

Depoliticizing Nigeria's Northeast Operation: The Way to Defeating Boko Haram Insurgency

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Abstract

This policy brief examines Boko Haram from its origin, evolution and activities up to the counter-insurgency efforts of government. Boko Haram is, in this policy brief, being identified as an intractable Islamic terrorist sect with local and external tentacles. The policy brief argues that Nigeria may not be able to completely decimate Boko Haram anytime soon partly due to over-politicization of the situation coupled with the absence of strong political will. It therefore, recommends, among others, the need for government to demonstrate strong political will and depoliticize the management of all counter-insurgency efforts, if the desired result must be achieved.

Introduction:

Nigeria is currently in a logjam with numerous challenges searching for attention and solution simultaneously. The country, once considered as Africa's pride and giant, is today contending with issues of bad governance, failing economy characterized by rising inflation rate, deteriorating education standard, rising unemployment, widespread poverty and human right violation despite democracy in practice, and constant police brutality which triggered the famous

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EndSARS protest². The Nigerian military, once one of Africa's strongest army, is now struggling to combat an Islamic insurgency at home.

Since the return of democracy in the last 22 years, Nigeria has roamed from one security issue to the other. Among others, the country has contended with the already abated Niger Delta crisis in the south-south region, the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast, the uprising of the suppressed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the southeast, and the pervasive gale of banditry and kidnapping. Although each of these security issues have their historical roots, their recent manifestations are explicable in the context of the re-emergence of democracy— a form of government that constitutionally gives voice to the voiceless, the minority groups and the oppressed in society.

These issues and challenges, which pose an existential threat to the country, have also dented its image and present same to the world as an unattractive tourist and investment destination. In light of the foregoing, this policy brief succinctly examines the Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria. In scope, the policy brief looks at the genesis, evolution, and dynamics of Boko Haram, considers government efforts in countering it, and identify what or where the continuance of the insurgence has brought the country to.

Upfront, the policy brief argues that the war against Boko Haram insurgence may not be won anytime soon partly, due to over-politicization and lack of political will. Government efforts towards ending the Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria has been politicized along religious, regional and ethnic lines.

Further to that, the absence of national ownership of the fight against Boko Haram also contributes to deepening the crisis. Boko Haram, which started as a local religious reformist sect, has evolved into a deadly terrorist group with links to other terrorist groups and sympathizers home and abroad. With its new manifestations— banditry and kidnapping, Boko Haram has become a difficult nut to crack in Nigeria.

Boko Haram which has been operating with audacity for eleven years, despite government efforts in taming it, has turned out to be a Pandora's box for the Nigerian government. In its

². EndSars- the slogan that called for the disbanding of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, a notorious unit of the Nigerian Police with a long history of abuses,

effort towards ending the Boko Haram crisis, the National Assembly has also moved several motions drawing the attention of government—that is the presidency and other relevant institutions of the executive arm to the country’s deteriorating security situation and what needs to be done to stem the tides of insecurity. However, the executive has always treated such important parliamentary resolutions flippantly perhaps because of their advisory nature.

Overall, the point must be made that unless the fight against Boko Haram insurgency is depoliticized and backed up with strong political will, it may not achieve the desired result. Rather than being degraded, the Boko Haram fighters are reinventing themselves as bandits and kidnappers whose dangerous footprints and activities have largely contributed in undermining national security. As it were, banditry and kidnapping is ubiquitous in Nigeria. Nowhere is safe and that Nigerians, big or small cannot sleep with their two closed, amidst the overwhelming state of insecurity.

Origin of Boko Haram:

Nigeria’s northeastern region, which comprises Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe has been a hotbed of Boko Haram insurgency for the past eleven years now. Boko Haram— a jihadist terrorist organization was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State in northeastern Nigeria (Fineman, 2018). The group draws its members from disillusioned youths and unemployed graduates, and former Almajiris (Arabic word for street children) who migrated from rural to urban areas in search of better means of livelihood or to study under prominent Islamic teachers in cities, such as Kano, Zaria, Kaduna, and Maiduguri (Addaney, 2017). Its membership also includes some well-educated, affluent and influential people home and abroad.

