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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Oyime Adejumo, T., Adams, J. A., & Abumbe, G. T. (2022). Terrorism and Abrahamic religious tradition: a focus on Boko Haram Islamic fundamentalism in the north-eastern Nigeria. *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 8(2), 177-201. <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282177a>

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(*) Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 08.03.2022
Accepted: 04.04.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Original scientific article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282177a>

How to cite:


Adejumo, Theophilus Oyime, John A. Adams, and Gabriel T. Abumbe. 2022. "TERRORISM AND ABRAHAMIC RELIGIOUS TRADITION: A FOCUS ON BOKO HARAM ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN THE NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA". *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 8 (2):177-201. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/605>.




TERRORISM AND ABRAHAMIC RELIGIOUS TRADITION: A FOCUS ON BOKO HARAM ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN THE NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract: *This study examines the normative hypothesis explaining the nexus between terrorism and Abrahamic religious tradition, particularly the Boko Haram Islamic fundamentalist sect in North-Eastern Nigeria. It is methodologically structured in quantitative and qualitative methods, where data and information are retrieved from primary and secondary sources. These were presented in a tabular form and analyzed descriptively within the context of the subject matter under investigation. The findings reveal that, beyond the classical arguments usually provided by the Abrahamic religious tradition school, the real reason behind global terrorism is for some overzealous religious bigots to establish a caliphate that will enable them to influence the international system. Based on these findings, the study concluded that the war against global terrorism would be a mirage unless national governments and international organizations fully address these fundamental issues.*

Keywords: *Terrorism; Abrahamic Religious Tradition; Globalization; Islamic Fundamentalism*

INTRODUCTION

The subject matter 'terrorism' is fundamental to the history of current global terrorism. This is why, in order to comprehend and reconceptualize the relationship between terrorism and the Abrahamic religious tradition, the paper will contest the normative assumption explaining the motivation of international terrorism. As a result, terrorism is a contentious topic. Its usage is often subjective and derogatory, intended to communicate an adversary's criticism. It is not possible to apply the phrase objectively. As a result, worldwide consensus on a definition has been difficult to achieve. Although terrorism was acknowledged as a significant worldwide security threat after the 11 September 2001 attacks on New York and Washington, it has remained on the international agenda since the problem has not been resolved. Global terrorism continues to be a source of concern, especially those linked to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Iraqi, Afghan, and Pakistani circumstances, and the future of Kashmir and Indo-Pakistani ties.

Thus, terrorist groups' behaviors, activities, and goals are more similar. Though complicated, the intelligence that characterizes these organizations' highly structured networks is increasingly shaping their homogeneity. This, of course, is tied to the reality that, in a globalized society, new sets of complex and interconnected hazards drive nations to reinterpret their security requirements. This submission has developed into a powerful instrument in the 'hand' of rebel organizations lucky enough to possess armaments inside and along a sovereign state's territorial frontiers. Thus, what distinguishes terrorism as a novel and critical component of today's threat to international security is the increasingly complicated settings under which transnational non-state actors wield influence. For this purpose, terrorist tactics in the global environment currently seem to follow a regular model since it has been noticed that:

Along the boundaries of the crescent-shaped Islamic bloc of nations from the bulge of Africa to Central Asia; from Karbala in Iraq to the Caucasus in Western Asia, terrorist operational strategies and psychology motivating their engagement and even weapons employed are becoming increasingly similar (...) highly combustible methods are adopted against groups considered enemies. Hence, small arms and light weapons proliferation and suicide bombings are no longer strong features in modern terrorist activities (Huntington in Theophilus *et al.* 2021, 196-217).

This study mirrors the authors' strong cognizance to analyze the normative hypothesis explaining the nexus between terrorism and Abrahamic religious tradition by focusing on the ideological, operational, and motivating factors of international terrorism, particularly Boko Haram Islamic fundamentalists. To answer these questions, the study will examine the evolving meaning of terrorism. It will be contested that, while many classical scholars of terrorism view the ideology of Abrahamic religious tradition and poverty as an important element responsible for the emergence of global terror, the study hopes to analyze further that, beyond this argument, the real issues driving international terrorism is the motive to occupy territories/empires in the form of Islamic caliphates. Equally, the study will analyze and case study, particularly Boko Haram in West and Central Africa, and flip through some of the most active terrorist organizations in the contemporary era, such as the ISIS in the Arabian Peninsula, Hezbollah, and Hamas in Lebanon, the al-Qaeda in Afghanistan amongst others. The choice of these terrorist organizations is informed by the fact that all have 'conquered' territories and empires from the legitimate government of sovereign states. Before going into a detailed analysis, it must be emphasized that the majority of the territories conquered by these organizations are seamlessly interconnected.

On the other hand, these views are best understood in globalization and permeable borders context, which have accelerated the flow of people and things across international frontiers. This is why it is easy to conclude that global terrorism has proliferated into something more complex, particularly in forging coalitions between like-minded non-state actors. The activities of these groups have triggered and span across a clearly defined terrorist arc, from the Southern banks of Lake Chad, going through Tripoli to the northern area of the Tigris in the Arabian Peninsula.

These characteristics make the global environment vulnerable to terrorist activities occasioned by violent non-state actors. Based on this, one can understand the changing nature of the security scenario in the study area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Religion, particularly when pursued with zeal and a readiness to sacrifice all else, defies modernity's expectations. Renowned social theorists and classical philosophers such as Karl Marx considered religion a fad that would ultimately die away. At the same time, Emile Durkheim saw it as a unifying force in old cultures that would lose importance when new forms and agents of cohesiveness emerged. However, current events in the world, whether viewed through the lens of the threat posed by a nuclear-armed Iran or the threat posed by Islamic fundamentalists, including the activities of terrorist groups in all major parts of the world, indicate that these classical scholars either underestimated the power of religion or were socially constrained in their perception of religion. Guillaume (1987) argued that the devout are motivated by the awareness that man's existence is to serve God, his creator, *ibada* (the act of worship of God). *ibada*, in its entirety, is contingent upon the presence of an organized community of believers. Such a society necessitates the establishment of a government whose major objective is the realization of *ibada*. Therefore, the primary purpose of every struggling Muslim movement is to create a conducive atmosphere for the true worship of God. In this scenario, extremist adherents of the faith pervert, thereby justifying terrorist actions against those seen as unbelievers or infidels. The illusion of a secular or contemporary society in which religion is mostly ineffective might have persisted if not for Osama Bin Laden's orchestrated assault on the World Trade Center's twin towers in New York on 11 September 2001.

