The Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on Nigerian National Security

Salisu Salisu Shuaibu, Mohd Afandi Salleh, and Abdullahi Yusuf Shehu

Faculty of Law, Accountancy and International Relations
Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia.
Corresponding Author: Salisu Salisu Shuaibu. Email: salisusalisu13@yahoo.com

Abstract

Jama'atul Ahlus Sunnah Lid daawati wal Jihad popularly known as Boko Haram, which means western education is forbidden emerged around 2002 as a local Islamic movement mainly for preaching and charity to people in Maiduguri Borno State. The activities of the group changed in 2009 after the Nigerian government crackdown on its followers as a result of which spiritual and political leader Muhammad Yusuf was killed. From 2009 to 2015 Boko Haram insurgency claimed the lives of more than 13,000 people. The group has intensified its attacks on security agents and their formations, top governmental establishments, schools, Mosques, and the general populace. The group kidnapped 250 schoolgirls in Chibok in April 2014. The threat posed by the group is undermining the existence of Nigeria as one sovereign political territory. In August 2014, the sect leader declared areas under their control as new Islamic Caliphate which would be governed according to strict Islamic laws. The objective of this study is to examine the threats of Boko Haram insurgency on Nigerian national security. The study also revealed that poverty and misconception of religion were the major factors that facilitated the emergence and development of Boko Haram. The researchers recommend that Nigerian Government should address the root and symptom of the problem by eradicating poverty, providing employment to the people and enhancing security efforts.

Keywords: Threat, Boko Haram, Insurgency, Nigerian National Security

1.0 Introduction

According to Murtada (2013), the real name of Boko Haram was Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lid da'awati Wal-Jihad, (congregation of the People of Tradition for Proselytism and Jihad). The word Boko Haram means western education is forbidden. The group emerged in early 2000s as small Sunni Islamic group advocating a strict interpretation and implementation of Islamic law in Nigeria. Initially, the sect's leadership did not call for violence; its followers engaged in periodic clashes with security during its formative years (Blanchard, 2014). There is a growing suspicion among Nigerians about the real identity and motive of Boko Haram sect. Most Muslims see it as an extension of *Maitatsine* sect which was established in 1945 to transport

turmoil to Islam as it was confirmed that *Maitatsine* was not a Muslim until his death, while a reasonable number of Christians see it as an attempt to Islamize Nigerians while some are indifferent (Shehu, 2014). In 2009, the activities of Boko Haram had transformed from a local peace militia into a violent group, after the government attacked the members of the group in some major cities of northern Nigeria, which led to five days violent clashes between the group members and the Nigerian forces and resulted in killing the sect leader, Muhammad Yusuf in Maiduguri, and more than 700 other people (Blanchard, 2014).

After the 2009 uprising, the activities of the sect was slow. The violence re-emergence of the group in 2010 came up with a new tactics that include suicide bombing, kidnapping, attacking Islamic clerics, Mosques and churches in the country. Nigeria witnessed the first suicide bombings in police headquarters and United Nation's office in Abuja (Blanchard, 2014). The activities of the sect escalated when on 14th April, 2014 the sect kidnapped 250 female students from Government Girl's Secondary school Chibok in Borno State (Zenn, 2014). Also, Boko Haram and Ansaru were designated as Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the United State Security Department in November 2013. Ansaru was the Boko Haram faction that earlier in 2013 kidnapped and executed seven foreigners who were working with international construction companies. Subsequently, the United Nations Committee on Al Qaeda sanction blacklisted the group on 22nd May, 2014 as one of the world terrorist organisations. The United Nation listing entry describes Boko Haram as an affiliate of Al-Qaeda and also one of the organisations of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (Reuters, 2014). Therefore, this study aims to examine the threat of Boko Haram insurgency on Nigerian National Security system.

1.1 Research Questions
1. What are the threats of Boko Haram insurgency on Nigerian security system?

2. What are the solutions to Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria?

2.0 Literature Review
This is aimed at explaining theoretical approach of the study; Poverty theory was adopted to explain the Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria. Moreover, the sub-sections of the literature review explained the conceptual framework in which a diagram was designed to predict the relations between the above variables. The last part of the literature explained the historical evolution of the group

2.1 Theoretical Approach
This study adopts Poverty Theory to examine the threat of Boko Haram insurgency on Nigerian National Security.

