

The misapplication of the context of Islamic religious teaching toward jihad and insurgency in Northeastern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

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Islamic religion is arguably the most misunderstood and misinterpreted contemporarily even by the followers of the religion. Several Quranic injunctions and Prophetic Hadiths were misconstrued, misperceived and misutilised by especially the youth with little knowledge of the religion towards revolutionary and extremists' activities such as insurgency and terrorism. This work is an attempt in examining how the Jama'atu Ahlul Sunnah Lid Da'awati Wal Jihad (popularly known as Boko Haram) in Northeastern Nigeria misperceived the concept of Jihad from the Islamic point of view which led to the dangerous movement that metamorphosed into a full-blown insurgency and terrorism. The work adopted both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary source is the consultation of scriptures such as the Holy Quran, Holy Bible and Prophetic Hadith which are direct sources of Islamic law. The secondary sources include books, journals, newspapers, reports and internet sources. The data obtained were analysed and discussed using content analysis. The research discovered that the youth are misguided and misdirected with wrong notions of the real meaning and approaches to Jihad and interpretations of Jihad in Nigerian society in consideration with the current Fatwas (injunctions) on its context and application which led them towards extremism in taking weapons to embark on insurgency and terrorism. The work recommends that there is a need for monitoring of religious activities by the state and censorship through strict monitoring of religious movements and activities for preaching and there is a need for proper teaching religious provisions which is necessary to avert such movements in future.

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Introduction

The word 'Jihad' is arguably the most contentious word in the global discourse of intellectualism and engagements by global key players and academics in the 21st century (Philips 2002, 6 and Kretsch, 2016, 11). Three dominant school of thoughts surfaced in their bid to provide the world

with the palatable meaning and various dimensions of Jihad in modern times. The first school conceives Jihad in its literal term using an elementary crude meaning as the 'Holy War' only. The second school of thought presents Jihad as the strive to maintain moral and pious relationship between mankind and his God. The third school of thought perceives Jihad as a complex and complicated term that has many meanings, interpretations, applicability and dimensions depending on the situation (Firestone 1999, 2). Jihad is a legal injunction that has its roots from the Quran, a spiritual Book that the Muslims identified unanimously as the final and sacrosanct authority (Bonner 2006, 7). Many verses pointed towards Jihad in different Chapters of the Holy Quran. Specifically, Chapters 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 narrated in detail the scenarios, circumstances, nature and process of conducting Jihad in Islam. However, a mere reading or direct translation of the Chapters or Verses alone could not equip a reader or the audience with the real meaning, nature and application of Jihad. This prompted for Quranic exegeses such as that of Ibn Kathir, Al Qurtubi, Al Dabiri, Al Suyuti and many other renown authorities on the Quranic sciences (Habib 2016, 12-16).

To successfully interpret and understand the concept of Jihad, relying on direct Quranic translation is not alone (Aydin 2012, 3). There are other sources of authoritative law in Islam including Hadith, Ijma, Qiyas and reference to history. Many Prophetic traditions reported by authentic sources such as Bukhari and Muslim revealed how the Jihad was initiated and conducted in Islam. The Prophet (PBUH) stipulated several regulations and conditions for the conduct of Jihad (Cook 2005, 6). Besides, there is a need for one to understand and perceive the deep authentic historical accounts of the Prophetic Jihad before one can invoke on analysing the contextual meaning and application of Jihad. Additionally, the nature and pattern of Jihad embarked by the Prophet (PBUH), the settings of his community, neighbourhood, pattern of the agreements and hostilities all differed extremely from what is obtainable in our contemporary Muslim societies. Ibn Qayyim (2010) in his book "Ilamul Muqi'ina an Rabbil Alamin" (The Contact of the Noble Scholars from their Creator) opined that: "not every tom, dick and harry possess the wisdom and the quality to make fatwa or interpret knowledge with an in-depth analysis except those that encountered it or secured it from the authoritative sources" (Ibn Qayyim 2010, 6). Mustafa Murad (2016) in his "Ghazawatil Raul" (The Battles of the Prophet) mentioned as one of his reason for writing the book that: "there is a need for the younger generation to understand the wisdom and politics behind the Prophetic Jihad not just a mere fanciful obsession with the term without a depth knowledge of it" (Murad 2016, 1). Many scholars in contemporary world especially in the West misinterpret and misrepresent the concept of Jihad for a purpose best known to them as rightly observed by Encyclopedia Britannica (2020) that "the Western scholars' views that Jihad is the holy war is wrong and misleading".

The purpose of this work is to identify how the Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria misinterpret and misapplied the concept of Jihad to reach their level of extremism which caused a serious disaster in Northeastern Nigeria in terms of destruction of lives and properties. The Boko Haram relied on some verses and Hadiths to justify their onslaught on Nigerians unjustifiably despite the counter arguments by scholars in Nigeria who are authorities in Quran and Hadith. All efforts to convince the young extremists and radicals to drop their fundamental views could not yield the desired result. The repercussions of the movement by Boko Haram was the situation that Nigeria found itself today. The insurgents introduced a non-existing non-Islamic view of forbidding the Western education known as “Boko” in Hausa language which is a dominant lingua franca in Northern Nigeria (Sule, Ahmed, Alhaji, Yahaya & Gambarawa 2019, 9). They conceived that all knowledge and its form from the West, mixing of male and female gender in schools and Western democratic and political systems are all ‘Haram’ or forbidden. As a result of their unrepentant chauvinism for extremist position, they went to the extent of taking arms against both Muslims and non-Muslims in Northern Nigeria which led to the killings of over 25, 000 lives, destruction of properties worth billions of Naira, attacks on churches and mosques, food insecurity and a worst humanitarian crisis in Northeastern Nigeria (Sule, Yahaya, Rabi’u, Ahmad & Hussaini, 2019, 63-64). All these emanated from the misapplication and misinterpretation of the teachings of Islam on Jihad. This study will therefore, analyse how the insurgents developed their ill-perceived ideology, and why their perception is incorrect owing to the analysis of the various contextual meaning of Jihad and its modern application as presented in this work.

Method

The work adopted the descriptive analytical method of collection of data and analysis. The topic of investigation in this research is broad, diverse, complex and highly technical in nature. What simplifies the process is the availability of classical literature and root sources of data for the work. Thus, the researchers decided to use the documented sources in existence. Quran is considered as a primary source of law, Shari’ah and data in Islam. Likewise, Hadith especially the authentic ones from the Prophet (PBUH) is also considered as a primary source of data in Islamic studies. Quotes from Bible were also referred to for comparative analysis. Hence, the work utilised documented primary sources for data collection. Relevant and necessary Quranic verses and Prophetic Hadiths on the subject matter of study were adequately consulted in addition to Biblical sources. Additionally, other documented secondary sources were used such as the views and interpretations of scholars from the Islamic perspectives, books, journals and other internet sources from both the Islamic scholars and Western scholars.

