

# Overview of boko haram: history, impact and methods



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## **Abstract**

In the previous few years, the threat of Boko Haram has been subjected to continuous reviews. A number of fundamental organizational ideologies and causes have also been the focus. While Boko Haram is well-thought-out as an extremist group that relates itself to Islam, a number of studies show Islam is used as a legitimization means instead of a motivation form (Adesoji, 2010). A significant role has been played by the terrorist attacks in deteriorating the current relationships in the middle of the Christians in the south and Muslims in the north. The paper is aimed at highlighting the way Boko Haram dramatically evolved deprived of undertaking fierce attacks. In 2002, the organization was established by the group commander, Yusuf. In 2009, the attacks started after a number of group's members were arrested and killed by the government, comprising the commanding general.

For establishing this group, the key goal is to make sure that Nigeria's northern parts remain Islamic states. As per the opinions of the group, several Muslims' political climates was corrupt due to following western civilizations (Adesoji, 2010). With the intention of making sure that there are available workers within the militant group, more Muslims youths are recruited by Yusuf. These youth were willing to join the groups because of the high unemployment rate due to corruption. This research will further focus on the ways the group was using in the attacks. As per the terrorism database, young women and children were also recruited by Yusuf for taking part in the attacks in the suicide bombing form. The majority of the issues were due to poor living standards and poverty making terrorism as a substitute.

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For over a decade, the group has been insubordinate and is still turning out to be more lethal. Though the other neighboring countries are affected by the crisis, Nigeria is well-thought-out as the most vulnerable country. In spite of the frequently proposed solutions, nothing worked for the reason that this group is still active (Anyadike, 2013). An assessment must be conducted related to the terrorism, along with the way it impacts both public and the private sectors, for implementing a defeat strategy.

## Introduction

Recently, global terrorism has been defined as a newer danger in the entire history of humankind. The terrorism phenomenon from the mid-20th century has been primarily increasing for the Middle East and African nations.

Terrorism actions in most cases are formulated with a specific motive by people under similar groups. This type of organization is communicated with dissimilar illegitimate motives stretching from religious sectarianism to government overthrow to state secession (Adesoji, 2010). Established in Nigeria, a jihadist terrorist group Boko Haram is active in numerous states, for example, Niger, Northern Cameroon, and Chad. It is well-thought-out as the modern group established in Africa, where the main base is Nigeria. In Nigeria, along with a number of surrounding nations, terrorism thus has turned out to be an undermining factor.

The rising of this terrorist group is related to the turbulent blur and violence throughout their operations' expansion, along with the membership since 2009. The year 2009 histrionically marked the establishment of the terrorist operations. A number of assumptions, hypotheses, and theories surrounding

Boko Haram operations' societal cause have been on the rise rapidly (Anyadike, 2013). The theories comprise religious extremism, democratic government failure and relative deprivation theory. The terrorist group since 2009 has snowballed, rolling even a step forward for attacking the embassy of the UK based in Nigeria's capital.

Though the organization's workforce, motivation, and operations' full context remain unrecognized, it is considerably apparent that the group needs to be dealt with. Terrorism although is portrayed for posing a threat everywhere around the globe, Nigeria is affected severely due to massive reserves of oil (Egbeleke, 2013). Consequently, this paper will focus on highlighting the organization's origin, its objectives, and significant events.

### History of Boko Haram

Prior to ensuing annexation and colonization of Nigeria into the British Empire in 1900, the Bornu Empire ruled the territories where the Boko Haram is currently active. The organization was described formally as Juma'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad, which had been established in Yusufiyya in 2001 and Yusuf Mohamed led this organization. Historically, Yusuf is considered an Islamic radical who undertook his studies in Niger and Chad before coming back to Nigeria from Yusufiyya. Over more than eight years of peaceful gatherings, operations and activities of more than 280, 000 members, the city of Yusufiyya developed into Boko Haram (Egbeleke, 2013). Yusuf also established a religious school intending to attract the poor Muslims in Nigeria and other surrounding countries. According to research,

the center had a political goal of creating an Islamic state. Therefore, the school became a crucial ground for jihad training.

