

# State, Governance And Insecurity In Nigeria: A Reflection On The Crisis Of Boko Haram Insurgency In The North-East

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**Abstract:** *The North-Eastern Nigeria is presently experiencing large-scale humanitarian crisis occasioned by the Boko Haram insurgency ravaging the North since 2009. The North-Eastern geo-political zone appeared to have suffered the most judging by the level of economic dislocations, social unrest; and destruction of both lives and properties recorded in the areas. It took the rejuvenation of the command and control of the military by the newly inaugurated Federal Government to check the rampaging militants and reclaim Nigerian territory from the 'new caliphate'. This paper, therefore, interrogates the effect of governance pattern in Nigeria on the festering and activities of the Boko Haram insurgents in particular, and insecurity in general with a view to offering suggestions that will foreclose future occurrence. The paper adopted the Marxists theory of the State and argued that the governance pattern in Nigeria over the years has remained elitists at the expense of the welfare of the masses. Documentary literature provided qualitative data which were interpreted with an analytical approach. The paper demonstrates that there is a disconnect between governance and the masses in Nigeria over the years. The disconnection displayed through the absence of welfare schemes for the citizenry, widespread corruption and impunity among government officials; as well as poor attitude towards the provision of qualitative education for the children among others entrenched a sense of frustration and abandonment among the disenchanting populace. The Boko Haram group, therefore, took advantage of this weak bond and offered "alternative paradigm on governance" (Islamic model) to the gullible minds as a system of governance that will alleviate their sufferings and lack. To prevent future occurrence of loss of trust in the State, governance in Nigeria must connect with the people through the provision of welfare services, elimination of corruption and impunity among government officials; and provision of qualitative education services (both Western and Islamic) for the children.*

**Keywords:** *State; Governance; Insecurity; Boko Haram; Insurgency*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The state is both a geographical and political entity within which complex human associations and activities are forged and pursued. As a political entity, the platform of the state serves the important purpose of a formal organisation for the articulation and aggregation of various interests of its subjects; and the pursuit of the advancement of both the individual members and the corporate entity. Governance, on the other hand, is the process by which the states strives towards attaining its purposes (as outlined above). Governance is a crucial subject in the management of the modern state. Salu (2010:84) underscores this point when he asserts that "...given

the pivotal nature of governance, its efficiency, effectiveness or otherwise should generate concern because of its capacity to make or mar other efforts of a country". This definition implies that the character of governance in a State is as important as the existence of the State itself, for it can make or mar anything the State undertakes including its corporate existence.

Security of lives and properties is one of the many challenges plaguing the Nigerian state. The rate of insecurity is alarming that the corporate existence of Nigerian is under serious threat. Examples of fragile security situations in the country include the continuous agitation for Biafra State in the South East, the upsurge in bombings/vandalization of

pipelines by the Niger-Delta Militants; the reoccurring incidences of herdsmen/farmers clashes, and the Boko-haram insurgency in the North. Each of these crises has brought about the destruction of lives and properties worth millions of naira and economic dislocations as well as negative publicity for the country. The Boko-haram insurgency remains one of the worst internal uprising experienced in Nigeria of recent both in cost and longevity. Although the Boko-haram disturbance started about 2003; its activities assumed a devastating dimension in 2009. "A conservative estimate of over 100,000 people have been killed by the sect since 2009 aside from damage to private and public property (Olasile, 2005:19).

It is not all gloomy as the Nigerian Government through the military has achieved some relative success in curtailing the onslaught of Boko-haram insurgents. It is, however, a fact that some remnants of this deadly group have continued to pull some strings to keep the group and its activities alive. The continuous hostage of a substantial part of 219 Chibok girls by the group and its demand for the release of its fighters as a condition for their release is a clear demonstration of the activeness of the Boko-haram group.

