

**A REFLECTION OF THE CHALLENGES OF ISLAMIC JIHAD IN
NORTHEAST NIGERIA IN THE LIGHT OF BOKO HARAM
PHENOMENON**

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Abstract

The inability of the Nigeria government to deal with the challenges of poverty, unemployment and unequal allocation of wealth amongst ethnic nationalities resulted eventually in resentment, agitation, and violent crimes against Nigerian management by some persons and groups. The Boko Haram violent behavior has opened the basics and the vulnerability of the Nigerian government. The lethal Islamic sect in northeast Nigeria which has ventured into suicide bombing, guerrilla fighting tactics, kidnapping, and all kinds of atrocities in the bid to enforce extreme Islamic thoughts in Nigeria has led to quite a lot of losses of lives and properties, displaced many, smashed hundreds of schools and government structures and devastated an previously ravaged economy in the northeast regions. In response, the thrust of the paper is to; discuss jihad, Quranic verses, and Hadith that are in support of the term. Explain the Boko Haram phenomenon in terms of its identity, membership, leadership, attacks, and challenges.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Northeast, Jihad, Fundamentalism, Borno State, Phenomenon, and Reflection.

1.0 Introduction

There are varied opinions as to the origin of Islamic jihad. Scrutiny of views will reveal that some see it as embedded in Islamic tradition and history (Voll 1994, 294), while others insist it is a more contemporary phenomenon, depending on how jihad is defined. In more recent times, Islamic jihad's great proponents are Abul A'la Maududi, Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and Ayatollah Khomeini. Furthermore, several scholars argue that the line of radical or fundamentalist Islam has always existed in the history of Islam, and it is not a new phenomenon. Some scholars like Voll (1983) and Ahmad (1983) see this precedence and continuity in *tajdid* (renewal) and *Islah* (reform), and there is also the concept of *tajaddud* (progressive transformation or modernization), as the roots of fundamentalism. Boko Haram violence has led to massive loss of lives, demolition of property, and countless human misery, governments, policymakers, and the political class does not seem to give the needed attention it requires. There is a need to take on through practical examination of the phenomenon to unravel the prejudiced scheming behind the persistent religious disturbance in the northeast part of Nigeria. Current factors that led to the surfacing of Boko Haram phenomenon in northeast Nigeria are many and interlinked, but for critical briefings, the canvasser will discuss a few and the challenges of Islamic jihad and finally draws conclusion In doing that, this paper will adopt the qualitative methodology and deploy data from secondary sources.

1.1 Conceptual Definition

Because of the difficulty associated with the usage, the term jihad is from the verb '*jahada*,' which means 'exerted.' Its definition in Islam means the exertion of one's power in the path of Allah. Furthermore, this has done to spread the belief in Allah and make His word ultimate above this world (Khadduri 1979, 55). The persons involved in jihad would be rewarded with the attainment of salvation since the jihad is Allah's direct way to paradise (Sura 61:11-12). Even though jihad in Arabic is struggling in the name of Allah. But its meaning is broad, and it involves any effort made

in furtherance of the cause of Islam. The term means 'extreme effort' in the promotion and defense of Islam, which might or might not involve armed violence with unbelievers (Lippman 2002, 111). Jihad possibly will be achieved by nonviolent means as well as in an authentic way. Jihad is a form of religious misinformation that can be carried on by force or by the sword (ibid). There are four diverse ways a Muslim can fulfill his obligation to jihad: employing his heart, his tongue, his hands, and by the weapon. This fourth way of jihad is considered as the 'military jihad' and has it means the same to that of warfare:

The first is concerned with fighting the devil and in the effort to get away his point of view to evil. This kind of jihad, so significant in the eyes of Prophet Muhammad, was regarded as the greater jihad. The second and the third are, for the most part, fulfilled in supporting the right and correcting the wrong. The fourth is precisely equivalent to the meaning of war and is concerned with fighting the unbelievers and the enemies of the faith. The believer is under the responsibility of sacrificing their "wealth and lives" (sura 061:11) in the prosecution of the war. (Khatturi 1979, 57)

Contemporary Muslim apologists now and then explain jihad as merely defensive. In its general sense, jihad in the Qur'an and Muslim practice refers to the responsibility of every single Muslim to strive in self-exertion or struggle to follow God's will. It takes account of equally the move violently to a righteous life and the worldwide mission of the Muslim group of people to spread God's rule and law in the course of teaching, preaching, and where needed armed struggle. Although the Qur'an promises paradise for those who die in violence with an unbeliever, in a higher place to those who fight than to those who stay at home (Sura 4:95), it is not to be judged incorrectly as a motivating force in political and military action by Muslims.

