

Boko Haram and Modern Slavery in Nigeria

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Abstract

The escalation of Boko Haram violent conflicts in Nigeria has intensified the phenomenon of modern slavery, particularly in the northern part of the country where refugees fleeing conflict and terrorism have generated a humanitarian crisis. Modern slavery in Nigeria and other parts of West Africa was enabled by deteriorating economic conditions, violent conflicts, territorial displacement and environmental crises. The anti-modern slavery organisation, Walk Free Foundation in the Global Slavery Index 2016 rated Nigeria top among 167 countries with most enslaved people. The havoc of Boko Haram has made Nigeria more enslaved people than any other country in West Africa with 875,500 out of 6,228,800 in Africa and 45.8 million in the world. Following the examples of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Boko Haram kidnapped and enslaved women and children for sexual slavery, suicide bombing, forced labour in the domestic sector and forced marriages. Boko Haram echoed slave-taking practices of girls and young women for sexual purposes by Algerian Islamists in the 1990s and early 2000s. Since the abduction of 276 high school girls in Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria, in 2014, Boko Haram has demonstrated that slavery was a way of handling prisoners-of-war. Boko Haram carved out a sphere of influence and territory for slave raiding and kidnapping. This paper argues that modern slavery practice of Boko Haram is a reflection of how widespread the phenomenon has been in Nigeria. The paper discuss economic contradictions and failure of postcolonial economic development strategies which created loopholes for modern slavery. It argues that the soaring rate of enslaved people demonstrated the reversal slave mode of production that has become widespread in the region. It contributes to the ongoing debate on the political, social and economic consequences of Boko Haram insurgency. The risks and hazards of terrorism threatened everyday lives and livelihoods of vulnerable households, women and young girls some of whom were enslaved or sold into slavery.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Modern slavery, terrorism, forced labour, Northern Nigeria

Introduction

At the dawn of the 21st century, modern slavery has become a global issue attracting the intervention of international organisations and scholars. This paper demonstrates how the activities of Boko Haram intensified the scourge of modern slavery in Nigeria. The widespread use of women as sex slaves is not new in modern history. For example, during the Second World War, Comfort women were used. The ISIS and the Lord's Resistance Army used vulnerable groups as slaves in their insurgent activities. This raises questions on how the dynamics of slavery have changed since the abolition of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in the early 19th century. The anti-modern slavery organisation, Walk Free Foundation in the Global Slavery Index 2016 rated Nigeria top among 167 countries with most enslaved people. The havoc of Boko Haram has made Nigeria more enslaved people than any other country in West Africa. In Nigeria, about 834,000 people accounts for about 15% of the 6.4 million people living in slavery in contemporary Africa and 45.8 million in the world.¹ The illegal profits was \$150 billion globally in 2016.² According to Free the Slaves, modern slavery in Africa and the Middle was estimated at \$1.6billion annually.³ They include victims of human trafficking, child labour, unpaid labour and kidnapping.⁴ This indicated that modern slavery has become a huge global crisis.⁵

¹ Michael Fleshman Facts on Modern Slavery in Nigeria <http://www.theglobalist.com/9-facts-on-modern-slavery-in-nigeria-2/> Retrieved on 27/1/2017

² By John J. Metzler Modern slavery on increase http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2016/04/197_202936.html Retrieved on 27/1/2017

³ Emma Christopher <http://theconversation.com/behind-the-boko-haram-headlines-slavery-in-africa-is-the-real-crisis-26379> Behind the Boko Haram headlines, slavery in Africa is the real crisis May 12, 2014. Retrieved on 27/1/2017

⁴ By John J. Metzler Modern slavery on increase http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2016/04/197_202936.html Retrieved on 27/1/2017

⁵ The Modern Slavery Act 2015, an Act of the Parliament of the UK designed to combat slavery in the UK and consolidates previous offences relating to trafficking and slavery.

Conceptualising Modern Slavery

Modern slavery refers to a process whereby a person is held against his/her will for exploitative purposes and commodification. Indeed, slavery did not end in the 19th century, as legislated but continues today in different forms.⁶ Since its abolition, slavery has slipped into the shadow economy. Bales defines slavery as the complete control of a person for economic exploitation by violence or the threat of violence.⁷ In Manzo's view, slavery could be defined as unpaid forced labour and identifies the defining features of modern slavery as the shift in the master-slave relation from legal ownership to illegal control.⁸ Manzo argues that "The constituent elements of modern slavery are identified as control without ownership: violence (or the threat of violence); coercion (loss of freedom and choice); and exploitation (of labour power through unpaid work)." The Walk Free Foundation's 2014 Global Slavery Index, defines modern slavery as any practice that traps people in servitude, including human trafficking and forced labor. Other examples are children who are forced to work as street vendors or beggars or forced to work in mines, stone quarries and domestic service. Many children were forcefully recruited as child soldiers in the Civil Wars of Sudan and Liberia, Sierra-Leone. In West Africa, many children are held under slavery conditions working under the threat of violence for little or no pay. About 250 children were widely reported to be on the "slave ship" *Etireno* taking them from Benin to work in Gabon.⁹

Traditional slavery continues to exist in some African countries such as Mauritania, Sudan and Niger. According to the 1991 Fact Sheet of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, slavery encompasses an extensive list of abuses:

⁶ Joel Quirk, 2006, "The Anti-Slavery Project: Linking the Historical and Contemporary" *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 3, p. 566.