Given the above, this paper reflects on the crisis of Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East with a view to ascertaining how the character of governance in Nigeria influenced the emergence and activities of the Boko-haram in the North-East. Thus, the paper seeks answers to the following posers:

- ✓ What is the nature of the relationship between state, governance and insecurity?
- ✓ To what extent can governance in the Nigerian State account for the violent nature of Boko Haram insurgency?
- ✓ How can governance be strengthened to eliminate insurgency in Nigeria?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### STATE

The subject of state has attracted a great deal of definition and analysis. It is devoid of a universally acceptable definition. Johari (2005:53) demonstrated how divided scholars are on the definition of a state in his elucidation that:

However, the more perplexing factor is that different writers have a different view of its nature with the result that it ranges from anything like an agency of positive good to the liberals and the democratic socialists to an instrument of exploitation and oppression by one class over another to the anarchists and the Marxists, or from its idealization at the hands of Hegel in the form of 'the march of God on earth' to its condemnation as an almost unnecessary and undesirable end at the hands of Proudhon.

The elucidation above shows that the concept of the state means different things to different people depending on each scholar's philosophical leaning. In spite of this divergence of opinion on the definition of the state, scholars have provided us with the basic understanding of the state. In this regard, Anifowose (2008:85) defines the state as "the most inclusive organisation which has formal institutions for regulating the

most significant external relationships of the men within its scope". It is the basic political unit, a grouping of individuals who are organised in a defined territory for the pursuit of common secular welfare, the maintenance of law and order and the carrying out of external relations with other groups similarly organised. Shaheen (1987) views the state from organisational dimension as the overall network of institutional arrangements composed of the many diverse agencies which individually and collectively make public decisions. The state is therefore both a political entity and organisational framework. As a political unit, it provides a venue for inhabitants to co-exist within a specified territory. As an organisational framework; the state provides a set of institutions through which it makes and executes decisions on issues affecting the members of the territory. The state is, therefore, an indispensable structure in the workings of modern societies.

### GOVERNANCE

The concept of state and governance are intricately interwoven that one can hardly be discussed without a talk on the other. In the words of Saliu (2010:84) "hardly can one talk about governance without taking about the states even through governance goes beyond the state". Huther and Shah (1998) define governance as including all aspects of the exercise of authority through formal and informal institutions in the management of resource endowment of a state. Shah (2008) sees it as the exercise of authority and control to preserve and protect public interests and enhance the quality of life enjoyed by its citizens. The World Bank (1989) defines governance as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. For the World Bank, governance has three dimensions; namely: the nature of political regimes; the exercise of authority in the management of social and economic resources, and the capacity of government to formulate and implement policy and to discharge its functions.

This explains the argument that governance is a wide subject. It encompasses both the formal and informal institutions of the state; and the processes by which all are deployed to the pursuit of the welfare of the citizenry.

### (IN)SECURITY

The concept of insecurity cannot be properly analysed without a serious reflection on the subject matter of security. Thus, it is appropriate that we begin with a review of scholars' elucidation on what constitute a security. "From the general day to day usage of the word, security means safety, or freedom from danger; and protection from external attack or infiltration" (Nowolise, 2006:348). Robert (1997) posits that in a modernising society security means development. He maintains that security is not military force, though it may involve it. Security is development, and without development, there can be no security. The point here is that development can only occur under a secured atmosphere. Insecurity from the preceding is the absence of safety or lack of freedom from danger and protection from attack. Beland (2005) conceives insecurity as a state of fear or anxiety due to the absence or

lack of protection. Achumba et al. (2013) define insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is seen as the state of being open or subject to danger or threat to danger. Danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, insecurity can also be seen as the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune.

Ewetan and Urhie (2014:44), defines insecurity as a breach of peace and security whether historical, religious, ethno-religion, civil, social, economic and political that contributes to reoccurring conflicts and leads to the wanton destruction of lives and property. Insecurity is both a feeling of being attacked or harmed; and the experience of attack and harm. The two dimensions are not exclusive of each other. For example, if your place as a particular target has been attacked in the past; the individual becomes weary of such tendency, and so a feeling of insecurity continue to reign.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper relies on the Marxists theory of the state as a basis for its argument and postulations. The Marxist analysis of the functions of the state stemmed from his conception of the state. Marxists see the state as an instrument of class domination and exploitation.