2.0 Some Qur'anic Verses that Support Jihad

The Noble Qur'an, translated by Al-Hilali and Khan, and Yusuf Ali in his translation, explains *yujahidu* as fighting in sura 9:44. Several verses of the Qur'an express different ideas concerning jihad. Some key examples are when believers are urged to strive in the cause of Allah (4:95; 5:35; 9:41; 22:78; 49:15; 61:10-12), but no specifics concerning the issue. It is well-thought-out as a test for believers (47:31). Allah supports and rewards those who take part in jihad (9:16, 88, 111; 29:69). Those who strive in Allah's way should not be friends with unbelievers (60:1). True believers will not ask to be exempt from Jihad (9:44). There is punishment for those who refuse to engage in jihad (9:81-85). Also, believers are required to resist those who strive to drive them from Allah's way, even if they are their parents (3:15; 29:8). Allah will also punish those who are encouraging believers to deviate from the direction of Allah (34:5, 38).

It is vital to point out that the Meccan verses of the Qur'an sound peaceful in general (Omar 2003, 159), whereas the Medinan verses contain references and instructions to the use of force against those who oppose, persecute, and break their agreements or hamper Muslim access to holy sites (Bennett 2004, 36). It has generated debate concerning jihad among Muslims. If numerous verses on fighting (viewed as striving in the way of Allah) added, then the concept of jihad should be very significant not only to fundamentalist Islam but to all Muslims in general. It becomes clear why fighting and warfare constitute a major theme of the Qur'an (Bonner 2006, 22). Thus, jihad is not a

questionable command of Muslims. The bone of the argument is what constitutes jihad because of the different ideas expressed concerning it in the Qur'an. Some view jihad as a personal internal struggle or consider it as a defense mechanism against outside aggression, while others think it as legitimacy for physical fighting. There is now a new emphasis on armed struggle as the obligation of jihad against unbelievers (Black 2011, 307). Indeed, some consider all three explanations above as legitimate jihad.

2.1 Jihad in the Hadith

Another means by which the scholars have tried to identify patterns of understanding jihad is in terms of how a devout Muslim practices his or her religion. Several verses have been wrapped up and integrated into the practice of jihad. In the Hadith by Sahih Bukhari, which is the second existing primary source, jihad is also a military struggle. In all the 199 references in Volume 4, Book 52, jihad is seen as "fighting in the cause of Allah," and used in the militant sense. Some of the narrations in the Hadith that implicitly give out the meaning of jihad in a military sense are as follows, narrated by Abdullah bin Masud:

I asked Allah's Apostle, 'O Allah's Apostle! What is the best deed?' He replied, 'To offer the prayers at their early stated fixed times.' I asked, 'What is next in goodness?' He replied, 'To be good and dutiful to your parents.' I additionally asked what is next in goodness?' He replied, 'To participate in Jihad in Allah's Cause.' I did not ask Allah's Apostle to any further extent, and if I had asked him more, he would have told me more. Narrated 'Abdullah bin Abi Aafa: Allah's The Apostle said, 'Know that Paradise is under the shades of swords. (Bukhari Volume 4, Book 52, Number 41; 72).

This canvasser argues that isolating a single verse of the hadith and interpreting it to suit personal caprices is invalid.

3.0 The Boko Haram Phenomenon

The name Boko Haram is from the combination of the Hausa word *Boko*, meaning Western Education. Boko Haram: This means Western education is prohibited. Boko being a Hausa term for western culture, while *Haram* is an Arabic term for forbidden. The official Arabic name, *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad*, means People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad (Danjibo 2009, 9). A close examination of the philosophy and ideology of the group seems to reveal a marriage of both traditional and contemporary *Salafi* thinking of Ibn Taymiyyah and Maududi, respectively. Onuoha also acknowledges this *Salafi* connection (2014, 158-191). Dikki argues that the original name of the group appears to be rooted in the explanation of Taymiyyah on the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama 'ah* (The People of the *Sunna* and the community) (2017, 43).

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, these are the people the prophet predicted will be one of the seventy-three Islamic divisions that will arise after him. They are called *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama 'ah* because they are the ones who will be saved (ibid). The reason is that they have no leader except the prophet, and they only obey him following sura 53:3. This group, he says, will be a small minority. He sums up that it is clear from this that the people set aside are the people of *hadith* and *Sunna*, who do not have any leader other than the Prophet (Ibn Taymiyyah 2000, 548-

551). It probably suggests the Boko Haram's aversion to traditional Islamic leadership and resistance to conventional mainline Islam.

