

Counterinsurgency Responses in Nigeria: Unveiling the Constraining Challenges

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Abstract: *This concept paper examine the constraining challenges of various counterinsurgency responses in Nigeria in combating an insurgent Boko Haram group. Boko Haram since 2009 was responsible for over 30,000 deaths, and over 2 million people displaced as internally displace persons and refugees. The analysis of the various counterinsurgency responses show an excessive force used by the military in containing the insurgency hinders the successes of the measures. To remedy, the paper hence recommend for redesigning of counterinsurgency tactic to focus on winning the hearts and minds of the local population. It also recommend for strengthening the Civilian Joint Task Force through establish code of conduct to checkmate excess and abuses.*

KEY WORDS: *Boko Haram; Insurgency; Counterinsurgency; Military; Non-Military*

I. INTRODUCTION

Since 2009, if there is anything that nested in the minds of Nigeria's stakeholders and the teeming population is the existential threat poses by the insurgent Boko Haram on the country's northeast. Boko Haram a colloquial literally, 'western education is sacrilege' is an Islamic fundamentalist movement that oppose to western (European) civilizations including their method of livelihood, political system, and education. The group moreover oppose wielding all diplomatic ties between Nigeria and non-Islamic states. Informed in this insinuation, the Boko Haram erupt into violence supposedly to overthrow the Nigeria's political system, reform it governance system and restructure its socio-economic systems through strict compliance to Islamic doctrines of the Qur'an and Hadith.

Consequently, in the propagation of its campaign, Boko Haram engage in bloodily attacks on civilians including fierce confrontation with the members of Nigeria's security forces. The combined violence of the two resulted in colossal damages on the socioeconomic and political livelihoods of many Nigerians. At the present, there is no authentic accounts of the groups damages, as available data varies considerably among spectators, but on an average since 2009, about 30,000 people are massacred (Agbiboa, 2015). Moreover, over 2 million people are forcibly displace as Internally Displaced Persons and refugees (UNHCR, 2016). In 2017, despite the repatriations of thousands of people, World Refugee Agency 'United Nations Commission on Refugees [UNHCR] document the existence of 219,305 Nigerian refugees in Cameroun, and over 90,000 in Chad Republic (UNHCR, 2018). This figure can also be conservative, as the commission cannot register many people.

In addition to colossal damages incurred on human and collateral assets, by midst 2014, Boko Haram pushes to consolidate its Islamization policy by seizing nearly 20,000 km² of Nigeria's physical land. According to Pham & Pham (2016) the territorial land seize control by Boko Haram is equal to the size of Belgium. The control of physical land sufficiently enable Boko Haram to consolidate it autonomy on expansive size of the population on whom it applies its corporal punishments. Propaganda videos shared by the group severally demonstrate the implementation of capital punishments on the controlled population. Among other punishments include the decapitations, amputations; flogging, and stoning to death of allege offenders.

Nevertheless, since the evolution of Boko Haram, numerous counterinsurgency [COIN] measures taken by the Nigeria's government and civilian groups to tackle the group. However, because of dynamicity of the groups'

violence, most of counterinsurgency [COIN] measures taken was renders futile enabling the group to continue the impunity of its violence.

Furthermore, in the academic over the years, sufficient body of literature evolved pointing on diverse COIN strategies taken against the insurgent. Whereas some of the literature focuses on the analysis of military COINs, others focuses on the carrot options taken by the government to pacify the insurgents to accept peace. Although, whereas the existing works are significant in exposing the general COIN strategies in Nigeria, however, their overwhelming interest of solely contributing to the abstract theoretical work is a mirage, particularly in view of the prevailing menace of the insurgency causing untold human and collateral damages on the state and the citizenry. This study therefore differs from the previous works. In addition to its desire of contributing to the abstract academic literature, the study is a policy science fundamentally aim at suggesting solution that will benefit policy makers in curbing the menace of the insurgency and restore order in the affected communities.

