

Religious Liberty in Nigeria: A Case Study of Terrorism

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Abstract:

Obviously, one cannot properly describe the present predicament in Nigeria today without making a conscious reference to fear of death due to continuous attempt and deliberate abuse of human life. The incessant attacks/killings by the Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen across the federation have brought about a great deal of insecurity mostly among Christians and every other person who does not share the same faith with the Islamic sect. Evidently, in the recent attacks Muslims are equally affected as can be seen in the burning of some mosques, killings and kidnapping of some who are also Muslim; mostly referred to as the doings of the bandits. However, the principal objective of this paper is to make a philosophical appraisal of the implication of terrorism with special emphasis on Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani Herdsmen and bandit activities in Nigeria as a challenge to Christianity and African traditional values. Using the method of analysis, the paper makes a critical reflection and addresses this challenge with the aim of proffering an authentic solution that will recognize and respect the value of human life and peaceful coexistence of all men irrespective of their religious and political inclinations.

Keywords: African Traditional Values, Boko Haram, Christianity, Fulani Herdsmen, Insurgency

Introduction

What is actually disturbing in any discourse about the Muslims is that there is a huge contradiction when one follows patiently and critically the writings of Islamic scholars and the teachings of the Holy Quran on the human dignity compared with what is seen on ground, shown on the news, and every social media as the attitude of Muslims on various other people who do not share the same faith. The rate and manner at which they inflict pain and destroy lives with impunity; and without any atom of respect to the dignity of human life is highly and really frightening. Islamic scholars in their argument claim that Islam is a religion of peace and has given a distinct position on humanity by viewing humans as the noblest of creatures and man as the vicegerent of God on earth. Instances abound in the Quran which highlights the high status of human beings and emphasis on upholding it. However, those teachings try to demonstrate the Islamic perception of man as something divine as they believe that the divine spark is present in every human, which requires an enabling society to ignite it. According to the Holy Quran "human beings have been inspired by the divine spirit, therefore their status is unique among the creatures (38:72)" (Mohammad & Muqtedar, 1995).

Human dignity is equally affirmed very explicitly when it is written that we have honored the sons of Adam and conferred on them special favours above a great part of our creation (17:70).

Indeed, this is the most disturbing part and one may quickly ask; who are these people who commit a whole lot of atrocities which is targeted mostly on the destruction of lives in the name of Islam? Who are these people who derive so much joy in demonstrating to the whole world the nothingness of human life by slaughtering people like goats and cows, also tie their hands and legs and position their neck in a hole as they cut their throat and watch life flow out of them. Who are those people who ambush women in their farms, rape and slaughter them after dehumanizing them and abusing their womanhood? Who are these people who come into the churches, burn and kill worshipers? Who these people who terrorize the public and displace people from their homes as they burn and destroy their properties? Who are these people who move into people's homes and kill them even when they are asleep? Who are these people who without hesitation cut even children into pieces including pregnant mothers as they cut their protruded abdomen open and crush the fetus and jubilate as they do that? Who are these people who value ordinary cows more than human beings? Who are these people who carry deadly and dangerous weapons in the name of cattle herders? Who are these people who kidnap and kill priests, seminarians and other Christian faithful either for their

money or for their strong refusal to renounce their Christian faith?

The question is: who are these people? Are they not Muslims? Don't they read or study Quran with all the beautiful teachings on human dignity? If they are not Muslims who are they, and most importantly, what have the 'true' Muslims done about this especially the enlightened ones and those who are at the corridors of power? This contradiction about the Islamic teachings and obvious attitude of the Muslims on others has tremendously been demonstrated in uncountable number of attacks on human dignity following the Boko Haram insurgencies and Fulani Herdsmen activities which have heightened in the course of Buhari's presidency. Smith (2020, May 20) rightly states that:

Boko Haram members have perceived Christians (and other non-Christians) who do not share their religious world view as enemies, therefore legitimate targets of attacks. Boko Haram members have been attacking Christians and their places of worship, creating tension and disharmony between Christians and Muslims in the Northern States of Nigeria similarly, over 1000 Christians killed in 2019 as a result of Boko Haram and Fulani extremists attacks. By now we know that during 2018, more than 6,000 Christians were killed or maimed by Islamist terrorists affiliated either with notorious Boko Haram group, best known for kidnapping young girls, or Fulani tribesmen, whose anti-Christian brutality goes largely unanswered by Nigerian government. The situation is threatening the unity and integration of Nigeria (8).

