

IMPACTS OF ISLAMIC STATE IN IRAQ AND SYRIA'S TERRORISM ON NORTHERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria has been fighting against Boko Haram terrorists without ends despite all the finances expended, national and international military alliances puts in place by authorities. Consequently, Nigeria's economy is negatively affected, several infrastructure, property and socioeconomic structures are destroyed and lives were lost both within and across the borders for over a decade. Understanding the reasons for authorities' failure to halt and crush Boko Haram terrorism prompted this study. The study relied on the use of qualitative secondary data, and adopted linkage theory to uncover the rationale for the resilience of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria. The findings revealed that Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a terrorists group from Middle East extended its tentacle to other parts of the world, particularly into Northern Nigeria. Such ideological affinities impacted the modus operandi, strength, activities of Boko Haram, and other splinter groups like Islamic State in West African Province (ISWAP), Ansaru, Mahmudawa, etc. The paper concluded that Boko Haram and other terrorists group's prowess could not be tamed by authorities in Nigeria because of ISIS influences. The study aimed to awake authorities in and beyond Nigeria, that while ISIS is weak in the Middle East, it is strong and making impacts in Nigeria. Political, military and other authorities are encouraged to reorient the Nigerian citizens, to be patriotic and proactive in exposing and resisting terrorism, create job opportunities for Nigerian youths, collaborate with other sovereign nation-states to face and conquer ISIS's influences in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa.

Keywords: ISIS, Boko Haram/ISWAP, Economy, Terrorism & Linkage

Introduction

The various countries in the world were living independently and pursuing individual as well as continental goals and aspirations amicably. Desire for economic resources, wealth, and scientific development made it easier for countries across the continent of the world to have socioeconomic, political, educational and other forms of relationship. Some of such nexus boosted common humanity, enhanced development in all ramifications and also implied that nations-states across the globe were and are enjoying development and progress of or from each others. Consequently, countries across the globe, in Europe, Asia, Middle East, Africa, Austria, etc, have or are about embracing western democracy and capitalist system, especially after the collapse of Eastern bloc. Nigeria is a sovereign nation-state in sub-Saharan Africa; she like other

nation-states has embraced Western democracy and socioeconomic system for several years and is recognized as such among the comity of nations, with numerous elections at various levels from 1999 to 2025. Nigeria has thirty-six microstates; nineteen out of the thirty-six microstates are from the Northern region or geopolitical zones. The above positive advances, prompted Agara & Chizea (2018) to opined that globalization has facilitated linkages across the continents and removed several impediments to international sociopolitical and economic affinities and development.

On the contrary note however, unfortunate events from any country are also shared or experienced in or by other countries globally. For instance, terrorism which is one of such unfortunate national and international crises is shared and experienced across the world. Terrorism in one country has effects and implications on regional and global economy due to globalization which unite the world and its system. For instance, the attack on United States of America (USA) in 2001 brought Al-Qaeda to limelight as a global terrorist organization. Consequently, several nation-states' economy were affected, international relations, social harmony and continental development became either disjointed or halted for sometimes. Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) also became another known global terrorist group, connected with Al-Qaeda, she also has lot of linkages with other groups which she either groomed or is supporting. Agara & Chizea (2018) opined that such linkages cut across the globe, threatening national security and territorial sovereignty. Nigeria, as one of the biggest democracies on the African continent, is confronted by Boko Haram, a supposed local insurgent and later terrorists group. The group has demonstrated capacity and afflicted several parts of Nigeria for almost two decades, without authorities halting and ending them. While several past studies looked at Boko Haram single handedly or in isolation, it creates a literature gap which this study tried to fill. This study therefore set to examine the linkages between ISIS and Boko Haram and answer some pertinent questions for unending terrorism in Nigeria and beyond. Could or should it be said that terrorism exacerbated in Northern Nigeria due to Boko Haram's connection with ISIS and other Al-Qaeda terrorists groups? In what specific areas has the linkage between the groups aided the Nigerian breed terrorist organization? What are some implications of such synergy on Northern Nigeria, Nigeria, as well as on the regional and global economy? These and many other questions shall be answered, and recommendations outlined.