2.1.1 Poverty Theory
The Poverty Theory can be used to explain one of the major causes of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. According to Liolio (2013), the successful recruitment of the people into the group depend on the nature of the economic and poverty level in the area mostly insurgent gain members by claiming their struggle is for the people and that they would provide basic necessity for the general population if supported. The insurgent may succeed if such society embedded by poverty, illiteracy, ineptitude, corruption, discrimination to modernization and

globalization, which create artificial poverty to many underdeveloped countries, such countries would become recruitment target of the terrorists. Liolio further stated that, it is significant to know that the root causes of the insurgency often relate to a long cloudy set of problems culminating into uncontrolled grievances and exploding violence. Such problems are socio-economic and political, that is why insurgencies are more rampant in underdeveloped countries or countries engulfed by corrupt regime, ethnicity, social prejudices religion and disparities in the distribution of resources or even lack of it.

Also, Olojo (2013) contends that one significant factor that has stimulated the drive towards violent extremism, recruitment and support for Boko Haram are economic deprivation. Several scholars believed that poverty and longstanding economic disparities in the northeast part of the country made the youth join the sect.

Similarly, Adesoji (2010) stresses that, In Nigeria the marginalization and imbalance distribution or implementation of the resources made some radicalised scholars to preach against the government and democratic setting, which later gave birth to the present Boko Haram insurgency.

The Poverty Theory further explains that domestically the politicization of religious traditions and the radicalization of religious communities are especially likely in times economic decay, social integration or state collapse. Hopeless people below the poverty line; people who are marginalized or physical threat turn to their religious in search for an alternative political order that satisfies their need for welfares, recognition, and security (Hasenclever & Rittberger, 2005). In present time, there are many violence uprisings around the world, some transformed into full terrorist organizations like the Boko Haram. The theory shows the significance of socioeconomic factors in explaining religious insurgency like Boko Haram.

Furthermore, Nigeria a country with more than 160 million people nearly 330 ethnic more than 250 languages with 50% Muslim and 40% Christian as well as 10% traditional belief were very poor. Poverty is what is seen by many observers and analysts as the root that causes most of the ethnoreligious crisis in northern Nigeria which Boko Haram insurgency is among. With the death of infrastructure development, 90% of Nigerians are permanent of crippling poverty. The country was ranked 153th out of 177 poor economic countries on the human development index (2008), despite its rich cultural endowment and abundant human and natural resources (Adenrele, 2014). Northern Nigeria in particular has the highest figure of relative poverty in comparison with south-west and south-east zones that have relative poverty of 67.0% and 59.1% respectively. The northeast and north-west zones have the higher figure of 76.3% and 77.7% relative poverty respectively (NBS, 2012).

Moreover, the rate of unemployment in the country has continued to increase despite the abundant human and natural resources available in the country. Unemployment has become a major problem tormenting the lives of the Nigerian youths and this poses a serious menace to Nigeria as a country (Adebayo, 2014).

Furthermore, 64 million Nigeria Youths are unemployed while 1.6 million are under-employed. Unemployment causes dejection, frustration, desperation and dependency on family members and friends. This dependency situation has left the youths in a vicious cycle

of chronic poverty that daily erodes their confidence of bright future. In such a case, most of these unemployed youths are the primary target of the insurgents (Adebayo, 2014).

In addition, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2007) said "despite Nigeria's plentiful resources and oil wealth, poverty is widespread to the extent that the country is ranked one of the 20 poorest countries in the world". Indeed over 70 percent of the population is classified as poor, with 35 percent living in absolute poverty (Andenrele, 2014). According to Plouch (Blanchard, 2014: 10):

> *Understanding Boko Haram's appeal among some citizen in Nigeria's far north requires an examination of underlying development challenges facing northern Nigeria, where high rates of poverty and unemployment are exacerbated by extreme population growth and low level of literacy. These factors combined with weak governance, rampant corruption and inadequate public service delivery, has contributed to the widespread disaffection that some suggest may facilitate Boko Haram recruitment.*

A country with legacies of economic stagnation, a higher level of unemployment and uneven economic development such country is a fertile ground on which terrorist seed can flourish (Umar, 2013). Moreover, individuals and group grievances such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, discrimination, and economic marginalization can be used as mobilising instruments by sinister group to get support and recruit for terrorist violence. This explains how economically deprived youth can easily be recruited by the extremist group, due to the economic hardship in the region (Umar, 2013).