The data gathered were discussed using analytical method. The Quranic verses, Prophetic Hadiths and views of scholars were analysed using comparative method where there is a need for that. The work presented two models or frameworks to explain the context of the study. The doctrine of the context of the 'Ignorant Islamic followers and Incapable Scholars' postulated by Abdulkadir Awdah (2006) and the framework of the 'Doctrine of Extremism' advanced by Yusuf Al Qaradawi (1999).

Discussion

Ignorant Followers and Incapable Scholars

Awdah (2006, 1-7) in his thesis presented that the Islamic world or the Muslims in contemporary world are suffering from the hallucination of ignorant followers and incapable scholars. The ignorant followers in his view lack the basis of understanding the principles and practices of Islam in its various ramifications which pushed several of them into a world of confusion. They failed to identify a clear dividing line between religious provision and secular life in their daily activities. This scenario created several faulty beliefs such as extremist perception of Jihad in some cases and in other situation a total secular life devoid of Islamic spiritualism by some of them. Furthermore, he opined that the youth that found themselves in this rigmarole could not get rescued because of incapable scholars who could not master the scientific methodology and system of marrying the Islamic principles with modern secular life to strike a moderate balance and approach towards issues. Indeed, Awdah (2006) submitted that:

"It is painful to a Muslim to see his fellow Muslims going from bad to worse, getting weaker and more ignorant every day, not realising that the real reason behind that deterioration is their ignorance of the system of Islamic jurisprudence and their negligence in applying it, notwithstanding its perfection and excellence" (p.1).

The quotation above captured the main caption of this work; the misapplication of the teachings of Islam in Jihad and other aspects of daily life of Muslims in modern world. Awdah (2006, 9-11) further stressed that every Muslim must know Islamic jurisprudence for secular and spiritual life. This is because laws of jurisprudence are indivisible, universal and divine. Islamic laws and man-made laws differ in many angles. Islamic laws are inspired by God while man-made laws are instigated by rationality and thought of mankind. There is a weakness in man-made laws. Secondly, Islamic laws are eternal while man-made laws are temporary provisions made to cater for the current societal needs which are subject to change in future when the needs vanished away. In essence, the Islamic laws have the advantage of perfection, excellence and permanence. He identified that rulers in Muslims countries are exceeding their limits with injustice, inequality and selfishness. He finally concluded that the Muslims are divided into the uneducated and the

European-educated. He further argues that Islam and politics are inseparable and that is where the damage is obtainable in the Muslim world. Politics has been taken over by the uneducated or the European educated who failed to steer the affairs of the Muslims towards a better Islamic and secular life in prosperity.

Finally, Awdah (2006, 27) suggested that the Muslim-educated in the society are doing their best in educating the illiterates and the European-educated but it is not enough because they don't have the instrument to exert authority. In essence, he identified that the efforts of the Muslim clerics in teaching and putting the younger generation in their rightful sense of mind for a better and organised Islamic society is not meeting the expectation. The younger ignorant generation were left on their own to cater for their ignorance. This submission is a good explanation of the situation of the Boko Haram extremist in Northeastern Nigeria. Owing to the ignorance and incapable scholars, the political leaders in the country who are mostly Muslims are unjust and tyrant. The youth who felt they can rely on their ignorance and lack a sound philosophical instruction from the religious clerics lean on Jihad to express their anger and frustration with the Nigerian system. This led to the present devastation that is threatening to tear away the country.

The Doctrine of Extremism

Yusuf Al Qaradawi (1999, 1) identified extremism as a disease that can be identified and recognised in its early stage, diagnosed and prescribed for remedy if the society is conscious about that. He suggested that fundamentalism does not start in a vacuum. It grows like a plant with some symptoms that could be identified. If the symptoms are not identified, or are identified but are not addressed before they escape into a full-blown social problem, it will lead to detrimental ideology that will harm the Muslim society. Like Awdah (2006) above, Al Qaradawi (1999, 3) stresses that Islam is moderate and permanent and it has universality in practice and in principle. Any attempt towards an extreme end of issues will throw the society into fundamentalism that will erupt into a violence and disaster that are not anticipated.

Al Qaradawi (1999, 6-67) identified six (6) symptoms of extremism that Islamic societies should beware and pay attention to. If such symptoms manifested, they must be deterred instantly to avoid violence and extremist ideas such as terrorism. The first is bigotry and intolerance. Bigotry is a strong sign of extremism. It is a condition of not tolerating others' opinions or a flexible relaxation of laws where there is the need to do so. The bigots do not tolerate dialogue or receptive views they just build their proposition on their own assumption uncompromisingly. The second symptom is commitment to excessiveness by insisting that the Muslim society must adhere strictly to the provisions of law where there is a relieve measures for that. The Prophet (PBUH) himself suggested that this religion is simple if you make it harder on you it will overcome you and push you into

extreme. He (PBUH) further said that do not make things difficult for the people. Those who are extreme in excessiveness if they are not prevented in their early movement may take up arms against the community. The third manifestation of extremism according to Al Qaradawi (1999, 23) is uncalled for austerity where such extremist will feel that even non-Muslims are bound by Islamic law to act in a particular way even when it is not binding on them.

The fourth measurement of extremism is severity and harshness. This manifest itself in the harsh treatment of others, roughness in ones' approach, and crudeness in calling to Islam all of which are contrary to the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. Firmness is only mentioned in connection with two situations in Quran; first in connection with the war against oppression and self-defense (Chapter 9 verse 123) second in connection with carrying out the Islamically prescribed penalties for specified transgressions against humanity (Quran chapter 24 verse 2). In the area of calling one to Islam, there is no place for violence or harshness (Qaradawi 1999, 28). The fifth sign of extremism is thinking ill of others because it comes with suspicion and distrust of others. An extremist depicts people as being guilty of transgression, innovation, or disrespect for Allah's law and Prophet's Sunnah. He jumps to a conclusion rather than looking for explanations and his sincerity and integrity of those who disagree with him are always called into question. Finally, Al Qaradawi (1999, 67) identified that extremism reaches its peak of symptoms when it reaches the stage of Takfir (labelling fellow Muslims as unbelievers). When an individual or groups deny others the right to safety and protection and instead sanctions taking their lives, confiscating their property and refusing to abide by any covenant concluded with them.