Therefore, in achieving its objectives, this paper is partition into five parts. The first part highlight the general methodology of the paper. The second part highlight the historical overview of the insurgent Boko Haram group and its violence, the third part highlights on the various responses toward tackling the insurgent violence. The fourth is the presentation of the constraints that presumed to have hindered the successes of the existing COIN approaches, and the fifth is the conclusion and recommendation for the policy makers on how to tackle the prevailing insurgency to restore peace and security.

II. METHODOLOGY

This concept paper utilise secondary materials for its data. The material uses includes but not limited to journals, past research works, newspaper articles and magazines and reports by national and international organisations such as United Nations High Commission on Refugees among others.

Boko Haram; Overview of History and Violence

Credible accounts on the origin of Boko Haram traced to the year 2003 to the city of Maiduguri and Malam Mohammed Yusuf, a young radical Salafist scholar who was born in Girir village of Yobe state as its founding father (Onuoha, 2012). The first set of skirmish of the group was observe in Kanamma, a town along the Nigeria and Niger Republic border in Yobe state. On 23rd December 2003, some students of Yusuf who are discontent with the newly installed democratic politics and constitutional government in 1999 after about two decades of military dictatorship withdraw to Kanamma in protest and remain in isolation to practice crude live. However, dispute over fishing right and farmland between the Boko Haram members and the host community resulted in police action. Police were however resist and overpowered that culminated to the death of two police officers. Boko Haram looted the police arm stores, freed criminals in police custodies, and stole police vehicle. Some scholars in recent past indicate the robbery in Kanamma forms the earlier ground of Boko Haram weaponry (Bamidele, 2016). However, military crackdown dismantle the groups' camp with some of the members arrest, some killed and surviving ones re-join the main camp of Yusuf in Maiduguri.

Excessive harm incurred on the group since then forces the group to underground campaign to rally support for further action. The existentiality of Boko Haram comes to global notice in 2009 when it appeared in violent uprising in the city of Maiduguri. Violent lasted for one week. Excessive military and police clampdown inflicted severe human and collateral damages both on the group and on the local population. Some estimates has indicates the military clampdown has resulted in the death of over 1000 people (Bamidele, 2016), majority of which are members of the insurgent group. Death among the group includes of the groups' spiritual leader Mohammed Yusuf. Yusuf die in police custody in very controversial manner (Folade, 2016). Other deaths in 2009 includes of Alhaji Buji Foi a former commissioner and major financier of the group, as well as Baba Fugu the spiritual landlord of the group and Yusuf father in-law. All men died in police custody. However, police has severally denied the allege murdering.

With the unprecedented damages on its leadership and physical structures, Boko Haram conspicuously disappeared. Some claim the group join other jihadist groups in the Sahel (Bintube, 2015), others claim the group dissolve into the larger population (Shuaibu & Salleh, 2015). Even as the exact place where the group took its asylum is not clear, it recuperated and emerged more violently under a new leadership of Abubakar Shekau in 2011. Shekau is one of two deputies of the late Yusuf. The other deputy is Mamman Nur, a Cameroonian immigrant residing in city of Maiduguri.

Since assumption of Abubakar Shekau leadership, Boko Haram become more lethal, violent, disastrous and bloodletting including expedited rise in attack frequencies. According to Shuaibu and Salleh (2015), Boko Haram under Shekau become capable of carrying out major attacks including suicide and bomb denoting. For instance, in June 2011 for the first, Boko Haram embarked on suicide attack on the convoy of Nigeria Police Inspector General in the capital city of Abuja. Since then, suicide bombing and explosion of IED continues unprecedentedly. Actual statistics of IED explosion are scarce, but recent report by Norwegian independent