Their rejection of secularism and demand for implementation of *Shari'ah* is trace back to Ibn Taymiyyah (Mohammed 2014, 14). The elevation of jihad above other religious obligations like *Hajj*, *Umrah*, *Salat*, and fasting to Taymiyyah's writing. Taymiyyah argues that scholars agreed that jihad is better than *Hajj* and *'Umrah* and better than supererogatory *salah* and fasting, as you find in the Qur'an and the *Sunna*. The Prophet, to quote a few *Ahadith*, said, 'the important thing is *Islam* (submission); its pillar is *salah* on which it stands, and jihad is its pinnacle' (2000, 540-542). It probably suggests why the Boko Haram considers jihad the ultimate path to its objectives.

On the other hand, the rejection of anything considered saturated with western values, western secularism, or civilization, as Onuoha reports a clarification by an interim leader of the group in 2009 (2014, 160), is apparently from a different source than Taymiyyah. The agitation for the contemporary Islamic state through the use of jihad is not from him as well, even if one argues the jihad link to him. For Dikki, these ideologies seem to exhibit Maududi's influence (2017, 32).

3.1 Membership

The membership of the sect cuts across the full range of social classes, but an arbitrary number of members come from the most deprived groups. Thus, further, than ex-university lecturers, bankers, officers of Borno State (as well as an ex-commissioner), and membership extends to drug addicts, vagabonds, university undergraduates and graduates, political elites, and migrants from neighboring countries (Agbibo 2013, 26; Lawal 2009, 35). A Isola asserts that the only common denominator that holds together all members of the sect is their desire to overthrow the secular government and to propagate Islamic law, the pool of poverty, the opinion of social injustice, corruption, and the high level of youth unemployment in northeast Nigeria (the country at-large) made it possible for Boko Haram violence (Isola 2009, 3). These factors mentioned above tied with the allegedly rigged voting mandates have led to a high and emergent disenchantment with the Western structure of governance, mainly among jobless youth who attribute their lousy condition to the nuisance of western education by a government that also has continued to make a mess of the nationwide assets (McConnell 2009).

3.2 The Leadership of the Sect

In the aspect of leadership, Mohammed Yusuf led the sect. He was born on 29 January 1970 in Girgir village of Jalisco local government area of Yobe State. In July 2009, he was killed by the Nigerian security forces just after the uprising. Before his death, Yusuf led the sect as its commanding officer. He had two deputies. In every place they existed, it had its leader. (Da'wah Coordination Council of Nigeria 2009, 14). He was a school dropped out but trained in Qur'anic education in Niger and Chad, where he was open to the elements of fundamental ideology. His radical debates and ideas on Islamic issues expressed on the local radio and television stations made popular among the populace. Yusuf often targeted Islamic Scholars such as Abba Aji, Jafar Adam, and Yahaya Jingir (Danjibo 2009, 6). He was also not a respecter of government and reputable political institutions. Ibrahim Shekau, a devout follower of Mohammed Yusuf, believed

that an Islamic state was to be achieved through preaching and mobilization of the people to refuse secularism, through taking up arms and war to defeat the non-believers (Suleiman 2012, 41). Shekau had persistently advocated arms struggle for the group to actualize its objectives. But Yusuf stood against any form of violence in the name of Islam. The attack of the members by the Nigerian security agencies over the treasonable preaching of Yusuf, Shekau's control in the group, began to grow, and counter-violence was seen as the only option to save the sect from advancing its cause (Suleiman 2012, 41). *Boko Haram* sect withdrew their loyalty for the Nigerian state. The faction refused to obey the laws of the country. They considered such requirements as Western civilization (Gusau, 2009). Several clashes ensued sporadically among the state and the sect members.

3.3 Boko Haram Attacks

Blanchard asserts that Boko Haram has focused its attacks to date predominately on northeast Nigeria, although several kidnappings of Western citizens in neighboring Cameroon attributed to the group (Blanchard, n.d., 6). In its early stage, the group, for the most part, attack Christians using clubs, machetes, and small arms as a line of attack to provoke sectarian violence. By late 2010, Boko Haram had begun making and using a crude but effective improvised explosive devices, often soft drink cans filled with explosives and a fuse that was lit and then thrown from a passing motorcycle (FI 2012, 65). The analysis of attacks by Boko Haram over the last few years yields some critical insights.

Since 2009, Boko Haram has been responsible for more attacks and more casualties than any other armed group in Nigeria. Furthermore, since 2010, the sect has been responsible for more radical attacks in Nigeria than all other groups combined (FI 2012, 65). It is important to note that only Boko Haram has become the most severe terrorist threat to Nigeria. A majority of Boko Haram's attacks have come in just two forms: armed assaults and bombings. More than the past three years, they have been responsible for more armed charges than blasts but has been a very significant increase in attacks since mid-2011. Further, the number of casualties from the Boko Haram bombings is now more than twice that of their armed assaults (FI 2012, 66).