Fig. 1: Model Showing Al Qaradawi's Symptoms of Extremism
 Source: Al Qaradawi (1999). Designed by the Authors 2020

The above symptoms identified by Al Qaradawi (1999) are a good explanation and application in the context of this study. All the signs were obtainable with the Boko Haram sect in their

extremist tendencies towards radicalism, violence and misperception of Jihad which metamorphosed into a full-blown insurgency and later terrorism all in the name of Allah when in reality, they are more distance from Allah than even a weak Muslim who is not perishing the souls of innocent human beings of all extraction. Muslims that are practicing Islam are not exempted from the atrocities of Boko Haram in their quest for the misguided Jihad that they engaged themselves in.

Findings & Discussion

In this section the researcher will review the literature critically, thematically and analytically. Some important subjects matter of study were discussed under sub-headings including the meaning, perspectives and logic of Jihad from the Quran, Hadith and diverse views of scholars; the logic and essence of Jihad and Jihad in modern times and the secular state.

Meaning, Perspectives and Logic of Jihad from the Quran, Hadith and Diverse Views of Scholars

The subject matter of Jihad is the major focus of this work because it is the major concept that has been misapplied by the Boko Haram insurgents to interprets the spiritual and logical aspects of the Islamic teaching to wreak their havoc on the Nigerian community. It is therefore pertinent, to consider the length and breadth of the term from the major sources that it emanates from. Some people believed that the recent actions of some Muslims in different forms of war, aggression, terrorism and violence indicates that the concept of Jihad in Islam is simply undermining the process of dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Muslims and non-Muslims especially in multi-religious societies (Islamic Education Trust 2009, 3). Historically, all religions and communities including Jews, Zoroastrians, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, atheists and others have had violent contact and lapses in following the ideals and real values of the provisions of their religion. Like other religions or philosophies of life, Islam should not be isolated by those of its followers who are ignorant of its teachings (Islamic Education Trust 2009, 4-5).

The word "Jihad" is an Arabic word which has its root from the Arabic verb "Jahada" on its own direct context simply refers to "struggle", "to exert effort", exert oneself", "to toil" or "to strive". Jihad in Islam simply refers to constant and continuous efforts that an individual must made towards self-improvement and self-purification. Jihad also is conceive as the duty of Muslims at individual and collective level to struggle against all forms of evil, corruption, injustice, tyranny, oppression, inequality, against Muslims or non-Muslims and whether it is committed by a Muslim or non-Muslim. Jihad in another version means armed struggle against oppressors, transgressors and aggressive attackers for self-defense and community peace. Thus, Jihad can be either peaceful or armed struggle (Islamic Education Trust 2009, 2-6). Physical Jihad is the most misunderstood in

the world today because it is a combat or a war undertaken by Muslims against oppression and injustice by the enemies of Allah, Islam and Muslims. Thus, if Jihad is the struggle against injustice and oppression by Muslims against a fellow Muslim or non-Muslim for the benefit of Muslims and non-Muslims, the Boko Haram should have target oppressors and transgressors in Nigeria which are both Muslims and non-Muslims because both of the two (2) groups are victims of injustice and oppression. However, in their misguided perception, anybody that didn't subscribe to their violent activities is "Kafir" as rightly observed by Al Qaradawi (1999, 3) and must be fought for his blood is legal in their judgement. This is the process that led one of the army commandant of "Operation Lafiya Dole" (a troop established to combat the Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast) in February 2020 to declare that the insurgents killed more Muslims than Christians in their heinous activities. The same statement was mentioned by the Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari that 90% of the victims of Boko Haram are Muslims.

Jihad According to Quranic Injunctions

Jihad in the Quran is usually referring to struggle in the cause of Allah which would include fighting, it was surprisingly used first in Makkah in Q.29:6 and 69 and 25:52 when the action of the Jihad itself was not permitted to the Muslims. The two (2) verses enjoin the Muslim to strive hard in their belief and deeds for reward and to face the rituals of the Islamic teachings not to mind the plots of the unbelievers. Hence, the first Jihad prescribed and approved for the Muslims was that of working hard towards self-righteousness and self-purification in good deeds and submission to Allah's commandment than the Holy War or armed battle (Afsaruddeen 2013, 6-11). How it is wish that the groups like Boko Haram would have this ample and sublime tool of understanding the meaning of Jihad, it would have averted their disastrous mission. Even when the Quran permits for Jihad in the nature of armed struggle, it is clearly specific on what the Muslim should do in their Jihad as narrated below:

"Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors" (Q.2:190).

This portion of the Qur'an was written in about 606 C.E., according to Encyclopedia Britannica (2020) when the Prophet Muhammad and his followers were under attack in the city of Madinah, says Imam Yahya Hendi, a Qur'anic scholar who is the Muslim chaplain at Georgetown University. There, they had established their own state. But various coalitions of non-Muslim tribes--including Christians, Jews, atheists and animists--continued to go to war with them (<https://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/islam/2001/09/save-a-life-save-all-humanity-take-a-life-kill-all-humanity.aspx>). This portion of the Qur'an explains their reasoning behind striking back (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). This verse revealed that the first condition for undertaking a Jihad

in armed terms is when the Muslims are under attacks. When people lives in peace and harmony with their neighbours even if they are non-Muslims, there is no need for Jihad. On non-Muslims, it is clear that they should not be coerced for whatever reason to embrace Islam as Allah Himself says:

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things" (Q.2:256).

This passage has been cited to justify expelling non-Muslims from Muslim countries. But Imam Hendi says that not only does the Qur'an avoid any such suggestion, it even prohibits aggressive efforts to convert. "No Muslim is allowed to go out and force people to become Muslim. In the early days of Islam, Jews came to Islam and had younger children and asked Muhammad if they could force Islam on their children because they are younger.

This verse which was revealed to him says that there can be no compulsion on other religions <https://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/islam/2001/09/save-a-life-save-all-humanity-take-a-life-kill-all-humanity.aspx>). This is very clear (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). All these positions above are referring to dealing with non-Muslims including those that are aggressive towards Islam and Muslims, what about the Muslims who confessed and professed Islam as their belief? On must ask on what ground are the violent group like Boko Haram killing them and taking their belongings as booty. A clear viewpoint will surface to answer this question raised above; ignorance as suggested by Awdah (2006) and misapplication of the religious teachings as advanced by this research. On those who often cite the following verses to justify martyrdom in the course of Allah:

"Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord" (Q3:69). And

"Of those who answered the call of Allah and the Messenger, even after being wounded, those who do right and refrain from wrong have a great reward" (Q.3:172).