Through denouncing the police and state corruption as well, Yusuf focused on attracting and training more unemployed youths. Reports depict that Yusuf used the Borno infrastructure of the Izala society to undertake his Jihad training before establishing his own faction. During the first seven years of its existence, Boko Haram peacefully conducted its terrorist operations, withdrawing from society to settle in north-eastern areas (Egbeleke, 2013). The government continued to ignore reports concerning the increasingly militant of the organization. Besides, the Ulama advised the whole government and the Nigeria Television Authority not to spread the news concerning Yusuf and the entire organization, but the threats were still ignored. Later, Yusuf was arrested, making his status more elevated (Onuoha, 2012). After evaluating the link that existed between Boko Haram and al-Qaeda, Deputy Governor Alhaji revealed that Yusuf was an unreliable individual and thus was released.

Boko Haram's critical agenda was to make sure that the laws of Sharia have been established in Nigerian northern state. Members of the organization believed that northern Nigeria politics was usurped by several groups of counterfeit and dishonest Muslims. Due to this hitch, Boko Haram wanted to wage war against these Muslims and the entire federal government, to establish a pure Muslim state under Sharia law. Since western education was believed to corrupting Muslims, residents were committed to prophetic teaching and propagation of Jihad (Okemi, 2013). The term Boko Haram was derived from Hausa words Boko which implied western education, and <https://assignbuster.com/overview-of-boko-haram-history-impact-and-methods/>

Haram meaning forbidden. Therefore, Boko Haram means that western education is prohibited. According to Yusuf, Boko Haram was not only against western education but also the culture of the west and related sciences.

The organization launched four separate attacks in 2004 when the government was facing crackdowns. Although the attacks were to be quite, the popular wisdom reported a plan of assassinating Sheikh Mahmoud Adam in July 2007 triggering the violent group attacks. July 2009 marks the turning point of the whole Boko Haram. During the period, the government troops moved to the neighboring countries such as Niger, Cameroon, and Chad to reorganize themselves to face the severe attacks from Boko Haram (Okemi, 2013). During the 2009 violent radicalization, the group was rioting against the new state law expecting the motorist to wear helmets. During this period, the government faced crackdown, and several members of Boko Haram were arrested, Yusuf included. By the end of the day, the arrested members were killed extra-judicially.

Since the 2009 riot, Boko Haram has established different strategies that made them more militant in their operations. There are massive deaths associated with Boko Haram terrorism with 2014 alone, causing more than 6000 deaths. Most of these deaths were counted for by suicide bombing, guns, and bomb attacks. Most of these attacks were focusing on government institutions such as police and military bases, although attacks on the public occurred more frequently (Okemi, 2013). Some of the public attacks included raids on villages to ensure there is the destabilization of the state, while

others were focusing on Mosques to distract pacifists from attacking the organization's ideology.

### Goals of Boko Haram

During the initial stages of Boko Haram development, their activities and operations were non-violent. Their primary goal was to establish a purified Islam in northern parts of Nigeria. They wanted to eliminate the counterfeit Muslims who were socializing with western education and culture as well. Since 2015, the organization has been aligned with the Levant and the Islamic State of Iraq. Since the terror attacks initiated in 2009, tens of thousands have been killed and more than 2.6 displaced from their homes (Onuoha, 2012). After the Boko Haram was founded, it aimed at increasing radicalization to suppress the operations of the military forces.

Historically, the ideology to form the organization was founded upon the Salafism principle, which was advocating for Sharia law. Even after the organization diffused to the Jihadist group in 2009, all the fighters were following the Salafi doctrine. This doctrine has made the Boko group announce the members of both Sufi and Shite sect as infidels. In their operation, Boko haram is always guided by the principal goal of establishing an Islamic state in Nigeria. Boko Haram opposes the entire aspect of the westernization of Nigerian communities and the concentration of wealth of the land among several political elites (Onuoha, 2012). According to research, Nigeria is among the largest countries in Africa, but more than 65% of citizens are living under one dollar a day. The Sharia Laws imposed by the government were considered corrupt. Therefore, Boko Haram was

aiming to eliminate such rules and establish others that would allow equitable sharing of wealth and state resources.

