

Boko Haram: Female Suicide Bombing and the Challenging Dimension to Nigerian National Security

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Abstract - The Islamic extremist sect (Boko Haram) in the North-East of Nigeria has unleashed terror against people and communities of the North-East, Nigeria. In their acts of terror, they have often used female suicide bombers unfortunately with remarkable success. This has often compromised and endangered security in Nigeria; especially the North Eastern part of the country. In light of this, paper examined the impact of this new phenomenon on security in the country. The work adopted the historical descriptive approach, in which secondary data were derived from text books, journals, online articles, papers and more. Data analysis for this study was qualitatively carried out. Adopting the Islamic religious fundamentalist theory, the researchers saw the security occurrence of female suicide bombing to be located within the context of this theoretical perspective and thus argued that, the activities of female suicide bombers offer a dangerous and devastating challenge to Nigeria's national security. And, should this present trend continue unchecked, it could potentially cause a lot of devastation to the country in the nearest future. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made to the government, religious institutions, women advocacy groups and NGOs which among others included that, there was serious need to equip and train the Nigerian security on modern counter terrorism methods that would enable them detect bomb and weapon carriers so as to neutralize attackers promptly before they infiltrate their targets and carry out attacks.

Index Terms - Security, National Security, Terrorism, Boko Haram, Female Suicide Bombing.

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian national security over time is being faced with other security challenges such as, organized crimes, kidnapping arms banditry, communal clashes among neighboring communities in the country, armed robbery, assassinations, farmers/herders attacks, militancy and even trans-national border

crimes. Aside from these mentioned security dilemmas which the country is plagued with, the nation's national security took a more dangerous and challenging dimension in 2009 with the advent of terrorism in the country, as a result of the activities of Boko Haram, an Islamic Extremist Sect which declared war against the government and people of Nigeria. Since the advent of this dangerous sect (Boko Haram), the sect and its followers have carried out severe attacks on different locations in the country. These attacks have destroyed lives and properties running to billions of dollars with other attendant humanitarian consequences with a compromising national security effect.

The attack which was first started in 2010, with the bombing by Boko Haram of the Nigerian Police Force Headquarters' building in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, with a suicide bomber driving a car and beating all security blocks, right into the Force Headquarters and detonating bombs and exploding the car, leading to the killing of the suicide bomber and a police officer who tried to check him at the gate, and destroying other cars and properties within the premises of the Force Headquarters. The said attack on the Nigerian Force Headquarters, according to (Blanchard, 2014) was the first suicide bombing witnessed in Nigeria and thus, said to have heralded the new wave of security challenge for the country (terrorists attacks and suicide bombings). Shortly after that attack, more attacks followed in different locations across the country, like that of the United Nations building in Abuja, the 25th December, Christmas attack at the St. Peters Catholic Church Madalla in Niger State and other attacks which followed in Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Kano, Plateau and the other parts of the North Eastern and North Western Nigeria, employing different strategies and coordination that defied the Nigerian security system

as it were then known to function. These terror attacks were well reported both in local and foreign media. Indeed the country was in a new era of the security challenges of terrorism.

In recent times, Boko Haram has adopted different shades of tactics and strategies such as, secret and open shooting, suicide bombing, hijacking etc., which greatly defy and compromise national security, thereby, resulting in wanton destructions of lives and properties running into millions of dollars. Since then, this dreaded terrorist group (Boko Haram) has continued to attack quite unrelentingly, various targets, and has today, introduced a more serious and dangerous dimension in its attack; that is, the use of females (women and girls) to carry out suicide bombing.

Although, female suicide bombing is not a novel phenomenon as it has been witnessed in a number of countries globally. For instance, authors such as Pape (2005), Reuter (2003) and Standish (2008) have reported various instances of female suicide attacks in the middle-East, in countries such as Chechnya, Palestine, Iraq, Iran and others. In Nigeria, the Boko-Haram among other groups and sects, are known to introduce female suicide bombing into the country as a follow up strategy. Thus, the unleashing of this new weapon of war “female suicide bombing” by the Islamic terrorist organization (Boko Haram) fuels concern that its insurgency has entered a more ruthless phase as they have been series of such suicide bombing attacks carried out by these females and young girls across the country. This new dimension of using women and girls as vessels to carry out suicide attacks portends grave danger to the Nigerian national security which according to Kofi (2015) is the protection of national survival.