In addition to the ever-increasing event, Boko Haram attacks have also spread physically. Recently, their assaults took place mainly in a handful of states in the northeast Bauchi, Borno, Yobe, Plateau, and Kaduna and mostly in and around the towns of Maiduguri, Damaturu, Bama, and Potiskum. (FI 2012, 67) The group's attacks had spread to the west and south of their primary areas of operation, to include the towns of Kano, Katsina, Bauchi, Jos, Gombe, and the nation's capital, Abuja (FI 2012, 66–67). All these developments indicate an expansion in Boko Haram's tactics, lethality, and geographic reach. Some observers have suggested al-Qaeda as one of its affiliates who has played a role in this.

Furthermore, it is also possible that Boko Haram's increasing operational capabilities derived from interactions with weapons traffickers and other criminal networks already indigenous to the northeast regions of Nigeria (FI 2012, 67). They have an extensive list of targets and victims. They have been responsible for attacks against government officials, military patrols, churches, politicians, academic institutions, police stations from which they have stolen weapons used in subsequent attacks and Christian and Muslim figures of traditional and religious authority who have been critical of its ideology (FI 2012, 67).

The sect's most regular targets have been police stations, patrols, and individual policemen's homes or in public who are off-duty or retired. They have used petrol bombs, improvised explosive devices, and armed assaults in these attacks. A common tactic used by the group has been drive-by shootings and bombings. Almost all of the armed charges were direct-fire, drive-by shootings, involving motorbikes, against unarmed persons. They have also targeted a variety of politicians, including village chiefs and a member of parliaments. On the 7th of September 2010, they attacked a prison in Bauchi, where an estimated 800 prisoners were released, including at least 120 Boko Haram members or supporters who were in anticipation of the trial (FI 2012, 68). The sect has also attacked individuals whom they consider to be engaging in un-Islamic activities, like drinking beer. But the group with the most significant number of identified casualties has been churchgoers, clerics, and others affiliated in some way with organized religion" (FI 2012, 68). While most of the religiously-affiliated targets and casualties of these attacks have been Christian, there have also been several attacks by the group's members against prominent Muslims. They are said to be responsible for murdering Sheikh Ibrahim Birkuti, a prominent cleric who had publicly criticized sect for their increasing violence (FI 2012, 68). Through these attacks, Boko Haram has a well-known kind of defense concerning their ideology, as seen among many other terrorist groups throughout history, including al-Qaeda (FI 2012, 69). In July 2009, shortly before the death of Yusuf, he claimed that the sect has no problem with the public, but the authorities unless the general public supports the system (FI 2012, 69). Nonetheless, the information clearly shows that a majority of their attacks from 2009 to 2011 have killed ordinary citizens, then the institutions. They have carried out mass-casualty attacks, the intent of which can only be to kill without rhyme or reason.

On 29 May 2011, as newly elected Nigerian president Good luck Jonathan took the oath of office, Boko Haram detonated three bombs at an army barracks in Bauchi State, killing at least 14 people. Two weeks later, on 16 June, the first suicide bombing in Nigeria's history took place just outside the Nigeria Police Headquarters in Abuja. Then on 26 August 2011, Boko Haram carried out its most discreditable attack to date using a suicide car bomber to blow up the United Nations building in Abuja. Eighteen people killed, and many were wounded (FI, 2012, 70). It has extended its attacks in terms of rate of recurrence and lethality, and its targets include internationals like the UN building. While armed assaults are the primary means of shooting in 2009, the group has added suicide bombings to its armory, opening with the attack against the Abuja police barracks on 16 June 2011 (FI 2012, 70).

The attack signaled a significant shift toward the inclusion of international targets, as opposed to their previous focus on only Nigerian objectives. A lot of people feared that the attack might be a sign of a stronger connection with al-Qaeda affiliates in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which also attacked UN offices in Algeria in 2007 (Ero 2011). This fear not mislaid because Abul Qaqa, its alleged spokesperson, has made statements validating public concerns that Boko Haram may be operational with Al Qaeda. Qaqa opines on 24 November 2011 that the sect receives support from al Qaeda: "We indeed have links with al Qaeda. They assist us, and we assist them" (News 24, 2011). In any case, the attack on the UN compound was a frontier creating an offensive, designed to drive out foreigners and the overseas influence exemplify by the UN presence in Nigeria. It was considered to show to Nigeria and the global community that Boko Haram's objectives were no

longer local, but that it had spiraled to initiate violence everywhere in Nigeria, and possibly even further than (Cook 2011, 20). A brief timeline of Boko Haram attacks from January to June 2018.

