

GENDERIZATION OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA*

Abstract

Boko Haram insurgency is prevalent in the North-eastern part of Nigeria. The group believes that 'Western Education is forbidden' and opposes westernization, which it views as negatively impacting Islamic values. The group has continued to perpetrate violence on the Nigerians, particularly the female gender. One of such violence against the female gender by the Boko Haram sect was the abduction of 276 schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno State, in April 2014. Some of the girls managed to escape shortly after their abduction; some were released in exchange for detained Boko Haram Commanders following negotiations with the Nigerian Government while the whereabouts of most of the girls is still unknown. This study analyses gender-based violence in Nigeria specifically against women by the Boko Haram sect. It also analyses violence against Christian women and children. This research is a descriptive study that employed a case study methodology. Data is sought from the newspapers, diaries, journals and online materials. The study recommends amongst others that the Nigerian government through the efforts of all security forces should investigate the root cause of Boko Haram insurgency to have a better understanding of the phenomena in order to tackle the issue with the right strategies.

Keywords: Gender, *Boko Haram*, Insurgency, Violence, Terrorism

1. Introduction

Boko Haram which was formally referred to 'Jama ' Ahlis Sunna Lidda ' awati Wal-Jihad' (people committed to the propagation of Prophet's Teachings and Jihad), is an Islamic Terrorist group based in North-Eastern Nigeria. Its terrorism act has serious consequences on Nigerian citizens especially the North- eastern region of Nigeria; Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States. These three States have recorded an increase in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) fleeing to safer States within the country and neighbouring nations like Niger, Chad and Cameroun. It has been noted that majority of the internally displaced persons constitute women and children. The increase in the nefarious activities of the group has created adverse effect in Nigeria. This group emerged in the early 2000s as a Small Sunni Islamic group advocating a strict interpretation and implementation of Islamic law in Nigeria. It is driven by an ideology of violent rejection of all Western values, as suggested by the name '*Boko Haram*', which means 'western education is forbidden' in the local Hausa language. In 2009, the activities of *Boko Haram* had transformed from a local peace militia into a violent group, after the government attacked the members of the group in some of the major cities of northern Nigeria, which led to a five day violent clash between the group members and the Nigerian armed forces which resulted in killing of the sect leader, Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri, and more than 700 other people.¹ The group has become notorious for its horrendous killings of civilians and massive abductions, many involving children. The most notorious of such cases is the abduction of 276 schoolgirls from the town of Chibok in April 2014. Since 2011, *Boko Haram* is estimated to have killed over 10,000 people and its activities has posed a severe threat to national security and social-economic life in Nigeria.

2. Definition of Key Terms

Gender: The word gender has been defined by various authorities: The Oxford English Dictionary² defines gender as: 'the fact of being male or female, especially when considered concerning social and cultural differences not differences in biology.

Boko Haram: *Boko Haram* is an Islamic terrorist group based in the North-eastern region of Nigeria. They also exist in other African countries like Chad, Niger, and northern Cameroon. *Boko Haram* is referred to by its members as *Wilayat Guarb Ifriqiyyah* (which means Islamic State of West province, ISWAP), and '*Jama'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da 'wati wa'l-Jihad*'³ (Group of the People of Sunnah for preaching and Jihad).

Insurgency: The United States Department of Defense (DOD) defines insurgency as; 'an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict'.⁴

Violence: Violence is defined as the use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage or destroy.⁵

Terrorism: The Terrorism and Prevention Act⁶ defines an act of terrorism to mean; 'an act which is deliberately done with malice which may seriously harm or damage a country or international organization; involves or causes an attack upon a person's life which may cause serious bodily harm or death; kidnapping of persons, destruction

*By Rosemary Nkechi OGUERI, LLB (NAU), BL, Associate Partner at Kehinde Akingbola & Co, Lagos State, Tel: +2347061031011, E-mail: rosenk91@gmail.com

¹ LP Blanchard, (2014). 'Nigeria's Boko Haram-Frequently Asked Questions, in CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service' (VOL.10).

