

Historical Overview of Terrorism and its Effect on the Nigerian Economy in the 21st Century

¹Salihu Ibrahim and ²Ahmad Zaharuddin Sani Ahmad Sabri

¹School of Language, Civilization and Philosophy, College of Arts and Sciences,

²Institute of Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad's Thoughts, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

Abstract: Terrorist activities have become almost daily event in Nigerian society these recent years. Bombings, gunfire and kidnapping have left our society with monumental destruction of lives and property. Thus, movements of peoples and goods across the country have become difficult and in some cases even dangerous. These follows from the actions of terrorist organizations such as: Boko Haram in Northern and Central Nigerian states, the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) in the South-Eastern Nigeria and the Oodua People Congress (OPC) in Western Nigerian area. Terrorism which is an action that creates not only terror but also destroys life and property is closely related with kidnapping of people both of which are serious security problems. In an attempt by government to tackle the situation, many questions are begging for answer. This study therefore, seeks to make an overview of the history of terrorism in Nigeria. The study further explore the impacts of terrorism on the socio-economic atmosphere of the Nigeria economy and finally, suggestions are made on the strategies for addressing the challenges towards rapid overcoming of the situation and transformation of Nigeria.

Key words: Terrorism, economy, kidnapping, Nigeria, challenges, transformation

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's internal security has had several challenges of different dimensions since, independence in 1960 but until the year 2009 not much was known of terrorism in the country. Until that period Nigerians were containing with different militia bodies such as the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) in the West, the Bakassi boys in the East, the Ogoni youths movement in the South East and a much earlier group the Maitasine in the Northern part of Nigeria in the 1980's. In addition to these bodies is the increasing cases of kidnapping and high level armed robbery. The situation has become so, alarming that police and other security agencies including the civilian arm have intensified their activities with the hope of curtailing the situation.

However, since, the appearance of terrorist bodies like, Boko Haram, the whole dimension of internal security have changed. Northern Nigeria in particular and Nigeria in general have found itself confronted with a more serious challenge. Lives and property have become worthless, people are forced to abandon their homes and areas of socio-economic intercourse for the fear of dear

life. Movement of goods and services has become almost paralyzed. The major roads have been taken over by military check points, market places and points of relaxation have equally become potential target by the terrorists. Worst are the public schools and worship centres and hospitals which are ideally supposed to be the save abode of people. Even the military and police institutions are not left out of the attacks.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is conceptual based and it draws information from purely secondary sources which includes; Textbooks, journals, conference study, newspaper publications interview some people that lived in the affected area for example Maiduguri, Onitsha and Ibadan (each respectively for Boko Haram, Niger Delta militia and the Opc), personal observations. The researcher witnessed some of the boomerang effect of terrorism in the country, especially, on cities like Minna where many refugees ran to for peaceful life. Based on the assemblage of facts from the various sources we are able make interpretation and draw our conclusion.

Conceptual framework: The concept terrorism is viewed differentially by people within the academia, politics, security and even the general speculators. The differences in conception of the term assumes from the activities of the groups, their mission and the targets. The variations in the concept terrorism have thus, made it very difficult to provide a single acceptable definition. The United Nations General Assembly in its draft Article 2 defines terrorism as illegally and deliberately wishing, planning or caused fear injuries even death to persons, damages to government or private properties leading to human and material loose and the purpose is to intimidate or force government or group to abstain or comply to some wish (U.N Fact Sheet No. 32:6). The United States Department of Defense defines terrorism as “the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear intended to coerce or intimidate government or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religion or ideological” (www.fbigov/stats-services/publication/terrorism-2002-2002). By this definition one can submit that the actions of the state of Israel against Palestine is purely terrorist in nature yet America does not see it that way rather, it named Hezbollah which is responding to Israeli shelling by means of suicide bombing as terrorists. It is on such premises that the current military action against terrorist’s activities in Nigeria should be understood.

On the other hand, the Iranian Foreign Minister believes that the Palestinians are fighting for the right cause. The Palestinians are resisting the occupation of their land. That is quite different from terror attacks that were carried out in New York (9/11) which the organization of the Islamic conference and most of Muslim countries in the world condemned (Maskaliunaite, 2002).

