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Re-evaluating President Muhammadu Buhari's Counter-Terrorism Efforts: The Opacities, Anxieties, Contestations, and Official Refutations

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Abstract

Boko Haram (BH) sect has engaged the Nigerian State since 2009 inan asymmetric warfare with enormous tactical capacity. This paper asks what factors bolstered the capacity of BH to engage the state in Nigeria in such an asymmetric war. The paper explored seven major themes that explained the audacity of the sect. These themes are perspectives on economics of counterterrorism, the Sulhu programme, enlistment of repentant BH sect members into the military, religious fanaticism, counterterrorism and human rights, financial terrorism, and ethnic contestations. The paper relied entirely on qualitative data sources. It relies on the notion of the Grey Area Phenomenon (GAP) as its theoretical framework. GAP identifies Boko Haram as a non-state actor that has contended with and challenged state monopoly of force by the Nigerian state since 2009. It uncovers, among others, a network of persons in the Nigerian military and highly placed persons in Nigeria. This network, particularly, bolsters the audacity of the sect to engage the Nigerian state in asymmetric warfare.

Keywords: Counterterrorism, Buhari, Boko Haram, North-East, Nigeria

Introduction

The Fourth Republic (since 1999) in Nigeria has been embroiled in insurgent group agitations[2]like the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) which later metamorphosed into the Indigenous Peoples of

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[2]Charles G. Thomas and Toyin Falola. *Secession and Separatist Conflicts in Postcolonial Africa*(Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2020); John Campbell and Nolan Quinn. What is behind growing separatism in Nigeria. Council on Foreign Relations (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021 August 3). https://www.cfr.org/articles/whats-behind-growing-separatism-nigeria;Simon Nwanike. Secessionist Movement in Nigeria, 1999–2021. https://globalhistorydialogues.org/stories/secessionist-movement-in-nigeria-1999-2021.

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Biafra (IPOB),[3]insurgent groups of the Niger Delta region,[4] the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)has particularly remained worrisome.[5] These groups have committed heinous crimes and criminalities—killings, maiming, destruction, banditry, kidnapping, and terrorism; which has been on the rise in the country. The emergence of the Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna li al-Da'wa wa al-Jihad (otherwise Boko Haram)as a terror sectin 2009 to engage the Nigerian state with disruptive campaigns of terror remains particularly troubling. The BH sect is on a mission to propagate the Triple Hypotheses of Anti-Western Education (H_1), Imposition of Sharia across Nigeria (H_2) and an Avowed Control of Government of Nigeria (H_3) (see Figure 1).

The President Buhari administration, after several wild claims of technically defeating or decimating Boko Haram by kinetic measures,[6]launched the "Operation Safe Corridor" (OSC)programme in 2016 as a non-kinetic/soft COIN measure under the auspices of the Defence Headquarters to rehabilitate repentant Boko Haram sect members into vocational training, civic programmes(such as religious reeducation, psychosocial support) and to de-radicalise low-risk repentant Boko Haram sect members.[7]

However, the efforts of the President Muhammadu Buhari to tame BH are, at best not enough to contain the BH sect—a non-state actor challenging state monopoly on the use of force in Nigeria. Thus, this paper ponders on this central question: What explains the audacity of Boko Haram to contend with the Nigerian state in asymmetric warfare the way the sect has undertaken since 2009.In other words, why did Boko Haram terror continue unabated in Nigeria despite the efforts of President Buhari.

The organisation of the paper proceeds in the next three sections. In Section II the paper explores the notion of the "Grey Area Phenomena (GAP)" as its theoretical handle. GAP identifies Boko Haram as a non-state actor capable of

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[3] Jideofor Adibe. Separatist Agitations in Nigeria: Causes and Trajectories. Accessed 19 March 2022, https://www.Separatist+agitations+in+Nigeria%3A+Causes+and+trajectories.

[4] Cyril Obi and Temitope B. Oriola, eds, *The Unfinished Revolution in Nigeria's Niger Delta: Prospects for Environmental Justice and Peace* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018).

[5] Murtada, A. (2013). *Boko Haram in Nigeria: Its beginnings, principles and activities in Nigeria.* Islamic Studies Department, University of Bayero.

[6]Felbab-Brown, V. (2018). *The limits of punishment: Traditional justice and violent extremism—Nigeria case* study. United Nations University; Buhari, M. (2022, May 7). In a recent state visit to Ebony State, President Buhari reacting to pleas by elders of Igbo ethnic nationality to release Chief Nnamdi Kanu, said the courts will determine his fate; Ayitogo, N. (2021, May 17). Despite claims of defeat by Buhari government, Boko Haram spreads tentacles to more states. https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/461998-despite-claims-of-defeat-by-buhari-govt-boko-haram-spreads-tentacles-to-more-states.html?tztc=1. Ayitogo, N. (2021, May 31). Six years after, Buhari has failed to keep promise of securing Nigeria. https://www.Six+years+after%2C+Buhari+has+failed+to+keep+promise+of+securing+Nigeria.

[7]TheCable. (2020, February 11). FG is setting our killers free'– soldiers kick as 1,400 Boko haram suspects are released. https://www.FG+is+setting+our+killers+free%E2%80%99%E2%80%93+soldiers+kick+as+1%2C400+Boko+Haram+suspects+are+released.

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undermining the capacity of Nigerian state. Section III presents the main thrust of the paper which unravels the inconsistencies and opacities of the counterinsurgency (COIN) regime of the President Buhari administration that bolsters the audacity of Boko Haram to engage in a deadly warfare in North-East, Nigeria. Finally, in Section IV the paper is concluded with the main findings of the paper.

The Theory of Grey Area Phenomena (GAP)

This paper owes its theoretical underpinnings to the theory of the Grey Area Phenomena (GAP);which owes its intellectual roots to the pioneering works of JimHolden-Rhodes and Peter Lupsha,[8]Peter Chalk[9], Max G. Manwaring[10]and Richard Matthew and George Shambaugh.[11]GAP is generally conceptualised as national and international security challenges or threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking[12], cybercrime[13]and human trafficking[14], posed by non-state actors and non-governmental processes and organisations to the stability of sovereign states.[15] In progressing, two short caveats are necessary here: First, the notion of Grey Area Phenomena is not a novel one because GAP threats such as terrorism, insurgency, agitations, drug trafficking, cybercrimes, human trafficking, etc., are part and parcel of the state system and second, whereas most GAP issues are attractors of violence, not all issues of GAP instigate violence.Chalk[16]submits that:

> non-violent GAP forces are more generally related to the threat posed by non-governmental processes and influences such as uncontrolled or illegal immigration, famine and the transnational spread of diseases such as acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and cholera. Whenever GAP influences are associated with

[8] Jim Holden-Rhodes and Peter Lupsha, 'Gray Area Phenomena: New Threats and Policy Dilemmas', *Criminal Justice International*, 9/1 (1993): 11–17
[9] Peter Chalk, *Grey Area Phenomena in Southeast Asia: Piracy, Drug Trafficking and Political Terrorism*. Canberra Paper on Strategy and Defence No. 123(Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, 1997): 5
[10] Max G. Manwaring, ed., *Grey Area Phenomena: Confronting the New World Disorder* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1993).
[11] Richard Matthew and George Shambaugh, 'Sex, Drugs, and Heavy Metal: Transnational Threats and National Vulnerabilities', *Security Dialogue*, 29/2 (1998): 163.
[12] Glen Segell. Warlordism and Drug Trafficking: From Southeast Asia to sub-Saharan Africa. In Paul B. Rich (ed.), *Warlords in International Relations* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1999): 38-51.
[13] Hamid Jahankhani, ed., *Cyber Criminology* (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2018).
[14] Marie Segrave and Sanja Milivojevic. "Human Trafficking: Examining Global Responses", in *The Routledge International Handbook of the Crimes of the powerful*, ed. Gregg Barak (London: Routledge, 2015): 281-302.
[15]Peter Chalk. *Non-Military Security and Global Order: The Impact of Extremism, Violence and Chaos on National and International Security* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Sebastian Hiltner. Facing Grey Area Phenomena: Transformation through Transnational Crime and Violence in Southeast Asia. *ASIEN* 109 (2008), 54-64.
[16]Peter Chalk. *Non-Military Security and Global Order: The Impact of Extremism, Violence and Chaos on National and International Security* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000): 2.

