

THE BUHARI ADMINISTRATION'S WAR AGAINST TERROR IN NIGERIA: AN APPRAISAL OF THE EVOLVING TRENDS SINCE 2015

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Abstract

There are several academic works on terrorism in Nigeria. However, such academic inquiries have not specifically hinged on the trends in the fight against terrorism. It is the existing hiatus in extant literature that occasioned the intervention of this study. The article analyzes the evolving trends of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration's war on terror in Nigeria since 2015. Using extant literature and oral historical sources in line with the interdisciplinary methods and adducing supporting evidence from statistics, it examines the drivers and typologies of terrorism in Nigeria. It identifies the negative effects of the phenomenon on the Nigerian economy and society. The study examines the successes and challenges the Buhari administration recorded and encountered in its quest to nip terrorism in the bud. It notes that those challenges have impeded the total success of the war on terror; this is to say that the administration has recorded marginal success in its quest to contain terrorism. The study advances some policy options that would help in stemming the rising tide of terrorism in Nigeria including inter alia maximum cooperation from the UN and procurement of modern military hardware.

Keywords: *Buhari's Administration; War; Terror; Nigeria; Evolving Trends*

Introduction

From the dawn of civilization or modern society, many goals of people, groups, and nations have been achieved with the use of fear or violence. It aids in self-defense or ensures conformity with personal preferences. The act of terrorism is as ancient as terrorism, just as the concept and usage of terror are not wholly new. Similar to this, T.A. Imobighe and A.N.T. Eguavon reveal that historically, the actions presently classified as terrorism have always been used as management strategies for violent confrontations. Terrorism was a key tool employed by both sides in

revolutionary or liberation battles across the world in the 1950s and 1960s, whether they were in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, or South America.¹

One of the biggest threats to global security that many nations are currently facing is terrorism. Terrorism has gotten serious attention worldwide because of the threat it presents to world peace and security. Particularly in wealthy nations, the scourge of terrorism is causing people, organizations, and states to express unprecedented worry. For instance, F.C. Onuoha cites a Global Market Institute (GMI) survey from 2006 that included 8,001 participants from the United States (US), Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom (UK), Russia, and Japan. The results indicated that the G8 countries' top preemptive concern was the threat of terrorism.² Over 90 percent (87 percent) of respondents in the US said they worry "some" to "all" the time about the rise of terrorism, and almost half (46 percent) said they worry "most" of the time about the issue. This number is much higher in France and Italy, where it is 62 and 60 percent, respectively. These results support the opinions of 73 percent of respondents who indicated that life has lately become "unsafe" in their nations".³

The stings of terrorism also affect developing nations, notably those on the continent of Africa. The terrorist assault on the United States of America (USA) on September 11, 2001, altered history and made terrorism a hot topic. After that incident, both domestically and internationally, terrorism has become a top issue. Notwithstanding the 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, which claimed 291 and 10 lives, respectively, the continent of Africa was not seen to be crucial in the post-9/11 war on terrorism.⁴ Nonetheless, the Mombasa bombings on November 28, 2002, shocked the globe and brought sub-Saharan Africa to light. This focus appears to have been strengthened by the ensuing surge of terrorism on the continent. The security risks on the continent have skyrocketed since

¹ T.A. Imogbighe and A.N.T. Eguavon, *Terrorism, and Counter-Terrorism: African Perspective* (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books PLC, 2006), 7-8.

² F.C. Onuoha, "Terrorism", H.A. Saliu and F.A. Aremu (eds.), *Introduction to International Relations* (Ibadan: College Press and Publishers Limited, 2013,), 292.

³ *Business Wire*, "Terrorism and Energy Crisis Top Concerns of G8 Citizens; New GMI Poll Exposes the Fears of Citizens of the G8 Nations but also Reveals the US and Canada are Optimistic about the Future", available at <https://findarticles.com/p/article/mi MOEIN/is2006 July 14/ain16534639> (Accessed, November 16, 2021).

⁴ P.I. Ukase cited in O.O. Okpeh, "Terrorism and Insurgency and their Implications for the Economic Development of Nigeria" (Lead Paper Presented at the National Conference organized by the Centre for Peace and Development Studies, Benue State University, Markurdi, November 30, 2016), 1-6.

the aftermath of 9/11. Apart from the increasing insurgency, the continent is also dealing with an increase in terrorism due to the actions of organizations like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the AI Shabab in Somalia. The efforts of other worldwide Islamist terrorist organizations to establish a presence in Africa serve to emphasize this even more.

Nigeria in particular has seen and continues to have its fair share of security difficulties. Political and election-related conflicts, socioeconomic unrest, ethnic militias, insurgencies, border disputes, cults, and crime are a few of these security issues. The Nigeria Defense and Security Forces (DSF) have not been able to counteract the criminal inclinations of the majority of these threats. However, the activities of other insurgent groups, such as the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and the Fulani (herders) insurgency, as well as the resurgence of Boko Haram in Nigeria, seem to have exacerbated the country's current security dilemma.⁵

Before the 21st century, internal strife and civil wars, along with the humanitarian crisis they brought about, illegal drug trade, nuclear proliferation, the proliferation of light and small arms, and other forms of criminality, were the main issues that preoccupied public policymakers, the media, and especially the academic community. For instance, terrorism studies were viewed as a less significant career path in academia, while the press did not view it as a topic deserving of coverage in their publications. This was mostly because it presented a minor problem, and governments infrequently introduced laws to address it. Terrorism was not the main topic of discussion at conferences of international and continental organizations and non-state entities.⁶

The flood of terrorist operations in Africa generally, and Nigeria in particular, raises significant questions about whether the continent has turned into a hub of worldwide terrorism. But the story has altered. With the rebirth of democracy in Nigeria, many administrations have undertaken attempts to combat terrorism. Nonetheless, terrorism has remained highly well-known in Nigerian society, adversely affecting all facets of society and projecting a terrible image of the nation at internal fora. Since taking office in 2015, the civilian Buhari government has worked to reduce terrorism, but as of the time of this study, it appears that such efforts have not yet yielded the intended results because terrorist acts continue to be committed every day throughout

⁵ O.O. Okpeh, "Terrorism and Insurgency, 1-2.

