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ANATOMY OF A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

BOKO HARAM

EMRAH KEKILLI, KHAYRI OMAR, IBRAHIM BACHIR ABDOULAYE





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ABSTRACT

This report examines the emergence, organizational structure and attacks of the terrorist organization Boko Haram, along with the counterterrorism efforts of the regional countries. Boko Haram made the headlines in April 2014 for abducting 276 girls in the city of Chibok in Borno, a state in northeastern Nigeria.

The first section will discuss the way in which a Salafi invitation movement transformed into a terrorist organization in a region mostly populated by Muslims; the religious structure of this region; its relations with the central government; and the characteristics of the founder of Boko Haram. The second section will examine the factors shaping the group's recruitment ideology and the principles of this ideology. The third section will look into how Boko Haram practices this ideology to mobilize its organizational structure, while the financial sources of this organizational structure will also be examined.

The fourth section will discuss the pattern of action, the objectives and the methods of Boko Haram since its emergence. The counterterrorism methods of the Nigerian state and those of the regional countries together with related problems will be scrutinized in the fifth section.

During the research and writing of this report, the authors accessed records in the local language of Hausa, which is also Boko Haram's propaganda language, related news in the media, and other sources in a variety of languages. To the extent that it was possible, the authors also contacted local experts and foreign journalists working in Nigeria.



The study examines the emergence, the organizational structure and the attacks of the Boko Haram terrorist organization along with the counterterrorism efforts of the regional countries.

INTRODUCTION

The terrorist organization Boko Haram was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in a period when the Islamic world was being dragged into a cycle of terror and violence. A very articulate man, Yusuf adopted the jihadist interpretation of Salafism. Despite ethnic and religious differences in the country, Nigeria adopted a federal government regime following the declaration of independence in 1960. Muslim elites living in the northern parts of Nigeria were, on the one hand, influenced by the popular transformations in the Islamic world and, on the other, were concerned about country's issues. Different interpretations of Islam made the agenda in Nigeria, as Muslim elites discussed the deep economic crises, education, health and the national identity. These interpretations were imported by Nigerian students who were being educated abroad.

Religious groups propagating Saudi Salafism and Iranian Shiism came into the picture, and communicated their own interpretation of Islam vis-à-vis the traditional understanding of the religion.

Furthermore, Muslims in Nigeria were deeply affected by the great crises in the Islamic world, such as the invasions of Afghanistan by the United States of America (hereinafter U.S.) and Russia, the U.S. occupation in Iraq and the civil war in Syria. Against this background, Yu-

suf, who was involved in Salafi and Shiite groups since the late 1970s in Nigeria, began with his strong oratory skills to voice a violent interpretation of Salafism in the 2000s as efforts were made to drag the Islamic world into a cycle of violence. Yusuf expressed his ideas in the language of Hausa. These ideas were directly communicated by his followers and spread in Hausa- and Kanuri-spoken areas through his sermons recorded on audiotapes. After a while, traditional emirs, religious sects and groups in the region were disturbed by Yusuf and his proponents. Yusuf was killed in 2009 following severe interventions by the Nigerian security forces against his followers; however, a terrorist organization based on his teachings emerged.

The violent acts of Boko Haram since 2009 caused a deep crisis, particularly in the north of Nigeria and, despite all measures, the problem could not be solved. Since the violence of Boko Haram began seven years ago, it has become a security issue for Nigeria and its northern neighbors as regional and international actors have been engaged in the issue as well. Twenty thousand people have been killed; farms, schools, hospitals and other key infrastructures have been destroyed; two million people have been displaced from their homes and 20 million more in the region have been affected by the abovementioned crisis.¹

Expectations were raised in the world public opinion when, in December 2016, Nigerian President Mohammed Buhari announced that the Nigerian security forces regained control of the last region controlled by Boko Haram and that the group had begun to disintegrate. How-

1. Abiodun Emmanuel Awosusi, "Aftermath of Boko Haram Violence in the Lake Chad Basin: A Neglected Global Health Threat", *BMJ Global Health*, Issue: 193, (2017).

ever, in a video released on December 29, 2016, the group's leader Abu Bakr Shekau announced, "We are here. We will continue to fight until the Islamic Caliphate in Nigeria is established, and the war has just begun."² As the attacks against the University of Maiduguri in January 2017 and subsequent suicide attacks were added to Shekau's remarks, the Boko Haram crisis of the last seven years in Nigeria seems far from being over.

The founding ideology of this terrorist organization is mainly shaped by Yusuf's idea that "Western education is forbidden by Islam". Yusuf described the modern state in Nigeria as *taghut* (idolatry) and presumed any involvement with this system as *kufir* (disbelief or denial of religious truth in Islam). He called for fighting against the Western order by any means and termed this fight *dawah* (proselytization). He gave meaning to the thought of "Western education is forbidden by Islam" in this context, claiming that education institutions in the country sabotage the values of Islam and drag Muslims into *kufir*. As Yusuf's remarks morphed into a call for violence, his movement faced severe intervention by the Nigerian security forces and transformed into a terrorist organization. Similarly to other terrorist groups, the group formed subunits such as emir; *shura* (consultation) council; executive council; and emir of *wilayah* (province). Boko Haram began to assassinate civil servants and administrators who conveyed information about the organization to the security forces and targeted ruling party administrators and security members in Borno State. Following this, Boko Haram turned from a local group into a global scale terror mechanism, and committed large scale attacks.

THE EMERGENCE OF BOKO HARAM

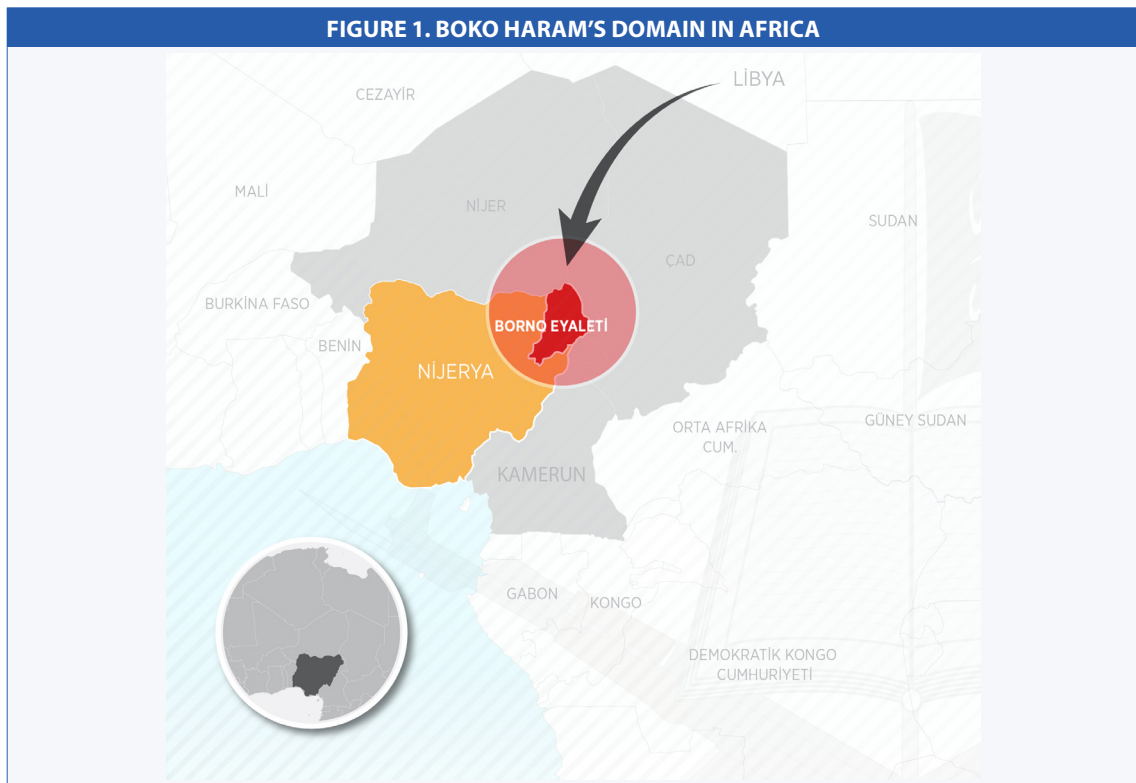
Based in the state of Borno, in northeastern Nigeria, Boko Haram emerged in a Muslim-populated region, where Hausa, Kanuri and Fulani are spoken, at the crossroad of Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. Known as "Boko Haram" in the international literature and in Turkish public opinion, the official Arabic name of the organization is *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lid-da'awati wal-Jihad*, meaning "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad." The reason for its being known as "Boko Haram" is the claim of Yusuf, the group's founder, that having a Western education is *haram*, or forbidden in Islam. In Hausa, the language spoken in the region controlled by Boko Haram, the term "Boko Haram" means "Western education is forbidden by Islam."³

