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# Counter Terrorism Committee

## STUDY GUIDE - CTC BMIDC 2015

### Background

After gaining independence from Great Britain in 1960, the Federal Republic of Nigeria was created through the amalgamation of several former British protectorates in West Africa and the northern half of the French protectorate of Cameroon.<sup>1</sup> The provinces included in this amalgamation brought together over 500 ethnic groups, each with distinct histories, languages, and cultures. The largest of these ethnic groups are the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba groups. These myriad ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups resulted in a number of conflicts and hot wars over the years, leading to Nigeria having a difficult time with majority rule and protecting the rights of the minority, especially given that there is often not a clear minority or majority.<sup>2</sup> The issue of majorities and minorities has once again come up for Nigeria, this time in the religious arena. Various studies have estimated the religious breakdown of the Nigerian population. The 2001 Census declared that 50% of Nigerians are Muslim, 40% are Christians, and 10% practice local, indigenous religions. The Pew Research Center report in 2010, however, asserts that 49.3% of Nigerians are Christian and 48.8% were Muslim, with 1.9% practicing other religions or religiously unaffiliated.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of the variations in the data, there is a near even divide between Islam and Christianity in Nigeria. The two religions are rather divided, geographically, socioeconomically, and politically. The Christians tend to live in the southern and central areas of the country while Islam dominates the north.<sup>4</sup> For the most part, the two groups tend to exist outside of each other, rarely coming into contact. Interestingly, certain Nigerians have tried to integrate the two religions into a new practice known as "Chrislam," a religion that takes practices from both the Qu'ran and the Bible in an attempt to quell religious feuds between the two ideologies.<sup>5</sup> As Africa's most populous country, with more than 174 million people, 350 ethnic groups, and 250 languages, Nigeria has long struggled with how to govern such an internally diverse nation, as well as how political power should be split amongst different demographic groups. Per capita income hovers around \$2,700 though the country has immense wealth in natural resources, especially in the oil market. Nigeria is the world's 12th largest petroleum producer, the 8th largest exporter, and owner of the 10th largest proven reserves. Economic disparity over demographic groups and geographical regions is another huge issue for Nigeria, as more than 70% of the population lives on less than \$1.25 a day, but 72% of people in the Muslim North live in poverty while only 27% of those in the Christian South live below the poverty line. Oil is ultimately the factor at the crux of this economic inequality,

especially in the North. The “formal politics” of Northern Nigeria are overwhelmingly run by Muslim elites who essentially use the state as a mechanism by which to divide up oil shares. This has turned Northern Nigerian wealth into a zero-sum game as different parties compete for vested oil interests. The oil wealth is marginally more equally distributed in the South, as oil-producing deltas require more infrastructure and management, thusly employing more Nigerians for a variety of jobs both skilled and unskilled.

### **Westernization and Radical Islam**

As Nigeria finally ended its cycle of alternating between democratically elected governments and military juntas, it began modernizing its economy and liberalizing its democracy. Nigeria regained democracy in 1999 after the adoption of a new constitution and the election of Olusegun Obasanjo as President of Nigeria. Obasanjo had formerly served as the military head of state, and his reign brought to an end nearly 33 years of military rule.<sup>6</sup> Though the 1999 election, as well as Obasanjo’s second term election in 2003, was criticized as unfair and crooked, Nigeria has shown promise in attempting to reduce government corruption and speed up the process of development. Umaru Yar’Adua took over after Obasanjo and served until his untimely death in 2010, after which Goodluck Jonathan took over, successfully winning the 2011 election as well. The international community, which had long been observing the electoral processes of Nigeria, decreed the 2011 elections in Nigeria as having run smoothly with little violence or voter fraud.<sup>7</sup> Under the reign of current President Goodluck Jonathan, the economy was opened up to foreign investors and the global economy, in addition to beginning to profit from Nigeria’s vast oil and natural gas reserves. Nigeria’s telecommunication industry has also been expanding rapidly due to the launch of several Nigerian satellites.<sup>8</sup> The opening of economic doors has also meant the opening of cultural doors, as Nigeria makes itself available to the creeping influence of other cultures, especially Western cultures eager for an opportunity to penetrate the African market.

Practitioners of radical Islam have dubbed this modernization and development as sinister machinations of the West in order to continue exploitation of the African continent and its denizens. Many of those who practice Salafist Islam believe that Westernization is merely a gateway to the excesses, sins, and vices openly practiced in the West, part of a broader attempt to undermine the pillars of Islam and the faith of its devotees.<sup>9</sup> Though the constitution of Nigeria establishes a secular government, some believe that Islam should be the official religion of Nigeria, and, by extension, the rest of Africa as well. These radicals began marshaling support for their cause and spreading their ideology throughout Muslim populations.<sup>10</sup> This radical movement is especially strong in the North, where there were large concentrations of Muslims and Islamic infrastructure in the form of mosques, cultural literacy, and community centers. The building religious fanaticism of Radical Islam culminated in 1999 when several states in Northern Nigeria formally established sharia law as the ruling order, overruling the Constitution of Nigeria

and the disagreeing Christian minority.<sup>11</sup> Sharia law is the codified moral and religious guidelines of Islam, essentially extending the laws that govern believers of Islam to govern an entire state. Sharia law sets regulations on everything from crime, politics, and economics to sexual intercourse, hygiene, and diet. Devout Muslims believe that Sharia law is the infallible law of God that supersedes the specious interpretation of laws developed by humans.<sup>12</sup> Believing that God is the only authority capable of passing judgment, proponents of Sharia law believe it is the only legitimate arbiter of consequences for civil and criminal transgressions, considering all man-made law illegitimate. Proponents of Sharia law would have the Koran replace the Nigerian constitution as the governing document of the country. Currently, Nigeria has 12 states that incorporate Sharia law into their governance in some form, while the other 24 do not. These 12 states are all in the North, and the remaining 24 are all in the South, further showcasing the geographic divide between Muslim and Christian. In 9 of the 12 states, Sharia law is fully applicable, including criminal law and the penal code, while in the other 3, Sharia only applies in personal status issues.<sup>13</sup>

