusuf, far from quelling the rebellion, has given it added fuel. The April 2011 post-election violence in the north appeared to have enhanced the legitimacy of the Boko Haram sect as an enforcer of northern political interests under the cover of religion.<sup>[70]</sup> The October 2011 Eagle Square bombings which took the lives of 12 people were the opening salvoes for the current round of terrorist activities. Before then, there were rumours of massive importation of arms by all sorts of shadowy groups as the country was moving towards an election year. The interception of an arms cache that came from Iran led to some diplomatic difficulty with Iran. The Boko Haram sect, a millenarian extremist group that is avowedly committed to the forcible Islamisation of Nigeria has moved from one audacious act to the other, including attacks on the UN Office and Police Headquarters and military barracks in Abuja. Box 4.2 outlines the catalogue of terrorist attacks unleashed by Boko Haram since 2002. It would be a mistake to view Boko Haram as being purely a religious problem. Not only are politicians and other influential persons implicated in it; it thrives on the increasing misery in which young people, particularly in the impoverished North, find themselves today.

#### Box 4: How Boko Haram Have Changed the Maiduguri Where I grew up

My home town, in the far north-east of Nigeria, is also the stronghold of the country's radical Islamist group, Boko Haram. And in the past few months, the group has carried out a number of violent and devastating attacks in many parts of Nigeria - including drive-by shootings and bombings in Maiduguri, even the central mosque in December.

Back from London in Maiduguri for the first time in almost a year, the town is as dusty as I left it - but it appears poorer - and so do its industrious and boisterous people. No more do buses, taxis, beggars, vendors and shop keepers hustle for business late into the night. Families are no longer able to afford three meals a day. Property speculators are complaining that business is down, and some are suffering losses. "Closing shops at 7pm is just like working half-day," said an economist with the University of Maiduguri who, like most people I spoke to, asked to remain anonymous. "The economy here is driven by the informal sector which has no closing hours," he added. Boko Haram attacks have left Maiduguri a shell of its former self. "We live in constant fear," one resident told me, "and you are the only journalist I can talk to, because I know you personally, but please do not reveal my name." Many people fled Maiduguri months ago in the wake of the killings, leaving behind firmly padlocked houses. Some of the town's wealthy businessmen have relocated their enterprises to other states.

When bombs went off on Christmas Day 2011 in churches in Abuja and Jos killing at least 40 people, Maiduguri was placed under a state of emergency because of the many Boko Haram members who are based there. Since then, gun-toting soldiers have set up countless checkpoints and taken up positions outside churches, police stations and other high-profile locations that have previously been Boko Haram's targets. The soldiers are there to protect the residents of Maiduguri - but people seem united in their condemnation of the curfew and the militarisation of the streets. They accuse the soldiers of torture and other human rights violations. Boko Haram squads target soldiers and security agents with explosives, either in their fortified positions or in their patrol vehicles. After an attack, the soldiers go into neighbouring houses, and are said to indiscriminately beat up the male occupants. The army denies this is happening - nevertheless, it is a recurring cry that is hard to ignore.



The questions many Maiduguri residents want answered are: When will the borders reopen and when will the army leave the streets?

There is a palpable sense of fear. Many people are resigned to their fate and have resorted to prayer to try to rediscover the virtues of peace and hospitality - which, once upon a time, was the defining feature of my home town.

Jimeh Saleh, BBC News Africa, 30 April, 2012 (abridged).

## 1. Economic and Social Consequences

In rich as well as poor countries, terrorism exerts a heavy toll on national economies. It is inevitable that the economic impact of terrorism would be more felt in unsophisticated monocultural low-income economies than they would be felt in highly advanced, diversified industrial economies. Economists have developed various approaches to analysing the economic costs of terrorism. First, we have the direct costs resulting from damage to physical infrastructures and economic assets. Then we have the indirect costs associated with long queues on airports and highways due to the security checks that people now have to undergo. A third level of economic cost derives from the loss of domestic and inward investments associated with terrorism. It is evident that terrorism scares foreign investors and increases the costs of doing business within and between countries.

It has been estimated that the city of New York alone lost US\$21 billion as a result of the 9/11 attacks. With the establishment of the Homeland Security, the US Government now has to spend a whopping US\$500 billion on security alone. Globally, it has also been calculated that world GDP decreased by a whopping US\$3.6 trillion in 2002 as a direct and indirect consequence of terrorist activities in 2001. This amount can be put in perspective when we realise it amounts to a third of the GDP of the United States and exceeds the combined GDP of Argentina, Italy and Britain. Another area of economic cost relates to the impact of terrorism on international trade supply chains, i.e. the sequence of steps that global suppliers of goods take to get products from one area to another.[71]

Linked to this is the increased cost to global supply chain logistics. Substantial costs do accrue to businesses when extra security layers have to be introduced at ports and land borders. According to the Paris-based OECD, higher transportation costs associated with more security checks have a negative impact on the external trade of emerging economies that, over the last decade, have benefited from reduction in costs in the last decade. This would in turn affect those countries' ability to combat poverty.

The greater uncertainty arising from terrorist activities have forced insurance firms to revise upwards their actuarial risk projections and premium costs. New market-based instruments such as 'catastrophe bonds' have also been introduced to ameliorate risk from terrorist activities. In the industrial economies, the estimated extra spending on security by government and the private sector by 1% of GDP is forecast to result in a 0.7% fall in GDP output, which further complicates national fiscal balances and growth prospects.

For countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, Kenya and Tanzania that are dependent on tourism, any incidence of terrorism is likely to register significant falls in the number of tourist visitors. For such countries, a drop in the number of tourists translates into significant falls in revenue and economic growth. In the case of Nigeria, it is clear that the new focus on tackling terrorism would mean diverting scarce budgetary resources from vital development projects to defence and security. The association of Nigeria's external image with terrorism and the fact that until recently she was on the 'Terror Watch' countries would also mean less FDI coming to the country, as potential investors reassess their risk options. Some who have already invested in Nigeria may consider relocating their businesses to neighbouring countries such as Ghana, Togo and Benin.

Apart from the economic and monetary costs associated with terrorism, there are also social and psychological costs. Terrorism erodes inter-communal trust and destroys the reservoir of social capital that is so vital to building harmonious societies and pooling together community energies for national development. The attendant proliferation of small arms and the militarisation of society results in a vicious cycle of violence which hampers national cohesion and stability.

The long-term impact of such violence on cities and regions is best exemplified by the impoverishment that has affected Kaduna and Jos. Kaduna used to be one of the most prosperous cities in Nigeria. It was in many ways the industrial hub of the North, a cosmopolitan city with over a dozen textile firms and prosperous trading companies. The Kaduna of today is a tragically divided city in which Muslims live predominantly in the North and Christians predominantly in the South. All the textiles have shut down and most investors have packed up their businesses. The Jos Plateau is following a similar trend, as it loses its cosmopolitanism and local economies are destroyed. The tragedy is that the collapse of local economies and the erosion of social capital reinforce a downward spiral of further impoverishment, which in itself sows the seeds of further conflict. Box 4 provides a journalist's account of the impact of terror and insurgency on the once prosperous city of Maiduguri.

For most of the north, the ongoing insurgency has had a significant negative impact on the regional economy. Lebanese and Indian expatriates who have established businesses in Kano going back decades have relocated to Abuja and the south. A good number have left the country altogether. Hotels, banks and other business sectors have witnessed significant reductions in their activities. The border towns that have thrived on trade with neighbouring countries have also seen their businesses curtailed because of increasing restrictions on cross-border traffic. In Kano alone, an estimated 126 industries have recently closed down.[72] Another trend is the massive movement of southerners from the north, many of them SME operators and professionals.[73]

The case of Borno is particularly illustrative of the general trend. A State that officially defines itself as "*The Land of Peace*" has become a by-word for violence and religious extremism. Partly engendered by mass disenchantment born of impoverishment and partly sponsored in the past by misguided politicians, the rising spectre of extremist violence has reinforced a path-dependence of poverty, wiping off livelihoods, undermining societal cohesion and deepening the vicious cycle of poverty.

All the available studies from the UN agencies, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and other relevant institutions point to the fact that poverty is worsening in Nigeria. According to the NBS, over 60 percent of Nigerians are living below the internationally defined poverty line.[74] It is evident also from recent data that poverty in Nigeria wears a predominantly northern face. Borno and the north east comprise some of the most impoverished regions in country, where the incidence of absolute poverty exceeds the 70 percent mark.

Poverty in Borno and other parts of the north east is compounded by ecological factors. The drying up of the Lake Chad basin and the disappearance of its associated livelihoods; the relentless onslaught of Climate Change and desertification and erosion combine to create the macabre drama of human and ecological catastrophe. Borno has one of the fastest growing populations in the country, with its estimated 4.5 million people growing at an average of 2.8 percent per annum.

The rate of urbanisation has been estimated at over 4 percent annually. As people move from the rural areas into the cities, greater pressure is placed on dilapidated infrastructures, social services and housing, leading to the rise of urban slums. Migration southwards is placing additional pressures on scarce fertile land for cultivation and pasture for grazing of livestock.

Agriculture, which remains the backbone of the local economy, is hampered by low productivity and access to inputs such as seedlings, fertilisers, appropriate technology and affordable credit. While such schemes such as Promoting Sustainable Agriculture in Borno State (PROSAB) supported by the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) have been quite successful, it is clear that more ground remains to be covered. Enhancing farm productivity is critical to eliminating hunger and ensuring food security.

Infrastructure facilities across the State, particularly electricity, transport and water remain in acute deficit. Electricity supply is largely restricted to the urban centres, despite the efforts of the State Rural Electrification Board. While the State is well connected to the rest of the country through air and road, most of the roads remain in a deplorable state of disrepair. The modernisation of the rail system is yet to reach Borno, a fact which adds to the economic cost of moving goods to and from the State. Water scarcity is probably the single most critical challenge facing ordinary people in the State, much of it due to poor maintenance of dams and boreholes.

Health is another major area of challenge for development in the State. Available data show that ordinary people have poor access to medical services and most cannot afford the charges. The available private health providers are expensive and the majority of the poor cannot afford their services. Antenatal and post-natal care requires improvement while primary healthcare facilities require major rehabilitation across all the Local Government Areas.

Illiteracy and lack of educational opportunities are a major stumbling block to social and economic progress. The State remains one of the most educationally disadvantaged regions in the Federation. It is estimated that only one out seven pupils (13.82%) proceed from elementary school to secondary education in Borno State.[75] Most of the youths have no access and no opportunity to acquire vocational skills that will make them economically self-sufficient. While the State is disadvantaged in terms of western education, it is a magnet for Qur'anic education under the *Almajiri* system. Of the estimated 9 million *Almajirai* to be found throughout northern Nigeria, an estimated 1.5 million are said to be found in Borno State alone. Such an influx of under-fed, ill-clad and poorly-housed youths constitutes a potentially explosive force in the hands of a teacher with extremist ideological views and politicians with an axe to grind with their opponents.