The religious, linguistic and cultural similarities among the regional countries have played a key role in Boko Haram's emergence in the border region, and in its gaining power and getting organized in crossborder areas. As Yusuf began to recruit followers, his sermons on audiotapes spread in the northern states of Nigeria and the southern provinces of Niger.⁴ However, there are a great deal of differences between the abovementioned region and the south of Nigeria in terms of religion, language and culture. The differences between the north and south deepened due to the policies adopted by the British colonial rule that took the helm of the region in the early 19th century. Although the Muslim emirs in the north accepted the su-

2. "The Latest Shekau Video 2", YouTube, December 29, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dCSvWp8rQg>, (Access date: March 12, 2016).

3. David Cook, "Boko Haram: A Prognosis", James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy: Rice University, (December 2011).

4. This information was obtained from local sources that have witnessed Boko Haram's propaganda.



Source: Anadolu News Agency (AA)

zerainty of British imperialism in 1906, people remained distanced from the new ruling class and approached Western-style education negatively.⁵ As a result, it was impossible to constitute a cultural unity between the north and south through the British education system, and people in the north established deeper relations with the Islamic world rather than with the cultural structure in the south.

After Nigeria gained independence from Britain in 1960, a federal system was established by taking ethnic and religious differences into account. This system contributed to the maintenance of the cultural diversification between the country's north and south. Nigeria was ruled by military elites until 1999, when, following the

adoption of democracy, Muslims in the north and Christians in the south agreed on a rotating presidency. Christian Olusegun Obasanjo led the country between 1999 and 2007. His Muslim successor Umaru Musa Yar Aduwa took office in 2007 and presided over the country until his death in 2010. After the death of President Aduwa, his Christian Vice President Goodluck Jonathan took over amid public disputes.⁶ Jonathan won the elections in 2011 and remained in seat. Although he became a candidate again in 2015, Jonathan lost the popular vote to Mohammed Buhari.

5. Kyari Mohammed, "The Message and Methods of Boko Haram", *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, ed. Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, African Studies Center [ASC], Leiden: 2014.

6. According to the agreement between the north and south, the Muslim president should remain in office for eight years because the previous president, who was a Christian, was in office for eight years. Following the unexpected death of the Muslim president, however, Goodluck Jonathan took over and became president in the next elections. That was contrary to the accord, so created a reaction among Muslims. See, Nick Tattersall, "Q+A: Nigeria's Presidency and the North-South Question", Reuters, September 18, 2010.

Muslims in the north did not consider that they had a say in the ruling of the country despite the presence of Muslim politicians in the capital. The institutions and the political order imported from the West - both during the period of colonialism and after the country's independence - could not bear the desired results with regard to social welfare and freedom.

In this manner, people lost faith in concepts used by the government, such as democracy, human rights and market economy. For instance, the fourth constitution of Nigeria was prepared by taking the U.S. Constitution as an example; however, Nigerians did not have the opportunity to audit the government through democratic institutions. People failing to audit their rulers began to conceive Islamic ruling as a political order in which every citizen is considered equal and in which mutual control is established. On the other hand, local administrators deprivatized certain concepts, such as Islam and sharia, in order to gain social support and, thus, provided an opportunity for Boko Haram's propaganda.⁷ Boko Haram, in a way, managed the anger of the youth who were subject to corruption, social discrimination and religious exploitation. The youth in Maiduguri and Kano acknowledged Boko Haram's religious and political discourse because of many social, religious and economic reasons which will be discussed throughout this report.

Predominantly populated by Muslims in the northern states of Nigeria, the community had faith in the traditional Sufi interpretation of Islam. Individuals who were educated in various centers of the Islamic world since the 1970s began to spread different interpretations of the religion throughout society. In the region, where

people mostly belonged to Qadiri and Tijan Sufi orders, the Izala movement, "*Jama'at Izalat al Bid'a Wa Iqamat as Sunna*" (Society of Removal of Innovation and Re-establishment of the Sunna), was formed under the leadership of Sheikh Mahmoud Abu Bakr Gumi in the late 1970s.⁸ Izala did not directly take a stand against public/state institutions, as Boko Haram did, but challenged traditional administrators, corruption and "moral breakdown." With its religious and political discourse, Izala blazed the trail for the expansion of a Salafi and radical religious understanding.⁹ In addition, the Muslim public and elites were influenced by the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and "the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN)" led by Sheikh Ibraheem El-Zakzaky began the propaganda of Shiism and the Iranian Revolution in the region. Nigeria witnessed a proliferation of books on the revolutionary ideology of the Islamic Revolution in Iran by the Zakzaky movement.¹⁰ Also, modern thoughts of the Islamic world, particularly the English translation of Seyyid Qutb's renowned jihadi book *Al Ma'alim fi'l-Tariq* (Milestones), were spread among young Muslims in Nigeria and the discussion of such issues on the basis of "Islam" and the "society of *jahiliyya*" (pre-Islamic age of ignorance/unbelief) began.¹¹

The founder of Boko Haram Mohammed Yusuf, who was deeply influenced by all trans-

7. Johannes Harnischfeger, "Boko Haram and Its Muslim Critics: Observations from Yobe State", pp. 36-37.

8. Izala caused a remarkable change in the religious organization in which previously traditional *mullabs* (*mallam*) were determinative. Izala disseminated its narrative to the remotest corners of the Muslim population in Northern Nigeria. Izala's narrative was based on the claim that those who are not involved in the movement are adept in *bid'a* (innovation). See. Michael W. Baca, "Could Nigeria's Mainstream Salafis Hold Key to Countering Radicalization?" IPI Global Observatory, (December 7, 2015).

9. Mohammed, "The Message and Methods of Boko Haram", p. 22.

10. Daniel Brett, "Zakzaky: Face of Iran's Dangerous Plan in Africa", *Al Arabiya English*, October 11, 2016.

11. This information is obtained from local sources who have witnessed the aforementioned times and events.

formations experienced in the region, was born in the state of Yobe and raised in the state of Borno, Nigeria. He did not attend modern schools, but received basic Islamic education in the traditional system and was radicalized along the process. Yusuf was born in the village of Girgir in 1970. After his father's death, Yusuf moved to Maiduguri with his uncle and was raised there. He was fluent in the local languages of Hausa and Kanuri, and learned English from people who attended schools of the modern education system, and Arabic from those he met in traditional schools.

Boko Haram means “Western education is forbidden by Islam” in the language of Hausa spoken in the Boko Haram-controlled region.

Reportedly, Yusuf's father moved from Niger to Nigeria to receive Islamic education and settled in the city of Gashua, in Yobe. But he contravened with the Sultan of Gashua, Sarki Abu Bakr, as the latter was trying to spread Western education. Yusuf's father claimed that Western education is forbidden by Islam and preached against the sultan of Gashua.