⁷ Kevin Bales, 2000, "Expendable People: Slavery in the Age of Globalisation" *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 2, p. 461.

⁸ Kate Manzo, 2005, "Modern Slavery, Global Capitalism and Deproletarianisation in West Africa" *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 32, No. 106, p. 522.

⁹ Mike Dottridge, 2001, "Child Slavery in West Africa" *International Union Rights*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 22-23.

In addition to traditional slavery and the slave trade, these abuses include the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, the exploitation of child labour, the sexual mutilation of female children, the use of children in armed conflicts, debt-bondage, the traffick in persons and in the sale of human organs, the exploitation of prostitution, and certain practices under apartheid and colonial regimes.¹⁰

Other abuses include forced labour for the state, which still persist, “cult” slavery in West Africa, servile marriage in various parts of the world, domestic servitude, abuse of migrant workers, prisoners, indigenous peoples and street children.¹¹

Modern slavery flourishes in situations of social crisis and when government law enforcement became corrupt.¹² The transformation of slavery is an example of the globalization process taking place in the shadows. Slaves are now “consumable item” in the world economy to be disposed of when no longer useful.¹³ Bales argues that “the new slavery mimics the world economy by shifting away from ownership and fixed management, concentrating instead on control and use of resources or processes.”¹⁴ Modern slavery transformed slaves as capital investments to their use as inputs in an economic process or insurgency. Slaves are transformed from fixed assets into fungible resources.¹⁵ In Bales’ view, due to the rapid increase in world population, for the first time in history, there is glut of potential slaves. There are many potential slaves that their value has fallen. For Bales, “The oversupply and attendant devaluation of slaves has completely changes the way slaves are used.”¹⁶ He further explains that, “Today slaves are so inexpensive that it is not worth securing permanent ownership. The fact that ownership of slaves is now illegal is not necessarily problematic for slaveholders; for them, slaves are disposable. Disposability means that the new forms of slavery are less permanent.”

¹⁰ Joel Quirk, 2006, “The Anti-Slavery Project: Linking the Historical and Contemporary” ...

¹¹ Joel Quirk, 2006, “The Anti-Slavery Project: Linking the Historical and Contemporary” ...p. 567

¹² Kevin Bales, 2000, “Expendable People: Slavery in the Age of Globalization” ...p. 463

¹³ Kevin Bales, 1999, *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press, p. 25.

¹⁴ Kevin Bales, 1999, *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*....

¹⁵ Kevin Bales, 1999, *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*...

¹⁶ Kevin Bales, 2000, “Expendable People: Slavery in the Age of Globalization” ...p.465.

As Bales demonstrates, the causes of modern slavery could further be located within the context of global economy. This involves the uneven effects of modernization and globalization. This process has been influenced by the shift from subsistence agriculture to cash crop production and export led growth, which are linked to the resurgence of new slavery. Brass contradicted Bales, by suggesting that population growth is irrelevant to the upsurge of modern slavery when considering labour cost than labour availability.¹⁷ According to Guay, “The modern set of economic conditions, on which slavery now firmly rests, have arisen through the monolithic pillars of capitalism and free trade. Massive inequality and poverty have set the stage for the most profitable form of slave trading even seen.”¹⁸

Most importantly, the devastating impact of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) contributed to the high incidence of rural impoverishment, vulnerabilities and insecurity. Economic contradictions and failure of postcolonial economic development strategies created loopholes for modern slavery. This paper argues that the soaring rate of enslaved people demonstrated the reversal slave mode of production that has become widespread in the region. The prevalence of violent conflicts generated humanitarian and refugee crisis, in which many vulnerable people are enslaved. Environmental crisis, especially desertification and climate change displaced many communities.

There has been the tendency toward sweeping references and generalization of historical constructs on “Islamic Slavery” when discussing Boko Haram and related terrorist organisations. Goodman contends that there is a Muslim world, and a history of slavery within it. According to Goodman, “Historical interactions between religions and forms of slavery comprise a necessary and important area of inquiry, yet approaching and characterizing slavery through an emphasis upon generalizations about Islam, or details and ideals of Islamic Law, without significant specific evidence of historical change remains problematic.”¹⁹ Terrorists around the world relied on antiquated social orders, which involved the system of slavery. Slavery in the pre-colonial

¹⁷ T. Brass, 1999, *Towards a Comparative Political Economy of Unfree Labour: Case Studies and Debates*. London: Frank Cass.

¹⁸ Justin Guay, “The Economic Foundations of Contemporary Slavery” *Human Rights and Human Welfare* www.du.edu/korbel/hrhw/researchdigest/slavery/economic.pdf Retrieved on 23/3/ 2017.

¹⁹ R. David Goodman, 2012, “Demystifying “Islamic Slavery”: Using Legal Practices to Reconstruct the End of Slavery in Fes, Morocco” *History in Africa*, Vol. 39, p. 153.

Muslim societies as a major mode of production and state formation is quite different from slavery used by terrorists to produce militarism, exploitation and disorder.

The ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) in the Middle East and Boko Haram in Nigeria have profited from human slavery as both a tool of intimidation, tactic of war and profit. "Forced marriage, enslavement and the 'sale' of kidnapped women and girls are central to Boko Haram's modus operandi and ideology." In Iraq, the ISIS captured Mosul in June 2014. This led sexual slavery of young women, particularly from the Yazidi minority ethnic group. These girls were sold as slaves in the markets or offered to ISIS fighters as gifts.²⁰ The leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau released a video showing some of the 276 kidnapped girls from Chibok in 2014. The kidnapped girls were the given choice of either enforced marriages or being sold into slavery. This Boko Haram method is similar to ISIS terrorists who captured Yazidi girls and sold them into slavery. According to the former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon the year 2014 "was marked by harrowing accounts of rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage being used by extremist groups, including as a tactic of terror...Sexual violence were integrally linked to strategic objectives, ideology and funding of extremist groups".²¹ Sexual violence was used for recruitment, displacing communities and generating revenue through slave trade and ransom. In 2003, the International Labour Organisation estimated that about six million Nigerian children had been trafficked.

Legislations against modern slavery include the 1926 Slavery, Servitude, Forced Labour and similar Institutions and Practices Convention; the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices similar to Slavery and the 1975 United Nations Working Group on Contemporary forms of Slavery that was renamed the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery in 1988. In 1999, the International Labour Organisation adopted its Convention No. 182 on the worst Forms of Child Labour. The Convention prohibits all forms of child slavery and trafficking and stipulates that each state

²⁰ ISIS, Boko Haram use rape, sex slavery as tactic of war: United Nations
<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/africa/isis-boko-haram-use-rape-sex-slavery-as-tactic-of-war-united-nations>
Apr 14, 2015 Retrieved on 27/1/2017

²¹ISIS, Boko Haram use rape, sex slavery as tactic of war: United Nations
<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/africa/isis-boko-haram-use-rape-sex-slavery-as-tactic-of-war-united-nations>
Apr 14, 2015 Retrieved on 27/1/2017

which ratifies the Convention should take steps to ensure the eradication of these and other practices which constitute the worst forms of child labour as defined in Article 3 of the Convention.

Emergence of Boko Haram

The emergence of Boko has been interpreted from diverse perspectives. First, it was argued that Boko Haram was a symptom of a failed state. The insurgence is perceived as mirror of the larger problem of poverty and exclusion.²² This school of thought posited that Boko Haram should be granted an Amnesty.²³ Second, the religious structural discourse perceive Boko Haram crisis as an example of intrinsic tendency within Islam, which causes periodic violence. In this framework, Mohammed Yusuf and other Islamists were considered dissident Muslims. Boko Haram emerged as “a religion of the disposed” among the uprooted urban youth who aspire for a radical change and dignity.²⁴ The third perspective anchors on religious agency discourse, the issue of deviance and order within Islam. The fourth view portrays non-state violence such as Boko Haram as chaotic and unpredictable.²⁵

²² Portia Roelofs, 2014, “Framing and Blaming: Discourse Analysis of the Boko Haram Uprising, July 2009” in Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, ed., *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, Leiden and Ibadan: African Studies Centre and IFRA, p.118.

²³ M. Aminu, 2013, “Kukah: Boko Haram, Symptom of failed State” *ThisDay*, Nigeria.

<http://www.thisdaylive.com.ng/articles/kukah-boko-haram-symptom-of-failed-state/98217/>

Henry Gyang Mang, 2014, “Christian Perceptions of Islam and Society in Relation to Boko Haram and Recent Events in Jos and Northern Nigeria” in Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, ed., *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, Leiden and Ibadan: African Studies Centre and IFRA, p. 105.

²⁴ Johannes Harnischfeger, 2014, “Boko Haram and Its Muslim Critics: Observations from Yobe State” Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, ed., *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, Leiden and Ibadan: African Studies Centre and IFRA, p. 46.

²⁵ Portia Roelofs, 2014, “Framing and Blaming: Discourse Analysis of the Boko Haram Uprising, July 2009” ...pp. 118-127.

Before Boko Haram, Nigeria had a history of inter and intra-religious violence with devastating consequences in the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s. Boko Haram, an Islamist movement is struggling to establish Islamic state through strict application of Sharia in Nigeria. For nearly six years, Boko Haram launched spontaneous violence in an attempt to enforce Sharia over the northeastern region of Nigeria. It wrecked havoc on moderate Muslims and Christians. Launched in 2002, Boko Haram - which in the local Hausa language means "Western education is forbidden" became a force to be reckoned with not only in Nigeria but globally. The message and narratives of Boko Haram outlined by Mohammed Yusuf were framed within the radical Islamic discourse which rejects secularism, democracy, Western education, and Westernisation.²⁶ According to Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, the followers of Mohammed Yusuf prefer to be called *Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad*.²⁷ He further noted that their nickname, Boko Haram could be understood as warning against the colonization of the mind through "bad, forbidden books."

Mohammed Yusuf was highly influenced by the 14th century Damascene radical Islamic scholar Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah (1268-1328). Ibn Taymiyyah strove to ensure Islam's adherence to Sharia, eradicate alien innovations and rejuvenate Islamic thought and practice. This puritan Salafi ideology influenced radical Islamic movements from Hassan al-Banna to Osama bin Laden. Mohammed Yusuf's conception was that a government not based on Sharia is illegal and serving such a government is illegitimate. In his sermons (*dawah*), Mohammed Yusuf insisted that Western education represents unbelief.