Linked to this is the fact of unemployment, particularly among young people. Youth unemployment across Nigeria stands at a frightening level of over 50 percent. For a region with dwindling economic opportunities such as the north east, the figures could exceed 60 percent. The virtual absence of youth development programmes is a major blind spot in national public management system. It amounts to a time-bomb.

The terrorist insurgency in Borno and the north east has destroyed not only the local economy; it has compounded the crisis of poverty in the region. The author visited Maiduguri in April 2011 at the official invitation of the State Governor, Kashim Shettima. We found that the Governor is a hardworking and compassionate technocrat who wants to do everything possible to lift his people out of poverty. But he is up against enormous forces which go well beyond his power and reach. We found Maiduguri to be a shadow of its former vibrant self – a city of ghosts where people talk in whispers. Box 4 summarises the situation in the words of a citizen of the town.

### **Terrorism and Nationhood**

It is clear that the current situation portends ominous trends for Africa's most populous nation. In the northern cities of Bornu, Damaturu and Yola, Christian worshippers have been attacked in churches and the latest reports indicate house-to-house killings by extremists, far from the eyes of the police, army and security agencies. President Goodluck Jonathan recently alarmed the entire nation when he declared that the Boko Haram sect has infiltrated the military, the police and security services and even the Presidency. He declared the current situation as the worst since the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970. There are also strong indications that Southern Christians -- including indigenous Hausa-Fulani northern Christians -- are leaving the north en masse. Northern Muslims are also leaving the South by the truckloads. What someone has termed the 'spirit of Sudan' has gripped the entire nation, with an unprecedented atmosphere of fear and gloom in under what appears like a gathering storm. If Christians were to retaliate even once in a crowded mosque on a Friday, it would be nightfall for Nigeria. Sadly, there is no guarantee that this collective restraint on the part of the vast majority of Christians will continue to hold into the interminable future. Nigeria's future hangs on a precipice.

The Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka has recently pointed out that Nigeria is already at the verge of disintegration. It is a choice that the current generation of Nigerians must make – whether they want to live together as one country or face the bleak prospects of dissolution. The country stands at that twilight zone in which any wrong move or misguided action could spell disaster for the survival of the federation. With the onslaught of Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, the country faces the grim prospects of a disastrous religious conflict that would make genocidal Rwanda look like a pantomime. The Goodluck Jonathan administration must make very tough choices in the years ahead. Fishing out the kingpins of terrorism and confiscating their assets and prosecuting them is absolutely vital, in addition to decisive military action to defeat the terrorists. He must realise that a government that cannot secure the lives and properties of its citizens has failed in its most elementary duty. In all this, however, efforts must be made to bring Muslims and Christians -- North and South – together and healing the bitter wounds of the recent past.

Can we legitimately suppose that some of the political leaders of the north know more about Boko Haram than they are prepared to let out? Could the silence of some of them imply tacit complicity? Are there indeed significant elements in

northern society who may not approve of the methods of the insurgents but who nonetheless endorse their objectives?

Whatever the answers that emerge from the foregoing questions, one thing is clear: Boko Haram could not have done a greater disservice to the Muslim cause. Such barbarities as we have seen against defenceless women and children in places of worship are unworthy of even pagans. Other Nigerians are obviously more than able to inflict the same, if not higher level, of damage. They have held back, not out of fear, but out of that moral restraint and inner hope that Nigeria must not be allowed to descend into utter darkness. I would urge them to continue to exercise restraint and to forgive those who kill and maim their women and children. On its part, the international community must rise in wholesale condemnation against the evil that Boko Haram represents. Civil society, government and the international community must join hands to restore hope and to build the foundations for a just and lasting peace. Indeed, the sages of old have taught that light will always triumph over darkness. But it is clear that light can defeat darkness not with the weapons of vengeful violence, but with the arsenals of enlightenment and reason; with that moral force which accords with the spirit of the laws and the conscience of civilised humanity.

The attitude of the United States and the West in general has been rather intriguing. The EU has not expressed a strong position with regard to terrorist violence in Nigeria, beyond the pious resolutions that were passed during the joint ACP-EU Parliamentary Assembly in Horsens, Denmark in May 2012 condemning terrorist violence and urging disarmament and dialogue.[76] The Obama administration has not placed Boko Haram on the list of terrorist organisations on the pretext that the link between the sect and al-Qaeda has not been established beyond any shadow of doubt.[77] There are also those who insist that doing so will give Boko Haram undue prominence, expanding its access to international terrorist financing while making it more difficult to engage with the group while providing development assistance to the impoverished North. Some Western commentators have tended to blame lack of Christian forbearance for prolonging the crisis.[78]

Whilst it is true that it always “takes two to tango” and that aggressive preaching by Pentecostal groups has been offensive to many Muslims, we cannot run away from the statistical fact that the overwhelming number of attacks have often started from one side. The entirety of the north has been undergoing what amounts to a form of low-intensity warfare that fits in perfectly with the logic of Global Jihad. The aim appears to be of ethnic cleansing of minority communities in the north through relentless violence, fear and demoralisation.