For this reason, he had to move to the village of Girgir, where Yusuf was born. It is also noted that Yusuf's father participated in the Maitatsine, the radical movement of the period,¹² and

12. In the analyses written in the early days of Boko Haram, Yusuf's father was associated with Maitatsine. We do not agree with those analyses; as an example, see N. D. Danjibo, “Islamic Fundamentalism and Sectarian Violence: The ‘Maitatsine’ and ‘Boko Haram’ Crises in Northern Nigeria”, Peace and Conflict Studies Programme, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, (2009).

was killed in a clash with security forces. Yusuf received traditional education in a *madrrasah*, a system of education that provides young Muslims with a religious foundation in Qur'anic recitation and Islamic values. In the mid-1990s, he was affiliated with Izala and was trained by one of the prominent names in Izala, Sheikh Jafar Mahmoud Adam. He was assigned by Adam to teach *tafsir* (exegesis) at the Indimi Mosque, one of the largest mosques of the Izala movement in Maiduguri. A gifted demagogue, Yusuf was allegedly weak in theology and was always defeated in the religious debates he engaged in with Izala leaders. He was eventually eschewed from expressing his own ideas in public.¹³

Boko Haram came into existence in an environment where different inclinations stood out in regards to the interpretation of Islam in the region. However, there are different views in literature regarding the timing of its emergence. According to the information given by the Directorate of Nigerian Defense Information, Boko Haram was founded in 1995 by Abu Bakr Lawan under the original name *Ahlulsunna wal'jama'ah hijra*. Later, the organization changed its name to Nigerian Taliban, *Yusufiyyah* and eventually to Boko Haram.¹⁴

It is stated that the nucleus of Boko Haram manifested itself when a group of young men, naming themselves “Nigerian Taliban,” withdrew from the urban landscape of Maiduguri to a region under the Yunusari local authority in Yobe State, in northwest Nigeria. The group

13. “Wa'azin Sheikh Ja'afar a Kan Yan Boko Haram”, YouTube, November 22, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuCWmOajiH8&spfreload=10>, (Access date: January 3, 2016).

14. Freedom C. Onuoha, “The Islamist Challenge: Nigeria's Boko Haram Crisis Explained”, *African Security Review*, Issue: 19, (2010), pp. 54-67.

settling in a forested area (Kanama), chosen in particular for its remoteness and defensibility, attacked local government installations in Yobe in December 2003.¹⁵

Yusuf's link with the Kanama riot is disputable;¹⁶ allegedly, however, the remainder of those who survived the riot after its suppression by the Nigerian state joined Yusuf. Even more so, Mohammed Ali, one of the leaders of the Kanama riot, is said to have been in part responsible for initiating Yusuf into jihadist ideology.¹⁷ Yusuf worried about being linked with the Kanama operation and fled to Saudi Arabia during this insurgency.¹⁸ Upon his return, he continued to spread his views and gained followers among the youth. As he turned into an influential opinion leader, some local politicians built close relationship with Yusuf. The Governor of Borno State Ali Madu Sharif strengthened his ties with Yusuf during the local elections in 2007 and allegedly he even provided financial assistance to Yusuf. It is also claimed that many politicians in the north supported Yusuf in order to benefit from his influence.¹⁹ Yusuf's influence and his relations with politicians and bureaucrats in the region precipitated

the growth of the *Yusufiyya* movement which was to transform into Boko Haram in the days to come.²⁰

In this regard, Boko Haram's formation stages may be verbalized as follows: impressed by the Salafi ideas of the Izala movement, which surfaced in the north of Nigeria in the late 1970s, Yusuf participated in this group, but along the way adopted extremist views, had contact with several groups, such as the Nigerian Taliban, or adopted similar narratives. His discourse, in time, grabbed the attention of certain young people and a school of thought called "Yusufiyya" was formed, leading to the ideological discourse of this school (explained in detail in the second part) being voiced. Izala leaders were disturbed by Yusuf's views and Izala sheikhs tried to change his mind.²¹ As of 2008, however, Yusuf's followers were engaged in a dispute over the ownership of *masjids* (places of worship) with Izala sheikhs while Yusuf firmly held on to his convictions. Many of his followers were thrown out of Izala mosques as a result of a complete break with the Izala movement.

After this clear break, the organization named itself "Boko Haram" and began to form independently. Nigerian security forces held operations where excessive force was used against the leadership of the group in 2009 - they killed 700 people, Yusuf being among them. Nonethe-

15. Cook, "Boko Haram: A Prognosis."

16. "Boko Haram et le Terrorisme Islamiste au Nigeria: Insurrection Religieuse, Contestation Politique ou Protestation Sociale?" Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, (Access date: September 21, 2016).

17. Mohammed, "The Message and Methods of Boko Haram", p. 13.

18. According to information submitted by Sheikh Jafar Mahmoud Adam, the two met when Yusuf was in Saudi Arabia in 2005, and when he asked Yusuf whether he had anything to do with the Kanama insurgency, Yusuf assured him that he was not a party to the incident. Sheikh Jafar advised Yusuf to abandon his radical views and Yusuf, agreeing on the baselessness of his ideas, relinquished them. Later, however, Yusuf reverted to his original views and insisted on voicing his radical convictions. See "Wa'azin Sheikh Ja'afar a Kan Yan Boko Haram."

19. Priscilla Sadatchy, "Boko Haram", Groupe de Recherche et d'Information Sur la Paix et la Sécurité GRIP, (October 2011).

20. Another reason for the killing of Yusuf in 2009 was allegedly to cover up the dirty relations between Yusuf and local politicians and bureaucrats. See, Rayanesalgo Anatole France Pitroipa, "Le Nigéria à L'épreuve du Terrorisme: Une Analyse des Racines Sociohistoriques et Politiques de la Violence Revendiquée par Boko Haram", (MA Thesis, Université Laval, Quebec: 2015), pp. 142-143.

21. During a round table discussion, Izala sheikhs shared information with the public about their relations with Yusuf and their efforts to convince him to relinquish his views. See "Karshen Alewa Shaikh Albani Zaria", YouTube, August 8, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umMkKASzJLM&t=27s>, (Access date: September 22, 2016).

less, Boko Haram picked up quickly and managed the release of hundreds of inmates – particularly its own members – in a prison riot organized in 2010. Following the operations, Boko Haram members reportedly contacted global jihadist groups in the coastal region and received training in the area. Thereafter, the acts of the group showed similarities to those of global jihadist organizations.²²

THE IDEOLOGY OF BOKO HARAM

The foundational religious and political narrative of the group is constructed on the basis of Salafism's interpretation of "Sharia" and "Jihad." Their fundamental points are the following,

1. The concept of *taghut* in which secularism, democracy and political parties are irreligious and impious.
2. Animosity towards Western education and Westernization.
3. Working for un-Islamic governments is *haram*, or forbidden by religion.
4. The accusation of their being *Khawarij/ Kharijite* is rejected. The term *al-Khariji* was used as an exonym for the group by their opponents who had revolted against the authority of the Caliph Ali by not recognizing him as the caliph after he had agreed to arbitration with his rival Muawiyah.²³

Yusuf emphasized that the religious movement he conceptualized under the name of "dawah" (invitation to Islam, or proselytization)

22. Lauren Ploch Blanchard, "Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Question", Congressional Research Service, (March 2016).

23. Mohammed, "The Message and Methods of Boko Haram", p. 15

would pay a price, so his followers should be prepared. To this end, Yusuf tried to motivate his followers in the following way:

In this "dawah," we agree that we are going to suffer like the Sahaba (Companions) of the Prophet Mohammed. These are trials we are waiting for. These are the hurdles we want to cross. Anyone who dies in the process goes to Paradise. This is our "dawah".²⁴

The narrative of Boko Haram is based on the demand for the practice of Sharia. Although the sharia of Islam was enforced in the Muslim-dominated northern states of Nigeria after the military junta that ended in 1999, Yusuf's demand for sharia has a different connotation.