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> violence and aggression, however, such conflict is generally organised, employed for either political or economic purposes,and characteristically falls short of major conventional warfare.

Whether violent or otherwise, all issues of GAP are direct threats to the sovereignty and stability of the traditional Westphalian state. However, contrary to traditional security challenges like external aggression, threats in the domain of GAP are:

> more transparent and insidious nature…because ittypically stems from a context that exists outside formal state structuresand only occasionally from an origin that can be directly linked to, or identified with, another polity, power faction or global ethno religiousbloc.[17]

GAP, as adopted in this paper, posits that whereas the traditional Westphalian state system which is structured on the traditional notion of the state as having unquestionable monopoly of the use of physical force within a given geographical entity is, however, challenged by non-state actors such as terrorist groups, insurgent groups, bandits, and guerilla fighters who though are less powerful vi-a-vis their state counterpart initiates and wages war against a superior and more formidable enemy. Boko Haram, ISWAP, and the various insurgent groups in Nigeria all amounts to lesser enemies that have challenged a formidable force in the Nigerian state for asymmetric battle. However, the Westphalian state system is often incongruent, naïve and unprepared for asymmetric wars usually posed by non-state actors.

The Counterterrorism Efforts of the President Muhammadu Buhari Administration

On the occasion of the 2020-Armed Forces Remembrance Day emblem celebrations, President Muhammadu Buhari said:

> The nation is appreciative of the gallantry and sacrifices of officers and men of our Armed Forces in the campaign against insurgency and other internal security operations. This has led to the return of normalcy in affected parts of the nation…The Boko Haram terrorists have been substantially defeated and degraded to the extent that they are only daring soft targets.[18]

Whereas, campaigns of technically defeating and decimating the Boko Haram (BH) and its splinter sect the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)gains ascendancy in the reportage of its onslaught against the sects by the Nigerian

[17] Peter Chalk. *Non-Military Security and Global Order: The Impact of Extremism, Violence and Chaos on National and International Security* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000): 2.
[18] Dennis Erezi. Boko Haram Now 'Substantially' Defeated, says Buhari. Retrieved April 17 2022, https://www.Boko+Haram+has+been+technically+defeated

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government, the President Buhari government covertly resorts to not engage media coverage of army casualties that are being buried in unmarked graves at the Maimalari, graveyard, Borno State.[19]

Furthermore, counterterrorism efforts of President Buhari either by deploying kinetic (lethal force) or non-kinetic (soft-counterterrorism) measures, since 2015have been widely criticised as having been tainted with several setbacks. This section dwells on the following setbacks of the COIN endeavours of the President Buhari administration:

a. Enlistment of Boko Haram Sect Members into the Nigerian Army

The Operation Safe Corridor (OSC) programme has been criticized of a clandestine policy of enlistment of low-risk repentant BH sect members into the Nigerian army. Boko Haram sect members "were rumoured to have been enlisted into the Nigerian Army. All these show that some people in government have high hopes for these repentant terrorists".[20]However, this claim has largely been dumped on the altar of allegations by the high echelon of the Nigerian army.[21]Onyema Nwachukwu, then Army spokesman, in refuting such claims notes that "for the avoidance of doubt, the Nigerian Army does not have any repentant terrorist joining its ranks and does not have any plan for that.[22]Corroborating the then army spokesman, Lucky Irabor, former Chief of Defence Staff, cautions that:

> But is the army recruiting repentant BH members? While the military through 'Operation Safe Corridor' has been rehabilitating insurgents, there is no official record of the enlistment of former insurgents into the army. We should give our armed forces some credit. It is acute mischief to spread injurious falsehood that has the potency of desiccating citizen/law enforcement cohesion. The military is about the most organised of all Nigerian institutions– forged in discipline, formulaic procedures and principles. Over the years the army has come out to dispel the speculation that it is recruiting former insurgents. It had to double down on its position on Wednesday as the fiction remains animated.[23]

[19] Joe Parkinson. Nigeria Buries Soldiers at Night in Secret Cemetery. Retrieved April 18 2022, https://www.Nigeria+Buries+Soldiers+at+Night+in+Secret+Cemetery.
[20] Segun Oguns. On Release and Reintegration of Ex-Boko Haram Insurgents 1. Retrieved 24 March 2022, https://www.On+release+and+reintegration+of+ex-Boko+Haram+insurgents+%281%29.
[21] News Agency of Nigeria. No Rehabilitated Ex-Boko Haram Fighter Recruited into Military–CDS. Retrieved April 18 2022, https://www.No+Rehabilitated+ex-Boko+Haram+Fighter+Recruited+into+Military%E2%80%93CDS.
[22] Frederick Nwabufo. Audacity of Fake News: Army Recruiting Boko Haram Members? Retrieved 24 March 2022, https://www.Audacity+of+fake+news%3A+Army+recruiting+Boko+Haram+members%3F.
[23] Frederick Nwabufo. Audacity of Fake News: Army Recruiting Boko Haram Members? Retrieved 24 March 2022,

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From the foregoing accounts, relevant army personnel in Nigeria have refuted whatever allegations of enlistment of repentant sect members into the Nigerian army.[24]However, gleaning from the adage that a every myth stems from a fact, there is need to be weary, apprehensive and suspicious of possible subline intentions of the Safe Corridor—a programme that has received enormous contestations such as the following from Nigerians: "Those who have killed mercilessly are being treated like kings while the victims (internally displaced persons and armed forces) are being treated poorly".[25]

b. Religious Fanaticism

Rev. William H. Leach defines religious fanaticism as "that spirit of religiosity which so controls the life of its victims that it blinds their eyes to any other truths or causes, natural, logical, or scientific".[26]It is, indeed, religious fanaticism by a huge spectrum of interested persons (some acting faceless) to introduce Sharia law—a principle that only Islamic law is the sole foundation for political and social life in the country. Just as the GAP theoretical opines, this explains the temerity of BH to wage the kind of jihad it does in North-East, Nigeria. Thus, COIN is greatly encumbered by the extent of religious fanaticism shown towards the cause of Sharia law propagation by the local population, traditional rulers, serving security personnel, political elites, and even persons in government who share the same faith with terrorists, already promised martyrdom and paradise upon death in course of jihad. In fact, the enormous clandestine support Boko Haram (BH) receives could possibly be likened to a Yoruba adage which says you do not wake the person who is pretending to be asleep.BH is operating in a fertile soil; more so that BH, a non-state actor challenging state monopoly on force (i.e., the resilience of BH) on account of the opaque/contradictory policies of the state (i.e., the "grey" actions of state actor in Nigeria). Counterinsurgency is simply pretense and bound to fail. This supposition is gleaned from the following:

The pre-office and in-office antecedents of Muhammadu Buhari, as the then chief operator of COIN efforts in Nigeria ,have caused cross sections of Nigerians to doubt the sincerity of COIN efforts in North-East, Nigeria. The raisons d'états for such ensuing fears are not far-fetched. Speaking at a seminar organised by

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https://www.Audacity+of+fake+news%3A+Army+recruiting+Boko+Haram+members%3F.