Prior to 2010, Boko Haram was believed to have attracted over 280,000 followers and sympathizers across the Lake Chad region and in the 19 northern states of Nigeria (Danjibo, 2010). Recruitment into the group was particularly high at the beginning of the violent uprising in 2009. Despite the fact that many voluntarily join the group, forced conscriptions were also common at the time.

With its ideological opposition to Westernization of the Nigerian society which it blames on the culture of corruption, Boko Haram seeks to establish, in Nigeria, an Islamic State where Sharia

Law reigns (Addaney, 2017). In consequence, the insurgents' initial goal was to purify Islam in the north, uproot the endemic corruption and injustice, which it attributes to Western influences in Nigeria. Suffice to say that Boko Haram was motivated by the principles of Salafism— an Islamic ideology that espouses strict adherence to Sharia Law.

Evolution of Boko Haram

Boko Haram claimed to have existed first as a moderate Islam reformist group. It gradually evolved into a full-blown radical jihadist group in 2009 when it started an armed rebellion against the government of Nigeria (BBC News, 2016) The insurgence occurs within the context of longstanding religious issues and violence between Muslims and Christians. Boko Haram's increasing radicalization gave rise to the suppression operation by the Nigerian Armed Forces, which led to the arrest, detention and killing of its first leader, Mohammed Yusuf in July 2009 (Onyebuchi & Chigozie,2013) Abubakar Shekau assumed the mantle of leadership of Boko Haram, following Yusuf's assassination.

In mid-2014, Boko Haram gained control of swaths of territory in and around Borno State, with the exception of Maiduguri— the state capital where the group was originally based. In 2015, a coalition offensive compelled Boko Haram to retreat into the fringes of the Sambisa Forests and the Lake Chad Basin (Addaney, 2017). In the same year, Abubakar Shekau, leader of Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Aljazeera, 2015). Due to internal differences, hundreds of Boko Haram terrorists deserted the group and formed their own organization which came to be known as the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). The continuity of their disputes have further fractured Boko Haram into different factions. As a result, there is today the Shekau and Barnawi factions alongside such other minor factions as the Ansaru faction which draws support from al-Qaeda, Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQUIM), Al-Shabaab, the Taliban and ISIL.

Activities of Boko Haram:

Boko Haram has been at war with the Nigerian state since 2009. Determined to achieve its goal of establishing an Islamic State in Northern Nigeria, the group vowed and attempted to avenge the death of their leader and other members who were killed by government security forces in

2009. In September 2010, Boko Haram launched an attack on Bauchi Prison and freed over 700 persons (Nossiter, 2010). Since then, the group's attacks have escalated in northeastern Nigeria and have also expanded into other neighboring countries, namely: Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.

The sudden resurgence of Boko Haram after the mass prison break in Bauchi State in the northeast in 2010 was accompanied by more sophisticated attacks. The attacks were initially against soft targets but progressed to suicide bombings, which trended at a time. Boko Haram has carried out large-scale acts of violence and innumerable assassinations in Nigeria. In fact, the insurgents have exterminated tens of thousands of people, while internally displacing well over 2.4 million people from their homes (Reliefweb, 2020).

Mass abduction of school children/students is a trend that is commonly associated with the Boko Haram insurgents. Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the abductions of 276 Chibok Schoolgirls in April 2014, 110 Dapchi Schoolgirls in February 2018, more than 300 pupils from a boys' secondary school at the outskirts of Kankara town in Katsina State, and the female students' abduction in Government Girls Secondary School at Jangebe in Talata Mafara Local Government Area of Zamfara State. The group also orchestrated the 2015 Baga massacre where it overran a military base previously headquarters of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) comprising troops from Chad, Niger and Nigeria, and the brutal killing of over 76 rice farmers at the Garin-Kwashebe rice field in Zabarmari community in Borno state in December 2020 (The Economist, 2020). Its terrorist activities have also contributed to national and regional food crises or famines. As at 2010, Boko Haram was considered the world's deadliest terrorist group, particularly in terms of number of killings (The Global Terrorism Index, 2015).

Emerging Commentaries on Boko Haram:

Having remained in insurgency for eleven consecutive years, the Boko Haram insurgents have become increasingly skilled in the act of terrorism. Recent happenings in northeastern Nigeria suggest that there are new manifestations of Boko Haram. Popular opinion has it that, the activities of bandits and kidnapers in the country are not totally unconnected to Boko Haram. Many security analysts and social commentators on local televisions including Channels Television and the Africa Independent Television have also affirmed the nexus between the rising spate of banditry, kidnapping and Boko Haram.

