

# Effect of boko haream in nigera econs



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To say that the deadly activities of the Islamic sect, Boko Haram, are killing the economy of the North is an understatement. In most states in the North, the devastating socio-economic effects of the sect's serial killings and bombings, especially in Borno, Yobe, Niger, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau (which is more of ethno-religious conflict), Kogi, Bauchi and recently, Sokoto, has destroyed economic and commercial activities with many people relocating to other places. In Maiduguri, Borno State, where the sect originated, the frequent bombings and clashes between Boko Haram and security agents have weighed down seriously on commercial and businesses activities in the city as many businesses have reportedly crumbled while many people have fled the state. The Maiduguri Monday Market said to be the biggest market in the city is reported to have been seriously affected as hundreds of shop owners, especially Southerners are said to have closed their businesses and left the troubled city. About half of the 10, 000 shops and stalls in the market were said to have been abandoned by traders who have fled the city. Banks and their customers are also said to be operating under difficult situation and have reduced their business hours to guard against being attacked by members of the sect. According to the Borno State Commissioner of Information, Mr. Inuwa Bwala, it will take the state 20 years to recover from the current predicament it has found itself. Bwala, in a telephone interview with THISDAY said the security situation has taken its toll on the economy of the state as many people have fled. According to the commissioner, " it is only natural that when you have such a situation as we have now, it will affect the economic fortunes, especially where people go out to do business under the atmosphere of fear. So there is no doubt that the crisis has taken its toll on our resources, on our business and on our

economy. It will take us a very long time, not less than 20 years to recover and get to the position we were before the crisis started. “ It is our prayers that those who were scared away from Borno State out of fear, those who closed shops out of fear, those who fled in the height of the crisis and the general apathy among business men to invest in Borno State, should do a rethink and come back because the atmosphere is peaceful now. “ Local businesses are beginning to pick up; we are in the process of recovering. The state government has intervened in various usiness sectors, especially the revival of our industries, alleviation of poverty, granting of business loans, development of business and technical skills and so many other programmes that the government has initiated for us to bring back the state on to stream and let people imbibe the spirit of self-sustenance, let them imbibe the spirit of thriving even in the face of challenges. So it is our prayers that we will recover soonest. “ We are optimistic that Borno will be back on its feet as the economic ‘ Heart Beat’ of the North-east. Mind you Borno has border links with three international communities nd all these routes had been very viable business routes. We hope that when we renew our links with these communities, businesses shall boom again in Borno State and the nation at large”. Since January 20, 2012, when the militant sect launched its onslaught on the metropolitan city of Kano, life has not been the same again in the city which is noted as the heart of the development of the North. The attack on Kano has been very devastating because the city has always been the commercial centre of western Sudan for the past 500 years. The city had been economic base of the North before even neighbouring countries like Niger

Republic, Chad and northern Cameroun before the evolution of the Nigerian nation. But today the story is different as business and commercial activities have taken a turn for the worse in the city as a result of the security problems occasioned by frequent killings and bombings. Investors who have been doing business in the city for ages are said to be relocating their businesses due to the unending security challenges in the city. Kano, which is reputed to be the hub of business and commercial activities in the entire 19 Northern states and beyond, is gradually losing steam. About 80 per cent of the industries are said to closed shops, due o powerfailureand the daunting security challenges. The security challenges have impacted negatively on both the private and public sectors of the economy as many business men and traders have relocated their businesses from the city. About 35 per cent of the over three million Igbo businessmen and traders in the city who engaged in both small and medium scale businesses are reported to have fled to Abuja and the South-east due to the growing insecurity posed by the activities of Boko Haram. The indigenous business community in the city especially the textile merchants are not faring better as they count their losses as heir customers who used to patronise them no longer go to Kano for fear of the unknown. The Durbar Festival in Kano which used to attract local and international tourists was canceled last week because of security issues even though it was attributed to the Emir's failinghealth. The Kano State government lost huge revenue from this singular decision. The story is not different in Jos, the Plateau State capital the unofficial headquarters of the Middle Belt. Plateau has been in the news before the advent of Boko Haram as a result of the persistent ethnic and religious crisis that has continued to engulf the state.

The city has witnessed so much carnage that many businesses are no longer thriving, as many business concerns have abandoned the city and moved out their investments. Though the city is not reputed as an industrial city, it is noted for its tourism potentials which have contributed to the national economy. However, the once thriving tourism destination that was an attraction for local and international tourists is now history as the spate of violence in the state which hitherto prides it as the 'Home of Peace and tourism' seems to have been robbed off of its glory in the tourism industry. Today, Jos is a no go area for tourists as destination marketers and tour operators take their clients to destinations with relative peace. Only hotels are recording slightly above 20 per cent occupancy rate. Some are said to have closed down while the Jos Museums, Jos Wildlife and Amusement Park no longer witness visitors trooping there again. The impact on hospitality is so much that investors in the industry are looking elsewhere, especially at neighbouring places like Abuja since tourism does not thrive in an environment characterised by insecurity and violence. Apart from the ethno religious violence, the city has had its share of the Boko Haram bombings. Many people have closed up their businesses and left the city. Social and economic activities are on the lowest ebb as a result of the security situation. Like Jos, Kaduna the former capital of the defunct Northern region has not fared better as business activities in the city continued to nose dive as a result of the increasing level of insecurity in state. As a result of the prevailing level of insecurity, many businesses, especially beer parlour operators, night clubs and other places of relaxation are gradually folding up as their owners count their losses. Worst hit are those located in the northern part of the city, such as the elitist NAF club, owned by the Nigerian