It should be understood that not only in the Jihad against oppressors and transgressors that an individual can meet such martyrdom as we shall later see in various Prophetic Hadiths which ascribed all good deeds and indeed, search for food in a legal way or even journey all as Jihad and if one dies in the process of the afore-mentioned, he is a martyr. What the terrorists are doing is to claim that their actions justified martyrdom which is subjective, misleading and unjustified. The overall Quranic disposition supports peace and preservation of life of mankind than a war or violence as narrated by the Quran below:

*"On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person--unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land--it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people" (Q.5:32).
"But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah"*

(Q.8:61).

The two verses above indicate how ready Quran and Islam are to make peace and to prevent the destruction of the life and properties of mankind. The first talks universally. It did not say the life of Muslims but rather whole mankind which has Jews, Christians, Animists, Buddhists, Hindus and Atheists in them (Khan 2008, 17-21). The second verse prefer peacemaking than any other process in the life of mankind. It is also worthy of noticing here that it is not only the Quran that prescribes Jihad in its provisions. Other religions too have such provisions. To limit our discussions within the relevant context, let us take the neighbourhood of Islam, Christianity for instance, and see its own perspective of Jihad. The Bible in some of its verses commanded the Christians to go for a Holy War or Jihad as presented below:

"Now go and smite the Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not: but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (Samuel 15:3).

"All those mine enemies that will not allow that I shall rule over them bring them before me and slay them" (Luke 19:27).

"I did not come to bring peace on earth but only sword" (Matthew 10:34).

"I am come to set fire on earth..... supposed ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I told you nay, but division" (Luke 12-46-52).

The above are just few verses picked randomly from the Bible to justify that it is not only the Quran that preaches Jihad but other religions such as Christianity too did the same. Furthermore, there are Christian terrorist groups in the world as there are Muslims' terrorists' groups (Al Hageel 2002,2-9 Chaliand & Blin, 2007, 1 and Demy 2009, 230-231). These Christians are causing havoc on mankind but the global media chose to maintain silence and black paint the Islam and Muslims as terrorists only. That position might push more radical Muslims who are ignorant and could not possess the analytical tool of peaceful engagement through dialogue to become more volatile and violent. A fair and just position for labeling all terrorists including gunmen of America and Europe is necessary for peace and unity to be achieve among the world community. This work is not justifying terrorism in whatever religion. Rather, it is concerned and worried that despite all the simple approach and the sophistication involves in the process of Jihad, there are Muslims who missed the path and are terrorising the Muslims community and non-Muslims community. Not even the juxtaposition of some scholars that it was a frustration from social injustice that compelled some to be terror-ridden (Chomsky 1999, 7 Chomsky 2000, 1 and Chomsky 2004, 11) are enough explanations for the action of the terrorists. Islam has its own special way of handling frustration and social injustice. If there is a proper learning and teaching, the youth could find solace for the injustice and frustration through legal and tranquil means designed for them by Islam which consist of returning towards their Creator, doing good deeds and leaving the oppressors with their Creator

for a day of recompense. It is still astonishing that youth like Boko Haram could not expand the tentacle of their knowledge to avoid violence and extremism.

The Prophetic Traditions

Jihad from the Prophetic traditions has variance of meaning and dimensions. For example, Jihad is interpreted by the Prophet (PBUH) as the best efforts to control oneself and his desires (Al Daylami 1990, 435) and in another version, the Prophet (PBUH) emphasises that Jihad is to utter a word of truth in front of an oppressive rule (An Nasa'i 1990, 673) while in another situation, he (PBUH) identified Hajj as the most excellent of Jihad for women (Al Bukhari 2000, 641). In another Hadith reported by Al Bukhari, a companion of the Prophet (PBUH) asked him on the best of all deeds, Jihad was mentioned as third after offering prayers at their right time and been dutiful to one's parents (Vol.4 B.52: 41). This Jihad can also take the meaning of struggles to make oneself better not necessarily fighting with sword as assumed or misinterpreted by some. Similarly, in another Hadith from Bukhari, the Prophet (PBUH) was asked of the best deeds, he equaled Jihad in the cause of Allah with somebody who isolated himself in the mountains praying to avoid harming the community or being harmed by the community (Vol. 4 B.52:45). One Hadith that is worthy of mentioning in its fullest in this section is the one narrated by Abu Hurairah as follows:

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "Whoever believes in Allah and His Apostle, offer prayer perfectly and fasts the month of Ramadan, will rightfully be granted Paradise by Allah, no matter whether he fights in Allah's Cause or remains in the land where he is born." The people said, "O Allah's Apostle! Shall we acquaint the people with the good news?" He said, "Paradise has one-hundred grades which Allah has reserved for the Mujahidin who fight in His Cause, and the distance between each of two grades is like the distance between the Heaven and the Earth. So, when you ask Allah (for something), ask for Al-firdaus which is the best and highest part of Paradise." (i.e. The sub-narrator added, "I think the Prophet also said, 'Above it (i.e. Al-Firdaus) is the Throne of Beneficent (i.e. Allah), and from it originate the rivers of Paradise.") (Volume 4, Book 52, Number 48).

The above Hadith would have save the mischief and havoc that the misguided miscreants are causing in the name of Jihad in modern times if they possess the knack for a versatile understanding and study of the Islamic teachings in its broader perspective. Jihad remains as a universal cause enshrined in the Quran never abrogated forever. Let us have this position clear. But there are conditions and situations that warrant for it and it must be understood fully and fulfilled as mentioned in the other sections above. The question here is, does the current Jihadists like Boko Haram met the criteria? The answer is unequivocally no. The Prophet (PBUH) also mentioned in a Hadith that they had crossed the valleys of Madinah for a battle and left some individuals there but they are sharing equal rewards because they stayed back for a legal excuse (Bukhari, Vol. 4 B.52:92).

In another Hadith from Bukhari, the Prophet (PBUH) gave Ali Bin Abi Talib, his cousin, the flag and asked him to proceed for a battle. He summoned him that go there and call them to Islam first, if they accept, proceeds to another town and if they refuse, seek for peace with them, if they accept leave for it is better to have one accept Islam in peace than in a war (Vol.4 B.52:253). Most of these Hadith above were also reported in a similar language and situation by Muslim in his Sahih. The most annoying issue in this regard is the perception of the Boko Haram group of Jihad without thinking of following the above procedures thoroughly before going into violence. This prompted many Nigerians to think of conspiracy attached to it. This is because the position of the Islamic law on Jihad are quite clear, Jihad is just being use and abuse by some Jihadists in modern according to Muhammad, Kalin & Kamali 2013, 1-409).

