

National Question: Attack on Life and School in Nigeria

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Abstract

Insecurity in Nigeria during the Buhari administration has got so high that the administration has become suspect. The target of school children and students of tertiary institutions only goes to establish the confessed aim of Boko Haram insurgency as being anti-western education. Thus when Deborah Samuel was murdered by Boko Haram extremists who claimed to have been appalled by her posting of an alleged blasphemous text-message denigrating Holy Prophet Mohammed on her 200 level Home Economics WhatsApp Platform at Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto State, curiosity for this paper arose. This study which employs the doctrinal method surveyed the critical issues involved in the kidnap of school children and the negative impact it has had on the future of education particularly in the north. It observes that the vulnerability of the schools and the student is a soft target and a sure way to undermine the integrity of the Nigerian State in its constitutional role to protect lives and property and advance the right to education of the Nigerian child. It finds that both the State and the International community have been unable to put their acts together and the dangers posed are tremendous. It concludes that until the Buhari administration leaves office in 2023, the danger posed by insecurity to the territorial integrity of the country may not be curbed as the administration appears to be die-in-wool with the insurgents, bandits and terrorists.

Keywords: National question, Right to life, Boko Haram, Freedom of thought and conscience

1. Introduction

Kidnapping was a crime only read in novels in the 1960s, until the Kaiama Declaration of the Ijaw youths in 1998 which signaled the beginning of the Niger Delta militancy. Kidnapping of white foreigners was initially adopted as part of the struggle for a better deal from the multinational oil companies that employed these expatriates. But soon, criminal elements in the fringes bought into it in a commercial way. The lessons of the militancy of the Niger Delta have been learned by the insurgents in the north. Islamic bandits and terrorists have taken over the crime of wholesale abductions of students and travelers nationwide. Kidnapping for ransom is a focal crime in countries wracked by terrorism, war, massive breakdown of law and civil order, economic ruination and failed-State syndrome. Accordingly, Nigeria in the 2020s ranked second in the Global Index of Top Ten of the Costells overall kidnap for ransom risk scale. Libya is first. Others are Venezuela, Mexico, Yemen, Syria, Philippines, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia (Vanguard Comment 2021, p. 18).

The worrisome deterioration of security in Nigeria has heightened the unprecedented victimization of vulnerable people in communities and population centers. Nowhere is this more pronounced than the growing targeting of schools for mass abduction of school children and students. Most schools throughout the country are unfenced with reinforced accommodation or classroom. There are no security for early warning and response system or contingency plans, or awareness and refresher courses for protective guards (Okoli et al., 2021, p. 19).

The attack of Boko Haram on the educational system of Nigeria especially in the north has been sustained and appears to be the centre ground of the sect and the State has found it almost unable to withstand. Since Buhari assumed power the tempo has reached the peak. The abduction of the Chibok girls crippled the Jonathan administration and after the negotiated release of dozens of the girls, no further progress has been made. Instead, many former Bring Back Our Girls (BBOG) Campaigners have been offered appointment at the highest levels of government having successfully contributed in bringing the preceding regime to its kneel. BBOG gatherings and matches to Aso Rock Villa thinned down if not disappeared. Media outfits known for interminable jingles on the subject matter of attack on the educational system and the inability of the Jonathan administration to raise its face to the threat have also faded (Vanguard Comment (2021, p. 18). In its place abduction had gone viral and became the albatross of the Buhari regime with the following attacks: Dapchi,

Yobe State (February 2018), Kankara, Katsina State (December, 2020), Kagara, Niger State (February 2021), Jangebe, Zamfara State (February 2021), Greenfield, Forestry and Mechanization, Kaduna State (May 2021).

The Buhari administration which rode to State power on the crest of the School Girls' abduction has become crest fallen and many Nigerians have become disappointed in his fight against the menace given his military background and hitherto taunted magic wand to make a difference. It never got better as four students of Capro Secondary Mission School at Gana Ropp in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State were abducted on 29th April, 2021. The abductors broke the rear wall fence of the School's compound where a hole was drilled to gain access into the premises.