On January 1st, three people confirmed killed in a blast in Nigeria's northeast town of Madagali. January 3rd, 14 civilians died when a suspected Boko Haram militant blew himself up at a mosque in Gamboru, Nigeria. Only the muezzin has survived. On January 8th, one civilian killed in an attack by members of the terror group Boko Haram in Cameroon's Far North region. Shooters on motorbikes opened fire on a grouping of loggers collecting logs at Kaje village in Borno state capital, Maiduguri. Twenty people killed in the attack and 15 others are missing and presumed kidnapped by the attackers. January 10th, three people were killed in a shooting in Cameroon's Far North region. January 11th, two suicide bombers, associates of the Islamist group, blow up their bombs in the Ouro-Kessoum district of Amchide in Cameroon, wounded two people.

Four people killed, and two others kidnapped in separate overnight attacks in the far north of Cameroon. Another one was wounded. January 15th, four people died in Mayo-Tsanaga, a region of the Far North of Cameroon, during an attack by Boko Haram. The attackers left after burning down dozens of huts and a church. Furthermore, six people were killed by shooters who also abducted five girls who joined the loggers to collect firewood from the Janene woods. Also, five people, including two suspected fighters of the terror group killed in an attack near Nigeria's northeastern town of Madagali. Two others were critically injured. On January 15th, two people died, and a dozen wounded in a suicide attack in the vicinity far North County.

January 17th, two suspected Boko Haram suicide bombers killed 12 people and wounded 65 others in a shooting in the northeastern Nigerian city of Maiduguri. Boko Haram fighters killed at seven soldiers in an attack on a military post in Niger's southeastern Diffa region. Ten others injured in the attack. January 18th, Boko Haram jihadists killed five people in an attack on a village in Adamawa State, northeast Nigeria. January 26th, three people were killed when *Boko Haram* attacked the Hyambula village in northeastern Adamawa state. Five others injured in the attack. January 29th, two soldiers were killed overnight while fighting off an attack by suspected *Boko Haram* jihadists in southeast Niger. January 30th, Boko Haram jihadists killed at least five loggers in northeast Nigeria and four others injured in the attack. January 30th, four people lost their lives, and 44 others sustained injuries in multiple suicide bomb attacks at a Konduga community, and the Dalori Internally Displaced Person camp.

On February 3rd, two civilians killed in an attack by Boko Haram in Kolofata of Cameroon's Far North region. February 4th, Boko Haram fighters stormed a village in northeast Nigeria and killed three people. Seven others have injured the attack. One person reported dead after Boko Haram terrorists attacked Kala village, opposite the Internally Displaced Person (IDPs) camp in Dalori, Borno State. The attackers also injured another man and burnt down some houses. Six people killed and two others wounded in the Cameroonian town of Hitawa (Far North), following an attack by Boko Haram. On February 16th, 21 persons killed, and 70 civilians wounded as three bombers struck Konduga local government area of Borno State. February 19th Dapchi abductions: Boko Haram abducted about 110 girls from their school in Dapchi, Nigeria. February 20th, six people killed, and five wounded in the Boko Haram assault in the subdivision of Mayo Tsanaga in Cameroon. February 21st, two soldiers, as well as a captain, were killed in a Boko Haram ambush in the Lake Chad region of Chad. February 22nd, Boko Haram terrorists killed six people in different

attacks in Cameroon's Far North region. February 25th, four people died in two suicide bombings by the sect in Bourvare and Goumouldi in the north of Cameroon. To some extent, a dozen others injured in the attacks. February 27th, two soldiers killed and two others wounded as soon as a suicide bomber drove into their patrol motor vehicle in the Lake Chad area of Nigeria.

On March 1st Boko Haram threatens to hurt Leah Sharibu, Killed a Red Cross Staff, and make off with three people from Madagali Local Government Area of Adamawa State. The group also killed 11 people together with three aid workers in an attack on the martial barracks in the town of Rann in Borno State. Three relieve workers were wounded and one more kidnapped. March 2nd, a female suicide bomber blew herself in the Fulatari mosque killing seven persons and injuring 28 people in Yobe State, Nigeria. March 5th, the sect attacked two farmers on their farmhouse and cut their throats in the rural community of Gudda in Mafa Local Government Area of Borno state. A team of loggers was attacked by Boko Haram while on their way to the bush to collect firewood, and three killed in the attack. A suicide bomber on a racing bike killed three inhabitants when he detonated his explosives on the outer edge of the northeastern Nigerian city of Maiduguri. March 6th, four loggers died when they stepped on a landmine left by Boko Haram in the neighborhood of Dikwa, 90 km east of the Borno state capital, Maiduguri. Three people killed in an attack in Gamboru on the border with Cameroon. March 30th five people, including four suicide bombers, were killed and 13 people were wounded when radicals attacked Muna Zawuya in the Mafa Local Government Area of Borno state