Moreover, it is a fact that a severe attack in Benue State in 2016, over thousands of people were driven from six (6) villages by Fulani Herdsmen not to mention in some other areas like Taraba and Kaduna where destruction of properties and brutality were massively displayed. Most of the victims complained that it was due to conflict between Muslims and Christians that has contributed to increasing violence and massacre in their religions. These incessant attacks on unsuspecting victims have become very worrisome as it continuously bites the fabrics of Nigeria's unity and security. Daniel (2020, August 1) gave a perfect description of this situation saying;

Attacks by herdsmen without doubt have become the most potent threat to national security in the last couple of years. What makes the attacks by herdsmen very disturbing are, the frequencies, the level of destruction and sheer brutality. The development in almost all cases is characterized by high casualty rate and massive displacement of communities. One can say with certainty that never has the country experienced this level of destruction and social dislocation. What however is so disturbing with the development is how the attacks in almost all cases took place under the eyes of security agencies. The attacks by herdsmen are without doubt comparable to the insurgency in the North East. This is the reason why fears are being expressed that the nation may be trading on a very dangerous ground. As at date, there has been wanton killings by herdsmen in Benue, Niger, Taraba, Kaduna and Plateau States that have resulted in massive displacement of people and loss of lives. The attacks are unprecedented when assessed on the basis of the frequency, the casualty and sheer brutality. The fallout naturally is huge humanitarian crisis in almost all the states affected (Daniel, 2020, August 1).

However, the simmering and the unabated ethno-religious conflicts and the politicization of religion coupled with the menace of Boko Haram insurgency and Fulani Herdsmen activities in Nigeria have been alarming and worrisome. The crucial reason behind the incessant human carnage caused by religiously motivated conflicts in Nigeria has not been clearly stated in most of the works done in the field. Missing gap in previous studies underpins and provokes the justification of this very paper; hence the statement of this research problem. The issue germane to this paper that needs clarification is that the existing works failed to indicate or attribute the challenges as the bane and springboard of religious crisis and ethno-religious conflicts and by extension the ongoing insurgencies in Nigeria which has been a challenge to Christianity and African traditional values. Consequently, the current paper will bring into focus the implication of the Boko Haram insurgency and Fulani Herdsmen activities in Nigeria.

This article expectedly seeks to philosophically appraise the implication of the Boko Haram insurgency and Fulani herdsmen activities in Nigeria as a challenge to Christianity and African traditional values. It reveals the extent to which the rivalry between Christianity and Islamic

religions has caused insecurity and human carnage in Nigeria since their inception and by extension the Boko Haram menace which has become an internationally known terrorist organization.

Conceptional Analysis

Fulani Herdsmen

Fulani Herdsmen or Fulani pastoralist according to Abdulbarkindo and Alupsen (2019, January 12), are nomadic or semi nomadic Fulani herders whose primary occupation is raising livestock. The pure Fulani pastoralist engages in random movement of cattle while the semi-nomadic makes transhumance migration and return to their camps or homes. Herdsmen can be perceived as people who are simply in constant search for greener pastures for feeding their herds. The term Fulani Herdsmen as regards to this review is linked to how Fulani herdsmen use terror against the Christians in Nigeria to fulfill the religious obligation of jihad and to protect their way of life. They are seen as people whose life, survival and tradition is embedded in the value attached to the herds, and using aggression to propagate these life systems.

Insurgency

Scholars and theorists have given different definitions of insurgency. While some of these definitions are closely related, others are not so related though contain common elements and this still makes the subject technically difficult. Perhaps insurgency is best understood by first considering what it is not. According to Akinbi (2019), insurgency is not terrorism or conventional war for example, though it shares with them some similarities such as the use of force or guerrilla tactics to achieve an end which is often political. Basically, the difference between insurgency and terrorism lies in the scope and magnitude of violence.

Traditionally however, Imasuen (2015) asserts that insurgencies seek to overthrow an existing order with one that is commensurate with their political, economic, ideological or religious goals. He noted that insurgency is a struggle to control a contested political space, between a state (a group of states or occupying powers), and one or more popularly based, non-state challengers. Insurgency which has been seen as the most common type of armed conflict has posed the greatest threat to global peace and security in the 21st century. A few years ago, insurgency was limited to a few isolated places, such as Northern Ireland, the Basque country in Northern Spain and some areas in the Middle East, but due to the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks as well as the rise of the Arab spring, insurgency has degenerated into a global menace.

Book Haram

Officially, Boko Haram is called Jamaatu Ahlis Sunna Liddaawati Wal-Jihad which in Arabic means people Committed to the Propagation of the Prophets Teachings and Jihad (Omonia, 2015). Osisanwo (2016) maintained that while Boko is Hausa for Book, Haram is Arabic for unlawful, hence the meaning western education is forbidden. For the sect, the Rule of Law, Democracy, Constitutionalism, secularism, and all non-Arabic schools are sinful and must be abhorred because they are predicated on man-made laws. Book Haram was derived as a nickname given to the movement by outsiders by truncating a slogan repeated by the late Mohammed Yusuf on video discs, prohibiting not just the colonial European format of literacy but any collaboration with the neo-colonial state (Manfred, 2015).