The massive killings caused by the attacks, the audacious character of the efforts, and the tremendous anxiety and misery they inflict make it imperative for the current world to pursue one path of progress (the nexus between terrorism and Abrahamic religious tradition). This is what the world quickly learned: Western ideas, education, and secularism had little effect on the power of religion to make people think about it in weird ways (Anugwan 2019). However, the wired nature of the international system has made the authors establish the connection between the hate religious teaching by uncompromising mullahs and their adherents directed at the philosophies promoting Western liberal orientations, which form a significant element informing and exacerbating modern terrorism. Attention will be made to bringing to the fore some influential theological philosophers of the early XX century and the role played by these individuals in shaping modern Islamic thoughts, including their disputably radical kind; one that modern-day followers subscribe to and are determined to attain that purity of socio-economic and political order that will avail them the opportunity to seek after spiritual harmony and ultimately access to paradise.

Although, terrorism has always been part of human society and human history for over two thousand years. Wilkinson thinks that ancient man did this by threatening to crush his victims with rocks. Medieval assassins used daggers to fight against Sunni Muslims in the Middle Ages. Violence and terrorism have always been part and parcel of a man's existence; even though religion gives enough reason for a peaceful existence in human society, most terrorists

ascribe their terrorist actions to religion. Scullard (1959) argues that the Roman political control over Judea in the 1 century AD and the weakness of the Jewish society to liberate itself from the brute force of the Pax Romana under the Caesars' force, a group of Jewish freedom fighters with no alternative than to resort to terrorist attacks of Roman symbol authority. To Guillaume (1987), the Roman Empire pursued a political agenda directed at the consummation of the cultural unity of its domination through political unification or what the state referred to as the "stoic cosmopolis" (p. 766). The desire of the Roman Empire to bring its twin doctrine of the Pax Romana and the stoic cosmopolis to fruition made their approach to governance, especially concerning its relationship with its subjects, to end in violent conflicts.

Many historical and present terrorist organizations, usually by their membership, have a significant religious component. Anti-colonial nationalist movements like the Jewish terrorist organizations active in pre-independence Israel and the Muslim-dominated FLN - Front de Liberation Nationale (National Liberation Front) in Algeria come to mind, as do more recent examples like the overwhelmingly Catholic Irish Republican Army (IRA), their protestant counterparts arrayed in various loyalist paramilitary groups like the Ulster Freedom Fighters and the Red Hand Commandos, and the Muslim-dominated FLN - Front de Liberation Nationale. However, in all of these organizations, the political side of their motivation is prominent, not the religious. Their ethno-nationalist and/or irredentist goals are unquestionably dominant. However, for others, religious motivation is paramount. Indeed, the theological mandate for terrorism is the most distinguishing feature of contemporary terrorist behavior.

In his contribution, Hoffman (1988) argues that the relationship between religion and terrorism is not novel. Over two thousand years ago, religious extremists committed the first acts of what we now refer to as 'terrorism'. Indeed, some of the terms we use in English to characterize terrorists and their deeds are taken from the names of long-defunct Jewish, Hindu, and Muslim terrorist organizations. Even within the Christian fold, for example, some terrorist organizations have emerged to lay their origin to the faith's creed by asserting their identity as the army of the Lord. However, the most prominent modern Christian movement identified with terrorism is the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), known to be a heterodox Christian cult known for its rebellion against Uganda State and operating along the dangerously defined borders of Northern Uganda, Southern Sudan, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The group's objective is to institutionalize a government in Uganda based on the tenets of the Ten Commandments and the propagation of the Christian faith. Even in the classical Christian era, was on non-Christian nations intending to convert these nations were advocated by Pope Gregory I. However, this prescription for the expansion of the religion was never accepted as Church doctrine. Similarly, Joseph Kony, a self-acclaimed prophet who appears to be a personality cult, was proscribed as a terrorist group by the United States. Even though it has been accused of crimes against humanity, all these groups, including murder, kidnappings, mutilation, child soldier and child sex, and slavery, have been removed from designated active terrorist groups.

While terrorism and religion have a lengthy history dating back more than a century, ethno-nationalist/separatist and ideologically driven terrorism has eclipsed this specific form. Therefore, the XX century witnessed the activities of renowned Islamic clerics and scholars who have greatly impacted the nature and the interpretation of the content of Islamic theology and

practice for all time. For instance, Hassan Albanna, between 1905 and 1949, established the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt as a revolutionary movement. Al-Banna clearly defined the organization's interest to include the liberation of the entire territory of the Ummah during a conference in his statement of a minor homeland that comprised the Nile Valley – Egypt and Sudan and the Greater homeland, which included the Gulf region to the Atlantic Coast as well as the extension to the Indian Ocean. In his analysis, al-Banna deciphers those factors which could constitute a setback to the progress of Islam in a universal system. This setback, in his analysis, is disunity amongst the adherent of the Islamic religion.

Corroborating the above analysis, Caleb (2017) espoused in his study on 'Terror Economy: Re-Examining the Narrative Motivating Global Terrorism', that there are other Islamic clerics such as Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), and Abula ala Mawdudi (1903-1979), and his Jama'at-Islami which in his analysis noted that, of these three scholars, two: Qutb and Mawdudi through their revivalist theological interpretations seem to have had the greatest influence on modern-day fundamentalist Islamic thoughts. Studies have shown that they desire to top any legitimate political institution that did not accept and profess the Islamic faith in their separate analysis. In a separate analysis, Nasr (1994) note that the non-conformist traditions handed by Mawdudi and his likes have influenced the orientation, thoughts, and practices of the different sects of the Islamic faith.

Keay (2012), in 'The New Economy of Terror: Motivations and Driving Forces Behind Contemporary Islamist Insurgence', further analyzes the position made by Caleb and Nasr in his remark that the universal revolution endorsed by Mawdudi and others seems to be the pathway of latter-day fundamentalist groups in the contemporary period. This position, according to Keay, is what influenced Osama bin Laden to assert in the same spirit that he had declared war on the United States and their Western allies and had in a 1998 Fatwa warned the Muslim States of the implication of rendering support to whatever or even cooperating with Nations/States he term 'infidels'. Similarly, Abu Mahaz, in a CNN interview before a world press, declared that "the Islamic fundamentalist (terrorists) yes are terrorists because it is their faith" (Salkida 2009 in Ayuba 2017, 391). Boko Haram in Nigeria has also embraced this thinking, which has greatly influenced its orientation and behavior to date.

To this end, the author Raheem (2015) summarizes that:

Boko Haram prefers to be known by their Arabic name - Jama'atu Ahlissunnalidda'wal - Jihad - meaning 'people committed to propagating the prophet's teachings and Jihad. The town of Maiduguri, North-Eastern Nigeria, calls for eradicating all Western elements in Islamic societies. It sounded like an indigenous Salafist group, turning into a Salafist Jihadist group in 2009. Their line of thought believes anything Western is an aberration or completely unIslamic. The group viewed the Western influence on Islamic society as the basis of the religion's weakness. Ideologically, any member who fought and died for the cause of an Islamic/Sharia state by destroying modern state formation and government establishment/institutions would automatically gain 'Aljanna' (Paradise or Heaven). Consequently, the Nigerian state is the major vehicle transporting Western civilization; hence, the sects vendetta against the state institution and collaborators (pp. 16-33).