Boko Haram persistently demanded for the full imposition of Sharia as opposed to the Sharia introduced by most of the states in northern Nigeria from 1999. As noted by Mohammed, the Islamic militants attempted to mimic and adopt the strategies of global Salafist movements such

²⁶ Kyari Mohammed, 2014, "The Message and Methods of Boko Haram" in Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, ed., *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, Leiden and Ibadan: African Studies Centre and IFRA, p.14

²⁷ Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, 2014, "Boko Haram and Politics: From Insurgency to Terrorism" in Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, ed., *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, Leiden and Ibadan: African Studies Centre and IFRA, p.

as Al-Qaeda.²⁸ From 2009, Boko Haram acquired a transnational nature and redefined itself by networking with regional Salafi groups in Mali, Niger, Algeria and Somalia.²⁹ Boko Haram perceived Christians and Muslims who do not share their Salafi ideology as enemies to be attacked or enslaved. Domestic factors such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, corruption and social neglect were driving forces of Boko Haram rebellion.

Its members were drawn from diverse social backgrounds: disillusioned youths, unemployed university graduates, former almajiri, and wealthy persons of northern Nigeria origin. There were also members from the neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Sudan.³⁰ The former almajirai (youths or children in pursuit of Islamic knowledge and purity under the mentorship of an Islamic scholar away from their homes) served as Boko Haram foot soldiers. The Ministerial Committee on Almajiri Education in 2010 reported that there were 9.5 million Almajirai in Nigeria, most of who lived under appalling conditions.³¹

It started as a “tiny group of people who withdraw from the urban landscape of Maiduguri to rural Kanama in the Yunusari local government of Yobe State in north-eastern Nigeria in December, 2003. They referred to themselves as the “Nigerian Taleban.”³² The Kanama camp was established with military details. Between December 2003 and January 2004, it launched attacks on police stations, government buildings and communities in some parts of Yobe State. These terror attacks continued in 2004. The group finally settled on the Mandara Mountains from where they were dislodged by the Nigerian military. By October 2004, the group took 12 policemen hostage in Kala Balge, northeastern Nigeria. Mohammed argued that the killing of its leader, Mohammed Yusuf in 2009 led to the re-organisation of the movement which re-surfaced with vengeance.

²⁸ Kyari Mohammed, 2014, “The Message and Methods of Boko Haram” in Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, ed., *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, Leiden and Ibadan: African Studies Centre and IFRA, p. 10.

²⁹ Gerard Chouin, Manuel Reinert and Elodie Apard, 2014, “Body Count and Religion in the Boko Haram Crisis: Evidence from the Nigeria Watch Database” in Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, ed., *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, Leiden and Ibadan: African Studies Centre and IFRA, p.217.

³⁰ Freedom Onuoha, “Boko Haram and the Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat in Nigeria” in Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, ed., *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, Leiden and Ibadan: African Studies Centre and IFRA, p.161.

³¹ Freedom Onuoha, “Boko Haram and the Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat in Nigeria” ...162.

³² Kyari Mohammed, 2014, “The Message and Methods of Boko Haram” ...p. 12. t

In 2009, it raided police stations and government buildings in Maiduguri, and other cities in northern Nigeria. Many people were killed in the ensuing clashes between the security forces and members of Boko Haram. The Nigerian Army attacked Boko Haram's headquarters, in Maiduguri where children from poor family backgrounds, including those from neighbouring Chad and Niger, enrolled for religious studies, but recruited as fighters. When the Nigerian Army attacked Boko Haram in Maiduguri, they captured its leader, Mohammed Yusuf, who later died in police custody. Although the military declared victory over Boko Haram, the group reorganised under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau. He adopted militant campaign to establish a puritanical Islamic state in Nigeria.

Since 2009, the insurgency has killed about 2,000 people in northern Nigeria. Boko Haram has increased its focus on smaller towns in north-eastern Nigeria after the military drove many of its fighters out of Maiduguri town, the capital of Borno State. Boko Haram infiltrated most of the nearby towns. The widespread use of motorcycles became the trademark for Boko Haram attacks in cities and towns of northeastern Nigeria. This made the northeastern part of Nigeria a volatile security environment. At least 32 people were killed in bomb blasts, which targeted churches on Christmas Eve 2010 in Plateau State.

According to Montclos, Boko Haram represents a terrorist model of insurgents which aim to create panic in order to destabilize the state.³³ From 2011, it targeted more Christian institutions to create disunity in the country. In the same year, it resorted to suicide attacks following the model of Pakistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine.³⁴ Christmas Day services were targeted, killing many people outside Abuja and other cities. In all these, Boko Haram aimed to create disorder in the state. The sporadic attacks on churches were meant to intimidate and pressure the government to negotiate.³⁵

³³ Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, 2014, "Boko Haram and Politics: From Insurgency to Terrorism" in Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, ed., *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, Leiden and Ibadan: African Studies Centre and IFRA, p.143.

³⁴ Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, 2014, "Boko Haram and Politics: From Insurgency to Terrorism" ...p.142.

