

Boko Haram and Security Threat in Nigeria: A New Twist of Political Game in Town.

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Abstract

Boko Haram insecurity complex which is pervasive and palpable is the most recent of the bones in Nigeria's throat as a nation. Rumour and speculation of Boko Haram bomb scare have heightened the level of insecurity and impacts negatively on the socio-economic and political equilibrium of our beloved nation. This paper tries to unravel why the sudden Boko Haram religious conflicts take a political dimension in northern Nigeria. Methodologically, it relies on both primary and secondary sources of data. It argues that a combination of politico-economic competition, illiteracy, poverty and the obnoxious police extra-judicial killings are the core drivers of this sudden change. It concludes with a range of recommendations on how Nigeria could mitigate the security threat posed by Boko Haram.

Keywords: *Boko Haram, Political Agenda, National Security, Northern Political Elites, Nigeria.*

Introduction

Boko Haram (BH) religious sect, which began in 2002 in the northern Nigeria with its headquarters in Maiduguri, Borno State recently turned into a nightmare for all Nigerians especially those in Northern Nigeria. This group with its late leader Ustaz Yusuf seeks the imposition of Sharia in the northern states and believes that Western or Non-Islamic education is a sin. A glance at the BH logo below will clear the above doubt.

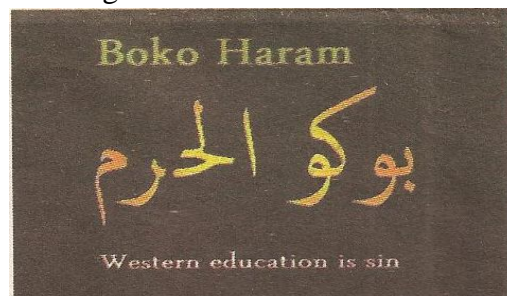


Fig 1: BH Logo

In fact, the sect is hostile to democracy, western culture and modern science. Little wonder in a 2009 BBC interview, the late Yusuf, their leader, stated that the belief that the world is sphere is contrary to Islam and should be rejected (Ajani, 2011:13).

Following the sectarian violence of this group in 2001 and 2002, and the constant arrest of its leader which subsequently led to his death in the hands of Nigerian security agencies in 2009, his followers turned into a terrorist group. From its base in Maiduguri, bombings have been carried out in Borno, Niger, Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna states and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. This reminds us of its late leader's statement that "this war that is yet to start would

continue for long, if the political and educational system was not changed” (Ajani, 2011:13). Actually, the members of this sect do not spare royalty or religious leadership. For policemen and law-abiding citizens in Maiduguri, Borno State, the fear of being targets of drive by shooters is now a common place. In addition, most citizens now avoid clustering around. Even those who go to the markets now do their buying in a very brisk manner.

However, the recent unfolding has proved beyond reasonable doubt that most of the Northern political elites have infiltrated into the group, helping them to finance and strategize for their selfish political goals. This has culminated into different factions with different political intentions that unleash terror in Nigeria state. No wonder, the co-founder of the *BH*, Malam Aliyu Tishau, who belongs to the conservative wing of *BH* group, said his sect was opposed to terrorism (Chigbo, 2011:14).

Nonetheless, this paper attempts to find out why this *BH* religious sect takes a political dimension and is sub-divided into six sections. The first and second sections concentrate on the introduction followed by the conceptual discourse. The third section deals with the origin and spread of *BH*. The fourth and fifth sections concentrate on the methodology of the study and various responses by northern and Nigerian government. The sixth section concludes.

Conceptual Discourse National Security

National security is a multidimensional concept. It is used in relation to security at the level of the individual and the state (Osumah and Ekpenyong, 2006). At the individual level, it refers to security from the point of view of human security, job security, social security and security against natural disaster. It denotes the protection of individual and property from any kind of threat. In other words, it is absence of the evil of insecurity, a negative value so to speak (Wolfers, 1965). While at the state level, it means defence and survival of the state from external aggression, that is, conventional security approach

However, for the purpose of this paper, we are particularly concerned with human security, within non-conventional security approach, which emphasizes freedom or the absence of dangerous threat to the corporate existence of any individual within the state. In fact, National Security from the non-conventional approach has altered the narrow interpretation of National Security with a more broad definition that is reflective of the multi-dimensional nature of society, the economic, cultural, technological, epidemiological, political, environmental and military variables (Chikwem and Alonge, 2011:83). This was succinctly attested to by Onuoha (2008:35-61), when he noted that national security denotes the capacity of a state to promote the pursuit and realization of the fundamental needs and vital interest of its citizens and society, and to protect such from threats, which may be economic, social, environmental, political, military or epidemiological in nature.