"It is a tool for the management of the interest of the bourgeoisies" (Muhammad, 2015:2). With this standpoint, the Marxists contend that the function of the bourgeois state is to protect and promote the interests of the bourgeois class. Since the state is an instrument of exploitation and oppression by one class over another, the capitalist state performs the function of defending and promoting the interests of the capitalist class (Johari, 2007:80). In Nigeria, the state and its governance have provided only a little or no grounds for the pursuit of the welfare of the proletariats. A review of the socio-economic situation in the country reveals that more Nigerians are finding life difficult.

The governance system in the country is characterised by exclusiveness, impunity and lack of popular participation by the citizenry. This elitist nature of governance has fuelled the feelings of frustration and hopelessness among the populace thereby providing fertile grounds for insecurity to thrive in the various parts of the country. Corruption has become an instrument used to underdeveloped Nigeria. It paves for terrorism because resources that could have been used to empower the people have been converted to private use and drastically reduce the resources available for development as well as the provision of social services such as education, medical care, etc. This negative situation has created frustration for the people thereby pushing youths into terrorism and other social vices.

### IV. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE ON THE NEXUS BETWEEN STATE, GOVERNANCE AND INSECURITY

There is a strong reciprocal relationship between the tripartite variables of state, governance and insecurity. In this

tripartite relationship, governance is at the centre and represents an instrument with which the state can either attained a secured society or create the atmosphere of insecurity to reign. Hobbes cited in Onifade, Imhonopi and Urim (2013) emphasised this point that "only the state has the wherewithal to guarantee security and save society from anarchy (and since government represents the state) the state through its government should provide adequate security to justify its reason d'eter (Gaskin, 1996).

Nwagboso (2012) argues that in the long sweep of history, security has been about people and without reference to the security of the individual, security makes no sense at all. Therefore, citizens must be seen as the beneficiaries of every security measures that a state can undertake. Thus, Nigerian's security will involve effort to strengthen the capacity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, so it can advance its interests and objectives to contain internal and external aggression, control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development, process and growth and improve the welfare and quality of life of citizen (Umar, 2016:122).

Scholars have demonstrated through empirical studies the nexus between governance and insecurity. According to Akpan (2010) governance, that enhances the delivery of public goods, and improved standard of living for the people can guarantee the improved security of lives and properties and minimise potential risks to national security. Egwu (2006) corroborated this point when he remarked that:

The catastrophic episodes of poor governance evident in the perversion of the constitution and constitutionalism, subversion of the rule of law and institutions of probity and accountability, and the abuse of political power for personal aggrandizement by the political leadership in Africa, and the attendant devastating challenges of development, poverty, insecurity and conflict underscore the import of governance on development and security.

Sebudubudu (2010) examined the impact of good governance on development and poverty in Africa with a focus on Botswana. He argued that Botswana is generally acclaimed as a model country on good governance in Africa because "almost all the part assessments at global and the country levels have shown that Botswana's democratic governance which involves transparency, accountability, lower levels of corruption and a decentralized decision-making structures and programmes has been a critical contributor to the country's development success to date (Tsie, 1996; Theobald and Williams, 1999, Holm, 2000). In 2007, the Ibrahim Index of African governance that measures quality of governance in sub-Saharan Africa's 48 states – on the basis of safety and security, rule of law, transparency and corruption, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity, and human development-ranked Botswana as the third best governed country with an overall score of 73.0 (Sebudubudu 2014: 258).