Furthermore, on April 1st, the sect attacked a village in the city of Limani near the boundary with Nigeria in northern Cameroon, killing one person and burning several huts. Boko Haram militants attacked a military place of duty in the community of Waza north of Cameroon, injured a soldier. Two suicide bombers blew themselves up and died. Boko Haram armed forces attacked a military base and two surrounding villages near the city of Maiduguri in Jere Local Government Area, killing 20 people and injured 84 persons. April 2nd, five Cameroonian soldiers killed and three wounded in the attack by Boko Haram militants. April 22nd, Boko Haram jihadists shot dead 18 forest employees collecting wood in Borno State, in the city of Gamboru, on the border with Cameroon.

In another incident, a vehicle carrying civilians traveling in a nearby army convoy hit a mine placed by insurgents, killing three people and injured eleven others near the village of Wumbi. April 26th Six people, including three civilians, a member of the Civilian Joint Task Force, and two suicide bombers, killed and nine wounded in an attack by Boko Haram insurrectionary in Maiduguri, Nigeria. Later on, another suicide bomber attacked an armored van of the Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squadron in the same area, injuring two police officers.

April 27th Boko Haram sect attacked a village near Amchide in the Mayo-Sava department in Cameroon's Far North region, killing a gentleman and stealing sheep. April 29th, three soldiers were killed in an attack by Boko Haram militants in the Diffa region in southeast Niger.

In 1st May 2018, Mubi suicide bombings: 86 people killed in two suicide attacks at a mosque and a market in Mubi, a city in the state of Adamawa in northeast Nigeria. Fifty-eight people injured in the bombings. May 2nd Boko Haram militants attacked the village of Auno in the Konduga local government area. No life was lost, but the terrorists burned a vehicle. May 3rd, four people killed, and nine others injured when four suicide bombers attacked Mainari Shuwa and neighboring Mainari Kanuri in the Konduga local government area of Borno State, Nigeria.

Twenty huts set on fire and a man killed in the Mayo-Sava department in the Far North region of Cameroon. May 5th, 12 people were killed, whereas 20 others injured as soon as two suicide bombers blew up their explosives at a mosque in Mabanda in the Far North region of Cameroon. On May 6th Six people, including four government officials and a soldier, died in an attack by the jihadists on a Chadian army checkpoint on an island in Lake Chad. 17 May 17th, four people died, and 15 others injured in a suicide terror campaign by the side of an open-air mosque for refugees in Dikwa in the northeast Nigerian state of Borno. May 27th, three people killed, and seven others hurt when two suicide bombers attacked a community in Konduga Local government area of Borno State, Nigeria. 28 May 28th, one person killed, and an unconfirmed number of cattle were taken away in the attack on herders by Boko Haram terrorists in the Askira/Uba Local Government Area of Borno state. May 31st Five soldiers lost their lives in an ambush by the terrorists in Gwoza Local Government Area Borno State Nigeria.

On June 4th, three suicide bombers, two women, and a man blew themselves up in Diffa in southeast Niger. The first detonation took place near a mosque, the second near a Koran school, and the third not far from a business center. Nine people killed, and 38 others injured in the attacks. June 8th, ten people were killed in attacks in villages of Diamaré in the far north of Cameroon, and four Boko Haram terrorists killed. June 9th, a male suicide bomber detonated a bomb attached to his body, killing himself in Maiduguri northeast Nigerian. June 11th, two people died, and four others injured when a Boko Haram suicide bomber detonated his explosives in the metropolis of Maiduguri in the Nigerian state of Borno. On June 13th, Boko Haram terrorists armed with machetes and firearms killed a woman in the village of Alhadjiri in the department of Mayo-Sava in Cameroon's Far North region.

On June 16th, two suicide bombers died when one of them prematurely activated her explosive device in the town of Limani in the Far North region of Cameroon. A young boy also died in the explosion. Terrorists killed two people in the village of Tchika in the community of Hile-Alifa in northern Cameroon. Forty-three people died, and 84 others injured when six female suicide bombers detonated their explosives in the Damboa local government area in the Nigerian state of Borno.