Thus, by the foregoing, the following questions would guide this study: What are the motivating factors for the use of female for suicide bombing by Boko Haram in Nigeria?

What is the national security implication of the use of female suicide bombing by Boko Haram in Nigeria?

What is the level of preparedness by the security agencies to combat female suicide bombing attacks by Boko Haram?

Therefore, in the light of the above, this paper assesses the dimension of terrorism exhibited by the Boko Haram and its use of female for suicide bombing and the threat this portends to Nigeria’s National security. Also

the pertinent issues raised above by way of questions would be addressed systematically.

CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS

Security: As noted by Ayamba and Inah (2017) the term Security which is antithetical to insecurity does not lend itself to easy definition. This supposition holds true as indeed, there are a plethora of definitions from different scholars. That notwithstanding, a few definitions would be advanced from some scholars. To Adler and Barnette (1998) security means freedom from harm or danger and protection from external threat or intrusion. Also Ayamba and Inah (2017), see security to embody the measures put in place to prevent, reduce or solve threats, conflict and criminal activities that stem from citizens and non-citizens, states and non-state actors, or structural, sociopolitical and socioeconomic conditions. Based on the foregoing, this paper can align itself with the definition given by Inah, (2019) which sees security as a state, feeling or means of being free from, or seen to be above the threat of damage or loss to lives and property. Thus, security is a condition of being protected from or not being exposed to danger. (Inah, 2012).

Going by the above definition, female suicide bombing and the general activities of Boko Haram and their terrorism threat, constitute very extreme security threat to the nation and the people because of the extreme threat there pose to lives and property and the excessive fears to the minds of the Nation.

Terrorism: Scholars such as Abang (2007), Imobighe (2006) and Tunde (2006) agreed with the supposition that terrorism has no universally acceptable definitions. This is also corroborated by Ezerumuna (2008) who stated that “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter”. However, Tunde (2006) adopting the perspective of the black law dictionary, sees terrorism as the use of violence, or threat of it, to intimidate or cause panic, especially as a means of affecting political conducts. Generally, the term terrorism is derived from the concept of terror which means a feeling of extreme fear. Therefore, terrorism as defined by the oxford advanced learners dictionary 6th edition “is the use of violent action in order to achieve political aims or to force a government to act”. Also, Chaturvedi (2006) defined terrorism as the use of violence or indulgence in violent activity for any

political end or in order to put the public in fear. Chuke (2006) sees terrorism as a political violence against a targeted population for a political goal based upon political, social, economic or ideological grievance, which may be triggered by fear and hatred.

Hardman (1937) and Wilkinson (1993) gave a more precise and encompassing definition of the concept of terrorism, which they agreed in principle with the notion that terrorism involves the use of violence against targets for some specific objectives, yet stand distinctive by stressing features which differentiate terrorism from just mere violence. Hardman (1937) defines terrorism as “the method or theory behind the method whereby an organized group or party seeks to achieve its avowed aim chiefly through the systematic use of violence”. Wilkinson (1993) in the same vein sees terrorism as “the coercive intimidation, premeditated acts of threats or violence, systematically aimed at instilling such fear in their target so as to alter its organization in the way desired by the terrorist”.

In the light of the above definitions, Boko Haram, the Islamist extremist group in North-east Nigeria could be said to be a terrorist organization as it has actively engaged in terrorism, to the extent that it has routinely attacked communities, destroyed lives and properties (worth several billions of Naira), planted and exploded bombs on civilian populations (killing them and destroying their properties), deployed suicide bombers (males and females), to mention a few. .

OVERVIEW OF BOKO HARAM IN NIGERIA

Boko Haram could be said to have started as an insurgency. Insurgency attempts to bring about change through force of arms. The insurgency of the group seeks to overthrow an existing order with one that is commensurate with their political, economic, ideological or religious goals. According to Kilcullen, “Insurgency is a struggle to control a contested political space, between a state (or a group of states or occupying powers), and one or more non-state challengers” (Kilcullen 2006: 112). Kilcullen also try to draw a line between classical and contemporary insurgencies thus: while the latter seek to replace the existing order, the former sometimes strive for the expulsion of foreign invaders from their territory or seek to fill an existing power vacuum (Kilcullen 2006: 112). Similarly, the Oxford English Dictionary defines insurgency as “an armed rebellion against a

constituted authority (for example, an authority recognized as such by the United Nations).”