Consequently, as pointed out by Ayuba Caleb, Sayyid Qutb's theology and the world view he subscribed to, direct discourses and practices in global futures regarding modern Islamic scholarship cannot be undermined for its rebellious quality. He has the quality of stirring the masses (people) against any cultural practices they are perceived as alien to the teaching of Islam. Therefore, adherents of Islam believe that it is in Islamic teaching that the solutions to the problems of the human race can be addressed. This analysis led to the call for the abolition of the Westphalian system in favor of the Ummah - in other words, the universal society of Islamic faith with an emphasis on the categorized human community into the Daral-Harb - the home of war and Dar-al-Islam - the home of Islam (Weiss and Hassan 2013). Of course, this can explain why Samuel Huntington, in his book 'The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of the New World Order', argued that Islam has bloody borders (Huntington 1997).

To a large extent, the growth in the number of Islamic terrorist movements is motivated and influenced by the quest to engage in Jihadist war through the instrumentalist of terror. In most cases, it is the pursuit of power, money, and the establishment of a caliphate. Studies have shown that, over the last couple of years, the United States government have discovered that al-Qaida, along with other Sunni Islamic terrorist movement, may have collected between \$70 and \$200 million US Dollar annually from criminal enterprises. In another instance, more than ten years ago, AQIM was worth over one hundred million US Dollars, which were proceeds of drug trafficking, smuggling, kidnapping-for-ransom, and other illicit enterprises (Caleb 2017; Crenshaw 2009; Ethridge and Handelman 2010; Lohmann 2011).

In pursuit of the US agenda, all terrorist organizations lean on several funding sources, including sponsorships, charities, individual donations, kidnapping for ransoms, and other illicit activities. However, in Arab communities, funds are usually transformed via HAWALA (an informal remittance system traditional to many Islamic communities through a regular banking system and courier). The funds are mainly for training recruits, weapons procurements, support to group members facing challenges and other activities, and waging the Jihadist war against Christians ('infidels'). However, Wezeman (2010) believes that many scholars and analysts have concluded that Eritrea sponsors al-Shabaab to counter regional power, aside from criminal enterprises. For nearly a decade, Ethiopia, Eritrea's long-time enemy, has sent USD 80,000 per month to some members of al-Shabaab through the Eritrean Embassy in Nairobi. In this situation, one could infer that, when nation-state conflicts are becoming less frequent, and war between major military powers is nearly unthinkable, terror has become the dominant source of concern in international society. This is because terrorist groups like al-Qaeda operate in the shadows and cannot be easily targeted like a country. People are afraid of them.

THE NIGERIAN STATE AND THE BIRTH OF ABRAHAMIC RELIGIOUS TRADITION

Nigeria has a long and tumultuous history of intercommunal and ethnoreligious strife. For example, since the return of democracy in 1999, there have been frequent outbreaks of violent conflict between different communities in Plateau State, Nigeria's 'middle belt'. There have also been riots in the cities of Kaduna and Kano and a simmering war in Bauchi's Tafawa Balewa district for several decades. From the outside, these confrontations may be mostly about religious differences and tensions between Muslim and Christian communities (Ikegbu and

Bassey 2019). However, a closer examination reveals that politics - specifically, control of government patronage - is the root of many of these confrontations. Election conflicts have sometimes resulted in schisms between Muslims and Christians. When violence breaks out in these situations, it generally starts with one group claiming control of the government machinery over another group or groups in a particularly varied and ethnically diverse section of Nigeria (United States Institute of Special Report 2012).

The data extraction and analysis revealed that Nigeria had been an Islamic country for generations. The governing parties believed that the neighboring territories attempted to degrade the Islamic religion, which led to early clashes. A theocratic federal state was established following the Jihad, solidifying a national faith. Ikime (1977) and Smaldone (1977) said that people in the bordering states were idol worshipers and unbelievers who looked like Muslims while secretly practicing pagan rites and preventing people from praising God, so they tried to look like they were Muslims.

Nigeria's central and southern areas turned to Christianity once European missionaries came, but the northern and western regions remained Islamic. The country was divided spiritually, but the people were also divided psychologically and emotionally due to the widely different cultures of Christianity and Islam. According to Burns and Burns (1972) and Falola and Heaton (2008), this was more than a religious separation; it was an ethnic division.

The divide deepened as more affluent Nigerians in the South took their children to the United Kingdom to receive an education. People's regional disparities have widened, particularly in schooling and higher education. People in the South were comparatively enlightened since they had educational access to information. Slavery was still practiced in northern Nigeria until 1936, officially outlawed. Boko Haram, an Islamic organization, was able to join this sort of split cultural milieu in quest of the abolition of Nigeria's government and the creation of Sharia rule. Boko Haram was created in 2002, but by 2010, the organization was well-established, armed, and highly brutal. The organization had evolved from a religious organization to one that tried to impose its will on Nigerians via bloodshed and terrorism.

Boko Haram terrorists continue to engage in violence and terror because they see violence as one of the required tasks and sacramentals to achieve their religion's teachings (Osumah 2013). This is even more evident in the sect's chosen locations. According to Taylor (2014), "the Boko Haram sect is dedicated to achieving supremacy over the Christian portion of the country at all costs" (Taylor 2014 in Osumah 2013, p. 32). These goals prompted the sect to destroy organizations like churches, government institutions, and educational institutions that they considered did not conform to or teach Allah.

UNMASKING THE IDENTITY OF THE PERPETRATORS OF THE GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX

Terrorism as a political tool is not new. However, throughout the nineteenth century, anarchist revolutionaries in Russia, Italy, and other areas of Europe carried out bombings and killings to destroy organized government and capitalism. However, the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon wreaked havoc on the fabric of American society on a scale never seen before (Parr 2018). Suddenly, the United States seemed vulnerable, despite its great military and economic might. Although 9/11 was the most heinous incident, it

was not the first time Islamic fundamentalist organizations launched a terrorist strike against the United States or the West. Terrorism in the world fell for the sixth year in a row in 2019. Between 2014 and 2019, the overall number of terrorist acts globally declined by 50%, while the total number of fatalities decreased by 54% (Barnett 2020). Regional patterns were markedly different. While the Taliban and the US were in discussions, Afghanistan saw 21% of all terrorist incidents worldwide in 2019. In 2019, Afghanistan was home to 41% of those killed in terrorist acts (including attackers).