Yusuf's main argument is based on the claim that the sharia of Islam, or Islamic Law, cannot be executed in a constitutional order written in a secular state or by individuals in the secular state. The Nigerian Constitution was written as a result of a military directive in 1999 which raised doubts about its characteristics. In addition, the enactment of the sharia in the northern states of Nigeria placed Muslims under heavier responsibilities than Christians.²⁵ Furthermore, the implementation of Islamic sharia by non-transparent local administrations resulted in serious mistakes. On account of such and similar issues, Muslim elites in Nigeria began to discuss the legal system of the central government and the feasibility of the Islamic

24. "Guzurin Mujaahidai.3gp", YouTube, October 28, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWCNdqwGU-M&t=864s>, (Access date: October 11, 2016).

25. In states substantially populated by Christians, such as Kaduna, Christians reacted against the implementation of Islamic sharia and held well-attended demonstrations. See Daniel Egiegba Agbiboa, "No Retreat No Surrender: Understanding the Religious Terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria", *African Study Monographs*, Vol: 34, Issue: 2, (2013), pp. 65-84.

sharia in the region.²⁶ As part of such discussions, Yusuf claimed that the current implementation of sharia was inadequate and argued that the “real sharia” would become possible only with the establishment of an Islamic state, which requires *jihad*.²⁷

Yusuf and the organization leaders following his path asserted the necessity of *jihad* for the “sharia of Islam.” In his sermon entitled “Come on let’s go for *jihad*,” Yusuf referring to Quranic verses and the *fatwas* (rulings) of the Damascene scholar Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah propounded that *jihad* was *fardh* (obligation) for Muslims to dominate “the religion of Allah,” and since Muslims neglected their obligation, *kufir* and *tughyan* (exceeding iniquity) have become prevalent and, as a result, Jews and Christians rule Muslims.

According to Yusuf, Muslims in Palestine, the Philippines, Algeria, Afghanistan and Iraq suffer oppression because of their laziness and worldliness. Muslims in Nigeria were tormented as well, he claimed, and administrators did not follow the orders of Allah; instead they were *tyrant/fasiq* (someone who violates Islamic law), *murtad* (apostate) and *kafir* (a person who rejects/disbelieves in Allah and the teachings of Prophet Mohammed). Yusuf proclaimed that Muslims should not remain silent to all these facts, referred to related Quranic verses, and called for *jihad* in his remarks in “Where is *Jihad*, Where is Faith.” In the case that *kafirun* (the plural form of *kafir*) invade the settlements of Muslims, *jihad* is obligatory, claimed Yusuf,

giving references to related Quranic verses and adding that every Muslim should respond to the call for *jihad*. “Islam needs your properties and your blood,” said Yusuf stressing that *jihad* for Allah is more beneficial than the world.²⁸ On the one hand, Yusuf constructed *jihad* - the *jihad* of his own interpretation - as the implementation of Islamic Law in the northern states of Nigeria and, on the other, represented it as an action for the “suppressed Muslims” in the Islamic world.

In Yusuf’s definition, *taghut* means any kind of legislative, executive and judicial act based on secular laws rather than Islamic Law and *jihad* is obligatory against *taghut*. For this reason, obedience to the Nigerian Federal Constitution and its institutions is *kufir* (denial of the truth in Islam). On the subject, Yusuf stated, “Those who formulate such laws in their parliaments, and prosecutors and those who believe or follow these laws have made themselves partners to Allah (are in *shirk* [apostasy] with Allah).” In the frame of such convictions, Yusuf also characterizes issues such as the multiparty system, democracy or secularism as *kufir*.²⁹

According to Yusuf, Western education is *haram* for it causes the estrangement of Muslims from their own values and brings them under the service of the *taghut* state.

These claims constitute the core concept of the discourse that gives its name to the group. However, this subject was not introduced in Nigeria by Yusuf. The claim of Western education being forbidden by Islam has been discussed for a long time among Nigerian Muslims. For in-

26. Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos, “Boko Haram and Politics: From Insurgency to Terrorism”, *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, ed. Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, (African Studies Center [ASC], Leiden: 2014), pp. 146-47.

27. Abimbola Adesoji, “The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria”, *Africa Spectrum*, Vol.: 45, Issue: 2, (2010), pp. 95-108.

28. Muhammed Yusuf Maiduiri, *Mecmuatu Huteb li-l-Imam Ebu Yusuf*, (Müessetü'l-Urveti'l-Vuska), pp. 14-22.

29. “Muhammad Nur and Mallam Muhammad Yusuf Nigeria”, YouTube, October 28, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUot3-BrT0FE&t=3322s>, (Access date: October 22, 2016).

stance, the former leader of the Nigerian Muslims (*Sariki Muslimi*) Sultan Ibrahim Desuki – although he had studied at Oxford and his son at Harvard – said, “Western education undermines our culture.”³⁰

The foundational religious and political narrative of the group is constructed on the basis of Salafism’s interpretation of “Sharia” and “Jihad.”

Nonetheless, in the context of the claim that Western education is forbidden by Islam, Yusuf is the one who totally rejected the central education institutions of Nigeria, and pronounced the political system containing such education institutions as *kafir*. In a discussion with Malan Isa Ali Bauchi, Yusuf claimed the following:

If medicine, agriculture, electro-mechanical departments do not clash with the teachings of the religion, or do not include anything against the religion, then they are not haram. Our objection is not to the type of education but to the method. There is a problem at this point. For this reason, the education system of Nigeria is haram. Being a civil servant is also haram. There are two types of civil servants who are directly involved in the law, such as police and judiciary (they directly take you to kufr) and there are those who work at a radio station, which is not directly related to the law.³¹

In the debate referring to a *fatwa* issued by the Saudi Arabia Fatwa Council, Yusuf claimed

that foreign schools represent Western values, deviate from the moral understanding of Islam, which is based on *taqwa*, and do not fit the narrative and history of Islam. Yusuf touched upon the period of colonialism, asserting that Westerners try to confuse Muslims and intend to destroy the morals and culture of Muslims.

He stressed that foreign schools and colleges were instruments of a systematic war waged against Muslims and that it is also *haram* for Muslims to open schools for foreigners or attend foreign schools.³² In this context, Yusuf believed that it is *haram* to be educated in the modern education institutions of Nigeria and Muslims attending this education system become irreligious.

Izala leaders described the aforementioned views of Yusuf as “Kharijism,” but Yusuf consistently rejected such claims. In the preface to the book entitled *Hadhibi Aqidatuna wa Minhaju Da’awatuna* (This is Our Belief and Method of Call), he repudiated the charges of being a Khawarij:

I saw some people talking about us and our call, attempting to relate us to some beliefs, such as al-Khawarij, Shiite, or some secret groups. We are together with Ahl al-Sunnah wa’ al-Jamaa (mainstream Islam) in the principles of belief, and method of worship and conduct and Sharia.³³

Boko Haram members, Yusuf in particular, accused Izala of corruption and engagement with politicians. Although Izala has criticized state institutions in Nigeria, there were cases of

30. Harnischfeger, “Boko Haram and Its Muslim Critics”, p. 53.

31. “Muqabala Maln Isaali Bauchi da Maln Muhmmadyusfmalidugurl Akankaratunboko Haram”, YouTube, January 21, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-nhmj3faHc>, (Access date: January 3, 2016).

32. Muqabala MalnIsaalibauchilda Maln Muhmmedyusuf Maldugurl AkankaratunBoko Haram 4”, YouTube, January 22, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_UVaYu3dIA, (Access date: January 3, 2016).

33. “Mallam Muhammad Yusuf Nigeria Film.3gp”, YouTube, October 28, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xthVNq9OKD0>, (Access date: January 28, 2017).

relations of mutual interest between Izala and local bureaucrats and politicians, and Boko Haram frequently brought this fact to the fore.