² 11th Edition.pg. 4

³ Accessed June 10, 2016 <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boko_Haram>

⁴ Accessed June 10, 2016 <<https://en.m.org/wiki/insurgency>>

⁵ Accessed July 24, 2022 <<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/violence>>

⁶ Terrorism (Prevention) Act, Op cit, pg. 1

of government or public facility, a transport system, an infrastructure facility including an information system, a public place, a private property, likely to endanger human life or result in major economic loss, etc.

3. History of the Emergence of *Boko Haram* Insurgency in Nigeria

Boko Haram is without doubt, the most sophisticated insurgence Nigeria has ever experienced. The sect has brought heightened tension, anxiety, and a sense of insecurity in Nigeria. There is no consensus among scholars on the actual year the Islamic group called *Boko Haram* emerged in the country. However, it was revealed that *Boko Haram* was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 in Maiduguri, as a Sunni Islamic fundamentalist group advocating strict Sharia Law and opposing the influence of 'Western Education'. Yusuf used the existing faction, the Izala society, a popular conservative Islamic group originally welcomed into government to recruit members before breaking away to form his faction. Yusuf successfully radicalized the group and opened it to foreign collaborations, especially with Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) formally known as Algeria's Salafist group. However, the sect was initially operating in a quiet nature, conducting its activities more or less peacefully during the first seven years of its existence. In 2009, due to the sect's extremist motives and increasingly militant character, the Nigerian government directed the police and military to begin an investigation into the sect's affairs in an assignment code named 'Operation Flush'. On the 26th of July 2009, security forces arrested nine *Boko Haram* members and confiscated their weapons and bomb-making devices. This culminated in revenge attacks on the Police during a funeral procession and widespread riot which lasted till 30th of July 2009, with more than 700 people, mostly *Boko Haram* members were killed. Also, police stations, prisons, government offices, schools, and churches were destroyed. Yusuf was arrested and later died in Police custody while trying to escape. He was succeeded by his second-in-command Abubakar Shekau. The activities of the sect took a new dimension after the death of the leader and founder 'Mohammed Yusuf'. His death marked the beginning of the worst era of insurgency ever experienced in Nigerian history. But before his death, Mohammed Yusuf had won the respect of some Muslim clerics and youths in the Northern part of Nigeria who became his followers, while the majority of his followers came from 'Almajiri'. The sect has destructively attacked churches, mosques, schools, police stations, governmental agencies, motor parks, market squares and other highly populated places, private and public owned facilities.⁷

4. Causes of *Boko Haram* Insurgency in Nigeria

Poverty is one of the causes of *Boko Haram* insurgency in Nigeria. There is growing poverty in Nigeria despite the fact that Nigeria is blessed with abundant natural resources. Northern Nigeria in particular has the highest figure of relatively poor people in the country. The north-east and north-west zones have the highest figure of 76.3% and 77.7% of relatively poor people respectively.⁸ The growing wave of radical Jihadist fundamental groups around the world contributed to *Boko Haram* insurgency. The in-roads made by such terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, Taliban, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Province of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIL) amongst others have promoted the cause of *Boko Haram* insurgency in Nigeria. Unemployment is another cause of *Boko Haram* insurgency. The high rate of unemployment among the youth is alarming. The *Boko Haram* group recruits some of the unemployed Northern youths into the group and use them in carrying out their misguided ideology. The rejection of western education is also the cause of the insurgency. The group believes that western education is forbidden, sinful and ungodly and should be opposed.

5. Effect of *Boko Haram* Insurgency

The *Boko Haram* insurgency has serious negative effects on the livelihood of Nigerians most especially the female gender. It is observed that public security volatility in the North-eastern States has hampered normal productive agricultural and commercial activities.⁹ The actions and activities of *Boko Haram* have also led to enormous loss of lives and properties in the country, particularly in the Northern part of Nigeria. Internal displacement of persons is one of the effects of the *Boko Haram* insurgency. Many people including women and children have been displaced. Other survivors whose houses were burnt and part of their family members killed have also been displaced. For instance, following the announcement of the state of emergency in the northeast, about 650,000 persons fled the three States of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe to neighboring States, while thousands of them left the country. A lot of revenue has been wasted by the government on efforts geared towards combating the crisis which has not been successful. *Boko Haram's* successes makes the security agencies look incompetent. As a result, there is a perception that security agencies are weak, corrupt, and poorly trained. High level of insecurity is another effect of *Boko Haram* insurgency. Presently, Nigerian citizen no longer sleep with their eyes closed. Terrorism is on the increase and there are so many terrorist groups Nigeria is currently witnessing. People are being killed and

⁷ Sahara Reporters April 21, 2014 <<https://mobile.facebook.com/reportyourself/posts/101519818417327033-rdr>.