³⁵ Marc-Antonie Perouse de Montclos, 2014, "Boko Haram and Politics: From Insurgency to Terrorism" ...p.143.

In June 2011, a suicide bomber rammed a car into the police headquarters in Nigeria's capital, Abuja. Eight people died and many properties were destroyed in the incident. The bomber had joined the convoy of the former Inspector General of Police Hafiz Ringim, but detonated himself. Two months after, Boko Haram attacked the UN headquarters in Abuja and killed 23 people in the bombing. This marked the insurgent's first attack on international institutions based in Nigeria. Subsequently, Boko Haram claimed responsibility and released a video, which described the UN as a "forum of all the global evil." It applauded Osama Bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaeda killed by US Special Forces in Pakistan. In this encounter, Boko Haram saw itself as part of a global jihadist movement. In this bloodletting violence, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Al-Qaeda, ISIL in Syria and Ansar in Mali. In addition to Nigeria, Boko Haram is active in the Republics of Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

In January 2012, Boko Haram carried out its bloodiest onslaught. The terrorists killed about 185 people in co-ordinated bombing and gun attacks in the highly populated Muslim and commercial city of Kano. In the same period, Boko Haram attacked schools, the offices of the *ThisDay* newspaper and mobile phone firms, which it accused of colluding with the security forces on intelligence gathering. In January 2012, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in 15 local government areas of four north-eastern states as Boko Haram intensified its attacks on the government and defenseless communities. Nevertheless, the state of emergency further enabled Boko Haram to terrorize local farmers, pastoralists and vulnerable women. The Islamist group established strong foothold and control over ten local government areas of Borno state: Marte, Magumeri, Mobbar, Gubio, Guzamala, Abadam, Kukawa, Kaza, Nanzai, and Monguno. In effect, Boko Haram carved out a sphere of influence and territory for slave raiding and kidnapping.

In June 2012, it assassinated the retired police Deputy Inspector General Saleh Abubakar Ningi after his vehicle was ambushed in Kano. In July 2012, a suicide bomber detonated himself at a mosque in Maiduguri shortly after Friday prayers. The target of the suicide bomber was to eliminate the senior Muslim leader in Borno, Alhaji Abubakar Umar Garbai El-Kanemi. He escaped death on that fateful day, but five other Muslims were killed. This was an attempt by Boko Haram to eliminate or intimidate moderate Muslims opposed to the group. Few weeks

later, a suicide bomber attempted to kill the traditional ruler of Fika Emirate, Yobe State, Alhaji Muhammed Abali Ibn Mohammed Idrisa. However, the suicide bomber blew himself after he was confronted by bodyguards of the traditional ruler. This was an attempt by Boko Haram to create anarchy in the community and establish their foothold by taking over the leadership. There were many other attacks on churches, including an Easter bomb attack in Kaduna in 2012, which claimed the lives of 41 people. These attacks forced many churches to tighten security. Some churches banned women from carrying hand bags.

In a well-planned attack on 7 May 2013 in Bama town near Maiduguri, about 200 armed Boko Haram fighters attacked military barracks, police station and government buildings. Fifty-five people were killed and 105 prisoners were freed in the attack. The Bama violence came a few weeks after Boko Haram attacked a military patrol in Baga town where it a strong foothold and forcibly recruited youth into its ranks. About 200 people died and many properties including buildings were destroyed. Boko Haram attacked Gumsuri, a village in Damboa and killed 32 people, including the chief Imam and the leader of the youth vigilante, also known as civilian-Joint Task Force (JTF).

Slave Raiding, Killings and Kidnappings by Boko Haram

Boko Haram committed unlimited violence by the barbaric reversal of slave raiding and trading that characterised the history of northern Nigeria in the 19th century. This reflects the global Salafi Jihadist ideology, which Boko Haram has deployed in its confrontation with the Nigerian state. The violence associated with terrorism play decisive role in the upsurge of modern slavery in Nigeria.

Boko Haram launched its first kidnapping operation across the border in neighbouring Cameroon in February 2013. Its fighters abducted French family of seven, including four children aged between five and 12 who had visited to Waza National Park in Northern Cameroon as tourists. The group claimed it held them hostage in response to France's military intervention against militant Islamists in Mali. They were freed after two months. There were reports that Boko

Haram was paid a ransom of more than \$3m (£2m) to release the hostages.³⁶ However, the governments of France and Cameroon denied any ransom was paid. Also on 13 May, 2013, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau released a video on declaring that Boko Haram had taken women and children - including teenage girls - hostage in response to the arrest of its members' wives and children.

Boko Haram claimed that the wives and daughters of “infidels” or “pagans” are legitimate “booty” who could be sold into slavery. The kidnapped victims either became “wives” of Boko Haram fighters or domestic servants. Some of the women were indoctrinated to become suicide bombers. They received lessons on detonating bombs and were indoctrinated that if they died “fighting Allah’s course,” they would go to paradise. In many instances, families of kidnapped girls and boys don’t often report abductions fearing stigma from their communities and retribution from Boko Haram.