As a result of close ties between the government of Yobe State and Izala, members of the Izala movement were appointed as imams to mosques in Yobe and some local administrators donated public funds to these imams for the building of Izala mosques. This caused Boko Haram members to criticize Izala.

Another reason for the close ties of Izala with local politicians and bureaucrats is that Izala had a lot of support among intellectuals, university students, and civil servants.³⁴ The leader of the group after Yusuf, Abu Bakr Shekau, said the following about Izala:

When we say innovators, don't think of anyone else but Izala. They are the scholars of democracy, imams of [George W.] Bush and they are munafiqun (hypocrites, who are secretly unsympathetic to the cause of Muslims).³⁵

THE ATTACKS OF BOKO HARAM

Beside Yusuf's abovementioned jihadist narrative, the stern intervention of the Nigerian security forces forged the metamorphosis of Boko Haram from a religious group into a regional terrorist organization. The first operation targeting Yusuf's followers is the dispute with Izala over the ownership of mosques, and the arrest of 67 Boko Haram members, including the group's second leader Shekau, who attempted to reclaim a masjid from Izala in Monguno. As

a result of this operation, apparently at the instigation of Izala members, Yusuf's supporters were locked up at the Maiduguri prison by state authorities. Yusuf vowed to regain the disputed mosque.³⁶

In the following period, joint military operations, "Operation Flush II," against Boko Haram and practices such as the mandatory use of crash helmets by motorcycle riders in order to prevent Yusuf's followers from attending religious chat sessions for *dawah* caused Boko Haram to further radicalize.

In June of 2009 in particular, security forces shot and wounded 17 Boko Haram members during the burial of a *Yusufiyya* member at a Maiduguri cemetery. The group saw this action as a declaration of war.³⁷ Arrests of Boko Haram members and the pressure on the group continued. The broad operations by the Nigerian security forces in July 2009, the killing of Boko Haram members and the extrajudicial killing of its leadership, starting with Yusuf, set a turning point and Boko Haram started armed acts of terror.

Its members who survived the security operations launched armed attacks targeting state officials in the region. Some of them resumed *dawah* in border regions outside the state's control and some others came in contact with splinters of global jihadists in the coastal area.³⁸ In this manner, the group, on the one hand, increased its number of followers and, on the other, found logistic support for armed actions.

36. Mohammed, "The Message and Methods of Boko Haram", p. 24.

37. Yusuf during a sermon on the subject characterized this incident as part of a campaign targeting all Muslims and said this was unacceptable and that *jihad* was necessary for the future of Muslims. See Maiduiri, Mecmuatu Huteb li-'l-Imam Ebu Yusuf, p. 16.

38. Blanchard, "Nigeria's Boko Haram", p. 3.

34. Harnischfeger, "Boko Haram and Its Muslim Critics", pp. 47-48.

35. "Bayani Akan Tauhedi", YouTube, October 28, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxW9Pl1rZs8>, (Access date: March 15, 2017).

Security forces compelled traditional administrators not to conceal Boko Haram militants in their domain and to hand over those who were identified to security agencies. Due to the lack of confidentiality within the Nigerian security and intelligence units and Boko Haram's noteworthy intelligence network, the group identified the rulers and civil servants who gave information about them to security units and began to assassinate them.

In addition, Boko Haram conducted assassinations of prison officials, who they accused of torturing their group's members in detention, administrators of the ruling party in Borno, and security officials.³⁹ The success recorded in these attacks and the failure of security officials to maintain security in the region not only emboldened Boko Haram members but also paved the way for passive sympathizers to undertake active roles in the group. In the process, the organization began to kill all its opponents in the region and the state failed to guarantee the security of citizens.⁴⁰

The military Joint Task Force (JTF) functioned like an occupation army. The JTF held operations without distinguishing Boko Haram militants from civilians and resorted to brute force in the region. As a result of the stern intervention of the security units, people accepted Boko Haram because they were exercising care not to harm civilians. Boko Haram's modus operandi has changed since mid-2010 as a result of the intensification of the operations of the security forces. In addition to the targets mentioned above, the organization has chosen new targets among which were media houses, journalists, schools, and telecom-

39. Pitroipa, "Le Nigéria à L'épreuve du Terrorisme", pp. 75-80.

40. Sadatchy, "Boko Haram."

munication base stations. Meanwhile, they announced that they were attacking schools in retaliation for the attacks by security forces. Since security units targeted Islamic schools, Boko Haram attacked schools, but only at night because they did not want to kill innocent civilians.⁴¹ During this process, the organization seemed to use different tactics, such as assassinations, attacks with improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks, and changed the strategy of operation according to the time and place of the attack.⁴²

Since the end of 2010, Boko Haram expanded attacks in the south, including the capital Abuja, and used terrorist techniques and methods such as bomb attacks, clashes with security forces and suicide attacks. During the inauguration ceremony of the newly elected President of Nigeria Goodluck Jonathan in 2011, the group committed multiple bomb attacks in Abuja and other cities.

Boko Haram targeted the United Nations building in Abuja in August 2011 and from then onwards, began to attack foreign missions. The group targeted churches, killing many people, in December 2011. The organization increased attacks against churches in 2012, which led to comments that Boko Haram is a terrorist organization committing acts of violence against Christians.⁴³ However, the list of attacks both in 2012 and 2013 discloses that the group targeted mosques as well and the majority of its attacks concentrated on Muslim-populated

41. Mohammed, "The Message and Methods of Boko Haram", p. 28.

42. Freedom Onuoha, "Boko Haram and the Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat in Nigeria", *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, ed. Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, (African Studies Center [ASC], Leiden: 2014), pp. 172-173.

43. "Nigeria: Les Crimes de Masse de Boko Haram", FIDH, (October 2014), pp. 8-10.

areas.⁴⁴ For instance, Boko Haram killed 56 civilians in a mosque attack in Maiduguri in August 2013.⁴⁵

The most sensational attack that placed Boko Haram on the world stage was the abduction of 276 female students from a school in the city of Chibok, Borno, in April 2014. People in different parts of the world protested such an act of violence including the then U.S. President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle Obama, who launched a social media campaign entitled “Bring Back Our Girls.”⁴⁶ In 2014 and 2015, Boko Haram organized armed attacks, bomb and suicide attacks targeting mosques, churches, banks, schools, marketplaces, houses, bus stations, military bases, and police stations.

With the increase of attacks in 2015-2016, in particular, the security operations in Nigeria and the regional countries increased as well and Boko Haram began to weaken. In January 2015, 11 people were killed and 11 more were wounded when Boko Haram militants attacked a bus in the city of Waza, north of Cameroon and near the Nigerian border.⁴⁷ The number of Boko Haram attacks decreased in the second half of 2015, but began to escalate in early 2016. Since the Nigerian security agencies intensified operations, Boko Haram concentrated on suicide and bomb attacks; female suicide bombers, among

others, appear to have substantially increased. In November 2016, Nigerian security units announced the purge of Boko Haram militants in Sambisa Forest, which was their last resort. Suicide attacks by Boko Haram terrorists, however, continued.

Since the beginning of 2017, Boko Haram members have committed suicide attacks in various regions of Nigeria. Considering the suicide attack by two young women at the Nigeria University in Maiduguri in January⁴⁸ and the group leader Shekau’s statement on the attack, Boko Haram seems to continue conducting acts of terror. In a video footage released in February 2017, Shekau claimed responsibility for all the suicide attacks they had committed. Furthermore, the fact that the message was delivered in Hausa, Kanuri, Fulani and French indicates that Boko Haram is trying to prove that it is a regional terrorist organization.