On Politics Today, a Channels Television Program, Dennis Amachree, former Deputy Director of the Department of State Service (DSS), while speaking on national security, draw attention to the linkage between Boko Haram and the current wave of Banditry (Amachree, 2021). In his opinion, the Boko Haram insurgents currently engage in banditry and kidnapping to raise funds to strengthen their logistic base. Bandits that were arrested and debriefed by security forces corroborated that, he further added during his interview with Channels Television.

Lamenting the worsening state of insecurity in Nigeria, Wole Soyinka, a Nigerian Playwright and Nobel Laureate declared that Nigeria is currently “at war, in a war zone” (The Guardian, 2020). Similarly, the President of the Nigerian Senate, Senator Ahmad Lawan, while fielding questions with media men at the National Assembly opined that insurgency is fast-becoming a business in Nigeria. According to him, Boko Haram has been privatized by conflict merchants or conflict entrepreneurs to one, promote their illicit trade in arms and ammunition, and two, as a conduit for syphoning public funds. Khalifa Dikwa, a university don and a public affairs commentator also contributed to the debate by tracing the sponsors of Boko Haram to some international and local forces (Dikwa, 2021). He further alleged that “people in government” are also sabotaging the efforts of security agencies (Olayinka, 2021).

From a close observation of the insurgent’s activities, these submissions are not distant from the reality. That Boko Haram, an illegitimate group has continued to challenge the military capability of the Nigerian state with audacity for over a decade without being crushed is unbelievable. There is a clear indication of saboteurs at work in this situation. Many critics attribute Boko Haram’s resilience to a number of factors. These include the absence of a strong political will, lack of coordinated intelligence gathering and use of the same against the terrorist group, internal and external conspiracies against the military, corruption, and fatigue/low morale of troops in the operation.

More than ever, political, religious and regional factors have also served to deepen Boko Haram insurgency. This eleven-year-old uprising has come to be shrouded in deep religious, regional and ethnic politics. On the political front, the conflict has been so politicized and made an instrument for bargaining or promoting an agenda for northeastern regional development. One of the results of the region’s campaign for development is the establishment of the North East Development Commission (NEDC) in 2017. Like the Niger Delta Development Commission

(NDDC), NEDC was established as a focal interventionist organization to pilot the reconstruction and development of the insurgency ravaged northeastern states, which comprises Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe. The Commission is specifically responsible for assessing, coordinating, harmonizing and reporting all intervention programs and initiatives by the federal government or any of its Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs), State and other Development Partners for the implementation of all programs for northeast development.

In the past and present, no administration has demonstrated commensurate political will to annihilate Boko Haram-a hitherto fragile and local Islamist insurrectionary group that has evolved into a full-fledged terrorist group with tentacles abroad. If anything, successive governments, including the present, have treated this deadly sect with levity and not with the seriousness it deserves. Over-politicization explains the flippancy with which government is dealing with the situation at hand. To be specific, government has failed to carry out credible intelligence on the group's activities. Government has also failed to use its superior firepower to devastate the insurgents. It remains a mirage to the public that, with its more sophisticated security apparatus and well-resourced intelligence community, government has not been able to track the group's activities and bring it to total submission. That none of these has occurred is only explicable in the context of the extent management of the insurgency has been politicized. That has gone a long way in underpinning the commonly held assumption that state and non-state actors are also complicit in fueling the insurgency.

In the religious context, the insurgents are on a mission to establish an Islamic State where Sharia Law will be practiced in Nigeria. This, the Boko Haram fighters have walked towards achieving by killings Christian and destroying churches in the north. Most times, Christians abducted by members of Boko Haram are compelled to renounce their faith before they are executed. Mosques and members of the Islamic faith are also not spared by the insurgents, which in essence, creates confusion or put to question what exactly these jihadists are up to.

Regional and ethnic intrigues also characterize the counter-insurgency operation in the northeast. When under heavy attack by government security forces, people of the crisis-ridden northeast and environ accuse federal troops of committing genocide against their people- the insurgents and civilians. Christian soldiers in the operation have, at times, been alleged of killing Muslims extra-judicially. Such narratives are gradually creating ruptures within the Armed Forces,

particularly among troops in the ongoing operation. Troops of the operation do complain of not enjoying the privilege of leave and pass as and when due, thereby, leading to general discontent and fatigue.