Christianity

Christianity is an Abrahamic monotheistic religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Its adherents, known as Christians, believe that Jesus is the Christ, whose coming as the Messiah was prophesied in the Hebrew Bible, called the Old Testament in Christianity, and chronicled in the New Testament. It is the world's largest religion (Gunton, 2011). Horrell (2006) stated that Christianity remains culturally diverse in its Western and Eastern branches, as well as in the doctrines concerning justification and the nature of salvation, ecclesiology, ordination, and Christology. Their creeds generally hold in common Jesus as the Son of God, the logos incarnated who ministered, suffered, and died on the cross, but rose from the dead for the salvation of mankind; as referred to as the gospel, meaning the good news, in the Bible. Describing Jesus' life and teachings are the four canonical gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John with the Jewish Old Testament as

the gospels respected background. The basic beliefs of Christianity are stated in the Apostles Creed. The concept of God as a benevolent and forgiving rather than vengeful is a main tenet of the Christian faith. Christianity holds values and morals in high esteem. Another Christian belief is that even though humankind has sinned and separated itself from the love of God, all can be saved by repentance.

African Traditional Values

The value of a thing according to Idang (2009), be it an object or a belief, is normally defined as its worth. Just as an object is seen to be of high value that is treasured, our beliefs about what is right or wrong that are worth being held are equally treasured. A value can be seen as some point of view or conviction which we can live with, live by and can even die for. This is why it seems that values actually permeate every aspect of human life. For instance, we can rightly speak of religious, political, social, aesthetic, moral, cultural and even personal values. We have observed elsewhere that there are many types and classifications of values. As people differ in their conception of reality, then the values of one individual may be different from those of another. Life seems to force people to make choices, or to rate things as better or worse as well as formulate some scale or standard of values. Depending on the way we perceive things we can praise and blame, declare actions right or wrong or even declare the scene or objects before us as either beautiful or ugly. Each person, as we could see, has some sense of values and there is no society without some value system (Idang, 2009).

Religion in African society seems to be the fulcrum around which every activity revolves. Hence, religious values are not toyed with. African traditional religion, wherever it is practiced, has some defining characteristics. For instance, it possesses the concept of a Supreme Being which is invincible and indigenous. It holds a belief in the existence of the human soul and the soul does not die with the body. Revealed that African traditional religion also has the belief that good and bad spirits do exist and that these spirits are what make communication with the Supreme Being possible. Above all, it holds a moral understanding of justice and truth and the knowledge of the existence of good and evil. African religious values seem to permeate every facet of the life of the African and the African believes that anything can be imbued with spiritual significance. The worship of different deities on different days goes on to show that the African people hold their religious values in high esteem. Sorcerers and diviners are seen to be mediating between God and man and interpreting God's wishes to the mortal. The diviners, sorcerers and soothsayers help to streamline human behavior in the society and people are afraid to commit offences because of the fear of being exposed by the diviners and sorcerers.

Each of the religions has core values of hospitality, honesty, peace and each is struggling to preach this in their own different ways. The approach may differ, but these values are evident in the different religions.

Religion as a Political Philosophy of Terrorism

About half of the dangerous terrorist groups on earth are for the most part instigated by religious doctrines and concerns. Under religion as the political philosophy of terrorism, Hoffman (2006) noted that terrorist tend to consider their religion as universal and feel they are obligated to propagate their religion by means of violence if need be. Their adoption of violence is often justified and legitimized because they believe their cause is part of God's plan (Hoffman, 2006).

Most of these religious systems of belief convince their believers to exterminate evils through militant means for the test of their faith or part of God's plan. They believe that it is the demand of God that is why their actions are legitimized and for the protection of their religion in present and future. Hence the aspiration for vengeance works as driving force for insurgency in the form of suicide bombing, war against other faiths and imperialism. They consider these acts as test of their sincerity with the religion and accomplishment of assigned duty by God and the way to achieve the will of God and a way towards heaven.

As evidence of the above statement is a statement released by the sect in justification for killing Saifura Hussaini and Hauwa Liman, two humanitarian workers in September and October 2018, who worked for the UNICEF and ICRC respectively before their abduction by the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) at a military facility in Rann, Borno State in March 2018. The sect revealed that:

...Saifura and Hauwa were killed because they are considered as Murtads

(apostates) by the group because they were once Muslims that have abandoned their Islam, the moment they chose to work with the Red Cross, and for us, there is no difference between Red Cross and UNICEF (Sahara Reporters, 2018, March 20).