### **Maitatsine and Islam in Nigeria**

Much of the credit for popularizing Sharia law and Radical Islam in Northern Nigeria goes to a man named Mohammed Marwa, better known as Maitatsine. "Maitatsine" is a Hausa word that means "the one who damns," the nickname referring to his caustic speeches against the evils of the secular Nigerian state.<sup>14</sup> Maitatsine began preaching a radical, incendiary brand of Islam throughout northeastern Nigeria in the 1960s, calling the reading of any book other than the Qu'ran paganism, and condemning the use of radios, watches, bicycles, and cars. The British colonial authority eventually sent him into exile for his outlandish comments against the state, but he eventually returned and came home to a large and increasingly militant following that went by the name Yan Tatsine.<sup>15</sup> This group mostly consisted of angry youths, unemployed migrants, and those who felt that mainstream Islam was not doing enough for the community. By the mid-1970s, Maitatsine received more and more acceptance from religious authorities, especially after completing the sacred pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>16</sup> Maitatsine fully emerged as a political and religious force in Nigeria, with his influence spreading to neighboring Cameroon as well. As his following continued to increase, so did the clashes between Yan Tatsine and the police. By December of 1980, confrontations between Yan Tatsine and the police forced the Nigerian Army to get involved. Ensuing violence claimed the lives of nearly 5,000 people. Maitatsine died soon after, beleaguered by his wounds and a weak heart. After Maitatsine's death, Yan Tatsine continued rioting through the early 1980s.<sup>17</sup> This violence has continued to the present era, killing thousands and displacing even more. Many feel that the Nigerian government did a poor job of handling this situation, choosing to bluntly ignore the demands of Yan Tatsine and like-minded organizations and individuals as opposed to engaging them in tactics. The Nigerian state is also blamed for contributing to the escalation of violence in the conflict by ruthlessly quelling riots, regardless of the constitutional rights to protest and

assembly. The 2010 Jos Riots, between Christians and Muslims, resulted in the deaths of hundreds, with the death toll further exacerbated by harsh government intervention.<sup>18</sup> Prisoners taken by the Nigerian government have been subjected to brutal and inhuman treatment. In early 2013, Amnesty International accused the Nigerian government of human rights abuses following the death of 950 prisoners, suspected militants, in detention facilities controlled by a joint task force led by Nigeria.<sup>19</sup> The government has encouraged the formation of vigilante groups like the Civilian Joint Task Force, which may feel unnecessarily brings civilians into the fore.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, these civilians do not have the authority or legitimacy by any law or edict to arrest, detain, or even murder other Nigerian citizens, but in most cases the Nigerian government is content to look the other way as these vigilante groups target and eliminate militia leaders and political firebrands.

## **Boko Haram**

The Boko Haram are the present manifestation of the anti-West, anti-government, and pro-Islam sentiments that have been brewing in Nigeria for the past 40 years. The full name of the organization is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad, which means, "people committed to the propagation of the Prophet's teachings and Jihad." The organization is most commonly referred to as Boko Haram, translated as "Western education is sin." This organization seeking to establish a pure Islamic state governed by Sharia law, free from the influence of the West and Christianity.<sup>21</sup> The group is known for attacking churches, schools, police stations, and anything else they feel represents the establishment they seek to topple. The group has also been responsible for the kidnapping of western tourists and the assassination of several important figures within the Nigerian government.<sup>22</sup> Violence stemming from the Boko Haram insurgency has claimed between 10-12,000 lives, and crippled or displaced countless more.<sup>23</sup> The group is most active in the northern Nigerian states of Borno, Adamawa, Kaduna, Bauchi, Yobe, and Kano, in addition to having splinter cells in Cameroon and Niger. President Goodluck Jonathan has declared a state of emergency in this region due to the endemic nature of the violence.<sup>24</sup> The group lacks a clear command structure, operating through a conglomeration of loosely organized cells. Several of these cells have splintered off to form new branches, the most notable of which is Ansaru, a similar terrorist organization with more of an international focus. Ansaru has been responsible for the kidnapping of several foreign nationals and various bombings throughout the region.<sup>25</sup> Boko Haram militants are also closely linked to al-Qaeda and al-Shabab, and it is suspected that Boko Haram funding comes from other terrorist organizations in the Middle East.<sup>26</sup> The United Nations Security Council declared the Boko Haram a designated al-Qaeda entity in 2014, leveling sanctions on funding, travel, and weapons against the terrorist group. The group has been criticized by the international community for its lack of respect for civilian neutrality, its ruthlessness, and its use of child soldiers.<sup>27</sup> The Boko Haram was formally founded in 2002 by Muslim sect leader Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri with the aim of establishing of a Sharia government in the state of Borno.<sup>28</sup> One of his first