In a similar incident, an unspecified number of students of Abia State University, Uturu were abducted by unknown gunmen. The students were moving in a mini-van from Okigwe to Uturu between 7pm - 8pm when they ran into the armed gang which marched them into the forest. Another gang of gunmen attacked Obosi Police Station in Idemmili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. They came to the Station in a large number and killed two policemen and freed all the detainees in the cell. The two policemen were killed because they were attempting to defend the Station against the attacks of the gunmen. Both of them were literally marched into a nearby uncompleted building and 'wasted'. These incidents were happening five days after a policeman was killed in another attack on Abaomege Police Station in Onitsha Local Government Area of Anambra State (Ujumadu, et al., 2021, p. 9).

2. Statement of the Problem

Some of the problems identified with this study are captured below:

2.1 Persons of concern

For years Boko Haram insurgency and banditry have forced the highest number of Persons of Concern (POC) into permanent or active displacement with more than two million persons in the Lake Chad region left as vulnerable persons hindered from access to basic amenities. In a report by the United Nation High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Nigeria has a total of 4.04 million Persons of Concern as at July 2019. The figure includes over 2.2 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs); 1.6 million returnees and an estimated 242,707 refugees. Interestingly, over the years, Nigeria has become a nation of destination for refugees from Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Cameroon has the highest number with a total of 57,809 across Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River, Imo and Taraba States. There are over 290 official camps across the country excluding hundreds of thousands of IDPs living in host communities.

2.2 Large scale students' abduction

Nigeria has also been in grip of serious security crises with some 800 students abducted from five locations within four months; bandits laying siege on many states in the northeast and Middle belt; Boko Haram terrorizing the northeast; staff residences of airport-workers being attacked and highways and forests being infested by bandits (Owei, 2021, p. 16). It is placed on record that the peculiar security challenges have seen Fulani herdsman illegally occupying federal forest reserves and using them as launch pads for unusual crimes of kidnapping, banditry, rape and all forms of terrorist activities connected thereto (Duru, 2021, p. 12).

Pertinent questions are raised about the modus operandi of bandits that carry out their operations so hitch freely that the intelligence of the State or its leadership is called to probe. Adetiba (2021, p. 1) states, is it that there are no intelligence reports or leadership is not reading let alone acting on them? How can one wrap up ones head round the logistics of ferrying freely 300 kidnapped students out of a town? How many trucks would be needed? How long will it take? The hassles of transporting 50 willing passengers from point A to point B is onerous let alone three to four hundred unwilling students! How could it happen in a civilized country? Videos of students being brutalized bleed hearts but the solution does not lie in closure of schools because the consequences of youths roaming the streets uneducated and unskilled would be dire in both the short and the long terms to come. Yet continued attacks and abductions of school children especially females have put the education sector and the future of the young under serious jeopardy. (Okoli et al., 2021, p. 8)

It has been observed with great alarm, the steady dislocation and deterioration of basic education especially in states that are badly affected by frequent kidnapping by Boko Haram and bandits. The clear consequences of these attacks are that children are afraid to return to school, parents are uncertain if their wards would be safe in school and teachers and administrators can no longer concentrate fully on their duties. These happenings constitute huge embarrassment to the State and its leaders, that is, if they are not responsible for it or if they are not comfortable with it. With the largest number of out-of-school children in the world, the insecurity associated with the steady closure of schools in northern Nigeria, has reached the level of a war-torn country.

2.3 The girl-child syndrome

Even when the schools resume, the girl-child will be the looser in the unfortunate circumstances. Already suffering from all sorts of deprivations, she may not return to school and the population of out-of-school would increase further. The rural

school girl child is faced with multiple challenges. First, cost of school fees makes parents give preference to the boy child. Second, the isolation of her residence makes it difficult to shuttle the classroom and her residence. Third, she is put to child labour to raise school fees. Fourth, traditional practices like early marriages, menstrual circles, profiling and gender based violence are skewed and hiped against her.

Nigeria has seen gains in the area of girl-child education both in terms of quality and scale in the last decade eroded by insurgency in the north (Vanguard Comment, 2021, p. 18). It is very clear that from the various abductions the conclusion is that education and school have become the targets of the attacks and the reason is that non-state armed groups that claim responsibilities for such attacks say they are opposed to western education. People who did not go to school now determine which school can open and which should be closed because they have guns (Mbele, 2021, p. 41).