The British Army counter-insurgency manual, Army Field Manual (AFM) defined insurgency as:

The actions of a minority group within a state, who intend on forcing political change by a means of a mixture of subversion, propaganda and military pressure, aiming to persuade or intimidate the broad mass of the people to accept such a change, it is an organized, armed political struggle, the goals of which might be diverse.

This definition also conform with the US Army-Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24) which defined insurgency as

An organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control (Petraeus & Amos 2006: 1).

By virtue of these definitions above, Boko Haram indeed could be said to be an insurgency group. The members of Boko Haram are a very minute minority, they intended to weaken/destroy constituted authority (i.e. the government, traditional institutions and religious institutions), also, they transformed into an armed rebellion. It is also noteworthy that the government of Nigeria in several statements between 2013 and 2015 regularly referred to the group as insurgents.

Onuoha (2014) stated that Boko Haram was created in 2002 in Maiduguri, Borno State, by Islamist cleric Mohammed Yusuf, a self-proclaimed Nigerian Islamic spiritual leader named. Yusuf was said to have come up with what became Boko Haram in 2002 at the Northern city of Maiduguri, wherein was its headquarters. In Maiduguri, Yusuf established a religious complex that included a mosque and a school where many poor families from across Northern Nigeria and from neighboring countries enrolled their children (Clothia, 2012). The group thus includes members who come from neighboring Chad and Niger and speak only Arabic. At the same time, Yusuf succeeded in entrenching his hold in Northern states such as Bauchi, Gombe, Kano, Katsina and Yobe. And in 2004 the complex was relocated to Yusuf's home town called Kanamma in Yobe state near the Nigerian-Niger border. In Kanamma, a militant base called “Afghanistan” was created (Liolio, 2013).

According to Liolio (2013), Boko Haram is an indigenous Salafist group which only turned itself into a Salafist Jihadist group in 2009. Paul Lubeck of the University of California noted that Yusuf was also a trained Salafist (a school of thought often associated with jihad) and was heavily influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah, a fourteenth century legal scholar remarkable for Islamic fundamentalism and considered a “major theorist” for radical groups in the Middle East. Boko Haram propagates that not only interaction with the Western World is forbidden, but it is also against the Muslim establishment and the government of Nigeria, the latter of which they accuse of political corruption and weak judicial structure. To sanitize this, they initially fought for the establishment of a Shari'a government in Borno State under the then Governor Ali Modu Sheriff, but after 2009, their aim was directed to the Islamization of the entire Nigeria. Boko Haram school of thought considers anything western as completely unislamic, and as such the basis for religious weakness. According to one AbdulMumuni Ibrahim Muhammad, a leader of a group of 33 members Boko Haram factions, “we are fighting westernization to protect adulteration of Islam.” For this reason Boko Haram thus adopted a ‘non-western’ lifestyle by wearing non-western clothes, eating basic foods, and worshiping in their own mosque in Maiduguri, all of which also separate them from other Muslims in the North. In fact, its members do not interact with the local Muslim population and have even carried out assassinations in the past on anyone who criticizes it, including Muslim clerics. (Liolio,2013).

Before the advent of Boko Haram, terrorism could be said to be alien to Nigeria. Boko Haram represented the birth of domestic terrorism in Nigeria. According to Akinbi (2015), the trend of domestic terrorism in Nigeria as exemplified by the nefarious activities of the dreaded Islamic sect popularly known as Boko Haram has become a major concern to the Nigerian government in particular and the international communities in general. Akinbi (2015) noted that the state of insecurity engendered by Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, especially in the North-Eastern part of the country became quiet worrisome, disheartening and alarming. Terrorist attacks of the Boko Haram sect resulted in the killing of countless number of innocent people and wanton destruction of properties that worth billions of naira through