Terrorism patterns in Iraq, which experienced more terrorist attacks than any other country each year from 2013 to 2017, continue to influence global statistical trends significantly. Between 2013 and 2019, the number of terrorist attacks in Iraq fell by 53%, while the number of individuals killed in terrorist attacks fell by 44%. Terrorist violence remained a problem in Iraq in 2019, and the rate of decrease may be decreasing. Between the formation of the caliphate in June 2014 and the recapture of Mosul in July 2017, the Islamic State carried out over 100 terrorist acts in Iraq, killing over 500 people on average each month. The group's violence in Iraq was reduced substantially and continued to fall throughout 2019, yet it was still deadly. In 2019, at least 350 Islamic State assaults in Iraq killed more than 500 people and 70 perpetrators, while the group also claimed hundreds of lives in Syria and other countries. While Islamic State violence in Iraq has decreased, the group's territorial reach has grown. In 2019, there were 31 attacks carried out by Islamic State 'core' operatives, linked groups, or unaffiliated people who declared allegiance to the group, compared to 35 in 2018. In 2019, however, three more nations - Mozambique, the Netherlands, and Sri Lanka - were targeted by Islamic State. This takes the number of nations that ISIS-linked terrorist strikes have targeted to 57.

In 2019, many noteworthy developments arose in African nations, notably in Nigeria, where total terrorist violence declined due to a decrease in assaults by Fulani extremists, although Boko Haram-related terrorist violence surged. Boko Haram's terrorist activities have also escalated in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. Furthermore, Mali experienced a 16% decrease in assaults in 2019 but a 41% increase in deaths due to several mass casualty terrorist acts involving more than 30 people, compared to zero such attacks in previous years. The number of terrorist acts in Western Europe decreased by 6%, from 203 in 2018 to 191 in 2019, following a downward trend that began in 2016. In 2019, the number of people killed in terrorist attacks in Western Europe stayed the same, with 18 people killed and about 100 injured. This is the same number that happened between 2015 and 2016.

Figure 1 represents a map of Nigeria that reveals that the nation is bordered on the West by Benin, on the North by Niger, on the East by Cameroon and Chad, and on the South by the Atlantic Ocean.



Figure 1: The map of Nigeria with Northern and Southern Regions (Source: Onyemaechi 2020)

Terrorist incidents with large numbers of casualties remained uncommon in Western Europe in 2019. Nine terrorist acts out of 191 resulted in at least four wounded or killed individuals (Global Terrorist Group 2020). In the United States, there were 64 terrorist acts in 2019, with 51 people killed. A wide range of ideological influences still characterizes terrorism in the United States, some of which are complicated and ambiguous and rarely linked to formal, recognized groups. In the United States, 286 individuals were murdered in terrorist acts between 2015 and 2019 (excluding assailants). Almost all of the victims (95 percent) were killed in gun-related accidents. During this period, firearms were used in 27% of terrorist acts in the United States (Mandhana, Taylor, and Shah 2019).

In 2019, the lethality of 'racially and ethnically motivated terrorist acts' (REMT) increased dramatically, with many inspired by white supremacy, xenophobia, and anti-immigrant sentiments. In Australia, North America, and Western Europe, at least 86 individuals were killed in such assaults in 2019, up from 52 in 2018. The worst terrorist assaults of 2019 occurred in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday. Eight perpetrators carried out suicide explosions at seven separate crowded venues, including hotels and churches, killing more than 250 people and injuring at least 500 more. At the eighth site, a pipe bomb was defused. According to Sri Lankan officials, Sri Lankan officials said the assaults were carried out by operatives of the National Thowheeth Jama'ath and Jammiyathul Millathu Ibrahim. However, Islamic State has released a video purporting to show the assailants swearing allegiance to the organization. Sources suggest that one or more assailants received training from the group.

Terrorist violence remained concentrated in a few areas and occurred in tandem with other forms of political violence. More than half of all assaults were carried out in five countries: Afghanistan (21%), Yemen (9%), Iraq (8%), India (7%), and Nigeria (6%). As in 2018, half of all deaths in 2019 occurred in Afghanistan (41%) and Nigeria (8%) (Onuoha 2011, 16).

Table 1: Terrorist Attacks and Total Deaths, Countries with more than 150 Attacks, 2019 (Source: Focus Group Discussion 2022 (in Global Terrorism Database) Statistical Annex: 2020:1-2)

Country	Total Attacks	% of Total	% Change from 2018	Total killed*	% of Total	% Change from 2018
Afghanistan	1804	21%	2%	8249	41%	16%
Yemen	771	9%	55%	1219	6%	8%
Iraq	642	8%	53%	798	4%	-44%
India	623	7%	30%	311	2%	25%
Nigeria	507	6%	22%	1718	8%	33%
Philippines	464	5%	23%	396	2%	10%
Pakistan	362	4%	25%	416	2%	40%
Somalia	360	4%	32%	860	4%	-25%
Syria	292	3%	25%	1102	5%	-29%
Democratic Republic of the Congo	250	3%	53%	642	3%	-35%
Colombia	228	3%	11%	134	1%	2%
Nepal	200	2%	102%	7	0%	-
Burkina Faso	159	2%	127%	797	4%	587%
Worldwide Total	8473	100%	14%	20309	100%	-13%

Three of the ten deadly attacks in the United States were labeled “doubt terrorism proper” in the GTD (2020), which means there is no clear consensus on whether the definitional criteria for terrorism were met.

Between 2018 and 2019, there was a significant reduction in terrorist violence in many regions. These are some of them:

- Libya, where the number of terrorist incidents has steadily decreased from 729 in 2014, when various Islamic State branches formed, to 70 in 2019. Similarly, the number of people killed in terrorist incidents went from 694 to 90 in the same period.
- Terrorist attacks in Pakistan, which peaked at over 2,200 in 2013 (2,800 people murdered), have declined dramatically. In Pakistan, there were 362 assaults in 2019, a 25% decrease from 2018, and 416 people (including 38 assailants) were murdered in 2019, a 40% decrease from 2018. (GTD 2020, p. 4).

Between 2018 and 2019, terrorist violence increased dramatically in many areas. These are some of them:

- In Yemen, where terrorist violence grew by 55 percent in terms of the number of attacks (771 in 2019) and 54 percent in victim deaths in a terrible conflict (903 in 2019). Despite the sharp increase in victim fatalities, overall mortality in Yemen increased by 9% between 2018 and 2019. This is due to a 41% decrease in perpetrator deaths in Yemen between 2018 and 2019.

- In 2019, Nepal was subjected to 200 assaults. However, almost all of them (98%) were non-lethal and not meant to inflict bodily harm. This 102 percent increase in assaults was primarily due to the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN).
- Maoists (CPN-Chand) targeted communications infrastructure, which resulted in the destruction of dozens of telecommunication towers, particularly in February, July, and August.
- In Burkina Faso, where terrorist violence has been continuously escalating since 2015, terrorist assaults increased by 127 percent in 2019, and the total number of deaths increased by 587 percent. The increase in lethality was mostly due to a rise in assaults involving 10 or more individuals, from 2 in 2018 to 25 in 2019. At least 9 assaults were carried out by Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin', also known as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara.
- Cameroon, where anglophone separatists declared independence in 2017 and bloodshed occurred. Although the number of assaults in Cameroon was reduced by 38% in 2019, it had more than quadrupled in 2018. Between 2018 and 2019, the number of people murdered in terrorist acts grew by 28%, from 167 to 214 (Agence France-Presse 2019).