[24] Kingsley Omonobi. No Member of Repentant Boko Haram Have Ever Been Recruited into Military/Para-military Services—Gen. Irabor. Retrieved 10 April 2022, https://www.is+the+Nigerian+army+enlisting+Boko+Haram+sect+members; Premium Times, No Repentant Boko Haram Member Has Been Absorbed into Nigerian Military – Presidency. Retrieved 10 April 2022, https://www.is+the+Buhari+government+enlisting+Boko+Haram+members+into+the+nigerian+army.

[25]Ayomide Anne Ogunleye. Ending Terrorism in Nigeria: Is Operation Safe Corridor the Right Approach? Global South. Retrieved April 20 2022, https://www.Ending+Terrorism+in+Nigeria%3A+Is+Operation+Safe+Corridor+the+Right+Approach.

[26] William H. Leach. Religious Fanaticism: Asset or Debit? *The Biblical World*, 53, no. 3 (May, 1919), 240-244: p.240.

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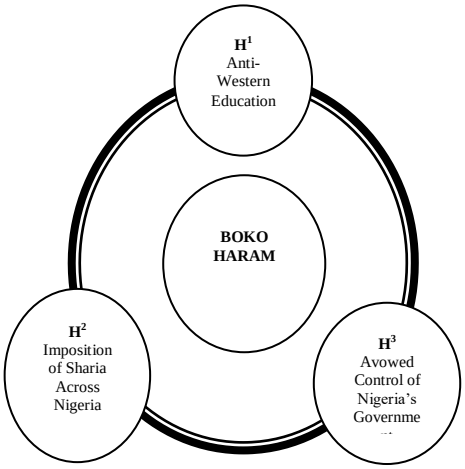
the Supreme Council of Sharia (SCS) in Nigeria, in August 2001, Gen. Muhammadu Buhari stated:

> Sharia should be introduced in full across Nigeria…I will continue to show openly and inside me the total commitment to the Sharia movement that is sweeping all over Nigeria…God willing, we will not stop the agitation for the full implementation of the Sharia in the country…It is a legal responsibility which God has given us, within the context of one Nigeria, to continue to uphold on the practice of Sharia wholeheartedly and to educate non-Muslims that they have nothing to fear…What remains for Muslims in Nigeria is for them to redouble their efforts, educate Muslims on the need to promote the full implementation of Sharia law.[27]

Such a proclamation by a statesman who later became a president is fearful because once a ruler becomes religious, it becomes impossible for to debate with him. Moreso, once someone rules in the name of religion, lives become hell.Total commitment to and full implementation of Sharia law all over Nigeria,a dream shared by Gen. Buhari in the foregoing statement, is indeed, the second avowed commitment of BH insurgency in Nigeria which states that "once it is not Sharia law that will be adopted in Nigeria…Then the government should not dream about peace in Nigeria"[28](Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Three Hypothesis of Boko Haram



[27] Babatunde Oyewole (2014, December 24). Insurgency and Buhari's call for full Sharia. Retrieved 10 April 2022, https://www.Buhari%27s+speech+in+the+August+2001+seminar+organised+by+the+Supreme+council+of+sharia+

[28]Femi Adi. Boko Haram: Jonathan's Phantom Peace Move. TheNews, Vol.39, no.09 (September 3 2012): 14-20.

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Source: Adapted from Agbiboa.[29]

Furthermore, Nigerians are suspect of the intentions of Gen. Muhammadu Buhari because top newspapers with their respective headlines (Table 1)have variously implicated President Buhari as having soft spots for the course of BH in Nigeria.

Table 1Gen. Buhari and Boko Haram: Timelines MainstreamingConnections and Refutations/Reactions

Newspaper Headlines	Source	Author
(a) Connections		
Boko Haram picks Buhari to moderate talks with the government of Nigeria.	The Nation, Nov. 2 2012.	Abiodun Joseph
Stop killing Boko Haram members, Buhari tells FG.	PointBlank News, June 2 2013.	Staff Reporter.
Buhari faults clampdown on Boko Haram members.	The Nation, June 3 2013.	Tony Akowe
Military offensive against Boko Haram, Anti-North-Buhari.	All Africa News, June 3 2013.	John Shiklam
How Buhari stopped us from fighting Boko Haram—South African Mercenaries.	The Guardian Newspaper, Nov. 26 2018	Abisola Olasupo
(b) Buhari's Refutations/Reactions		
Boko Haram: Buhari rejects mediator role.	Premium Times November 8 2012.	Sani Tukur
Boko Haram did not nominate me as their mediator– Buhari.	Daily Post, November 3 2012.	Ameh Comrade Godwin
Buhari rejects Boko Haram's mediation offer.	The Nation, November 7 2012.	Gbenga Omokhunu
General Muhammadu Buhari Reacts to Boko Haram's Mention of His Name as Member of Mediation Group.	Bellanaija News, November 2 2012.	Adeola Adeyemo

Source: **The Authors.**

While there are refutations and reactions from Gen. Muhammadu Buhari tosuch weighty allegations (see Table 1), substantial evidence points to otherwise. First, Abu Mohammed Ibn Abdulaziz, assistant to late Abubakar Shekau, named Gen. Muhammadu Buhari; Dr. Shettima Monguno, former Yobe State Governor; Bukar Ibrahim; Ambassador GajiGaltimari; and Aisha Alkali Wakil, and her husband, Alkali as their "trusted" Nigerians the sect agreed to negotiate with Dr. Goodluck E. Jonathan government in Saudi Arabia.[30]The mention of the name of Gen. Buhari as a member ofa 5-man trusted negotiation team of BH immediately elicited response from the political party of Gen Buhari, the Congress of

[29] Daniel E. Agbiboa. The Westgate Terrorist Attack and the Transformation of Al-Shabaab: A Global Jihadist Perspective, *Africa Series*, no. 3, (2014): 1–19, p. 5.
[30]Nairaland. Why Did Boko Haram Name Buhari as One of Their Mediators? Retrieved April 13 2022, https://www.Why+Did+Boko+Haram+Name+Buhari+as+one+of+their+Mediators%3F.

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Pressive Change (CPC).In a press statement on Friday, November 2 2012, and signed by Engr. Rotimi Fashakin, the National Publicity Secretary of the CPC, the party noted:

> Our attention, in the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), to a widely publicised news that our National Leader, General Muhammadu Buhari (GMB) has been appointed to take part in a Boko Haram/Federal Government parley…Without any scintilla of equivocation, General Muhammadu Buhari has never been directly or remotely connected with any insurrection or insurgency against the Nigerian Nation and her people. He remains the quintessential Patriot that continues to magnetise the very best across the ethno-religious boundaries within the Nigerian nation-space.[31]

Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, emerging from a meeting of the Board of Trustees of CPC, also noted: "I donot know any Boko Haram member, and I cannot negotiate for the Federal Government…I do not believe and I do not know of any religion that will go and kill people, burn schools".[32]Second, there are point-blank accusers of President Buhari of insincerity in his COIN efforts. Retired Commodore Kunle Olawunmi said in a Channels Television breakfast show—*Sunrise Daily*—that the sponsors of terrorist groups are currently holding cabinet positions in President Buhari's government.[33]Again, following the terrorist attack on Kaduna-bound train, the culpable terrorists said the government of President Buhari knows their demands; says it is not money.[34]

Military personnel into COIN in North-East, Nigeria, are equally culpable of religious fanaticism. Serving officers are suspected and arrested for working with BH.Lance Corporal Abdullahi Jibrin, an instructor with Nigerian Army battalion in Geidam, Yobe State, for example, committed suicide upon his arrest by military authorities for working with Boko Haram.[35]Traditional authorities are as well complicit. The government of Zamfara State, for example, deposed the Emir of Zurmi, Atiku Muhammadu, the Emir of Dansadau, Hussaini Umar

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[31] Adeola Adeyemo. General Muhammadu Buhari Reacts to Boko Haram's Mention of His Name as Member of Mediation Group. Retrieved 13 April 2022, https://www.General+Muhammadu+Buhari+Reacts+to+Boko+Haram%E2%80%99s+Mention+of+His+Name+as+Member+of+Mediation+Group.