bombings and other attendant humanitarian crisis and violation of human rights. Boko Haram before 2009 were mainly involved in attacks with clubs, machetes, Molotov cocktails as well as drive-by and ride-by assassinations, often with small arms. They sometimes shot sporadically at their targets (who might be civilians or police officers drinking alcohol in beer parlours) before running into hiding. This however changed after 2009 as the group started using bombs and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on strategic places. Their tactics now also includes suicide bombings and the August 26, 2011 suicide car-bombing became the first and successful suicide bombing in Boko Haram history. Currently Boko Haram conducts bombs operations with flexibility and maximum effectiveness and has claimed responsibility for over twenty bombings in Nigeria. Its arsenal now also boasts of Ak-47 style rifles, grenades, rocket propelled grenades, automatic rifles, surface-to-air missiles, vehicle mounted anti-aircraft machine guns, machine guns with anti-aircraft visors, and explosives such as Semtex, all of which might have been smuggled into the Sahel from Libya during its 2011 war (Liolio, 2013). In the years 2013-15, the group went totally out of the control of the government as the government looked helpless in stopping the groups’ attacks and annexation of territory effectively setting up its own government (caliphate) in the territories it had seized in North-east Nigeria. Akinbi (2015) reported that all the efforts of the Nigerian government to curtail the activities of the sect did not yield any meaningful positive result. Thus, the Boko Haram scourge remained intractable to the government who appeared helpless in curtailing/curbing their activities.

FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBINGS IN NIGERIA

Prior to the emergence of Boko Haram in Nigeria, suicide bombing attacks could be said to be alien to Nigerian society and polity, much more so, the use of women and girls for suicide-bombing campaigns. However, suicide-bombing attacks already existed in several other conflicts in the world. The Human Security Report stated that conflict is on the decline in every sector globally with one exception—terrorism—and suicide bombing is terror’s number one tactic. Since 1985 in countries as diverse as Iraq, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Iran, Palestine/Israel, Sri Lanka, Russia, United Kingdom, United States, Spain,

India and Turkey, suicide bombing has become a reality (Human Security Report, 2005).

Akinbi (2015) reported that the first occurrence of suicide-bombing in Nigeria by the Boko Haram group was in the June 16, 2011 failed Abuja police Headquarters Bombing (Nigeria's first instance of suicide Bombing) in which 2 people died (the suicide Bomber and a traffic policeman). Evidently, a larger target was the goal. Many of such attacks continued, all carried out by male suicide bombers. However, in time, the group transitioned into using females (women and girls) for their suicide-bombing attacks. Apparently, the strategy as adopted to avoid suspicion and detection by communities, vigilantes and the law enforcement agents. Also, the female suicide-bomber is able to load more volume of explosives and conceal the bomb better by using the Islamic traditional dressing styles such as the hijab and free-flowing gowns.

The impact of suicide bombers by foreign extremist groups in the Middle East might have served as a model for the Nigerian Islamist movement (Boko Haram) to adopt. According to Akinbi (2015), the first occurrence of female suicide bombing occurred in the June 22, 2015 Maiduguri Mosque Bombing by 2 female suicide bombers in which 30 persons were killed at crowded mosque as Boko Haram marked the start of Ramadan by targeting a mosque that they saw as falling short in following 'the Prophet'.

According to Mba (2014), in modern history, female suicide bombers have earned dubious honour of becoming more news-worthy than their male counterparts following the widespread belief that women are naturally not wicked, non-violent, motherly and weak to take such deadly task of committing suicide bombing. The Boko Haram seems to have used this logic to cause some devastation in the Nigerian polity. The Boko Haram terrorist group in Nigeria has joined the trend of using innocent young girls as suicide bombers to unleash their terror on innocent citizens. One of the first occurrences of this new trend in Nigeria started in Gombe State where yet-to-be identified middle-aged woman wrapped an explosive round her body and headed towards the Quarter Guard of the 301 Nigerian Army base in Gombe. While she was being stopped for a search, the bomb suddenly went off.

In a similar vein, four (4) unidentified female suicide attackers heavily strapped with IEDs have at different

locations; different days but almost same week of the month of July, 2014 blew themselves up while the security personnel on duty were trying to stop them from accessing their target areas in Kano State. Worried about this curious phenomenon, some Nigerians had concluded that the Boko Haram insurgents have indoctrinated and prepared the abducted Chibok school girls for suicide missions across the country. Although the above hypothesis sounds plausible, there is no empirical or intelligence evidence to support the view, and especially with the said release of some of those Chibok girls. The recent interception and subsequent arrest of two teenage girls by Policemen at Katsina State casts a huge doubt on the veracity of this claim as none of the two girls already strapped with explosives and prepared for suicide mission was among the abducted Chibok girls. As can be seen from the level of damage and horror associated with female bombing, it has become paramount for law enforcement to deal with the emerging trend before it gets out of control (Mba, 2014).

FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBING AND NATIONAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS

Female suicide bombing has greatly undermined Nigerian national security and has brought very serious untold hardships on the country. As a matter of fact, at the peak of the activities of Boko Haram in 2014-15, especially with the adoption of females as tolls for suicide attack, the Nigerian security seriously suffered quite greatly as there is no passing week that the country did not witness suicide attack carried out by women or young girls. Even today, the issues of female suicide bombing and the engagement of women in terrorism activities has not abated as more women are continually being adopted in schools and different locations, like the recent issues where young girls and women were reportedly adopted from schools in Kaduna and other areas. This scenario has greatly contributed to the carnage of destruction in both lives and properties in the country running into billions of dollars. The North East and North west today, is an eloquent testimony of what level of destruction the country is confronted with as a result of the activities of Boko Haram and their use of female suicide bombers to carry on attacks at various locations. Because of this, the North East economy is

in very bad shape and so even the country is seriously suffering. The most dangerous aspect of this security dilemma of female suicide attack is the fact that because of the innocence and sympathy attached to women and religious inclination, one can hardly suspect women as carriers of weapons but this assumption turns out to be false as they hide their weapons inside the so called hijab and unsuspectingly infiltrate their targets. This makes the terrorism fight very difficult to security forces. A good number of persons have lost their lives and properties worth billions of naira have been destroyed due to all of these activities of female suicide bombers inspired, trained, duly sponsored and equipped by Boko Haram.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Fundamentalist theory (Islamic)

Theory of fundamentalism as explicated upon by Farley (2005) is adopted as a theoretical framework for this study. "Fundamentalism" migrated from a descriptive historical to a pejorative term for an ossified, hostile, and even fanatical way of being religious. According to Farley (2005), in the last part of the twentieth century, students of world religions appropriated the term to describe aggressively anti-modernist, tradition-preserving movements in many of the world's faiths. Fundamentalism arises from an engagement between ordinary tradition-maintaining religion and modernity. Fundamentalism is one way (ordinary) religion response to modernism which carries with it a rather daunting problem. Most of the features of fundamentalist movements appear throughout the history of the religion.

In order to survive over any period of time, a religion must develop and maintain rituals, narratives, origin-stories, cultic practices, casuistries and taboos, and figures and institutions of authority. Throughout their history, religions have been threatened by political-military and "religious" aggressions from other peoples, by internal heterodoxies, alternative origin-stories, and alternative practices and belief. And the religions have defended themselves against these destabilizing threats by citing their textual authorities, strengthening their institutions, giving their leaders more power, precisely defining their belief commitments, and punishing the heterodox by excommunication, violence, or even death; behaviors which resemble modern fundamentalist movements.

Given the similarities between modern fundamentalism and the perennial self-maintaining behaviors of religion, is it possible that fundamentalism, rather than being a distinctive phenomenon, is simply the present-day name for a perennial feature of tradition-maintaining religion?

Farley further explained that religions originate and survive by way of successful institutionalizations of the sacred figure and event in the form of an authoritative tradition (oral or written texts, hierarchical functions and structures, sacred places, symbols, rituals, and cosmologies) and an authoritative leadership (apostles, priests, bishops, shamans, imams, rabbis, lamas, and scholar-monks). The posture of believers (or participants in religious communities) toward these mediations is never simply critically objective, linguistically sophisticated, or research-oriented. It is rather an existentially dependent, emotion-filled posture of trust, dependence, and certainty about the mediations as divinely given for the community's salvation and welfare. The one conviction that rules the believer's world (piety) is the conviction that God (divine power) has brought about, willed, and communicated the rites, beliefs, texts, and traditions of the community. The texts record messages sent by God through prophets and therefore say what God intended to say.