Tactic-wise, the insurgents have changed from suicide bombing to a more intelligence-driven approach. In their new strategy, police and military formations, checkpoints and security personnel have become prime targets. The Boko Haram insurgents have succeeded in infiltrating the rank and files of the Nigerian military and the entire security arrangement of government. The group thus, rely on their moles within the military for intelligence, which has resulted in many successful deadly attacks against government troops. It is observed that in recent times, the insurgents have applied live-fire-supported ambushes and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) activation as tactics for engaging government troops.

Until the recent arrest of about 400 suspects in Nigeria and the jailing of 6 Nigerians in the United Arab Emirate (UAE) for allegedly funding Boko Haram insurgency, its source of Boko Haram's funding has been elusive to the public locally and internationally (TheCable, 2021). An ongoing investigation conducted by the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) in collaboration with the Department of State Security (DSS), Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) and the Central Bank (CBN) traces the source of Boko Haram's funding to suspected businessmen. The suspects comprise Bureau De Change (BDC) operators, gold miners and sellers, and other businessmen (TheCable, 2021). According to TheCable report, over ₦300 billion was found to have been utilized in funding terrorism.

One predictable danger in all of these is that, as the insurgency deepens and gets more politicized, Nigeria may slide into a country of no strong and formidable territorial army. This is more likely so, especially with the unresolved issues of poor motivation, general fatigue, cases of voluntary retirements and the corruption that typifies how the situation or operation is being managed. It is essential to note that, regardless of rank, men and officers in the operation are entitled to a monthly allowance of Forty-Five Thousand Naira (₦45,000), which equals \$100 - \$117.96, depending on the exchange rate at the time (Kevin, 2015). This translates to a daily operation allowance of N1,451.6 or \$3.80 per soldier who is in the trenches fighting for the safety of the Nigeria state.

These unsettled issues and complaints have resulted in cases of voluntary retirements and cases of AWOL— military term for absent without official leave notice or permission. With the barrage of complaints about the harsh and unbearable condition under which they serve in the counter-insurgency operation, some soldiers, this policy brief deduces, have lost interest and their nationalistic fervor in the fight. If unattended to, these factors present a looming danger to the future of the Nigerian Military.

As of 2015, not less than 66 soldiers, described by the Nigerian government as ‘cowards’ and their supporter as ‘scapegoats’, were reported to have been found guilty of mutiny and sentenced to death by firing squad, while dozens more remain in detention, awaiting trial (Kevin, 2015). The statistics of disgruntled soldiers have increased that number to 380, as of 2020. Out of the 380 soldiers, 356 formerly requested to exit the Nigerian Army for loss of interest, while 24 ask for voluntary discharge in order to take up traditional titles in their places, and their applications have already been approved by the outgone Chief of Army Staff, Tukur Buratai, in line with the Nigerian Army Administrative Policy and Procedure (Premium Time, 2020).

Synopsis of Government Efforts in Tackling Boko Haram:

Boko Haram has been a difficult terrorist group to immobilize by troops of the Nigerian government. This is partly due to its resilience and shadowy nature. The group’s campaign of terror has continued to defy the counter-insurgency strategy of government. Initially, government responded to Boko Haram by pursuing a strategy of military confrontation which has not yielded the desired result. Rather, the confrontation strategy has motivated and strengthened the terrorist group to re-strategize and fight harder. Nevertheless, government security forces, which comprise the ground and air troops, have been able to chase the insurgents away from the city centres to the fringes of the Sambisa Forest and the Lake Chad Region that have become the battlefield.

By 2013, the insurgents have succeeded in taking over many rural local government areas in the northeast. In a bid to crushing the group, government had to build what could be described as military super camps and mini locations in the fringes of the insurgency-affected areas to engage the enemies right in their hideouts. In 2011, the federal government sanctioned military efforts to counter the growing threat of Boko Haram. With 21 Armoured Brigade of the Nigerian Army as

its centre, the Joint Task Force Operation Restore Order (JTF ORO 1) launched an extensive counter-insurgency (COIN) campaign against Boko Haram. This military offensive went through several phases.