The September 11/2001 bombing in America have drawn more international attention to terrorism and since, that event america has been spearheading an “All-out war on terror”, thus, involving itself in the internal struggles of some nations attempting at achieving self determination. As Sonika Gupta writes; “The Chinese have successfully renegotiated the US, definition of terrorism to include movement for self determination” (Somika Gupta in Asta, M. “September 11 and Definition of Terrorism). For instance the East Turkestan Islamic militants, the Tibetan self rule movement and the Kurdish militants of Iraq are engaged in activities towards self actualization which has been seen in the light of terrorism.

Terrorism, thus, assumes or rather becomes a more problematic concept. Terrorism or act of terror is connected to life and death struggle, it instill the deepest fear in the minds of the ones who encounter it. Therefore,

the need of a dispassionate conceptualization of terrorism is even more acute. Alex Schmid has made a summary of 22 main elements out of 109 scholarly definitions. Seven most commonly used are violence and force, political, fear and terror, threat; psych effects and anticipated reactions, victim-target differentiation and purposive, planned and systematic organized action (Maskaliunaite, 2002). Maskaliunaite argued that in defining terrorism, emphasis is placed more on political parlance. She thus, expanded the horizon of the concept to include religious terrorism which has different aims and reasons from political that should be distinguished from the so called “old ideological terrorism” of the 1970’s (Maskaliunaite, 2002). This has been supported by the work of Steven Lukes and Nadia Urbinati in their article “Words Matter”. They claimed that the new terrorism is completely different because of its religious character. They also added that the Al-Qaeda are unlike the terrorist of the past such as the Red Brigade or the IRA or even the Hezbollah who speak the language of their victims and use violent means to achieve political ends that are contestable but not obscure (Steven Lukes and Nadia Urbinati “Words Matter”).

There are also normative elements for consideration in the definition of terrorism, most of such elements include not only an impassionate description of the phenomenon at hand but also an evaluation on moral grounds. The most common feature of these definitions is the emphasis on the victims of terrorism, on the innocence of the target of the attacks. Kirk Patrick see terrorist as, one who “kill, maim, kidnap, torture” who “chooses violence as instrument of first resort” whose victims can be “School children travelers industrialists returning home from work, political leaders or diplomats”.

However, one major difficulty about conceptualizing terrorism is that it is most commonly perceived as a non legal act with its opponent calling it illegal while its adherents perceived it as extra-legal, beyond the legality of old codes of law (Walter, 2004). It cannot be put into the brackets of the system it opposes because its legitimacy or illegitimacy comes from a very different level of justification. Therefore, it is the view of this study to define terrorism as: any act or attempt to act that is aimed at human physical, psychological and material destruction or annihilation with the purpose of achieving either political, socio-economic or religious objective(s). Given what we have today in Nigeria, the various terrorist groups have different adjectives yet, they terrorize the citizenry and have caused both physical and psychological harm on the people. They kill lives, they frighten people and they destroy both private and public properties.

The economy in this context implies means and conditions for the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. When these means are troubled the general life of the society can no longer be stable. Terrorist activities in recent years have distorted most economic activities in the affected area.

Kidnapping has also become a business; It is the act of forceful seizure of a person, so as to collect ransom. One may want to tie such crime to poverty but the question remains that logic and morality did not place any sense in such acts. Kidnapping of both Nigerians and Foreigners have become so common that one wonder what it stand for as some victims are even poorer than their abductors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An overview of terrorism in Nigeria: The origin of terrorism goes back to Jewish Zealot movement (66-73AD) when the Sicarii in the attempt to drive the Romans out of Palestine were using rather unorthodox means of violence for those times (like: Murder in the midst of the crowds) while trying to force the moderate Jews into a fierce opposition against occupation and the Romans themselves leave (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism> accessed on 25 November 2016: 5:58pm). Later the phenomenon occurred in another sect the Assassins (11-13thBC) who used many techniques similar to those of contemporary terrorists and who was attempting to reach their goals by a long campaign of intimidation.

However, the roots of modern terrorism and the appearance of the concept itself into the political lexicon can be traced to the events of the French revolution (Davis, 1965). Like the revolution itself, the concept of terror gained a very controversial assessment from the very beginning of its application. For the adherents of the revolution, it was an unfortunate but necessary part of a revolutionary struggle. For its adversaries it was a brutality as unnecessary as the revolution itself. The Jacobins who took over state affairs in France proudly called their rule “reign of terror” and referred to themselves as terrorists (Goucher *et al.*, 1998). Their actions were meant to intimidate all the enemies of the revolution, to put fear into their hearts and minds.