The increasing rate of unemployed youth in the region, which were economically deprived, mostly was the recruiting target of Boko Haram. Some scholars pointed out that the connection between poverty, illiteracy and terrorism is indirect and complicated. The huge number of young people living on the margins of Nigeria society intensified these linkages (Olojo, 2013). In 2013 the federal government released some detainees of Boko Haram mostly wives and children of the sect members, some children confessed of providing kegs of fuel to Boko Haram to set school and other buildings ablaze in Maiduguri for the sum of 5000 naira (Olojo, 2013). These show how the people in the area were living in absolute poverty due to the failure of the government to provide education and economic opportunity in the area for more than a decade. These socio-economic problems contributed to the escalation of Boko Haram violence in north-eastern Nigeria.

They theory explains that in most cases, conflicts occur as a result of growing economic, social, and political inequalities in and between nations (Hensenclever & Rittberger, 2005). Ojolo, (2013) noted that:

> *Individuals and groups grievances such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, discrimination, and economic marginalization, can be used as mobilizing instruments by sinister group to get support and recruit for terrorist violence. The predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria provide the group a steady stream for recruitment, the deprived youths and Almajiris are willing to join any movement for them to find an alternative to the current economic and political*

inequalities that existed in the country; believing that the sect version of radical Salafism to be the answer to their problems.

2.2 The Recent Threats of Boko Haram on National Nigerian Security

Ethno-religious violence has bedevilled Nigeria as a sovereign and independent country since its return to democracy in 1999. The Boko Haram insurgency has continued to pose a serious threat to the country's security system and corporate political entity (Zenn, 2014). Since the violence re-emergence of the Boko Haram in 2010 the attacks and suicide bombing carried out by the group was increasing beyond the national boundary. Furthermore, in pursuit of their violence objective, the sect engages in bombing police station, schools and Mosques. The sect also engages in kidnapping of foreigners, and the recent tactics of kidnapping women. The group kidnapped more than 250 school girls in Chibok town of Borno state. According to Anyadike (2014), the changing dynamic of the operations and tactics of the group confused many scholars and analysts. Its initial campaign of violence targeting security personnel and their formations have now expanded to include civilians, nongovernmental targets and the entire Nigeria populace.

The major violence started in 2009 between the Boko Haram and Nigerian security forces. This violence has claimed the lives of more than 1000 people with over 700 killed in Borno State capital Maiduguri (Umar, 2012). This violence has exposed the weakness of Nigerian security system by its inability to curb the crisis on time. Subsequently, the group carried out another attack, when it orchestrated a large prison break in Bauchi in 2010 which freed more than 700 inmates including the sect members. This prison break shows how capable the group is in undermining the security of the country and exposes its weakness to the international community (VOA, 2012). The sect claimed responsibility for police headquarters attacks that was believed to be the first suicide bombing in Nigeria in 2011. The attack is said to target the former Inspector General of Police. This attack shows how powerful the group is with its ability and strategy to attack such an important place (Blanchard, 2014). In the same year, the group carried out another suicide attack on United Nations Headquarters in Abuja in which twenty people were killed and more than sixty were injured (Nossiter, 2011).

The attack drew the attention of the international community about the threats of the sect that is now beyond the national issue. "The Boko Haram attacks since 2011 have featured improvised explosive devices (IEDS), car bombs, and periodical suicide bombing. The members of the group cause a lot of damages and unpleasant moments to the people by continuing burning and destroying the communities using arms and arsons (Plouch, 2014). This made the United States security department to designate Boko Haram and Ansaru as foreign terrorist organizations (FTO) in November, 2013. Subsequently, the United Nations Committee on al Qaeda sanction blacklisted the group on 22 May 2014. The United listing entry describes Boko Haram as an affiliate of Al Qaeda and organization of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (Nicholas, 2014).