In 2019, 66 percent of all attacks worldwide were recorded with the perpetrator's identity. Individual offenders were recognized in 59 incidents, but they were not known to be linked with any single group or organization. The number of assaults carried out by unaffiliated people has decreased after peaking at 102 in 2017. In unaffiliated attacks, the number of people killed has also dropped, from more than 200 in 2016 to 98 in 2019 (GTD 2020, 5).

Table 2: Perpetrator Groups Responsible for more than 100 Terrorist Attacks, 2019 (Source: Global Terrorism Database 2020)

Perpetrator Group	Total Attacks	Change from 2018	Total Killed*	Change from 2018
Taliban	1375	9%	7531	-11%
Houthi extremists (Ansar Allah)	579	55%	983	11%
Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)	461	-37%	1252	-44%
Boko Haram	348	43%	1954	47%
al-Shabaab	330	-33%	864	-25%
Maoists/Communist Party of India – Maoist (CPI-Maoist)	238	-11%	146	-23%
New People's Army (NPA)	192	-32%	155	-18%
Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist (CPN-Maoist-Chand)	134	148%	7	-
Fulani extremists	118	-61%	4	64%

Two hundred sixty-five (265) groups and organizations carried out terrorist acts in 2019 (Reinares 2005). Since peaking at 377 groups and organizations as perpetrators of terrorist incidents in 2016, this figure has been progressively falling in recent years. The perpetrator groups responsible for the most assaults in 2019 are listed in Table 2.

By a large margin, the Taliban in Afghanistan were responsible for more terrorist acts in 2019 than any other organization. Those assaults killed more people than the next ten worst perpetrator groups combined. The number of terrorist incidents carried out by the Taliban climbed by 9% between 2018 and 2019, but the overall number of deaths was reduced by 11% (Walker 2012). However, it is crucial to remember that Taliban strikes frequently result in the deaths of many perpetrators. The number of perpetrators killed in Taliban assaults declined by 31% in 2019, but the number of victims killed climbed by 9% (GTD 2020, 6).

In addition to the Taliban, Houthi extremists in Yemen (55 percent increase in attacks; 11 percent increase in total deaths; 54 percent increase in victim deaths) and Boko Haram (43 percent increase in attacks; 47 percent increase in total deaths; 37 percent increase in victim deaths) were among the perpetrator groups that increased terrorist violence in 2019 (there was a 148% increase in total attacks in 2019, with seven people killed, including one perpetrator, compared to zero in 2018) (Andrew 2012).

The Islamic State and allied organizations were among the terrorist organizations whose terrorist violence decreased in 2019. These include the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (attacks down 37%, fatalities down 44%) and the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISIL) (attacks decreased 52 percent and deaths decreased 68 percent) (Alex 2016). On the other hand, this network of groups remained extremely lethal, and their attacks resulted in thousands of deaths at sites worldwide. In 2019, Islamic State operatives killed more than 1,000 people in Iraq and Syria. The organization also claimed responsibility for assaults in Lebanon, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, and Tunisia, in which several people were murdered.

Boko Haram expanded terrorist activity in Nigeria and surrounding countries such as Cameroon, Chad, and Niger in 2019. Boko Haram-related assaults claimed the lives of 241 people in Cameroon (up from 76 in 2018), 189 in Chad (up from 106 in 2018), and 315 in Niger (up from 50 in 2018) (GIABA 2013). Furthermore, Boko Haram (Barnawi faction, Islamic State West Africa Province) claimed responsibility for a 2019 attack in Burkina Faso in which 24 soldiers were killed. The lethality of racially or ethnically motivated terrorist acts increased dramatically in 2019. This rise was mostly due to particularly lethal assaults in the United States against Hispanic Americans and Muslims in New Zealand.

TERRORISM AND ABRAHAMIC RELIGIOUS TRADITION: AN IDEOLOGICAL NEXUS INVESTIGATING THE ACTIVITIES OF BOKO HARAM IN THE NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

The Abrahamic religious tradition may be defined as a series of doctrines or beliefs held by many people who have built a system based solely on feelings. Such a corpus of doctrine frequently includes references to fascist-like political and social plans and the group's tools to carry out its goal (Fisseha 2016). Furthermore, the Abrahamic religious tradition can be viewed through the lens of philosophy. Experts and analysts investigate the nature and origins of ideas derived from specific ideologies to understand better how a group's minds operate under this doctrine. On the other hand, ideological considerations aid in defining the formation of a terrorist group, notably Boko Haram, as impacted by global and political events in this study. The ideology of Boko Haram is frequently defined as consisting of two stances: antagonism

towards democracy and a rejection of Western-style education (Vanguard News 2009). However, the sect's theology and politics are more than just anti-Western sentiment. Its worldview combines two larger concepts. First, there is religious exclusivism, which opposes all other value systems, even competing Islamic interpretations. According to this exclusivism, Muslims must choose between Islam and a series of purportedly anti-Islamic activities such as democracy, constitutionalism, non-Muslim partnerships, and Western-style schooling.

Second, there is victimhood politics. Boko Haram says that its brutality responds to what it perceives to be a decades-long history of Muslim persecution in Nigeria. State crackdowns on Boko Haram are the newest manifestation of such persecution, according to Boko Haram. Boko Haram's leaders' philosophy may not pervade the movement, whose internal structure and degree of cohesion are unknown. Despite this, the sect's leaders have utilized religious discourse to excuse the sect's brutality, score-settling, and provocations. At the very least, such speech gives a narrative that attempts to justify the violent campaign: Boko Haram leaders tell a provocative story about what it means to be Muslim in Nigeria, designed to arouse fears that pious Muslims are losing ground to forces of immorality. There are four prevalent but ineffective therapies for Boko Haram, in addition to conspiracy theories that seek to explain the group. The first is the notion that Boko Haram is an unavoidable consequence of Northern Nigeria's poverty. More than 60% of Nigerians live on less than \$1 a day (BBC News 2012). The second view is that Boko Haram reacted to the North's perceived political marginalization, particularly in the North-East. Many Northerners were angered by President Goodluck Jonathan's electoral success in 2011 as a Southern Christian who rose to the office following the death of President Umaru Yar'Adua, a Northern Muslim. The third argument is that early Boko Haram was a branch of al-Qaida. This interpretation was convenient for Jonathan, who minimized Boko Haram's political statements by referring to the group as a 'terrorist group', a "West African al-Qaida" (Irish 2014).

Finally, there is the idea that Boko Haram is the reincarnation of Nigeria's Maitatsine sect or the sect's indirect descendant in terms of demographics and underlying reasons. Muhammad Marwa (1980), a Cameroonian preacher known as 'Mai Tatsine' (The Curser), condemned Western technology, espoused a 'Quran-on-ly' philosophy, and claimed to be a new prophet.