Several terror acts have over the centuries taken place across the globe, some of which have had monumental effects on human history, for instance, the June 28, 1914 killing of Arch Duke of Sarajevo, Franz Fardinand and his wife led to the series of issues that culminated into the First World War (Davis, 1965). Equally, it is also, important to mention that since, the end of the cold war in

the 1980s, terrorism have become a popular means by which aggrieved people find re-course for political, economic, social as well as ethnic problems. In such attempts, African states were not left out. It must also be remembered that terrorism is double faced, hence, the government and its antagonists both use terror to achieve their goal. African leaders are known for employing brutal and terror means to suppress oppositions in their national politics. Corruption and abuse of power have contributed immensely in the emergence of strong nationalistic groups some of which metamorphosed into terrorist organizations (Cambell, 2010). This is very clear in the recent developments in Arab world, particularly North African states. Most of the groups that have succeeded at sacking die-hard leaders like; Mammarr Gaddaffi of Lybia, Hoassain Mubarak of Egypt, the ruling oligarchy of Tunisia and the current attack on Mali were all referred to as terrorists until later on proved otherwise. The Al-Shaabab of Somalia and the Al-Qaeda of Algeria are all referred to as terrorists by both their national governments and the international community, however, the groups see themselves as not and equally have a claim that they are being terrorized by the government.

In Nigeria, the history of terrorist activities is equally a long and unfortunate one featuring communal conflicts, ethno-religious violence, political upheavals resulting into clashes between the security apparatus and the groups. Far back in the 1980’s Muslim sect groups grew in the Northern cities of Nigeria, prominently, the Maitasine sect who heretically claimed, Prophet Mohammed was not the messenger of Allah, established itself in the slums of Kano (Walker, 2014). The sect was wiped out forcefully despite the women and children of the sect attacking heavily armed military and police forces with bows and arrows and knives. The group scattered and was fully eliminated over the course of a decade. In 1995, the Oodua People’s Congress (OPC) was founded by Dr. Frederick Fashehun as a nationalist Yoruba advocacy group composed of Yoruba activists and tribal leaders. However, an armed militant group split from it in 1999 under the leadership of Gani Adams who then claimed legitimate authority over the whole group (Terrorism organization profile: Oodua people Congress, in, <http://www.start.umd.edu/start>). Adams radical faction reigned terror across Western Nigerian area using the OPC as vehicle for violent anti-government, anti-police and anti-military vigilante agenda. At a particular point the region was as unsafe as the Northern Nigeria comes to be as Boko Haram phenomenon reigns. Every brutal police crackdown on OPC serves to radicalize the organization.

In the mid 1990's, the Ogoni Youths under the leadership of Ken-Saro-Wiwa, became a threat to the government and people of the South-South during late General Sani Abacha's regime. The group was treated with firebrand and the gang leaders were put to death by the regime but the seed of discord still germinated a few years later. Among the groups that subsequently emerged, the most popular was the Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari led Niger people's volunteer force formed in 2004 (Stephaine Hanson: MEND: the Niger Delta's umbrella militant Group center for foreign relations (CFR) in: <http://www.google.com.ng/url?sa=t?&source=web&rct=j&url=http://www://.cfr.org/nigeria/mend-niger-deltas-umbrella-Militant-group/p12920&ved=0ahUKEwjJ18mwQhAhvmkcAKHYpkD>). The group waged an "all-out-war" against the government of Nigeria. Dokubo was later arrested and charged for treason (<http://www.nigeria-law.org/Alhaji%2520Mujahid%2520Dokubo-Asari%2520v%2520Federal%2520Republic%2520of%2520Nigeria.htm&ved=0ahUKE>). In 2005 the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) was formed (Anonymous, 2009). Its first known attack was the bombing of shell's Opopo pipeline in delta state on 20th December. That event led to a shutdown of the refinery and a lost of close to a quarter of Nigeria's daily output of petroleum production. On January 11th 2006, MEND issued a statement following the kidnapping of four foreign oil workers in the offshore oil field. Since, then, oil production in the area is faced with more challenges; Other economic activities have also become risky. Kidnapping of people both foreigners and citizens have equally become the order of the day in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. However, relative peace exist in recent years in the area following the amnesty programme of the federal government but it is yet to be a totally save place.