Furthermore, there were a lot of incidents that happened while soldiers are fighting the group that exposed the weaknesses of Nigerian security for tackling the menace of the group. These incidents are; on 14 May 2014, some of the battlefield soldiers fighting the group in Maiduguri attempted a mutiny by firing off their commanding officer. The soldiers had complained that the insurgents outgun them as a result of more sophisticated weapons used by the sect

members. This problem shows endemic corruption within the Nigerian security system, where billions of Naira was allocated to defence ministry for the fight against terrorism, but the outcome has not yielded any achievement. In a related issue, a group of soldiers fighting the group in Maiduguri had refused to go to the battlefield until modern weapons are provided to them. The Nigerian Army officials are not ready to fight Boko Haram; a Nigerian soldier said, the soldiers fighting the insurgents has no sophisticated weapons and adequate arms and ammunitions which made it difficult to confront the insurgents (Thisday Newspaper, 2014).

The threats posed by the group recently are undermining the existence of Nigeria as one political territory. The group captured more than local governments in the affected states of Borno Yobe, and Adamawa. And about 500 Nigerian soldiers and refugees flee Boko Haram to Cameroun (Sahara Reporters, 2014). Moreover, the sect's leader Shekau declares areas under the sect's control as new caliphate that would be governed according to strict Islamic codes (Sahara Reporters, 2014). All these have exposed the weaknesses of Nigerian government to curb the problem of the group, despite the country being the giant of Africa. According to Onuoha (2014), also Boko Haram has become a threat to regional security and its violent activities have impacted regional security. These threats by the sect can be assessed from at least four dimensions. Namely, the group expansion in the form of recruitment, training equipment and funding its target, the increase problems of border attacks, transnational implications of these attacks, as well as diminishing the potential of Nigeria as a defacto leader of West Africa.

An evidence of Boko Haram's reached beyond the national borders of Nigeria, expanding international network that enables it to recruit and train members from the countries of the Sahara –Sahel region. The United Nation report was quoted to have linked Boko Haram with al-Qaeda in the Land of Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (Onuoha, 2014). The groups have a good connection with one another, and Boko Haram was influenced by the ideology and tactics of the (AQIM) (Nossiter, 2012). According to the report, many of the group members were trained in Sahel alongside (AQIM). This connection continues where a large number of Boko Haram members attended an (AQIM) training centre in Timbuktu Mali during the summer of 2011. These members later came back and became the influential figures of the Boko Haram.

Boko Haram dispatched some other members to far away Somalia to join Al-Shabaab run training camp, where members were taught on how to construct and detonate improvised explosive devices, and how to carry out suicide bombing. Before the June 2011 suicide bombing, there was little attention to the connection between Boko Haram and other Jihadist groups in the African region. Also, the groups run an international network of recruitment, training and indoctrination camps in different countries Gao, and Kidal in Malia, Cameroun, Chad, Sudan and some cells in Central Africa Republic. This shows how the group has well connected with major African Jihadists, which are all allies of al Qaeda. And shows how dangerous the connection will be to the entire African countries. Subsequently, the expanding of the cross-border attacks by the group poses a serious threat to neighbouring countries in the region, among which are Cameroun, Chad, and Niger Republic. Nevertheless, the threats of the group have transnational implications; the deteriorating nature of the violence affected economic, humanitarian, and diplomatic stability of the affected countries.

The Boko Haram insurgency has reduced the power and influential role of Nigeria as a de facto leader of the West Africa and the entire Africa, this violence posed a serious security threats that hinders the country to continue its influential role in peacekeeping operations in many countries. Consequently, the Nigerian and U.S government's long bilateral relation had broken when the later refused to render military hardware assistance to the former (Guitta, & Simcox, 2014). Government of United States would not work closely with Nigerian security forces as doing so would violate the 1997 "Leahy law" which prevents the U.S defence and state Departments from providing assistance if there is credible information that (a foreign security force) has committed a gross violation of human right.