Another point in the video worthy of attention is that some of the Boko Haram members speaking use the term “We are the men of Shekau.” In this respect, Shekau’s position in the organization seems to have weakened and it becomes clear that, as the group experiences breakaways, Shekau is trying to consolidate his leadership. In another message released a few weeks ago, Shekau claimed that he killed one of the commanders of the group for plotting against him;⁴⁹ an indication that Boko Haram also faces a leadership problem as its image has been quite tarnished in the region.

44. For a table offering information on the regions Boko Haram intensified attacks until 2015, see “Mapping Every Boko Haram Attack”, *Los Angeles Times*, January 14, 2015.

45. “Over 40 People Killed While Praying in Nigeria Mosque-Security Forces”, *RT*, August 12, 2013.

46. For the attacks by the group from 2009 to 2014, see, Adam Adem Anyebe, “An Overview of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria”, *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol.: 1, Issue: 2, (2016), pp. 55-61

47. “Boko Haram Attack on Bus in Cameroon Kills at Least 11”, *CNN*, January 3, 2015.

48. Ludovica Iaccino, “It’s My People’ Boko Haram Faction Leader Claims Responsibility for Nigeria University Bomb”, *IBT*, January 17, 2017.

49. “Le Chef de Boko Haram Tue Son Commandant”, *24heures*, February 25, 2017.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF BOKO HARAM

The organization's top leadership during the Mohammed Yusuf period consisted of *Amiru'l-Amm* and his two aides entitled *Naibu Amiri'l-Amm*. It was designed from top to bottom in hierarchical order. The *Shura* Council and the Executive Council followed them as each state assigned one emir with the responsibility for all the organization's work.

Boko Haram's ideological discourse and tactics show similarities to those of regional and global jihadist organizations.

After Yusuf was killed, his aide Shekau took the lead and adopted Yusuf's organization scheme. Since the command chain remains weak, the group's cells in different states act quite independently. Boko Haram cells, or units, intertwine in action and take orders from a commander. Each unit sends one representative to the *Shura* Council, Boko Haram's highest decision-making mechanism. The organization leader is also the head of the *Shura* Council.⁵⁰

Unemployed and disgruntled young people, *madrasah* students, who are called *almajirai* (singular: *almajiri*) or the children of the poor join Boko Haram. The system of religious education provided in boarding schools, where parents in Nigeria and bordering Muslim countries send their children, is named *almajiri*. Report-

50. Onuoha, "Boko Haram and the Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat in Nigeria."

edly, Boko Haram often takes advantage of such schools as part of its recruitment activities. Although a great many Boko Haram members are from Northern Nigeria, there are others from different regions of Nigeria and from Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Sudan.

Before his death, Yusuf revealed that he collected donations from disciples of the group and ran some farms to earn money. After his death, however, Boko Haram's financial sources have become more complicated. The group is stated to have received money from global terrorist organizations and is the regional representative of global terror. In the Western media, news stories, based on certain security experts, described Boko Haram as a group that "bears the hallmarks of Al Qaeda and is financed by Al Qaeda."⁵¹

The mastermind of a bomb attack against a church in Madalla, in Niger State, in early 2011, Kabiru Abu Bakr Dikko, code named "Kabiri Sokoto," stated that an Islamic group in Algeria provided him financial support and that financial support from outside caused splits in Boko Haram.⁵² This aside, the nature of Boko Haram's financial and logistic relations with regional and global terrorist organizations still begs elucidation. In addition, the group, apparently, tries to finance itself by committing crimes, such as bank robberies. Some group members who were caught after bank robberies confessed during their interrogations that they were working for Boko Haram.⁵³ The extent of the financial income Boko Haram has earned from bank robberies, kidnappings and usurpations needs to be discussed. For

51. "Islamist Group with Possible Qaeda Links Upends Nigeria", *The New York Times*, August 17, 2011.

52. "Nigeria: Kabir Sokoto Trial-Sharing of Funds Split Boko Haram", *All Africa*, May 10, 2013.

53. "Nigeria: Boko Haram, C'est Qui? C'est Qui?" *TV5 Monde*, February 22, 2014.

this reason, the organization's financial sources have not yet been completely clarified.

Breakaway Factions of the Organization: Ansaru

Boko Haram's focus on Muslim targets caused discussions within the organization and a dissident group, saying that the real enemies of Islam were essentially Westerners, left the organization and founded *Ansaru*.⁵⁴ Although at the beginning Boko Haram definitely disavowed kidnapping and ransom, since mid-2013 both Nigerians and foreigners have been kidnapped by the group.⁵⁵ However, there is contradictory information on whether Boko Haram has committed such crimes, as the crimes of kidnapping and killing foreigners have increased. For instance, the organization's spokesperson Abu Qaqa denied their involvement in the kidnapping and murder of two European citizens in March 2012.⁵⁶ This was considered an act of breakaways within the group and proof of the existence of cells which were acting independently.

Differing approaches among local and non-local group members regarding the implementation of operation tactics caused a splinter group to form within Boko Haram. The group *Jama'atul Ansaru Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan* (Vanguard for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa) under the leadership of Abu Bakr Adam Kamber was formed on February 26, 2016. *Ansaru* has its nucleus in the northwest, while the northeast is the epicenter of the Boko Haram insurgency. Although *Ansaru* shows similarities with Boko Haram in terms of ideology, there are differ-

ences between the two in terms of their tactics. Unlike Boko Haram, *Ansaru* commits itself to not harming innocent Muslim civilians except in cases of self-defense. Contrary to Boko Haram, *Ansaru* on principle condemns the killing of innocent security operatives. As Boko Haram makes more local claims, *Ansaru* proclaimed itself the defender of Muslims all over West Africa. The organization's main strategy is the targeting of foreigners.⁵⁷

Boko Haram and Global Jihad

Boko Haram's ideological discourse and tactics show similarities to those of regional and global jihadist organizations. Until its allegiance to DAESH, Boko Haram not only praised the Taliban and Al Qaeda but also established close ties with Al Qaeda-linked groups. Yusuf, the founder of the organization, exalted Afghan *jihad*. Its present leader Shekau has praised Taliban leader Mullah Omar and Al Qaeda leader Ayman Al Zawahiri, and positioned himself close to Al Qaeda.⁵⁸ It has been speculated that Mamman Nour, who attacked the United Nations Office in Nigeria in August 2011, fled to Somalia after the 2009 incidents. Reportedly, Nour was trained in Al Shabab camps and had close ties with Al Qaeda. During the French intervention in Northern Mali, hundreds of Boko Haram members had evidently joined terrorist organizations in Mali, as well as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), *Jamā'at at-tawhīd wal-jihād fi gharb 'afriqiyā* (Movement of Oneness and Jihad in West Africa, or MUJAO) and *Ansaru'd-din* to fight against the French. An expert on the subject, Jacob Zenn, insists that Boko Haram is part of the global terror network and has fiercely

54. Montclos, "Boko Haram and Politics", p. 140.

55. Nigeria: Les Crimes de Masse de Boko Haram", p. 16.

56. "Boko Haram Denies Kidnapping and Killing European Citizens Involved in Botched Rescue", *Sahara Reporters*, March 9, 2012.

57. Mohammed, "The Message and Methods of Boko Haram", p. 30.

58. Sadatchy, "Boko Haram."

criticized that fact that Boko Haram was not included on the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) list until 2013.⁵⁹

Boko Haram's propaganda methods also show similarities to those of regional and global terrorist organizations. Although in video footages the group leader Shekau proclaims his message to regional leaders, he speaks in the local languages, Arabic and English. With this tactic, Boko Haram tries to give the impression that they are a global terrorist organization like Al Qaeda. Until the Tweeter account "@Urwata Wutqa" was shut down, the group posted tweets predominantly in Arabic but also in English and French.⁶⁰

When it started to weaken in 2015, Boko Haram planned to gain back power by declaring allegiance to DAESH. In fact, the group leader Shekau issued a statement extolling DAESH leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi on March 7, 2015. In turn, DAESH spokesperson expressed their content regarding Shekau's "obedience."⁶¹ In March 2015, in the issue of *Dabiq*, one of DAESH's official magazines, DAESH applauded Boko Haram's allegiance. The magazine stated that although the two organizations' domains are far from each other in geographical terms, the improving relations after the group complied with DAESH are evident in Boko Haram's videos. Soon after Boko Haram's declaration of obedience to DAESH, their propaganda videos seemed to have substantially improved.⁶²

59. For the determinations on the organization's relations with international terrorist organizations, see Jacop Zenn, "Exposing and Defeating Boko Haram: Why the West Must Unite to Help Nigeria Defeat Terrorism", *The Bow Group*, June 2014.