Muslim in his opening Book of Jihad, made some fundamental and useful comments on what the term Jihad is squarely and philosophically. This opening statement alone suffice for a person of understanding to know that Jihad is not a war or violence in Islam as wrongly assumed by some Muslims and non-Muslims in modern times. We should not forget that Sahih Al Muslim is the third most authoritative source of law in the Islamic world. The statement is: "The word Jihad is derived from the verb Jahada which means: "he exerted himself". Thus literally, Jihad means exertion, striving; but in juridico-religious sense, it signifies the exertion of one's power to the utmost of one's capacity in the cause of Allah. This is why the word Jihad has been used as the antonym to the word Qu, ud (sitting) in the Holy Qur'an (v. 95). Thus, Jihad in Islam is not an act of violence directed indiscriminately against the non-Muslims; it is the name given to an all-round struggle which a Muslim should launch against evil in whatever form or shape it appears. Qital fi sabilillah (fighting in the way of Allah) is only one aspect of Jihad. Even this qital in Islam is not an act of mad brutality. It has its material and moral functions, i.e. self-preservation and the preservation of the moral order in the world. The verdict of all religious and ethical philosophies-ancient and modern-justify war on moral grounds. When one nation is assaulted by the ambitions and cupidity of another, the doctrine of non-resistance is anti-social, as it involves non-assertion, not only of one's own rights, but of those of others who need protection against the forces of tyranny and oppression. A Muslim is saddled with the responsibilities to protect himself and all those who seek his protection. He cannot afford to abandon the defenceless people, old man, women and children to privation, suffering and moral peril.

Fighting in Islam, therefore, represents in Islamic Law what is known among Western jurists as "just war" (Sahih Muslim, <https://thereligionofpeace.com/quran/muslim/019-smt.htm>). The above foundation set by Muslim in his authentic collection revealed that war is sometimes inevitable when there are aggressors and oppressors but it is also revealing that Jihad should not be taken in its naked interpretation and embark on war by any group. Jihad requires going by the

submission of Muslim, an acceptable leader, scholarship, condition, aggression and oppression. Not all aggression and oppression are subject of Jihad. It is allowed in Islam to seek for rights and entitlements but in a violent manner. Sometimes leaving the rights to stay in peace is worth it than claiming the right violently which may result in what is not expected.

Muslim reported a Hadith which alone should deter all the insurgents and terrorists today from their evil acts if they are true believers in Islam. The Hadith narrated that: “the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) sent an expedition under the leadership of Khalid Bin Walid in far-away Madinah. As the community was overpowered and they were about to surrender clearly uttering the Kalima Al Shahada which converts one into a Muslim, Khalid killed all of them. When they returned from the battle, the Prophet (PBUH) was informed of what Khalid did. The Prophet (PBUH) asked Khalid why he did that? Khalid responded that they did not enter into Islam until when they saw death but the Prophet (PBUH) asked him why haven’t you pierce through their hearts and see how genuine their pronouncement of Islam was? Khalid asked the Messenger of Allah to forgive him and seek forgiveness to him from Allah (SWT). But the Prophet (PBUH) kept on repeating that what could we do with the Kalima Al Shahada?” (Muslim, B.19:4374). The lesson in this Hadith is that any Muslim that is belief to pronounce the Kalima must not be killed in the name of Jihad except on some legal provisions which is beyond the boundary of the terrorists’ powers since they are not constituted authorities. However, there is no country today in the world where there are no Muslims. The indiscriminate attacks by the terrorists symbolises ignorance and a violent action totally condemned by Islam. In the case of Boko Haram in Nigeria, they are operating in Northeastern Nigeria and some parts of Northwestern Nigeria where more than 80% of the population is Muslim and where most of their victims are Muslims so, on what basis or law are they perpetrating their terrorism?

Furthermore, Muslim reported a Hadith where the Prophet (PBUH) warned that: “the following should not be killed or destroyed during a war: children, women, pastors, monks, churches, tress, animals, houses and shades” (Muslim, B.19:4457). This simply means that war has an exception, etiquettes and procedures. However, in the case of Boko Haram, records have shown that they have attacked churches severally, bombed mosques with worshippers inside, killed pastors and respected Islamic clerics, killed and burned children and women, burned farms and cut trees and burned animals alive in many villages. To worsen the matter, their abduction of Chibok girls in 2013 more than 200 of them in Borno State mostly Christians further spoilt the name of Islam and they have repeated the same scenario in 2017 when they abducted over 100 Dapchi girls in Yobe State. Their type of Jihad knows no boundary between what is legal or forbidden and it has no respect for Islamic laws and provisions on Jihad itself. In essence, what they have been doing is bloodsucking venture allegedly perpetrated for a hidden motive of bastardising the name of Islam and not a Jihad.

They could not claim to have exhausted their self-righteousness and self-purification to embark on purifying others.

Jihad in Modern Times and the Secular State

It should be noted that Jihad has never been used in the Holy Quran to refer to war solely. The word war or fighting in the Quran is mentioned as “Qital”. Modern scholars are of the view that most of the users of the word Jihad had misinterpret it and are taking its naked meaning without reflection of the interpretation by the authorities on it. In the first place, the jurisdiction of Jihad and the obligation of fighting in Islam rely on the ‘Dar Al Islam’ and ‘Dar Al Harb’. Dar Al Harb is simply anywhere where the Muslims do not feel secure to live and to practice their religion accordingly (Islamic Education Trust 2009, 3-6). This study can only find these places in our contemporary world in Burma, India and China in which Muslims are denied from freely performing their worship and practicing their faith. Otherwise even in America and Europe, Muslims are allowed entry as immigrants with full rights of practicing their religion accordingly. Even in Burma, China and India, there is the provisions for migration if the Muslims feel they are not safe instead of waging a war since they are the minority there (Khan 2008, 19). Surprisingly, sometimes it is discovered in modern times that Muslims found it safer to practice Islam in the West than in their countries (Ramadan 1999, 3) and if a Muslim can openly practice his religion in a non-Muslim land like Europe or America, that place has become Dar Al Islam for him (Al Mawdudi 1996, 16). Indeed, modern scholars are of the view that without a clearly defined Dar Al Islam and Dar Al Harb, it is erroneous to identify the geographical demarcation. The scholars unanimously agreed that Jihad in contemporary world for a Muslim include seven (7) major activities as follows:

1. Being frank in advice to a tyrannical ruler and Da’awah or call to Islam;
2. Exercising discipline or self-restraint;
3. Hajj Pilgrimage to Holy Makkah;
4. Taking care of one’s parents;
5. Studying religion meaningfully;
6. Imparting beneficial knowledge and
7. Taking up arms to defend oneself and others if it becomes a last resort.