Some foreign analysts wilfully ignore these realities, in particular, the statistics underlying the slaughter of defenceless women and children in churches and villages that has been a recurrent phenomenon in northern Nigeria since the 1980s. A noted American political scientist and purported ‘Nigeria expert’, Jean Herskovits, recently wrote an article that seemed to whitewash the atrocities of the terrorist insurgents, putting the blame, instead, on the government. Her article amounted to an insult to the families of the thousands of innocent souls who have been lost due to Islamist-inspired terror in Nigeria. [79] A few years ago a study from the United States predicted that Nigeria will disintegrate by the year 2015.[80] The United States has been in this business of prophesying doom for Nigeria for decades now. The West seems unwilling to lend support to President Goodluck Jonathan because it would not want to offend the Arab-Muslim world by appearing to be taking sides with Nigerian Christians. Some Nigerians see in this attitude a conspiracy to ensure the disintegration of Africa’s largest nation. Few understand that if Nigeria does eventually implode, it would result in the bloodiest civil war in Africa’s history; an economic disaster for West Africa and, a political tragedy for Africa and a catastrophic humanitarian disaster for the international community.

Beyond the loss of lives and the destruction of properties and physical infrastructure, terrorism is even more damaging to the soul of the individual and the community. Buildings that have been destroyed can be rebuilt in no time; infrastructures can be rehabilitated. Traumatized souls, sadly, may take a generation to heal.[81]

## Summary and Conclusions

While globalisation has made the world smaller, it has generated new forms of insecurity among nations and cultural communities that had been cocooned from external influences for centuries. Globalisation has compounded the crisis of governance in some developing countries, deepening the tendencies towards state failure while undermining the capacity to govern at national and international levels. All these factors have weakened the capacity of state authorities, leading to the emergence of transnational terrorist groups that are competing for power and influence with established state authorities. Compounding all these challenges is the absence of multilateral institutions that would ensure effective global governance. In the words of Yehezkel Dror: “humanity as a whole faces critical choices in respect to ... the future of global governance”. [82]

Terrorism is nothing less than the ultimate test of the moral fibre of free societies. In the Nigerian and African context, it is not attributable to globalisation and its unequalising tendencies; it is also about the crisis of development and nationhood and the failure of the state to provide human security and to act as a servant of the people. Tackling terrorism requires fighting to regain the hearts and minds of the youths and in fostering dialogue among communities. Government must become the servant of the people, not their master. Military action will be necessary, but it must be carefully deployed and it must conform to international humanitarian standards. The security agencies must work more closely together and should be more strategic in their thinking and action. The Federal Government also has to work with its ECOWAS neighbours to prevent terrorists from penetrating into the country through its porous borders. The strategy we advocate calls not only for bold action in defeating terrorism; it requires expanding the possibility frontiers of welfare while widening the democratic space for popular participation. Government must provide decent jobs for the teeming millions of youths; steering them from a culture of nihilistic violence to one of tolerance, patriotism and nonviolence. Ultimately, it is about reinventing Nigeria as a compassionate country; a purpose-driven nation with a clearly defined vision of its manifest destiny as the leader of the New Africa.

A generation of Nigerians, tempered by war and tutored by a hard and bitter peace, should appreciate more than any other that civility and restraint are the only true course for the survival of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious democracy. Terrorism is a negation of all civilised values, encouraging as it does such contempt for human life. There can be no illusions about it: the apostles of extremism are the enemies of liberty -- in the memorable words of George Kennan -- malignant parasites that feed on diseased tissue. They must be stopped at all costs.

While violence has been endemic in the Nigerian polity, the leaders of the north have a particular duty to re-examine their readiness to use religion at the slightest opportunity as a weapon of fear against fellow citizens, particularly minorities in the north. The views of Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka may be anathema to some, but his observations on this matter are unassailable: "When I say that the phenomenon has a very long history, I am talking about a movement that relies on religion as a fuel for their operation, as a fuel for mobilisation, as the impetus, an augmentation of any other legitimate or illegitimate grievance that they might have against society. Because of that fuel, that irrational, very combustible fuel of religion of a particular strain, of a particular irredentist strain....All they need to be told is that this is an enemy of religion and they are ready to kill. No matter the motivations, no matter the extra-motivations of those who send them out, they need only one motivation: that they are fighting the cause of that religion." [83]

Thinkers as wide apart as Franz Fanon and Maurice Duverger have understood that conflict is endemic in human society and violence merely reflects the existential dilemmas of the human condition itself. If Boko Haram did not adopt the wholesale murder of defenceless people in the name of Jihad, they would probably have had the majority of Nigerian youths on their side by now. The failures of government and the prevailing culture of impunity have alienated the vast majority of Nigerians from the political system.

In their random and indiscriminate killing of women, children and entire families in places of worship in pursuit of their *soi-disant* Jihad, Boko Haram have placed themselves outside the pale of civility even for a terrorist organisation. If their atrocities continue unchecked and succeed in reaching the south, the inevitable reprisals that will follow will shake the federation to its very foundations. Nigeria's future as a political community will be gravely imperilled as a consequence. Indeed, former aviation minister Femi Fani-Kayode – regarded as an alarmist by some -- insists that the current insurgency represents the greatest threat to Nigeria since the civil war. [84] He likens the Nigerian federation to a marriage of which the 'rich wife' is the South and the 'poor husband' is the North. "The marriage has been strained and turbulent. We fought a brutal and avoidable 3 year civil war from 1967 in which we killed no less than 2 million....Yet today's barbarism and mass killings are far more horrendous than ever and are far better planned, funded, orchestrated and executed by those that are behind them than ever before. The question is how much longer can the "rich wife" and the "poor husband" give and take this sort of thing from one another? For how long can the centre hold before the voices of reason and restraint are completely drowned by the irrational, compulsive outrage that is gradually building up and the uncontrollable outcry for reprisals and revenge?" [85]