research group 'Action on Armed Violence' shows that Boko Haram is culpable for 15 IED explosion involving 25 suicide in the first quarter of 2017. Disturbingly, the number since then keeps counting causing untold human and collateral damages on the citizenry. Although accurate data are scarce, but most evidences shows that between 2013 and 2014, Boko Haram has killed over 5000 people. Nigerian officials and United Nations reports indicates that the insurgent affects more than six million Nigerians (Shuaibu and Salleh, 2015). Moreover, in the first half of the year 2014, Blanchard (2014) indicates that the Nigeria's terrorist is culpable for the death of over 2000 people. Most disastrous in the series of the attacks was the massacre in the ancient town of Baga. Local evidences claim over 2000 people murdered and unquantifiable properties destroyed. Amnesty International in particular described the attacks in Baga as the worst in the history of the Boko Haram insurgency. Many observers claim that ruthless violence of Boko Haram under Abubakar Shekau contradict the traditional styles of the group warfare that are mostly characterise by withdrawal and propaganda messages. Furthermore, even as Boko Haram has coordinated and launched numerous attacks that destroyed numerous churches and office structures, in November 2014, the group extended its violence on the Muslim faithful by attacking on worshipers and destroying mosques. The deadliest in the series of attack on Mosque is in Kano when the group fired and explodes three suicide bombs on congregation of worshippers observing the weekly Friday prayer. The attack left more than 100 people murdered and many others injured. Consequently, on 14 April 2014, Boko Haram extended its global terrorist outlook by rudely abducting over 200 school-girls in their dormitory in boarding school at Chibok in the volatile Borno state. The abduction of the girls has witnessed widespread condemnation nationally and internationally. Emerging evidences in the recent past shows nearly 100 girls freed on allege payment of ransom and swap of prisoners by the government. However, many of the girls remained in the captivity of the insurgent. In fact, there is growing suspicion that some of the girls have been use for suicide bombing. Consequently, Boko Haram in 2014 started seizing territorial lands to establish its Islamic state. In August 2014, the group invade and conquer the town of Gwoza. Propaganda video release by Abubakar Shekau claim to have renamed the town *Darul Islam*; the headquarter of the purported Islamic state. In the video, Shekau reiterated for conquering of more towns and cities including the city Maiduguri, the erstwhile spiritual house of the group. Between 2014 and 2015, credible source shows that Boko Haram has seize control of about 20,000 km² of Nigeria's territorial land where it successfully establish its authority including levying and collection of taxes from local population.

III. RESPONSES TO BOKO HARAM IN NIGERIA

In responses to Boko Haram violence, several measures taken by Nigeria's government, international groups, and civilians bodies. For this analysis, the various measures can be categorise into military and non-military. However, whereas the two approaches are treats differently in this analysis, their application however not concurrent rather they are simultaneous. The following review will highlight on the two categories of responses against the insurgent group.

IV. MILITARY RESPONSES

The Nigeria's Military

The bulk of the literature on the Nigeria's counterinsurgency against the Boko Haram shows hard military tactics as the major counterinsurgency tactic of the Nigerian state (Abdulazeez, 2016). The focus of this type of strategy according to Folade (2016) is kinetic, a category of warfare that prioritise the use of coercive force in crushing insurgent violence by neutralizing allege perpetrators. This strategy of the Nigeria's government according to Aghedo & Osuma (2012) conform to traditional tactics of United States in most of its counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations around the world.

The emphasis on military response on Boko Haram by Nigeria government first emerged in 2003 when the first skirmish of group emerged at Kanamma in Yobe State. Source shows that government treat the group in purely military action. The action of the government was demonstrates through massive deployment of troops to tackle the situation. Furthermore, even with dissipation of the group, a military special force 'Operation Flush' was inaugurate to fish out the fleeing insurgents in Maiduguri and other major towns in the northeast. There is general believe that the brutal approach by members of the Operation Flush incubated for uprising of Boko Haram in 2009 (Adeniran, 2014). Since then the government continued to expand and strengthen its troops in the northeast. For instance between 2009 and 2011 not less than 36,000 members of Nigeria armed force (the army, Airforce, Navy) are combating the insurgent in the northeast (Folade, 2016). In addition, by 2015, this number has grown to over 100,000 (Raphael & James, 2016) and since then its keeps growing. According to Lawal & Aluko (2016), Nigeria government to expand the capacities of its troops withdraw over 1,000 members of its armed force in various peacekeeping missions in Africa. This massive deployment of troops to civil violence is generally believe to be the first since after the end of the country's 30-month civil war in 1970s.