Origin and Spread of *BH*

BH is an Islamic sect based largely in North Western part of Nigeria. Their leader was one Mallam Muhammed Yusuf, until he was killed in a questionable circumstance; Yusuf was born

in Girgir village of Yobe State. The *BH* group started as Sahaba group in 1995. The main leader of the group then was Abubakar Lawan who later left for the University of Medina to study. When he left, the older clerics conceded the leadership to Yusuf, who was a young and versatile man. But immediately Yusuf took over, the doctrine of the sect changed and he abandoned the older cleric and came up with 'BH' (Sani, 2011:6).

BH – Boko, meaning “Animist, western or Islamic education and the Arabic word *Haram*, figuratively meaning sin”, (literally forbidden). This implies that western education is forbidden. Available information indicates that the group emanated from an orthodox teaching slightly resembling that of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Their school of thought considers anything western as an aberration or completely unislamic. The group viewed the western influence on Islamic society as the basis of the religion's weakness. Hence their declaration that western education and indeed all western institutions are infidel and as such must be avoided by Muslims (Sani, 2011:6). To prove that the group denounces everything western, in a 2009 BBC interview, the late Yusuf, their leader, stated that “the group's belief that the world is sphere is contrary to Islam and should be rejected, along with Darrorism and the theory that the rain comes from water evaporated by the sun” (Ajani, 2011:13).

Among their objectives and beliefs are: seeking the imposition of Sharia in the northern states; beliefs that western or non-Islamic education is a sin; today's banking system is Shylocks and Islam forbids interest in financial transactions; mixing of boys and girls under the same shade is forbidden in Islam; propagation of the theory that men evolved from the family of monkey as well as the sun in the sky is static and forbidden in Islam. According to them, all these are in conflict with the direct words of Allah. Little wonder, the sect normally dresses in similar costumes as the Taliban of Afghanistan or Pakistan, with long sleeve robe, shortened trousers, a turban, long beard, a small coat cover the long sleeve robe, covering the abdomen (like a bullet proof jacket) and a chewing stick.

However, observers of political events in Nigeria have observed that BH are of two factions. One faction is Yusuf's groups who are head-bent on Islamizing the Nigerian state. While the second group are the criminal gangs who are supposedly agents of the intellectual, political, traditional and religious elites of the North conscripted after presidential elections for regional political agenda. This was attested to by the Governor of Bauchi State, Mallam Isa Yuguda, who stated that BH are of two types, one faction of the sect distorts the true teaching of Islam, while the other faction is a band of criminals who are out to destroy the country for selfish reasons (Omonobi et al, 2011: 1-5). Collaborating the above information, the BH spokesman Qaqa made it crystal clear that they are prepared to go a step further with Nigerian government to ensure that these groups who are using their name for political and criminal purposes are identified and checked (Aganda, 2012:7).

Surprisingly, *BH* started spreading like a wild fire and unleashing their terror in Nigeria to realize their aims and objectives. Some of the chronicles of *BH* insurgencies are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Some Fact line on BH insurgency in the Northern States of Nigeria