⁶ O.O. Okpeh, "Terrorism and Insurgency, 1-2.

the nation. It is therefore imperative to study the factors responsible for the rise of terrorist activities in Nigeria, to understand this challenging phenomenon, and appropriate some policy options which might help in stemming the tide of terrorism in the focal area. In this connection, this paper will attempt to raise and address the following fundamental questions that touch on the concepts of terrorism. For instance, what is terrorism? What are the causes of terrorism in Nigeria? What are the typologies of terrorism in the study area? What are the evolving trends and challenges of fighting against terrorism under Buhari's administration? What are the implications of terrorism for the nation's economic development? What appropriate responses/measures would help in stemming the tide? These are the major concerns of this paper.

To achieve these, the paper employs the interdisciplinary approach in line with qualitative methodology with empirical data to examine the evolving trends of the Buhari administration's war against terror in Nigeria and its effects on the economy and society of the people since 2015. The fieldwork undertaken consists essentially of identifying printed materials in the form of books, journal articles, statistical, and photographic evidence, and internet materials that treat the issue of terrorism in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world. Besides, oral interviews were conducted with members of the armed forces, farmers, headers, traders, and members of the general public who are involved in the fight against terrorism or who are direct victims of terror and those who are presumed to have considerable knowledge of terrorism in Nigeria. In doing this, priority is given to states that are most affected such as Zamfara, Taraba, Kebbi, Kaduna, Adamawa, Gombe, Bauchi, and Sokoto. The information gathered from these sources was carefully analyzed and marched with written sources to enhance a better understanding of the effects of rural banditry on the Nigerian economy and society.

Understanding Terrorism

To enhance a profound understanding of this study, this segment conceptualized terrorism and distinguished it from insurgency. Terrorism has become one of the most common security challenges to most countries across the globe. Arising from the threat terrorism poses to international peace and security; it has attracted a lot of attention globally. This justifies why there is a long-standing consensus in the academic community over the disagreement surrounding the conceptual and operational definition of terrorism. However, even though there is still a lack of agreement on what constitutes terrorism,

attempts at arriving at a definition have been made.⁷ At the 1999 Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) defined an act of terrorism as:

Any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity, or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage.⁸

Terrorism is defined as the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by non-state actors to achieve political, economic, religious, or social purpose through fear, compulsion, or intimidation" in the 2015 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report.⁹ J.J. Forex and J. Giroux define terrorism as a method that employs violence or the threat of violence as a coercive approach to induce fear and political intimidation to support the aforementioned viewpoints.¹⁰ Based on the foregoing conceptual underpinnings, this research views terrorism as unlawful or unconstitutional activities committed by the "strongest force" largely for the aim of instilling dread and terror in the victims and achieving their objectives.

The term "insurgency" refers to a "protracted political-military action" that employs irregular armed forces and is defined as "a fight between" a non-governing group and the ruling authority in which the non-ruling party uses political resources and violence.¹¹ A national movement aimed at overturning the government is known as an insurgency. That is a revolt.¹² Movements to topple governments are called insurgencies. For

⁷ R. Apau, "Terrorism, Violent Extremism and Insurgency in the Sahel Region: An Assessment", *African Journal of Terrorism* (Vol.8, No.9,2019), 5.

⁸ C. Batolotta, "Terrorism in Nigeria: The Rise of Boko Haram", *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* (Vol.5, No.1, 2011), 44-57.

⁹ The Organization of African Unity, 1999 OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. Available at <https://www.caert.org/dz/official-documents/convention/convention-terrorismpdf> (Accessed, November 2, 2012).

¹⁰ J.J. Forests and J. Giroux, "Terrorism and Political Violence in Africa: Contemporary Trends in a Shifting Terrain", *Perspectives on Terrorism* (Vol. 5, No.3-4), 2.

¹¹ "The Difference between Terrorists and Insurgents" available on <https://www.worldreportnews.com/us-foreign-policy-archieved> (Retrieved on November 10, 2021).

¹² See <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/insurgency> (Retrieved on November 2, 2021).

instance, when the colonies battled England for independence, the United States (US) was created via the actions of rebels. Across the world, several insurgencies use violence and other tactics to further their goals. has been employed in less serious circumstances in modern times. An insurgency, for instance, can refer to a group of rebels within a business, political organization, or educational institution.¹³

Insurgency is a strategy adopted by groups that cannot attain their political objectives through conventional means or by a quick seizure of power. Insurgency could also be defined as any kind of armed uprising against an incumbent government.¹⁴ To shield the rebels and eventually tip the scales in their favor, it is characterized by lengthy asymmetric violence, ambiguity, the utilization of difficult terrain (jungles, mountains, and urban areas), psychological warfare, and political mobilization.¹⁵ Extrapolating from the previous research, it is evident that insurgency and terrorism typically result from the same incidental circumstances, with terrorism frequently being used as a strategy within a larger insurgent operation. For instance, it is well known that organizations like Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Somalia use a combination of insurgency and terrorist methods. Moreover, terrorism may exist on its own, as seen by well-known terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS).

The structural organization of terrorist organizations has improved. They mobilize local, regional, and foreign fighters in various theaters while raising money. Even if they continue to commit heinous acts of terrorism, this is "no longer their primary line of business."¹⁶ Al-Qaeda, its affiliates, and other Jihadi groups are engaged in waging insurgencies that are primarily aimed at overthrowing local governments, as J.M. Berger has explained, but their self-described jihad includes classic terrorist activities: acts of extra-normal violence against noncombatants in the service of political ends, designed to instill fear and thereby influence a wider audience.¹⁷

¹³ See <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/insurgency> (Retrieved on November 2, 2021).