⁸ 'National Bureau of Statistic Report', (2012), Nigeria poverty profile 2010, p. 16, <http://issuu.com/73092/docs/mirror48>.

⁹ AIC Okoli and P Lortyer (2014), Terrorism and Humanitarian Crisis in Nigeria; Insight from *Boko Haram* Insurgency'. Global Journal of Human-Social Science.

kidnapped on daily basis by *Boko Haram*, ISWAP, bandits, herdsmen amongst others. On the 5th July, 2022, the Boko Hara breakaway faction, Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) led a successful attack on a well-secured prison in Nigeria's Capital, Abuja.¹⁰ The group had its way into the Kuje prison Medium Security Custodial Centre after overpowering security guards in a well-coordinated assault. It was reported by the government that 879 inmates escaped including all imprisoned *Boko Haram* members. Since the escape of these inmates, the northern region of Nigeria has been facing a surge in terror attack notably from ISWAP. This is the latest of the high profile strikes that questions the government's inability to protect its citizens. How ISWAP was able to carry out this latest attack on Kuje prison which is one of the most secured prisons in Nigeria is what most of the Nigerian citizens could not imagine.

6. Legal Framework Protecting the Rights of Women

There are several provisions of the National, regional and international framework protecting the rights of women. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantees certain fundamental rights of every individual. These rights are contained in Chapter IV of the Constitution.¹¹ *Boko Haram* insurgents have repeatedly and mercilessly violated these rights. The Nigerian Government at all levels must ensure that *Boko Haram* does not interfere with the enjoyment of these rights. In August 2013, the Nigerian government launched a National Action Plan (NAP) on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325. In launching the plan, the government committed to prevent sexual violence during and after conflicts, established special courts to prosecute conflict-related sexual violence and take measures to ensure that women participate at all levels of peace and security negotiations and discussions. Nigeria has ratified many regional and international treaties and mandated the protection of residence from abduction, violence, torture, and other ill-treatments such as; slavery and forced prostitution. These instruments also obligated Nigeria to adopt effective measures for the prevention, investigation, prosecution, and punishment of serious human abuses. Among these basic human rights, women and girls have the right to bodily integrity, the right to security of person, and the freedom from torture, cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment. These rights are also enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Right (UDHR), Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), The International Conventional Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), The Convention Against Torture, The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Women in African, Maputo Protocol, and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Human rights protection against sexual violence also applies to persons under 18 years old. The convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) 1990, which states that children must be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence', ensures that victims receive legal and psycho-social redress. The ICCPR grants every child the right to such measures of protection as required by his status as a minor.¹² *Boko Haram* is undermining several other key rights including the rights of education and health both enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Childs Right Act (CRA), and Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The right to education without discrimination is enshrined in the ICESCR and CRC, which provides that primary education should be compulsory, available, and free to all, and secondary education should be available and accessible.¹³ The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to health has said that rape and other forms of sexual violence represent a 'serious breach of sexual and reproductive rights, and are fundamentally and inherently inconsistent with the right to health'.¹⁴ Even though international laws grant women and men equal rights in the enjoyment of all human rights, women and girls continue to face inequalities in virtually all societies. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 to reinforce the provisions of existing international instruments aiming to eliminate discrimination against women and achieve gender equality. Till date, it has only been ratified by 183 States despite being the subject of more reservations than any other human rights treaty. CEDAW does not address the gender-based violence that is often widespread in crises but the committee that monitors the conventions implementations has addressed the issue in general resolution No.19 and Jurisprudence, stating that 'the definition of discrimination includes gender-based violence, that is, violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes an act that inflicts physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such act, coercion and other deprivations of liberty'.¹⁵

¹⁰Accessed July 5, 2022 <<https://issafrica.org/iss-today/kuje-prison-break-is-nigeria-out-of-security-options>>

¹¹ Section 34-41 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (As Amended)

¹² ICCPR, Art. 2491

¹³ ICESCR, Art. 13, CRC, Art.28

¹⁴ UN Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health/A/61/338, September 13, 2006. Para.51

¹⁵Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women, General Recommendation. No. 19 on 'violence against women'.