S/N	STATE	INCIDENT	YEAR - PERIOD	CAUSALITIES
1.	Bauchi	First clash with security agencies on Dutsen Tanshi, in Bauchi State	26 th July 2009	39 civilians dead 2 policemen dead 1 soldier killed
2.	Yobe	First attack in Yobe leading to invasion of potiskum divisional headquarters	27 th July 2009	5 civilians dead, 3 policemen dead
3.	Yobe	Confrontation with security men at Mamudo village in Yobe State	29 th July 2009	33 BH dead
4.	Borno	All night Battle between BH and combined security operatives	29 th July 2009	scores killed and operational base destroyed
5.	Bauchi	First clash with security agencies on Dutsen Tanshi, in Bauchi State	26 th July 2009	39 civilians dead 2 policemen dead 1 soldier killed
6.	Borno	BH gunmen on motorcycle fired at a tea shop in Gazangi- Tashan Gandu	7 th January 2010	3 Civilians dead
7.	Bauchi	Attack on prison at Maiduguri	2 April 2010	1 prison warder killed
8.	Bauchi	Killed governorship candidate of (ANPP), Alhaji Modu Fannami Gubio	28 th January 2011	5 injured
9.	Kaduna	Attack residence of Divisional Police Officer	2 March 2011	2 policemen killed
10.	Borno	An explosion of bomb	7 th April , 2011	Many injured
11.	Kaduna	Bomb explosion at independent electoral commission office Suleja	8 th April 2011	11 civilians killed
12.	Borno	Two suspected bomb makers	21 st April 2011	2 BH dead
13.		Three bomb blast at Tudu palace Hotel and Kano motor park in Maiduguri	25 th April 2011	
14.	Bauchi	Bomb explosion in Damaturu	5 May 2011	1 policeman injured
15.				
16.	FCT Abuja	Attack of Bauchi State government house at Abuja	5 th May 2011	1 civilian dead, I policeman dead others injured
17.	Bauchi	Attack on two Islamic clerics, Sheikh Goni TIjiam and Mallam Alhaji Abur at his residence	5 May 2011	2 Islamic clerics dead

18.	Bauchi	Attack on Ibrahim Dudu Gobe	9 May 2011	1 civilian dead and his son injured
19.	Bauchi	Bomb explosion at Londo Chinki Maiduguri	13 May 2011	2 civilians killed
20.	Bauchi	Bomb explosion at military barrack	15 May 2011	3 policemen dead 2 soldiers dead
21.	Bauchi	Attack Shehu of Borno's brother, Alhaji Abba Anas Garba El-Kanemi	29 th May 2011	14 soldiers dead
22.	Borno	Attack on police station in Maiduguri	31 May 2011	1 civilian dead
23.	Bauchi	A blast at the mammy market of Shandawanka Barracks in Bauchi	28 th May 2011	13 civilians dead 40 injured
24.	FCT Abuja	Ann explosion at Zuba of Kubwa in Abuja	29 th May 2011	8 civilians lose their legs
25.	Bauchi	Attack on police station in Maiduguri	1 June 2011	5 policemen dead
26.	Bauchi	Attack on drinking joint at Damboa	12 th June 2011	4 civilians dead
27.	Bauchi	Bomb explosion at Damboa town Maiduguri	16 June 2011	4 civilians dead
28.	FCT Abuja	Bomb explosion at force headquarters	16 th June 2011	2 policemen dead
29.	FCT Abuja	A massive explosion at the national police headquarters building in Abuja	16 th June 2011	
30.	Borno	Bomb blast	4 th July 2011	4 Civilians dead 10 injured
31.	Borno	Bomb blast	13 th July 2011	5 Civilians dead 2 soldiers injured
32.	FCT	UN House Abuja	26 th August 2011	33 civilians dead 11 UN personnel and Several people injured
33.	Borno	BH storm police barracks	17 th October 2011	14 vehicles burnt
34.	FCT Abuja	Bomb explosion at UN's Office at Abuja		
35.	Kaduna	Bomb Blast	8 th Dec. 2011	15 Civilians dead Several injured
36.	Yobe	Bomb Blast	20 th Dec. 2011	3 suspected BH injured
37.	Niger	Bomb blast at St. Theresa's Catholic Church	25 th Dec. 2011	
38.	Adama wa	Deeper Life Bible Church in Gombe	15 th January 2012	8 worshippers dead 18 injured
39.	Adama wa	At Christ Apostolic Church, Jimeta, BH spraying worshippers with bullets	January 16 th 2012	16 worshippers dead
40.	Kano	Several bomb blast at police station etc	21 st January 2012	200 killed including civilians and policemen
41.	Kano	Bomb blast	27 th January	2 civilians injured

			2012	
42.	Plateau	Attack on security	17 th October 2012	1 soldier matched 3 <i>BH</i> killed
43.	Plateau	Attack on the capital	20 th Sept 2012	9 civilians dead

Source: Compiled by the author

From Table 1, it is quite clear that 950 deaths have so far been recorded. But the death toll is estimated at over 2000 losses and valuables running into several millions of dollars destroyed

Methodology of the Study

The study raises the following fundamental research questions: what are BH conservatives motivations before and after 2011 presidential election? What factors influence the influx of different factions after 2011 presidential election? The questions will adopt the following propositions: that the motives of BH conservatives before and after 2011 elections have remained Islamic religious jihad. That political agenda significantly influence BH influx after 2011 presidential election.