To be sure, the insurgents are neither demons nor irrational madmen. They have simply calculated that the payoffs from their activities outweigh the costs. In the words of political scientist David Apter: "Choices by an individual define his moral personality. Choices by governments constitute the moral aims of society and reflect the ambitions of those within it, thus constituting that measure of satisfaction that will lead to a stable order. The efforts to find such a moral condition, however, may lead to the most violent and unstable of human conditions...in such periods, the loftiest human purposes may be expressed in violence. Whatever the situation, it is in such times that men make explicit those core values they hope will lead to both a moral community and moral individuals. Perhaps this is the ultimate secret of political life". [86]

Ultimately, Boko Haram may be more about politics than it is about religion. But they have also told us that they are waging a Jihad and they have gone ahead to demonstrate it in their praxis. We cannot ignore those realities. But we must not play into their hands. Muslims and Christians are the children of Abraham. Both religions are indigenous to Africa and none can wish the other away. Nigerians will have to learn how to live together or perish. They must therefore create a national system that is all-inclusive and participatory and that encourages the civic virtues of tolerance and social justice. It is said that true love casteth out fear. What the extremists want to do is to impose a reign of fear; fear in turn will force people to retreat to their own tents and prepare for war. Nigerians must deny them the opportunity to render an entire nation captive.

Whether we like it or not, extremists of all faiths – madmen who hear voices at noonday – will always be around. What is required is to put in place institutions of restraint; building a civic culture that fosters what the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas termed "the ethic of infinite responsibility". [87] In the words of the nineteenth century French political thinker Alexis de Tocqueville, "nothing is more fertile in marvels than the art of being free, but nothing is harder than freedom's apprenticeship...liberty is generally born in stormy weather, growing with difficulty amid civil discords, and only when it is already old does one see the blessings it has brought". [88]

With its vast natural resources, vibrant cultures and energetic peoples, Nigeria has what it takes to be one of the leading nations in the twenty-first century. But she can only fulfil her vocation when she secures a just and lasting peace within her borders; when she is governed by responsible leaders committed to expanding the possibility frontiers of welfare while protecting the liberties of all her citizens without regard to ethnicity or creed. This will entail major constitutional reengineering and reinvention of the very meaning of nationhood. The pernicious concept of 'indigene' and 'settler' will have to be expunged from the spirit and letter of the country's laws not only in Plateau State but throughout the federation. The ancient Chinese sage LaoTzu famously declared that "governing a large state is like cooking a small fish". It is a delicate art requiring skill, dexterity and wisdom. Governing a country such as Nigeria requires the qualities of the highest statesmanship. Sadly, this might be asking too much from a ruling elite that possesses neither a moral vision nor the civic virtue and sense of destiny that makes for the building of a great and prosperous republic. [89]

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[1] African Development Bank, African Economic Outlook, Tunis, 2012. Cf. The International Monetary Fund, IMF Executive Board Concludes 2011 Article IV Consultation With Nigeria, Washington DC, 28 February, 2012.

[2] The World Bank, Nigeria: Employment and Growth Study, Washington DC, November 2009.

[3] Fareed Zakaria, The Future of Democracy: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad, New York & London, Norton & Company, 2004.

[4] Cf. Emmanuel Nnadozie, Managing the Nigerian Economy in an Era of Global Financial and Economic Crises, Annual Public Lecture of the Nigerian Economic Society (NES), Transcorp Hilton Abuja, 15 March, 2012.

[5] Cf. Alexander Wendt. *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. The concept of 'the invention of tradition' as put forward by two eminent British historians is very much in this spirit. See Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

[6] Kalu N. Kalu & Olutayo T. Oguntoyinbo, "Alternative Explanations of Conflict and Violence in the Niger Delta, Nigeria", *The Air and Space Power Journal*, 1st Quarter, 3 (1), 2012, pp. 85—96.

[7] Noam Chomsky, "International Terrorism: Image and Reality", in Alexander George (ed.), *Western State Terrorism*, London and New York, Routledge, 1991.

[8] Charles Tilly, *Terrorism, Terror, Terrorism and Terrorists*, *Sociological Theory*, vo. 22. No. 1, pp. 5—13.

[9] Cf. Tomis Kaplan, "The Terrorism of 'Terrorism'", in James P. Sterba (ed.), *Terrorism and International Justice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 47—66.

[10] We could probably avoid these definitional issues by simply defining terrorism as "what terrorists do". But that would be begging the question.

[11] United Kingdom Department of Home Affairs, London, 1974.

[12] The African Union, *Convention on Prevention and Combating Terrorism*, Addis Ababa, 1994. The AU Convention, however, excludes from its definition all legitimate struggles waged by oppressed peoples against foreign rule or aggression in accordance with the principles of international law.

[13] Department of Political Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, New York, September 1992.

[14] David Dickson, *Political Islam in Africa: The Need for a New Research and Diplomatic Agenda*, United State Institute of Peace, Special Report No. 140, May 2005.

[15] Donal B. Cruise O'Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal: The Political and Economic Organisation of an Islamic Brotherhood*, Oxford:

Clarendon, 1971. Cf. Cf. J. Spencer Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 37—46;

Jean Copans, *Les marabouts de l'arachide: La confrérie mouride et les paysans du Sénégal*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988.