If such ideas constitute a danger to a state's security and stability, a better knowledge of them will assist in the formulation of effective plans and methods to eliminate them (Rapoport 2001).

Boko Haram, a Nigerian extremist organization, has been carrying out more brutal attacks in recent years. Since their first attack on Bauchi prison in northern Nigeria in September 2010, the group is known as Jama'am Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awa Wai-Jihad, which is an Islamist Sunni group for preaching Islam and conducting Jihad, has carried out numerous attacks that have claimed the lives of Nigerians, with the first two months of 2014 witnessing almost daily killings, bombings, thefts, and the destruction of schools, churches, homes, and businesses around villages in no time Nigerian security authorities executed Boko Haram founder Mohammed Yusuf while he was in police custody near the group's primary headquarters in Maiduguri, Borno State in northern Nigeria, a little over a year before this attack, in July 2009.

Security officials slaughtered about a thousand Yusuf's supporters, forcing them to flee. In hiding, Yusuf's deputy Abubakar Shekau emerged as leader a year after. Shekau's leadership

emerged with two new strands of Boko Haram doctrine that overlapped (Zenn 2014). The first ideology is motivated by a desire to carry out a 'vengeance mission'. They believe that retaliating against the Nigerian government and Islamic authorities in the North, who backed both former President Yar'Adua's smoking out of Boko Haram and the assassination of their previous leader, Mohammed Yusuf, in 2009, is the only option. Furthermore, President Jonathan was inaugurated as the new president in 2010 after Yar'Adua died of natural circumstances.

Boko Haram saw Jonathan's inauguration as a Christian president as a violation of their conviction that he was not a Muslim (Zenn 2013). Most of Yusuf's original followers, who had split up from Shekau into several smaller factions after his death, including the Yusufiya Islamic Movement, which kept Yusuf's name, adopted this ideological strand, even though their split was largely due to their disapproval of Boko Haram's tactics. The bombings against civilians and non-combatant Nigerians are part of a 'false Holy War'.

The second ideological stream is concerned with jihadist aspirations on a regional and worldwide scale. After Yusuf's death, two notable organizations split away from his original group and currently practice this belief. The first is Shekau's faction, which comprises Yusuf's initial supporters, while the second is Ansaru, a breakaway organization that split from Shekau in 2012. Ansaru's leadership received instruction from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and has carried out operations since then.

Ansaru has expanded its actions over the West African area, even engaging international governments since it includes the kidnapping of foreigners in its terror itinerary. For example, in May 2001, Ansaru abducted and executed a British and an Italian engineer in Birnin Kebbi. They abducted and murdered a German engineer in Kano in March 2012. AQIM (al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) claimed credit for the kidnapping in Kano, but it was Ansaru that carried it out. They abducted a French engineer in Katsina in December 2012, and his whereabouts are unknown. Ansaru abducted and murdered seven foreign engineers in Bauchi in February 2013. So far, Ansaru's ideology has been characterized by global communication, with the terror organization justifying its activities. For example, Ansaru stated, "kidnapping the French engineer was retaliation to France's desire to wage war on Islam in Mali and its restriction on Islamic women wearing headscarves in public places" (Zenn 2013, 22).

Similarly, when Ansaru assassinated three Nigerians who were part of a military convoy heading to Mali, the terror organization said it was retaliation for European nations' sins in Afghanistan and Mali. Boko Haram has recently grown increasingly international in its operations, even though it still has a local ideology. Boko Haram, for example, published a series of remarks in 2010 warning the US that 'Jihad had begun'. It claimed responsibility for the August 2011 suicide car attack on the UN building in Abuja.

The kidnapping of a seven-member French family in northern Cameroon in February 2013, when an Arabic-speaking member of Boko Haram who was holding the hostages threatened war against France in response to the European country's intervention in northern Mali, is where analysts are drawing a link between Ansaru and Boko Haram. The jihadist was identified by his use of Arabic rather than Hausa, his focus on France, and his choice of victim, the engineer and his family. The northern Cameroon kidnapping may have been the first sign of hybridization of the Boko Haram and Ansaru insurgencies, as these trends were more typical of Ansaru operations (Zenn 2013).

Analysts believe that a possible collaboration between Boko Haram, Ansaru, and other militant organizations in West Africa's Sahel areas, such as the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), will have a significant influence on the terrorist threat in the region (Idonor *et al.* 2011). This notion is substantiated by the fact that members of the AQIM terrorist organization educated the current commanders of MUJWA and Ansaru before 2011, when they regrouped and retreated from the Sahel towards southern Libya and Tunisia to work with the terrorist groups there. Al-Shabaab, a Somali terrorist group, has been linked to and inspired members of Boko Haram and Ansaru. Thus, the jihadi mandate in Sub-Saharan Africa has been handed on to Boko Haram, Ansaru, and MUJWA, all of which have global ambitions.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram is fighting for an Islamic state, while in West Africa, Ansaru and MUJWA are also fighting for an Islamic state. In addition, all three groups now consider themselves part of global Jihad. As a result, if these three terrorist groups - Boko Haram, Ansaru, and MUJWA - expand their terrorist collaboration, Nigeria, Africa's most populous and second most resource-rich country, will face a steady rise in the violent domestic insurgency in its northern regions, which will occur concurrently with several linked insurgencies in the West African region (Zenn 2013).

THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

The Nigerian state has been and is being threatened on many fronts by violence that are being perpetrated by Boko Haram Islamic Fundamentalist, whose ideology is rooted chiefly in the intent of destroying modern state formation and government establishment for the cause of institutionalizing an Islamic/Sharia state (Ogar and Ogar 2018). As a result, just as there are disagreements on the grounds for the group's radicalization, there is also disagreement over how the sect's emergence should be described. The frustration-aggression theory, the relative autonomy theory, and the failed state theory, among others, have all been presented as theoretical underpinnings. For the sake of this research, the article will, however, be based on a failed or failing state theoretical analysis.

The literature on state failure is divided into two strands: the first is the view that a failing state has a set of institutional structures that differ from a modern Weberian bureaucracy, and the second is represented by so-called functionalist theorists who argue that measuring failure is pointless. In the universe of Szuhai Ilona (2015), institutional systems determine nation-states' well-being. Although the notion of a failed state has been questioned on theoretical, normative, empirical, and practical grounds, it remains popular. Take, for example, the issue of definition. On the other hand, the word merely refers to a state that is no longer capable of performing the necessary activities to pass as a state (Zartman 1995). According to Anyanwu (2005), a 'failed state' is a state that has failed to meet the essential prerequisites and obligations of a sovereign government. For example, when a central government is so weak or ineffective that it has little practical control over the vast majority of its territory, public utilities are not provided, populations are dispersed, and economic decline is rapid, kidnapping, terrorism, arms proliferation, sexual abuse, killings, maiming, and the use of child soldiers are all common features of failing states. Colombia, East Timor, Indonesia, North Korea, Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan, and, most likely, Nigeria are among them.