The data for the study were derived from secondary and primary sources. Secondary sources include from journals, newspapers, magazines report and internet, while the primary data were collected from survey questionnaires on a dichotomous scale. The data collected through the questionnaire were subjected to computations in the form of table which made the calculations and analysis easy. All the survey questionnaires were administered to security operatives, journalists, academics and politicians in four northern metropolis, namely Kano in Kano State; Kaduna in Kaduna State; Maiduguri in Bornu State and Damaturu in Yobe State. These states have witnessed much violent campaign of BH more than other states in the North.

A snowball sampling technique was adopted. Because of security limitations, these aforementioned northern states remain highly volatile in recent times because of the dangerous activities of the sect. Thus, the sample size was 80 respondents, 20 for each state. The data collected through questionnaires were based on frequency and presented in tables along the formulated propositions. The profile sample of 80 percent males, ranging between 25-40 percent. As far as the education was concerned majority of respondents were post-graduates with some computer related qualifications.

Table 2: BH Conservatives before and after 2011 Presidential Election

BH BEFORE AND AFTER INFLUX OF DIFFERENT FACTIONS IS FIGHTING FOR	PERCENT OF YES
To make Nigeria an Islamic state	84
Paradise	78
Abolition of democracy	72
Abolition of western education	82
Personal revenge	42

Generally, BH members are the unemployed youths, uneducated religious/political thugs, who are susceptible to manipulation by the intellectual, political, religious and traditional elites of northern Nigeria for a regional religious *cum* political agenda.

The survey results indicate that the conservative wing of BH is on personal revenge and is against western influences such as education and democracy. The survey as well indicated that the sect is seeking for the replacement of Nigeria's constitution with *Sharia*; in other words, the islamization of Nigeria, without taking into account its secularity. Nigeria is a secular state with a conglomeration of multiplicity of religions with Muslim and Christianity as the major religions. The findings of BH motivations in this research correspond to the findings of Aghaedo and Osumah (2012) who researched on BH uprising and how Nigeria should respond in terms of social profile, motivations and *modus operandi*. Though, the later findings were not classified in the pre and post-2011 presidential election. However, there are three majority ethnic groups, namely the Muslim Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Christian Igbo in the southeast and the Yoruba, which have an almost equal population of Christians and Muslims in the Southwest. Added to these three main ethno –religious groupings, there are over 250 minority ethnic groups in Nigeria.

The *Sharia* issue has plunged Nigeria, especially the northern part into endless bloodshed. This is attested to by the sporadic outbreaks of violence in the north which broke out following the introduction of *Sharia* in the state of Bauchi (June and July 2001), Gombe (May 2011), Zamfara (2000), Kaduna (Feb. 2001) and Kano (Feb 200). In fact, Nigeria has recorded “more than 50 religious crises in 30 years in the north and they have left political, social, economic and psychological losses and pains in their trail” (Abimbola, 2009:10). In 2001, in the worst of such anti-sharia riots in Kaduna resulted in deaths estimated at over 5000 and loss of valuables running into several millions of dollars (Reno, 2004:219-238). It is estimated that between 1999 and early 2012, close to 20,000 people died in clashes between Christians and Muslims.

Furthermore, survey respondents revealed a strong expression of anger by BH conservatives over Nigerian security agencies heavy-handed approach on their members. In fact, the brutality and extra-judicial killings which characterize the Nigerian international security system especially the police contributed to the sudden escalation and radicalization of the sect. Several BH members including its leader Yusuf Mohammed have been known to have been murdered by police extra-judicially in 26-27 July 2009, in the operation ordered by the former President Umaru Yar'Adua. For example, a recent report by the network on police force reform shows that 7,198 persons were extra-judicially killed by the Nigeria police force between 2006 and 2010 alone. In 2008, the Human Right Watch stated that it tracked over 8,000 killings by the police between 2000 and 2007 (The Punch Editorial October 26, 2011:18). Actually, several BH members have been extra-judiciary massacred which made the government to order the prosecution of police personnel who killed Yusuf, and the military commander of the troop that killed 42 other BH insurgents. That explains why the targets of BH conservatives bombing spree include police stations, barracks, security checkpoints, public infrastructure and government buildings for revenge purposes.