major moves as leader was to create a religious complex that included a mosque and a school where many poor families enrolled their children. The mosque and the school taught a very strict version of Islam that corrupted many of its patrons, making them easy prey to Boko Haram recruiting. Yusuf gained a following among unemployed youth by harshly criticizing the police and the corruption within the government.<sup>29</sup> The group, though radical without a doubt, was largely peaceful for the first seven years of its existence. With the exception of minor skirmishes, the Boko Haram was mostly a gathering point for those interested in radical Islam and reforming the government. The talking points of the group gradually became more and more violent and talk began to trend towards action.<sup>30</sup> In 2009, the Nigerian government began investigating the increasingly militant character of the group on a tip that the group had begun to arm itself. The investigation resulted in a series of harsh crackdowns on organization members, with many being arrested, detained, and tortured.<sup>31</sup> Due to their harsh treatment at the hands of the Nigerian government, the group re-emerged as a much more violent, ideologically zealous organization that had expanded to include Islamic militants, criminals, and even a few disgruntled politicians hungry for power.<sup>32</sup> As the violence and clashes between police and militants increase, Mohammed Yusuf was targeted and killed. Left without a clear leader, the firebrands in the group had the opportunity to push for escalation, and so they did, carrying out their first formal attack in Borno in 2011, resulting in the deaths of four civilians.<sup>33</sup> After the first attack, Abubakar Shekau took control of the group. Described as an “intensely private bookish theologian and ruthless killer,” Shekau escalated both the frequency and intensity of Boko Haram attacks.<sup>34</sup> The group carried out bombings in the capital of Abuja, in Niger in Suleja, and in Damaturu. The group was also responsible for several prison breaks throughout northern Nigeria in which numerous deadly prisoners and terrorists were released.<sup>35</sup> The attacks on churches, schools and police stations continued with frightening regularity. One attack involved Boko Haram militants dressing up as soldiers and mercilessly slaughtering 200 civilians in the Gwoza district of Borno state.<sup>36</sup> The Boko Haram finally got its time to shine on the international scale on April 15th, 2014, when it kidnapped 276 female students from the Government Secondary School in the town Chibok in Borno state.<sup>37</sup> Militants broke into the school, killing the guards and a nearby soldier, taking the students by truck into the neighboring Sambisa forest where numerous fortified Boko Haram camps were located. The girls were forced into Islam and being sold into marriage with members of Boko Haram, at the going rate of about \$12.50 per bride.<sup>38</sup> Abubakar Shekau released a statement, taking claim for the kidnapping and justifying his actions through Islam’s acceptance of slavery, stating that the girls shouldn’t even be in school in the first place.<sup>39</sup> Amnesty International later confirmed that the Nigerian military had four hours notice of the kidnapping, but failed to send reinforcements to the school in time due to their forces being over-extended and not able to dispatch troops in time. 223 of the original 276 girls are still unaccounted for.<sup>40</sup>

## Current Situation

The international community has condemned the actions of the Boko Haram and many western nations have offered their support in the form of expert investigators and hostage negotiators, in addition to technological aid and intelligence sharing.<sup>41</sup> On May 22, 2014, the United Nations Security Council officially declared the Boko Haram a terrorist group with ties to al-Qaeda, placing them under international sanctions, asset freezes, travel bans, and arms embargoes.<sup>42</sup> The recent Boko Haram attack of June 2, 2014, involved Boko Haram militants dressing up as soldiers and mercilessly slaughtering 200 civilians in the Gwoza district of Borno state.<sup>43</sup> The attack came without warning, and the government and local law enforcement were utterly unable to retaliate or ward off the raid. Action must be taken against this ruthless group as they continue to evade the authorities, cause chaos in the area, terrorize innocents, and hold Nigeria back from becoming the power it was meant to be. The actions of the Boko Haram are the culmination of tensions related to inequality, poor governance, and corruption over the past 20 years. Since 1999, 25,000 people have died in killings that can be related to the Boko Haram and groups like it.<sup>44</sup> Issues related to internal diversity, once again, have only exacerbated the problem. Much of the blame for the rise of the Boko Haram is being attributed to current President Goodluck Jonathan, the key figure in Nigeria's economic liberalization and what some would call "Westernization." Many disputed the results of the election in 2011 that kept Jonathan in power, further escalating the violence and internal divisions in the region. Additionally, many experts cite the presence of an "informal power-rotation agreement" in Nigerian politics, that has power switch between Christian leaders and Muslim leaders, causing many Northern Nigerians to be upset that a Christian has remained in power for this long.<sup>45</sup> The elections in 2015 could prove tumultuous for the state as Jonathan plans on seeking re-election, which could cause an escalation in tensions. There is also the possibility that there will be too much instability and discord to even hold the 2015 elections. Analysis of the Boko Haram over time has shown that their methods have increased in sophistication, suggesting a higher level of training and funding. This change most likely signifies that the Boko Haram has begun to receive additional resources from other Islamist insurgency groups, like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, al-Shabab, and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>46</sup> U.S. officials have investigated these ties and confirmed that the groups are in communication. The ties to other radical fundamentalist groups have led to the Boko Haram becoming an extremely diffuse and ideologically broad organization, with membership including a variety of interests and passions. Many of the Boko Haram's foot soldiers are impoverished, uneducated youth who are indoctrinated with the religious doctrine of the organization. These soldiers have very little knowledge of the overarching goals of the Boko Haram, or of the specifics of the Salafi doctrine formally preached by the group.<sup>47</sup> Other fighters claim to have received training in Iran from Shi'ite militias, while others still have immigrated to Nigeria after participating in extremist conflicts in other regions of Africa. The issue now is that the cause has so many "followers," that



identifying participants and perpetrators of attacks as members of the “Boko Haram” becomes difficult.<sup>48</sup> Analysts point to the existence of at least five distinct offshoots of the organization, each dangerous and each operating in a different sphere. For example, Abubakar Shekau, the formal leader of the Boko Haram, is committed to overthrowing the Nigerian government in the state of Borno, while Ansaru is much more focused on removing Christians from power. Other groups still have conducted raids and operations into neighboring Cameroon and Niger.<sup>49</sup> A significant reason for this homogenization of interests under the umbrella of the Boko Haram has been outrage over the ineptness and corruption of the Nigerian government. The Boko Haram attracts as many anti-government soldiers as it does pro-Islam soldiers. The corruption, bureaucracy, and inefficacy of the government has left many disgruntled and upset, given that they lack access to quality education, clean drinking water, and important social programs while the government’s elite has more oil wealth than they know what to do with.<sup>50</sup> This inequality has frustrated, upset, and angered many, given that Nigeria is supposed to be a democracy where the people rule. It is unfortunate that very little power actually rests in the hands of the majority of Nigerians.<sup>51</sup> Some have argued that the Boko Haram is actually given legitimacy by the inefficacy of the Nigerian government. One man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter, and for many, the Boko Haram are not a terrorist organization but a rebel force against the oppressive regime of the government, and there is some evidence to support this kind of thinking.<sup>52</sup> A 2011 Human Rights Watch report claimed that corruption was so rampant in the government that it had essentially turned public service into a “criminal enterprise.” The Boko Haram argues that an Islamic state would be able to govern better than the current system, which has repeatedly proven itself ineffective.<sup>53</sup> As the Nigerian government decreases in popularity, the Boko Haram has more and more potential recruits. Some have been reluctant to classify the Boko Haram as a terrorist organization as the question is raised of who is doing more harm in this situation, the Boko Haram, or the Nigerian government. Police brutality and an alarming lack of due process are among the most frequent complaints leveraged against the Nigerian government. The Nigerian police are responsible for hundreds of extrajudicial killings and disappearances each year, killing and kidnapping supposed criminals without the appropriate authorization.<sup>54</sup> This allows the police to operate with impunity given that there is very little accountability or transparency built into the system that allows citizens to hold the police answerable to their actions, even though these actions often have witnesses, like the public executions of Boko Haram members. An Amnesty International report revealed that nearly 1,000 people, mostly Islamic militants, died in the custody of the military in the first half of 2013. There is speculation that the militants were tortured quite brutally by the military in an attempt to gain information about terrorist operations.<sup>55</sup> Though the government began the trial of five police officers and a military commander accused of abuses of power in 2011 and 2009, respectively, these trials have yet to be concluded, indicating further government inefficacy in delivering justice.<sup>56</sup> These grievances only serve to give Nigerians and the international community an increasingly negative opinion of the government and providing the