On June 18th, Boko Haram killed nine soldiers and wounded two others when they attacked the town of Gajiram, headquarters of the local government of Nganzai in northeast Nigeria. June 20th, fifteen people were injured when two suicide bombers attacked military barracks in the city of Maiduguri in northeastern Nigeria. On the 22nd –23rd of June, the Boko Haram sect attacked the locality of Guid-Zeleved in the Far North region of Cameroon, murdering three people. June 26th, three civilians killed, and a woman abducted in a night raid led by a group carrying weapons in Oulfo on the border between Cameroon and Nigeria in the Far North region of Cameroon. At least seven people killed at the same time as dozens of them sustained injuries when the militants attacked them at a village in the local government area of Damboa in the Nigerian state of Borno. June 30th, Boko Haram jihadists killed four people and injured four others during an attack on a camp of displaced residents of Banki in the local government area of Bama in Borno State, Nigeria, and terrorists also killed in the fight. Later on, two soldiers wounded when their patrol vehicle struck a landmine planted by the fleeing jihadists in the rural community of Freetown, nine kilometers away (MacEachern 2018, 42).

In spite of the time breach between the *Maitatsine* revolt and Boko Haram violence, the Socio-economic conditions that sustained the violence in the 1980s are still pertinent for the current Boko Haram stalemate (Adesoji 2011, 106).

4.0 Current Factors that aided in the Surfacing of Boko Haram

Boko Haram has been able to take advantage of quite a lot of existing problems for both enrollment and operations, including: “weak local, state, and federal institutions; widening gap between rich and poor; rumors and conspiracy theories; the propensity of state and federal officials deny or downplay the scale of atrocities; incompetent and unprofessional security forces; uncontrolled corruption and conspiracy of the police; loss of faith in the justice system; and a culture of vigilantism and impunity” (Azumah 2014, 7).

The early success of the sect was given support by the local politicians and well-known business people. The assumption is that all of these factors contributed to the fueling (rather than root causes) for the rise of Boko Haram, on condition that fertile ground for the seeds of religious prejudice to get root. Addressing them will help use up the pus but will not necessarily deal with the causes of the infection (Azumah 2014, 8).

According to Dikki, he asserts that politicians, poverty, cruelty, and imperialism regarded as laying the basis for enhancing Islamic fundamentalism and the Boko Haram phenomenon in northeast Nigeria (Dikki 2017, 91). He further said most scholars suppose that religious disputes and Boko Haram came into view as an end product of socio-political and socio-economic factors. He questioned the assertion and holds that “theology and theological explanation are the key reasons, while socio-political and socio-economic factors are minor for the reason that in spite of socio-political and socio-economic factors, Islam is in other parts of Nigeria without these crises” (Dikki 2017, 91).

Furthermore, he opined that both religious violence and the appearance of Boko Haram are a result of theological ideology and in essence, Maududi’s conservative ideology and the Salafi trend. He further asserts that the coming of Maududi ideology led to the formation of groups akin to Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria (Dikki 2017, 91).

5.0 The Challenges of Islamic Jihad Today

Islamic jihad presents challenges in northeast Nigeria today. A few identified for discussion.

The threat to national security is one of the challenges of Islamic jihad. Gwamna and Dayil asserts that Boko Haram violence and the security situation of the country has dazed to its basics, The regular taking part of the police, army, and other security forces have become vulnerable today by using sophisticated weapons used by the sect, and the breaking of ranks of security men as some of them accused of partisanship in the handling of the crises. It came into force mostly in the enforcement of Shariah and Boko Haram violence. The explosive nature of Islamic fundamentalism prompt the former Libyan leader Muammar Ghaddafi who suggested that Nigeria should split into two (Muslim north and Christian south) if ethno- religious violence is not abated (Gwamna and Dayil 2011, 80-81)

Challenge of intolerance. Gwatnna argues that in the last three decades, religious mayhem has led to increasing intolerance among adherents of either Islam or Christianity. Due to constant cases of ethno-religious violence, most Nigerians have lost their sense of peaceful co-existence and mutual respect. Simple disagreements these days can lead to clash and calamity (2007, 134). Citizens who lived in peace and mutual exchange of daily existence in the past, now torn in between religious division. Islamic jihad has torn people apart as a trust; confidence and love have battered. It is not suitable for inter-religious relations in a multi-religious society like Nigeria (Gwamna and Dayil 2011, 81).

Challenge of dialogue. The inter-religious dialogue today can be of great help to check Islamic jihad and its radicalism and excesses. Inter-religious dialogue requires commitment, security, respect for other person's religious viewpoint, and it promotes understanding of the other person's point of view too (2011, 81)

Challenge of peace. The fact is that no country can develop and become stable in an environment that is lawlessness. A traumatized public cannot focus on developing its people due to Islamic fundamentalism. Resources for the development of the people are diverted to restrict the crises, and potential investors are easily discouraged from getting concerned (2011, 82).

Challenge of leadership. Dayil and Gwamna assert that spiritual leaders called into question; to provide an excellent example of peaceful living and promote the same in their verbal expressions and actions. Consistently, they have helped in accelerating the violence by provoking speeches and sermons (2011, 82). According to Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar 3rd, the Sultan of Sokoto presented these questions to describe the point unmistakably.