Failing states are inevitably the result of the breakdown of power institutions that provide political backing for law and order. This process is typically sparked and perpetuated by anarchic forms of internal violence. As a result, when state institutions like the police and judiciary break down and there is a lack of law and order, government functions are halted, as well as the destruction or looting of government assets and the deaths of experienced officials (Theophilus *et al.* 2020). This helps to explain why this research concluded that the situation in Nigeria, and the consequent rising worry about other such governments in the subregion, only heightened concerns about the role of 'failed states' in harboring or helping terrorists. Some see Boko Haram as a sign that Nigeria's government has failed or is collapsing. Others attribute it to poverty and bad government, while still others attribute it to the frustration-aggression theory. According to Raheem (2015), members of the group are typically dissatisfied with the state of affairs in the nation, particularly with the position of Northerners and Northern Muslims in the country's existing political and economic power structure.

According to Adibe (2012), Boko Haram is more of a symptom of Nigeria's nation-building dilemma. As suggested, the crisis caused a vast de-Nigerianization process. Many people and groups withdrew into primal identities, searching for meaning in the wake of the Nigerian state's betrayal. For this purpose, people who are abandoning the Nigerian cause on the spur of the moment see the state as an enemy and attack it with any tool they have at their disposal to destabilize the nation and its institutions. This inconsistency is what feeds, supports, and generates an ungoverned zone in which crimes and other horrors can thrive, eventually leading to state breakdown (Theophilus 2020).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The North-East was peaceful until the monstrous Boko Haram ('Eastern education is a sin') attacks, first led by Muhammed Yusuf, escalated over a decade ago. Boko Haram has its operational base in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State and the largest city in the North-Eastern Nigeria. At its inception in 2002, the main tenet among its followers was regime change in Nigeria, as they believed that democratic and secular rule contradicts Sharia (Obilor *et al.* 2018; Onyemachi 2020). The sustained assault by Boko Haram on the Nigerian state, its citizens, and foreigners followed its spread from Sambisa Forest Reserve in Borno State to the entire North-East and currently North-West geopolitical zones. However, the unprecedented increase in violent attacks is defying the narrative among some analysts that the North-West is relatively peaceful compared to the North-East. Boko Haram has mutated into cells linked to international terror groups like al-Qaeda and Islamic State-West Africa (ISIS-WA) (Onor 2021).

Boko Haram has notoriously diminished Nigeria's image at the international level. Both human and material resources have been lost in the fight against this terrorist organization. The abduction of schoolgirls - over 300 female students in Chibok (Borno State) on 14 April 2014; 110 female students from the Government Girls Science School, Dapchi, Yobe State, on the 19 February 2018; and 344 schoolboys from a school in Kankara near Katsina in December 2020 devastated Nigerians home and abroad. Similarly, women, children, men, military and paramilitary personnel have been kidnapped, maimed and killed. Schools have been shut down

in several parts of the North-East and North-West due to insecurity caused by Boko Haram (Channels Television Documentary 2016).

Danjuma (2014), in agreement with the above, ascertain that the escalation of the Boko Haram insurgency has internal destabilizing effects in Nigeria, to the extent that the group's activities have caused serious security challenges to the Nigerian state. In certain quarters in Nigeria, the series of attacks by members of Boko Haram have been misconstrued as targeting the Christians who are predominantly in the South by predominant Muslims in the North. This misunderstanding often occurs between Muslims and Christians on some religious issues. It is perhaps for this reason that Mazrui (2006) maintains that "Muslims and Christians in Nigeria fight each other from time to time" (p. 550).

Historically, Boko Haram is a product of globalization. Like several trending issues, the group has had a firm grip and 'subdued' the West Coast and Central African State for almost a decade. The sub-regional blocs have fallen under the group as its geostrategic sphere of influence. This explains why the group is motivated mainly by the desire to acquire empires in its image. It has been severally caught declaring that the goal sustaining its thrust is the construction of an organic Islamic State in the Nigeria sub-region in general. It is equally important to state that Islam does not subscribe to the activities and the accompanying strategies of these extremely violent elements operating under the umbrella of ISIS, AQIM, Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda, and several others. The group slaughtered children, women, and other vulnerable people in societies that are antithetical and extremely adversative to the tenets of the Islamic religion that has a patron in the Abrahamic belief system (Caleb 2015).

The group has specifically borrowed its origin and ideas from various climes within a highly complex and dynamic global environment, including the Middle East and, ironically, the Mosques of London. Fiery and demagogue preachers who migrated into Europe, especially the United Kingdom, around the late decade of the XX century - 1980-1990s played a major role in shaping the terrorist mentality in the UK. Many recruited young men imbibed the ideology in the UK, whose complete circle ends with full indoctrination in Yemen and elsewhere. Other studies revealed that Boko Haram received these training and indoctrination sessions from the al-Shabaab group in Somalia and al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) around the Central Saharan zone. This situation, however, explains why Ribadu (2015) emphasized that "there is no pointer to the global nature of what presently is the world's highest security risk than this" (p. 793).

This, of course, brought to the fore the extremely anti-modernity ideology in Northern Nigeria that is reminiscent of other volatile terrains like Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. These anti-Western thoughts emanated from two Nigerians. Abu Umar a native of the ancient city of Kano and Muhammed Ali of Borno at the tip of the Chad Basin. These individuals had contact with Abu Albasir al Dardusi, a Syrian preacher in Yemen, whose teaching indoctrinated these Nigerians by rejecting anti-Western symbols, education, and modern values as the main areas of his attacks, which of course, is anchored on a single Hadith.

Unfortunately, when those Islamic clerics returned to Nigeria, they embarked on the task of proselytizing for new converts to their newly acquired knowledge and teachings. They especially targeted young Sunni preachers that had been versed in fundamentalist orientations. Two established and educated local Islamic scholars, Muhammed Yusuf and Bello Oma, immediately connected with Umar and Abi, who converted them to these new revolutionary

teaching. Yusuf was recognized for his intellect, worldview, education, and personality trait by the movement's hierarchy, who made him one of the frontline leaders. From around 2001, differences in understanding doctrinal position/teachings and egoistic/personality clashes led to the group's splintering into smaller units (Ribadu 2015). However, these factions reunited when Ali was killed and Umar was arrested and imprisoned by the state's authority. At this juncture, Muhammed Yusuf took full charge of the group. Because many of the leaders were prominent preachers in their own right, recruiting was first done via compelling preaching and sermons and one-on-one brainwashing sessions, according to the recruitment method. Some leaders would embark on itinerant teaching tours to cities and villages, mostly to attract disgruntled young men. The club initially relied on donations from members, some of whom were dealers or worked in low-wage occupations. Several of them sold their homes in order to support the campaign. However, as the violent campaign began, they turned to kidnappings for ransom, bank robberies, and armed robbery to sustain their expanding numbers of recruits. To further buttress the fact that money and power motivate the group's ideological orientation. Keay (2012) argued that the massive theft of crude oil in the South-South, amounting to over one million barrels per day due to the diversionary influence of the Boko Haram terrorist activities in the Sahel region of Nigeria's North-East, is indicative of the reality that money and power are the important motivation of terrorism in Nigeria and the Sahel region as a whole.