Captives were used for a new mode of production based on militarism and terror. The governor of Borno State, Kashim Shettima suggested that Boko Haram operatives deliberately impregnated women for ideological reasons: “These people have a certain spiritual conviction that any child they father will grow to inherit their ideology whether they live with the children or not.” Therefore, kidnapped “wives” have become a Boko Haram recruitment strategy.³⁷ Boko Haram operatives believe that their children will inherit their “ideology.” Governor Kashim Shettima, attributed the rise in the number of children used as suicide bombers in the Northeastern part of Nigeria on hard drugs given to them by Boko Haram. According to him,

In this criminal endeavor, they resort to the use of teenagers and children as young as seven years. More recently, they even strap babies on the back of their recruits in order to slip through our security dragnets. They also use hard drugs on these innocent children, who do not know what they are

³⁶ Reuters news agency

³⁷ John Campbell Boko Haram’s Sex Slaves?

<http://blogs.cfr.org/campbell/2015/05/07/boko-harams-sex-slaves/> May 7, 2015

Retrieved on 27/1/2017

doing when they kill their own parents, relations, and fellow countrymen and women. Many precious lives have been lost, hundreds of citizens, including school girls, were abducted.³⁸

Boko Haram raided communities to kill the men and treat vulnerable women and children as war booty, to be enslaved, for ransom or sold for profit. Subsequently, according to UNICEF, more than 1.3 million children have now been displaced as a result of Boko Haram onslaught. Thousands of girls and women have been abducted by Boko Haram since it began its insurgency in 2004. Many of the schools in towns around Chibok, Borno State were affected. Boko Haram attacked many schools in order to enforce its ideology. For example, there was a massacre of fifty-nine schoolboys in Yobe State. This led to the closure of schools in many parts of northeastern Nigeria. However, the Chibok school was reopened for final examination in April 2014.³⁹

Boko Haram raided the dormitories of the government secondary school at Chibok, kidnapping more than 200 Chibok girls who were preparing for their final examination. A total of 276 girls were kidnapped at their boarding school. Boko Haram looted the school and burned it. Out of 276 girls kidnapped, only a few escaped on their own, while 21 were released by Boko Haram to the government of President Muhammadu Buhari in 2016. After two years, majority of them are still in captivity and unaccounted for.

While in captivity, many of the girls were used as cooks, sex slaves, child soldiers and suicide bombers. Those who managed to escape from Boko Haram insurgents told of a life of torture, enslavement, rape, and forced marriages in captivity.⁴⁰ For example, the courage of girls like Deborah Sanya who escaped Boko Haram recalled that, “I thought it was the end of my life.”⁴¹

³⁸ Boko Haram Turns Children To Suicide Bombers With Hard Drugs, Says Borno Governor by *SaharaReporters*, New York Feb 03, 2017

³⁹ Alexis Okeowo Nigeria's stolen girls Read more at <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/general/nigeria-s-stolen-girls/17175.html#rqLt4ivBFYM0FpqB.99> May 3 2014

⁴⁰ Sydney Denmark 'Join Boko Haram or Be a Slave': Kidnapped Girls Share Details of Captivity Oct. 17, 2016 <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/join-boko-haram-or-be-a-slave/> Retrieved on 27/1/2017

⁴¹ Alexis Okeowo Nigeria's stolen girls Read more at <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/general/nigeria-s-stolen-girls/17175.html#rqLt4ivBFYM0FpqB.99> May 3 2014

The kidnapping of school girls by Boko Haram has become part of the global backlash against girls' education by terrorist groups. In Pakistan, the Taliban shot Malala Yousafzai in the head at the age of 15 because of her advocacy for girls' education. Boko Haram repeatedly used the kidnapped girls to threaten the Nigerian government, USA and European countries. In a video released in June 2014, leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of the girls and announced that, "I abducted your girls. I will sell them in the market, by Allah." The Boko Haram's self-styled "emir", also threatened to sell the Chibok schoolgirls into slavery. "Allah instructed me to sell them: they are his properties," he declared in a Youtube video released after the girls were kidnapped. The girls were to be auctioned for \$12 each. This signaled the rising wave of the return of slave trade in Nigeria. Among the kidnapped girls who refused to get married Boko Haram terrorists were forced into slavery including serving as cook and fetching water. The girls were forced to convert to Islam. Military forces from Nigeria and neighboring countries have freed thousands of women and girls who were abducted for sexual slavery in 2015 and 2016.

Binta Abdullahi was kidnapped from a village near Madagali, in Adamawa State. She was held in two places before being transferred to Sambisa forest and Boko Haram's "headquarters" in Gwoza. She described forced labour, marriage, sexual and psychological abuse as well as being forced to fight on the front line by Boko Haram. According to her, "I couldn't leave them." This was due to the fact that she was looking after three children, whose mothers were not among those kidnapped. "They asked us to marry Boko Haram members but we told them there was no way we could get married because we were already married to our husbands...They said since we would not marry them they would sell us as slaves at the right time." ⁴²

A woman who was abducted with about 185 others from Gumsuri village in Borno State has escaped from a camp. She recounted how she worked as a slave farm labor, "We were kept in a camp at Zongare village and there is vast farmland there. We work morning and afternoon on the farmland, sieving beans and packaging it into bags. Our captors do a lot of exercises, they also

⁴² They were going to sell us as slaves – Boko Haram hostage
<http://www.news24.com.ng/National/News/They-were-going-to-sell-us-as-slaves-Boko-Haram-hostage-20150504-04-May-2015>. Retrieved on 27/1/2017

practice handling of firearms. Sometimes, some of them would disappear for one or two days and then reappear. Captives are being forced to eat only beans.”⁴³