What benefit would any dangerous Muslim or Christian leader derive from such senseless mayhem? How could we lose our sense of responsibility and our sense of restraint at such a critical hour? I doubt it very much if God Almighty will ever forgive us or indeed view us favorably when we invoke His hallowed name to provoke and justify the mass murder of His innocent children and the pillage of their possession. Unfortunately, the conflict in Jos involves Muslims and Christians, but it is not a conflict between Islam and Christianity. Its solutions must be sought in the complex matrix and faultiness of Plateau society and not on the streets of Maiduguri, Aba, and Osogbo (2010, 5).

These challenges are what religious leaders need to agree to and promote today instead of being the driving force of violence and incessant killings.

Challenge of followership. Time after time, religious followers have always been the ones that encourage fanaticism. They are the ones who are convinced and mobilized with jihadist teachings. The elites, politicians use them, and the rich to unleash terror on innocent Nigerians. The bulkiness of the religious followers falls below the poverty line. They are the underdogs, the deprived Nigerians, the impoverished, and those exposed to the daily caprice of life. It becomes effortless, therefore, to mobilize them for such negative tendencies. When money and the hope of salvation in the hereafter flashed on them, they quickly fall prey, and what takes over now is what Osemedua Robert Nwabor calls "the rule of the crowd, instead of the rule of law" (2010, 2). That is what we are presently witnessing in following the circle of violence that has occurred in the last two years.

The greatest challenge of the Boko Haram series of violence has spread trauma, fear, and hatred among large portions of northeast Nigerian Christians who see Islam as an existential threat. Sections of the Christian headship and youth have been radicalized, with many resorting to violence and openly calling for retaliatory attacks.

6.0 Conclusion

Even if the military overpowers Boko Haram, the critical factors of it's coming out are still in place. Corruption, deprivation, poverty, religious frustrations, and violations by security forces equally created an uprising of the Maitatsine in the 1980s, which is a forerunner to the *Boko Haram* violence (Aghedo 2014, 229-250). The Nigerian state and security establishment still shows the lessons learned from dealing with a violent, fundamental insurgent group, and the challenges facing, especially the northeast region, seem to be higher than ever. On the other hand, the problem *Boko Haram* has represented to the state may ironically be a latent driver for positive change. Because of the systemic causes of poverty, corruption, and mismanagement that have fuelled and intensify the violence as argued by Johannes Harnischfeger, " he made it clear that the rotten political system in northeast Nigeria is no longer sustainable" (2014, 41).

Responding to Islamic jihad in northeast Nigeria today requires going back to the sacred literature to draw restraints and guidance. Good hermeneutical response and application will help immensely so that our interpretation of Holy Scriptures are not quoted and applied out of context, or used only to meet our agenda and interest. It calls for a good understanding of both Christian and Muslim viewpoints and what their religions teach. We must emphasize commonalities and shared values of our faiths (issues of justice, righteous living, and shared humanity) and use them to enrich our beliefs and foster greater understanding, tolerance, and harmony. We need to appreciate the various legacies these religions have bequeathed to the world. Writing on Islamic heritage to the world, for example, Bernard Lewis asserts that:

Islam has given self-respect and meaning to drab and impoverished lives. It has taught people of diverse races to live in brotherhood and people of different creeds to live side by side with a reasonable tolerance. It had an immense civilization in which others, besides Muslims, lived creative and useful lives and which, by its achievement, enriched the whole world (2002, 112).

This position is supported further by Sultan Sa'ad Abubakar 3rd thus:

The scriptures Muslim and Christian have provided us with sufficient bases to establish religious harmony and understanding and to build a rancor-free Muslim-Christian relation in Nigeria. Unfortunately, it is our behavior as religious leaders, the vested interests we have in maintaining the status quo and indeed our unwillingness to free ourselves from the cages that we have set for ourselves, that tend to undermine our efforts at peacebuilding in our dear country (2010, 3).

Christianity upholds the virtues of love for the neighbor and kind-heartedness borne out of love without regard to creed, color, and race. These are virtues that we need in Nigeria today to reduce tendencies towards religious Jihadism, extremism, and positive dispositions that promote mutual distrust, suspicions, hate, and anger. We can avoid jihad today in Nigeria and the world as a whole

if both religions resist the temptation of stereotyping and problematizing themselves with arguments on which religion is best. The sequence of violence has spread trauma, fear, and hatred among large portions of northeast Nigerian Christians who see Islam as an existential danger. Sections of the Christian leadership and youth have been radicalized, with many resorting to violence and openly calling for retaliatory attacks.

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