Simply, in its extremist form religious groups adopt terrorism as a last resort to its campaign. In its tactics religious terrorism is full of injustices and maltreatment. Strategically it supports pre-emptive attacks for the fear of an existing threat from the opposite faith and ideology. Because of applying this tactic religious groups and leaders cannot plan their actions rationally and select inappropriate time and places of target that cause human sufferings. Most of the religious attacks and avenges are related to the historical events; religious insurgency is based on the idea of never forget the past wounds and previous grievances, they are more rigid in their actions and more dangerous in consequence of failure of actions.

Nevertheless, insurgency in the name of religion aims at political motives. Believers of the religious group consider it righteous to adopt violent means in defense of their faith against other religions. They consider their religion universal and assume it their great responsibility to propagate their faith by all violent means.

The Neo-Malthusian Theory:

The Neo-Malthusian Theory helps in analyzing drivers of the conflict between the Fulani herdsmen activities in Nigeria. It is a theory which suggests that prejudices can raise competition between groups for scarcely available resources, power, or territory. These theorists predicted that a time would come when population explosion will put pressure on the few available resources leading to increased hunger and violence.

Homer-Dixon progenitor of this theory used three hypotheses to link environmental changes to violent conflict. First, he suggested that decreasing supplies of physically controllable environmental resources, such as clean water and good agricultural land, would provoke conflicts. The second hypothesis stated that large population movements caused by environmental stress would induce group-identity conflicts, especially ethnic clashes. The third hypothesis suggested that severe environmental scarcity would simultaneously increase economic deprivation and disrupt key social institutions, which in turn would cause deprivation conflicts such as civil strife and insurgency (Homer-Dixon & Blitt).

The above observations by different scholars are pointed to the fact that Nigeria is one of the countries in the global community seriously affected by the activities of the dreaded sect called Boko Haram and the Fulani herdsmen. One of the groups seriously affected by the incidences of insurgencies is the Christian. The following report is intended to cast light and increase focus on these relentless attacks on Nigerian Christians, to provide insights into the perpetrating groups, and to offer evidence of their Islamist intentions and hence the implication of the Boko Haram insurgency and Fulani herdsmen activities in Nigeria as a challenge to Christianity and African traditional values.

Analysis of Boko Haram Insurgency and Fulani Herdsmen Activities on Christians in Nigeria

Nigeria has continued to come face to face with security challenges since 2003, prominent among which are Boko Haram terrorism and armed herdsmen violence in the North-Eastern region and Nigeria as a whole. The sect's leader, Mohammed Yusuf, is believed to have formed Boko Haram (meaning western education is a sin) in 2002 in the restive North-Eastern city of Maiduguri with the intention of imposing a strict version of Islamic law.

The activities/operations of these two groups over the years have been with impunity, leaving in their trails, blood, death, wailing and destruction. These have devastating social, political and economic effects on the progress and stability of not only their direct victims, but the entire Northern region and Nigeria at large. These incidents have adverse effects on some African countries sharing boundaries with Nigeria such as Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

Verified reports of murders, rapes, mutilation, and kidnapping of Christians in Nigeria have persistently increased since the dawn of the twenty-first century, and with horrifying acceleration in recent years. These attacks are frequently accompanied by the torching of homes, churches, villages, and agricultural fields. A July 15, 2020 headline reports that 1,202 Nigerian Christians were killed in the first six months of 2020 (Daniel, 2020, August 1). This is in addition to 11,000 Christians who

have been killed since June 2015. Such violence has reached a point at which expert observers and analysts are warning of a progressive genocide a slow-motion war specifically targeting Christians across Africa's largest and most economically powerful nation.

These persistent attacks carried out by the Boko Haram sect makes it correct to say that they are head bent on lynching anyone of opposing faith. Or rather, they are on a jihad to forcefully convert people of other religious inclinations to Islam. This is true because while they released the kidnapped Chibok girls, they refused to release one Leah Sharibu, a Christian who refused to convert to Islam. They continued attack on Christian clergies who have equally continued to be unabated. As Patrick Egwu (2021, February 22) reported, Fr. Gbaka was abducted and killed by armed men. He also reported that armed herdsmen killed two priests and 17 parishioners during morning Mass at St. Ignatius Quasi parish in a rural community in Benue state in 2018. According to him, At least 20 priests in Nigeria have been abducted over the past five years. In January 2020, this dastardly attack was extended to priests in training. Olugbemi (2020, February 8) reported that the abduction of four students of Good Shepherd Major Seminary were kidnapped on January 9, 2020, when gunmen invaded the school located at Kaukau in the Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State. After about three weeks in captivity, one of the four Catholic seminarians, identified as Michael Nnadi, was killed after collecting ransom. This is why Rev. John Joseph Hayab is quoted saying that:

Today in northern Nigeria, many people are living in fear and many young people are afraid to become pastors because pastors' lives are in great danger. When bandits or kidnappers realize that their victims are priests or pastors, it seems a violent spirit does take over their heart to demand more ransom and in some cases go to the extent of killing the victim (Christian News Agency, 2021, January 18).