Table 3: BH after 2011 Presidential Election Influx of different factions

BH AFTER INFLUX OF DIFFERENT FACTIONS IS FIGHTING FOR	PERCENT OF YES
Political competition (Northern political regional hegemony)	78
Economic competition	70
Poverty Alleviation	62
End to bad leadership	38
End to corruption	30

The survey results indicate that the influx of different factions of BH after 2011 presidential election has been significantly influenced by political competition, economic competition, poverty alleviation, end to corruption and end to bad leadership. In fact, all the survey respondents explicitly stated that BH influx after 2011 election is undoubtedly motivated by struggle for the highest position among the geo-political zones of Nigeria especially between the South and the North. That explains why writers such as (Omoweh, 2006; Ikelegbe, 2005; Obi, 2009a, 2009b; Ukiwo, 2007:592) likened the age-long conflict in Nigeria, as a political struggle to hold unto oil-wealth. Before now, the North has been dominating the political sphere of the Nation. A glance at Table 2 below will serve as eye opener.

Table 1: Various Administrations in Nigeria since Independence (1960 – 2012).

S/N	Head of State	Type of Government	Tenure	Mode of exit/end of tenure	geo-political zone	Duration in power
1	Alhaji Tafawa Balewa	Civil-Democracy	1960-1966	Coup d'eta Murdered	North-East	5years +3.5 months
2	Gen. Aguiyi Ironsi	Military Rule	Jan. 1966-July 1966	Coup d'eta murdered	South-East	6.5 months
3	Gen. Yakubu Gowon	Military Rule	1966-1975	Coup d'eta over throw	North-Central	9 years
4	Gen. Murtala Mohammed	Military Rule	1975-1976	Coup d'eta murdered	North – West	6.5 months
5	Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo	Civil Democracy	1976-1979	Transition to civil rule-Hand over	South-West	3 years +6.5 months
6	Alhaji Shehu Shagari	Military Rule	1979-1983	Coup d'eta over throw	North-West	4 years + 3months
7	Gen. Mohammadu Buhari	Military Rule	1983-1985	Coup d'eta over throw	North-West	1 year +8 months
8	Gen. Ibrahim Bagangida	Military Rule	1985-1993	Step Aside-Handover	North-Central	8 years
9	Chief Ernest Shonekan	Ill-Defined Interim National	Aug. 1993-Nov. 1993	Resignation? Overthrown? (maier 2000:72)	South-West	3months
10	Gen. Sani Abacha	Military Rule	1993-1998	Natural death	North-West	4 years + 7 months
11	Gen. Adulsalami	Military Rule	1998-1999	Transition to civil rule-Hand	North-Centra	1 year

	Abubakar			over		
12	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	Civil Democracy	1999-2007	End of tenure of 8 years of 2 terms	South – West	8 years
13	Alhaji Umaru Yar'Adua	Civil Democracy	2007-2010	natural death, on 5 th May 2010	North-West	2 years +11 months
14	Goodluck Jonathan	Civil Democracy	2010-date	incumbent since 2010	South-South	1 year +6months
	Subtotal North	Civil/military	1960-2012	Coup d'eta/ Civil rule/ Resignation	North	39 years
	Subtotal South	Civil/military	1960-2012	Coup d'eta/ Civil rule/ Resignation	South	13 years + 6months

Source: Created by the Author

From Table 4, it could be observed that the northern region of Nigeria has ruled for 39 years while the Southern part has ruled for 13 years of 52 years of Nigerian existence. The emergence of President Goodluck Jonathan as president which brought the shift of power to the south did not go down well with some of the northern political elites who manipulate religious differences (*BH*) to fight and struggle for regional political status. This was attested to by the chairman of the northern ethno-cultural group, Arewa Consultative Forum, Gen. Jeremiah Useni (rtd), who blamed selfish northern politicians for the emergence and radicalization of the *BH* and Jos crisis (Owuamanam, 2011:13). Co-founder of the *BH*, Malam Aliyu Tishau collaborated the above statement by stating thus:

Some politicians from the Northern parts of the country had infiltrated the group and created a political faction that they are now using to cause havoc in the country. Apart from funding the activities of the faction they chose to work with; the newly created political wing of BH were reported to be also involved in issues of strategy and links with external forces (Chigbo, 2011:14).