2.4 School infrastructural decay

The state of infrastructure of many schools all over the country is equally embarrassing. The schools invaded by bandits are samplers in the widespread neglect of the schools and the environment that school children live and learn. There are serious gaps in state and federal policies on basic education especially school administration and safety. The House of Representative Committee on Education believes that, 'The basic education sector is under attack. Our children are under attack and our collective future is under attack. The consequences of the current disruptions will be evident very shortly unless urgent steps are taken' (Okoli, 2021).

2.5 Out-of-school syndrome

In a report, the UNICEF (Ajumobi, 2021, p. 27) has submitted that attacks on schools and kidnapping of students are taking a huge toll in the north as no less than 5,330,631 students in states in parts of the north have had their education disrupted and this is compounded by out-of-school children as parents withdraw their children from school to evade attacks. Indeed, there are over 16 million children that are out of school and of this, 70 percent have never been to school at all. Since 2014 when the first mass abduction of 276 school children by Boko Haram took place in Chibok, Bornu State, there have been six similar attacks in Nigeria. 310 school girls were taken in Dapchi, Yobe State in February, 2018. Although it was yet to take place in Sokoto State, the state government ordered schools in rural areas to be closed and merged with those in urban centers to curb attacks. One in every five of the world's out-of-school children is in Nigeria (Mbele, 2021, p. 11).

3. Theoretical framework

Some of the theories that are suitable in the analysis of this study are discussed below:

3.1 Neo-Weberism

The unleashing of terror on Nigerians since after the last civil war that ended in 1971 is not a recent development. It was climaxed when the State became typified by 'sporadic bomb explosions and between 1995 and 1988 18 bomb explosions had taken place in Nigeria.' The explosions were used to divert citizens' attention from dubious government policies and make the gains in western education in the north come to a standstill and alienate the citizens from western schooling and hold down the north in under-development.

It is in this respect that Neo-Weberism and Euro-centric theories that African societies can only develop through the European paradigm come in conflict with Islamic world view. This Orientalist theory is the anti-thesis of the Muslim belief as exemplified in the northern conflicts of the Boko Haram and ISWAP genres. The Weberian world view believes that African societies like Nigeria have not developed as proposed through the western paradigm due to internal factors of religion, ethnicity and poverty. But to the Boko Haram and ISWAP sects, the concept of western education and civilization is completely out of consideration or contemplation (Dibua, 2012, 188).

3.2 Ethnic nationalism

The mis-management of the Nigerian project (which was a proposed show-case of admixture of Islamic and Christian society in colonialism) by the neo-colonial state under civilian and military rules has equally set the project on a slippery slope of disintegration because of misrule which has fueled 'a new but dangerous wave of ethnic nationalism.' This pseudo nationalism has led to the appearance on the national stage, agitations for Biafra republic in the east, Oduduwa republic in the west and Islamic state in the north. The misrule has equally fueled authoritarian exclusion of certain ethnic nationalities (especially Igbo) from the scheme of things which has become an 'intractable hindrance to genuine democratic culture and good governance'.

4. Conceptual Clarification

4.1 Media ethics

An explanation of the ethics of the media in the reportage of the incidences considered in this research is necessary. According to Neha (2014, p. 56) the media takes responsibility for what it reports and shows some measure of concern for the average citizen. This is because when citizens suffer tragedies and are confronted with the atrocities of insurgency, the last thing they will want to see and confront is a barrage of microphones slung in their faces as they attempt to grapple with their losses and bizarre circumstances. Therefore, the media must seek the truth, report it, minimize harm and act independently and be accountable.

The truth to be conveyed must not necessarily reflect precise reality rather it must be a faithful rendition of the real opinion of the media. In this regard, the ethics of freedom of speech boils down to the ethics of honesty. While the media fight openly for view point in the market place of ideas, invectives, blunders, bias, and partisanship crop up, but essentially, media must demonstrate a socially responsible character. This social responsibility theory contributes to the development of the concept of the public's right to information, not of sensationalism, but the obligation of the media to search for and publish objectively only socially important and responsible news. This is because it is only on the premises of such authentic information that researchers can rely and work upon.