News stories about the assaults in Nigeria are rarely reported in mainstream media outlets, and instead are generally found in publications sponsored by Christian organizations in their newsletters and websites. For this reason, the genocidal intentions of radical Islamist groups such as Boko Haram, Islamic state of West Africa Province (ISWAP), and Fulani jihadist have not gained sufficient attention to alert global powers and authorities. To make matters worse, when these incidents are reported, they are regularly explained away as effects of climate change, local feuds, or internecine religious wars for which both sides bear equal responsibilities (17).

Religion has remained a dynamic force in the history of man and society. Religion draws its strength from its potency to induce or bring about change in the attitudes of its adherents, either positively or negatively. Africa as a continent seems to confirm the long lasting belief that man is deeply religious, because of the plurality of religion and religious beliefs which are found in it; there are moderates and extremists, fanatics and relists, simple minded believers and complex adherents, liberals and conservatives; they all contribute to the multi-religious nature of Nigeria and Africa.

Nigeria today faces greater challenges to peace and stability than ever before. The various regions in the country, the Northern part of the country, the South West, and the Niger Delta, are a volatile mix of insecurity, ethno-religious conflict and political instability. Thousands have been killed in crises between the two major religious groups sparked by various events. The militant attacks, which followed the arrest of several of its members, targeted mainly police stations, prisons, government buildings and churches. Insurgency in Nigeria is predominantly exhibited by two major deadly terror organizations namely the Boko Haram Islamic and the Fulani Herdsmen Islamic religion-organizational jihadists. In the Eastern Nigeria (Biafra), Fulani Herdsmen Islamic religious-organizational terrorism has been witnessed in the States like Enugu, Anambra, Ebonyi, Abia, Imo and Rivers.

The Boko Haram has become known as a fringe Islamic sect brought into existence principally by the political and the socio-economic motivations for survival. Accordingly, it is not to be considered to be true Islam, since it professes and carries out violence on both Muslims and Christians, the emergence of its violent campaigns have set the two major religions against each other with resultant clashes erupting as community conflict between cattle rearer of Fulani/Muslim faith against their host Christian communities.

Implication of Boko Haram Insurgency and Fulani Herdsmen Activities on Christians in Nigeria

Nigeria has been battling with ethno-religious conflicts which have divided the country on ethnic and religious lines. Even though insurgency and other violent crises has started at the close of

Goodluck Jonathan's administration, the tides changed for the worse when President Muhammadu Buhari was re-elected as Nigerian president. The Boko Haram insurgency in North East and the Armed Herdsmen attacks on communities all over Nigeria and since their emergence, it has been revealed that the armed herders have terrorized, kidnapped, killed, raped, burnt farming communities, property and taken-over lands belonging to the farming communities for their grazing activities. Their activities have also resulted in the loss of revenue by the State, threatened national unity, diversion of budgetary allocations for the maintenance of internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps, loss of human capital and damage to the country's international image.

With the recent execution of eleven (11) Christian captives by the insurgents to 25th December, 2019, in Borno State, gruesome beheading of Pastor Lawan Indimi, the CAN Chairman of Michika LGA of Adamawa State on 20th January, 2010; the kidnap and later execution of Ropvil Daciya on 9th January, 2020, along Damaturu-Maiduguri road, attack on Garkida in Gombi LGA of Adamawa State on 21st February, 2020, leading to the burning of EYN and Living Faith Churches; attacks of Christian communities in Plateau, Benue and Taraba States by the Fulani extremists and the Prayer walk organized by Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) all over the country on 2nd February, 2020 (which some referred to as protest). Full scale jihad unfolds in Nigeria as Fulani kill thirteen Christians amidst ceaseless Boko Haram bloodshed, coupled with attacks on churches, Christians communities and reprisals, it becomes admissible, though contested by others, that the Boko Haram and Fulani extremists activities are particularly targeting at Christians in order to wipe them out of the Northern region completely (Daniel, 2020, August 1).

Even though some Christian religious leaders in the North, especially Most. Rev. Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah (Current Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sokoto in North-Western Nigeria) and Josiah Atkins Idowu-Fearon (Nigerian Anglican Bishop) have continually called for restraints against reprisal attacks, recent attacks on Christians such as the kidnap and murder of Seminarian Nnadi has made Kukah to state clearly that it is safe to say that Christians in the North are marked men and women today, they had for long become targets of killings by terrorists under the garb of Islam (Hoffman, 2006). The handwriting on the wall is very clear about the obvious polarization of the Nigeria people on religious line, consequent of incessant attacks on Christian communities all over the country either by Boko Haram or Fulani extremists. Thus, the Federal Government, confirming this perspective through the Minister for Information, Lai Mohammed, stated that the terrorists were deliberately deploying the antics of attacking Christians and Churches in order to sow the seed of confusion between the two great religions, they have started targeting Christians and Christian villages for a specific reason, which is to trigger a religious war and throw the nation into chaos. Apparently, they have realized how emotive and divisive religion can be, when exploited by unscrupulous person (Daniel, 2020, August 1).