Boko Haram with more and more recruiting opportunities. Given the fact that most of the brutal treatment at the hands of the government goes to average Nigerians or low-level Boko Haram foot soldiers, and not high-value terrorists with information, this approach is doubly foolhardy and does not yield much fruit.<sup>57</sup> Non-interventionists point to signs that the problem appears to be solving itself. Christians in the North are fleeing to the South, where they feel that the cultural atmosphere is much more welcoming than the increasingly Islamic North. This means northern states' populations are becoming much less diverse, making it easier for Islamic fundamentalist interest like those supported by the Boko Haram to become the rule of law.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, some critics point to the example of the splitting of the former Sudan as a case in which it is necessary for the creation of two states to solve internal crises. The near-even split between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria makes it difficult to establish a clear consensus on certain divisive issues, and it is increasingly seeming like the viewpoints of the two groups cannot be reconciled, suggesting that the best option might just be to create two states from the current Nigeria.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, it is worth noting that the current boundaries of the country are remnants of the arbitrary carving up of Africa by colonial powers, and by no means the best borders possible. As non-interventionists suggest that the best thing to do for the problem is let it run its course, the government of Nigeria is beginning to posit that they lack the resources to properly tackle the problem. The current strategy has been to declare a "state of emergency" in certain states, which allows President Jonathan to use the necessary force to crack down on militants and rebels.<sup>60</sup> As stated above, the crackdown is only exacerbating the problem and, in some cases, actually having adverse effects. Defeating the Boko Haram on the battlefield is increasingly becoming a harder task, as, after the crackdown, the Boko Haram are now armed with better technology, operationally more streamlined, and recruiting soldiers in record numbers. In February of 2014, Kashim Shettima, governor of Borno state, made the sweeping claim that, "given the present state of affairs, it is absolutely impossible for us to defeat Boko Haram."<sup>61</sup> There is a great amount of validity to Mr. Shettima's claim, as the Nigerian government and state police forces are spread thinner than ever, making it difficult to respond quickly and efficiently to deal with Boko Haram attacks, as was the case with the Chibok kidnapping. The U.S. State Department has urged the government of Nigeria to counter Boko Haram actions through "a combination of law enforcement, political, and development efforts, as well as military engagement."<sup>62</sup> Nigeria, as well as the continent of Africa, is often left out of the public forum due to poor media coverage. Given that 88% of conflict-related deaths occur in Africa, the media should be paying significantly more attention to the continent than it does now. Africa barely constitutes 10% of Western media outlet coverage, which robs African conflicts and causes of much need international attention and research.<sup>63</sup> Many experts point to the sheer number of at-risk Nigerians who are easy prey for Boko Haram members. The correlation between poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment, and insurgency is difficult to ignore, as the Boko Haram has the most success when recruiting from the almajiri, a word that refers to Nigeria's poor, uneducated youngsters.<sup>64</sup> The militants of the Boko Haram can offer these

underprivileged youth so much in the form of both tangible things like employment, education, food, and medicine, and intangible things like a sense of purpose, a community, and belonging. Only 28% of children in Borno state attend school, and the literacy rate in Northern Nigeria, at 32%, is less than half the national average of 68%.<sup>65</sup> Some have argued that Nigeria's market liberalization is to blame for the economic woes of the North, as competition in the global market, especially in the sectors of manufacturing and heavy industry, was much steeper than anticipated. In the 70s and 80s, Nigeria's largest cities were manufacturing hubs, with each factory employing close to 100,000 people in each city.<sup>66</sup> After Nigeria joined the World Trade Organization in 1995, tariffs and quotas that had previously protected native Nigerian industry were removed, causing Nigerian factories to close, as they couldn't compete with cheaper goods from places like China and Bangladesh. This forced factories to lay off workers by the hundreds and the thousands, taking away the primary source of income for many families and bringing many into poverty.<sup>67</sup> The failed efforts of market liberalization for many in Northern Nigeria are an excellent selling point for the Boko Haram as they continue to preach their anti-West gospel throughout the region. The Boko Haram continue to conquer territory across Northern Nigeria, and the media remains ever ignorant of it. The Boko Haram creeps closer to its goal of establishing an Islamic state across the region, with more and more areas joining the "caliphate" daily.<sup>68</sup> The city of Gwoza in Borno state was recently taken by the organization, adding to their existing territories in the state and in neighboring Yobe. This tight control over specific regions makes it very difficult for the Nigerian government or any organization to intervene because the Boko Haram have such a vicegrip on the region, controlling the transport of goods, services, and people in and out of the area.<sup>69</sup> It additionally allows the Boko Haram opportunities to amass resources, recruit new soldiers, and build their own infrastructure in the area, including things like prisoner camps, training centers, and watchtowers.<sup>70</sup> The Boko Haram's strong governance of these spaces essentially expel the Nigerian government from the region, as the Boko Haram take over sources of communication, education, and commerce in their controlled spaces. Many have warned of the danger of the development of so-called "ungoverned spaces" in which the government has no reach.<sup>71</sup> This creates incredibly isolated, independent communities, which can come to reject the government's legitimacy, creating a dangerous situation for developing nations like Nigeria with a history of unstable governments. Additionally, these spaces are hotbeds for terrorist activities, informal economies built on illicit industry, and general instability. In the case of the Boko Haram, the presence of ungoverned spaces concentrates all the power in the hands of a few extremists, a situation no better than even the worst government corruption in Nigeria.<sup>72</sup> With that concentrated power, these extremists can rob, cheat, and kill as they please, without the existence of a remotely impartial rule of law.