2.3 Conceptual Framework
Based on the poverty theory, constructivism theory and Islamic theory, the research tried to establish a relationship between the variables of the study. Figure 2.1 below shows the predicted relationship between Boko Haram, poverty, illiteracy, and misconception of religion.
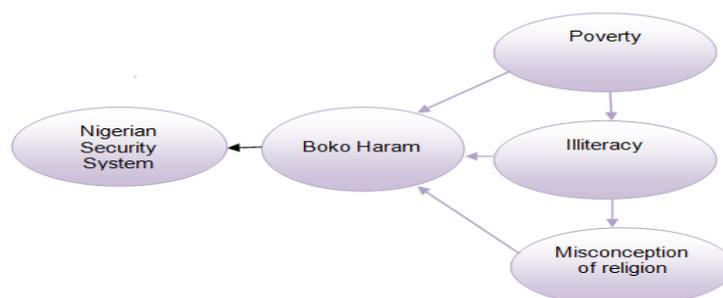

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 shows the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The independent variable is Boko Haram, while Nigerian Security System is the dependent variable. Based on the above diagram Poverty, illiteracy, and misconception of religion are significant factors that led to the independent variable. According to Olojo (2013), one significant factor that has stimulated the drive towards violent extremism, recruitment and support for Boko Haram are economic deprivation. Moreover, national bereau of statistics report (2012) shows the level of poverty in the area. According to the report, the Northeast of the country where Boko Haram is strong has the higher figure of 77.7% of relative poverty. Individuals grievances such as poverty, unemployment and illiteracy, were used as mobilizing instruments by the group to get support and recruit for terrorist violence (Olojo, 2013).

 Adesoji (2010) stress that, marginalization and imbalance distribution or implementation of resources are the major factors that led to poverty in Nigeria which simplified the recruitment process of the group. Moreover, the failure of Nigerian leaders to establish economic policies that will improve the living standard of people and create employment opportunities among the youth has created a vacuum of unemployment, poverty and illiteracy among the youth,

which resulted in various communal, ethnic, religious, and class conflicts that have now characterised the country and contributed to the emergence and Boko Haram.

4.0 Methodology

This study employs qualitative research method in which analytic approach was used to address the research problem. A qualitative analytic method refers to identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data collected for the purpose of the study (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

For the purpose of this Paper, the researcher used the structured questionnaire as data gathering instrument. The target population for the present study comprises the security agents of Nigeria. The researcher used thematic analytic approach to analyze the data. Thematic data analysis consists of minimally organizing and describing the data set in (rich) detail (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.0 Findings Of The Study

The data collected has been spread across various security organizations and their personnel, the majority of whom are still involved directly or indirectly in the fight against the insurgents.

3.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents

From the data collected, item one of the questionnaire revealed that the respondents were police officers with the ranks of assistant superintendent of police (ASP) and officers in the department of state service (DSS) who are with the ranks of senior intelligence officers (SIO). Furthermore, there were inspectors from Nigerian security and civil defence corps (NSCDC). The respondents comprises of Army personnel with the ranks of lieutenant. This show that the research is beneficial by having various respondents across multiple security organizations who are also involved in the fights against Boko Haram with different strategies, tactics and modes of operation.

3.2 Research Question 1: What are the threats of Boko Haram insurgency on Nigerian security system?

This question was set to answer research question one of study. The escalation of attacks and bombings, as well as direct attacks on public institutions and security formations is quite different from any ethnic and religious of yesteryears.

Question of the questionnaire revealed that Boko Haram has posed the challenge of weapons armament and another ballistics possession. Report shows that Boko Haram fighters possessed more superior equipments that are far better than those wield by the security agents of the country. The remaining as documented pointed to the challenge of gathering accurate and timely intelligence and security tips that could assist security organizations in fighting against Boko Haram insurgency. In short, all of the respondents believed that Boko Haram has really made effective security a difficult task to provide as this is not unconnected with a high level of corruption within top-ranking officers of the organizations, poor and outdated weapons, problems of logistics and many other internal security issues.

Furthermore, the respondent revealed that Boko Haram has severely affected the Nigerian security formations. About 90 % of the respondents opined that Boko Haram remained faceless within mainstream Nigerian population. Hence, the targeting of security officers even on private life has placed the men of these services extremely in danger. The security has also been affected in terms of spirit and morale of it agents in facing the enemies squarely. With this evidence has shown that more of them are fleeing and abandoning their post or turning to mutiny. And, as a result, Nigerian military hierarchy has sentenced about 200 of the military personnel to death, and about 300 have been expelled from the service, a situation that negatively affected the Nigerian security formation.