The impact of Boko Haram insurgency and Fulani herdsmen activities in Nigeria have been examined by different scholars. The implication of the activities of the sect is well felt even today. The following are clear outlined of the impact on the Christians in Nigerian. They have killed innocent Christians or forcibly convert them; they have bombed and killed members of churches; they have threatened Southerners and Christians to relocate from the North; they have burnt different schools and killed students; they have killed traditional rulers.

The activities of the sect have a negative implication on the Christian liturgy celebration or worship in Nigeria, particularly in the North. The attack on Christian worship is that it has reduced the number of members of the church community. Many Christian lives have been lost as a result of the activities of the sect. there is generally the gratuitous destruction of church buildings by the sect, living the members displaced and without anywhere to worship. United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2019 revealed that between 9,000 and 11,500 Christians displaced and churches destroyed in March 2015, according to the United Nations Office of Coordination of Humanitarians Affairs (UNOCHA), 1,235,295 people in total were displayed by Boko Haram related violence and the remaining eight percent (98,824) of them are mainly displaced by Muslim Hausa-Fulani herdsmen attacks.

However, many more Christians have left Northern Nigeria all together and have integrated into communities in Middle Belt states or migrated (back) to Southern Nigeria. Based upon the number of destroyed churches, it is estimated that up to 1.3 million Christians have left their place of residence between 2000 and 2014. The Christian communities in the far North (e.g. Borno, Yobe and Kano) have the most Christians that flee. The Christian communities in the Middle Belt (e.g. Benue,

Plateau and Nasarawa) received the most fleeing Christians. Between 2000 and 2014, over 13,000 churches have been abandoned, closed, destroyed and/or burnt, predominantly in the far North. It has been estimated that this has affected 1.3 million Christians. Amongst them, there are internally displaced persons, people that have been forced to relocate and people who are no longer able to go to their normal places of worship. Nearly 3,500 new churches have been established by relocating Christians, predominantly in Middle Belt states. The Christian communities in northern Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states are the most affected by Fulani herdsmen attacks. Christians apparently relocate to Middle Belt states (e.g. Plateau, Kogi and Kwara) and relative peaceful Sharia states (e.g. Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara).

Church attendance and membership decreased in the far north violence-ridden areas but increased in the Middle Belt states where many Christians relocated to. The church has mostly lost the strength and resources to engage in community projects, giving of offerings and tithes and to support their pastors due to poverty amongst members. Christians have indicated that feelings towards Muslims in their community have been negatively affected by the impact of the persistent violence. Others feel that freedom of speech, association, religion and other human rights have been severely affected, most notably in the Sharia states. Every Christian in Northern Nigeria is born and bred in a culture of violence regardless of when and where they are born in the region. Three out of four Christians in Northern Nigeria see a bleak future for Christians in Northern Nigeria.

The persistent violence has also led to the further segregation of the Muslim and Christian communities. It has become more difficult for Christians in Northern Nigeria to be promoted at work or find employment with the government. At a state level, there seems to be more political involvement among Christians in the southern Kaduna and Plateau States. Nevertheless, it seems to be almost absent among Christians in violence-ridden Borno and Yobe States. Despite this, there seems to be a new dynamic in which Christians are fighting for their freedom through participation in politics.

Accordingly, up to eighty seven percent of the respondents interviewed on the implication of insurgency, the number of Christians who persevere despite the personal loss and trauma has grown. They seem to experience an increase in faith and a greater solidarity within the church. To understand religious violence and to love your enemies are considered to be the biggest spiritual challenges Christians are facing. To cope with the trauma inflicted by the persistent violence is understood to be the main emotional challenge. The main economic challenge for Christians in Northern Nigeria is to empower themselves to gain a sustainable livelihood. Christians say the social challenge for them is to overcome mutual distrust, fear and hatred between them and their Muslim counterparts.

Generally speaking, Boko Haram insurgency and Fulani herdsmen activities in Nigeria, have adversely affected religious activities such as night vigils, midweek services, Sunday services and open-field crusade, particularly night vigils, which Ugwuobute believed was one of the most powerful means of attacking Satan, evil spirits, witches and wizards and occult men and women.

Implications of the Boko Haram Insurgency and Fulani Herdsmen Activities on African Traditional Values and Dignity of Human Life

The first legal issue raised by the mass killings perpetrated by Boko Haram and the Fulani herdsmen is the violation of right to life. Ekpo, et al., stated that:

The sanctity of life is guaranteed under section 33(1) of the Constitution of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), which provides: Every person has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria.