For example, the Boko Haram recently killed two men in the newly acquired town of Gwoza for smoking cigarettes on the street. Though smoking publicly is already illegal in some places of Nigeria, the punishment hardly fits the crime in this situation.<sup>73</sup> It is this kind of skewed

perspective of justice and order that the Boko Haram brings to the spaces it occupies. Local politicians in Nigeria also have the authority to grant "indigeneship," which determines whether citizens can participate in politics, own land, or even get work permits. This system has been widely abused, and the Boko Haram could use this system to disenfranchise all those who did not support their cause.<sup>74</sup> Most importantly, however, the Boko Haram pose a serious threat to Nigeria's future development. In two key areas, empowering women and education, the Boko Haram are causing Nigeria to move backwards instead of progressing forward. Through extremely strict, narrow interpretations, Boko Haram members treat women as slaves or chattel, preventing them from getting jobs or getting educated, often kidnapping women and selling them to their new "husbands," as was the case in Chibok. It is also a true atrocity that an organization like the Boko Haram treats half the population like objects or items to be traded and passed along.<sup>75</sup> In some cases, the Boko Haram deliberately uses women as suicide bombers, forcing them to wear bomb belts and IEDs, operating under the assumption that martyrdom would be a fitting purpose for them. Preventing women and young girls from getting educated or obtaining employment causes Nigeria to lose valuable economic output and human capital as half the population's talent goes unused.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, this continues cycles of poverty as uneducated, unemployed women give birth to girls who are not allowed to be educated or employed, forcing them to be dependent on the employment of their spouse for their livelihood, as well as robbing them of important personal development skills like confidence, creativity, and open-mindedness. The Boko Haram's lack of emphasis on any kind of Western-style education, considering it the utmost sin, is also a danger to Nigeria's future as the Boko Haram discourages any kind of education that is not rooted in the Koran or Islam. The zealots of the Boko Haram often deter students considering careers in business, engineering, law, and medicine from their original course. It is very important that Nigeria's next generation of students be armed with marketable skills that will allow them to both compete on the global market and aid in the internal development of Nigeria's infrastructure, as Nigeria will need businessmen, lawyers, engineers, and doctors to continue to make its mark on the world.<sup>77</sup> The Boko Haram continue to make significant gains throughout Northern Nigeria and the Nigerian government must make its strongest stand yet, lest the movement become so strong that it cannot be stopped. This is very much a turning point for the Nigerian government, as, if the Boko Haram are allowed to continue their march across the North, the territory will be lost and the government will be proven inept and ineffective. If the Boko Haram are beaten, however, the Nigerian government will have won a decisive victory that removes a bulky obstacle to stability and peace in the region. This cannot be the legacy of the first "successful" democratic government in Nigeria in 40 years, and cannot be the future that the Nigerian people are left to face.

## **Past International Actions**

On May 17, 2014, the Presidents of Benin, Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Niger met in Paris to discuss the threat posed by the Boko Haram. An agreement was reached to coordinate efforts to combat the terrorist organization, sharing surveillance information and intelligence gathering. Western nations like the United States, Britain, Israel, and France, the host nation for the summit, pledged their support in the form of technological expertise and training for troops.<sup>78</sup> These leaders have agreed to wage a full on “war” against the Boko Haram in order to eradicate the organization from the region. French President Francois Hollande said the group had developed a “global and regional action plan,” one that involves “co-ordinating intelligence, sharing information... border surveillance, a military presence notably around Lake Chad and the capacity to intervene in case of danger.”<sup>79</sup> Many at the summit pointed out the growing threat the Boko Haram represented in the form of a coordinated front of Islamic fundamentalism throughout the Middle East and Africa, especially given the Boko Haram’s relationship with other organizations like al-Shabab and al-Qaeda. Hollande went on to say that “we have seen what this organization is capable of. They have threatened civilians, they have attacked schools and they have kidnapped citizens of many countries.”<sup>80</sup>

The summit also pointed out that the Boko Haram are truly an international threat, now recruiting from neighboring Niger, Cameroon, and Chad, making it a significant threat to West and Central Africa. UK Foreign Secretary William Hague stressed the importance of cooperation in order for regional powers to deal with a cross- border threat like the Boko Haram. Additionally, the Boko Haram has been manipulating the ambiguous borders of the region by establishing bases in the Mandara mountain range which forms the border between Cameroon and Nigeria, making it difficult to determine exactly which country has the right to intervene in that space.<sup>81</sup> At the recent US-African Leaders Summit in Washington, D.C., Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan stressed the importance of concerted international efforts to fight terrorism in the form of groups like the Boko Haram. He specifically requested the placing of international sanctions on terrorist groups so as to cut off the monetary lifeblood of these organizations that keeps them operational.<sup>82</sup> “Several African countries, including Nigeria, are now challenged by terrorism and violent extremism. For several countries in the continent, terrorism has become a real threat to social progress, peace, and security. The violent and criminal activities of Boko Haram in my country have captured the world’s attention. This has been especially so since the terrorist group abducted some girls from their school dormitory in the Northeastern Nigeria in April. Nigeria may be the epicenter of Boko Haram terrorist activities at the moment, but its affiliation with international terrorist networks dramatically increases its capacity and reach beyond Nigeria’s borders. Nigeria is doing everything possible to combat Boko Haram and violent extremism. While we continue to enhance our intelligence and military capacities, we are, at the same time, working on political and socioeconomic solutions. We are also building partnerships, both at the regional and international levels to combat the threat posed by terrorism in our sub-region. In this enterprise we are pleased to acknowledge the supportive role of the United States. The assistance that we continue to receive from the United States and

our other international partners is proof indeed that partnership can multiply our strengths in addressing common challenges. We call for an effective international sanctions regime that would hold accountable any country, institution, and individual that finances terrorism in any part of the world. This inaugural Africa-US Summit must also call for effective action and implementation of all existing international protocols on this critical issue. Because terrorism, piracy, and transnational organized crimes are global in scope, greater regional and international collaboration is required to combat them. We must act in concert." --Goodluck Jonathan