7. The Domestication and Implementation of these Instruments in Nigeria

By ratifying the ICCPR, the Convention Against Torture, Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and other Human Rights Treaties, Nigeria has assumed a positive obligation to address violence against women whether the violence is perpetrated by the government authorities or by others. International law requires that Nigerian authorities exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish acts of violence against women¹⁶. The ICCPR has emphasized that government shall ensure accessible and effective remedies for human rights violations and to take into account the special vulnerability of certain categories of persons and failure by the state party to investigate allegations of violations could give rise to a separate breach of covenant.¹⁷ Nigeria assented to these obligations when it ratified CEDAW, ICCPR, ICESCR, and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatments. After the ratification of CEDAW by Nigeria, its provisions remain a paper tiger and cannot be enforced by any court in Nigeria as a process of domestication must be undergone by Section 12 of the Nigerian Constitution before it can become part of the Nation's Local Law. The Nigerian government has also domesticated the African Charter on Human Peoples' Right; the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Women in Africa, the African Charter on the Rights and welfare of the child and the Provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Child's Right Act of 2003. The former Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Mrs Zainab Maina, while speaking at the commemoration of the 2014 International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women said that 'since the passage of the Child's Rights Act in 2003 by the National Assembly to protect children's rights, only 23 States have domesticated the Act'. Out of those 23 States, only two States; Lagos and Akwa Ibom are implementing the Child Right law.¹⁸ The challenges most States are facing with the ratification of these instruments are due to differences in culture, religion and custom as Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country with differences in culture and religion. By ratifying, implementing and domesticating these instruments, the abuse that female gender and children face on daily basis in our society will be minimal and justice will be served.

8. Limited Efforts at Investigation and Prosecution of *Boko Haram* Sect

There have been limited efforts at investigations and prosecution of *Boko Haram* sects involved in serious violations of human rights. However, there have been few investigations and no prosecutions of security force members implicated in the abuses. Security forces always announce on Newspapers and the Mass Media that they have arrested many *Boko Haram* members but there is no prosecution. They always tell Nigerians about the arrests of the members of the sect without Nigerians seeing their prosecution. The Security Forces sometimes boast that they are winning the war only for the *Boko Haram* group to strike thereafter. Since 2009, Security Forces have arrested thousands of people suspected to be *Boko Haram* members. However, the whereabouts of a large number of those arrested are unknown and others are detained by security forces in the military for prolonged periods without trial. The few who are facing trial for terrorism-related offenses including the 2011 bombing of the United Nations building in 'Abuja' the capital of Nigeria, often have their cases sometimes interrupted for prolonged periods while they remain in custody. In June 2014, the military arrested a suspect alleged to have been involved in the Chibok girls' abductions and the killer of 'Emir of Gwoza' in May 2014, was also arrested along with two of his alleged accomplices and both of them being women but till date, none of these suspects have been tried for the abduction of hundreds of women and girls. There have been also few efforts by the Nigerian Criminal Justice system in investigating the many serious cases of abuse committed by members of Nigerian authorities by way of reports from National and International Human Rights Organizations, the Nigerian National Human Rights Commission, the media and diplomats. In July 2013, the military set up a commission team (JTF) to investigate the allegations of the detainees. The military authorities admitted to holding 14,000 suspects for months without trial at detention centers in the northeast. The JTF recommended the release of 167 detainees and the prosecution of 500, while 614 cases were to be further reviewed and the military was silent on the remaining 119 *Boko Haram* suspects. Women and girls are abducted by *Boko Haram* for sexual exploitation, forced marriages, labour, and religious conversion to Islam. This is a typical example of gender-based violence against women. Section 9 of the Child's Right Act provides for every Child's freedom of movement subject to parental control. The sect had infringed on these rights by abducting and depriving Chibok girls of the right of movement and removing them from the custody of their parents and guidance. The Child's Right Act in Section 21 prohibits child marriage. Shekau in his video claimed that the under-aged Chibok schoolgirls had been forcefully married off. These violations of female rights contravene the human rights granted under the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

¹⁶UN Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 13, on nature of the general legal obligation imposed on states parties: General legal obligation and states parties to the covenant, U.N. Doc; (CCPR) 21/Rev. 1/Add. 13, (eightieth session, 2004)

¹⁷ ICCPR, Art.2, para.15

¹⁸ Premium Times (2014), <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/topnews/171909-asscesd> 12 June 2016.

9. Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence against Women in Nigeria.

Gender-Based violence against women is prevalent in all corners of the world and it is a human rights violation that manifests itself in several ways. It includes among others;

Domestic Violence:

This form of violence involves marital rape, beating, maiming, sexual violence, threats etc. In Nigeria, violence within the home on both wives and children has cultural backing. The Penal Code¹⁹ applicable in the Northern part of Nigeria, under its provision, specifically encourage the beating of a wife by her husband for correction. This is violence against women.

Sexual Assault:

Rape, indecent assault, and defilement are common sexual assaults that women and girls in Nigeria face on daily basis. Women and girls who are victims of sexual assaults are usually silent about them to avoid stigmatization and sometimes to protect the perpetrators who may be family members, friends, or relatives. Rape can affect the productivity of women. A woman or girl who was raped may fall sick, be hospitalized and may not be able to continue her education. She may also become pregnant and even contract diseases like HIV/AIDS.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

This is the traditional practice whereby part or the whole of the clitoris of a female is cut off. The is to ensure that the females are less desirous of sex so as not to be promiscuous. This is gender-based violence against women that is practiced in most States in Nigeria. The grave danger is that at childbirth, it is the clitoris that helps the woman during childbirth, as it is supposed to stretch at delivery and its absence results in serious categories of tear which gives rise to; Vesicovaginal fistula and Recto-vaginal fistula. This practice is obnoxious because of its associated damages such as hemorrhage, shock, infections etc. Female genital mutilation practice is highly discriminatory as it purports to protect men's selfish interests to curb women's sexual appetite while the men are at liberty to have sex with multiple partners as much as they desire.

Trafficking of Women and Girls:

The emergence of modern slave trade called 'human trafficking' often comes in the form of servitude that seeks to enslave the captives in commercial sex works with either for payment which is in most times collected on their behalf. Nigerian women and girls are trafficked domestically and abroad for forced labour and sexual exploitation and citizens of neighboring countries are brought into Nigeria for similar reasons.

10. Effect of Gender-Based Violence:

Gender-based violence poses danger to a woman's reproductive health and can affect a survivor psychologically. The effect can be devastating and long-lasting. A victim of any sexual assault usually has low self-esteem. The victims are usually left with certain peculiar traits and behaviours that include a host of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, personality disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) that can develop later in life. It has been observed that most children who grew up in homes where there is violence may suffer a range of behavioral and emotional disturbances that can be associated with higher rates of infant mortality. A woman who had previously been trafficked is always seen as a prostitute and never fully accepted back into the community. A woman who experiences domestic violence and lives in an abusive relationship with her partner may be forced to become pregnant or have an abortion against her will, or her partner may knowingly expose her to sexually transmitted diseases.

11. The Place of Christian Women in *Boko Haram* Ideology.

Boko Haram has been very effective in using Islamic ideology to recruit, organize and sustain its battle against Nigerian State. *Boko Haram* ideology is a spillover from the 'Sunni-Salafi doctrine that the temporal proximity to Prophet Mohammed is associated with the truest form of Islam. On the other hand, contrasting approaches to returning to this original way of practicing Islam have given rise to Salafi Jihadis that believe in the use of violence even against other Muslims. Victim of this approach includes Salafi Purists and activists who denounce violence and advocate participating in political processes. *Boko Haram* appears to associate with the Sunni-Salafi Jihadis who call for the use of violence to ensure a return to the original form of Islam, and the rejection of everything deemed un-Islam.²⁰ Christians are perceived as undesirable minorities in Muslim Countries. They are subjected to extreme persecution, repression, and violence. All women are treated as Second-Class Citizens under Islam.

¹⁹ Section 55 (1) (d) of the Penal Code.