At the beginning of 2012, Goodluck Jonathan's administration declared a state of emergency in the entire northeastern Nigeria (BBC News, 2013). This escalated security force exploitations and militant attacks. The Jonathan's presidency also tried to apply the carrot and stick approach in addressing the Boko Haram insurgency. For instance, in April 2013, Jonathan invited members of the group to the presidential villa for a roundtable; but unlike the Niger Delta militants, they refused to honor the invite. As was the case with the Niger Delta youths, Jonathan's administration also promised to grant amnesty to members of Boko Haram, if they disarm, but Shekau, the group leader dismissed the proposal, declaring that the group has not committed any crime against the state to warrant amnesty from government.

Barely a month after when government made all these efforts, Boko Haram launched a series of coordinated military-style attacks in Bama, a town in Borno state. The attacks left well over 50 people dead and destroyed police and military formations alongside other government buildings. Boko Haram was officially declared as a terrorist group banned under Nigerian law. What it implies is that the group's members and anyone caught abetting them would be prosecuted under the Nigeria Terrorism Prevention (Amendment) Act, 2013. Similarly, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) imposed sanctions on Boko Haram members, freezing their assets and issuing travel bans and an arms embargo. However, the sanctions were of no discernible effect on the operations of Boko Haram, due to its informal structure.

In the buildup to the 2015 general elections, President Goodluck Jonathan deemed it necessary to suspend the polls, due to the heightened level of insecurity, which the government at the time felt would have disrupted the conduct of a peaceful election. By way of intervention, his administration hired the services of Private Military Contractors (PMC) from South Africa to destabilize Boko Haram and made possible the holding of election in all local councils (ThisDay, 2021). However, the succeeding administration led by President Muhammadu Buhari neither retained the PMC, nor heeded the advice of the PMC to man the land borders to sustain the victory recorded early 2015. Therefore, the resurgence of the Boko Haram insurgency could partly be attributed to government failure in sustaining achieved successes.

Boko Haram has remained undeterred and has been business, despite eleven years of sustained government counter-insurgency efforts. In fact, its resilience and resurgence contradict the September 2015 declaration of government that the military has destroyed all Boko Haram camps. The regularity of the group's activities has also falsified the claim by Buhari's administration in 2019 that "Boko Haram is technically defeated". Boko Haram is still very much alive and even stronger and more tactical in its modus operandi.

Challenges Confronting Successful Counter-Insurgency Operation:

Overall, government efforts in tackling Boko Haram have not yielded the desired result. In summary, some of the issues and challenges hampering government effort in completely defeating Boko Haram include but not limited to lack of strong political will, over-politicization and sabotage by enemies from within. On one way or the other, conversations that give regional, religious and ethnic coloration to the crisis not only deepens it but further brings to the fore the national consciousness and national ownership which Nigeria does not have to confront the situation.

Another key challenge is shortage of manpower. Personnel are in short supply in the Army, Air Force and the Police. Hence, the available workforce in bodies is overstretched. Due to shortage of manpower, leave and pass are not easily granted to personnel in the special force. As a result, many troops have lost the patriotic zeal to fight against the enemy. Closely related to the previous point is periodic rotation of personnel which is no more a regular practice. Many officers and men have served in the northeast operation for as long as three or more years without regular contact with their family members and as such, become nostalgic.

Some operation locations are ill-equipped. One frequent complaint is that locations with more threats are not deployed with new and reliable war equipment, while those closer to the cities and with fewer or no threats are deployed with new weaponry and visited more often by the military leadership during inspection tours. In contrast, operation locations in the more difficult terrains are less visited.

Conclusion:

Boko Haram has become an extraordinary enemy of the Nigerian state that must be forth with the highest sense of tact and diplomacy. In the last eleven years of containment effort,

government has pursued a strategy of military confrontation that yielded mutable successes. Government has recorded successes that are no sustained. Boko Haram insurgency is an extraordinary problem that requires extraordinary solution. What that implies is the urgent need for government to revisit the drawing board to refashion new ways of assessing and tackling the situation that will lead to better result.

Essential to pose at this point is the question as to whether government should continue with its strategy of military confrontation or broaden that approach to accommodate other de-radicalization or counter-radicalization initiatives/programs. The response would be for government to combine both, for greater and a more beneficial result. However, where the terrorists fail to present clear-cut demands and indicate no willingness to lay down arms, government may wish to go all out in destroying all Boko Haram elements.