The condition necessary for the last item is when one is under attacks or is having an information that an enemy is preparing to attack him. The last resort here is self-defense. The question that emanates from the above itemised valid position of Jihad by respectable scholars is, why are some Muslim groups becoming violent and ignoring these simple teachings full of wisdom? The answers are not far-fetched. Awdah (2006) and Al Qaradawi (1999) explained that ignorant Muslims, incapable reliable scholars and manifestations of untamed extremism are the main causes

of insurgency and terrorism in the Muslim world contemporarily. The Boko Haram can fall squarely within this description because their weak level of engagement with knowledge, ignoring vast and learned scholars and display of extreme position are what gingered their terrorism and surprisingly, on both Muslims and non-Muslims. It is not only self-defense that is motivated but Islam has encouraged a good relationship with non-Muslims. Allah (SWT) Himself mentions in several verses in the Quran that there is nothing wrong with maintaining a good relationship and friendship with non-Muslims provided there is a trust in it. In Q.60:7-9 and Q.42:40-43, Allah (SWT) emphasises that there is nothing wrong in maintaining a friendship and relationship with non-Muslim and to be kind to them. Building on the above verses and other Prophetic traditions, scholars in our time summarised the following as some of the measures of maintaining relationship with non-Muslims Islamic (Education Trust, 2009):

Friendship with non-Muslims is permitted in Islam;

- Men in Islam are permitted to marry Ahlul Kitab (People of the Book translated as Jews and Christians);
- Verses in the Holy Quran prescribing kindness to non-aggressive non-Muslims are not abrogated according to many commentators of the Quran;
- The Prophet (PBUH) himself trusted many non-Muslims with his life and the lives of other Muslims;
- The Prophet (PBUH) was so friendly to non-Muslims that he allowed them entry into his mosque;
- Islamic sources made it clear that there are good and bad men of all faith;
- Muslims are allowed to visit non-Muslims friends and associates and neighbours, accept their invitations and host them;
- Exchanging of gifts is allowed to cement relationship;
- Zakat and charity can be given to non-Muslims;
- Islamic law specifies that non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic territory must be protected;
- Muslim minorities in non-Muslim territories are obliged to honour their terms of residence;
- Muslims must be dutiful to their non-Muslim parents and
- Islam views every human life as sacred and must be respected and protected.

Any sound minded and peaceful fellow may not dislike the above simple logic of maintaining a bond of relationship with non-Muslims to allow for the society to exist in tranquility. It is even ordained by Allah (SWT) in the Holy Quran that it will be better if one can forgive transgression from both Muslims and non-Muslims (Q.16:126). In addition, churches, mosques and synagogues are protected lawfully in Islam. Allah says that:

“Had Allah not been repelling some people by means of some others, monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques, where Allah’s name is abundantly recited would have been demolished. Allah will definitely help those who help him” (Q.22:40).

Islam does not only provide for the protection of Christians and Jews and their places of worship but it has also directed for protecting them and guaranteeing their safety and freedom of worship under Islamic state. The Prophet wrote the Constitution of Madinah in it recognising the rights and freedom of Jews and Christians provided they maintain the trust entered into. Indeed, Christians of Nazareth approached the Prophet and dialogue with him on the Quran and the status of Jesus (AS) freely. The first Caliph, Abubakar (RTA), in his letter to the Christians of Najran, stated that your wealth, your belongings, your religions and all possessions are to be retained by you. Umar (RTA), the second Caliph in his letter to Jerusalem maintained the same status with Caliph Abubakar. Historically, there are evidences of Muslims protecting churches under the Muslim land. This has been evident by the testimonies of some non-Muslims such as Patriarch Gaytho, Will Durant, Le Bon, Robertson, Thomas Arnold, Lothrop Stoddard and Richard Stebbins all testify to the several incidences in Islamic history where the Muslims protected the churches, synagogues and Christians and Jews to worship and live freely under the Muslim land. Indeed, Etienne Denier states that: “The Muslims are the opposite of what many people believe. They never used force outside of the Hejaz” (Islamic Education Trust 2012, 2).

It is thus surprising if the non-Muslims are asked to be protected by the Muslims, how the terrorists’ groups today found it easier to defy all these beautiful teachings and provisions to attack indiscriminately both Muslims and non-Muslims. Ignorance and extremism are the answers. The Boko Haram lacks enough versatile understanding and reading of Islamic law and history. Some young radicals who directly interpret Quran nakedly with insufficient knowledge are causing havoc for millions of innocent Nigerians. Something must be done to engage these astray group through a sound religious teaching.

How the Boko Haram Misconstrued the Concept and Application of Jihad in Northeastern Nigeria

According to Ibn Qayyim, “Islamic law is all about wisdom and achieving people’s welfare in this life and the hereafter. It is all about justice, mercy, wisdom and good. Thus, any law that replaces justice with injustice, mercy with its opposite, common good with mischief, or wisdom with nonsense, is a ruling that does not belong to Islamic law, even if it is claimed to be so by some interpretations” (Ibn Qayyim 2006, 16). The above statement may be questioned by many analysts especially non-Muslims if one considers the numerous reports of violence and terrorism from the Muslims across the world. How can such a law that is merciful, just, full of wisdom and preservation of lives and properties be found now destroying lives unnecessarily? However, for a fair-minded

and a rational mind, we all know that the percentage of Muslims' terrorists is insignificant in consideration of the number of the Muslims across the globe. For instance, the PEW Research Centre reported in 2019 that the Muslim population has now hit 2 billion in the world (PEW Research Centre, 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/31/worlds-muslim-population-more-widespread-than-you-might-think/>). Considering the number of Muslims, not up to one million Muslims in the assumption of this study are terrorists across the world from the Muslims, how could an action of few absurd ignoramuses be generalised in a contextual interpretation?

The Boko Haram insurgents could not claim a superior knowledge more than the Quranic provisions, Prophetic traditions and noble scholars like Ibn Qayyim. One of the ways in which they relied in their misapplication of the context of religious teachings towards their fundamentalist activities is the argument that all forms of Western schools and knowledge are forbidden in Islam and that all Muslims should desist from it. They cited their case with the injustice and tyranny of the Muslim leaders in Nigeria who are Western educated. For example, they vehemently argued that all forms of schools where male and female gender are mixed is prohibited. They ignored that the famous wife of the Prophet (PBUH) taught many great companions of the Prophet (PBUH) during his lifetime and after his death. To reflect on our immediate environment, they missed the fact that the wife of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio, a great Reformist of the 19th century in Hausaland who established the Sokoto Caliphate, Nana Asma'u was vast and enlightened to the level of teaching many women and writing many books (Balogun 2008, 6-12). They have also missed the doctrine of necessity. Mixing of male and female students could not invited for amorality or indecency if the culture and values of the Islamic societies are maintained.