[16] Princeton Lyman, *The Terrorist Threat in Africa*, *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2004.

[17] Christopher Coker, *Globalisation and Terrorism*, Paper prepared for a seminar on "The Prospects for the Canadian Summit," sponsored by the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo, the Japanese-British Society, the LSE International Social Economic Forum in Japan and the G8 Research Group, Nippon Press, Centre, Tokyo, Japan, June 10, 2002 (mimeo).

[18] Of late, we have witnessed the emergence of powerful non-state actors who vie for authority, power and influence with the state. These non-state actors range from transnational firms to non-governmental organisations, drug cartels and international terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda. Such powerful non-state actors can also seize new opportunities to leverage on their capacity to do good as well as evil.

**[19] The Occupy Wall Street Campaign in New York in September 2011 emerged as a spontaneous mass movement against what is perceived as the greed and corruption of global bankers and financiers which fuelling inequality as well as international financial crisis.**

**[20] Of course, it is not necessarily the case that the mere prevalence of poverty could be said to engender terrorism. Rather, poverty normally interacts with other variables such as ethnically divided elites, absence of societal cohesion, corruption, political disempowerment and perceptions of horizontal or vertical deprivation.**

[21] Michael Burleigh, *Sacred Causes: Religion and Politics From the European Dictators to al-Qaeda*, London: Harper Collins, 2006, p. 468.

[22] Jean Baudrillard, *L'Esprit du terrorisme*, Paris, Le Monde, 2 November 2011.

[23] Le Monde, 7 November, 2011. Minc argues that the real problem is the fact that our globalised post-Cold War

international order no longer possesses a moral centre of gravity and represents the emergence of a new medievalism, with its chaos and lawlessness. See also Alain Minc, *Le Nouveau Moyen Age*, Paris, Gallimard, 1995.

[24] Robert D. Kagan, *The Coming Anarchy: How Scarcity, Crime, Overpopulation, Tribalism and Disease are Rapidly Destroying the Social Fabric of our Planet*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994.

[25] West Africa, he insists, "provides an appropriate introduction to the issues, often extremely unpleasant to discuss, that will soon confront our civilization".

[26] Nader Kabbani & Ekta Kothari, *Youth Unemployment in the MENA Region: A Situational Assessment*, Washington DC, The World Bank, September 2005.

[27] Peter M. Lewis, *Growing Apart: Oil, Politics, and Economic Change in Indonesia and Nigeria*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 2007.

[28] Cf. *Income Diversification Determinants Among Farming Households in Konduga, Borno State*, *Academic Research International*, vol. 2 no. 2, March 2012, pp. 555—561.

[29] The World Bank, *Nigeria Employment and Growth Study*, Washington DC, 2009.

[30] Sadly, his studies only reinforced his belief in a benighted Manichean world divided between the *Dar-al-Islam* (the abode of Islam) and the *Dar-al-Harb* (the realm of war).

[31] OECD, *Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States: Governance, Peace and Security*, Paris, 2006.

[32] Cf. Ashraf Ghani & Clare Lockhart, *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

[33] The prediction was recently revised to the year 2030 as the Year of Armageddon for Nigeria. See Christopher J. Kinnan et. al, *Failed State 2030: Nigeria*, Centre for Strategy and Technology, Air War Collage & U.S. Air University, Maxwell Airforce Base, Occasional Paper No. 67, February 2011.

[34] Frances Stewart, *Horizontal Inequalities: A Neglected Dimension of Development*, Oxford, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE), 2001.

[35] Billy J. Dudley, *Parties and Politics in Nigeria*, London, Frank Cass, 1968.

[36] Also known as Izala or Yan Izala, the movement was founded in Jos by Sheikh Ismaila Idris in 1978 with the objective of purifying Islam from it believes to be by Sufi syncretism.

[37] It has been suggested that both the Shi'i and the Yan Izala are opposed to the current application of Shari'a in Nigeria. They insist that Shari'a can only work where the political leaders fully operate an Islamic republic. Among those who hold this view is said to be the Zaria-based Shi'ite leader, Sheikh El Zakzaky, who is said to have opposed the precipitate application of Shari'a on the grounds that the prevailing social and economic conditions did not make it feasible.

[38] Crawford Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1979. See also Crawford Young, *Revisiting Nationalism and Ethnicity in Africa*, James S. Coleman Memorial Lecture Series, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), July 2004.

[39] Nigerian political culture has been replete with violence and assassinations. Cf. Ruth Watson, *Civil Disorder is the Disease of Ibadan: Chieftaincy and Civic Culture in a Yoruba City*, Oxford: James Currey, 2003; Shehu Sani, *Political Assassinations in Nigeria*, Ibadan, Bookcraft, 2007.

[40] Perhaps the most authoritative work on the phenomenon of political violence in Nigeria is that of Remi Anifowoshe, *Violence and Politics in Nigeria: The Tiv and Yoruba Experience*, New York: NOK, 1981. Cf. Osita Agbu, *Ethnic Militias and the Threat to Democracy in Post-Transition Nigeria*, Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Research Report No. 127, 2004; Victor E. Dike, *Nigeria and the Politics of Unreason: A Study of the Obasanjo Regime*, Adonis & Abbey Publishers, 2003.