Little wonder the famous northern cleric and social critic, Rev Hassan Mathew Kukah, the Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, in the just concluded December 10th 2011 conference organized by the northern socio-cultural organization, the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) in Kaduna, “accused northern religious leaders of conspiring with their politicians to perpetuate conflict in Nigeria by exploiting religious differences (Avwode, 2011:54).

Furthermore, most of the survey respondents claimed that post presidential influx of different *BH* factions are struggles to capture the state among the geo-political zones for economic expediency. Asked how they recruit these youths, almost all the survey respondents claimed ethno-religious inducement with a token. Because economic power resides in the south, the northern political elites have always been reluctant in allowing power shift to the south. For instance, oil which contributes to the mainstay of Nigeria’s economy resides in the south. Also, the seaports which earn the second largest income for the Nigerian government, reside in the south too. Because of the above economic power in the south, Chikwem (2012:26) argued that “the former northern heads of state through undemocratic decrees and laws have carefully

centralized all the fiscal revenue allocation in Nigeria on the presidency and has been reluctant in allowing power shift to the south, especially, the incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan from the oil rich Niger Delta of Southern Nigeria, where those obnoxious decrees and laws have affected drastically''. That explains why various prominent northern political leaders such as Alhaji Lawal Kaita, Alhaji Adamu Ciroma in October 2010, during a build up to the presidential election promised to make Nigeria ungovernable if the president did not come from the northern Nigeria (Umoru, 2012:5). Little wonder, the President, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor unequivocally argued that the root causes of *BH* are often embedded in struggle for political and economic dominance by northern Nigeria (Oba, 2011:3).

However, the high rate of poverty and unemployment in the north also make the teeming hungry *BH* youths to be easily manipulated for political cause. The socioeconomic development statistics for the North are the worst in Nigeria, with 72% of the people living in poverty compared with 27 percent in the South and 35 percent in the Niger Delta (Omotal 2008:496-517). The poverty nature ranges from unemployment, inadequate housing to inadequate feeding. Table 4 however, shows a comprehensive trend of poverty level by geo-political zones in Nigeria.

Table 5: Trends in Poverty Level by Geo-Political Zones in Nigeria (1980-2008) in percentage

ZONE	1980	1985	1992	1996	2004	2008
South-South	13.2	45.7	40.8	58.3	35.1	31.5
South-East	12.9	30.4	41.0	53.5	26.7	26.7
South-West	13.4	38.6	43.1	60.9	43.0	43.1
North-Central	32.2	50.8	46.0	64.7	67.0	60.0
North-East	35.6	54.9	54.0	70.1	72.2	72.2
North-West	37.7	52.1	36.5	77.5	71.2	71.2

Source: Chikwem, F. (2012:30).

From Table 5, it is quite clear and distinct that the three northern geo-political zones, most especially the North-East that remains volatile, are rated high above every other zone in terms of poverty. This accounts for why some of the northern political elites with a token of money and religious identity can manipulate and mobilize the masses for violence like the recent post-electoral violence for regional struggle.

Responses by Northern and Nigerian Government

BH, which is of two factions as confirmed by the survey respondents, has been a source of worry to the public and government. Nigerians, both Muslims and Christians have expressed worry at the sect's extremism. For some Christians, the sect's strategy and tactics are aimed at eliminating the Christians from the north judging from some of the various attacks on Christian churches in the northern part of Nigeria which they have claimed responsibility. However, media and fieldwork report show that many allow Muslims and Islamic groups abhor *BH* violent campaign, especially the group's use of Islamic religion to legitimize evil activities. Oloyede, Vice

Chancellor of Fountain University Oshogbo (Nasrul-Lahi-II-Faith society of Nigeria, an Islamic group is the proprietor of the University), “Islam does not encourage terrorism in any manner. Prophet Mohammed said we should seek knowledge. Allah is knowledge and knowledge is Allah” (Odesla, 2011:13). Other prominent Muslims in the country have collaborated the above statement including former Attorney General and Minister of Justice and former Judge at the International Court of Justice at The Hague, Prince Bola Ajibola who have condemned bombing as un-Islamic (Jimoh and Coffie-Gyanifi, 2011:3).

