

Futures Uncertain: Mapping the Socio-Economic Aftermath of The Boko Haram Insurgency

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Abstract: *Boko Haram can be seen as an expression of frustration against injustice, underdevelopment, corruption, inadequate public service, political marginalisation and socio-economic grievances vis-a-vis the outlandish nature of the Nigerian political economy which fosters disequilibrium. The attacks by Boko Haram defy a particular pattern: drive-by shooting, attacks on prisons, and police stations, attacks on churches and "sites of immorality" (such as beer parlours, gambling centers and commercial sex businesses) : and suicide bombing on strategic buildings. They do not discriminate their targets, but their targets of choice appear to be government officials and security agents. It is against this backdrop that this paper attempts to map out the uncertain future of the socio-economic activities as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency. The paper among others recommended the following; traditional institutions integration; economic empowerment and employment generation; reformation of security agencies; proper religious enlightenment; and government proactive attitude towards crisis*

I. INTRODUCTION

It is no more news the quantum of destruction, both human and material, meted by the Boko Haram insurgency on the citizenry. But its aftermath is likely to be of interest to analyst in Nigeria and beyond.

Over two million persons (World Bank, 2016) were rendered homeless, as they were forced to flee their places of abode making them refugees in their own land and are now Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). About 200,000 children were made orphans. Similarly, a new phenomenon called Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), a youth Volunteer Vigilante Group, emerged with its socio-economic consequences. The CJTF constitute a social challenge as this army of unemployed youth can pose another problem to the state which may be difficult to handle.

The operations of the insurgents are aimed at crippling the economic activities of any place they spread their tentacle as well as led to migration of people from the affected places due to restiveness (Aro, 2013). Aro further noted that, 'no wonder the Nation Newspaper (2013:3) reported the activities of the Boko Haram thus: "Borno and neighbouring Yobe State - epicentre of the activities of the sect-have been crippled economically....."

Less we forget, the insurgency was triggered by the extra judicial killing of, Mohammed Yusuf, the erstwhile leader of "JammatuAhalulSunnah Lil Daawatiwal Jihad," popularly called Boko Haram. Similarly, cases of human rights violations were reported, especially by the Amnesty International, hence many persons might have died in detention. Reasons adduced for this include; a speculation of outbreak of cholera and other diseases in detention camps or could as a result of torture by security operatives.

Prior to the advent of the Boko Haram insurgency, Borno served as a nerve centre for agricultural and commercial activities including international trade. The state is bordered by Cameroon, Chad and Niger. It produces grains such as maize, sorghum, corn and millet as well as legumes like beans, groundnut etc. The state also produces cash crops such as cotton, beni seed. Hides and skin, cattle are imported into the country through Borno border. All these activities have been stalled by the insurgency.

The future is uncertain. There are likely preponderance of social and economical consequences linked to the emergence of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), the children orphaned by the insurgency and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). Though not wanting to sound cynical, the socio-economic aftermath can better be imagined than said. Such possibilities as resurgence of insurgency and militancy are likely. This is adduced against the backdrop of renewed violence in the Niger Delta with the bombings of some oil pipelines; amidst winding up, by government, of the amnesty programme later this year. The Shiite-military clash in Zaria and Zamfara gun attacks (a style similar to that of the Boko Haram). All these could be seen to be emanating from the weakened security situation.

A considerable effort to end the violence and build a sustainable peace to steer the economy to sustainability seems far from realization (Nwanego and Odigbo, 2013). However, contrary to this assertion, government believes the insurgents have been sufficiently decimated and the war is coming to end. If so, what is the aftermath of the insurgency, particularly on the socio-economic life of the population? How realistic the ultimate end of insurgency? How can the consequences be mitigated? How can future occurrence be averted?

What is the fate of those who lost their means of livelihood? It is against this backdrop that this paper is poised to make an exposition and proffer possible solutions.

Modus Operandi of the Sect

Boko Haram can be seen as an expression of frustration against injustice, underdevelopment, corruption, inadequate public service, political marginalisation and socio-economic grievances vis-a-vis the outlandish nature of the Nigerian political economy which fosters disequilibrium (Tat et al,2014).

The upsurge in terrorism since the late 1970s notwithstanding, the most familiar form of violence used by insurgents has been guerrilla warfare. In guerrilla warfare the primary targets are the government's "armed forces", police, their support units etc.

Insurgents may use more than one form of warfare. The combination of terrorism and guerrilla warfare is the most common. Although many actions of the insurgents are often categorised very easily, others may fall into grey areas; bomb attacks against civilians in public places- bazaars, department stores, buses- are clear acts of terrorism.

Insurgents differ in their use of tactics and methods. In a 2004 article, Robert R. Tomes spoke of four elements that "typically encompass an insurgency";

- 1) cell-networks that maintain secrecy;
- 2) terrorism used to foster insecurity among the population and drive them to the insurgents for freedom;
- 3) multifaceted attempts to cultivate support in the general population, often undermining the regime; and
- 4) attacks against the government.