Method or Sources of Data

Qualitative or secondary source of data is used as the methodology for gathering data in this study. This is principally because of the distances between the two countries, which required financial backing; the risks and challenges involved in studying religious extremists groups in Nigeria and other parts of Africa; hence, the researcher adopted the use of electronic means to

scout for news papers, magazines, journals and books that covered or have something tangible on the ISIS, Boko Haram and other emerging groups. Even from those materials, one cannot over rule some bias reports or fallacies. Never the less, the contents of the aforementioned sources of data were analyzed, in terms of credibility and minimal biases in reporting before drawing thematic inferences.

Theoretical Framework

Linkage theory has its root in the United States of America's foreign policy, championed by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger in the 1970s. It also means leverage- the linking of one event to another in order to maintain bargaining power or mount pressure on opposing parties involved. Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb (1974), described linkage as an update application of Henry Kissinger's theories about balance of power, where coercive or cooperative linkages are prospective, such as promise or threat; and they can be retrospective, such as rewards or retaliation can be employed.

This theory conceptualizes relationship between variables operating within the domestic system of state on the one hand, and other variables operating in those other nations and international systems environment on the other. For instance, the challenges of exploring and exporting crude oil in Nigeria have or do affect the price of oil in the global market; Corona virus infections in China affected many countries across the globe, xenophobic attacks on Nigerian nationals in Republic of South Africa caused diplomatic and socioeconomic strain relations between the two countries. Aligning the above, Rosenau (1990), described linkage as any recurrent sequence of behaviour that originates in one system and is related to another. He stressed that there are initial and terminal stages of linkages by referring to the former as output and the later as input.

Rosenau (1990) further indentified three types of linkage processes in the way in which output and inputs get linked together. The first he calls penetrative; which occurs when a person from outside the state participates directly in its political process. This means that they share interest with those on the penetrative polity and the authority to allocate its values. The second, he calls reactive; where decision makers take decisions in response or partly in response to behaviour originating in the state's environment, but without direct participation in decision making by those whose bahaviours provide the stimulus. Thirdly, is the emulative process which is established when political activities in one country are perceived and emulated in another country; and this is where this theory relates to our study.

Linkage can cover not only linkages within but without the immediate and remote environment; from local government to state, federal and international levels. Similarly, it can emanate from a rural community reaching national and international community; as the world is today a global

village, and all issues are interconnected. Linkage theory clearly showcased the linkage between the activities of Al-Qaeda and ISIS in far away Middle East countries, with the ones on African continent, orchestrated by other terrorists groups like Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru, Mahmudawa, etc in Nigeria, Taliban, Islamic Organization in Saudi Arabia, Al-Shabaab in Yemen, in Somalia, Mali, etc (Otinche, 2018).

Meaning of Terrorism

Many scholars, individuals and organizations have numerous descriptions of what connotes and constitutes terrorism. Nwogwugwu, et'al (2018:325), opined that terrorism is from the Latin verb 'Terrere' which means "to frighten". This word as translated, they argued gave the English word 'Terrorism', which was derived from "terror" its origin and bearing. To Hudson (1999:18), terrorism or terrorist act is:

The calculated use of unexpected, shocking and unlawful violence against non combatants (including, in addition to civilian, off-duty military and security personnel in peace situation) and other symbolic targets perpetrated by a clandestine members of a sub-national group or a clandestine agent(s) for psychological purpose of publicizing a political or religious cause and/ or intimidating or coercing government(s) or civilian populations into accepting demands on behalf of the case.

Schmid and Jongman (1988:28) gave an elaborate and all encompassing definition thus:

Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi) clandestine individual; group, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby- in contrast to assassination-the direct targets of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. The threat and violence bared communication process between target (organization), (imperiled) victims and main target (audience), turning into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion or propaganda is primarily sought.

Deducing from the above, one can say that terrorism is violent tactics by state or non-state actors for sociopolitical rationale against non-combatants, principally to instill fear in order to generate or send a message.