[32] Sani Tukur. Boko Haram: Buhari Rejects Mediator Role. Retrieved 13 April 2022, https://www.Boko+Haram%3A+Buhari+rejects+mediator+role.

[33]Lukman Abolade. Sponsors of Boko Haram, Terrorists are in Buhari's Government–Ex-Naval Officer. Retrieved May 10 2022, https://www.Sponsors+of+Boko+Haram%2C+Terrorists+are+in+Buhari%E2%80%99s+Government%E2%80%93Ex-Naval+Officer.

[34] Sahara Reporters. Buhari Government Knows What We Want, Say Terrorists Who Attacked Abuja-Kaduna Train, Threaten to Kill Kidnapped Victims. Retrieved May 10 2022, https://www.terrorists+say+buhari+knows+their+demands.

[35] Ibrahim Baba Saleh. Soldier 'working with Boko Haram fighters' commits suicide in Yobe. Retrieved 29 April 2022, https://www.lance+corporal+jibrin+killed+himself+for+alleged+links+with+boko+haram.

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and the district head of Birnin Tsaba, Sulaiman Ibrahim for alleged links with bandits.[36]

More worrisomely, principal officers of the Ministry of Justice, Nigeria, also present a friendly posture toward jihadist courses in Nigeria. The former Chief Justice of Nigeria, Ibrahim Mohammad, on the occasion of the 20th Annual Judges Conference held at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria,submits:

> As we all know, there are sections of the constitution that allow the implementation of Sharia personal law and apart from that,we cannot do more…However, we have the number to amend the constitution to suit our own position as Muslims…The Sharia law should be taught in Arabic not English. There is no university in Nigeria that runs Sharia in Arabic; they all teach Sharia in English. So, academicians let's also look into this issue.[37]

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in its reaction described the call by the CJN as provocative, ill-timed, threat to national unity and unacceptable.[38] The role of science and technology to COIN[39]is undisputed but the Ministries of Information and Communications have not deployed the relevant technology to intercept calls that could successfully truncate banditry and terrorist operations and even facilitate COIN as well. Whereas Global System for Mobile (GSM) communications have been shut down in most Northern states in Nigeria; with security forces equally deploying tracking devices to monitor terror-related calls, to say the least, the Ministries of Information and Communications have not been on top of their approach to COIN in Nigeria. It is well known that banditry, kidnapping and terrorist activities and their networking strive on the GSM technology—where sim cards facilitate their operations. As GAP noted, the audacity and fluidity of banditry and kidnapping activities of BH have compelled Nigerians to cast aspersions on these two important ministries in the fight against BH in Nigeria.

Finally, local villagers ,by fear or sympathy, are equally guilty by connivance to the course of BH. On one hand, where sect members kill without remorse, the local villages have to play safe by shielding them. Conversely, local villages also

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[36] Mohammed Babangida and Abubakar Ahmadu Maishanu. Zamfara government deposes Emirs, district head over links with bandits. Retrieved April 29 2022, https://www.two+emirs+deposed+for+alleged+links+with+bandits+in+Zamfara+state.
[37] Alfred Olufemi. Nigeria's chief justice wants more Sharia in constitution. Retrieved April 30 2022, https://www.Nigeria%E2%80%99s+chief+justice+wants+more+Sharia+in+constitution.
[37]Onyebuchi Ezigbo. CAN Knocks CJN over Call for More Sharia Provisions in Constitution. Retrieved April 30 2022, https://www.Nigeria%E2%80%99s+chief+justice+wants+more+Sharia+in+constitution.
[38] Onyebuchi Ezigbo. CAN Knocks CJN over Call for More Sharia Provisions in Constitution. Retrieved April 30 2022, https://www.Nigeria%E2%80%99s+chief+justice+wants+more+Sharia+in+constitution.
[39] National Academy of Sciences. *Science and Technology to Counter Terrorism: Proceedings of an Indo-U.S. Workshop* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2007); Bruce Mutsvairo (Ed.). *The Palgrave Handbook of Media and Communication Research in Africa* (Cham. Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018).

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display or share in the vision and mission of the sect where martyrdom and paradise are promised. Therefore, sect members operate with unperturbed fluidity. Either way enables sect members to operate with ease from within the local villages—enabling BH to contend with the Nigerian state also seamlessly.[40]

c. Ethnic Contestations

Some geopolitical zones have been restive since President Buhari assumed office in 2015.[41] In particular, intense agitations from South-East, Nigeria, orchestrated through the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), have remained visible. The South-East region has demanded for distributive justice in course of governance in Nigeria. Rather than giving a listening ear, and perhaps deploying a programme to engage and stem the ongoing agitations in the region, kinetic measures have been deployed to tackle the MASSOB and the IPOB.

Another dimension to ethic agitations has been that the government of President Buhari was discriminatory in handling the arrow-heads of ethnic groups agitating for justice for their respective regions. Whereas the government solicits and lure hard and low-risk BH and ISWAP sect members to repent and be incorporated into either the Safe Corridor or the Sulhu programmes, other ethnic agitations, except for the Niger Delta, are never availed with requisite programmes but are greeted with stern military measures. Moreso, agitators like Omoyele Sowore, a prodemocracy campaigner and Sunday Adeniyi Adeyemo, popularly known as Sunday Igboho,a self-determination activist and philanthropist, both from the South-West and Chief Nnamdi Kanu of South-East are unleashed on by Police and DSS brutality, state detention. In these instances, the court is their final arbiter.[42]In fact, the judiciary is being nicknamed the temple of injustice and the theatre of the absurd in Nigeria. The voices of injustice by reasons of the absence of whatever programme to engage the agitations in other geopolitical zones is just too loud to ignore.[43]

Peculiar worries from the antecedents of successive governments in engaging either the MASSOB and the IPOB is that whereas similar insurgent groups like the Niger Delta insurgency, are solely agitations against injustices toward their

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[40]Murtala A. Rufa'i. "I am a bandit": A decade of research in Zamfara State bandit's den. 15 Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto, seminar series. Thursday 9th September. Sokoto: Graphic Concept Academy.

[41]Thomas, C. G., & Falola, T. (2020). *Secession and Separatist Conflicts in Postcolonial Africa.*Calgary: University of Calgary Press; John Campbell,John &Quinn, Nolan (2021, August 3). What is behind growing separatism in Nigeria. Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.cfr.org/articles/whats-behind-growing-separatism-nigeria; Nwanike, Simon (2022). Secessionist Movement in Nigeria, 1999–2021. https://globalhistorydialogues.org/stories/secessionist-movement-in-nigeria-1999-2021.

[42] In a recent state visit to Ebony State, President Buhari reacting to pleas by elders of Igbo ethnic nationality to release Chief Nnamdi Kanu, said the courts will determine his fate.