²⁰ Haykel, Bernard (2009). 'On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action; in Meijer Roel, *Global Salafism. Islam New Religious Movement*. Columbia University Press, P:34

However, Christian females are even worse traits than Muslim women because they are the weakest member of an 'infidel', outcast population. Islam casts women as lesser beings who to varying degrees require male guardianship. Nearly all girls and women in Muslim societies live vulnerable lives and are beset by great injustices. But the risk and inequalities faced by Muslim women are magnified in the lives of Christian women and children. The type and degree of gender-based violence committed directly by *Boko Haram* members tilted towards abduction, rape, forced marriage, destruction of business and shops belonging to Christian women, torture, force conversion to Islam and the killing of Christian women. Christian women have been subjected to torture and sometimes killed not only by *Boko Haram* but by Muslim fanatics also. For instance, a Christian woman 'Bridget Patience Agbaheme' who is an Igbo woman from Imo State, Nigeria was beheaded by Muslim Fanatics in Kano over an accusation that she "insulted" the prophet Mohammed.²¹ Also, recently, Deborah Samuel, a Christian and a 200level student of Shehu Shagari College of Education Sokoto was gruesomely murdered and set ablaze by her fellow Muslim students on an allegation that she 'insulted' prophet Mohammed.²² *Boko Haram's* command to Jihad often features exhortations to terrorize Christian communities, and the victimization of women. Human Rights Watch research suggests that *Boko Haram* has targeted Christians, burnt churches with some worshippers trapped inside, killed men who refused to convert to Islam, and abducted Christian women. In several video messages posted on you tube and sent to the media, *Boko Haram's* leaders made direct threats against Christians.²³ These include a post in January 2012, in which the then spokesperson issued an ultimatum of three days for Christians to leave the North.

12. Gender-Based Violence against Christian Women and Children by *Boko Haram*

There are increased reported cases of gender-based violence against Christian women in northern parts of Nigeria, and increasing levels of sexual violence, torture, and murder by the *Boko Haram* sect. A recent study suggests that more than 45% of those killed by *Boko Haram* are Christian women and children. Christian leaders reported also that 90% of the abducted Chibok girls were Christian.²⁴ In the video released by *Boko Haram* after the Chibok abductions, scores of the students were seen chanting Arabic, as *Boko Haram's* leader Abubakar Shekau declared that the young women and girls from the Christian homes would be sold as slaves in the market. In one widely reported case in November 2013, a 19years old girl Christian teenager Hajja narrated how she was abducted and held for three months by *Boko Haram* in a rural area of Gwoza in Borno State, and was forced to cook and clean for the group and during which time she was forced to convert to Islam and set to be married off to one of the group members and she was also pressured to carry out operational tasks for the fourteen-strong team of men who abducted her.²⁵ In August 2013, a Christian student in Maiduguri reported an attack by *Boko Haram* on her University hostel. The male students were murdered while the female students were separated into Muslim and Non-Muslim and the female Christian students were systematically raped by the *Boko Haram* members. Such an attack on Christian female students by *Boko Haram* members was regarded as an extension of other institutionalized and long-term discriminatory practices against them in the Northern region.²⁶ Women and girls are particularly at risk and are constantly targeted by the sect. Hundreds of women are still in *Boko Haram's* captivity. A Gwoza official estimated that more than a dozen Christian women remain in captivity of *Boko Haram* sect.²⁷ These women endure extreme severe and widespread violations of their rights which include sexual slavery, sexual violence and forced pregnancy. Christian women are also often accused of 'dishonouring Islam'. Christian women and girls are forced to convert to Islam and forced into marriages by the *Boko Haram* against their wish.

13. Government Measures in the Fight against *Boko Haram*

Several measures have been taken by the Nigerian Government in the fight against *Boko Haram* insurgency. The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) between Nigeria, Chad and Niger Republic was set up in 1998 in order to combat transnational crime in the Lake Chad region, but was mostly dormant until 2012 when it was reactivated in order to deal with *Boko Haram*. In order to cope with the spread of terrorism in the region, Paris Summit of May, 2014 which together with the head of State of Benin, Chad, Cameroun, Niger and Nigeria, and representatives of the US, UK and EU decided to enhance regional cooperation in the fight against *Boko Haram* by means of coordinated patrols and border surveillance, pooling intelligence and exchanging relevant

²¹ Accessed June 3, 2016 <<https://saharareports.com/nigeria-woman-beheaded-muslim-fanatics-kano-named-police>>