The most dreadful of its time in the history of Nigeria in general but in particular Northern Nigeria is the Jama'atu Ahlis sunna liddaawati wal-jihad (aka Boko Haram). It is a jihadist terrorist organization based in the North-East of Nigeria. An Islamic movement which claims to strongly oppose man made laws was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 (<http://naijan.com/how-boko-haram-started-sponsors-history-of-the-jamaatul-ahlis-sunna-lid-dawwatis-jihad/andved=0ahUKEw1ohN9p8MrQAhWHK8A>). The organization is a Muslim sect that seeks to abolish the secular state in the country and to establish sharia law in its place. Since, August 2011, Boko Haram has bombed almost on daily basis public places including worship centres (Churches and Mosques) in Nigeria's North-East and central regions. The group has also broadened its targets to

include setting fire on public schools and attack on hospital, markets and gatherings. In March 2012, some twelve public schools were burnt down in Maiduguri during the night as many as 10,000 pupils were forced out of school (Walker, 2014). The group equally claimed responsibility for violent attacks on public institutions like the United Nations building in Abuja, summary killing of innocent souls and general public disorder leading to almost complete paralysis of any form of human social contact. It is difficult to give the number of lives lost so far as a result of Boko Haram activities in Nigeria, however, the group is rated as been the Nigeria Taliban.

A comprehensive history of terrorist groups in Nigeria is beyond this study, however, it was necessary to have mentioned a few in order to comprehend the main subject of this thesis. Terrorists actually do not just appear but as Andrew Walker puts it, "A weakness in the institutions of politics and the security services has created a political situation where such threats of stability are not dealt with until violence is a certainly. Only when a politician in control of a state is convinced that such a threat cannot be bent to his advantage will he order any action be taken against. Such is the weakness in our security institutions, their only method of dealing with any such threat is violence, Boko Haram was created under these circumstances" (Walker, 2014) emerged from similar circumstances.

Impact of terrorism on Nigerian economy: The Benue state Governor, Gabriel Suswan in a meeting of the Northern Governors forum in Kaduna cried out loud like many other Nigerians that, "terrorist activities have almost brought to a halt economic activities in Northern Nigeria" (Tochukwu, 2013; Edobor, 2014) that terrorist activities have drastically reduced foreign direct investment in the country. Since, the rekindle of democracy in Nigeria, so many threats to the national peace, unity and stability have challenged the cooperate existence of the country and above all threatened and even in some cases halted social and economic activities in the Nigerian state. Some of the impacts of terrorism in Nigeria include the following:

Destruction of lives and property: Since, the existence of Nigeria as a nation-state, except the civil war no any other period has it witnessed such monumental lost of lives and destruction billions of naira North of properties across the country by different terrorist acts like the recent years. This for many people concerned about development is most disturbing for political stability. Conflicts and wars are illustrated by images of turbulence and distraught and

destitute fleeing people. Some states are in complex emergency characterized by protracted crisis and the collapse of state structure. Human rights violations resulting from current conflicts and arising violence are unprecedented. The cost are to be measured in deaths, broken homes, destroyed livelihoods, lost homes and increased vulnerability. While there is a relative peace in the Western Nigeria today, the East and South-East are still battling with among other issues kidnapping of people, some of which the victims end up losing their lives and heavy armed robbery. In the North, the dimension is even changing from that of bomb blasts, attack on churches and Mosques, market and recreation centres to attack on schools and medical health workers. Recently three Korean health workers were killed in Northern Nigeria and soon after wards, gunmen killed another ten persons and injured four in Kano state, Nigeria. The victims were conducting polio immunization exercise in the state (The Nation News Paper, February 12th, 2013). Very disturbing is the role of the state in handling terrorists in the country. Terrorists are handled with heavy military actions which have very serious repercussion. It creates a vicious circle of revenge thus, a continuous acts of crisis is established. Government activity in that direction under different named operations (example, Operations Zaki, Zuma, Wiet e.t.c.) has led to the death of thousands of people some of whom are innocent. The Joint Task Force (JTF) have killed so many lives and raided as much villages in the crisis prone states of the federation as did the terrorists. Both the police and the army have employed Summary execution on anybody suspected to be or having anything to do with Boko Haram, MEND or the OPC, thus, both the security men and the terrorist have no respect for the sanctity of human life. Recently, the Abia state police command is being accused of killing 14 men (Suspected to be members of MASSOP) and their bodies thrown into the Ezu Rivers (The Nation News Paper, February 12th, 2013).