Moreover, within the same period, the government hike its military expenditure to procure ultra-modern arms to crush the insurgents. Between 2009 and 2013, Nigeria's defence budget was rise by over 100% (Odo, 2015) and it keeps expanding. This huge military budget score Nigeria as the sixth largest military expenditure in Africa and 57th in the world (Abdulazeez, 2016). In addition, alliance countries such as Britain, China, and France also offered aerial surveillance, drones, and reconnaissance service to strengthen the Nigeria armed force (Nwanpka, 2015). However, even with the heavy deployment of troops, pundits claim that the military largely operate in a defensive tactics. The defensive approach of the Nigeria's army according Aghedo & Osumah (2012) is among the factors that made them gullible to the frequent raiding of their formations that often manifest in loss of logistics and arms.

Multinational Joint Task Force

In January 2015, members of the Lake Chad regional economic block [Nigeria, Chad, Cameroun, Niger and Benin republics] signed a treaty requiring the formation of 8700 troops Multinational Joint Task Force [MNJTF], a regional force to combat the insurgent Boko Haram. Pundits claim that the formation of the MNJTF was borne out of the extensive regionalization of the Boko Haram threat. The regionalization of insurgent violence according to United States ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell (2014) was acknowledge with the kidnapping of the families of deputy Prime Minister of Cameroonian in July 2014. Since then, violence continue to escalate across the Nigeria's border in the Lake Chad region.

The cross border attacks of the group includes targeting of foreign nationals and their investments. The kidnappings of 10 Chinese engineers and a German citizen along the Nigeria's border in Cameroon are among the cases that pressured the need for regional counterterrorism force in the region. The massive humanitarian situation occasioned by proliferation of refugees and internally displace person is also another factor. In 2014, United Nation Refugee agency [UNHCR] document the existence of over 2 million refugees and people displaced internally across the countries of Chad, Niger, Cameroon, and Nigeria. The humanitarian crises cause by Boko Haram according to UNHCR is the worst in the recent history of world. World Food Programme claim over four million people are in desperate need of food support, and thousands of children are in death risk because of malnutrition related ailments (Tull & Weber, 2016). These consequences are among the reasons that necessitated the formation of regional force to contain the insurgency.

Credible accounts shows that in its earlier year MNJTF is very influential in reconquering of many towns along the Nigeria's border control by the insurgent. For instance, in March 2015 the MNJTF conquered the town of Damasak that has taken control by the Boko Haram in November 2014 (Folade, 2016). The force is equally mention responsible for reconquering of Gambori-Ngala and Dikwa along the Chad borders in Borno state. However, available sources point these successes short-lived as most of the freed areas are subsequently retook by the insurgent group. Multifaceted challenges entangled in logistic, finance and politics was point to have hindered the sustenance of MNJTF's counterinsurgency tempo.

V. NON-MILITARY RESPONSE

Counterterrorism Law

In addition to huge deployment of troops both at the national and international level, in 2011 Nigeria's government enacted Counter-Terrorism act involving stringent punishments on the insurgent groups, collaborators, financiers and sympathizers. Campbell, (2014) shows that the anti-terrorism law is the first of its kind in the constitutional history of Nigeria. Among other provisions in the act are death sentence for insurgent members and jailed term of not less 20 years for financiers, sympathizers and collaborators. Included in the act according to Folade (2016) are unlimited warrant for security operatives to search houses and arrest as well as confiscate properties and monies suspected to be belonging to real and or potential fighter.

To further crown the counterterrorism law, in May 2013, the then Nigeria's President Good Luck Jonathan declared emergency law in three states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, the hotbeds of the Boko Haram violence. The emergency law according to Bamidele (2016) since its declaration witnessed severe criticisms particularly from the Muslim north. Many people described the action of the government as politically motivated rather than the actual interest of stemming the insurgent group. In spite of the widespread criticisms, the emergency law that was initially mean for six months was extends consecutively for another two terms. Because of suspicion of politicization of the act, along with allege abuses by security operatives, Nigeria's national assembly overwhelmingly rejects further extension of the act in May 2014.