4.2 Conflicts and national security

National security and conflicts are concepts that are often going and coming together. Security is so important that nations have built the issue into the front row of its national consideration and therefore, it is their overall responsibility to guarantee it to their citizens at all cost otherwise, they may abdicate. According to Emordi (2012, p. 242) it is a measure that guarantees absence of fear, threats, anxieties, tensions, and the apprehension of losing life, liberty, property, goods and values. It is peace that allows children and students to live and go to school, teachers to feel safe at work. Conflict on the other spectrum can hardly be discussed outside the concept of pluralism. The Nigerian state is a plural one. Many ethnic entities constitute it. Their being together had been the enterprise of British colonialism and the neo-colonial state of Nigeria has been striving to maintain it.

4.3 Pluralism and conflicts

Conflict and pluralism according to Ifediora (2012, p. 188) have their objective bases in the society where they occur and they are validated 'daily over access to a variety of limited resources created and distributed within a defined establishment and location.' In this study, they are occurring as a result of religious cleavages and ideological claims of superiority between the schools of Islamic and Christian education and their respective world views. The conflict is assuming an intolerable violent dimension on the part of Islam due to the desire of Islamic extremists to take back the north from the civilizing influence of western education. This, they call 'Boko Haram: Western education is evil'.

5. Literature Review

Kidnapping for ransom has become a deadly game with dozens of school children in and out of dormitories as targets (Azu 2021, p. 20). Nigeria is a bandit country with little distinction between bandits and negotiators. 618 schools have been shut down in northern Nigeria as at March, 2021. It was evidence that a place of learning had turned to a place of fear. The number of out-of-school children which had earlier been put at 13.5 million by UNICEF had continued to increase. In fact, in three months, it grew from 6,946,000 to 10,193,918. Senator Mohammed, Federal Commissioner, National Commission for Refugees Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) (HassanWuyo, 2021, p. 14) has claimed that 1,194 households comprising 27,121 individuals, mostly women and children were displaced by bandits in Birnin Gwari Local Government Area of Kaduna State alone. An abducted school girl amongst the Jangebe 270 stated to Sahara Reporters, 'my future ambition was to become a medical doctor or a nurse, but I won't go back again (to school). The Nigerian government has failed to protect us' (Ladelokun, 2021, p. 18).

In Yobe State, students from JSS 1 to SSS 11 were to vacate their schools as a result of security concern and the urgent need for government to be proactive in safeguarding the lives of children (Vanguard, 2021, p. 14). These are indeed setbacks in the gains made in advancing girl-child education in Nigeria. They are intended to instill fear in the citizens and undermine the corporate existence of the nation. Closing down schools because of kidnapping and banditry will mean that the terrorists have won the war and to Senator Mohammed, Federal Commissioner for Refugees, a boy or girl who has been in the displaced persons camp since the beginning of the Boko Haram crises has probably been out of school for a decade. That is 10 wasted education years for millions of youths in the camps (Sam-Duru, 2021, p. 15). This should be a source of concern for anyone.

5.1 Education becomes meaningless

It has become established that the easiest way to destroy a people is to destroy its education as bandits have done to the north. Even barbarians in history did not condescend to such atrocities (Sobowale 2021, p. 15). Illiya Gwaram (Vanguard, 2021, p. 9), father of kidnapped Jangebe School girl was shocked to see his daughter among the kidnapped schoolgirls when they were herded into his kidnapper's den. He states, 'At first I did not know who they were or where they were

coming from, until I saw the face of my scared daughter looking at me. I quickly told some of the girls who were brought along with her and who sat near me to tell my child not to show any indication that she even knew me. The girls were brave enough and they kept our little secret up to the last day of their four days stay with us.’

Illiya continues, ‘I never cried as the day the girls were taken back because I felt it was the last time I would see my daughter. Fortunately my daughter informed Governor Matawalle of our whereabouts and the poor health conditions we were which led to our freedom as facilitated by the Governor and his security.’ Although Illiya did not know whether ransom was actually paid, he states, ‘Look at those two women that were rescued with me, N2million was said to have been paid by their relatives to the bandits more than two months ago, the money could not be traced as it was suspected to have been intercepted by another gang.’