### Methods of attack

The organization has used a number of methods of attacks for opposing the westernization since its inception. After the arresting and killing of their leader in 2009, an armed rebellion was initiated by the group contrary to the Nigerian government. The conflict was arising amid the Christian communities and Nigerian Muslims. Under the group of Boko Haram, the Muslims focused on making an Islamic state within the region. The initial attacks were unsuccessful because of the killing of their leader. The remaining group turned out to be more aggressive, along with initiating severe insurrection under Commander Abubakar Shekau. This has been an effective attacking method as the group has managed for capturing numerous regions in Nigeria's northern region.

Because of government's constant attacks, the group has changed its strategies to attack, making the insurrection spread to Cameroon and Chad. Moreover, Boko Haram also used suicide bombing as a major method of attack. For example, in Nigeria children are the major source of suicide bombers. In 2018, UNICEF recently revealed that Boko Haram has used over 48 children for undertaking their suicidal attacks (Onuoha, 2012). Women have also been used in attacks as suicide bombers. Research has depicted how women increasingly participate in political violence, primarily due to poverty. Generally, Boko Haram deploys more female militants and suicide bombers more than any terrorist organization in the entire history.



Throughout their aggressive attacks, suicide bombing was frequently used primarily in the Maiduguri city (Rogers, 2012). According to terrorist researches, most women tend to join the suicide bombing group to earn a better life, given the political climate in Nigeria and the surrounding regions. In addition, Boko Haram was using kidnapping as a method of attacking the government.

The most infamous of Boko Haram's attacks—its kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls on the night of April 14-15, 2014—occurred in the context of this total war. At Government Secondary School in Chibok, Borno South, the teenage girls had gathered to take exams despite the general climate of insecurity. When the attack began, the girls were initially duped by Boko Haram members posing as soldiers and promising to escort them to safety. After Boko Haram loaded the girls onto trucks, a few escaped en route by grasping tree branches or fleeing during breaks. But most were driven to Boko Haram's hideouts, where they became sexual slaves and propaganda objects for the group. The incident became a national trauma for Nigeria and evoked international outcry.

Chibok was part of a broader pattern. As Boko Haram attacked civilians in the northeast's villages and towns, the sect targeted boarding schools and residential colleges. In these raids, Boko Haram sometimes conscripted boys but often slaughtered them outright. This pattern occurred at Government Secondary School in Mamudo, Yobe, in July 2013; at the

College of Agriculture in Gujba, Yobe, in September 2013;" Federal Government College in Buni Yadi, Yobe, in February 2014; and in other, smaller attacks.

In another event, the group kidnapped 110 schoolgirls on February 19, 2018. The age of all the girls was between 11 to 19 years. These girls were kidnapped from the Government Girls' Science and Technical College (GGSTC). On the same day, 5 schoolgirls died. In March 2018, all other girls were released except Leah Sharibu, the only Christian girl as she refused to convert to Islam and abandon her faith.

The insurgency of Boko Haram has caused the displacement of 2.3 million individual since May 2013. The number of displaced children in just one year increased by more than 60%, from 800,000 to 1.3 million children. In Africa, this is the fastest growing crises of displacement (Unicef, 2016).

Since day one, the Nigerian government has failed to handle the Boko Haram terrorists. The early warnings imposed by the group were ignored by the government, giving them ample time for preparation. Several threats were mishandled despite having an explicit knowledge about the group. Now that prevention terror attack is out of the picture in the government has decided to use severe crackdowns with aims of eliminating the seizures (Rogers, 2012). Despite undertaking an aggressive tactic to handle the situation, the government has faced immense flaws in implementing violent crackdowns. Instead of targeting and removing the assets of the Boko Haram group selectively, the Joint Security Forces established a reputation through brutality similar to that of their enemies.