It is therefore not a coincidence that insecurity in Botswana is at the minimum. The Nigerian experience is the reverse of the Botswana's impressive records. "The failure of governance is core to the socio-economic and political development challenges confronting Nigeria and the spate of violence that threatens national security" (Omodia, 2012). In the words of Omodia and Alin (2013:40), the failure of

democratic governance to improve the wellbeing of most Nigerians is one of the contributing factors to the emergence of numerous threats to national security in the Fourth Republic. Underlying the dysfunctionality in governance is the recklessness and insensitivity of the political elites and leadership in the management of the human, natural and material resources of the Nigerian state.

## V. HISTORY AND DIMENSIONS OF THE BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY

Scholars and pundits have rendered varying accounts of the history of Boko Haram insurgency. What is not in doubt from the various accounts is that the insurgents group known today as Boko Haram with its official identity as Jama'atul Ahalul Sunna Waljama'a Liddaawati Wal Jihadi (JASWAL JIHAD) was founded by late Mohammed Yusuf (Bintube, 2015:2; Shuaibu, SS and Salleh M.A, 2015). According to Bintube (2015:2), Boko Haram established their stronghold popularly known as Markas in Maiduguri since 1992 but gained notoriety in 2001. In another account, Shuaib, Salleh and Shehu (2015) opine that Jama'ah al-Ahlu al-Sunnah li al-Dawah waal-Jihad known as Boko Haram in Hausa which means western education is forbidden emerged around 2002 as a peaceful local salafist Islamic movement whose original aim was preaching and assisting the needy.

It must be stressed that two different accounts have been offered on the circumstances that necessitated the violent attitude of the Boko Haram group. One account holds that the group initially operated under the name of Shabaab Muslim Youth Organization with Mallam Lawal as its leader. This account explained that when Lawal travelled to continue his education in Medina, Saudi Arabia, Yusuf became the leader of the movement. Yusuf's leadership opened the group to the popularity and political influence (Chothia, 2012).

The second account holds that the opportunity of Boko Haram was opened to Mohammed Yusuf at Indimi Mosque, Maiduguri in which his colleagues in which his colleagues in the Izala were operating. In addition to preaching and translation of sermons, he was at one time an Imam at the mosque. Yusuf's concern with political Islam rather than the spiritual made him appear too ambitious and radical in his approach and interpretation of Islam. He subsequently broke ties with scholars in Indimi mosque and later with the Dagash Mosque because of differences on issues concerning the establishment of Islamic State, Liberal democracy as well as his other weird personal interest. "It was at this point that the movement began to grow and the leader is becoming popular particularly because of his approach to issues affecting the state and the society" (Bintube, 2015:13).

From the preceding, it is clear that Yusuf's leadership of the group had a tremendous influence on the orientation and its violent approach to the propagation of Islam. Imam et al (2013) opine that it is believed that the group camped at Jaijin biri, thick forest in November 2003 to give their members military training to prepare them for Jihad. Boko Haram's principal goal is to create a strict Islamic state in the north it believes would address the ills of society including corruption and bad governance. The sects' core beliefs are strict

adherence to the Quran and the Hadith (sayings of Prophet Muhammad), and their interpretation as sanctioned by in Taymiyyah (Awortu, 2015).

Furthermore, Boko-haram resorting to violence in pursuit of its objective dates back to December 2003 when it attacked police stations and public buildings in the towns of Geiam and Kanamma in Yobe State (Olasile, 2015:19). The group continued with its low-level attacks through 2004 in towns around Borno and Yobe States. The violent attacks on government interests took a new dimension with the July 2009 attack in revenge for the killing of its members by security forces. The aftermaths of this attack led to widespread conflicts in the northern states of Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Katsina and Yobe.

Furthermore, since the July 2009 confrontation in which its leader was captured and subsequently summarily executed by the security agencies, the sect had changed from using low-level guerilla tactics to outright warfare and had evolved into a more dynamic and decentralised organisation. By 2011, the group metamorphosed into international terrorist group operating in collaboration with other international terrorist groups. The international terrorist groups include Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahideen (Al-Shabaab) all affiliate of al-Qaeda terrorist network. Boko Haram has killed over 2000 persons in 2014 alone and is responsible for more than 12,000 deaths and over 8,000 maimed persons since it started its murderous campaign of insurgency (Gilberth, 2014:152). The United Nation (2016) estimates that at least 20,000 people have died in violence blamed on the Islamists and 2.6 million people displaced.