²² Accessed May 23, 2022 <<https://guardian.ng/opinion/the-killing-of-deborah-samuel/>>

²³ Accessed June 11, 2016 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=umkj50SUZCK&hI=en-GB>>

²⁴ Accessed June 11, 2016 <<http://www.punching.com/news/bokoharam-holding-165-christian-girls-con>>

²⁵ Accessed June 10, 2016 <<http://www.blaze.com/stories/forcing-them-to-convert-and-then-marry-islamic-militants>>

²⁶ Onapajo, Hakeen & Uzodike, Ufo Okeke (2012). *Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria*, 'African Review', vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 55-67

²⁷ Accessed June 10, 2016 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/17/us-nigeria-security-islamists-insight/id.USBRE94120131117>

information.²⁸ The Nigerian government has set up committees to analyze the root causes of the violence and security challenges in the North-eastern parts of Nigeria and make recommendations.²⁹ The Nigerian government had also established a state of emergency under President Goodluck Jonathan in 2012 in the fight of *Boko Haram* insurgency and the state of emergency was extended in May 2013 to cover the whole of the three North-eastern States of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. In 2013, the Nigerian military shut down mobile phone's coverage in the three North-eastern States to disrupt the sect's communication and ability to detonate Improvised Explosive Devices. The report after the mobile phone blackout suggests that the shutdown was 'successful' from military tactical point of view. In May 2014, China offered Nigeria some assistance in the fight against *Boko Haram* which include the provision of satellite data and military equipment.³⁰ In March 2015, it was reported that Nigerian Government had employed hundreds of mercenaries from South Africa and the former Soviet Union to assist in fighting *Boko Haram* before the March election.³¹ Also, Columbia Government sent a delegation of security experts on October 2015 to assist the Nigerian authorities and shared expertise in security and how to counter terrorism.³² A delegation led by Lieutenant General Tukur Yusuf Buratai, also visited Columbia on January 2016, to exchange information with regards to the war against *Boko Haram*. The command and control of the Nigerian military was relocated to Maiduguri the Capital City of the Borno State in 2015 of which the action was aimed at bringing *Boko Haram* insurgency to an end.³³ Also, alternate command center was subsequently established in Yola, Adamawa State. These measures taken by the government are not enough and have not yield any fruit in the fight of *Boko Haram* insurgency because the group has become monsters and causing even more havoc in Nigeria. The *Boko Haram* group is the most dangerous and deadly insurgency Nigeria has ever witness.

14. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study focuses of the gender-based violence against women by *Boko Haram* insurgency. However, it is pertinent to note that the *Boko Haram* group does not have a monopoly of violence against women. Nigerian forces are also involved in violence against women and girls and this violence also occur within the family, community and the State. The Researcher recommends the following: The Nigerian government through the efforts of all security forces should investigate the root cause of *Boko Haram* insurgency to have a better understanding of the phenomena in order to tackle the issue with the right strategies and effective principles. The security agents should be properly equipped and empowered to provide security in communities especially to vulnerable women and girls. The Nigerian government at all level should ensure the safety of lives of its citizens, because the major responsibility of any government is to protect lives and properties. The Nigeria government security agencies and *Boko Haram* sects should desist from gender-based violence against women. Debates should be organized on the issue of *Boko Haram* insurgency to enlighten the general public on the incidence of the violation of the right of women and the girl-child, carrying out in-depth analysis of issues concerning gender-based violence. There should be greater and improved cooperation between Nigeria and other foreign nations in the international community so as to gain the needed support and assistance in dealing with the insurgency.

²⁸ Lonel Zamfir (2015): African led counter terrorism measures against Boko Haram

²⁹ The Galtimari Committee Report (2011) and The Turaki Committee Report (2013).

³⁰ South China Morning Post. May 8, 2014. 'China pledges help to Nigerian's hunt for Boko Haram'.

³¹ Ed Corplery and David Lewis March 12, (2013) "Nigeria drafts in foreign mercenaries to take on Boko Haram".

³² Accessed June 22, 2016 < <http://thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2016/01/in-pictures-it-general-buratai-visits-columbia> >

³³ Accessed June 21, 2016. <<http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/184543-boko-haram-nigeria-military-moves-command-center-to-maiduguri.html>>