Policy Recommendations:

Drawing from the foregoing, the following long and short recommendations are put forward. In the long term, government should work towards depoliticizing its counter-insurgency approach and match all efforts in that direction with demonstrable commitment to the spirit of national consciousness. Unless government exhibit, in words and in action, national ownership of the situation at hand, this almost twelve-year-old insurgency and its recent offshoots may not end anytime soon.

Government should do all that is possible to discourage citizens' loyalty to regional and ethnic enclaves, in order to give way to the promotion of a common national interest/and agenda. In that case, the people should pledge loyalty first, to the sanctity of the Nigerian state before their regions and ethnic nationalities. This will help eliminate the cracks within the Armed Forces and among troops. The same will propel the people and troops of the northeast operation to galvanize the spirit of national consciousness— a shared sense of national identity that is capable of inciting a general will towards ending the insurgency for the collective good of all.

Government is also expected to exert strong political will in prosecuting the war against Boko Haram. Government efforts in that direction should include issuing executive orders where necessary, and ensuring that they are backed with action and not mere political rhetoric.

Security institutions, particularly the Army, Air Force, Nigeria Police Force, Defence Intelligence Agency, National Intelligence Agency, Department of State Security and others should be strengthened, financially empowered, and charged to discharge their responsibilities without undue interference. Such institutions should be properly funded to make sure they put in their best for the country's security.

In the short term, proper parliamentary oversight and investigative hearings should be encouraged to ascertain the extent of funding and whether funds appropriated are released as and when due and expended for the purpose it was budgeted. Similarly, troops should be exposed to better operational allowance, feeding and be made to enjoy leave and pass as and when due. Proper kitting of troops should be given the priority attention it deserves so as to differentiate them from the enemy forces. As it were, the home and enemy forces at war cannot be easily differentiated. The home troops and the adversaries are kitted the same way, which makes identifying the enemy difficult. These measures, if put in place, will boost troops' morale to perform better in the ongoing operation against Boko Haram.

Periodic rotation of troops is key and should not be ruled out in the management of the northeast operation. Through periodic rotation, men and officers who have had a prolonged stay in the operation and are already fatigued could be granted some relief by way of redeployment to a non-insurgency affected part of the country.

Government should rejig the security architecture by putting a peg and a round hole and guard against all double agents and subversive tendencies. Government should also look inward and rid itself all of the saboteurs— that is the enemy within. To ensure all of these and be on top of its game in terms of countering Boko Haram, government must invest heavily on effective intelligence gathering and utilization.

An increase in manpower is, more than anything else, a must-do for the military. Currently, there is short supply of personnel. The available workforce on ground is grossly inadequate and overstretched and hence, cannot attain the desired result. Government is also advised to engage the services of ex-military officers with cerebral capacity to constitute a think-tank to, from time to time, provide technical support or policy directions that would be useful in degrading Boko Haram.

Stronger inter-agency collaboration is also a crucial step to undertake. In this case, the armed forces, the police and other security agencies, such as the DIA, NIA, DSS should work hand in hand towards containing Boko Haram. To attain better result, the office of the National Security Adviser (NSA) should ensure proper coordination of intelligence and related activities of these outfits. In that case, the office of the NSA should therefore, be the clearinghouse for intelligence gathering and processing for use in tackling Boko Haram. The time is now for the Nigerian government to strengthen ties with her neighbours— Chad, Niger, and Cameroon in fighting this diehard enemy.

Also, it is high time Nigerians adopted the concept of “if you see something, say something”. Citizens’ docility has not helped in Nigeria’s bid against insecurity. There should be a medium for reporting suspected Boko Haram members. The Boko Haram terrorists do not live in space but in the forests. Some at times come out in disguise to visit public places and return to their sanctuaries. They all have relatives and neighbors. Government should introduce a good reward system to encourage people to covertly report suspected Boko Haram members within their neighbourhood. Nigerians should leverage on the whistle-blowing policy to report or disclose relevant information that would lead to the arrest of Boko Haram suspects.

Above all, effort should be made to sustain the regional Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) which comprises Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Benin and Cameroon, in order to prevent the continuous resurgence of Boko Haram. Countries of the MNJTF should deepen their collaboration in the fight against what they have considered as a common enemy.

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