Describing terrorism from African perspective, Maiangwa (2014:28) stated that:

Terrorism in the African context implies the application of intensive pressure by individuals or groups on governments by the use of force (which may include the use of arms) especially when all openings for democratic expressions and legitimate agitation and ways of seeking redress are blocked. Those regarded as terrorists use excessive force though not legitimate means to attract government attention to the need of the populace.

Terrorism as quoted above, corroborated the views of Stern, (2002), who initially saw it as an avenue by aggrieved person(s) or groups to get attention or recognition by the state on their demands.

At Algiers Convention in 1999, Article 1 of the African Union (the rebranded Organization of African Unity, OAU) described terrorist act as:

- (a) Any act which is a violation of criminal laws of a state party which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any number or group of persons or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to: (i) intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to act according to certain principles; or (ii) disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create public emergency; or (iii) create general insurrection in a state.
- (b) Any promotion, sponsoring, contribution to, command, aid, incitement, encouragement, attempt, threat, conspiracy, organizing, or procurement of any person, with the intent to commit any act referred to in paragraph (a) (i) to (iii).

The above broad definitions of what constitutes terrorist act according to African Union article, if or when applied to Nigeria, clearly shows that the activities of Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru, Mahmudawa, etc either within or outside the shores of Nigeria or in connection or collaboration with ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Al-Shaabab, among other groups, is terrorism.

From the preceding literature therefore, one can define terrorism as the coercing, inflicting of pain and injuries on persons, confiscation of property, abrupt halting of institutions or state by person(s) from within, or outside the immediate environment either for sociopolitical, religious, economic or other reasons, against national, international law and treaties, which is also a criminal act. Therefore, activities of Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru, Mahmudawa, etc among others, against the indigenes, citizens, the state and other nationalities, anywhere on the globe and particularly in Nigeria is terrorism.

Ideological nexus between ISIS and Boko Haram, ISWAP, among others

Promoting democracy and capitalism as part of global agenda by the Western countries is viewed with mixed feelings by individuals, ethno-religious groups in various human settings, especially where Islamic legal system was or is much desired like in the Middle East and some parts of Africa. In time past, the Middle East States like Iran, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, among others, cherished and accepted Islamic system and principles. As some of those countries began to ‘modernize’ or accept western values and systems, conflict of ideology and interest, created avenue for rebellion, insurgency and full blown terrorism. For instance, Marxist-Leninist socioeconomic ideology introduced and orchestrated by Soviet Union in some democratic states like the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan was seen as alien. Consequently, some Arab Afghans moved to get rid of it. This prompted them to reorient their people to resist such moves by or from any person, nation, as such westernization is perceived as anti-Islamic in nature (Siegel, 2022).

Early apologist of this movement includes but not limited to Abu Qatada al-Filistini, Abu Musab, Mustapha Kamel (Abu Hamza al-Masri), etc. They all believed the ‘Qutbism’ doctrine of Islam, quarreling against how secular infidel Muslims leaders and population have fallen to imitating the western way of life. They believed that before any prosperity would occur, the Muslim world must revert to Caliphate age system-‘Sharia law’ instead of manmade law’. The above philosophy served as fertile ground for the emergence of Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), which was also known as Islam State and Daesh; originally created by the wing of Al-Qaeda in Iraq and smaller Iraqi Sunni insurgent.

Today’s Islamic States of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) were yesterday’s Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL). ISIS can therefore be said to be the modern transnational Salafi Jihadism, also known as Salafi-Jihadism, Jihadist Salifism and revolutionary Salafism. These were a religious-political Sunni Islamic sect, with the ideology and aim to establish Caliphate within and in their remote neighborhood. ISIL/ISIS originated as Jamma’at al-Tawhid wal-jihad in 1999 and pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda. She participated in the Iraqi insurgency following

the 2003 invasion of Iraq by western forces at the behest of the United States and proclaimed itself as worldwide caliphate, thereby referring to itself as Islamic State (Cook, 2014). As a caliphate, it claimed religious, political and military authority over all Muslims (Elbagir, Cruickshan & Taweefee, 2015 & Hamidu, 2022).