¹⁴ P. Calvert, *Terrorism, Civil War, and Revolution: Revolution and International Politics* (3rd Edition, New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2020), 3.

¹⁵ O.O. Okpeh, "Terrorism and Insurgency and their Implications, 5.

¹⁶ O.O. Okpeh, "Terrorism and Insurgency and their Implications, 5.

¹⁷ J.M. Berger, "The Connectivity between Terrorism, Insurgency, and Civil War", cited from <https://www.news.steingroup.com> (Accessed on November 08, 2021).

The argument is that there is a link between insurgency and terrorism. All of these concepts—insurgency, terrorism, war, secessionist or separatist agitations, and so forth—have certain characteristics that tie them together and make them comparable. These characteristics include violence, insecurity, murder, assassinations, and crime. Terrorism and insurgency are best described by these terms. Thus, they have major negative effects on the economy and society of Nigeria wherever and whenever they occur.

Typologies of Terrorism in Nigeria

There are many different types of terrorism in Nigeria, including bombs, hostage-taking, abduction, arson, assaults, and hijackings. The paper covers one of these forms of terrorism in the order to help readers better comprehend them. The most frequent kind of terrorism is bombing. For their horrific crimes, terrorists may readily create or get improvised explosive devices in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world. These gadgets are more recent, smaller, and concealable. They are quite damaging; for instance, two US embassies in Africa were destroyed on August 7, 1998. Almost 200 individuals, including 12 innocent American citizens, lost their lives in the bombs, and over 5,000 civilians were injured.¹⁸ To build a bomb, terrorists can also employ supplies that are widely available to the general public. In Nigeria, bombs occurred in practically all of the Federation's states. The criminals have attacked people from all walks of life, and as a result, they have bombed government buildings and places of worship (police stations, army barracks, markets, motor parks, and schools, among others). To spread terror and accomplish their objectives, they do this.

Kidnapping and hostage-taking are tactics that terrorists use to gain leverage in negotiations, garner attention, and further their financial goals. Kidnapping and hostage-taking have evolved into one of the simplest tactics employed by terrorist organizations in Nigeria to achieve their objectives. When kidnapping is successful, terrorists may receive cash, the release of imprisoned allies, and long-lasting publicity. The act of taking hostages while seizing a building or other object is known as hostage-taking. In contrast to an abduction, taking hostages results in a conflict with the police.¹⁹ It pushes the government to make difficult choices or give in to the terrorist's demands. It is overtly intended to grab and hold the attention of the

¹⁸ A.E. Udeoji and K. Olayode, *Contemporary Strategic Studies*. This is a Course Material Developed for the Teaching and Learning of the National Open University of Nigeria for INR 441, Pp. 134- 135.

¹⁹ A.E. Udeoji and K. Olayode, *Contemporary Strategic Studies*, p.135.

media. Nearly everyone in Nigeria has become their target. Since Nigerian democracy has begun to flourish once more, this ailment has gained notoriety.

Armed assaults such as raids and ambushes are attacks or assassinations, murders and the murdering of victims, frequently with bombs or small guns. Drive-by shootings are a frequent tactic used by terrorist organizations that are inept or poorly coordinated. In the past, terrorists have killed certain people, causing them to suffer physically, financially, mentally, and occasionally even fatally. In Nigeria, roads and rural regions are the primary locations for terrorist assaults. Assassins typically ambush their prey on major thoroughfares. Sometimes they capture them in cars and take them to their killing grounds to carry out their will. The attackers also attack commercial cars, killing all of the people inside.²⁰

Arson and the types of terrorism that exist in Nigeria cannot be properly explored separately. Incendiary devices are inexpensive and simple to conceal. Terrorist organizations that may not be as well-organized, outfitted, or trained as large terrorist organizations can readily carry out arson and firebomb attacks. An attempt is made to destabilize and discredit the government in power by setting fire to or firebombing a hotel, industrial complex, utility facility, or government or government-owned structure. One occasionally wonders why the terrorists would benefit from burning state institutions given how many of them they set on fire.²¹

More so is hijacking, which is when a surface vehicle, its occupants, or its cargo are taken by force. Similar to hijacking, skyjacking occurs when an aircraft is taken, turning it into a mobile hostage scenario. It attracts a lot of media attention and gives terrorists access to captives from several countries. Skyjacking also gives the terrorists the ability to move the aircraft to a nation that supports their cause and offers them a people shield, which makes response challenging. On September 11, 2001, three planes were hijacked and then used to bomb several targeted locations inside the United States, resulting in the largest number of reported human deaths ever.²²

Additionally, there is rural banditry, which poses a significant threat to farmers, herders, and animals. This is because cattle rustling also results in the death of pastoralists and livestock. Data on the number of cattle rustled in Nigeria since 1999 are not frequently available, but the author was able to get the 2013 numbers and evaluate them as shown in Table 1 below.

²⁰ Oral Interview with O. Olajire, 65, Lecturer and Head, Department of Political Science, KolaDaisi University, Ibadan, Nigeria, December 12, 2021.

²¹ A.E. Udeoji and K. Olayode, *Contemporary Strategic Studies*, p.35.

²² Oral Interview with M. Babangida, 34, Student, Zamfara, July 10, 2021.