Credible evidences suggest that beyond instigated social and economic difficulties on the already depleted citizens, the declaration of emergency law frequented the violence of insurgent. Within this period according to some source (Amao & Maiangwa, 2017), Boko Haram intensified it attacks raiding several military establishments and communication gazettes. The frequented attacks by the insurgent coupled with stringent and radical security measures such as dusk to dawn curfews, restrictions of vehicular usage, band of communication gazettes, house searches, and restriction of food, gas, and fuel supplies brewed severe human misery and

frustration of the local communities. The implication of stringent tactics and civilian frustration according to the counterinsurgency literature (Dixon, 2012) is that it will wane state legitimacy, and brew support for insurgency. This perhaps explains the fact that even with the extraordinary measures to deal with the Boko Haram, up to the termination of the emergency law in 2014, Boko Haram continued its violence with impunity.

Dialogues and Peace Talks

In furtherance of its non-military strategy, in September 2011, Nigerian government engaged former President Olusegun Obasanjo to broker peace between the government and the insurgent group (Egunjobi & Odiaka, 2014). Sources indicate that Obasanjo's talks set phase for compensation of families of deceased Boko Haram members including the family of the erstwhile leaders 'Mohammed Yusuf.' Agreements also include amnesty for defecting fighters as well as rehabilitations and reconstruction of their spiritual mosque and Islamic complex in Maiduguri and other places (Egunjobi & Odiaka, 2014). For factor, generally attributes to the peace broker of Chief Obasanjo, Borno State government in 2011 paid compensation turning to about 100 million naira (\$300,000) to the families of late Mohammed Yusuf. In audio message circulated in Maiduguri, the speaker who claim to be representative of the insurgent confirm to the agreement on cease-fire.

However, some evidences shows that Obasanjo's broker short live because in less than one week after the payment of the supposed compensation, un-cooperating members of the insurgent on the peace arrangement gruesomely murdered the recipient [brother in-law of the slain Yusuf]. The unfortunate assassination therefore frustrated the situation and hindered further attempt for negotiation.

In further attempt, in October 2012 another committee inaugurated under the chair of Dr Ahmed Ibrahim Datti, the president of Nigeria's Supreme Council on Islamic Affairs. Some sources from the Nigeria society suggest that Datti led committee brought the insurgent and the government in dialogue table. The reality of this manifest in significant reduction in the spate of attacks by the insurgent. In November 2012 however, one Abu Mohammed who claim to be the spokesperson of the insurgent told Voice of America (VOA) that the group cannot proceed the talk, accusing the government of insincerity. As shows by Nwankpa (2016), the withdrawal was instigated by leakage of information from the government on vital issues before consensus is reach.

Sequencing to the above, in May 2013 President Good Luck Jonathan re-inaugurated another 27-member committee tagged "Presidential Committee on Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of the Security Challenges in the North." A minister 'Alhaji Tanimu Turaki,' chaired this committee. However, in their response to the inauguration of the committee, the embattled leader of Boko Haram Abubakar Shekau release propaganda video criticising the government action as devilish. Shekau urged all Boko Haram members to desist from cooperating as well as to intensify attacks on government and civil population. According to Doukhan (2015), Shekau claim "amnesty" are grant to criminals; therefore, ascribing the term to their group is derogative mean to blackmail them from the public.

Civilian Joint Task Force

In mid-2013, civilian defence group 'kato da gora' literally 'men with stick' that was later renamed Civilian Joint Task Force dubbed after the Special Joint Task Force and the Multinational Joint Task Force fighting the insurgent group in the region ramped to combat the insurgent group. The group that first starts as neighbourhood guard ascertain massive support from the communities that are already fed-up with the unrelenting violence of Boko Haram and ineffective state response.