According to reports from magazines and other related articles, the Nigeria security team is described to cause massive damage to private property, extra-judicial killings, killing citizens and have failed to follow the required channel of investigation. In a nutshell, the government has vastly alienated more citizens instead of resolving the issue (Suleiman & Aminul, 2015). The situation becomes even more dangerous when the government uses people during the counter-terrorist attack, to help in locating Boko Haram terrorist and their assets. Instead of encouraging the citizen to support the government to fight the terrorists, the security forces were aggregated the youths to join Boko Haram, making the situation more severe.

Nevertheless, several policy reforms can be employed to eliminate terrorism and restore peace in Nigeria. Restoring faith in the state government is essential to legitimize Boko Haram attacks and other incidental damage they may cause. Firstly, democratic reform will play a significant role in the entire process. This is for the reason that it has been a challenge to fight corruption that has offered several passes to Boko Haram. The government needs to conduct a fair and free election under international oversight for ensuring the process legitimacy (Suleiman & Aminul, 2015). Besides, such an election can be used to eliminate political corruption, improve the government system, and deliver the needs of the people. The state should adopt an independent agency with international support and ensuring cases of corruption are strictly investigated.

Moreover, the inadequacies of military and security responses must be adequately addressed. The Joint Security Force has initially operated against the constitution, offending citizens and radicalizing them as well. War <https://assignbuster.com/overview-of-boko-haram-history-impact-and-methods/>

suspects and criminals must be arrested and presented to the court.

Likewise, security officers must be adequately equipped to control the troop during field attacks better. This calls for a complete reform in the military sector and replacement of the leadership as well. However, before all these reforms are established, the current forces should continue assaulting the Boko Harams to sustain it in Nigeria.

The threat of terrorism has continued to increase, hence the need for the private, public, and government agencies to understand and manage the risks of attacks on their assets and employees (Thomson, 2012). Handling the risks relating to terrorism can be a formidable operation for most organizations. However, with a three-phase program for managing the risk of terrorism, the challenge can be reduced.

The first phase ensures identification and initial assessment of the threat and the site. The main goal is to recognize the vulnerabilities in the organization and the threats they are facing. The second phase of the program involves a detailed assessment of the risk. Organizations can utilize the information from stage one and use the available resources to define the impressions of a terrorist attack on the facilities (Pichette, 2015). Software tools can also be used to measure the impacts of chemical and biological terrorist attacks. The third phase in the program is the actual risk management. The step involves the protection of the occupants of the facility, emergency planning, reduction of financial risks, and disaster recovery.

Generally, terrorism has become a complex issue that has been haunting many nations. However, the risk of terrorist attacks can be defeated through

a well-devised defeat strategy. The best approach, in this case, is to disassemble the terrorists' networks and ensure that all their sources of support are severed (Pichette, 2015). When the reinforcement groups for the terrorists are dismantled, the terrorists will lack support for regeneration and adaptation. Also, sufficient pressure should be sustained on the terrorist groups to ensure that they do not re-emerge after cessation.

## Conclusion

The rise of the Boko Haram organization can be described as a gradual and painful process in Nigeria. Despite the initial threats reported by various organizations and the members of the public, the government did not respond adequately giving the terrorists ample time to prepare and stage their bombing attacks. This group affects not only Nigeria but also other surrounding states like Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. Several methods are used by Boko Haram to conduct their attacks in Nigeria. Armed attacks are the conventional method used by the group to raid in the villages and government institutions such as military bases. More women and children are increasingly being recruited in the Boko Haram terrorist organization due to unemployment crises resulting from political corruption. The leaders in the group are taking advantage of economic instability to recruit youth to become severe militant. There are enormous proposed solutions the problem has not been solved. This calls for a critical evaluation of the current state and establishes a defeat strategy for terrorism to curb the situation.

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