Accordingly, the texts and other mediating entities have the status of being "divine." In the believer's world, the world of authentic piety, the mediations (the cosmology, casuistry, sacred writings, traditions of origin, institutional structure) are factually true. These mediations and convictions give rise to a discourse which both finalizes the divine and assigns divine status to the mediations. It is, accordingly, a discourse of divine-human or sacred-profane identity. Since the recipient of these mediations is a particular people or community, it is assumed that the welfare of that community is the uppermost aim of the divine activity. And since individual believers are part of the community, the mediations are absolute conditions of the salvation or welfare of those individuals. This is why ordinary religion is always both ethnocentric and egocentric.

The theory of fundamentalism as explicated upon by Farley is relevant to this study. Boko Haram considers itself as an Islamist fundamentalist group. Their goal is to enthrone their belief system upon the geographical territory of Nigeria and its population.

Also, Boko Haram is widely accepted as a fundamentalist group by people (local and foreign) who are not part of its movement. Perhaps, the group feels their religion (Islam) threatened by other religions or the secular state, they therefore have to find ways to preserve their religion by all means even if it resorts to violence and terrorism. The sect and its followers and fighters also believe they are carrying out a divine duty (Jihad) by engaging in violence and terrorism. By the foregoing, it is obvious that the group (Boko Haram) is a fundamentalist group; therefore, the theory of fundamentalism fits the purpose of the study as their have indoctrinated, recruited and radicalized the female folks who engage in suicide bombing (female suicide Bombing) along the lines of this ideologies.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts the historical and descriptive approach in examining the dimensions of security challenges in Nigeria occasioned by THE up rise in female suicide attacks.

Study area

While Boko Haram attacks have concentrated on the North-East Nigeria, the group is known to have carried out or attempted attacks in all the geo-political zones of the country. Also, the group has declared itself at war with the government of Nigeria as a whole. Therefore, the whole of the geographical space of Nigeria form the study area for the purpose of this study.

Sources of data

Data for the research were drawn principally from secondary sources; which included information drawn from textbooks, Journals, magazines, newspapers, the Internet, etc. In other words, secondary data is used for the purpose of the study.

Data analysis

The data for the research was analyzed using qualitative and descriptive method; relying greatly on historical facts and secondary sources as it relates to terrorism and general issues confronting the Nigerian security system. Inferences were drawn from secondary data. The analysis is done using content analysis from scholarly views and write-ups.

Table 1: Occurrence of Female Suicide Attacks in Nigeria by Boko Haram

S/N	Date	Description	Remark
1	June 8, 2014	Quarter Guard of the 301 Nigerian Army base in Gombe by middle-aged woman	2 killed
2	July, 2014	Four (4) unidentified female suicide attackers at different locations in Kano	15 killed
3	July 27, 2014	Female Suicide bomber detonate bomb in University Campus in Kano	5 injured
4	July 28, 2014	Female suicide bomber in filling station	3 killed
5	July 28, 2014	Female suicide bomber detonate bomb in shopping center in Kano	6 killed, 8 injured
6	July 30, 2014	Female suicide detonate bomb in college campus	6 killed
7	February 15, 2015	Female suicide bomber in bus station	13 killed
8	February 22, 2015	Female suicide bomb attack	8 killed, 42 injured
9	February 28, 2015	Female Bomber kills accomplice in Borno	2 others killed
10	March 22, 2015	Two female bombers kill selves in Borno	2 (bombers) killed
11	June 4, 2015	Female suicide bomb attack in Maiduguri	2 killed
12	June 9, 2015	Female suicide bomb attack in Borno failed	3 (bombers) killed
13	June 22, 2015	Maiduguri Mosque Bombing by 2 female suicide bombers	30 persons killed
14	June 23, 2015	Female suicide bomber in Yobe	15 killed
15	June 26, 2015	Two female suicide bombers in Maiduguri	3 killed, 16 injured
16	June 2015	Two female suicide bombers killed in failed	2 (bombers) killed

		attack in Maiduguri	
17	July 7, 2015	Female suicide bomber at military checkpoint	4 killed
18	July 7, 2015	Female bomb attack at Kaduna verification centre	41 killed
19	October 16, 2015	4 female suicide bombers attack Maiduguri	30 killed
20	November 11, 2016	3 Armed would-be female suicide bombers gunned down by Police in Maiduguri	3 would-be suicide bombers killed
21	December 31, 2016	2 female suicide bombers attack Madagali	8 killed
22	January 13, 2017	Female suicide bomb attack in Madagali	

Source: Farouk (2014); Mba (2014)