5.2 Experience from Kaduna state

In the Afaka 39, the polemics between the State and the parents of the abducted students came to the open. The Kaduna State Governor, El-Rufai (Nanlong, 2021, p. 3) got the State to dig in that the era of settlement of kidnappers was gone and that it would be criminal to settle the abductors. The Governor contended that the proceeds of abduction were being re-funneled back to Boko Haram as critical funding. He argued that Boko Haram which had no way of getting money since many of its sources of supply had become cut off, had slipped back to join the ranks of bandits in North West to raise money for its crucial operations. El-Rufai profiled the division of roles being played by the segments of the group into informants, petrol, food, trucks suppliers and suppliers of weapon and ammunition. Medical doctors who treat the injured insurgents are also profiled separately. Paying ransom was thus an equivalent to re-arming an enemy to acquire more sophisticated weapons that can cause greater danger and scare to State security and the society.

According to the Governor, a segment of the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) a splinter of Boko Haram called Ansaru is assembling in Birnin Gwari forest in Birnin Gwari Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The sect is fighting the sovereignty of Nigeria and ought to be treated with a long pole even though it is not against western education and rape of women. Dogogide (Ajayi & HassanWuyo, 2021, p. 9) is said by another source to be one of the leaders of the three notorious gangs operating within Shiroro, Rafi and Munya Local Government Areas of Niger State and Birnin Gwari in Kaduna State (Mosadomi, 2021, p. 8).

But the parents of the Afaka 39 will not deign any of these gubernatorial contestations. They consider the issues canvassed by the Governor as ‘callous commentary’ in that the State ought not to suddenly renege from its previous avowed position of doing everything humanly possible to release all abducted persons in captivity including the option of paying ransom. Mr. Sani Friday (Duru, 2021, p. 5) whose two daughters were among the students of Federal College of Forestry and Mechanization, Mando in Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State appealed to the Governor to adjust his no-payment-of-ransom stance to facilitate the release of the children arguing, ‘It is the State Governor who said if it costs him to pay bandits to stop killing citizens he will pay. Now he claims that it is wrong to negotiate with bandits and that he is not going to negotiate.’

This is contradictory according to Sani Friday who appealed to the abductors to ‘create a platform where they can negotiate ... to reduce their demands to the level we will be able to raise...There is tension everywhere ... as we are hearing about the killing of the students of Greenfield University.’ But El-Rufai restates, ‘The ruthless and heartless resort of the kidnappers to murdering these young persons are part of their efforts to blackmail and compel us to abandon our no-ransom, no-negotiation policy.’ Then, he raises the question, ‘Are people bothering with the consequences of State surrender to hoodlums? Or is the continued politicization of security challenges not going to make all of us ultimately victims of the insurgents?’

The Defence Minister has also differed from the position of the Kaduna State Governor, El Rufai, that bandits should be killed at sight. Gen. Magashi (Obinna, et al., 2021, p. 5) had countered that, ‘This country is governed by the rule of law and we have accepted democracy as a solution to the liberty of individuals... With my little knowledge as a lawyer of 37 years, I think I know how decisions are taken. Everybody is innocent until he’s found guilty.’ But El-Rufai believes that bandits terrorizing Nigeria have lost their rights to life under the constitution and must be wiped out. They are at war with Nigeria and there is no other way to approach them than for security forces to take the war to them and recover the forests they occupy. He submits, ‘We will not engage with bandits. Private Citizens (like Clerics and Clergymen) can do so in their individual capacities to preach to them to repent but it is not our job to ask them to do so.’

El Rufai’s submission is in tandem with international standards. In 2003, ex-President George Bush had argued, ‘You have got to be strong not weak! The only way to deal with these people is to bring them to justice. You can’t talk to them. You can’t negotiate with them’. At the height of the IRA violence, United Kingdom ex-Prime Minister, M. Thatcher, vowed never to negotiate with IRA. No government (all over the world) bends backwards to all the demands of criminal elements as it is done in Nigeria. That will embolden them.

5.3 Experience from Benue state

Aside Benue State which had been the most hit by the herdsmen attack on farmers because of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law of 2017 passed by Governor Ortom administration, almost all other states of the Federation are bearing the brunt of the bandits. They are recounting similar experiences of armed men storming their communities from known federal forests after which they beat the retreat to such forests regarded as their operational base (Vanguard Comment, 2021, p. 18). In the case of Benue in particular, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association and Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore rose in arms against the State and its Governor insisting that the law must be repealed or there would be no peace in the State.