The activities and deeds of ISIS include but not limited to: Radical teaching on Islam, beheading and crucifixion, targeting religious minorities and Christians as well as Sunni Muslims who did not adhere to the group's religious law; (she is known for video postage on such beheading and other types of executions of both military and civilian population). They also uses bombing of places like Druze and abduction of women and children, assassination, burning of crops field in Northern Syria and other human rights violations. They equally sought for volunteers to come for jihad against Western forces in the region (Thurston, 2017). The use of arm by the sect was seen as the easiest and justifiable ways to enforce sociopolitical changes or resist foreign influences and she was able capture many places in Iraq and Syria.

Unfortunately however, Western forces defeated it control in Syria and was reduced to only eastern part in 2019. The group however captured and established her Islamic ideology in several parts of Iraq and Syria. Many other groups like Al-Qaeda in Iran/ Islamic State of Iran and the Levant (ISIL); Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC); Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (MIFM); Maoists (India); New People's Army (NPA); Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula; Terik-i-Taliban, Pakistan (TTP), among others, were continental and global terrorists groups thriving to establish synergy among themselves and to collaborate with other and establish caliphate (Maiangwa, 2014). Most terrorists groups, like ISIS are now transnational terrorist groups; because they have become 'actors whose activities cut across state boundaries, as non-governmental actors' as noted by D'Anieri (2010:353- 354).

Jama'at al-Li-sunna Lid Da'awat Wal-Jihad was a religious sect which started in Maiduguri, Borno State, and Northeast Nigeria. They are popularly called 'Boko Haram', a Hausa and Arabic word, literally translated to mean 'western education is forbidden' (Katsina, 2011). They are Sunni Islamic sect, which advocates a strict form of adherence to the Sharia law and its implementation in Nigeria. Mohammed Yusuf is said to have officially formed the group in 2002 in the city of Maiduguri as noted by David, (2001) & Maiangwa, (2014).

The objective of this group was to preach and teach how to practice Islam in the way the Prophet handed it over to his disciples, (based on their understandings and beliefs) in a more radical way; vehemently speaking against bribery, corruption, injustices in the social system or in the circular political system. Such teachings gave the group more adherents, which also

gradually brought suspicion and tension in the metropolis between the ruling elites and the ruled. They established schools and Mosques in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital as the medium of carrying out their mission (Maiangwa, 2014).

The group's clash with security operatives in Maiduguri from 26th to 30th July 2009 led to its leader, Mohammed Yusuf to be pronounced dead while in police custody; three hundred and fifteen of its members were also killed, some members arrested and the demolition of its property in Markas, its base in Maiduguri. These, according to Ibrahim (2013) and Maiangwa (2014) were the circumstance that warranted the group to take to violence in the State. The group therefore went underground and relocated to the outskirts of the metropolis and gather momentum which made her to resurface on a revenge mission from the year 2010 upward as corroborated by Fineman, (2018:114), who stated thus:

Boko Haram unexpected resurgence, following a mass prison break in September 2010, was accompanied by increasingly sophisticated attacks, initially against soft targets, but progressing in 2011 to include suicide bombings of police buildings and the United Nations office in Abuja. The government's establishment of a state of emergency at the beginning of 2012, extended in the following year to cover other states like Adamawa, Borno and Yobe all in North East of Nigeria, leading to an increase in both security force abuses and militant attacks.

To justify their incessant attacks, the successor to Mohammed Yusuf, Imam Abubakar Shekau, the leader of the group in a YouTube video released in the year 2012, mentioned three reasons for their violent attacks on Nigerian government and state:

- a. To avenge the killing of their leader and other members in July 2009 by members of Nigeria Police;
- b. To avenge the ill-treatment the Christians are meeting out to Muslims and Islam in Nigeria; and,
- c. To correct the present secular constitution which he described as un-Islamic.

Many states in northern Nigeria like Kano, Bauchi, Gombe, including the Federal Capital territory, Abuja all had their share of the attacks.