Table 1: Estimated Number of Rustled Cattle and Associated Deaths in Nigeria in 2013

State	Herders Killed	No. of Cattle Rustled
Plateau	87	7,200
Nasarawa	125	12,000
Benue	17	2,000
Zamfara	37	2,462
Niger	15	500
Gombe	NA	99
Yobe	NA	92
Bauchi	NA	204
Kwara	NA	204

Source: *Sunday Trust*, June 1, 2014

According to Table 3, the statistics on cattle rustling incidences for just 2013 are highly illuminating. More recent data on cattle theft and the number of herdsmen killed nationwide, including incidents in the North Central states of Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Kwara, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, demonstrate the humanitarian crisis linked to cattle theft as an expression of rural banditry. Dr. Garus Gololo, secretary of the Myetti Allah Cattle Rearers Association of Nigeria (MACBN) in Benue State, claims that 28,000 cows were stolen in Plateau, 25,000 in Nasarawa, 8,680 in Benue, 1,650 in Kwara, and 1,500 in the Federal Capital Territory. 2,500 herdsmen were killed in Benue, 264 in the Plateau, 150 in Kwara, 70 in Nasarawa, and 7 in the FCT. According to reports, livestock rustlers have dispersed from the northern states of Zamfara, Sokoto, and Kaduna and moved southward to the North-Central regions.²³

In addition, terrorism encompasses a wide range of additional forms of violence. As a means of retaliation for security breaches, defections, or information sharing, terrorist organizations intentionally maim their individuals. When terrorist groups need to raise money for their activities but lack sponsorship from friendly governments, they also engage in thefts and

²³ *Weekly Trust Newspaper*, May 16, 2015.

extortion. As we become more and more dependent on computer networks to transmit information and give connection in today's contemporary and fast-paced world, cyber-terrorism, a new kind of terrorism, will only gain prominence. Terrorists may carry out their activities with little to no risk to themselves thanks to cyber terrorism.²⁴ Also, it provides attackers a chance to disrupt computers and networks. As a result, crucial business or government functions are halted. Although this type of terrorism is less well-known than earlier terrorist attacks, it nonetheless has the potential to be extremely destructive and destabilizing.

Drivers of Terrorism in Nigeria, 1999- 2020

There are several causes or motivating elements for terrorism in Nigeria. Just the most important ones, such as psychological, economic, political, and religious issues, are considered in this research. Psychologically, man feels that he is in charge of everything in life, which makes him hungry. D. Polang, an oral informant, claims that certain people's ambition to satisfy their limitless needs and wants led them to become so greedy that they engaged in various illegal activities, including terrorism.²⁵ To corroborate the above, an interviewee, D. Enegesele noted that:

Some people want to possess what they do not have or labor for. Greediness has compelled them to commit to rural banditry to forcefully achieve their needs. Some indulge in this heinous act to kidnap, suffer the victims of rural banditry, and extort money from their relatives or government authority.²⁶

From the foregoing, it follows that, although being against the law, terrorism has developed into a thriving "business" in modern Nigeria. When a victim is abducted, the kidnappers acquire riches at the victim's expense, and if the ransom is not paid, the victim is killed.

Economically, some perpetrators of terrorist activities have joined the evil wagon primarily to improve their economic fortunes. Agreeing with this position, G. Barcker argued that there is a nexus between wealth and terrorism, this is because "nations or regions that are experiencing rapid growth appear to have lower incidences of terrorism".²⁷ To corroborate the

²⁴ A.E. Udeoji and K. Olayode, *Contemporary Strategic Studies*, p.34.

²⁵ Oral Interview with D. Polang, 42, Civil Servant, Jos, August 10, 2021.

²⁶ Oral Interview with D. Enegeseles, 42, Lecturer, Department of Computing Science, KolaDaisi University, Ibadan, December 12, 2021.

²⁷ G. Barcker, cited in A.E. Udeoji and K. Olayode, *Contemporary Strategic Studies*. This is a Course Material Developed for the Teaching and Learning of the National Open University of Nigeria for INR 441, Pp. 134- 135.

above argument, an indigene of Zamfara State, B.S. Umar who is also an oral informant noted that terrorism in Nigeria is caused or at least aggravated by economic deprivation of a population where there is the dominance of territory and misdistribution of resources.²⁸

Socially, Nigeria has a high rate of both unemployment and poverty. Nigeria generates a large number of graduates each year from universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, and other higher educational institutions, but finding employment after graduation has remained difficult for them. The inference is that these individuals who invested resources in their education have grown poorer and that many of them have caused trouble for Nigerian society by participating in various social ills, such as terrorism. An interview with Changwak Emmanuel Jonah revealed:

Poverty is the underlying cause of terrorism in Nigeria. It is on poverty that all other drivers/causes of terrorism are built. Once poverty has been alleviated the issues of terrorism will be a thing of the past. This is because whenever terrorists of any kind carried out their activities, the intention is to intimidate people and make money or improve their economic lot (bandits, *Boko Haram*, Cattle rustlers, Fulani militia).²⁹

According to statistics from the World Bank (WB) and other sources, Nigeria has a high rate of unemployment, which contributes to poverty and an increase in terrorist activity. The numbers in Table 1 illustrate this situation graphically.

²⁸ Oral Interview with B.S. Umar, 40, Public Servant, Makurdi, November 10, 2021.

²⁹ Oral Interview with C.E. Jonah, 43, Civil Servant, Kano, August 20, 2021.

Table 1: Unemployment in Nigeria, 1996-2020

Year	Unemployment Rate	Year	Unemployment Rate
1996	3.769999981	2008	3.539000034
1997	3.760999918	2009	3.721999884
1998	3.757999897	2010	3.76699996
1999	3.792999983	2011	3.769999981
2000	3.779999971	2012	3.734999895
2001	3.778000116	2013	3.703000069
2002	3.816999912	2014	4.561999798
2003	3.821000099	2015	4.31099987
2004	3.786000013	2016	7.059999943
2005	3.74000001	2017	8.388999939
2006	3.645999908	2018	8.243000031
2007	3.565000057	2019	8.095999718
		2020	7.960000038

Source: World Bank's World Development Indicators, 2020

The above table demonstrates that for more than 20 years, unemployment has been a serious problem in Nigeria. The unemployment rate varies but is often high; from 1996 to 2013, it increased little but steadily. Although there was a little uptick from 2014 to 2015, the jobless rate skyrocketed from 2015 and 2016. The amount of unemployment from 2016 to 2019 was 8 million, and although it had largely decreased by 2020, it was still quite high and hurt the country's ability to fight terrorism.