[43] Victor Agboga. Selective Forgiveness and the Politics of Amnesties in Nigeria. *The Round Table*, Vol.111, No.5, 567-581.

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regions, and so they are understandably pro-masses;[44]however, the Boko Harm sect with known records of killings, maiming, kidnapping, abduction of school girls, destruction of whole villages and farmlands, etc., with no specific justice cause has never been pro-people of the North-East, Nigeria, yet the Safe Corridor has been opened to sect members to undertake courses on disintegration, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) and to de-radicalise and reintegrate repentant sect members into normal civilian lives. Worst still, whereas the IPOB has been proscribed as a terrorist group in 2018, the federal government under President Buhari dilly-dallied in labelling Boko Haram and other banditry organisations as terrorist groups.

d. The SulhuProgramme

The Safe Corridor and Sulhuare both non-kinetic COIN programmes of the President Buhari government to tackle BH terror. The difference between the two is that whereas the Safe Corridor is a programme for low-risk repentant BH and ISWAP respective sect members to defect, the Sulhu isa decoy to lure top-level BH and ISWAP respective sect members into defection. However, what is being detested and criticisedis that the Sulhuprogrammehas been made highly secretive.[45]

Sulhu-an Arabic word for peacemaking, remained a top-secret programme of the President Buhari administration to lure senior BH and ISWAP sect members to defect and exit the forests, abandon their intentions to build a caliphate by force of arms.Sulhu was exposed by *The New Humanitarian,*[46]a United Nations publication.The publication **noted:**

> *this story was based on six months of reporting and research. Government officials, former jihadists, analysts, journalists, displaced people, and civil society workers were interviewed, but nearly all asked to have their names withheld or altered due to security concerns.*[47]

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[44]Osisioma B. C. Nwolise. *Bullets Kills the Terrorist and Insurgent, But Not His Ideas: The Imperative of Deploying Comprehensive Dosage of Non-kinetic Measures in Nigeria's Counter-Terrorism, Counter-insurgency Efforts in the North-East* (Ibadan: Gold Press Ltd, 2019).

[45] John Ikani. UN Report Exposes Nigeria's Secret Programme for Repentant Terrorists. Retrieved April 13 2022, https://www.UN+Report+Exposes+Nigeria%E2%80%99s+Secret+Programme+for+Repentant+Terrorists; Sahara Reporters. Buhari Regime Secretly Funds Another Welfare Programme For 'Repentant' Boko Haram Commanders–Report. Retrieved April 13 2022, https://www.Buhari+Regime+Secretly+Funds+Another+Welfare+Programme+For+%E2%80%98Repentant%E2%80%99+Boko+Haram+Commanders%E2%80%93Report.

[46]Oliver Boyd-Barrett. "Globalisation, Cyberspace and the Public Sphere", in *Community practice in the Network Society: Local Action/Global Interaction*, eds. Peter Day and Doug Schule (London: Routledge, 2004): 23-35, p.33.

[47] Obi Anyadike. Exclusive: Nigeria's Secret Programme to Lure Top Boko Haram Defectors. Retrieved April 13 2022, https://www.Exclusive%3A+Nigeria%E2%80%99s+Secret+Programme+to+Lure+Top+Boko+Haram+Defectors.

Sulhu was also adopted to free over 270 Chibok schoolgirls under the captivity of the BH; a feat the government undertook when it noticed *mujahideen* signalling the possibility of an opening for dialogue. As a peace initiative, Sulhu is under the supervision of the military and the Directorate of State Security (DSS) and it is strictly intended for high-risk repentant sect members such as the turbaned rijal who exult in victories, kills without remorse, who prior to the 2016 BH split, were obedient to a maximalist "takfir" creed professed by Abubakar Shekau "who declared that anybody living outside their zone of control was an infidel, punishable by death or enslavement".[48]

However, Sulhu, like its counterpart, the Safe Corridor, has attracted mixed reactions from Nigerians. Supporters of the Sulhu saw it as smart warfare to achieve a peace deal in ending a stalemated conflict that has lasted for years. Antagonists of Sulhu describe it as one deal too many that rewards mass killers in Nigeria; a clandestine programme sponsored with money from Nigerian tax payers that has set free at least one of the commanders of the 2014 Bama massacre that took hundreds of civilian lives and he as well enjoys payroll from the government.[49]

e. Financial Terrorism

Finance is the oxygen of any violent non-state organisation[50] that builds, maintains financial infrastructure, develop sources of funding, means of laundering those funds and to use those funds to secure material and logistics items.[51]This scenario played out in Nigeria when ISWAP successfully used the financial system of Nigeria to launder funds. This development was exposed by the ECOWAS owned the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA).GIABA accused the government of President Buhari of failing to track the nefarious movement of funds by terror networks through the financial system of the country.[52] The allegation specifically stated that ₦18 billion ($36m) from the ISWAP flowed through the country's financial system to reach terror groups in the country.[53]

As usual, the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU)through Ahmed Dikko, its Chief Media Analyst, refuted the allegation as "totally outdated and based on a 2019 country evaluation report which is literally stale and irrelevant

[48] Obi Anyadike. Exclusive: Nigeria's Secret Programme to Lure Top Boko Haram Defectors. Retrieved April 13 2022, https://www.Exclusive%3A+Nigeria%E2%80%99s+Secret+Programme+to+Lure+Top+Boko+Haram+Defectors.

[49]Ibid.

[50] Colin P. Clarke. Terrorism, Inc. *The Financing of Terrorism, Insurgency,and Irregular Warfare* (Santa Barbra, Cal. Praeger Security International, 2015).

[51] Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Guidance for Financial Institutions in Detecting Terrorist Financing (Financial Action task Force on Money Laundering, April 24 2002), p. 3.

[52] Adelani Adepegba. ISWAP Moves ₦18bn Annual Revenue Through Nigeria's Financial System–ECOWAS Body. Retrieved April 20 2022, https://www.ISWAP+Moves+N18bn+Annual+Revenue+Through+Nigeria%E2%80%99s+Financial+System%E2%80%93ECOWAS+Body.

[53] GIABA. Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Measures–Federal Republic of Nigeria, Second Round Mutual Evaluation Report (Dakar: GIABA, 2021): 101-125.

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today".[54]But he added that "it is true that recently Nigeria fell victim to illicit financial flows but overt and far-reaching efforts are being executed by the government to stem the bad practice".[55] As expected, reactions from Nigerians have been fierce. Okechukwu Nwangwuma, Executive Director of the Rule of Law and Advocacy Centre (RULAAC), said:

> I do not know how I can avoid the conclusion that this government is intolerant of, sympathetic to, if not in complicity with terrorists. People in, or connected to, government appear to be benefitting from the proceeds of terrorist activities…There are people in high places, including in government, who are the sponsors and beneficiaries.[56]

Dr. Kabiru Umar, Assistant Regional Vice President, Region 11, ASIS International noted:

> A good testament to the authenticity of the GIABA report is the inability of Nigeria's counter terrorism efforts to block the funding avenues of the terror groups operating in Nigeria, including ISWAP…That is huge and explains why the group is strong and able to exercise influence.[57]

In a related development, the government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) equally named the sponsors of terrorism in Nigeria. It implicated Abdurrahaman Ado Musa, Salihu Yusuf Adamu, Bashir Ali Yusuf, Muhammed Ibrahim Isa, Ibrahim Ali Alhassan and Surajo Abubakar Muhammad. However, these persons have neither been arrested or prosecuted.[58] It is quite unfortunate that at a time the international community is in solidarity to checkmate terrorism financing, the President Buhari government remained complicit in terrorism financing and have appeared as an outlier state toward such an international course of action. It may be recalled that following the 9/11 terrorist attack on United States homeland, the U.S. and the international community, having identified money as the lifeblood of terrorist operations,

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[54] Sahara Reporters. Buhari Government Tackles ECOWAS Over Report on ISWAP Getting Funds Through Nigeria's Financial System. Retrieved April 14 2022, https://www.Buhari+Government+Tackles+ECOWAS+over+Report+on+ISWAP+Getting+Funds+Through+Nigeria%27s+Financial+System.