On 1st January, 2018 a massacre occurred across communities in Benue State leading to a mass burial of 72 people. In Saghev ward in Guma Local Government Area where Governor Ortom hails from, 20 persons were murdered in April, 2018 on account of the protestation against the open grazing prohibition (Owei, 2021). At the same time that these were happening, Shehu Garba, the Spokesman of the President, was revealing that Buhari still had two more years to go to election to mark the end of his tenure. The same period, soldiers fighting and engaging the Boko Haram terrorists were protesting in the streets of Maiduguri against non-payment of their allowances, lack of adequate arms and poor equipment which turn them into cannon fodder. At the same period, the National Security Adviser, Rtd. General Monguno was fuming that neither the money nor the arms imported by the military to fight insurgency could be located by the new Chief of Defence Staff, General Erabor (Nwabughigwu, 2021, 19). For Ango Abdullahi, the incompetence in government and the dissatisfaction in the populace are the main reasons breeding insecurity in the country. 'The screwed mind that everybody is an enemy, rather than giving everybody the right to make a contribution by way of constructive criticism is what we have been doing from day one' of the Buhari administration.

6. National Government Response to Banditry

Government's poor handling of issues regarding terrorism and perceived conspiracy of authorities especially in the north are already discouraging parents from sending their children to school. Benjamin Habila, an SS3 student, was shot dead during the Kagara Government Science School abduction incident in Niger State. Nnamdi Michael was murdered when he was abducted alongside other students of the Good Shepherd Seminary in Kaku, Kaduna State while Leah Sharibu is yet to regain freedom many years after the Dapchi School girls' abduction. Over a hundred Chibok School girls are still in captivity more than six years after their abduction. The Kagara GSC boys, Jangebe girls, the Federal College of Forestry and Mechanization students and primary school pupils in Kanduna State are all cases of abduction in Nigeria. Their only sin is seeking western education (Sam-Duru, 2021, p. 41).

The situation has become so appalling that release of students from kidnappers' dens is being announced in batches as if they are results in examinations. When 28 out of 118 students of Bethel Baptist High School were released to the proprietor, Rev. Ishaya Jangodo who addressed the parents to the effect that the bandits had agreed to be releasing the remaining students in batches, stated, 'God has answered our prayers. By the grace of God I have been talking to these people (bandits) and they told me they will be releasing the children in batches.' Even the Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Rev. John Hayab stated, 'Please if your child or children are not among the first batch released, hope is not lost yet. We are going to celebrate the coming of these children in batches.' In Nigeria, it became as bad as that.

The 2022 Nigerian Law School annual call to bar of over 1,507 new Nigerian Lawyers was shifted from the Nigerian Law School, Abuja to the Office of Body of Benchers within the City at Jabi, Abuja due to insecurity. While the President was in Liberia delivering a lecture on peace and insecurity, a Captain and two soldiers of his Presidential Guard (from Kogi State) were attacked and killed by the insurgents back home in Abuja with a threat that the President and the Kaduna State Governor, El Rufai, shall be kidnapped. The bandits had previously attacked his Advance Presidential Guard on his way to his home town of Daura, Katsina State for Salah holidays whereupon he admitted his preparedness to vacate office in 2023. These were happening just days after the Maximum Correctional Centre, Kuje Prison Abuja, was entirely smashed down to ruins by the insurgents with all the terrorists-prisoners (64 in all) released from custody into freedom including Boko Haram inmates in custody serving long, life and death sentences.

The attack on the prison was entirely un-resisted in that before it took place, the State Security Guards on duty had been infiltrated and vacated the facility to make way for the attack indicating, according to Baba Galadima, a former ally of the President, that if the ISWAP (a faction of the Boko Haram) intends to abduct Mr. President as boasted, it could be possible. This is because, as claimed by Datti Ahmed, the running mate of Peter Obi of the Labour Party for the 2023 presidential election, President Buhari and the Action Progressive Congress (APC) led government have strong links with terrorists, especially the Boko Haram troubling the country.