Available account on the mobilization of CJTF reveals its importance. Many people describe its emergence as a child of necessity because of the cynical failure of the state (Matfess, 2016; Chukwuma, 2017). Some moreover describe the mobilization as a functional civil-military strategy in countering contemporary guerrilla warfare (Stovenson, 2015). In either case, what is important is that the mobilization of CJTF signified a dramatic reduction in the spate of the insurgent violence. Enormous evidences shows that in addition to weeding the city of Maiduguri from the insurgent, CJTF was point instrumental in neutralising hundreds of Boko Haram fighters. The group is also instrumental for rescuing hundreds of captives from the insurgent group. There is general believe that mobilization of CJTF is culpable for the relative restoration of social, economic and political lives in the Nigeria northeast. Many prominent Nigerian applauded the group. The Nigeria's then President 'Good Luck Jonathan' described the CJTF as national heroes (Bamidele, 2016; Agbiboa, 2015). Military document moreover shows the CJTF is the eye, ear and mouth of the armies fighting the insurgent group. In most military operation, members of the CJTF are front-liner due to their thorough knowledge of local terrains.

However, despite the applauded successes, there are numerous accusations labelled against the group. Many claim that group is brewing trouble and sabotaging legitimate state action. Accusation also comprises of abuses bordering on human rights, child soldiering, and domestic violence. In 2015, Amnesty International release graphic video footage of members of CJTF supported by the Nigeria army slitting the throats of Boko Haram and throwing the bodies into mass grave. In 2016, a report by the US-based Human Rights Watch accuse both the CJTF and the military in sexual abuse of displaced women in camps. The CJTF has is also accused of raping

women, false arrests, imprisonment, and arson. In fact these atrocities has led the Executive Director Human Rights Monitor (HRM), Barrister Festus Okoye to called for an immediate dissolution of the civilian JTF, describing them as an aberration.

Moreover, there is also claim that the mobilization of CJTF aggravated the insurgent violence. Evidence shows that since the mobilization of the CJTF, Boko Haram intensified its attacks on civilian declaring members of the public as enemies. In a statement sent to journalists by the spokesperson of Boko Haram as quoted by Hassan & Pieri (2018), 'We have established that the youth in Borno and Yobe States are now against our cause. They have connived with security operatives and are actively supporting the government of Nigeria in its war against us. We have also resolved to fight back. We hereby declare an all-out war on you because you have formed an alliance with the Nigerian military and police to fight our brethren' (p. 81).

In 2014, Global Terrorism Index scored Boko Haram as the most fatal terrorist group in the world. In addition, in 2014 moreover, local evidences shows that the terrorist group is responsible for more than 2,000 death including an explosion of about 25 bomb on innocent civilians. These atrocities of Boko Haram is recorded despite claims by Nigeria's authorities including President Muhammadu Buhari of 'technically defeating' the insurgent group.

Therefore, the lacklustre performance of the successive COIN options taken by government and civilian group has necessitate the need of a coherent option that will assist in curbing the insurgent group.

THE CONSTRAINTS OF THE NIGERIA'S COUNTERINSURGENCY

To assist in making recommendation to curb the prevailing insurgency; the primary objective of this paper, it is imperative to highlight the factors that constraints the successive COIN strategies previously adopted against the Boko Haram group. Yes, it is arguable, indeed extremely to attribute the lacklustre performance of the successive COINs to a particular factor. This so because Boko Haram like many other modern insurgencies erupt in a set of complex issues crisscrossing social, political and economic circumferences, moreover embroiled with dynamic objectives. This study however found factor of highhandedness by the COIN operatives as having the crucial effects on the success of the COIN measures.

The excessive force use by the COIN operatives [SJTF, MNJTF and CJTF] both on the insurgent and importantly on the local population executed through indiscriminate killings, mass arrest, and detention without trials is significant in undermining the successes of the COIN campaigns. This perhaps made possible by sabotaging public support and cooperation toward the COIN operation. The fact that support of the population is crucial to COIN campaign has been popularise in several studies (Dixon, 2012; Galula, 1964; Kilcullen, 2006). Most of these scholars argued that insurgency and counterinsurgency is battle for legitimacy and support of the population. Whereas the insurgent are striving to off-root the legitimacy of the government, the counterinsurgent is struggling to inforce the legitimacy of the government back on the population. In this contest therefore, whichever group ascertain the support of the population, the victory is make in its favour.

