



Jihadist violence in Nigeria continues
**DEFEATING BOKO HARAM REQUIRES
 A MULTIFACETED APPROACH**

Boko Haram has killed more than 20.000 people making it the world's deadliest terror group, forcing over 2 million people to flee their homes. Addressing insecurity in Nigeria and Boko Haram requires a multifaceted approach.

On January 30, 2016 Boko Haram killed yet another 86 people in an attack in Maiduguri in Northern Nigeria. As part of the assault three female suicide bombers blew themselves up close to camps where internally displaced people had sought shelter from the six years long insurgency. The next day, another two attacks happened in the neighbouring country Chad reportedly killing more than 50 people. These incidents cast doubts on newly elected Nigerian president

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Defense forces should support the regional taskforce to avoid human rights abuses during the counter-insurgency.
- Root causes of the insurgency i.e. political and economic marginalisation should be addressed by supporting development in northern Nigeria.
- The role of women within Boko Haram and as protesters against Boko Haram should be included in future interventions and policies.
- International donors should contribute to long-term development solutions in the region alongside immediate humanitarian aid.

Nigeria trapped in a cycle of violence

"The humanitarian consequences of the conflict will not be solved only by immediate humanitarian intervention alone but requires long term support to development from international partners."

Muhammadu Buhari's claim on December 24 2015 to have "technically" defeated Boko Haram.

The development of Boko Haram

Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati w'al Jihad, is a Nigerian religious sect more commonly known as "Boko Haram" often translated to "Western Education is Forbidden". Boko Haram started out first and foremost as a war within Islam and a struggle over interpretations of Islamic ideas and identity, unfolding in the particular local political context of northern Nigeria where the role of religion, as elsewhere in Nigeria, is central. The group has become increasingly radicalised and the violence of Boko Haram has escalated, also as a response to the Nigerian army's brutal counterinsurgency.

In March 2015, the group pledged loyalty to Islamic State and took up the name "Islamic State in West Africa". They are also suspected of having links to a number of radical African Muslim groups like Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

Since president Buhari took office in March 2015, the Nigerian army have made significant military gains against Boko Haram. Boko Haram has in turn resorted to targetting civilians through deadly guerrilla warfare that increasingly includes female suicide bombers.

The deployment of the regional multilateral task force, which is financially supported by the EU and technically supported by the French anti-terror operation Barkhane as well as US soldiers, may also contribute to retaliations from Boko Haram. As such, a combination of Nigerian and local conflict dynamics, various military interventions and external influence from other radical jihadist groups has shaped the development of Boko Haram.

Counterinsurgency has led to violations of human rights

Nigerian military forces are accused of having committed serious human rights violations and war crimes during counterinsurgency operations against Boko Haram. The mutual retaliations between Boko

BOKO HARAM OVER TIME

2003-2009: Militant mobilisation phase

Under the charismatic leadership of Mohammed Yussuf, members of the group actively mobilised to demand the implementation of Sharia law in the northern Nigerian states.

2009-2013: Clandestine period

After the death of Mohammed Yusuf while he was held in police custody, Boko Haram re-emerged under the new leadership of Abukar Shekau, who transformed the movement from mobilising youth, to a clandestine network well equipped for asymmetrical warfare.

2013-2015: State of emergency in northern Nigeria

In response to the Nigerian army's brutal counterinsurgency in the northern Nigerian states, Boko Haram seizes territory and consciously provokes the military knowing they would strike back, causing the death of civilians.

2015 and on: Regionalisation of the insurgency

Return to guerrilla warfare of the clandestine period with haphazard attacks on civilians, markets, motor parks and religious places as well as an increasing number of attacks in the neighbouring countries Niger, Cameroon and Chad.



Nigeria

Haram's insurgency and the Nigerian army's counter-insurgency has trapped Nigeria in what Amnesty International has named a "cycle of violence", and consequently developed into a humanitarian crisis. After the president's election in 2015, there seemed to be a shared understanding that Buhari was indeed able to weaken Boko Haram by intensifying the counter-insurgency. Buhari provided the Nigerian army with more and better equipment and a more systematic strategy, and he collaborated with other states in the region and other external security actors. With the current deployment of the regional multinational task force there is a dire need to prevent the task force from continuing past mistakes of human rights abuses and economic sanctions on the populations that may strengthen local support to Boko Haram.

The role of women in Boko Haram

Boko Haram made international headlines in 2014 with the abduction of approximately 276 school girls in Northern Nigeria, whose destiny is still uncertain. The story that has unfolded in the global media

concentrates to a large extent on terror, sex slavery of abducted school girls and questions of international interventionism. Yet, the abduction of the schoolgirls from the town of Chibok is not the only way in which women and girls play a significant role in Boko Haram. The use of female suicide bombers is a new way in which women are increasingly involved in Boko Haram. The reasons why women get involved in the organisation – either as victims or perpetrators in the conflict – are often tied to gender inequality in Nigeria. Societal and cultural expectations of women to depend economically on men leave them with few options when male family members leave to become active members of Boko Haram or if the male breadwinner dies. Nigerian women have been at the forefront of Boko Haram's activities, not only as victims of abduction or suicide bombers but also as political activists against the conflict.

Staggering humanitarian consequences

The Boko Haram insurgency has entailed enormous humanitarian consequences in its wake. Civilians have been shot, beheaded, amputated, drowned, burned

The widespread insecurity and violence raises significant and immediate humanitarian concerns

“Civilians have been shot, beheaded, amputated, drowned, burned and bombed, and the violence has prompted the forced displacement of more than two million people in Nigeria and across the region.”

and bombed, and the violence has prompted the forced displacement of more than two million people in Nigeria and across the region. The widespread insecurity and violence raises significant and immediate humanitarian concerns. The forced displacement of people in northern Nigeria and in neighbouring countries continues to increase. As a consequence of people being displaced from their homes there are food shortages as farmland is not cultivated and many have been deprived of their means of living. These immediate humanitarian concerns are amplified and entangled with pre-existing conditions such as poverty, inequality and other grievances in northern Nigeria. The high level of insecurity constrains the conditions for humanitarian workers to alleviate the situation. Thus attempts to solve the humanitarian problems or significantly reduce the consequences have up till now been fairly fragmented.

In 2015 international donors, including the Danish Government, began to increase their contributions to immediate humanitarian crisis interventions. But, instability in northern Nigeria and the region is mainly

caused by economic marginalisation and poverty. The humanitarian consequences of the conflict will not be solved by immediate humanitarian intervention alone but requires long term support to development from international partners.

The Danish humanitarian contribution in 2015 to the Boko Haram related humanitarian crisis in Nigeria and neighbouring countries

Organisation	USD
Caritas	146.200
Danish Red Cross	906.440
Danish Refugee Council	292.254
ICRC	4.386.000
Save the Children	102.340
UNHCR	835.972
Total	6.669.205

Source: Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Personnel Assistance, HCP.

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Coverphoto: House in Maiduguri damaged by extremists ©AP, Jossy Ola