7. Ineffective International Response

The international community seems to have also left the people of Nigeria in the lurch. Countries like the USA and UK have not offered meaningful assistance in the era of the Buhari misrule and insurgency (Owei 2021, p. 16). It is worrisome that instead of activating the pact that the United Kingdom has with Nigeria, it is sounding like a good-Samaritan. Speaking while welcoming 2019 – 2020 United Kingdom Chevening Scholarship beneficiaries, the British High Commissioner had stated, ‘We are extremely concerned about the deteriorating security situation... but we are here to support and help. We have military team here who came after the Chibok girls’ kidnap. We are still here training Nigerian military helping to do campaign, planning how to counter Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)’. Under the 2018 pact, Ms. May Theresa had stated, ‘No one should live in fear of being targeted by militants or forced from his home and no child should lose out on an education because of threat of terror... We are determined to work side by side with Nigeria to help fight terrorism, reduce conflict and lay the foundation for the future stability and prosperity that will benefit us all.’

Under the pact, United Kingdom is supposed to deliver a new 13 million pounds programme to educate 100,000 children living in the conflict zones, provide equipment, teacher training, and safe places to learn; cut the number of new recruits joining Boko Haram by tackling the lies and false information spread by the group to attract new members and implement a new Nigerian Crisis Response Mechanism similar to the United Kingdom’s COBR system to help the government respond to incidents of terror attacks.

The pact was of no moment when in April, 2021 two students of the Green Field University, Kaduna State were killed by their abductors insisting on N800 million ransom. The two students brought to five the number of students killed by the kidnapers while demanding the ransom of N800 million which the Governor of Kaduna State, El-Rufai, had headily refused to pay. Quickly thereafter, three students of the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi in Benue State were to join in the fray. In Niger State, over 50 villages had been sacked in five Local Government Areas yielding over 3,000 Internally Displaced Persons in Minna alone. More than 50,000 farmers were equally forced to flee from their ancestral villages in Nasarawa State. The Chief Press Secretary to Governor of Nasarawa State observed that the attacks that do not spare women and children bore the mark of devilish elements bent on truncating the relative peace in the State (Mosadomi et al., 2021, p. 5).

However, explanations have been offered for the lukewarm disposition of pact-partners and International friends of Nigeria. For John Campbell (Jannamike, 2021, p. 27), Nigerian government has to do its best to restore public confidence in the security forces especially the Police. Moreover, under United States’ law, it is prohibited to provide any technical expertise for security forces accused of human rights abuses. Human rights abuses are a huge barrier to a more cordial relationship between the United States and the Nigerian security forces. And addressing this barrier has always been a complex issue. Therefore seeking international assistance is not the way out for Nigeria but ending impunity in the security forces and holding them accountable would achieve more gains for the country. Yet, ending human rights abuses alone cannot improve military – to – military bilateral relationship with Nigeria. This relationship has always been challenging. It is about a cultural issue within the Nigerian military. There is a general reluctance of Nigeria to engage closely with foreign military partners in terms of allowing them access in a sort of close relationship required to have a sustained and meaningful training of troops over time.

Campbell states, ‘We saw that in 2001 with “Operation Focus Relief” where the late Chief of Army Staff, General Victor Malu, viewed American training of Nigerian peacekeepers as a sort of infringement on Nigerian’s sovereignty and potential espionage.’ For Matthew Page (Jannamike, 2021), the unwillingness of Nigerian military to accept international military cooperation is another major hindrance to Nigeria accessing help in the fight against insecurity from the outside world. Furthermore, payment of ransom is illegal in the United States and this could be extremely and ideologically unpopular in Nigeria particularly to those close to the victims of kidnapping. Payment of ransom is also illegal in Nigeria but common.

Senator Bukola Saraki (Jannamike, 2021), former Governor of Kwara State, was also not far from one of the greatest obstacles to security in Nigeria: the Judiciary. He states, ‘We need as a people to hold leaders accountable to have the will power to do whatever is necessary and important for security in Nigeria and also to reform the judicial system. If people have to wait for two to three years to obtain justice (from our courts) and criminals believe that they can do wrong and get away with it, then we should be worried.’