United States Vice President Joe Biden echoed the statements of President Jonathan, describing Nigeria as an "extremely important ally" of the United States. He reaffirmed the country's commitment to helping root out terrorism and Islamic insurgency in the country, additionally indicating the United States' willingness to aid in the containing of the more recent threat of Ebola. This summit also included discussions on joint cooperation to boost trade investments, agricultural developments, and access to electricity in Nigeria.<sup>83</sup> The United Nations Security Council, an important organization in international politics, has placed sanctions on the Boko Haram at the request of Nigeria following the Chibok kidnapping, adding the organization's name to a list of 1267 others. Due to the group's ties to al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, it is subjected to a travel ban, an asset freeze, and an arms embargo.<sup>84</sup> The UNSC went on to specifically name Abubakar Shekau, the leader of the Boko Haram, and Ansaru, the splinter group of Boko Haram, as also subject to sanctions and a travel ban. US Secretary of State John Kerry has offered a reward of up to \$7 million for information leading to Shekau's location. Ansaru split off from the Boko Haram after protesting the killing of Muslims in Boko Haram terrorist activities.<sup>85</sup> Ansaru is shown to have stronger ties to al-Qaeda than Boko Haram, as, in a 2011 hostage video, the organization referred to itself as "al-Qaeda in the Land Beyond the Sahara." These groups are by far the greatest threat to the security and stability of Africa's largest oil producer, and protecting the valuable resource is very important to the global community.<sup>86</sup> There has yet to be a significant amount of international action on this issue as, to the international community, this is still a relatively new problem. Much of this has to do, once again, with media coverage of Nigeria and greater Africa. Only after the Chibok schoolgirl kidnapping, a sensational story that tugs at the heartstrings, did the insurgency conflict get the attention it deserves. Since the kidnapping, however, the world has paid Nigeria significantly more attention, beginning with international use of the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls" after the kidnapping to encourage awareness of and action on the issue. Though many of the girls have yet to be found, it is a good sign that the international community has not stopped looking and remains vigilant.

## Timeline

October 1st, 1960: Nigeria receives its independence from Great Britain with a constitution that provided for a parliamentary government. Jaja Wachuku is chosen as the first Nigerian Speaker of the Nigerian Parliament and House of Representatives.

October, 1963: Nigeria proclaims itself the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and former Governor-General Nnamdi Azikiwe is elected the country's first President. The new republic must grapple with ethnic tensions and economic disparity, and political machinations eventually plunge the nation into a civil war a few years later.

1964: Mohammed Marwa, also known as "Maitatsine," returns to Kano, Nigeria after being exiled by the British government. He begins preaching his controversial views on Islam and the Koran and clashing with the Nigerian government.

1975: The Nigerian police arrest Mohammed Marwa for slander. At the same time, however, he begins to amass a following among religious authorities, especially after making the pilgrimage, "hajj," to Mecca. His preaching mainly attracted youth, unemployed migrants, and Islamic fundamentalists.

December 1980: Yan Tatsine, the followers of Marwa, begin attacking other religious figures and police authorities with increasing frequency. The Nigerian Army intervenes to stop the violence and clashes between the military and Yan Tatsine ensue. These clashes claimed the lives of over 5,000 people, among them Mohammed Marwa himself.

October 1982: Despite the death of Mohammed Marwa, Yan Tatsine riots continued into the early 1980s. Riots erupted in Bulumkuttu, near Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state. Many Yan Tatsine members fled to Bulumkuttu after the death of Marwa. Riots there caused the deaths of over 3,000 people as once again the Nigerian Army intervened and drove up the death toll.

1984: Surviving Yan Tatsine members move to the city of Yola, and uprisings continued to occur in that city, killing more than 1,000 and displacing more than 30,000, nearly half the city's population. Musa Makanaiki, a disciple of Mohammed Marwa, emerged as a leader of Yan Tatsine after these riots and was informally appointed successor.

May 29, 1999: Democracy returns to Nigeria and a new constitution is passed, establishing the Fourth Nigerian Republic, and former General Olusegun Obasanjo is elected President. The new government has to deal with frictional federalism and communal violence throughout the country.

September 2001: Religious protests become a riot as Christians and Muslims clash in the city of Jos, eventually killing over 2,000. This riot ripples through Northern Nigeria and hundreds more die and thousands are displaced as communal violence spreads through Benue, Taraba, and Nasarawa states.



2002: Mohammed Yusuf founds the Boko Haram, establishing a religious complex in Maiduguri, which attracted poor Muslim families from across Nigeria and neighboring countries. The center aimed to create an Islamic state, and attracted many followers in the form of unemployed youth by criticizing the police and state corruption. Group remains non-violent and largely isolated for the first 7 years of its existence.

July 26, 2009: Nigerian police begin "Operation Flush," an operation designed to root out Islamic extremist in the country. The police began arresting Boko Haram members and confiscating weapons and equipment. These arrests led to widespread rioting, and in the next few days, over 700 people had died and numerous police stations, schools, and churches had been destroyed. Boko Haram founder Mohammed Yusuf was also arrested and died in police custody "while trying to escape." Abubakar Shekau, his second in command, took over control of the organization.

August 26, 2011: A car bomb goes off in the UN building in Nigeria's capital of Abuja, wounding 60 and killing 21. The driver crashed into the reception area of the building and then detonated the bomb. This attack was the first suicide bombing in Nigeria to attack an international organization.