According to the Executive Director of UNFPA, Prof. Babatunde Osotimehin the horrendous treatment of kidnapped women was barbaric and sadistic in nature.⁴⁴ Also, the spokesperson for United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Stéphane Dujarric was of the view that, "A large number of girls and women rescued from Boko Haram have been found to be pregnant...We do not know yet the total number of pregnant girls among those rescued. The screening is still ongoing."⁴⁵ Asabe Aliyu, one of the rape victims of Boko Haram insurgents recounted how she was raped after her abduction in Delsak village. She was held as a sex slave in one of the Boko Haram's camp in northeastern Nigeria. Lami Musa was another rape victim. She was physically and emotionally tortured by Boko Haram. She reported that "They abducted the whole of my family and killed my husband at Kilkasa forest when I was four months pregnant...They took us to Sambisa forest. We were sleeping in an open field." Beyond the abuse, Lami Musa had little access to food, water and shelter. According to her, "For days, we went without water or food...As I am talking to you, I cannot ascertain the status of her [the baby's] health. I have not had a bath since I was delivered of the baby. The baby is yet to be bathed, too."

Boys were forced to attack their own families to prove loyalty to Boko Haram. This brutal strategy turned communities and families against themselves. According to Manuel Fontaine, UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa,

Let us be clear: these children are victims, not perpetrators...Deceiving children and forcing them to carry out deadly acts has been one of the most horrific aspects of

⁴³ [Jim Hoft](http://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2015/01/boko-haram-uses-captured-girls-for-slave-farm-labor/) Boko Haram Uses Captured Girls for Slave Farm Labor <http://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2015/01/boko-haram-uses-captured-girls-for-slave-farm-labor/> Jan 3rd, 2015 27/1/2017

⁴⁴Michael F. Haverluck 214 of 234 freed Boko Haram captives pregnant, used as sex slaves <https://www.onenewsnow.com/persecution/2015/05/10/214-of-234-freed-boko-haram-captives-pregnant-used-as-sex-slaves> 27/1/2017 May 10, 2015

⁴⁵Michael F. Haverluck 214 of 234 freed Boko Haram captives pregnant, used as sex slaves <https://www.onenewsnow.com/persecution/2015/05/10/214-of-234-freed-boko-haram-captives-pregnant-used-as-sex-slaves> May 10, 2015. Retrieved on 27/1/2017

the violence in Nigeria and in neighboring countries...As 'suicide' attacks involving children become commonplace, some communities are starting to see children as threats to their safety. This suspicion towards children can have destructive consequences."⁴⁶

According to Laurent Duvillier, regional spokesman for UNICEF in West Africa, one of every five suicide bombers used by Boko Haram is a child. Some of these children used for suicide bombings were as young as eight years old. "The use of children, especially girls, as suicide bombers became a defining and alarming feature of insurgency. It's basically turning the children against their own communities by strapping bombs around their bodies."⁴⁷ The use of children for suicide bombing by Boko Hama went beyond the borders of Nigeria to include Cameroon. Moreover, fifty-eight people were killed in Dikwa, northeastern Nigeria by two female suicide bombers. According to the UNICEF, there were 44 suicide bombings in West Africa in 2015. Young girls were considered suitable suicide bombers due to the long and loose female gowns widely used in northern Nigeria, which made it easy to hide the bomb. In most cases, the girls were ignorant of the fact that they were carrying bombs until it got detonated.

It is important to note that kidnapped women were used or treated differently. While most of them became slaves, a very few emerged as highly privileged wives of Boko Haram commanders. Aisha, 25-year-old wife of jihadist commander recalled the power she wielded as the wife of a Boko Haram commander at the Sambisa forest. According to her, "I had many slaves - they did everything for me. me ... Only when you get married to a rich man, or a man of authority, can you get that kind of power. "⁴⁸ She explained how women and girls kidnapped by

⁴⁶ [Dan Stockman](http://globalsistersreport.org/blog/gsr-today/boko-haram-still-using-children-slaves-weapons-39251) Boko Haram is still using children as slaves, weapons
<http://globalsistersreport.org/blog/gsr-today/boko-haram-still-using-children-slaves-weapons-39251>
27/1/2017

⁴⁷ <http://www.australianetworknews.com/boko-haram-forces-young-girls-to-be-suicide-bombers-slaves-says-unicef/>
27/1/2017

Boko Haram Forces Young Girls to Be 'Suicide' Bombers, Slaves, Says UNICEF

[Jyotirupa Sarma](#) April 13 2016

⁴⁸ Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, FEATURE-Power, sex and slaves: Nigeria battles beliefs of Boko Haram brides
Wednesday, 8 February 2017, <http://news.trust.org/item/20170208060545-tibww/>

the Islamist militants washed, cooked and babysat for her during the three years she spent in their base in the vast Sambisa forest. "Even the men respected me because I was Mamman Nur's wife. They could not look me in the eye." She was kidnapped by Boko Haram when they attacked her town of Banki. She married the suspected mastermind of a suicide bomb attack on U.N. headquarters in Abuja in 2011, which killed 23 people. Also, 22-year-old Halima recalled the 'beautiful home' built by her Boko Haram husband in the Sambisa forest. She had regular supply of food and clothes, a hospital staffed with doctors and nurses tended to the ill. According to her, "Anything I requested, I got."