Similarly, the Boko Haram insurgents adopt some of these tactics to unleash violence and evoke fear into the populace.

On 16th June 2011, a suicide bomber from the Boko Haram movement blew himself up at the national headquarters of Nigerian Police Force- Louis Edet building in broad daylight (Tar et al,2014).

Since 2009, the Boko Haram group has unequivocally exhibited its capabilities to reign terror not just in the north-eastern part of the country where their activities led to the imposition of state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states in 2013, but across the country, as exhibited in various places like Kano, Kaduna, Nasarawa, and in Abuja and its environs, where there were bomb blasts in Nyanya and Wuse11, in addition to an attempted jail break at the headquarters of the State Security Service (SSS).

The group has also evolved in its mode of operations, from simple attacks and open confrontations with the security forces, to highly calculated and sophisticated attacks using improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide bombings and guerrilla tactics. The group has also carried out targeted killings, and consequently carried out assault against non-combatants, the notable of which was the April 14, 2014 kidnap of over 250 schoolgirls from Chibok (op cit.)`

The attacks by Boko Haram defy a particular pattern: drive-by shooting, attacks on prisons, and police stations, attacks on churches and "sites of immorality"(such as beer parlours, gambling centers and commercial sex businesses) : and suicide bombing on strategic buildings. They do not discriminate their targets, but their targets of choice appear to be government officials and security agents (Tar et al, 2014)

The Magnitude of Destruction by Boko Haram Insurgents

The magnitude of the destruction unleashed by the Boko Haram insurgents on Nigerian and neighbouring countries of Chad, Niger and Cameroon, cannot be overemphasized. As at 2011, more than 264 children were orphaned, 392 women widowed, 28 policemen killed, several police stations razed, over 700 inmates and sect members were forcefully released from Bauchi Prisons and 109 died in bomb explosions near the Mogadishu Barracks in Abuja. (Onuoha, 2011).

Awojobi (2014) reports that, since the first attack of Boko Haram in 2009 in one of the police barracks in Bauchi State that killed scores of people, including police officers and members of their family, and the subsequent killing of the leader of the sect, Yusuf Muhammad, the coordinated attacks by Boko Haram have intensified. The extrajudicial killing of the sect leader made the group intensified its attacks on government departments, the churches, markets, homes, police and military formations (Ajah, 2011). It is erroneous to believe that the sect attacks churches without doing same to the Muslim worshiping centres. Boko Haram has attacked mosques in the northeast and even killed some Islamic clerics that are opposed to their ideology. It is estimated that over 10,000 Nigerians have been killed and maimed by the sect since 2009. Abubakar Shekau who was the deputy of Muhammad Yusuf took over the mantle of leadership of the sect after Yusuf's death. The year 2014 has been the worst period of the group attacks, according to Human Right Watch. Over 700 people have been killed in attacks on 40 villages in the northeast states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. Most of the

attacks are concentrated in these three states. However, the nation's capital Abuja, Jos, Kano and some part of the north have experienced attacks from Boko Haram.

These figures are just like a drop in the ocean. In 2016, the World Bank Report, indicates that, in Borno State alone lost 20,000 citizens and suffered property damaged worth 5.9 Billion U S Dollars. This represents an estimate of the value of public and private property damaged by the insurgents.

The Socio-Economic Aftermath

Since independence, Nigeria appears to have been bedevilled with ethno-religious conflicts. Over the past decades of her Nationhood, Nigeria has experienced a palpable intensification of religious polarization, manifest in political mobilization, sectarian social movements, and increasing violence (Lewis 2002: 1).

The inabilities of the Nigerian leaders to tackle challenges, distribute state resources equitably and render services to the people appear to be one of the causes of ethno-religious violence. Salawu (2010) argued that a major cause of what we now see as ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria has to do with the accusation and allegation of neglect, marginalisation, nepotism and bigotry.

No doubt security problems caused by the Boko Haram poses a great challenge to our socio-economic life. Former Nigerian Vice president in his speech titled; "Socio-economic Dimensions of Nigerians Internal Security Challenges," posited thus:

One of the tragedies of the Nigerian situation is that to think of security as though it is disconnected from economic and political development, when in fact they are inter-related. Sometimes we even look for imaging enemies when the enemies are with us. The rising were of insecurity in the country results largely from socio-economic challenges: high level of unemployment, high level of illiteracy; and poor and unaccountable governnace. Put in another way, it largely results from the inability of the government to fulfil the aspirations of our people especially our young people.

The Boko Haram Insurgency pose grave consequences to national development hence the socio-economic aftermath could better be imagined then said.

Some Of These Consequences Include:-

Threat to National Security in Nigeria.

Undoubtly, the Boko Haram Insurgency, poses a threat to national security. Nwanenbo and Odebro (2013) posited that, "Boko Haram seems to be a destructive political tool with a cosmetic pretension of being religious". The insurgency exposed the seemingly absence of synergy amongst the security agencies, especially in terms of intelligence sharing.