January 2012: On the 5th and 6th of January, Boko Haram militants attacked Christian churches and businesses in Northeastern Nigeria, followed by an assault on government offices and police stations on January 20th, culminating in the deaths of over 180 people. This attack was more sophisticated than previous attacks and was the point where experts began speculating on the Boko Haram's connection with more established organizations like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

March 18, 2013: Suicide bombers attacked the Kano Bus Station, killing most of the civilians on board. Most of the passengers on board were Christians fleeing to the more heavily Christian south of the country. There is no official death toll, but estimates place the number dead between 22 and 65, with 60 more wounded.

April 15, 2014: 276 female students were kidnapped from the Government Secondary School in Chibok. The Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for the attack, and announced their intent to sell many of the girls, now their "war booty," into slavery to serve their "husbands," stating that the girls shouldn't have been in school in the first place. More than 200 of the girls are still unaccounted for. The Nigerian government has been heavily criticized for failing to respond quickly to the kidnapping or track down the girls after the event.

June 2, 2014: Militants dressed up as soldiers slaughter at least 200 civilians in the city of Gwoza. Local residents plead for help from the military, but support failed to arrive in time to stop the



attacks. It took several days for news of the attack to reach Maiduguri because of dangerous road conditions and poor phone service.

August 11, 2014: Boko Haram raids rural villages in Borno state, killing 28, and kidnapping 97, all men and boys who will likely become soldiers and suicide bombers for the organization. Many homes were torched in the raid.

January 3, 2015: Forces under the Boko Haram attacked Baga in northeastern Nigeria, burning the town and massacring the people, with the reported death toll upwards of 2000 people. Militants also captured the military base run by the multinational joint task force.

February 4th, 2015: The Chad Army killed over 200 militants through a coordinated offensive, and Boko Haram forces retaliated by attacking the Cameroonian town of Fotokol, killing 81 civilians. Chadian and Cameroonian soldiers were also killed in the raid.

March 7, 2015: Abubakar Shekau, leader of the Boko Haram, pledged his allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant via the organization's Twitter account. ISIL leaders welcomed the announcement, and used it to further their efforts to create a caliphate in West Africa.

## **Proposed Solutions**

Though the violence of the Boko Haram has only risen up in the past 5 years, the conflict is rooted in much more deeply held grievances that must be addressed if this slaughter is ever to end. As Nigeria undergoes its own process of nation- building, it must address the crises within it that both fuel and complicate the Boko Haram conflict, like internal diversity, endemic poverty, and religious tensions. Virtually every part of the country feels "marginalized," whether by economic, political, or ethnic means, resulting in an extreme lack of unity in the country or any sort of national identity. It also sets up a system in which many groups align themselves against different groups, creating "other" complexes that are difficult to remove.<sup>87</sup> Many groups have been calling for a "Sovereign National Conference," in which Nigerians would have to decide whether the best course forward for the country is to remain one country. Some people still consider Nigeria at best a "geographical expression," with very few actual Nigerians or a cohesive Nigerian culture.<sup>88</sup> Especially among young people, the only true solution is to dissolve Nigeria and create new nations from the disparate ethnicities and cultures that have taken root in the area. Some have referred to this as a process of "de-Nigerianization" that must occur if peace is ever to be secured. There are very few authorities that enjoy universal legitimacy as nearly every party in Nigeria has some bone to pick with another party, and the Nigerian state is seen as the ultimate enemy, a poorly constructed attempt to homogenize the heterogeneous.<sup>89</sup> Anti-statism is on the rise, and for good reason, as many of those entrusted with the safeguarding of the state end up taking it for all its got. Law enforcement officers turn the other way with the smallest inducement. Organized labor goes on strikes whenever they feel

it is appropriate. Very few of the institutions of Nigeria perform the functions they are meant to perform. Terrorism in Nigeria will end when Nigerians realize that they must commit to being one people, leveraging their diversity to create a rich cultural tapestry that will promote political, economic, and social harmony. The creation of so-called "imagined communities" engenders a false sense of isolation and independence in the minds of Nigerians, preventing them from embracing the similarities of their fellow countrymen and only allow them to acknowledge the differences. For this reason, the "Sovereign National Conference" should be less about how the problems of different groups can be best addressed by different states and more about how one nation can address the problems of all groups. The conference should be more of an airing out of grievances than a call for dissolution. Many also point out that the strongest adhesive with which to hold Nigeria together may be the country's economic growth. The recent addition of Nigeria to the MINT group (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Turkey) of emerging economies has resulted in a wave of optimism throughout the country.<sup>90</sup> An investment in a sound economic future could help bring the country together as they work towards a common goal. Additionally, national economic growth will help create links and ties between individual states as products from one area become factors of input in the production of another area. This is especially important in bridging the divide between North and South, as natural resources from the South are used in industrial production in the North. These economic linkages will create channels through which cultural exchanges can also flow freely.<sup>91</sup> This economic unity, however, is a long-term goal that will not help the immediate violence in the area. In the short-term, more localized measures can be taken to change the status of the situation on the ground. One such measure would be to task state governments with leading the fight against the Boko Haram as opposed to national forces. Though dissatisfaction with the federal government is at an all-time high, more Nigerians are pleased with the performance of their state and local governments.<sup>92</sup> Allowing the state governments to be the face of the assault against the Boko Haram would help recruit allies and gain civilian support from local populations. Additionally, it would help to take negative sentiments about the national government or Goodluck Jonathan out of the picture, as these have complicated efforts to engage the populace in the fight against the Boko Haram. Some conspiracy theorists have even claimed that the Jonathan administration is secretly funding the Boko Haram to spread negative opinions of Islam and to depopulate the Muslim North before the 2015 elections.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, a Ministry of Northern Affairs should be created to specifically target and engage Northern populations who are at the heart of the crisis. This will allow resources, troops, and solutions to be more effectively allocated to the specific regions that need them most. It will also demonstrate the national government's commitment to helping out the North. There already exists a Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs in the South, though that is mostly set up to preserve Nigeria's oil interests.<sup>94</sup> A concerted effort must also be made to develop the country, specifically the north, as adequate education, healthcare, and economic infrastructure would make it much more difficult for the Boko Haram to continue recruiting those disgruntled with the current state of affairs. Finally, the legal infrastructure of