- [41] Mohammed Kuta Yahaya, Development and Challenges of Bakolori Irrigation Project in Sokoto State, Nigeria, *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 11 (3), 2002, pp. 411-430.
- [42] Cf. Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, African Book Collective, 1994.
- [43] Ahmadu Bello, *Sardauna of Sokoto*, quoted in *The Parrot*, 12 October 1960
- [44] John Paden, *Ahmadu Bello Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria*, Hudahuda, 1986. Cf. Justin I. Tseayo, *Aspects of National Integration in Nigeria: The Tiv Case*, Brighton, University of Sussex, 1973.
- [45] They may have taken too literally Ibn Khaldun's doctrine of '*asabiyya*', forging a solidarity based on clannishness centred on the Caliphate and its hegemonic structures. On the role of the 'Kaduna Mafia' in northern politics, see Bala J. Takaya and Sonny Tyoden, *The Kaduna Mafia*, University of Jos Press, 1987.
- [46] The case of cotton may be quite instructive. Cf. J.I. Onu and F.Y. Okunmadewa, *What Does the Conduct of the Cotton Market in Nigeria Reveal?* *World Journal of Agricultural Sciences* 4 (4): pp. 521-526, 2008.
- [47] Cf. As a young researcher and Fellow of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, I was part of a team that carried out a detailed study of the Maitatsine phenomenon, carrying out extensive field work in Kaduna, Adamawa and Borno, Timothy Gyuse and Obadiah Mailafia, *Religion and Conflict in Nigeria: A Study of the Maitatsine in Northern Nigeria*, Kuru: National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, December 1983.
- [48] Ricardo René Laremont, *Islamic Law and Politics in Nigeria*, Africa World Press, 2011.
- [49] Ruud Peters, *The Reintroduction of Islamic Criminal Law in Northern Nigeria, A Study Conducted on Behalf of the European Commission*, Lagos, September 2001. Cf. Philip Ostien, *Sharia Implementation in Northern Nigeria, 1999—2006*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2007.
- [50] Rotimi Suberu, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*, US Institute of Peace Press, 2001.
- [51] Shehu Sani, *The Killing Fields: Religious Violence in Northern Nigeria*, Ibadan, Spectrum Books, 2007.
- [52] Rasheed Olaniyi, *Hisba and Sharia Law Enforcement in Metropolitan Kano*, University of Ibadan (undated).
- [53] In a recent email discussion with the researcher Jana Krause, she opines that foreign elements, including al-Qaeda, may have been involved in recent episodes of violence on the Jos Plateau. Her study on the subject is probably the most comprehensive so far. Cf. Jana Krause, *A Deadly Cycle: Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria*, Geneva, The Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011. See Also Adagba Okpaga, Ugwu C. Chijioke and Okechukwu Innocent, "Activities of Boko Haram and Insecurity Question in Nigeria," *Arabian Journal of Business and Management (Oman Chapter)*, vol. 1 (9), April 2012, pp. 77—99.
- [54] Adam Higazi, *The Jos Crisis: A recurrent Nigerian Tragedy*, Centre for African Studies, University of Cambridge & Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, January 2011.
- [55] Cf. Phillip Ostien, "Jonah Jang and the Jasawa: Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos, Nigeria", a Study Under the Muslim-Christian Relations Project in Africa, University of Bayreuth, Germany, August 2009. Having grown up in Jos,
- [56] As a matter of fact, the Kwararafa peoples of the middle belt had conquered Hausa land and were, on and off, the rulers of Kano for the better part of two centuries between the 16th and 18th centuries. On the changing character of identity politics in the Middle Belt, see Abdul Raufu Mustapha, *Transformation of Minority Identities in Post-Colonial Nigeria*, Queen Elisabeth House, University of Oxford, Working Paper Series No. 9 (undated).
- [57] Cf. Bill Freund, *Capital and Labour in the Nigerian Tin Mines*, London and Ibadan: Harlow Longman & Ibadan University Press, 1981. See also, Hanatu Alahira, *Colonial Ordinances and Capital in the Jos Tin Mines in Northern Nigeria*, Saabruken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011.
- [58] The Inspector-General of Police at the time, Mr. M. D. Yusuf, has revealed that Gomwalk in fact did neither participated in the coup that killed Murtala Mohammed nor was he privy to the conspiracy that led to it. The Dimka coup was ostensibly to reinstate General Yakubu Gowon who had ruled the country from 1967 until he was overthrown in a bloodless coup in 1975. History has confirmed that Gowon neither gave the go-ahead nor did he desire a come-back to the High Magistracy of the republic. Cf. Jonah I. Elaigwu, *Gowon: The Biography of a Soldier Statesman*, Addonis & Abbey Publishers, 2009.
- [59] The Governor of the State, Joshua Chibi Dariye was suspended and a retired General, Chris Alli, was made Administrator.



[60] Jana, p. 38.

[61] The Vanguard, Lagos, 27 March 2010. There is no doubt that the army commander failed the people of Dogo Nahauwa who had always lived peacefully with their Hausa-Fulani neighbours. There are many who doubt the neutrality of the army commander during this particular episode. This distrust extends to the Chief of Army Staff at the time, Lieutenant-General Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau, who prided himself in possessing a PhD in Criminology. He was alleged to be a rather jaundiced individual who had brought the cohesion and professionalism of the military to one its lowest ebbs ever. General Dambazau was retired from the army in September 2010.

[62] These coldblooded killings were supposed to achieve two objectives: first, to further demoralize the local populace as part of the military doctrine fitna which is well-known in the strategies of Global Jihad; secondly, it is intended to ensure that the ensuing vacant senate seat would be filled either by a Hausa-Fulani or someone who is in sympathy with their cause.