Politically, Terrorist operations in Nigeria have been linked to governmental failure. Corruption has caused the populace to become dehumanized, traumatized, marginalized, and forgotten, which has led to state failure. People with bad tempers in the general public occasionally engage in terrorist acts to make a living. B.S.Umar, a participant in the interview, stressed this point saying:

Corrupt practices in administrations have torn Nigeria apart; this has manifested in misappropriation and embezzlement of government funds. It has created a serious hardship for the citizenry propelling others to go into the "terrorist industry". The terrorists have blamed the government over bias, incompetence and mismanagement, misappropriation, and personal

aggrandizement. Because of the aforementioned, terrorist groups have employed the use of brutal force to accomplish their needs.³⁰

Religiously, several terrorist organizations in Nigeria founded by individuals are driven and run according to religious principles. P. Rose reveals that terrorist attacks have historically been committed on religious grounds with the intent to either disseminate or impose a system of thought or opinion. The *Maitatsine*, *Boko Haram*, and the Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) are well-known instances of religiously inspired terrorism in Nigeria. Mohammed Marwa invented *Maitatsine*, which first gained notoriety in the 1970s and '80s and had devastating repercussions.³¹ Mohammed disproved the legitimacy of the Mohammedan priesthood and incited riots that left hundreds of people dead. With its focus on forbidding western education and westernization from a larger viewpoint, *Boko Haram* also arose in the 2000s. This terrorist organization gained notoriety by vehemently rejecting anything Western, which it believes corrupts Islam.

In a 2009 interview with the group's head, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) discovered that Mohammed Yusuf opposed the idea of a spherical earth and stated that it should be rejected since it goes against Islamic doctrine. He also argued against the scientific consensus that rain comes from water that the sun has evaporated. He also argued against the Darwinian theory of evolution. Yusuf repeated the group's goals of altering the educational system and rejecting democracy before he was killed. The gang uses terrorism to try to accomplish these goals.³²

Implications of Terrorism on the Nigerian State

The detrimental effects of terrorism on the Nigerian State are covered in this section. To do this successfully, a variety of topics have received research, including demographics, education, market/trade, and psychological consequences, among others. Nigeria registered roughly 20,375 terrorist-related fatalities between 2001 and 2017, according to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), which is based on demographic data.³³ 2014 saw a rise in terrorist acts, with 662 events, 4,940 fatalities, and 2,780 injuries. In 2016 and 2017, there were 466 and 411 instances, resulting in

³⁰ Oral Interview with B.S. Umar, 40, Public Servant, Makurdi, November 10, 2021.

³¹ P. Rose cited in A.E. Udeoji and K. Olayode, *Contemporary Strategic Studies*. This is a Course Material Developed for the Teaching and Learning of the National Open University of Nigeria for INR 441, Pp. 134- 135.

³² The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) interview with Muhammed Yusuf, October 15, 2008.

³³ Global Terrorism Index (GTI) of 2001 and 2017.

1,832 and 1,532 deaths, while there were 919 and 852 injuries, respectively. Terrorist assaults on security infrastructure and communities in North-East Nigeria resumed in 2018.³⁴ These statistics show that the terror threat is still wreaking havoc in Nigeria, despite a discernible drop in activity between 2014 and 2015 and 2016 and 2017. Nigeria has consistently ranked third in the world for the years 2016, 2017, and 2018; the table that is shown here sheds further insight into the situation.

Table 2: The Incidents of Terrorism and Casual Rates in Nigeria

Year	Number of Incidents	Number of Deaths	Number Injured	World Ranking
2014	662	7,512	2, 246	Third most terrorized country in the world
2015	588	4, 940	2, 780	Third most terrorized country in the world
2016	466	1, 832	919	Third most terrorized country in the world
2017	411	1,532	852	Third most terrorized country in the world
2018	562	2, 040	772	Third most terrorized country in the world Third most terrorized country in the world

Source: A.N. Thoma, "Policing Conflict Areas in Nigeria: Contents, Context, and Operational Strategies", E.Uchendu (ed.), *Nigeria's Resource War* (United States: Vernom Press, 2021), 761-762.

This table demonstrates that terrorist activity has been steadily increasing in Nigeria, but it also suggests that terrorism is still being committed there regularly. In the 2018 Human Development Index (HDI), Nigeria came in at number one with indices of 216,000 country-of-origin refugees, 1,707,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), 7,000,000 homeless people, 11,600,000 orphans, 31 inmates per 100,000 people, 9.8% homicide rate, 15.5 suicide rate, and a 48 percent depth of food security deficits. The HDI on human security, however, reveals that Nigeria was rated 152 in the 2016 report, with indices of 152 000 refugees from the nation of origin, and

³⁴ A.N. Thoma, "Policing Conflict Areas in Nigeria: Contents, Context, and Operational Strategies", E.Uchendu (ed.), *Nigeria's Resource War* (United States: Vernom Press, 2021), 761-762.

2,096, 000 IDPs. These IDPs are necessary for a large part because of terrorist activity.