## VI. STATE AND GOVERNANCE'S FAILURE AS A RECIPE FOR BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN THE NORTHEAST

There is no gainsaying that the character of the Nigerian State and its governance contributed significantly in the evolution of Boko Haram in particular and insecurity in general. Sule, Jingh and Othman (2015:38) maintains that "leaders are entrusted with resources for the benefit of Nigerians as a whole, but Nigerian leaders use these resources largely for the benefit of few people directly and indirectly in government." In specific terms, the governance style in the last 17 or so years of the return to democracy has failed to add values to the life of the citizenry and contributed to insecurity in the following areas.

### A. ABSENCE OF WELFARE SCHEMES FOR THE CITIZENRY

The various policies and programmes of government at all levels in Nigeria have provided little or no welfare schemes that could significantly improve the lots of Nigerians. This tends to have left the masses to their fate in the scheme of things. The result is the worsening living conditions of the people in spite of huge revenue that have accrued to the government between 1999 and 2013. Awortu (2015:15) shared this opinion in the following words:



...the Boko-haram sect under the leadership of Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau took advantage of the failure of the Nigerian government at all levels in the north (Local, State and Federal Government) to provide basic welfare schemes to criticise western education and drum support for their false Islamic teachings.

It was, therefore, easy for the leadership of the Boko-haram group to exploit the lacuna created by the high unemployment level, lack of infrastructure and general high poverty incidences in the Northeast which is the highest in the country to secure the sympathy of the populace against the government.

#### B. WIDESPREAD CORRUPTION AND IMPUNITY IN GOVERNMENT

Corruption and impunity in Nigeria have contributed in no small measure to the insecurity in the country. Anyone with a simple knowledge of Nigeria would know that the cause of insecurity and Boko-haram was the decades of corruption and impunity of perpetrators, and failure of successive governments to provide quality education to Nigerian children (Odunsi, 2014). The trademark of corruption and impunity is defined by the elite use of power in a dishonest or illegal way to take advantage of others. It can also be found in the conduct of public officers which shows inequality before the law and lack of accountability. There is a link between corruption and violence. Corruption delegitimizes the state and fractures the relationship between government (state), and the people (society) corruption of state officials undermines the rule of law and the authority of the state. Barkindo (2013) demonstrate that Boko-haram and its sympathizers accused the government of engaging in the legacies of nepotism and enriching family members and close associates instead of investing in the development of north-eastern Nigeria. This tendency leads to hostility by citizens who came to view the state as an "enemy" (UNODC, 2015:89).

#### C. POOR ATTITUDE OF GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION

The consensus among analysts is that the delivery of public goods by governments in Nigeria has nosedived in the last decade. However, the delivery of qualitative education remains fundamentally abysmal, especially in the Northeast. Mbachu (2011:200) pontificated that low level of a country can be explained by the low level of educational achievement because those without education in the society form the ready and willing recruits, the jobless and miscreants who perpetuate considerable vandalism and terrorism. The situation in the Northeast is pathetic where current statistics reveals the highest rate of 53% out of school children between ages 9-14 (Education Policy and Data Center, 3). This figure is staggering especially if one considers an additional 10 million children in the almajiri education (Taiwo, 2013). The implication of these facts is that children are either denied access to education or were not given meaningful education sufficient enough to see to their usefulness in the society. This position has been affirmed by Bintube (2015). His interviewee identified lack of consciousness on the parts of parents about

the movements of their children and the kind of clerics they contacted in their quest to learn as one of the factors responsible for the Yusuffiya Boko-haram. This situation is contrary to the old practice where clerics who taught children were those established by the community as people whose line of thinking and ideologies were known and accepted as non-violent.