The unchallenged agreement in the COIN literature is that; COIN is rather not a force, but salient tactics of winning the heart and minds [WHAM] of the larger population. Enormous evidence has shown the consequences of Nigeria's military centric approaches on its COIN campaign. For instance, in 2015, Secretary General to the United Nations Mr Ban Ki Moon caution Nigeria's government to desist on repressive actions pointing that military action can only weaken the insurgent but cannot proffer solution. Corroborating on this contention, a researcher at the Institute of Research and Development, Perouse de Montclos, in 2014 contend that the effective way to combat Boko Haram is to protect civilians. He stresses that without reordering the prevailing COIN tactic to adopt measures to regain the trust of communities, Nigeria's military is catch fighting an interminable insurgency.

The consequence of using force in fighting the Boko Haram according to successive literature not only wane the support of the population on the counterinsurgent force, but it also altered the integrity of government. The waring questions of integrity on the government as earlier observed is the hindrance to the various peace talks between the government and the insurgent group. The outright withdrawal in 2012 dialogue arrangement by insurgent is one fortifiable example. Not only that, integrity is also the factor that wane the legitimacy of the government from the larger population; a factor that disrupt mass support and acquiescence on its activities. Integrity issue moreover drained public hope and confidence on the existence of the state. For instance, because of the stunted trust on the integrity of the government, many people in the Nigeria's north affected by the insurgent rarely speaks against the insurgent. Indeed, even in the event of an eminent attack on security operatives, or government official. At the worst moreover, local prefer support and leaking intelligence for the insurgent than cooperating the counterinsurgent force. The disgruntled support of the local population on the counterinsurgent is what regularly use by the government and military to justify its percussion on the ordinary civilians in the Nigeria's north. Therefore, this paper contend that excessive force by Nigeria's military in their responses to the insurgent group is counterproductive in achieving the desired objective of curbing the insurgent group.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper examines the general counterinsurgency responses taken against the insurgent Boko Haram in Nigeria. It highlighted the differential responses including military and non-military responses. In the military response, the paper highlights the role of the Nigeria's military, and the intervention of regional military force 'Multinational Joint Task Force.' On the non-military tactics, the paper highlights on the political-legal options of enacting counterterrorism laws, as well as measures taken by civilian-defence force 'Civilian Joint Task Force.' In spite of the multifaceted COIN responses, the paper however argued that the overconcentration on and dominance of military tactic appeared counterproductive. Security operative highhandedness constrained the success of entire counterinsurgency campaign leaving the insurgent to perpetrate its violence unchallenged.

The Way Out

Since it is clear that the military centric COIN against the insurgent Boko Haram in Nigeria is essentially counterproductive. Therefore, to remedy the situation, this paper recommends the following.

- a. That classical military response to Boko Haram is no longer suitable. Therefore, ensuring the support of the population is necessary. The military and the government should redesign their COIN tactic on the hearts and minds approach. This can be ensured through relaxing some of the stringent COIN policies such as closure of markets, imposition of extended curfew hours, and restrictions of vehicle movements. The government can also take the realm of governance to the local population through provision of basic social services to ameliorate the hardships induced by the war.
- b. The successes made by the CJTF has demonstrated the relevance of communal force in the COIN campaign. In this respect, there is an urgent need to strengthen the CJTF through an established code of conduct to guide and checkmate their operation to prevent excessiveness and abuses.
- c. The fact that the insurgents operate across boundaries, and recently speculated to be engaged in cross-national recruitment among the countries of Lake-Chad Basin, in addition to the MNJTF, a Multinational Civilian Joint Task Force [MNCJTF] is required. Members of MNCJTF can be recruited from the local communities along the border areas. When established with an international code of conduct to guide their operation, MNCJTF will provide actionable intelligence both at the national and international level to contain the insurgency.

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