the country must be improved. Corrupt state officials and policemen should be punished with the same discretion that is given to Boko Haram members. Expedited legal processes would issue swift justice and reduce backlash against the government for forcing prisoners to languish in custody or failing to give due process to all citizens.<sup>95</sup> As much as the threat posed by the Boko Haram is increasingly becoming an international issue, the conflict began in Nigeria and it must end in Nigeria. Only a Nigerian solution will be able to solve the problems created by this terrorist organization, and that is why it is important that any efforts to tackle the Boko Haram must be spearheaded by Nigeria, regardless of what other international players may be involved. It is important to focus on solutions that address the roots of the problem, not the symptoms. In this case, the roots of the problem are a religious divide, ethnic discord, poor infrastructure, and poverty, while the symptoms of the problem are violence, instability, and insurgency. Though it is the violence and instability that are the most visible and the most pressing, any attempts to address them will only bandage the wound as opposed to treating it at the source. This mindset must be ever-present when discussing solutions to the conflict.

### **Relevant Partners**

**Non-Governmental Organizations:** Charities often have a reach and level of access to certain areas that the government cannot penetrate. Aid workers are often more favorably looked upon as they often come bearing gifts of food, medicine, textbooks, and clothing. These organizations also have stronger ties to the population and can be effective secondary outlets through which to engage populations. In Nigeria, charities like the Igbo Charitable Association and Reading Hamlets are improving education infrastructure and combating poverty through their efforts. Additionally, larger charities like the Red Cross and United Way have regional offices in Nigeria that can make for good on-the-ground partnerships.

**Human Rights Watchdogs:** Organization like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International are useful in areas like Nigeria in which it is unclear how much harm is being done on both sides. The reports produced by these organizations are useful for holding all parties accountable for their actions and recommending measures and policies that can be put in place to prevent human rights violations from happening again the future. Additionally, in areas of low information like Nigeria, any organization that can collect relevant data and present it appropriately is very valued, as half the battle is just finding out what is really going on.

**Regional governments:** As the Boko Haram's influence begins creeping across borders into other nations, partnerships with neighboring nations like Cameroon and Niger are very important. Additionally, these nations have similar ethnic makeups to Nigeria and solving the crisis in Nigeria could prevent similar organizations from taking root in other countries in the region. The combining of resources allows the region to present a much stronger, unified front against an unwanted presence.

International Organizations: International organizations can provide greater resources than single nations can, and international buy-in is often the best way to fully solve a problem. International engagement helps convince other nations that their futures are dependent on the future of a nation in crisis as globalization draws us further into an international community that is increasingly tighter-knit. Organizations like the United Nations, the African Union, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation can help marshal together concerted efforts to comprehensively solve major problems.

### **Questions a Resolution Must Answer**

**Regional Focus:** What area of Nigeria or the region will your policy target? Will you be implementing national policy or state level policy? Specificity tends to bring about more effective action as efforts can be more targeted and more concisely carried out. As opposed to dealing broadly with "Northern Nigeria," discuss solutions for specific states, cities, and townships. Consider whether or not a state adheres to Sharia law, or its current economic climate when deciding what actions to recommend. There can be no one-size-fits-all solution for a nation as diverse and fragmented as Nigeria.

**Funding:** How much money, time, and resources will your recommendation take? Where will these resources come from? Keep in mind the economic conditions of Nigeria and their access to flows of cash. Think of self-sustaining policy measures that create sources of funding as opposed to draining them. Policies should take into account the cost of doing business in Nigeria, namely corruption and bribery, which can add hefty costs to executing plans. More importantly, funding through traditional channels can often prop up inefficient allocation systems that continue cycles of corruption and inefficacy.

**Acting Agent:** What agent do you want carrying out your plan of action? Is it the federal government? The state or local government? Vigilante militias? International bodies like the UN? Keep in mind the relationships between different groups and where groups can be used most effectively, given their areas of expertise and relative skillsets. Especially given the myriad complaints against the federal government, there may be certain situations in which federal police or national soldiers may not be the best force to defuse a crisis.

**Transparency and Accountability:** How can accountability and transparency be maintained while acting as swiftly and thoroughly as possible? How will due process be prioritized throughout the process? Given the history of human rights abuses in the area, ensuring that all human life is

respected through this process is of paramount importance. Additionally, in an area so rife with corruption, dishonesty, and deceit, it is essential that order and justice be maintained so that programs are efficiently carried out and one step forward doesn't come with two steps backward.

### **Suggestions for Further Research Council on Foreign Relations:**

The Council on Foreign Relations is an independent, non-partisan think tank and publisher, with over 4,900 members across the world. These members cover the major regions and most pressing issues of the world that shape today's international agenda. The Council also publishes "backgrounders," which provide quick overviews of critical situations, as well as more in-depth research. The Council of Foreign Relations publishes the bi-monthly magazine *Foreign Affairs*, widely considered the most preeminent authority and influential international relations magazine available. *National Geographic*: One of the most iconic magazines in history continues to provide excellent insight into some of the most dangerous areas in the world. *National Geographic* has been covering the conflict in Northern Nigeria with vivid photographs, heartbreaking personal accounts, and remarkably objective reporting. The perspectives offered by *National Geographic* allow the reader to truly get a glimpse into the humanity at stake, into the atmosphere of fear under which people live their daily lives. *BBC News*: *BBC News* has consistently been one of the few Western media outlets that has provided continuous coverage of the conflict in Nigeria, with updates dating back to the Boko Haram's first few attacks in 2009. The BBC has always been a bastion of credibility, accountability, and trusted reporting, and they continue to perform that role as they report on the conflict at hand. Setting news alerts with the BBC about Nigeria can ensure the delegate stays on the ball with up to the minute news on the crisis unfolding.

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