If the UK and USA have not been of much substance in the Nigerian insurgency assistance reckoning, same is not of Chad. ‘When we heard about the unfortunate killing of the Chadian President, we knew problem was around the corner in the neighbouring States of Mali, Niger and Cameroon and that Nigeria would be worst hit by the fall of the Chadian President’ (Obinna et al., 2021, p. 5). For Nigeria, Derby’s death may have some implications especially in the fight against Boko Haram. Chad had intervened severally to assist Nigeria’s military in tackling Boko Haram insurgents, especially when they took over swathes of territory in north-eastern Nigeria in 2015 and with insecurity around other countries bordering

Lake Chad. Derby was ever ready to send his battle-hardened troops into Nigeria when Nigeria needed them. Nigeria can also learn from Derby that instability in Chad may mean instability in Nigeria (Peterside, 2021, p. 17).

All over the globe, the modalities of insurgents, bandits and terrorist are the same. They take the system by surprise and they attack when the opportunity provides the weakest link in the system and the most vulnerable are civilian population of children, women, students and high population density areas of the city or remote places where effective government coercive presence is weak. They strike to run down the State and not necessarily to overthrow it. But the conundrum of the Nigerian experience during the Buhari era of 2015 to 2023 is the allegation of the complicity of the administration in the insurgency.

It is Gen. Abacha's thesis that when insurgency lasts beyond a week, the State is complicit. The complex weapons in possession of the bandits, vis-à-vis those available to State Security forces has been noted. Datti Ahmed and Nigerian Indigenous National Alliance for Self-determination believe that the weapons in possession of bandits are bought with funds running in excess of \$9 billion lent to the country by donor western powers that have merely ended up in the hands of Boko Haram insurgents and used to kill, harass, oppress, intimidate the defenseless people of the country and destroy State infrastructure and lock down schools.

As long as insurgents are not brought to book chances are that there would be no end to kidnap for ransom and the failure of government or its complicity in the crime leaves the citizen with no better option than to negotiate with the insurgents. And as government has insisted that it would no longer negotiate with insurgents and it is also unlawful for citizens to do so with the criminals, the room is wide open for the criminals to deal ruthlessly and outrageously with their victims.

Even in situations in which government stepped in to negotiate, unscrupulous elements and fat cats in government had also used the opportunity of negotiating and paying ransom to divert public fund. It has also been revealed that the State is not acting on intelligence reports submitted to it by security agencies. According to the Deputy Speaker, House of Representative, Rt. Hon. Wase, over 44 intelligent reports submitted to the Buhari administration by Intelligence Agencies over attacks and intended attacks by insurgents were never acted upon leaving the field open for anarchy to hold sway and reign.

8. Conclusion

The claim by Boko haram that western education is evil has been borne out by their kidnap of school children in vast areas of the north for ransom. Though the Zamafara State Governor claimed that no ransom was paid for the release of the Jangebe School girls, evidence has since been released by the bandits involved in the assault and similar others to the BBC Africa Eye that over N65 million was paid. The Buhari administration has not been able to exonerate itself from complicity in sponsorship of insurgency. In fact, when alarm was raised against his appointment of a Boko Haram sympathizer (Prof. Isa Pantami) as a Communication Minister, not much attention was paid to the allegation by the administration rather, experience has shown the precision with which the criminal activities of the insurgents and bandits have been carried out without let or hindrance.

The administration has equally kept the education sector in coma and disarray while children of members of the administration and other well-to-do Nigerians have all found their ways abroad to school if for anything, due to insecurity. It would appear that the desire to sow ignorance on the populace with the hope that non-educated citizens would be easier to govern informs the disposition of the administration in allowing Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, for instance, to be on strike for over half of the year 2022 and collective agreements reached between them have been serial kept in breach since 2019.

The on-going attacks to root out children from their ancestral homelands into Internally Displaced Peoples Camps in vast areas of the north support the desire of the bandits to achieve their aim of destabilization of education in the country. With large populations of the children out of school, a fertile breeding ground is created for the recruitment of willing hands into banditry. The fight for the soul of children is easily won by banditry if the administration and its security agencies lower the guards of protection over the northern societies. And by dealing with education with open lackadaisical attitude in the south, the view of Boko Haram that western education is a scam is being allowed to take root.

9. Recommendation

The fight against insecurity has to be fought on three fronts. The military should be well equipped and intelligence reports must be promptly acted upon. The security of school compounds should be improved. The civilian population should be up-dated on schools' safeguarding, security education and bearing of arms. Communication providers (such as MTN, etc) should be integrated into the security architecture of the State.

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