Another perspective where the Boko Haram misapplied the teaching of Islam to justify their extremist views is the eloquent pronouncement that the Western education is anti-Islam and anti-Quran because such theories and discoveries like Darwin's Evolution, Marx atheism and other Western ideology that are contrary to Islamic principles are making the Muslims that belief in them to become unbelievers. They have displayed their overzealousness and shortsightedness of the depth knowledge in existence. For instance, they have missed the beautiful and bulldozing works of Adnan Oktar aka Harun Yahya who single handedly demolished Darwinism with his scientific writings from the Islamic perspective. The same writer also countered Marxism and atheism in full force with knowledge and wisdom. Boko Haram failed to see the magic and power of pen in establishing or debunking myths that could not stand the facts and logics of scientific knowledge.

Additionally, another way in which the Boko Haram failed to interpret and apply the teachings of Islam is their open revolt against the constituted authority which the Islam is categorical about. Several verses of the Quran and Prophetic Hadith made it a command for the Muslims to obey their

rulers even if they are unjust to them. From their base where the movement began, they have been clashing and evading laws made by the Borno State Government. For example, one of the magnum opus of the violent clash was the directive by the Borno State Government for all users of motorcycle to wear helmet for their safety. The group refused to obey such law which led to a clash between them and Operation Flush, a troop established by the State to maintain peace and counter crimes. The resultant effects were a crisis that led to the taking of arms against the security personnel which eventually led to the death of the sect leader, Muhammad Yusuf and the subsequent launching of violent attacks against the innocent souls both Muslims and Christians in Northeastern Nigeria. This is against the Sunnah which ordained that the Muslims should obey the rulers even if they are tyrant on them provided they didn't stop them from practicing their religion. Wearing of helmet is religious because it is one of the duties of the authorities in preventing the life and properties of the governed but it was turned into a conflict due to misunderstanding of the Islamic teachings.

All these were not unattended to by some religious clerics. For instance, Sheikh Dr. Isa Ali Pantami, a respected religious cleric in Nigeria and currently the Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, engaged the sect leader, Muhammad Yusuf around 2007 and 2008 while he was alive before his murder by the Police on the above raised issues that the Boko Haram is capitalising on to call for a total revolt against the Nigerian leaders and the Shunning of Western education. The debate obtainable in this link (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QuGXdE-09eg&feature=youtu.be>) disclosed the nature and manner in which the sect leader, Muhammad Yusuf was grossly handicap in Islamic knowledge and how he is manipulating some rulings out of context to deceive his gullible followers. Most of the contexts and references that he has been quoting were subjected to scrutiny and misperception by Sheikh Dr. Isa Ali Pantami. Additionally, in an audio clip which was recorded from one of the lectures delivered by late Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmud Adam, he narrated how he debated with Muhammad Yusuf confidentially and the sect leader admitted his fault and accepted the version of a better approach by Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmud Adam. He even went to the extent of repentance and pronouncing his creed and he promised the Sheikh to do so. Unfortunately, he changed his mind and continued with his disastrous mission which cost his life. Sheikh Ja'afar further narrated in the audio clip that he too was not happy with the level of injustice and wickedness of Nigerian leaders especially the Muslims but he offered an alternative which is for Muhammad Yusuf to train his disciples in various fields of human knowledge and let them occupy administrative positions to bring the most needed change, morality and justice in the system.

The Da'awah Coordination Council of Nigeria provided some responses to the frequently asked questions on the motive, nature and activities of Boko Haram which are germane to be discussed here. The Boko Haram has been assassinating Islamic clerics, Muslims and others are they Muslim?

The Council responded that yes, they are still Muslims because of the Prophetic Hadith which mentions that whosoever pronounce Kalima Shahada and pray to the Qiblah and eat what we slaughtered is indeed a Muslim (Reported by Bukhari). On the fate of their members who were killed in the cause of Boko Haram, the Council opined that only God can decide. What is the punishment for killers among the members of the Boko Haram group? The Council responded by citing Q.39:53 that they shall face killing in this world and a severe punishment in the hereafter. On the question of whether the deceased among the Boko Haram deserved an Islamic burial, the Council suggested that yes they deserve because they died as Muslims until they denounce their faith before death. On the issue of fighting the Boko Haram group as a Jihad, the Council suggested that it is not good for Muslims to initiate a fight with such groups as Boko Haram but if they fight you then you have no alternative than to defend yourself and if you die in the cause then you are martyrs because of the Quranic position in Q.49:9-10 Q.42:40-43. The security personnel that were killed in the cause of fighting Boko Haram are martyrs according to the Council because Nasa'I, Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi reported a Hadith from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) that whoever is killed in defense of his wealth and life is a martyr.

The Council in its responses also examined the position of Islam on Western education and they answered in this way. In order to establish the legality or otherwise of Western education, a Muslim must refer to Quran and Sunnah while at the same time taken into consideration the methodology of Islamic jurisprudence. An education, whether foreign, secular or modern that is useful which does not go against the explicit teachings of Quran and Sunnah is permissible. Depending on the position of Islamic jurisprudence on a specific subject and the purpose of studying it, some education or knowledge can be '*Fard*' (obligatory), '*Mustahab*' (recommended). '*Mubah*' (permissible), '*Makruh*' (discouraged) and '*Haram*' (forbidden).

This study found some of the positions of the Council in their Fatwah unacceptable. Quran and Islam are clear about those Muslims who fight their fellow Muslims as unbelievers and that they should be fought and they shall be in hellfire (Q.4:93). By declaring them still as Muslims, it will be motivating for some of the insurgents to continue with their heinous act. Declaring them as renegades from Islam will frighten the conscious among them to denounce their violence and repent from killings and other terrorists' activities. But this position does not mean that the basic provisions of Shari'ah should be neglected. The Council might have relied on the other verse (Q.4:116) which narrates that Allah may forgive all sins that are not associated with polytheism and killing is not exempted in the verse which means they may be forgiven and that is why they had taken that position in their fatwah.