60. "Un Compte Twitter Affilié à Boko Haram Suspendu", *Anadolu Ajansi*, February 24, 2015.

61. "L'EI Accepte L'allégeance de Boko Haram", *BBC Afrique*, March 13, 2015.

62. Rukmini Callimachi, "In Newly Sophisticated Boko Haram Videos, Hints of Islamic State Ties", *The New York Times*, February 20, 2015.

FIGHT AGAINST BOKO HARAM AND THE FUTURE OF TERROR

At first, the State of Nigeria did not consider Boko Haram a serious threat since from 2002 to early 2009, the militants concentrated only on *dawah* (invitation to Islam). However, the Nigerian government prepared a strategic plan against Boko Haram after 2011. From then onwards, the organization was treated as a problem under the jurisprudence of local administrators in the northern states of Nigeria. As a result, the state of Nigeria's first intervention was to use brute force against Boko Haram rather than to actualize a strategic action plan.

Since the group members toughened their assaults following the extrajudicial murders of Boko Haram leaders, including Yusuf, in 2009, the Nigerian government has paid closer attention to this terrorist organization. The government of Nigeria passed the Terrorism Preventive Act (TPA) in June 2011, increased military spending, and developed new strategies.⁶³

In the 2015 presidential elections, one of the campaign lines emphasized by the presidential candidate Mohammed Buhari was the fight against Boko Haram. To this end, Buhari adopted new strategies after he won the elections. He took office in May of 2015 and gave the armed forces a deadline of the end of December 2015 to complete the conventional campaign against Boko Haram. Upon taking office in May, President Buhari ordered the military command to relocate to the newly created Maiduguri Command and Control Center in Borno State. Joint operations held with the Multinational Joint Task

63. Colonel Solomon Effiong Udounwa, "Boko Haram: Developing New Strategies to Combat Terrorism in Nigeria", *United States Army War College*, (2013), pp. 8-10.

Force (MNJTF) were accelerated. Compared to the past, the Nigerian military was provided more logistic and equipment support and critical changes were made in the top command line. Boko Haram, losing ground since 2015, pledged allegiance to DAESH and then divided within.

After the security forces took over Sambisa Forest, the last piece of Boko Haram territory, in late 2016, most of the group's militants took off. In April 2016, security forces arrested the leader of *Ansara*, a Boko Haram splinter, Khalid Barnawi in a hideaway.⁶⁴ Considerably losing power and territory, the group resulted to suicide attacks (particularly by female militants) in late 2016.

In addition, the government of Nigeria took a number of steps to increase counter-Boko Haram efforts in 2015. The government encouraged the formation of "auto-defense" groups in order to gain the people's help in the fight in Borno State where the group intensified their acts of terror. The auto-defense groups, consisting of local youth, played a critical role in the prevention of many attacks by the terrorist group. Furthermore, regional institutions, such as the inter-governmental action group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) have been formed to prevent financing of terror in the effort to fight against terror in Nigeria.

Nigeria, as one of the strongest countries in West Africa, faces plenty of problems in the fight against terror. The lack of coordination and cooperation between Nigerian security agencies, the lack of biometric collection systems, and the lack of requisite databases are primary among these problems and deter policies. For instance, the bombardment of a refugee camp by the Nige-

rian Air Force inadvertently stemmed from such a weakness.⁶⁵ Again, the state's hand is weakened by corruption; misallocation of resources; the slow pace of the judicial system, including lack of timely arraignment of suspected terrorist detainees; and lack of sufficient training for prosecutors and judges to understand and carry out the Terrorism (Prevention) Act of 2011 (as amended).

Nigeria's fight against Boko Haram has been negatively affected by the security forces' brutal treatment of civilians, the lack of trust between the people and the security services, and the lack of economic opportunities in Muslim-dominated regions.⁶⁶ Nigeria being the largest economy in Africa also has the strongest military in the region. Still, the country could not fight against this organization. Nigeria managed to debilitate Boko Haram by joint operations only after a military alliance with the neighboring countries.

Cameroon

Along the way, Boko Haram expanded its sphere of action to Nigeria's next-door neighbor, Cameroon, by committing attacks in the northern parts of the country. It is forecast that the group will maintain its presence in Cameroon. Boko Haram organized its first attack in Cameroon against the Cameroonian troops near the northern town of Fotokol in March 2014.⁶⁷ Afterwards, the group intensified attacks on the Nigeria-Cameroon border, targeted Cameroon, formed groups of natives in Cameroon and gained strength in the region. Following the operations led by the Ni-

64. "Nigeria: Khalid al-Barnawi le Leader du Groupe Islamiste Ansaru Inculpé", *RFI*, March 14, 2017.

65. "Nigeria: L'armée de l'air Bombarde un Camp de Déplacés Par Erreur et Fait au Moins 70 Morts", *Jeune Afrique*, January 18, 2017.

66. "U.S. Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism: Country Reports on Terrorism 2015", U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov>, (Access date: January 12, 2017).

67. "Principales Batailles entre Boko Haram et L'armée Camerounaise", *RFI*, March 2, 2014.

gerian security units in late 2016, Boko Haram was driven out of its last stronghold, the Sambisa Forest.

Despite the official statements issued by Nigeria that Boko Haram was eradicated, the organization proved otherwise and released video footages in March 2017. The group leader Shekau in his statement clearly targeted Cameroon. Boko Haram militants in the footage speak French and Fulani, and are, thus, considered to be the citizens of Cameroon.⁶⁸ It may be said that Boko Haram hides in the Nigeria-Cameroon border area.

The state of Nigeria has passed counterterrorism laws, increased military spending and developed new strategies in the scope of the fight against Boko Haram.

Cameroon fought actively against Boko Haram since being targeted in 2014. In this direction, the member states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), i.e. Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad, formed the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) with Benin on October 7, 2014. Joint operations with the participation of about 10,000 troops from the aforementioned countries enervated Boko Haram.⁶⁹

Cameroon's methods for fighting Boko Haram are to send troops to the region where Boko Haram remains active and to exercise strict controls on land and maritime borders with Nigeria. Cameroon also issues biometric passports and

has established a financial intelligence unit to block Boko Haram's cash flow.

However, Cameroon suffers lack of personnel and opportunities and to eliminate such problems the country receives counterterrorism training, and financial and logistic support from the U.S. and France. In this context, Cameroon has become a member to the U.S.-founded Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Pact (TSCTP).⁷⁰

Cameroon also tries to prevent youth from radicalization. In this context, the government of Cameroon has partnered with faith-based organizations such as the Council of Imams and Religious Dignitaries of Cameroon (CIDIMUC). The council's strategy, on the other hand, is to improve the living conditions of *imams*.⁷¹

Chad and Niger

Chad is the center of the French-led counterterrorism operations in Sahel-Sahara which after the Operation of Epervier in 1986 evolved into the Operation of Serval in 2013 and, since 2014, into the Operation of Barkhane. For this reason, Chad remains in the frontline when it comes to the fight against terror in the region. Chad is one of the countries that played the most active role

70. The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) is a multifaceted, multiyear U.S. government program aimed at defeating terrorist organizations by strengthening regional counterterrorism capabilities; enhancing and institutionalizing cooperation among the region's security forces; promoting democratic governance; discrediting terrorist ideology; and reinforcing bilateral military ties with the United States. The overall goals are to enhance the indigenous capacities of governments in the Pan-Sahel region of Africa (Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso and Niger, as well as Nigeria and Senegal) to confront the challenge posed by terrorist organizations in the region. Additionally, TSCTP will facilitate cooperation between the Pan-Sahel countries and Maghreb partners (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia) in combating terrorism. TSCTP is a sustaining program of counterterrorism, democratic governance, and military assistance, and includes a public diplomacy component. See, "Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP)", Global Security.