Displacement and forced migration: In conflict prone areas, displacement of people and forceful migration has become a common feature. Many people have left their homes in the North East part of Nigeria following incessant Boko Haram and JTF attacks on their communities. Thus, the people have abandoned their social and economic activities. These have much effect on the nation's economy. Considering the costs of violent crimes against lives and the values of property destroyed or damaged. It is under such situation that illegal trafficking of goods easily takes place which have serious negative impact on the society. More seriously, the cost of handling internally displaced persons is a misnomer to

the economy such funds would have been put into elsewhere, should there be no such crisis. Terrorist activities on the aggregate lower Gross Domestic Product (GDP) below what it would be without them (Ansel, 2000).

Collapse of the existing social and economic order of the society: In crisis situation such as civil war and terrorist invasion on the society as in Nigeria, the civilians tend to suffer and bear the consequences the more. This is because the exiting social order in terms of laws, social relations, political and economic structure are hardly stable. Similarly, material resources and social networks which made daily life possible are destroyed. Long standing arrangements of exchange between groups are often forcibly broken down 21. In both the Niger delta area and North East Nigeria, community leaders have been killed by terrorists and some economic networks have been made dysfunctional.

Manifestation of tribal religions and civil unrest: This is one important effect of terrorist activities and the attendant government reaction to it. When Abacha regime killed the Ogoni nine, it brought the peoples mind into unity and many other organizations sprang up, equally the arrest of Dokubo Asari, leader of NPVFF informed the formation of MEND. Similarly it was the emergence of OPC that in one way or the other crystallized the formation of MASSOB and the Arewa consultative forum. In close connection with these is the emergence of religion bodies like Boko Haram. All of these groups have made demands and have in their effort towards achieving them used violence and terror attacks directly on the peoples and institutions of the state in Nigeria (Anonymous, 2018).

Undermines economic activities: Economic activities strife better and more efficiently were peace exist, terrorist made not only life difficult in some parts of the country, their activities have also immensely hindered production and distribution of goods service. Movement of people have been regimentalised with military check points on the high ways all over the country, thus, creating problems in process of circularization of goods and services. To a very large extent, the whole situation discourages and affects both local and foreign investors that would have invested money into the economy. Regular bombing and gunfire in Kano, Maiduguri, Yobe and Bauchi markets and unprecedented kidnapping of people in Port Harcourt, Warri, Aba and other southern cities are sources of economic dislocation in the country. The Situation has led to economic deprivation of the people thus, resulting in the increase object poverty of

the people (Dasai and Potter, 2008). Finally, the government budgetary allocation at all tiers of governance is alarming. In 2012 the federal government budgeted (N1 trillion) (Courson, 2009), an amount that virtually all Nigerians did not support yet, the attack on lives and property did not stop. Regrettably in an attempt to maintain security, stop or curb terrorist activities, some state governments went as far as stopping the use of motorcycle in the cities. It should be noted that Nigeria is operating a Okada transport economy, the policy have however, thrown more Nigerians out of job and government palliative measures are not enough, thereby worsening poverty level and increasing crime in the society.

CONCLUSION

Terrorism in Nigeria has been motivated by some inherent factors of failure in the Nigeria state. Successive regimes in the country have allow, so, many things out of hand in some cases political actors have exploited some perceived advantages from the marauders. But the most serious issue is that of corruption and maladministration. Government seems to have neglected some of its essential obligations to its people and as the people react to such neglect conflict ensue and haven taken to arms and violent means such groups are label as terrorists.

Terrorism as the name implies create terror on the victim in any physical or psychological form. The implication on the nation's socio-economic life can not be estimate. Thousands of lives have been lost wounded, homes and families broken, economic and social contracts dislocated and disarticulated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The government should in the first place employ more civilized ways of handling terrorism of any form. Fire for fire approach is no longer in vogue, dialogue and other means should be the watch words. Corruption should be checked by all means including the use of education to re-orientate our value system. Government necessarily need to selflessly look into the yearnings and aspirations of the people with a more passionate and concerted effort at bridging the gaps between social classes in the society. The indiscriminate military checks points on the highways is not the answer; it has rather militarized the society. In its place military men and the police should do patrol in the towns, cities and flash points and on the roads. Finally, serious means be employed to encourage community policing, so that, neighborhood suspects can early be reported.

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