However, to make meaning out of the recent terrorist activities, the author Keay (2012) has provided a perspective bordering on the post-modernist phenomenon, especially US globalization variants. He notes, "globalization paves the way for non-state armed groups to advance the course of liberal philosophies and socio-economic progress; the same process has also inversely facilitated the networking of violent non-state actors" (Keay 2012, 797). He has trenchantly argued:

An economic analysis downplays the role of religion, relegating it to a mere means of recruitment while focusing on the growing tension between a dominant Western capitalist system and a resentful and growing Muslim population, hemmed in by corruption and deceit (...) what we are witnessing today, therefore, goes well beyond the motivations of single Islamist armed group. It is a clash between two economic systems - one dominant, the West, and the other insurgent - Islam (Keay 2012, 798).

In a bid to address these security dilemmas triggered by the Boko Haram insurgents, the Nigerian state led by the former President Goodluck Jonathan adopted the National counterterrorism approach designed to assist the government in effectively addressing the threats of terrorism and reduce its risks in Nigeria to provide a safe environment for Nigerians to go about their daily lives freely and confidently (Okereke 2017). As a subset of the National security strategy, Nigeria's National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (NCTEST) was drafted to provide protection to the public, assist organizations in dealing with acts of terrorism, and pursue terrorist and their sponsors. It also held the promise of tackling the root causes of terrorism in Nigeria. Following this, on 29 May 2015, President Buhari relocated the Nigerian Army's military theater command and division from Abuja to Maiduguri, improved the military budget and approved the purchase of arms for security forces and agencies, and investigated the use of

military funds under the administration of Goodluck Jonathan, leading to the arrest of former National Security Adviser Sambo Dasuki for alleged embezzlement of funds. Thus, under Buhari's leadership, defense spending has stayed high over the previous six years, despite the military's performance falling short of many Nigerians' expectations. President Buhari said in March 2018 that his administration was willing to accept the "unconditional laying down of weapons by members of the Boko Haram organization who demonstrate significant commitment in that direction" (p. 466) after asserting that Boko Haram had been 'technically crushed'. Many Nigerians criticized the move because releasing 'repentant' Boko Haram militants into the civilian population could be counterproductive.

The irony of the war in the North-East and North-West is a mismatch of funding and ineffectiveness on the part of the military. Analysts have identified some factors responsible for the vulnerability of the North-East and North-West to incessant violent attacks owing to porous borders and difficult terrain, arms, and weapons trafficking, poor governance, poverty and climate change, overburdened security apparatus, controversial peace agreements between some state governments and criminal groups, etc. These same factors, it must be stated, are more or less universal in their applicability across the country. These same factors, it must be stated, are more or less universal in their applicability across the country. However, it is important to note that the intensification of counterterrorism measures stipulated in NACTEST degraded Boko Haram insurgents across the country within the first two years. The sects' ability to carry out attacks on military establishments, assault and execute suicide attacks has significantly reduced.

Equally, the periodic online presence of Boko Haram's most vocal leader, Abubakar Shekau, has since March 2015 diminished, giving credence to speculations of his death in Combat (Goffey 2016). Speaking with the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during the World Future Energy Summit in Abu-Dhabi, President Muhammdu Buhari declared that, following collaboration with the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), Nigerian Armed Forces had driven Boko Haram insurgents from Nigerian territory such that they no longer hold any territory. Alhaji Lai Mohammed, Nigerian Minister of Information and Culture, and her Defence Counterpart, Gen. Mansur Mohammed Dan Ali (Rtd), have corroborated this official argument. The first two years of NACTEST implementation gradually restored public confidence in the government's counterterrorism capabilities.

Despite all of these achievements, there is increasing concern that the threats of terrorism in Nigeria remain alarming. For instance, suicide attacks and ambushes by the Boko Haram against carefully-selected targets, including a United Nations aid convoy to Bama (Vanguard Newspaper 2016). Furthermore, the constant menace of armed herdsmen across the country, especially in the lower Benue Valley, prison/jailbreaks, the activities of the Niger Delta Avengers, and that of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), among others, are indicators of the changing nature of terrorist acts in the country.

CONCLUSION

Although terrorism and Abrahamic religious tradition are linked in Nigeria, the theoretical foundations conclude that Abrahamic religious tradition is primarily the excuse that Nigerian society latches onto and exploits. In Nigeria, terrorism has always been motivated by religious beliefs. Extremism and radicalization have fueled the rise of terrorist assaults, particularly in the Muslim North. Boko Haram has long been antagonistic to Christians, whom they regard as 'infidels', as they strive to control the North while propagating their ideas. As a result, their attacks against Christians have been motivated by the reality that their population and ideology are rapidly dwindling. As a result of this knowledge, they focused their hatred on defenseless Christians, using terror as a tool to instill dread and worry among the populace. As difficult as it may be for the government to take religion out of the equation and focus on injustice and disenfranchisement, they can at least explain why terrorism is not a new political strategy. Political events are hard to predict, especially in international relations, where so many uncontrolled forces are at play.

However, few analysts or policy analysts anticipated the end of the Cold War only five or six years before it happened. Only a year or two before the 11 September terrorist attacks, few could have predicted their magnitude or how they would change the nature of domestic and international politics. Today, as the world faces an uncertain future triggered by the activities of violent non-state actors (terrorists), it can be realized that economic inequality, ethnic-nationalism, religious and ideological provocations or sentiments, technological development, global strategic imbalances, and repressive national governments are among the causes of global terrorism. Indeed, this paper further underscored the above position because, without cooperation and a united front through a global offensive against terror at the international level, it will be practically impossible to curtail the menace of terrorism. In other words, the transnational nature of international terrorism has made tracking its trends and dynamics a very difficult challenge. However, this position explains why the United States coalition against terror, especially in ISIS-controlled territory in Syria and Iraq, is a strategy that will help weaken the groups' control of the region.

Equally, the Multi-National Joint Task Force Initiative of the countries of the Lake Chad Basin is another important cooperative effort proving useful in the war against the security challenges posed by the Boko Haram insurgents. It is also important to state that the fluidity of this organization and the secrecy that characterizes its *modus operandi* can only be checked through the constitution of a Unified Front. Boko Haram knows no boundaries, and its bloody soldiers have no respect for conventions or international law. Hence, they traverse the borders of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon without any apprehension. Therefore, only the mobilization of troops throughout the affected region could successfully deter the Boko Haram elements from achieving their cardinal objectives of requiring empires and establishing a caliphate in their image.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

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