Evolving Trends in the Buhari Administration's Fight against Terrorism

For residents to feel secure and engage in economic activities like farming and other agribusinesses to make a livelihood, the government (whether at the federal or state level) is tasked with protecting their lives and property. The Nigerian government does not sit idly by as the robbers go about their business. To ensure that the bandits are expelled, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) has security forces sent to the affected districts. A special squad called "Operation Safe Haven" was developed for North-Central Nigeria and stationed in Plateau State with its areas of operation spanning Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, and the Kwara States to deal with banditry and other associated offenses.³⁵

In the North-West, a similar operation called "Operation Saharan/Operation Harbin Kunama II" was launched to curb banditry and associated crimes mostly committed in the states of Zamfara, Kaduna, and the periphery of Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, and Kano. Banditry and other types of insecurity still exist, nevertheless. An evaluation of the local security situation led the FGN to begin Operation Accord, a new operation to combat banditry, on June 4, 2020.³⁶ Killite claims that the military of this operation quickly destroyed 392 bandits and other criminal groups torturing zone residents by assuming responsibility and launching land and air offensives.³⁷

Along with the foregoing, the then Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Tukur Yusuf Buratai announced the launch of "Operation Sahel Sanity" on July 06, 2020, as part of the festivities of the Nigeria Army Day Celebration of the year. The Nigerian Army mega camp IV Faskari, Katsina State, was established right away. The objective of the operation is to assist "Operation Hardin Daji" in containing the rural banditry and other security concerns in the North-West region. The illegal activity carried out by the bandits hindered social, economic, and agricultural operations, leaving

³⁵ Joab-Peterside, S. (2020), "Nigeria's contemporary security challenges: Herders-Farmers Conflict and Banditry", *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol. 10, No.17. pp.27-38.

³⁶ Joab-Peterside, S. (2020), "Nigeria's contemporary security challenges, 35.

³⁷ Killite cited in Joab-Peterside, S. (2020), "Nigeria's contemporary security challenges, 34.

Nigeria vulnerable to food shortages.³⁸ It is on record that this operation in a short period eliminated 8 bandits, detained 33 suspects (of different offenses), recovered 943 cows, 633 sheep/ram, 7 AK47 rifles, 1 GPMG, and 16 Dane guns were seized from bandits in the attack in Katsina State. Throughout the first month of the anti-banditry effort known as "Operation Sahel Sanity," several bandit camps, notably the famed "Dangote Triangle," and their logistical bases were eliminated".³⁹

Since the bandits' numbers are still rising and their destructive effects are still present, the FGN's aforementioned security operations only slightly succeeded. As a result, the governments of the northern states established their security units to cooperate with the FGN forces to maintain peace and protect people, crops, and food. For instance, the Kaduna State Government formed the "Kaduna State Vigilance Service" in 2018 to support the operations of other security agencies in gathering intelligence and other crime prevention measures.⁴⁰ In connection with this, the Sokoto State Government established a security organization called "Yan Banga" that patrols the State's rural areas. The Sokoto Corps Marshal was founded by the same government and stationed at State tertiary institutions and traffic junctions to supplement local internal security. Abdulaziz Yari's administration in Zamfara State created an armed group known as "Yan Kasai" Local Vigilantes, but the current administration disbanded it and gave the local vigilantes authority to perform security duties without carrying weapons to check-mate and report criminal elements' activities.⁴¹

The state administration of Borno State also established several local security organizations. To protect human life and food crops, hunters from all across the North and the surrounding nations were also asked for assistance in battling banditry and other sorts of criminal activity. The gang is armed with pump-action and light weapons made locally. Banditry activities and other types of crime are increasing in Northern Nigeria despite all of these attempts; therefore their efforts have not yet produced the anticipated outcome. This has adversely impacted Nigeria's food security and

³⁸ To understand in detail the formation of Operation Sahel, the reader is advised to read the *Vanguard News Paper*, December 21, 2020, available at vanguardngr.com/2020/12/b... Also see *Thisday News Paper*, January 12, 2021.

³⁹ Ndidi is cited by Joab-Peterside, S. (2020), "Nigeria's contemporary security challenges,

⁴⁰ O. Ojo cited in Joab-Peterside, S. (2020), "Nigeria's contemporary security challenges, 35.

⁴¹ Joab-Peterside, S. (2020), "Nigeria's contemporary security challenges, 35.

has significantly harmed the whole nation in all spheres of life.⁴² Based on the aforementioned, it is essential to establish strategies or policy choices that would aid in halting the spread of rural banditry in Northern Nigeria and elsewhere to ensure the country's people and food security.

J. Erunke points out that Operation Python Dance has been renamed Operation Egwu Eke by the Nigerian army, which is now led by President Muhammadu (in the Ibo language).⁴³ To stymie the Indigenous People of Biafra efforts started in South-Eastern Nigeria (IPOB). Later, it was renamed Operation Atilogwu I, which stands for Operation Dancing for Peace. In talking about this further, Erunke reveals:

The army which announced the change in the operation's nomenclature, through the media coordinator of the Operation, Colonel Aminu Iliyasu, however, did not state the reason for the action. The operation, designated for South-East and South-South according to the Nigeria Army begins on November 1, 2019. It is expected to address the current insecurity being experienced in the two neighboring geopolitical zones.⁴⁴

Several Nigerians disagreed with the foregoing, calling the action a misguided priority. The service was also ordered by the critics to refocus on the geopolitical regions of the northeast and north-west, which are being torn apart by Boko Haram terrorists and bandits, respectively. The bulk of the young people in these geopolitical zones is not interested in this effort, which has so far had very little results. Typically, they see it as a tactic to hurt their territory and as such, they demand self-defense. Here are some snippets from E. Okeke's brainwashed words as an illustration. Thugs from the Fulani Caliphate, whose emirates go by the names of the military, police, and so forth, are more powerful than Kanu and the IPOB organization, not the Igbos. Since Kanu cannot lead the IPOB group in a Bloody Engagement against the thugs of the Fulani caliphate with its emirates nicknamed military, police, *et cetera.*, they were even stronger than the IPOB group. The day of cowardly empty noisemakers is done. In the current era of Bloody Engagement, every community, town, and city in Igboland is required to be fully armed,

⁴² Oral Interview with P.S. Agwa, 35, Public Servant, Maiduguri, Borno State, December 01, 2021.