Every person is made in the image of God. This means that every life is sacred and all people are worthy of respect, no matter who they are or where they live. We are called to care for all human life. African culture is embedded in strong moral considerations. It has a system of various beliefs and customs which every individual ought to keep in order to live long and to avoid bringing curses on them and others. Forms of immoral behaviour are strongly discouraged and whenever a suspected offender denies a charge brought against him, he would be taken to a soothsayer or made to serve the consequences. African culture has a moral code that forbids doing harm to a relative, a kinsman, an in-law, a foreigner and a stranger, except when such a person is involved in an immoral or evil act; and if that is the case, it is advisable to stay away from such an individual and even at death.

There have been numerous attacks on Christian communities and natives by Fulani herdsmen in Eastern Nigeria. This shows clear cases of religious and ethnic cleansing. Fulani herdsmen kill, injure, maim, and destroy farms of the indigenous people. As a result of Fulani Herdsmen religious-organizational attacks, children suffer more from malnutrition, hunger, starvation and diseases than adults. In some cases, the children suffered permanent injuries, losing legs or other limbs, while others die due to lack of medical care.

In some places in Eastern Nigeria, the attacks involved razing villages and communities down at night with its accompanying massacres of people with AK47 guns or matches, which is very synonymous with genocide. The Fulani herdsmen religious-organizational terrorism and the Boko Haram insurgency has left thousands of people dead, maimed or wounded, and property worth millions destroyed in Eastern Nigeria. What has been going on can no longer be described as a clash between Fulani cattle herders and farmers in the Eastern Nigeria. It is a sustained massacre. The Fulani herdsmen claimed their attack is revenge for cattle theft. The massacre was a reprise of several such murderous invasions across different areas of Middle Belt region of Nigeria of such States as Plateau, Kaduna, Taraba, Nassarawa, Adamawa, and Benue. The genocidal rampage of well-armed herdsmen has become a feature of life in the region in the last eight years.

Herdsmen attacks have resulted in massive loss of lives, displacement of people and the disruption of the occupational pursuit of many, all of which have impoverished victims of their attack, worsen the living conditions of those in Internally Displaced People camps (IDP camps), affected environs and importantly, resulted in a significant decrease in agricultural (crop and livestock) production. About 6,000 persons have died in the last four years as a result of Herdsmen attacks. This constitute a huge loss in human capital, and when corroborated with reports of about 175,000 displaced persons in Benue state alone, the economic security of the country is further threatened. There are about 20 government funded IDP camps in Nassarawa state, 8 in Benue state among several others established in various states across the country. Reveal that within these IDP camps, the living conditions of displaced persons are pitiable as issues of food insufficiency, unclean water, poor sanitation and hygiene, inadequate medication and several health challenges to women and children threatens to breed communicable diseases. When in April 2018 about 10,000 earlier reintegrated persons returned to various camps across Nassarawa state, the implication was invariably a decrease in food production and rising cost of goods influenced by their displacement and loss of occupational and economic productivity. These negative effects of Herdsmen attacks, if not nipped in the bud could degenerate into socio-economic crises with grave security implications.

Reprisal attacks are increasingly being adopted by a few farming communities seeking justice they perceive cannot be given by the country's security apparatus. Anti-Fulani sentiments have spread across the country in recent times due to the fact that Herdsmen are predominantly Fulani. The Bachama reprisal attack on a Hausa community believed to be Fulani has the potential to spiral ethno-religious crises within the country if a counter attack became an option of the affected community. In Cross River state for instance, on the 6th of May 2018, two trucks conveying Fulani migrant sellers were intercepted and returned by communities after an alarm was raised by the Hausa Settlers in Ogoja. Also noted that Ogoja people complained that:

The new Fulanis will make life difficult and hostile for us to continue living in Ogoja peacefully because; it is possible they were driven away from wherever they came from because they were affiliated with killer Herdsmen. These returnees were predominantly women, children and the elderly. They could themselves be fleeing from the backlash of herdsmen attacks.

How can a country be said to be safe and secure when mutual fear exists amongst its citizens? Insecurity is synonymous with fear and as a result of herdsmen attacks, there is the fear of just anyone individuals who controls a herd of cattle, or is affiliated to same by virtue of ethnicity as was the above case. Beyond all of the following security issues, kidnapping, rape, and theft have increasingly become elements of Herdsmen attacks. In fact, Herdsmen attacks, it seems, have provided a platform for acts of criminality to strife because they are oftentimes considered to be communal clashes by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Many terror and criminal atrocities associated with such attacks are not subjected to investigations, and the culprits are usually not brought to justice in fear of not wanting to escalate a communal clash. Thus the violence is further ember by the inaction of some Nigerians in good offices.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

This paper has situated and analyzed the implications resulting from various violent clashes between Boko Haram insurgency and Fulani herdsman activities in Nigeria as a challenge to Christianity and African traditional values. Hence Boko Haram attacks and Fulani Herdsmen activities have a devastating impact on Christians; spiritually, mentally, psychological and morally.