[55] *Ibid.*,

[56] Kingsley Nwezeh. Outrage as ECOWAS Report Uncovers ISWAP's ₦18bn Terror Financing Network. Retrieved April 14 2022, https://www.GIABA+report+on+ISWAP%E2%80%99s+money+laundering+activities+in+Nigeria.

[57] Ibid.,

[58] *Kingsley Nwezeh and Michael Olugbode.Nigeria: Report - UAE Names Six Nigerians Among Sponsors of Boko Haram. Retrieved May 5 2022, https://www.UAE+government+handed+over+the+list+of+sponsors+of+Boko+Haram*

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bolstered efforts at encouraging states to prevent terrorism financing by stopping payments.[59]

f. Economics of Counterterrorism

Counterterrorism in Nigeria, just as elsewhere, isa heavily commercialised industry.[60] It remains a profitable enterprise culpable by government, security forces and the various terror sects. The commercialised nature of COIN which unfortunately results in longevity compelled Gen. Sani Abacha to say: "if insurgency lasts for more than 24 hours, the government has a hand in it".[61] On economic considerations, the high military elites gain enormous estacode from monies meant for troop maintenance, and procurement of military equipment.[62] BH and ISWAP are both complicit in engaging in extensive extortion, plundering of natural resources, and illegal fishing around the Lake Chad Basin under the watch of the various Lake Chad Basin Authorities.[63]Security agencies have been uncovered to have looted homes, extorted money and other values from the locals, and plundered scarce resources.[64]

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[59] Jason Campbell Sharman. "The International Campaign to Counter the Financing of Terrorism", in *Security and the War on Terror*, eds. Alex J. Bellamy, Roland Bleiker, Sarah E. Davies and Richard Devetak (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008): 77-189; The Economist. Financing Terrorism: Looking in the Wrong Places. Retrieved April 20 2022, https://www.Financing+Terrorism%3A+Looking+in+the+Wrong+Places.

[60] Karen Ballentine and Heiko Nitzschke, eds., *Profiting from Peace: Managing the Resource Dimensions of Civil War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005); *Sandler, Todd, "Advances in the Study of the Economics of Terrorism". Southern Economic Journal, 79, no.4 (2013):768–773; Temitope B. Oriola. Nigerian Soldiers on the War against Boko Haram. African Affairs, 120, no.479, (2021): 147-175; Mumo Nzau. "The Political Economy of Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Twenty-First Century Africa: A Critical Evaluation", in The Palgrave Handbook of African Political Economy, eds. Samuel Ojo Oloruntoba and Toyin Falola (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 891-909; Jobson O. Ewalefor. "The Political Economy of Insecurity in Africa: Focus on North-East, Nigeria", in The Palgrave Handbook of African Political Economy, eds. Samuel Ojo Oloruntoba and Toyin Falola (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 927-946; Olatunde Ojo. Economic Underpinnings of Security in Africa (CASS Monograph No.12, 1999).*

[61] Muhammad Nourah Bamalli. 23 Years After: In Remembrance of General Sani Abacha. Retrieved April 27 2022, https://www.if+insurgency+lasts+for+more+than+24+hours+the+government+has+a+hand+in+it.

[62] Temitope Francis Abiodun, Adepoju Adeoba Asaolu and Anthony Ifeanyichukwu Ndubuisi. Defence Budget and Military Spending on War Against Terror and Insecurity in Nigeria: Implications for State Politics, Economy, and National Security, *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research*, 6, no.7, (2020): 12-34.

[63] J. Tochukwu Omenma. Untold Story of Boko Haram Insurgency: The Lake Chad Oil and Gas Connection. Politics and Religion, (2019) :1-34. doi:10.1017/S1755048319000166; Uche Igwe. Illicit natural resource extraction in Nigeria fuels violence and insecurity. Retrieved May 5 2022, https://www.Illicit+natural+resource+extraction+in+Nigeria+fuels+violence+and+insecurity.

[64] Alan Bryden, Boubacar N'Diaye and 'Funmi Olonisakin, eds. *Challenges of Security Sector Governance in West Africa* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces {DCAF} 2008); United States Institute of Peace. *Elite Capture and Corruption of Security Sectors* (United States Institute of Peace, 2023).

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Despite the foregoing, the Nigerian government is still urged to expend more on COIN. In acommunique issued, following a North East Security Summit convened by the Nigerian Police Force in Maiduguri, Borno State, called on the President Buhari government to "urgently increase funding for the Nigerian Armed Forces, the police and other security agencies involved in the fight against…insurgency".[65]This call apparently is in response to the audacity of the onslaughts of BH in North-East, Nigeria. Whereas, such calls may be pertinent, President Muhammadu Buhari while into the twilight of his administration; a period he engaged in extensive counterterrorism efforts and so expended much money in this enterprise, however, how much was expended on COIN by the administration in North-East, Nigeria remains opaque.

In 2017 the President Buhari administration established the North-East Development Commission (NEDC) to oversee the infrastructural development of the region ravaged by BH insurgency. However, it is unclear what budgetary allocations have so far been allocated to the North East Development Commission.[66]Worrisomely, the President Buhari administration never made public how much it expended on countering terrorism in North-East, Nigeria; especially funding the NEDC. The silence of the administration was a wide accountability gap in its COIN operations since 2015 and it was definitely at variance with the vigour it fought the $2 billion arms purchase scandal, otherwise referred to as the Dasukigate. Recalling that a major aspect of the anticorruption attention of President Buhari, upon assumption of office in 2015, was focused on unravelling the Dasukigate; named after Col. Sambo Dasuki who was the National Security Adviser (NSA) to President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. Dasukigate was one scandal that ruffled the feathers of most prominent Nigerians, including former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, on allegations of corruptly enriching themselves with various sums of money meant for arms purchase for COINoperations in North-East, Nigeria.[67]

Table 2Nigeria's Defence Budget, 2015-2022

Year	Amount US Dollars ($) Billions
2015	2.07
2016	1.72
2017	1.62
2018	2.04
2019	2.15
2020	1.05

Source: Abiodun[68]

[65] Olarewaju Kola. Nigerians Demand Bigger Budget for Counter-terror Operations. Retrieved April 20 2022, https://www.Nigerians+Demand+Bigger+Budget+for+Counter-terror+Operations.

[66] The North-East Development Commission (Establishment) Act, 2017.

[67] Frank Ogbeide. Dasuki Threaten to Expose More Beneficiaries of the Arm Scam Deal. Retrieved April 20 2022, https://www.Dasuki+Threaten+to+Expose+more+Beneficiaries+of+the+Arm+Scam+Deal Naij.com. EFCC May Invite Jonathan for Questioning Over Arms Deal. Retrieved April 20 2022, https://www.EFCC+May+Invite+Jonathan+for+Questioning+Over+Arms+Deal.