On the part of Northern Nigeria where the negative impacts of *BH* have been much felt, the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) peace conference has enjoined everybody to embrace peaceful and non-violent means as a vehicle for resolving all problems. According to the communiqué on the Arewa Conference on Peace and Unity issued after the conference and published in major newspapers on December 10th, the group stated that “the peace conference considered the general state of insecurity across the country brought about by ethno-religious crises and the spate of bomb blasts in the northern parts of the country, as well as the prevalent incidence of armed robbery and other crimes. On politically induced tension and insecurity, the conference enjoined political leaders to play by the rules of political contests and allow our democracy to attain its universal standards (Avwode, 2011:55). In addition to the ACF conference, a northern peace conference and a meeting of all former national security advisers has been held in response to the terrorism. Recently, the 19 northern governors forum has on its part responded to *BH* crises by constituting a committee headed by Ambassador Zakari Ibrahim to address the rising insecurity which has crippled the economy of northern states and paralyzed socio-political activities and to proffer solutions (Daily Post, August 22, 2012).

On the part of the government, the response has been slow and systematic. The government first instituted a presidential panel on the security challenges posed by the *BH* crises headed by Ambassador Usman Gaji Galtimari who submitted his report on 26th September 2011. Among other things, the committee advised the Nigerian Government to fundamentally consider the option of dialogue and negotiation which should be contingent upon the renunciation of all forms of violence and surrender of arms to be followed by a rehabilitation programme on the side of government (Onuorah, 2011:2). Earlier, the government ignored this committee’s report and started prosecuting *BH* members and their respective sponsors. A member of the National Assembly from Borno State is currently being prosecuted for divulging classified information to *BH* terrorist (Nnochiri, 2011:1). Also, three ex-governors and a serving governor of some northern states have been indicted for aiding *BH* (Aghaedo and Osumah, 2012: 863).

In another response to the *BH* insurgency, the Nigerian government had earlier placed Sudan, Niger, Chad, Somalia, Mauritania, Yemen and Pakistan on a terrorism watch list, but later they closed the border routes in Borno and Yobe States following the Christmas day bombing of St. Theresa’s Catholic Church at Madalla, Niger State, in which 43 persons died. In fact, over 2000 illegal aliens from Chad, Niger Republic, Sudan, etc have been deported from Nigeria. Travellers to or fro these states appear to have been taken unawares by the closure, leaving quite a number of them stranded with their goods on the other side of the border (Ojeme, 2012:11). Also, there is a comprehensive intelligence information about the *BH* tactics with the security agencies and the military are strategizing through adequate training of their personnel to curtail their excesses. Nigeria has also joined 28 other countries including the E.U, U.S., Britain,

Canada, Germany, etc. to form a new anti-terror coalition. Speaking at the launch of the new multilateral organization in New York on September 22, 2011, the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, said this “counter-terrorism network is as nimble and adaptive as our adversaries (*The Punch*, September 23, 2011:1).

Also, the Borno State government has paid a N100 million compensation to the family of the in-law of the late *BH* sect leader, Baba Fugu, following an order granted by a Maiduguri High Court which ordered the state and the federal government to pay the above sum of money as compensation for alleged extra-judicial murder of its founder and leader Mohammed Yusuf in 2009. Presenting the cheque to the Fugu family’s solicitor, Anayo Adibe, Governor Kashim Shettima said: “The ceremony today at the government house is a solemn one and that my heart goes to the family of the deceased Baba Fugu and others that lost their lives in the sectarian crises that engulfed the states” (Musa, 2012:5).

The state has also on several occasions responded to *BH* using military measures. The government has used soldiers e.g. the Joint Task Force (JTF) for the restoration of peace, especially at the volatile North East region of Nigeria. Over 35 check points have been mounted by men of the Joint Task Force Operation Restore Order in Maiduguri alone. Despite this visible security presence, life is on edge in the city as the constant bomb scare of *BH* makes some of them to stay indoors. Seventeen police commissioners have also been redeployed to check increasing insecurity.

Aside the government, the former president Olusegun Obasanjo’s peace parley in the house of late Yusuf at Borno State resulted in the killing of Babakura Fugu, a brother-in-law to Yusuf Mohammed, the slain leader of *BH*. A faction of *BH* claimed responsibility for the killing of Fugu who had met Obasanjo on a peace talk (Adepegba, 2011:15).