[63] This concept of 'existential threat' has been well expounded by the eminent political scientist Yehezkel Dror, in his famous opinion piece, "When the Survival of the Jewish People is at Stake, There is no Place for Morals", The Jewish Daily, Jerusalem, 23 May, 2008.

[64] Lorie M. Graham and Siegfried Weissner, Indigenous Sovereignty, Culture and International Human Rights Law, The South Atlantic Quarterly, Vol. 110 (2), pp. 403-427, 2011.

[65] Cf. Jana Krause, The Deadly Cycle: Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, Geneva Declaration Secretariat, Working Paper, Geneva, Switzerland, 2012.

[66] Sanusi Aliyu, Religious Based Violence and National Security in Nigeria: Case Studies of Kaduna State and the Taliban Activities in Borno State, A thesis Presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

Degree of Master of Military Art and Science, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 2009.

[67] Andrew Walter, What is Boko Haram? Special Report No. 308, United States Institute of Peace, June 2012.

[68] Cf. CLEEN Foundation, Responding to the Emerging Trends of Terrorism in Nigeria, Conference Proceedings, Monograph Series no. 6, Lagos, 2011.

[69] In May 2012 a court ordered the Borno State Government and the Federal Government of Nigeria to pay the family the sum of 100 million naira (US\$617,000) for the illegal killing of Mohammed Yusuf.

[70] Several commentators are of the view that there are not one but several groups that are lumped under the common rubric of Boko Haram. There may well be opportunistic criminals whose activities have been subsumed under Boko Haram.

[71] It has been estimated that the introduction of additional security measures between national borders may increase the *ad valorem* cost of trading internationally by 1 to 3 percentage points. With elasticity of trade flows with respect to transaction costs falling within the -2 to -3 range, this could be expected to lead to a significant fall in the volume of international trade, which in turn would have a negative impact on openness, productivity and medium-term global output growth.

[72] Sunday Trust, Sunday 9 September 2012;

[73] Rumours are rife that the elections of 2014 are likely to lead to another upheaval in which southerners may once again come under attack in the north. Many are therefore selling of their properties and re-locating to the south. Sunday Sun, 9 September 2012.

[74] National Bureau of Statistics, Abuja, April 2012.

[75] Interview with Borno State Ministry Official in Maiduguri, April 2012.

[76] 23rd ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Horsens, Denmark, on 28-30 May 2012.

[77] The seeming coincidence between the EU and U.S. position is rather surprising. This is because the two sides have tendered fundamentally on how to confront global terror. The famous article by Robert Kagan discussed the key elements in the divergence of strategic approaches across the Atlantic. See his "Power and Weakness". Policy Review. No. 113, June/July, 2002. For a critique of Kagan, see Olaf Dilling, "If I had a Hammer: A Review of Kagan's *Power and Weakness*", German Law Journal, 12 (1) December, 2002. pp. 963—969). Dilling expresses this divergence in terms of "the Hobbesian philosophy of the Americans and the Kantian *Weltanschauung* of the Europeans" (Dilling p. 964).

[78] An elderly English missionary woman that knew me as a child and taught me Sunday school scolded Christians for retaliating against Muslims. I felt shame and confusion at the same time. I explained to her that as far as I am concerned I

could never subscribe to what in the popular parlance is known as 'reprisals'. At the same, I would not be in a position to preach to those who have lost loved ones in terrorist attacks and who insist they have a moral duty to protect their loved ones.

[79] Jean Herskovits, "Boko Haram is Not the Problem", New York Times, 3 January 2012. Her article prompted a rebuttal by no less than the Nigerian Ambassador in Washington, Professor Ade Adefuye, who happens to be a distinguished historian in his own right.

[80] This prophecy was later revised and the date shifted from 2015 to 2030. See Nuruddeen Abdallah, Nigeria May Become a Failed State in 2030, Not 2015, African Herald Express, 18 January 2012.

[81] In the village of Vwang, outside Jos, a young lad of 11 recounted to me how his uncle lost his only son in Ali Kazaure during a previous conflict. When the next round of violence erupted, the old man came out with a bag full of poisoned arrows. When he brought down his first victim, he crawled to him like a hyena and systematically began to tear off his flesh with his bare teeth. This may not be an isolated case. There have indeed been reports of cannibalism in Jos – of people cooking their enemies and eating them to express their hatred and contempt.

[82] Yehezkel Dror, The Capacity to Govern: Report to the Club of Rome on Modern Governance, London, Frank Cass, 2001.

[83] "The Next Phase of Boko Haram Terrorism", Interview with Wole Soyinka, The News, Lagos, 7 February 2012.

[84] Femi Fani-Kayode, "The Poor Husband, The Rich Wife and Boko Haram," Nigerian Tribune, Ibadan, 1 July 2012.

[85] Ibid.

[86] David E. Apter, Rethinking Development: Modernisation, Dependency and Postmodern Politics, London and Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1987, pp. 61—62.

[87] Cf. Jeffrey Bloechl, Liturgy of the Neighbour: Emmanuel Levinas and the Religion of Responsibility, Pittsburg: Dequesne University Press, 2000.

[88] Alexis de Tocqueville, ed. by J. P. Mayer, Democracy in America, New York: Doubleday, 1969.






[89] David McNaughton, Moral Vision: An Introduction to Ethics. Cf. Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought, Princeton; Princeton University Press, 2004.






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