[68] Temitope Francis Abiodun, Adepoju Adeoba Asaolu and Anthony Ifeanyichukwu Ndubuisi. Defence Budget and Military Spending on War Against Terror and Insecurity in

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Following the huge budgetary allocations to the Ministry of Defence (Table 2) to combat insecurity in Nigeria; especially COIN in North-East, Nigeria, Transparency International(TI) stated that between 2016-2022, Nigeria under President Buhari spent a total of over US$19.9 billion on security alone; noting that:

> Nigeria's defence and security sector is plagued with systemic corruption, a major hindrance to the effective provision of defence in a country facing serious security challenges. Corruption enmeshes the ever-increasing defence sector expenditure and procurement—activities with little oversight and transparency mechanisms.[69]

A cross sections of Nigerians have equally wondered aloud on the following fronts: BH sect has not been technically defeated and decimated as widely claimed by the President Buhari administration. Collating data from interviewees from the Defence Headquarters, civil servants of the Budget Office, the Central Bank of Nigeria, Ministry of Defence, retired military personnel, appropriation committee on budget at the National Assembly and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Temitope Francis Abiodun attributed the doggedness of Boko Haram to majorly a mismatch between military funding and performance; especially:

a. "some military personnel, politicians and other public officers had enriched themselves by diverting public funds meant to fight terror and insecurity,
b. expenditures are sometimes duplicated using different headings by staff in the defence ministry and military institutions,
c. lack of transparency in the procurement process encouraged corruption,
d. the procurement of military weapons was usually shrouded in secrecy which meant that outdated items instead of modern weapons were purchased. This meant that armed forces did not have the best equipment to fight against terrorists and bandits,
e. payments were not made to soldiers on the battleground as budgeted,
f. evidence of unhealthy rivalry among the armed forces and other security agencies,
g. money was not being allocated in the right places because of poor leadership in the military, and an absence of good governance in the hierarchy,
h. the top brass seemed to be more interested in procurement of office goods, services, building structures, and overseas trips,

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Nigeria: Implications for State Politics, Economy, and National Security, *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research*, 6, no.7, (2020): 12-34, p.22.

[69]Transparency International. Nigeria's Defence Sector Persistent Corruption Risk amidst Escalating Security Threats (Policy Brief, 2024). https://ti-defence.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Nigerias-defence-sector-Persistent-corruption-risk-amidst-escalating-security-threats.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

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i. the government's annual budgets are usually delayed. This created room for selective implementation of the budget,
j. evidence of weak monitoring, controls and audits of the military budget, which allowed corruption and waste to get through,
k. various public scrutiny institutions, particularly audit agencies, anticorruption bodies and Parliamentary Public Accounts Committees, were usually reluctant to investigate the military. There were even instances in which it appeared they had been prevented from doing so".[70]

Furthermore, corruption was said to have strived from the war economy by both political and military elites in Nigeria and has also been identified as the raison d'état for the unrelenting terrorism by BH and COIN operations in North-East, Nigeria.[71]Speakingon the occasion of the 2022 edition of Bring Back Our Girls (B.B.O.G) Annual Chibok Girls Lecture, Haj. Naja'Atu Mohammed, Chairperson of the Bring Back Our Girls (B.B.O.G) lecture stated that:

> The military…have turned the North-East into a cash cow, military jumbo budget, unaccounted for…We also know that the army more than anything else have contributed and reenforced this so-called terrorism. Terrorism has become a multi-billion-dollar industry. It is a multi-billion-dollar industry.[72]

The foregoing accounts have since compelled most Nigerians to categorise the COIN endeavours of President Buhari as ridden in corruption and after all business as usual.[73]

g. Counterterrorism and Human Rights

Global best practices of COIN put obligations on states to protect human rights while on COIN.[74]Unsurprisingly, the human right community has variously

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[70] Temitope Francis Abiodun. Why There is a Mismatch between Funding for Nigeria's Military and its Performance. Retrieved 20 April 2022, https://www.Why+there+is+a+Mismatch+between+Funding+for+Nigeria%E2%80%99s+Military+and+its+Performance.

[71]Temitope B. Oriola. Nigerian Troops in the War Against Boko Haram: The Civilian–Military Leadership Interest Convergence Thesis. *Armed Forces & Society*, 1-35. DOI: 10.1177/0095327X211072894.

[72] Channels News (April 14 2022). Retrieved April 22 2022, https://www.Bring+Back+Our+Girls+%28B.B.O.G%29+Annual+Chibok+Girls+Lecture.

[73] Maurice Ogbonnaya. Has Counter-terrorism Become a Profitable Business in Nigeria? Retrieved April 20 2022, https://www.Has+Counter-terrorism+Become+a+Profitable+Business+in+Nigeria; Emeka Thaddues Njoku. Merchant of Terror: Neo-Patrimonialism, Counterterrorism Economy and Expansion of Terrorism in Nigeria, *African Conflict & Peacebuilding Review,* 10, no. 2 (2020), 83–107; William Robert Avis. *War Economy in North East Nigeria.* Knowledge, Evidence and Learning for Development, K4D Helpdesk Report 734 (Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, 2020).

[74] Andrew W. Neal. *Exceptionalism and the Politics of Counterterrorism: Liberty, Security and the War on Terror* (London: Routledge, 2010); Christophe Paulussen and Martin Scheinin. (Eds.) *Human Dignity and Human Security in Times of Terrorism*. (The Hague, Netherlands: T.M.C Asser Press, 2020); Alison Brysk and Gershon Shafir, eds., *National*

thundered thus: First, Ian Bremmer submits that "in fighting insurgency or terrorism, deliberate caution is needed in order that security and civil liberties prosper together; and none at the expense of the other".[75]Second, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)notethat "there should be no conflict between human rights and policing. Policing means protecting human rights".[76]Third, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy submits that:

> The promotion and protection of human rights for all and the ruleof law is essential to all components of the strategy, recognising that effective counter-terrorism measures and the promotion of human rightsare not conflicting goals, but complementary and mutually reinforcing.[77]

However, in the COIN efforts of Nigeria, human rights are wantonly violated by security forces.[78]The landmark publication by Amnesty International, *Stars on Their Soldiers, Blood on Their Hands*, exposed Nigerian security forces as extrajudicially executing" more than 1,200 people; they have arbitrarily arrested at least20,000 people, mostly young men and boys; and have committed countless acts of torture".[79]This report stirred the hornet's nest among security providers in Nigeria and opened the eyes of the international community to war crimes committed by Nigerian armed forces combating BH terror in North-East, Nigeria.

The overriding concern is the human rights scorecard of the administration in fighting BH. While there are enormous documentations evidencing human rights violations in North-East, Nigeria, such as the 17 January 2017 Nigerian Air Force fighter jet bombing of an IDP camp at Rann, Borno State where over

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Insecurity and Human Rights: Democracies Debate Counterterrorism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Conor A. Gearty. Terrorism and Human Rights. *Government and Opposition*, 42, no.3 (2007): 340-362. Conor A. Gearty. Human Rights in an Age of Counterterrorism: Injurious, Irrelevant or Indispensable?' *Current Legal Problems,* 58 (2005), 31; Conor A. Gearty. "Human rights in an age of counter-terrorism", in *War on Terror: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures*, eds. Chris Miller (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 84-98.

[75] Ian Bremmer. *Super Power: Three Choices for America's Role in the World* (New York, NY: Penguin Publishing Group, 2015): 38.

[76]Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Human Rights in Counter-Terrorism Investigations: A Practical Manual for Law Enforcement Officers (Warsaw, Poland: OSCE and ODIHR, 2013): 13.

[77] United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. General Assembly resolution 60/288, annex.

[78] Ibukun David. Addressing the Paradox: Counterinsurgency, Human Rights and Women in Northeast Nigeria, *The Age of Human Rights Journal,* 15 (2020): 203-223;Eteete Michael Adam, Goodnews Osah and David Oladimeji Alao. From Civilisation to the Dark Ages: AddressingViolation of Human Rights in Northeast Nigeria, *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 58, no.3, (2019): 211-222.