#### D. THE ATTITUDE OF POLITICIANS DURING ELECTIONEERING

The conducts of politicians since the return of democracy in 1999 have compounded the level of insecurity in the country. Umar (2003:210) underscores this point in the following words:

"Politicians in the North-east as in the other parts of the country are the critical elements that orchestrate and employ violence in the pursuit of personal interest. The most worrisome behaviour of our politicians is the manner they have employed the use of thugs to perpetrate violence they are not only ready to recruit and work with political thugs but have come to accept thugs and violence as a legitimate part of political process.

There is hardly any political party in the zone that does not have thugs at least one person who has ties to attack, maim or assassinate a political rival or destroys political offices in furtherance of political interests (Haruna and Jumba, 2011). In the particular case of Boko-haram, researchers and analysts have variously linked the former Governor of Borno State Senator Ali Modu Sherrif with the use of Boko-haram group as political thugs in the name of ECOMOG in pursuing his political ambitions in the state. However, after the elections, and having achieved their primary purpose, the politicians left them to their fate since they could no longer continue funding them (Bintube, 2015).

#### E. ATTITUDE OF SECURITY PERSONNEL TO THE CITIZENRY

Another factor which has contributed to the insurgency in the North-East is the unfriendly attitude of security personnel towards the citizenry. Security officers represent a major functionary of government especially in the maintenance of law and order. However, there has been very poor relationship between security officials especially the police and the citizenry. Achumba and Ighomereho (2013:81) shared this opinion when they assert that "In many cases, security personnel assigned to deal with given security situations lack expertise and equipment to handle the situations in a way to prevent them from occurring".

The second dimension is the impunity with which security officers sometimes discharge their functions. Massive human rights violations tarnish the image of security forces. "Hundreds of people are unlawfully killed while others are tortured to death with some disappearing from police custody" (Barkindo, 2013). These negative attitudes have pitched the police and other security agencies against the public to the extent that the citizen's confidence in the former is at its lowest ebb.

## VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a reciprocal relationship between state, governance and insecurity. Governance being the administrative and political mechanisms through which the state is managed has a major responsibility for (in)security. The Boko Haram insurgency which has ravaged the Northeastern Nigeria in particular and other insecurity situations, in general, represent major consequences of bad governance which successive governments in the country have foisted in the country. Successive governments in Nigeria, especially in the fourth republic, have perpetuated regimes characterised by elitism, corruption, and a subjugation of the welfare of the masses in government policies. This paper has demonstrated that there is a fundamental disconnect between the government at all levels and the governed, hence the high level of insecurity in the country.

To reverse this ugly trend and entrench peace in the country, governance at all levels must establish a veritable bond with the citizenry, especially through the following measures.

- ✓ Policies that will promote the welfare of the citizens must be given greater attention by local, state and federal governments. The areas to be targeted by such policies should include employment creation, poverty reduction, and the creation of infrastructures for the people.
- ✓ Corruption and impunity must be removed from public offices. Corruption is quite endemic both among political office holders and civil servants. The rule of law which is at the core of democracy must be upheld and enforced in all situations. Therefore, anyone caught violating the laws of the society should be punished, and in accordance with the provisions of the laws.
- ✓ Governments of North-Eastern states especially must step up their attention to education in the areas. Children must be seen to be receiving proper education from those certified and qualified to teach. Even where pupils are preferred to be sent to Islamic schools, governments have a role in ensuring that such institutions are being run by responsible people.
- ✓ Politicians must do away with the attitude of “do or die” politics which has virtually institutionalised the use of thugs to unleash violence on political opponents. This behaviour has contributed significantly in the empowerment of jobless and idle youths with sophisticated weapons thereby unleashing terror on the society after elections.

The leadership of security agencies should organise more training and orientation for the rank and file of their men and officers on how citizens should be treated with dignity and respect no matter the offence one is suspected to have committed. This will help in creating a better image for the security agencies and foster a better relationship for improved security in the country.

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