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that indeed, Boko Haram built competence and attained an undeniable level of success in the use of female suicide bombers. Several of such attacks have occurred in the country bringing about a wanton loss of lives and destruction of properties in billions. Severally, the group always claims responsibility for such attacks. Therefore, it can be deduced that the extremist group not only introduced the phenomenon of suicide bombings into the country, they also developed it into the use of hard-to-suspect girls and women for such attacks. This second scenario is referred to as female suicide bombing attacks in the context of this study. This finding is supported by Mba (2014) who explained that in modern history, female suicide bombers have earned dubious honour of becoming more newsworthy than their male counterparts following the widespread belief that women are naturally not wicked, non-violent, motherly and weak to take such deadly task of committing suicide bombing.

The motivating factors for female suicide bombing attacks by Boko Haram in Nigeria could be explained by some factors. Firstly, the motivation could be said to be the need to sustain the religion of Islam by its

adherent such as members of groups such as Boko Haram. This factor is explained by the Religious Fundamentalist theory exposed upon by Farlay (2005). Farlay exposted that when adherents of a religion perceive other religion(s), belief systems, or culture as threatening to the existence and sustenance of their religion, they may indulge in violence as a way of preserving and sustaining their religion, its culture and practices. This could be said to be true with the Boko Haram sect. The sect has sworn to establish an Islamic Caliphate within the geographical location called Nigeria and are ready to wage Jihad (holy war) for that purpose. Therefore, the use of female suicide bombing attacks is just one of the tools for execution of their said Jihad (holy war).

Another motivating factor for the recruitment and use of female suicide bombing attacks could be said to be the frustrating socio-economic situation of places and persons (including females) who buy into the extremist doctrine. When people are frustrated by continual failures of successive governments and politicians, this creates an enabling environment for extremist doctrines to thrive as an alternative to the present political and economic establishment or status quo. People who have craved change for long thus become vulnerable to peddlers and preachers of extremist ideologies. This finding is supported by Akinbi (2015) who argued that most of the circumstances that led to this insurgency are not unconnected with frustration caused by high rate of poverty, unemployment and morally bankrupt governance. He further explained that Poverty, Unemployment and Ignorance contribute significantly to the spread of the sect's activities in Northern Nigeria. Most Nigerians agreed that the current insurgency in the North is worsened by the high level of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy prevalent in Northern Nigeria (Akinbi, 2015).

In support of the findings of this study that economic deprivation and poverty is a fertile ground for the spread of extremist ideologies, Lukeman (2012) explained that Poverty though endemic throughout Nigeria, the rate is highest in the north. The three northern regions have the highest incidence of poverty having an average poverty incidence of 70.1% compared to 34.9% of the three geo-political regions of the South. Ten states in Nigeria with the highest incidence of poverty are all in the north, while ten states with the lowest incidence of poverty are in the

south. This means that about 70% of people in the north live below poverty line with an income of less than one dollar per day.

This view is shared by Ogege (2013) who explained that terrorism is caused by frustrated expectations and a state of hopelessness and sustained mainly by bad governance, corruption and a pervasively weak institutional framework. This view is supported by Awoyemi (2012) who posited that when a young woman is poor, illiterate and unemployed she becomes a clean slate for any kind of brainwashing which is more potent when it comes from religion aided by culture. This is so because these category of people lack the intellectual power to question logically or critique what they are told. Also, the activity component of the brainwashing given to them provides a quasi-equivalent of employment, and thus they feel engaged and fulfilled in acting out what they have been brainwashed on.

From the findings of this study, there are obvious socio-economic consequences on persons, households, communities, and regions that have experienced the dastardly nature of Boko Haram attacks including their use of female suicide bombing tactics. In Boko Haram female suicide bombing attacks, persons, many of whom are gainfully employed or engaging in some form of economic activity which adds value to society, are killed, maimed or disabled, thus making it impossible for such persons to engage in their gainful economic activities. The economy is thus deprived of productive activities. Also, in carrying female suicide bombing attacks, Boko Haram destroys properties of individuals, companies, communities and the government. These properties destroyed were assets to their owners and were acquired through hard-earned resource. By destroying such assets through female suicide bombing attacks, wreckage is done to some sections of the economy.