71. "U.S. Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism."

68. "Boko Haram Leader Shekau Threatens World Leaders", YouTube, March 17, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RJ-KhQQLfhg&t=60s>, (Access date: March 22, 2017).

69. William Assanvo, Jeannine Ella A Abatan ve Wendyam Aristide Sawadogo, "La Force Multinationale de Lutte Contre Boko Haram: Quel Bilan?" *Institut d'Etudes de Sécurité*, Issue: 19, (August 2016).

in the regional joint counterterrorism operations in Northern Mali in 2013. Chad continues to take an active role in the coalition of Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) established against Boko Haram. The government of Chad passed counterterrorism legislation in 2015. The law imposes the death penalty on any person convicted of terrorism. Following the enactment of this law, the government of Chad has tried, convicted, and executed ten members of Boko Haram.⁷²

Also, Niger actively fights against Boko Haram. The group gained control of certain villages in Niger in 2014. Niger has participated in both the MNJTF operations and joint regional operations in Northern Mali – these operations are to continue as a United Nations operation under the name MINUSMA. Niger has suffered attacks by Boko Haram on the border with Nigeria, and by *Ansaruddine*, MUJAO, *Macina Katibas*, *Mourabitoune* and AQMI on the border with Mali. Niger also faces a serious terror threat in the southeast and northwest of the country. France and the U.S. have built military bases in Niger to support the country's fight against terror.⁷³

CONCLUSION

Boko Haram is a terrorist organization nurtured by the cultural, political, social, economic and religious crises in the north of Nigeria. It was formed by a group born out of deep crises in the Islamic world who adopted the jihadist ideology. The founder of Boko Haram, Mohammed Yusuf rather than a religious scholar was an orator and

preacher who effectively used the Salafist-Jihadist ideology. The presence of the Salafi interpretation of Islam since the 1970s in the north of Nigeria gave Yusuf an opportunity to form a social circle of his own. A part of Salafi groups gathered around Yusuf and constituted the nucleus of a structure that was eventually to develop into Boko Haram. This core team of Salafis began to control the anger of economically, socially and politically disenfranchised young men who were annoyed by the traditional religious groups' style of action in the Muslim quarters of Nigeria.

The organization increasingly emphasized the concept of *jihad* in the Salafi discourse and adopted a language of violence. When the violent discourse of Yusuf began to pose a threat to the religious, social and political structure shaped in the frame of the relations among traditional religious formations, local rulings and the central government in Nigeria, Yusuf and his followers faced the brutal intervention of the Nigerian army. In 2009, the army held operations targeting Yusuf and his followers. However, the lack of a counterterrorism strategy in these operations set the ground for Boko Haram to grow stronger (although Yusuf and most of his leadership were killed) and transform Boko Haram into a terrorist organization.

In primordium, Boko Haram remained on the same page with the Taliban and Al Qaeda, but pledged allegiance to DAESH as the latter strengthened. Boko Haram constructed the concepts of sharia, *jihad*, and *taghut* in its discourse similarly to those of Taliban, Al Qaeda and DAESH, and praised the Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders.

Before its allegiance to DAESH, Boko Haram built close ties with other groups adjunct to Al Qaeda. Its militants fought together with Al

72. "U.S. Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism."

73. Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership", U.S. Africa Command, <http://www.africom.mil>, (Access date: March 9, 2017).

Qaeda-linked groups against the military units of France and Mali during the French intervention in Mali. In addition, intelligence on Boko Haram, which is periodically publicly shared, revealed that the Boko Haram militants were trained in Al Shabaab camps in Somalia.

Boko Haram grew stronger by expanding its territory and developing its tactics. At the beginning, the group committed assassinations and armed raids in the state of Borno, but along the process, it adopted more sophisticated methods of attack, such as bomb attacks, bomb-vehicle attacks and suicide attacks. The organization targeted the capital of Nigeria and neighboring countries Cameroon, Niger and Chad, as well. Boko Haram also assaulted foreign missions in Nigeria and the region. U.S. experts, stressing that Boko Haram was an offspring of regional and global terrorist organizations, Al Qaeda in particular, criticized the Washington administration for not including the group in the list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations from 2009 until 2013. U.S. intelligence reports failed to ascertain Boko Haram's organic bond with regional and global terrorist organizations although they associated it with such groups.

Boko Haram has failed in discourse and actions and left behind 20,000 dead bodies in addition to 20 million people, mostly Muslim, in humanitarian crisis. Yusuf and Shekau asserted that they will bring sharia to Nigeria and solve the social, political, economic and religious problems caused by central governments and local rulers. However, during the years in which Boko Haram's presence was felt, the region became more impoverished, the community paid a heavy price, the political establishment remained

in fault, and Islam, for the first time, was equated with terror. The organization failed in its claim to establish an "Islamic State" starting with all northern states of Nigeria and to govern Muslims in Niger, Chad and Cameroon. It has transformed into a small terrorist organization hiding on the Nigeria – Cameroon border area and using young women as suicide bombers.

As of the end of 2016, Boko Haram has substantially weakened as operations by regional countries continue to increase. The group may try to survive by deepening relations with regional and global terrorists. Its failure to organize any acts of terror after being driven out of Sambisa Forest indicates that Boko Haram has lost operational ability. Besides, attempts to kill Shekau inside the organization and Shekau's efforts to prove himself expose the leadership problem in Boko Haram. The group that had caused a serious crisis in the region has reportedly lost prestige among people. For this reason, in the upcoming period, Boko Haram will definitely face serious problems of recruitment. In addition, the counterterrorism efforts of the regional countries and the decision to increase military spending in Nigeria⁷⁴ signal that the fight against Boko Haram will continue in the future. Thus, it may be said that Boko Haram will lose members in substantial numbers and decrease operational capabilities; however, it will survive as a small group for a few more years by deepening its relations with regional and global terrorist organizations.

74. The Chief of Army Staff Lt. General Tukur Buratai announced the Army's 2017 budget as 152.8 billion naira, and said the Nigerian Army would recruit 12,000 men. See "Army to Recruit 12,000 in 2017 - Buratai", *Daily Trust*, February 15, 2017.

The report examines the emergence, organizational structure and attacks of the terrorist organization Boko Haram, along with the counterterrorism efforts of the regional countries. The group made the headlines in April 2014, by abducting 276 girls in the city of Chibok in Borno, a state in northeastern Nigeria.

The first section will discuss the way in which a Salafi invitation movement transformed into a terrorist organization in a region mostly populated by Muslims; the religious structure of this region; its relations with the central government; and the characteristics of the founder of Boko Haram. The second section will examine the factors shaping the group's recruitment ideology and the principles of this ideology. The third section will look into how Boko Haram practices this ideology to mobilize its organizational structure, while the financial sources of this organizational structure will also be examined.

The fourth section will discuss the pattern of action, the objectives and the methods of Boko Haram since its emergence. The counterterrorism methods of the Nigerian state and those of the regional countries together with related problems will be scrutinized in the fifth section.

During the research and writing of this report, the authors accessed records in the local language of Hausa, which is also Boko Haram's propaganda language, related news in the media, and other sources in a variety of languages. To the extent that it was possible, the authors also contacted local experts and foreign journalists working in Nigeria.



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