It is clear that from 2003 when the group which later came to be called Boko Haram started unleashing terror on North-Eastern part of Nigeria, and later spread to other parts of the North; through 2013 and 2019 when the Fulani extremists upgraded their terror on farming communities in the Middle-Belt region of Nigeria (Benue, Plateau, Taraba, Adamawa, Southern Kaduna and Nasarawa States), and extended the terror to South-Eastern and South-Western Nigeria, Nigerians' unity, integration and national development remained defied. The various perspectives from which the Nigerian people see the phenomena have placed the stability of the country under question mark. Apart from the death of thousands of Christians and destruction of communities and property, the phenomena affected food production in the fertile regions of Northern Nigeria, thus impacting negatively on the economy of not only the farmers, but the entire nation. Protests, and counter protests, calls and counter-calls from all over the nation for either state or regional security structure or even division of the country along regional lines have become very serious issues of concern due to the foregoing development.

Finally, people have also advocated for the Just War theory as the only solution to the problem. The just war theory is a largely Christian philosophy that attempts to reconcile three things:

- a. Taking human life is seriously wrong.
- b. States have a duty to defend their citizens, and defend justice.
- c. Protecting innocent human life and defending important moral values sometimes requires willingness to use force and violence.

The theory specifies conditions for judging if it is just to go to war, and conditions for how the war should be fought. Although it was extensively developed by Christian theologians, it can be used by people of every faith and none. The aim of Just War Theory is to provide a guide to the right way for states to act in potential conflict situations. It only applies to states, and not to individuals. The theory is not intended to justify wars but to prevent them, by showing that going to war except in certain limited circumstances is wrong, and thus motivate states to find other ways of resolving conflicts.

Governments resort to the use of force in response to emerging security threats from non-state actors leans on the two dimensions of the just war theory. However, in most cases, the use of force is considered as the first option, contrary to the theory's requirement that the use of force must be the last resort. Nonetheless, governments can argue that their response to insurgency is just given that they have the legality to act as the main custodians of security and peace and terrorists pose an immediate threat to the safety of citizens given their flexibility in choosing targets as well as methods. Therefore, countering force with force becomes justifiable in protecting the integrity and national security of the state. Governments can also argue that negotiating with leaders of terrorist groups is not an option given its potential multiplier effect: it could encourage more people to use terrorist tactics to gain attention.

Perhaps it is the most highlighted aspect of the theory that governments rely on to justify their counterterrorism strategies. It is centered on the argument that upon the occurrence of an armed conflict between government forces and terrorist groups a number of considerations ought to be taken into account. One is that the response must be made by a legitimate authority and in this case the government through its security forces. Secondly, the action should be towards the right intention meaning that the decisions being taken should inspire peace, order, and stability.

The third factor is that there should be all signs that the response is for a just course to mean that the response is for purposes such as protecting civilians, brings to justice the perpetrators and correcting past offenses. There should be other considerations such as the chances of the chosen response strategy being successful, which needs to take into consideration good judgment that will avoid disasters such as a possible genocide or a prolonged war that will put the government into a spending spree. In other words, the amount of resources, both human and financial, invested in the operation needs to be consistent and justifiable with the outcome. The chosen decision especially if it involves the use of violence has to be taken after other channels have failed. High-risk strategies should not be the first choice.

The importance of this theory is that war or response to war should be conducted in a manner that upholds the rights and dignity of civilians especially those not involved in the conflict by ensuring their properties and life are protected and people are not attacked indiscriminately. Having examined the main assumptions of just war, its application to war on terrorism seems reasonable on the surface. The theory seems to lean on government's justification of use of force in responding to incidences of terror. Of course, it prescribes the use of force as a last resort, but seemingly with regards to war on terrorism, the last resort comes much faster than it would have been in other instances.

However, the following is the way forward in addressing the challenge of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria: There should be a clear separation of the state and religion: this was also the position canvassed by the participants at the 8th All Nigeria Editors Conference that took place at Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The separation of the state and religion implies equal recognition and respect for all religions and favour to or patronage of none. Failure to separate religion and the state, and the continuing politicization and manipulation of religion to gain and retain economic and political hegemony, will lead to the corruption of religion by the state.

The three tiers of Nigerian governments (Federal, State and Local Governments) must, as a matter of policy, improve the living conditions of the Nigerian people who are wallowing in poverty. The governments, private and international organizations should provide employment opportunities to the seething unemployed Nigerian youth, in order to improve their general well-being. There is also the need for government to carry out massive education and orientation of the traditional herders on the need for change from open pastoralism to ranching. This, apart from reducing farmers/herders clashes to the minimum, would improve their productivity.

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