It is also known that in areas that have borne the worst brunt of the attacks of Boko Haram including the use female suicide bombing, formal (western) education has been heavily threatened and sometimes put to a stop. The most infamous example of this is the Chibok girls kidnap. With education made unassailable to children and youth, what then is the future social and economic hope of such children, households, communities or regions given the importance of education for socio-economic advancement? These

findings are supported by Akinbi (2015) who posited that since the activities of the sect in Nigeria, from 2009 assumed frightening dimensions, there have been wanton destruction of countless innocent lives and properties worth billions of naira. Akinbi (2015) while corroborating this finding further stated that another effect of the Boko Haram insurgency is that many people including women and students have been displaced; many have been kidnapped like the Chibok Girls, traumatized and their future shattered by the nefarious Islamic sect. Other survivors whose houses have been burnt and part of their families killed have also been displaced with its unsavoury attendant consequences. For instance, following the announcement of state of emergency in the North East about 650,000 persons fled the three states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe to neighbouring states, while thousands of them left the country.

The findings of this study showed that the Nigerian military were obviously unprepared for several of the strategies of the Boko Haram sect, including its strategy of female suicide bombing attacks. For the extremist sect to have achieved much success in its use of women and girls as human explosives and bombs, it was obvious that the military were not prepared and therefore could not deal with such a threat, thus making the use of such strategy by the group seem invisible. In support of this finding, Ogege (2013) stated that there was an upsurge of Boko Haram insurgence and an accompanying inability of the security agencies to guarantee security, this led to economic life being nearly grounded to a halt with dire consequences for the society in North-eastern Nigeria. This view is corroborated by Oche (2001) in his definition of security which the author defined as the freedom from danger or threat to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest.... And enhance the well-being of its people. Thus, security is the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and the corporate existence of a nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values... as well as freedom from danger to life and property. With the military finding it hard to curb the Boko Haram crisis and the various strategies of the group such as the use female suicide bombing attacks, the military could be said to have failed in providing security to the

population in the face of the attacks and strategies of the extremist sect.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that the Islamist extremist group Boko Haram has used or exploited the socio-cultural beliefs attached to women in the Nigerian context (which sees them as innocent and quite harmless) to make women an effective stealth weapon as suicide bombers. These women and girls used by Boko Haram while being looked upon by the society, the community and law enforcement agents as innocent and harmless, and therefore unsuspected are able to carry out the deadliest attacks with maximum damage. The dressing culture of the Islamic religion associated with the wearing of Hijab in which women are allowed to wear an overall to cover up the whole of their bodies further makes it difficult for the suicide bomber to be suspected, observed or identified while making it easier for the female suicide attacker to load more explosives in her clothing as the veils serve as bomb concealment mechanism. All of these have helped the extremist group Boko Haram record some successes in its use of female suicide bombers. This therefore makes the female suicide bombing situation quite threatening to security in the country, and so apparently therefore is a clear fact that female suicide bombing has seriously and greatly compromised security in Nigeria, and so has apparent brought about serious and untold hardships among the affected persons and communities in Nigeria today, especially in the North Eastern part of the country, which has been the focus of the Boko Haram insurgency often experiencing great carnage leading to loss of precious lives and the destruction of properties running into billions. Generally, this brings about a truncation of economic activities, which further leads to serious setbacks in the country in the socio-economic standards of the persons and communities concerned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations made as a result of the above discussion.

1. Nigeria should as a matter of urgency, equip and train its security agents on modern counter terrorism methods that would enable them detect bomb and weapon carriers so as to neutralize

attackers promptly before they infiltrate their targets and carry out attacks.

2. Muslim clerics must be encouraged to begin a very serious attitudinal and ideological reorientation on members to dissuade their followers from being used as suicide bombers in the name of jihad.
3. It is recommended that, like Chad, the use of Hijab be banned in the North because of the prevailing security situation in the country.
4. In view of the fact that one of the underlying factor for the indoctrinating, radicalization and recruitment of these females and young girls, is the prevailing poverty and economic deprivation in the country, we recommend that government policies for job creation and economic empowerments be seriously introduced in the country and especially in the north and north eastern states of the country were the impact of these attacks are more felt.
5. Nigerian government must strengthen its educational system and introduce educational policies that can increase literacy in the north as a means of taming wrong indoctrination and de-radicalization.

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