Airforce , along Rabbah Road, which used to be a beehive of activities. Many residents live in perpetual fear of the unknown as the Boko Haram sect continuous to attack the city as they restrict their business activities to areas where they feel safe. Worst hit is the hospitality business in the city. Many hoteliers are counting their losses as a result of lack of patronage. Many people who come into town for any engagement prefer to go to stay in Abuja rather than stay the night in Kaduna. A source at one of the leading hotels in Kaduna lamented that since, the reprisal ttacks that trailed the June 17 bombing of Churches in Kaduna and Zaria, there had been very low patronage. “ As you can see, the whole place is looking empty; we don’t have customers as we used to have because people are afraid of coming to Kaduna. No any serious event, meeting or occasion that could bring people to Kaduna is holding, so business is on the declined,” said the source. A lot of Igbo are said be relocating from the city to Abuja and the East for a more secured business environment. According to Mr. Ben Ikwu, a businessman, businesses are no longer thriving in Kaduna as they ought to be as a result of insecurity ccasioned by Boko Haram bombings. “ Sincerely business is not thriving at all in Kaduna. The business environment is very doll, there is so much uncertainty. Each day you wake up, you are scared because you are afraid of what may happen during the day and you are very careful of places to go so that you don’t get caught up in the wrong place if anything happens. “ We, especially the non-indigenes have been living under serious fears because of the bombings. A lot of people, especially we Igbo, are relocating to Abuja and the East. Some people have relocated their investments. A good number of people that

I know have put up their houses for sale because they want to relocate. " I know people who have moved to Abuja to secure business offices so that they could have a place to fall back on if the situation of things in the North remains the way we are seeing. " I know people; some of my Igbo brothers who have relocated their families back home because of the situation of things in the North generally so as to avoid the experience of the 1966civil war. They are ready to leave and join their families back home anytime if things get worst," he said. He lamented further that businesses were at a standstill because people are scared, dding that " if anybody tells you those things are moving well in Kaduna, that person is telling a lie. Well things may be moving well for people who are working and getting salary at the end of the month, but for those of us in business, we going through serious difficulties. " There is feeling of insecurity and uncertainty everywhere and that not good for any economy, it is not good for business and investment. " Also lamenting the situation, the Executive Director of Admiral Agricultural and Environmental Care, Kaduna, Mr Shadrack Madlion, regretted that the business environment in the North is becoming orst and called on the authorities to do something about the worsening security situation. Madlion noted that " business activities in northern Nigeria today have gone to almost zero per cent. There is no way anybody can come and put up any investment where there is insecurity. " He lamented that " I was thriving on N3 million on daily bases in business, in my agricultural inputs, but today, I don't see N80, 000. Those in the transport business are feeling it too. Social life in the North is gone. " No one is going to say the North should wake up because they are feeling it. I seat in my office and somebody expects me to ay my local government taxes and other government taxes, under what

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circumstances can I generate the funds when business is not moving. I am not even sure whether I would be able to pay my children's school fees this coming session because there had not been business. " People move out of Kaduna to go and look for their daily bread. In terms of food business at this Ramadan period, it is progressive but as I speak with you sales have dropped by 75 per cent compared to last fasting session. Prices have gone up because of insecurity. Lamenting the situation further, the Bishop of Kaduna Diocese of the Church of Nigeria,

Anglican Communion, Rev. Josiah Idowu- Fearon, said that violence has destroyed the economic, social and religious lives of the people of Kaduna State. Addressing the first session of the 19th Synod of the Anglican Church in Kaduna recently, Fearon said a significant number of church members prefer to stay within the safety of their homes rather than coming to churches and be bombed to death. According to him, businesses have dropped and the standard of living has also dropped deeply, stressing that for the situation to stop, the North must do something. " The entire North-east of the country, Jos and Kano are almost completely isolated conomically, socially and politically. The understanding by many in this northern part today is that Kaduna, the ' Heart Beat' of the North is the next target of this group that is bent on this mission of self- destruction," he said. In virtually all the states in the story is not different as people living under fear of the unknown. Concerned about happenings in the region, the Federal Government, in February this year, raised the alarm over the devastating effect of the Boko Haram insurgency on the region, warning that religious



extremists will destroy the region if the activities of the Islamic sect are not curtailed.

The Information Minister, Mr. Labaran Maku, who spoke on behalf of the government, had said the region needs peace and stability more than any other region in the country, particularly because the region is clearly lagging behind in terms of infrastructure, education and other development indices, declaring that the North's economy is on the verge of collapse. Sadly, the governors of the region appear to be helpless in containing the situation as the Islamic sect continues with its bombardment. For how long will this continue? If the region comes out of this, it will surely take some decades for it to recover from the effect of this madness.