Subsequently, the research also asked the respondents on how the crisis has affected the Nigerian security system. : A great majority of the respondents agreed that Boko Haram insurgency has seriously affected the nation's security system in the high degree. The security organizations were totally changed in combat operations, tactical and strategic approaches to security. The security system has been weakened by its ability to win the war is seriously affected, as some of them were turned into helpless force with no clear focus or blueprint on how effective to stop the insurgency. This can be validated in recent cases of mutiny and fleeing of Nigerian soldiers to neighboring countries and the consequent trials of many soldiers in Military court martial where many soldiers has either sentenced to death, or expelled from the service.

Furthermore, the security system has been exposed to public knowledge, as it is no longer a secret that they are being overrun and defeated in some instances. This has affected the public confidence towards security matters. In short, most of the respondents as they are security men, believed that the conflicts have affected them individually as well as within their respective security agencies. Only one of the respondents thinks that the impact of the insurgency on security agencies is still very minimal and low. This could be linked possibly with increasing men who still want to be in the service.

3.3 research question 2: What are the solutions to Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria?

This question was set to answer research question two of the study, the respondents believed that for effective end to this insurgency, government must improve the quality of it security organizations in term of providing modern ballistics and weaponry so as to arm their operatives with sophisticated weapons that could enable them to matched Boko Haram superior arms possession. Also, to make proper arrangements for incentives to maintain the operatives fighting spirits. Then, dialogue as some of the respondents remains optimistic that it is the only viable way to put an end to this insurgency. Conversely, some of the respondents pointed the need to approach the solution from the scratch, by improving the general conditions of the people, provide employment opportunities, reduce corruption and injustice, since some of these insurgents lay their justifications to some of bad effects of leadership prevailing in the society. The responses also indicated the need for government to arrest and bring to justice all those perceived to be sponsors of Boko Haram, as these could increase commitment and dedication on the part of security personnel, particularly those engaged on the actual war fronts. The security agents also think the strategy such as effective community policing and intelligence gathering could reduce the level at which Boko Haram coordinators penetrate and link up with their networks in unleashing attacks.

Moreover, the majority of the respondents believed that a coalition of international forces could help them in addressing the problem of Boko Haram especially if they can use their advancement in military and security technology properly. The political leaders of Nigeria or more specifically the government should employ an international practice that is not politicized to offer more assistance in curtailing the insurgent's activities. But few of the security personnel opined that international coalition may not always be the needed approach, as even with their presence now, they had little impact on the ongoing insurgency organizations are still the better options, since they have fullest understanding of the issue at stake.

Finally, almost all the respondents agreed that Nigeria need regional cooperation among its West African neighbors. Most of the respondents pointed out that, since Boko Haram hub of operations still remained with borders of these West African states, notably among them; Cameroon, Chad and Niger Republic, then Nigerian government must joint effort and work closely with these countries irrespective of their colonial history or other differences to tackle the problem. On the other hand, the establishment of constant border patrol teams, and sharing of intelligent information and logistics could surely assist in defeating Boko Haram insurgency.

5.0 Conclusion

The discourse on Boko Haram insurgency clearly revealed that Nigeria is confronted with security challenges. This is made manifest in the Boko Haram murderous campaigns against securities, government institutions, religious cleric and members of the general public. The escalating of the violence, with increasing attacks suicide bombing and kidnapping prevailed the failure of government to curtails the crisis .the paper has revealed how the group transformed from a local *salafis* militia into a regional terrorist group, with linkages and support from other Islamic insurgent in Africa like Al Qaeda in the land of Islamic Magreb (AQIM) and Al-Shabab. The sect becomes a threat to Nigerian national security.

Finally, the paper recommends that for any solution to a security situation like that of Boko Haram to be effective a multi-dimensional approach that address both the symptoms of terrorism and root causes must include addressing the problems that create the enabling environment. Lack of employment in Nigeria remains a monumental challenge. The northeast region were Boko Haram remain active is considered the worst affected. By creating employment opportunity in the region the youths can be away from criminal activities .the government should improve school enrolment in the region to address the issue of illiteracy in the area. The government should denied the group require operating space to carry out its attacks by preventing the group from organising, or reorganising, recruiting and launching attacks, any form of support for the sect most be denied. The entire porous border network, through which the group might get weapons, and supports from other Islamic movement outside the country must be blocked

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