⁴³ J. Erunke, "Nigerian Army Rename Operation Python Dance to Operation Dance for Peace", *Vanguard Newspaper*, October 16, 2019, Also Available at <https://www.vanguardngr.com>. Accessed on January 30, 2021.

⁴⁴ J. Erunke, "Nigerian Army Rename Operation Python Dance to Operation Dance for Peace."

eradicate the thugs of the Fulani caliphate with its emirates known as the military and police, and burn down the barracks of Fulani thugs known as the military and police, among other things. In their neighborhood, town, or city Igboland should be covered with Biafra flags, and an interim Biafra administration should be formed. Anyim Pius Anyim is the Biafra Republic's interim leader. Any hamlet, town, or city that does not immediately arm itself with thugs from the Fulani Caliphate's emirates, military, police, *et cetera* will be considered a barren territory, and we will eradicate such a community, town, or city off the face of the planet. The Biafra Republic in the southeast, the Niger Delta Republic in the south, the Oduduwa Republic in the southwest, the North East Republic, the North West Republic, and the North Central Republic all have sovereign states that are non-negotiable in 2019 due to their native populations. Only the Sword makes decisions. The Lord Is With Us! (SIC).⁴⁵ Similarly, In response to Operation Dance for Peace's name change, D. Ayo said, "Go and dance in Sambisa forest where you badly needed. Whether you are dancing for peace or not, the South-East does not need you".⁴⁶ The information above has demonstrated that the locals were dissatisfied with the establishment and running of this enterprise.

Challenges of Fighting Terrorism in the Buhari's Administration

Muhammadu Buhari's administration has faced several major difficulties in the war against terrorism since the inception of his administration in 2015; these difficulties have hampered the administration's fight against terrorism. These formidable obstacles include a lack of resources, a lack of sophisticated and quantitative weaponry, corruption, mistakes in administration, poor information collection, and betrayal among the soldier's coworkers, among others.

First and foremost, despite the massive sums of money that Muhammadu Buhari's administration has approved for and spent on Nigeria's defense industry since 2015, the army and Senate of Nigeria, who are legally obligated to defend the nation's territorial integrity, continue to lament the lack of funding for the fight against terrorism. For instance, Senator Ali Ndume, the Senator for Borno South and the Chairman of the

⁴⁵ E. Okeke's Reaction to the Formation and Renaming of Operation Python Dance to Operation Dance for Peace was electronically transferred to my Facebook Page in October 2021.

⁴⁶ D. Ayo's Reaction to the Formation and Renaming of Operation Python Dance to Operation Dance for Peace was electronically transferred to my Facebook Page in October 2021.

Senate Committee on the Army is quoted as saying in an article written by A. Oluwafemi and published in the Cable News Newspaper, "N 29 billion budgeted for the army's capital expenditure in 2021 shows that Nigeria is not serious about tackling insecurity."⁴⁷ He further argued that countries like Chad and Cameroun spend more on their military compared to Nigeria, the self-acclaimed giant of Africa. He (Ndume) reiterates that the Senate on the army is facing difficulty in winning the war on terror. The Senator emphasized that now that the country wants to review the army budget; it is still less than 30 billion per capita and that is what is used to procure ammunition and other supplies in fighting terrorism.⁴⁸ Another published article authored by F. Owolabi discloses how the then Chief of Army Staff, Ibrahim Attahiru (now of blessed memory) stated that they needed more funds to tackle insecurity. Attahiru was more forthcoming when he stated that, "the support of lawmakers is needed to assist the army to defeat the security threats".⁴⁹ These depict that the stakeholders in fighting terrorism need more funds to prosecute the war for victory to be assured.

Besides, it is said that corruption and oversights in the Nigerian army obstruct Buhari's efforts to wage an effective battle against terrorism. Every time the Nigerian army overthrows the government, it is customary that they cite a variety of factors, including corruption. There is, however, a deluge of material indicating that the Nigerian army likewise exhibits significant levels of corruption and poor management.⁵⁰ While some of the corruption cases took place while President Buhari was in office, others were already in progress before he took office. For instance, President Buhari changed the heads of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (Gabriel Olanisakin, Tukur Buratai, Ibok Ekwe Ibas, and Sadique Abubakar) in January 2021. Lucky Irabor handed over the reins as Chief of Defence Staff to Ibrahim Attahiru, who was named Chief of Army Staff, and Isiaka Amao, who was named Chief of

⁴⁷ A. Oluwafemi, "Ndume: Nigeria is not Serious About Fighting Insecurity with N 29 Billion Capital Budget for Army", *The Cable News*, April 29, 2021, available at thecable.ng/ndume-nigeria-not... Accessed on January 28, 2022.

⁴⁸ A. Oluwafemi, "Ndume: Nigeria is not Serious About Fighting Insecurity with N 29 Billion Capital Budget for Army"

⁴⁹ F. Owolabi, "We Need More Funds to Tackle Insecurity, Army Chiefs Tells Senate", *The Cable News*, April 21, 2021, available at thecable.ng/we-need-more-funds. Accessed on January 28, 2022.

⁵⁰ Oral Interview with an Anonymous Nigerian Army Officer, Calabar, Cross River State, November 02, 2021.

Staff.⁵¹ In an interview with the British Broad Casting Corporation (BBC), the National Security Adviser (NSA), Babagana Monguno, lamented that: The new service chiefs did not meet the money approved for the arms purchase when they assumed office. We do not know where the money went to. The President has given out some money for equipment but they are yet to arrive. The President has done his best by ensuring that the released exorbitant funds for the procurement of the weapons which are yet to be procured, they are not there. Now the President has employed new hands that might come up with new ideas. I am not saying that those that have retired have stolen the funds, no. But the funds might have been used in other ways unknown to anybody at present.⁵²

The quotation above demonstrates the Nigerian army's lack of accountability, corruption, and poor management. If weapons are not obtained and provided as required, the administration's battle against terror will be put in jeopardy. It will be exceedingly challenging for the Buhari government to defeat terrorism in the face of events like these. The vulnerability of the Nigerian army will be made public due to the attacks and deaths of several soldiers.