Cost of Freedom

In May 2014, a global campaign called "Bring Back Our Girls" was launched to protest the Nigerian government's inaction and to safely bring the students back. President Jonathan opposed the #BringBackOurGirls movement, branding it an agent of opposition and "manipulation" of the victims of the attack for political purposes. The #BringBackOurGirls movement suffered hope fatigue and financial stress. British armed forces offered to attempt to rescue nearly 300 Nigerian schoolgirls kidnapped by the Islamist militant group Boko Haram, but were rebuffed by the government of Nigeria at the time.⁴⁹ In a mission named *Operation Turus*, the RAF conducted air reconnaissance over northern Nigeria for several months, following the kidnapping of 276 girls from Chibok in April 2014. It has been alleged that Nigeria shunned international offers to rescue the girls. While Nigeria welcomed an aid package and assistance from the US, the UK and France in looking for the girls, it viewed any action to be taken against kidnapping as a "national issue."

Former President Jonathan was widely criticized for perceived apathy over the kidnapping of the school girls. Indeed, the governor of Borno State, Kashim Shettima, publicly criticized President

⁴⁹ Former President Goodluck Jonathan Rejected British Offer To Rescue Kidnapped Chibok Schoolgirls <http://saharareporters.com/2017/03/05/former-president-goodluck-jonathan-rejected-british-offer-rescue-kidnapped-chibok> UK Guardian , Mar 05, 2017 Retrieved on 27/1/2017

Goodluck Jonathan for failing to call him or any other state official for 19 days after the kidnappings. He finally condemned the Chibok raid on May 4 2014 more than 19 days after it had happened and 18 days after the British Foreign Secretary has criticised the incident. On May 6, 2014 Mrs. Patience Jonathan, the First Lady of Nigeria, told the grieving mothers of the missing girls: "We, the Nigerian women, are saying that no child is missing in Borno state. If any child is missing, let the governor go and look for them. There is nothing we can do again."⁵⁰ However, like the President, she later acknowledged the fate of the Chibok girls. According to the Nigeria Watch Database, between July 2009 and December 2012, a total of 2,993 deaths were recorded from the Boko Haram crisis.⁵¹ Casualties included Boko Haram members, security officers as well as non-combatant Christian and Muslim civilians. Many people were killed since then.

In December 2016, during the Operation Lafiya Dole, the Nigerian army bombed Sambisa forest and succeeded in overrunning Boko Haram camps. The army recovered Abubakar Shekau's Quran and flag in Camp Zero. The army arrested 1, 240 suspected Boko Haram terrorists which included 413 adults, 323 female adults, 251 male children and 253 female children. However, many of the kidnapped Chibok girls were not recovered. Over the years, Sambisa forest in the Chad Basin National Park, Borno State became Boko Haram's ideal hiding place for perpetrating terrorism. It was infested with landmines. Its trees, rocky and hilly terrain made aerial surveillance difficult for many years. Boko Haram used captives as human shields.

Challenges of Reintegration

Efforts are being made to deradicalise women who were either kidnapped or had engagement with Boko Haram. Fatima Akilu, the head of Neem stated that, "There is a possibility of violence (when these women go home) because they were married to Boko Haram militants."⁵² She added that, "There is still a lot of anger and resentment from communities that have been traumatised

⁵⁰ David Blair Nigeria's Boko Haram isn't just kidnapping girls: it's enslaving them <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11342879/Nigerias-Boko-Haram-isnt-just-kidnapping-girls-its-enslaving-them.html> 13 Jan 2015. Retrieved on 27/1/2017

⁵¹ <http://www.nigeriawatch.org/>

⁵² Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, Kieran Guilbert and Ros Russell; the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, that covers humanitarian news, women's rights, trafficking, property rights, climate change and resilience. <http://news.trust.org>.

for years, and subjected to atrocities by the group."⁵³ Female former Boko Haram captives, and their children born to the militants, often face mistrust and persecution from their communities, who fear they will radicalise others or carry out violence.

Conclusion

The freedom of kidnapped girls was subjected to political manipulations which elongated the tragedy. On many counts, Boko Haram threatened the Nigerian state with slave raiding and kidnappings. The Boko Haram's threat of selling the kidnapped girls into slavery prompted the Nigerian state to embark on series of negotiations with the terrorists. In dealing with the insurgence, many government officials and military officers became corrupt, making the war on terror a futile attempt and complicated the freedom of those in captivity. This war has claimed the lives of several military men, who died due to inferior weapons and low morale compared to the sophisticated weapons used by Boko Haram. In effect, the kidnapped girls continued to languish in the world of modern slavery. There were confrontations and mistrust between the government of President Goodluck Jonathan and the Bring Back Our Girls movement. Until 2015, the Bring Back Our Girls movement was not supported by the government. Above all, modern slavery perpetuated poverty, cross-border migration and refugee crisis.

⁵³ Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, Editing by Kieran Guilbert and Ros Russell; the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, that covers humanitarian news, women's rights, trafficking, property rights, climate change and resilience. <http://news.trust.org>