Furthermore, the Nigerian government opted for dialogue with the *BH* which was to be brokered by Dr. Ahmed Datti, President of Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the peace talk has failed. Ahmed observed that “he and his colleagues are withdrawing from the efforts which they undertook at great risk to their lives, because they do not believe in the sincerity of the Federal Government. He said that they were given guarantees of secrecy and confidentiality by the president personally, but have had all their progress and discussions leaked. He said he could not trust government to honour its word if it cannot deliver on guarantees it gave over the confidentiality of the talks (Hakeem, 2012:17). Beyond Datti’s peace talk, the Nigeria government has recently set up a committee on Amnesty proposal to the *BH* insurgents. This has generated a heated debate from the public most especially against the background that the conservative wing of *BH* has a link with Al Qaeda who are highly ideological and hold their beliefs high. Al Qaeda ideology, however, is not new. Its critique of the existing social and political order and vision for how to redeem the Muslim world builds on pre-existing arguments of several 20th century predecessor who called for an Islamic revolution that would create a new order based on Islam (Gregg, 2010:293). For the Al Qaeda, this revolution can only be achieved through physical struggle, jihad against Muslim leadership and western powers that support it (Gregg, 2010:294). Little wonder, the sect’s leader Imam Abubakar Ibn Shakau has openly rejected the proposed Amnesty from Nigerian government.

Hear Him: “The Nigerian government is talking about granting amnesty. What wrong have we done? On the contrary, it is we that should grant you (Federal Government) (a) pardon” (Olorok and Alechen, 2013: 2). However, most of the survey respondents strongly insist that should the amnesty continue, the beneficiaries will be the political wings of *BH* who are bent on making the country ungovernable for Jonathan’s administration.

Also, the Nigerian government on May 14th 2013, declared a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States of Northern Nigeria with an order to use extraordinary measures to quell the *BH* insurgency that has bedeviled the states. In the words of President Goodluck Jonathan while addressing the nation, he said:

...Those who are directly or indirectly encouraging any form of rebellion against the Nigerian State, and their collaborators; those insurgents and terrorist who take delight in killing our security operatives, whoever they may be, wherever, they may go, we will hunt them down, we will fish them out, and we will bring them to justice. No matter what it takes, we will win this war against terror (Jonathan, 2013:13

Finally, on June 5th 2013, the Nigerian government bans two prominent *BH* groups: *Jamaatu Ahlis-Sunna Liddaawati wa Jihad* otherwise known as *BH* and the *Jama’atu Ansarul Muslim in Fi Biladis* Sudan also known as *Ansaru*. The Nigerian government declared their activities illegal and acts of terrorism and henceforth ordered the security agencies to prosecute them under terrorism prevention Act 2013 as approved by President Goodluck Jonathan, pursuant to section 2 of the Terrorism Prevention Act, 2011 (as amended).

Conclusion

The findings presented in this paper are based mainly on the respondents’ answers. The paradigmatic research questions directed the course of our analysis and hence we were able to arrive at these propositions. The first proposition in the methodology section following the survey results permit the conclusion that the motive of *BH* conservatives before and after the influx of different factions (such as Islamization of Nigeria, paradise, personal revenge, abolition of western education and police brutality) have remained a religious configuration. While in the second proposition, the survey results allow the inference that the factors influencing the influx of *BH* after 2011 presidential election, such as northern regional political hegemony, economic gain, poverty alleviation, end to corruption and end to bad leadership underscore political dynamism.

However, as the threat of *BH* has paralyzed the socio-political activities of Nigerians, especially the northern part, urgent steps must be taken to fashion out strategies to address the disturbing state of insecurity bedeviling the nation. First and perhaps most important, there should be a holistic approach other than security by taking into consideration socio-economic issues that can give rise to extreme sentiments and actions leading to terrorism and militancy. Second, there should be an increase in operational equipment and further training of our security agencies on the latest tactics and operations. Third, there must be an increase in intelligence gathering and

surveillance. This will help to expose further the sponsors of *BH*. Finally, the culture of impunity is gradually being eliminated through the prosecution of *BH* members and sponsors but it should be sustained through appropriate legal sanctions to those involved to serve as a deterrent to others.

Notes

NBS and NAPEP

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