Effects of the Boko Haram's Perception of Jihad on Religious, Economic and Political Wellbeing of Northern Nigeria

The Boko Haram insurgency or terrorism has several consequences on many aspects of social settings in Northeastern Nigeria. The group, which has no exact date of establishment was believed to have been led by the late Muhammad Yusuf after the violent 2009 clash when he was extra judicially murdered by the Nigerian Police in Maiduguri, Borno State in Northeastern Nigeria (Sule et al. 2019). Some accounts traced the origin of the movement as far back as 2002 under the titled 'Taliban' in Yobe State while others agreed that it surfaced in Kano in 2007 under the auspices of Mujahids who attacked several security outposts in Panshekara in Kano State of Northwestern Nigeria. The group named themselves 'Jama'atu Ahlul Sunnah Lid Da'awati Wal Jihad' translated as 'People committed towards the re-affirmation of the Prophetic teachings and strive in the course of Allah' (Sule et al. 2019). It was believed that the group was earlier peaceful but critically outspoken of the Western education, democratic leadership and anything Western. They later turned violent after the murder of their leader when a radical, Abubakar Shekau took over the leadership of the group in 2009 and declared Jihad on Nigerian government and its security personnel. The activities of the group later spread towards churches, mosques, bombings, attacking of villages and towns, killings of innocent Muslims and Christians, kidnapping, abduction of women and children and foreign workers which is estimated at over 27, 000 deaths (Abubakar, 2019).

The Boko Haram has many effects on religious, economic and social aspects of Northern Nigeria, Nigeria at large and West Africa in general. The Global Conflict Tracker reported in 2020 that "Since 2011, Boko Haram one of the largest Islamist militant groups in Africa has conducted terrorist attacks on religious and political groups, local police, and the military, as well as indiscriminately attacking civilians in busy markets and villages". The Report further mentioned that since 2011, more than 37, 500 number of people were killed, 2.5 million were displaced from Lake Chad area and it created nearly 244, 000 Nigerian refugees (Global Conflict Tracker, 2020). The CNN Library reported that from 2002 to 2019, there were about 63 major attacks from the Boko Haram insurgents which caused thousands of death, millions of IDPs and hundreds of thousands of refugees (CNN Library, 2019). It was reported that more Muslims are killed than Christians in the process to the extent that the Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari claimed that 90% of the those killed by Boko Haram are Muslims (Ameh, Olokori, Adepegba, Ede & Isenyo, 2020). Indeed, it was not only that the Muslims are the highest victims of Boko Haram killings, Christians themselves were found to have been involved in Boko Haram activities. For instance, the lingering blames on Muslims for killing Christians compelled for an Editor of the Leadership Newspaper, Sam Nda-Isaiah, a Christian in his Article on 11th October 2011 titled "Is There More than Meet the Eyes" to present about ten different cases of Christians apprehended attempting to bomb their churches or

shooting in various places in the North in the name of Boko Haram. Thus, the misguided act of Boko Haram by some ignorant Muslims has opened up a room for conspiracy.

One of the effects of the Boko Haram insurgency is food insecurity in Northern Nigeria and in the whole of Lake Chad Basin because the farmers and rearers there were dispersed into refugees and IDPs by the Boko Haram attacks. The Nigerian economy and its neighbouring West African countries was affected sharply especially in agriculture and commercial activities. The conflict quickly spread into Nigerian neighbourhood in Chad, Cameroon and Niger. The Nigerian politics was overheated as a result of mutual suspicion created by the Boko Haram activities. The 2015 General Election was spearheaded with campaign using the pretext of insecurity and Boko Haram insurgency to gain support. The ruling PDP then lamented that the Boko Haram was a creation of the North to destabilise the government of President Jonathan, a Christian from the South. The opposition APC in its own perspective identified Boko Haram as a deliberate attempt by the ruling PDP under Jonathan to depopulate the North and cripple its economy. A matter of national security escalated into a dangerous politicking.

The above effects were as a result of two major issues. Ignorant Muslims and incapable scholars as postulated by Awdah (2006) and untamed manifestations and explosion of extremism as analysed by Al Qaradawi (1999). A proper and a systematic societal organisation with enlightenment and versatile scholars would have saved the country from the debilitating act of the insurgents. However, it should be noted that the activities of Boko Haram did not warrant for stigmatisation of Muslims as terrorists or generalisation of terrorism as Islamic since we have seen adequately in this work what Jihad is and how it should be understood. Indeed, not only Muslims are engaged in such terrible acts. The Christian world undertook their Crusade which cost thousands of lives under the auspice of religion (Ali, 2002; Hashmi, 2012 and Polk, 2018). Aside, the Christian Europe was the genesis of the First and Second World Wars which claimed about fifty (50) million lives. There are also wars of terrorism that are taking place by the American and European countries who professed the root of modern Christianity in their history (Chomsky 2000, 6 and Mamdani 2005, 9-15). Several global wars by world powers could not be justified except aggression, bloodsucking and terrorism disguised under national interest (Sule, Yahaya & Sambo, 2019). Thus, it is improper to identify the actions of few ignorant as the justification for labeling all. Terrorism of all magnitude is condemned in Islam and Jihad is not taking up arms against non-Muslims. If the Muslims of today would face themselves and embark on self-Jihad for self-purification, it would have been the best that they can do in the time of tribulation.

Conclusion

This work concludes that ignorance and insufficient knowledge of Islamic teachings and fanciful overzealousness of some misguided Muslims is what led to the misinterpretation of the term Jihad which escaped out of hand and turned into terrorism in Northeastern Nigeria. The absence of an organised council of Islamic clerics in Nigeria immensely helped in the proliferation of undeserved and unqualified preachers among which one of them turned radical and violent in the process. The study believed that failure to have a flexible mind from the Boko Haram members and digress various positions and interpretations of authoritative sources are what led to the current havoc that country is undergoing. If the insurgents are privileged or rather are opened up for a genuine dialogue and acceptance of superior arguments, they would not have embarked on their disastrous mission in the first place because all the Nigerian clerics pointed out unequivocally to them that their mission and position were against the Islam that they profess to serve. Since the avoidable had occurred and the damaged has been done, this study suggested that there are many measures that quash the current violence and prevent the outbreak of such in future.

One of the ways of eliminating the current phenomenon of insurgency is to adopt non-traditional measures such as cybersecurity and intelligence gathering to track and detect the sources of weapons, finance, logistics, movements and activities of the group for a total blockage that will make them surrender in defeat. Once they surrendered, the next line of action is deradicalisation and post-conflict peacebuilding in the affected areas. Scholars should be engaged with a sound understanding of religion to disabuse the mind of the radicals to acquire a flexible and a better understanding of their religion. Additionally, there is a need for a registered council of Ulama to be guided and monitored by the Nigerian authorities who should have the mandate of identifying the qualified preachers and an undesired ideology that may result in violence to alert the government for a swift action against such movements. The clerics have been doing a great service in teaching the populace in Nigeria the pure and methodological religious issues in Islam. They should do more by emphasising on the concept of Jihad to make the public understand its nature, dimension and purpose without a self-fashion from radicals based on imagination.

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