The Nigerian army's lack of modern, qualitative and quantitative weaponry made it more difficult to combat terrorists. The reason why terrorists have more advanced weapons than the army, according to an armed officer serving in Ikom, Cross River State of Nigeria who spoke on the condition of anonymity, is that when the money for the purchase of arms and ammunition is released, those in charge of the purchase embezzle or improperly use it. As a result, this has put the valiant Nigerian military in a bind even on the battlefield, and as a result, many troops have died there. A. Ndume underlined that it is rare to see an army officer when moving about to support the claim that there is not much-advanced weaponry available.⁵³ The same Senator did, however, recognize afterward that the Nigerian army's finances had improved. He was apprehended on January 5, 2021, in the Premium Times Daily, recognizing that the army had adequate funding for its campaign against terrorism. This suggests that the Buhari administration is trying its best to eradicate terrorism. Yet, given that terrorist attacks are

⁵¹ F. Owolabi, "Monguno: Money for Arms Missing Under Buhari's Service Chiefs", *The Cable News*, March 12, 2021, available at [thecable. ng/we-need-more-funds](https://www.thecable.ng/we-need-more-funds). Accessed on January 28, 2022.

⁵² F. Owolabi, "Monguno: Money for Arms Missing Under Buhari's Service Chiefs"

⁵³ N.Musa, "F.G. Votes 675 Billion for Arms Training of Soldiers", *The Guardian*, January 05, 2021.

occurring virtually daily in the nation at the time of this study, the efforts have not yet yielded the expected results.

Lack of good military intelligence and the betrayer among some soldier colleagues;⁵⁴ A very basic military practice or routine that is intended to assist stop terrorism or operations connected to terrorism is intelligence collection. Nonetheless, even throughout the time under discussion, the Nigerian army experiences inadequate information collecting. On the condition of anonymity, an army officer serving in the nation's north-eastern region remarked that soldiers in Nigerian battle zones lack previous knowledge of both their adversary and the topographical area. In this sense, several soldiers are typically slain in ambushes.⁵⁵

Sadly, it is said that there is a complete divide inside the army. The army's divisions were not as significant in earlier times as they are now. The army has been split based on religious, ethnic, and tribal sympathies, which has led to ill collaboration with the armed forces and contributed to the deaths of many troops, according to another army official (who did not want his name to be publicized). An important obstacle to the Buhari administration's fight against terrorism is the army's tendency to occasionally accept payments from terrorists in exchange for information regarding army troops.⁵⁶

Conclusion: Approaches to the Rescue of Terrorism in Nigeria

This dwelt on Nigeria's fight against terrorism during the Buhari administration, with an emphasis on the changing patterns after 2015. Before the restoration of democracy, it was reported that security threats and acts of terrorism had been detected in Nigeria for a very long time. However, the paper noted that since 1999, Nigeria returned to democratic rule amid a plethora of security difficulties, the country's security architecture has grown increasingly brittle. The most significant security threat now facing Nigeria is terrorism, which may take many different forms, including abduction, arson, rural banditry, hijacking, *et cetera*. Though it has a stronghold in the country's north, it affects the whole nation. It discussed the concept, types, and background of terrorism. The causes and repercussions of terrorism in

⁵⁴ Oral Interview with an Anonymous Nigerian Army Officer, Gusau, Zamfara State, October 04, 2021.

⁵⁵ Oral Interview with an Anonymous Nigerian Army Officer, Gusau, Zamfara State, October 04, 2021.

⁵⁶ Oral Interview with an Anonymous Nigerian Army Officer, Maiduguri, Borno State, October 04, 2021.

Nigeria were then highlighted. It then went on to demonstrate how detrimental the terrorists' actions were to the Nigerian State. The research assessed the government's and other stakeholders' attempts to combat terrorism, highlighting the fact that official measures have not yet yielded a satisfying outcome. The study advances several policy recommendations in this respect that it believes might aid in mitigating the spread of terrorism in Nigeria.

One of the factors contributing to rural banditry in the study region is greed. In this regard, the article highlighted that Nigerians (particularly the youth) should be content with what they have. Because their income is unstable, they should pursue other legal endeavors like farming, trading, and animal husbandry rather than resorting to crime. Secondly, many bandits are young people who have graduated from various educational institutions but have not been offered productive jobs by the Nigerian government. Along with their negative outlook, these individuals turned to crime as a means of subsistence. This research thus recommends that the government at all levels—federal, state, and local—create more work possibilities to encourage young people to turn away from crime and engage in legitimate companies.

Thirdly, the study recommends the dismantling of the cattle rustling economy. Government should ensure that the demand and supply chains, as well as the operational routes, markets, networks, syndicates, and infrastructures of cattle rustling, are systematically identified and dismantled to do away with the criminal practice of cattle rustling and ensure Nigeria's food security.

Moreover, for a more aggressive containment of rural banditry, the FGN, states, and local governments around the nation should strengthen the amount and caliber of security agencies in rural regions. More specifically, the farming and herding community should be encouraged to engage in dialogue to settle disputes over cattle theft and crop destruction rather than using violence, which typically leads to the destruction of lives and property of the actors involved and even beyond and increases the country's vulnerability to food insecurity. Finally, they ought to be effective means of punishing offenders. The Nigerian government should adequately prosecute anybody who commits crimes, including rural banditry, to prevent others from doing so and end impunity for those who do.

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