Furthermore, there is the resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta with its attendant economic consequences. This weakened security gave rise to the Shiare-Military clash in Zaria early this year as well as cattle rustling in North-Western Nigeria, Farmers-Headmen clash and armed banditry. All there cumulatively poses a threat to the National Security.

There seem to be continuation of violence even after the insurgency because of proliferation of small arms. Inter-communal crises may resurface and could be as a challenge of resettlement arising from land disputes.

Challenges of resettlement and rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Most of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) suffered psychological depression because of several attacks on them and their belongings including their houses. Many IDPs lost their landed properties that were destroyed- houses, shops and farmlands. Many of them came along with their families. Those living in camps found more adequate shelter than those living in informal settlements or host communities. Therefore, the desire and clamour for IDPsto re establish their lives back home once the insurgency ends can be an issue to be addressed by the government so also, the extant law in Nigeria that protests the right of IDPs. Moreover the NGO putting humanitarian services may likely withdraw at the end of the insurgency.

Fate of the Volunteer Youth Vigilante (VYVG/CJTF)

There is no doubt that the youth vigilantes have played a major role in chasing out the Boko Haram Terrorist out of Maiduguri city and to a large extent contributed to the sufficient decimating of the insurgents. However, the future of these army of youth is uncertain. Of recent they have been found to be involved in cattle resulting for the Boko Haram insurgents. Funds realised is supposedly to be used for sponsoring activities of the insurgents. Therefore, government with purpose and intent must engage these youth in some meaningful venture at the end of the insurgency.

Upsurge in Prostitution/Crimes

Women and children have suffered indelibly during these violent conflicts and insurgency in Nigeria. Many women have become widowed and have been subjected to all manner of horrendous abuses; some of these abuses are sexual, physical, psychological and emotional (Ajibola, 2015). They have been targets of abductions, rapes and gruesome murder. The ordeal of the Chibok girls indicate that they were subjected to physical and psychological abuse, force labour, forced participation in military operation, including carrying ammunition or luring men into ambush, forced abuse including rape. They were in addition made to cook, clean, perform other household chores (Human Right Watch: 2014)

Although some of the Chibok girls have been released and other women rescued, what is the fate of those who are yet to gain their freedom? Even those that have been rescued have suffered a lot of trauma both physical and psychological. Rehabilitating and reorientating them would be a huge task. Less we forget, some of them have been used for suicide bombings and other operations of the Boko Haram.

In terms of health, women and children in the north east have been deprived of basic medical facilities. Some have given birth in refugee camps. Their sexual and reproductive rights have also been affected while some have been exposed to risky sexual behaviours leading to the transmission of HIV and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs).

Challenges of Rehabilitating the Insurgents

Some of the insurgents have voluntarily surrendered to the authorities while others have been captured alive. The change in their orientation which has been indoctrinated will be a challenge. Also reintegrating them back into the society will be far more challenging because of likely vengeance by the relations of those they maimed and killed.

Loss of Productive Manpower

The insurgency mostly involved the youth (both the insurgents and those affected by the violence) hence the loss of productive manpower. The insurgents and the victims alike are youths who should have formed the bulk of the productive age bracket were lost to the insurgency. The youths that are ideally supposed to be at school could not attend school due to closure of such schools for years. Hence, there will be a lack of qualified manpower to fill vacancies in government offices and agencies. Furthermore, manpower on the farms will be grossly inadequate resulting in food shortage, food insecurity and famine and malnutrition.

Challenges of Child Upbringing

Many children have been orphaned some of whom are at the mercy of good Samaritans. Others are at the IDP Camps without proper care, schooling or clothing. Some of these children have been taken as far as Benin City, Edo State, south-south, Nigeria. They are kept under the tutelage of philanthropic organizations such as Churches. The proper upbringing of these children will be a problem. What happens to these children after the insurgency?

Way Forward

The aftermath of the insurgency has been clearly mapped out in this exposition. What remains is for various governments and stakeholders to mitigate the consequences and avert future occurrence of the insurgency. With good vision, proper articulation of measures and religious implementation the socio-economic could be addressed. Aro (2013) in his paper, "Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: Its Implication and Way Forward toward Avoidance of Future Insurgency", has suggested, how to avoid future insurgency; viz; traditional institutions integration; economic empowerment and employment generation; reformation of security agencies; proper religious enlightenment; and government proactive attitude towards crisis.

II. CONCLUSION

This exposition has attempted to x-ray the activities of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria, since inception in 2009 to 2016 when the insurgents have been sufficiently decimated, particularly, with the capture of the Sambisa Forest (a strong enclave of the insurgents) at the eve of Christmas. With this the end of the war is at sight.

There is no doubt some socio-economic effects are likely to follow. These have been mapped out. Women and children are at the receiving end. However, the Nigerian nation and its national security are at stake. The earlier we mitigate these consequences the better for the country.

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