[79] Amnesty International. *Stars on Their Shoulders, Blood on Their Hands: War Crimes Committed by the Nigerian Military* (London: Amnesty International, 2015): 2.

100 refugees died,[80] there is no investigation into the unfortunate incidence by the President Buhari government. Instead, General Lucky Irabor, the Commander of Nigerian forces in North-East said "unfortunately, the strike was conducted, but it turned out that other civilians were somewhere around the area and they were affected".[81]President Buhari in response said the incident was a "regrettable operational mistake".[82]

The human rights community, however, saw the incident otherwise. Mausi Segun of the Human Rights Watch said "even if there is no evidence of a willful attack on the camp, which would be a war crime, the camp was bombed indiscriminately, violating international humanitarian law".[83]The raid on the Rann IDP camp definitely violated fundamental articles of the Geneva Convention IV (GCIV) and its Additional Protocol I (API).To Article 27 of GCIV, the Rann IDP Camp is a protected area:

> entitled in all circumstances to respect for their persons, their honour, their family rights, their religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs. They shall at all times be humanely treated and shall be protected, especially against all acts of violence or threats thereof and against insults and public curiosity.[84]

However, the COIN operation desecrated this protected area in the unfortunate January 17 2017 attack. The API in Article 51(para b)defines an attack as "which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury, to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated".[85]In avoidance of unanticipated attacks, the API in Article 57(II) cautions COIN operations to "take all feasible precautions in the choice of means and methods of attack with a view to avoiding and in any event to minimising incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects".[86]The Rann IDP Camp attack simply amounts to an indiscriminate attack on a supposedly protected area.

Other documented evidences detailing the excessive use of force by security agencies including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) (Avis, 2020; Hassan,

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[80] Haruna Umar and Bashir Adigun. Nigerian Air Force Bombs Refugee Camp, More Than 100 Dead. Retrieved May 5 2022, https://www.nigeria+airforce+bombs+refugee+camp.
[80]Washington Post. Nigerian Military Mistake Kills at least 50 in Attack on Safe-Haven Town. Retrieved May 5 2022, https://www.Nigerian+Military+Mistake+Kills+at+least+50+in+Attack+on+Safe-Haven+Town
[81] Ibid.,
[82] Ibid.,
[83] BBC Online. Nigeria air strike error: Urgent plea to Evacuate Wounded. Retrieved May 5 2022, https://www.Nigeria+air+strike+error%3A+Urgent+plea+to+Evacuate+Wounded.
[84] ICRC (2010). Fourth Geneva Convention (August 12 1949). Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, Switzerland: ICRC.
[85]ICRC (2010). Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949. Geneva, Switzerland: ICRC.
[86] Ibid.,

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2021), are being shielded from prosecution. Haj. Naja'Atu Mohammed, Chairperson of the Bring Back Our Girls (B.B.O.G) lecture series noted on the occasion of the 2022 edition of BBOG Annual Chibok Girls lecture:

> I have been part of a committee that investigated the atrocities of BH and that committee indicted the military more than anything else. There is no house in Borno that the military has not either killed or raped or plundered…There has been committees after committees set up by the government and the government have failed to bring this people to book…this government has failed to even acknowledge the reports of those investigations. We also know today that in this government papers have been given, investigations have been made into the atrocities and corruption in the military. We all know today that the investigations into the Airforce have been published. That of the Navy has been made public but that of the Army has been swept under the carpet by this government because they are not only sustaining it, not only retaining those culprits but they are still serving in various capacities in this government; as government that is supposed to fighting corruption more than any government.[87] (Channels News, 2022)

It was further gathered that Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV), among other concealed or unreported war crimes, and instigated by poverty and hunger,is the most common human right violation committed by the military and aid workers.It is widely reported that:

> security agents and aid workers were guilty of exploiting their access to resources and women's and girls' vulnerabilities to satisfy their own sexual desires…these women and girls are often deceived through promises for food, money, shelter, protection or even marriage in exchange for sex by some security agents and aid workers serving in the north-east.[88]

The API in Article 76 also provided that "women shall be the object of special respect and shall be protected in particular against rape, forced prostitution and any other form of indecent assault" (ICRC, 2010). The Rann incident is indeed an ominous sign of the continuous stumble in the fight against the BH and a course of COIN that has fallen far short of several international regulations of COIN operations.[89]

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[87] Channels News (April 14 2022). Retrieved April 22 2022, https://www.Bring+Back+Our+Girls+%28B.B.O.G%29+Annual+Chibok+Girls+Lecture.
[88]Emeka Thaddues Njoku and Joshua Akintayo. Sex for Survival: Terrorism, Poverty and Sexual Violence in North-Eastern Nigeria. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 28, no.2, (2021): 285–303, p. 298.
[89] Global Counterterrorism Forum. The Rabat Memorandum on Good Practices for Effective Counterterrorism Practice in the Criminal Justice Sector.

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The afore-discussed seven thematic areas are definitely terrorism attractors that have bolstered the capacity of Boko Haram in engaging the Nigerian state in such an asymmetric warfare as the sect has demonstrated and of course that the President Buhari administration has failed to technically defeat and decimate the Boko Haram sect.[90]

Conclusion

This paper was agitated by this question: What factors or prevailing circumstances bolstered the audacity of Boko Haram (BH) to display the audacity it has in engaging the Nigerian state in such an asymmetric warfare that it undertook since 2009—in particular, under President Buhari? This question is, particularly, pertinent in the light of the several claims by the government of President Muhammadu Buhari to have technically defeated and decimated Boko Haram. However, Boko Haram under the watch of President Buhari became the proverbial cat with nine lives that resuscitates after each supposedly technical defeat/decimation.

The paper explored seven major themes of perspectives on economics of counterterrorism, the Sulhu programme, enlistment of low-risk repentant Boko Haram sect members into the Nigerian military, religious fanaticism, counterterrorism and human rights, financial terrorism, and ethnic contestations, to explain the audacity of Boko Haram in North-East, Nigeria. Furthermore, the paper demonstrated that the unrelenting terrorism and counterterrorism environment in North-East, Nigeria simply illustrates a whole gamut of civilian sympathisers and influential persons within the corridors of power in the then administration of President Buhari with opaque allegiance to and who share jihadist ideologies; especially on the promises of martyrdom and paradise upon death in course of jihad. They are simply Boko Haram at heart. This also applies to most serving soldiers who are Nigerian soldiers by day, but Boko Haram at night. Under the foregoing scenarios, counterterrorism by whatever measure—be it kinetic and non-kinetic was bound to fail. Just as GAP opines, Boko Haram, as a non-state actor, has not only contested and undermined the territorial integrity of Nigeria in the Fourth Republic (since 1999), but it has demonstrated resilience as a non-state actor in paralysing the capacity of the Nigerian government to have effective governance in North-East, Nigeria. Thus, the capacity of Boko Haram to inflict further damage to Nigeria has not waned.

[90] Uche Igwe (2021, January 15). Buhari Has Done Little to Address Nigeria's Ongoing Terrorism and Insecurity. Retrieve April 25 2022, https://www.Buhari+Has+Done+Little+to+Address+Nigeria%E2%80%99s+Ongoing+Terrorism+and+Insecurity. Nasir Ayitogo (2021, May 31). Six years after, Buhari has failed to keep promise of securing Nigeria. Retrieved 25 April 2022, https://www.Six+years+after%2C+Buhari+has+failed+to+keep+promise+of+securing+Nigeria.

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