Boko Haram terrorism has led to destruction of lives and property both at national and international levels and the United Nations declared the group as a terrorist organization (Akinoye, 2015).

It was alleged that Boko Haram leadership established links with the Algerian Salafist Group, later known as Al-Qaeda in Islamic Magreb (AQIM) since 2004 and other terrorist groups (Fineman, 2018:107). In a pragmatic move however, on 7 March 2015, Boko Haram's leader Abubakar Shekau pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), headed by Abu Al-Baghdadi. Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), now Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (Elbagir, Cruickshan & Taweefeeq, 2015).

This affiliation or nexus between Boko Haram and ISIS upgraded and metamorphosed Jama'atual Alhi-sunna Lid Da'awat Wal-Jihad, popularly called 'Boko Haram'to its new status and name as the Islamic State in West Africa Province (abbreviated as ISWAP). This implies that Boko Haram is beyond the shores of Nigeria. It is now upgraded to a West African militant group, with transnational capacities; active in Chad, Niger and Northern Cameroon Republics. Affirming with the above, Tamba, (2015:26) stated that 'initially confined to Nigeria, Boko Haram has extended its activities around Cameroon, Chad and Niger Republics, wrecking havoc on some communities in the region'. Boko Haram has become connected, having membership in the mentioned states, besides its allegiance to ISIS (Elbagir, Cruickshan & Taweefeeq, 2015).

Paradoxically however, after the allegiance to ISIS, there was internal friction among the Boko Haram Commanders and the ISIS leadership on another hand which prompted one faction to break away. On 3rd August 2016, the Islamic State reported in the 41st issue of its newspaper, al-Naba, that Abu Musah al-Barnawi has been appointed as the new leader of their West African branch (Hamidu, 2022). Today, there are two different factions of the terrorists groups. Al-Barnawi that is backed and connected to ISIS leads ISWAP, while the initial and most popular one in Nigeria and across the region, Boko Haram is headed by Abubakar Shekau. Whichever of the group attacks, it is labeled as Boko Haram. Both of them have the mission of establishing caliphate in Nigeria and beyond (Elbagir, Cruickshan & Taweefeeq, 2015).

Some similarities and few differences can and should be identified. ISIS and Boko Haram/ISWAP nexus was easy and eventful because: both of them were Sunni Muslims; they both had the mind of changing western laws and democracies for Islamic government/Sharia system; both have more than one names; they are known to operate in and from more than a country; both use weapons to force their will against the non-supporting indigenes/local populations and the State; both have or use mercenaries against the State or the military attacks against them; they were both defeated or displaced to rural areas where they strengthen themselves and launch attacks; they were and are all connected with other likeminded Jihadist groups and both of them are today known or called terrorist

groups (GTI, 2017 &2020). Paradoxically, there are some noticeable differences as well: ISIS is in the Middle East, Boko Haram is in West Africa; Boko Haram/ISWAP asked for ISIS help, thereby making it subservient to it, ISIS have never been subservient to Boko Haram/ISWAP, etc. These clearly showed that ISIS is far and above Boko Haram/ISWAP, hence, the call for nexus by Boko Haram. Thereafter, other groups like Ansaru, Mahmudawa and Lakurawa also emerged/surfaced in and across Nigeria (Danlami, 2025).

Influences of ISIS on Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru, Mahmudawa's activities in Northern Nigeria and Global Economy

From the above discourse, one can clearly decipher that the relationship between the two or more terrorists groups are certain and should have lot of impacts and implications on Northern Nigeria and other nation-states beyond the West African sub-region. Such impacts and implications on Nigerian economy and international global relations can be categorized or classified thus:

Internationalizing and incorporating Nigeria's domestic terrorism into global scale. The linkage between ISIS and Boko Haram has directly and practically transformed and upgraded Boko Haram to become a transnational terrorists group operating within and beyond the West African sub-region, with the names like Islamic States in West African Provinces (ISWAP), Ansaru, Mahmudawa, etc; thereby aiding ISIS to continue its intercontinental or global adventures, as leading caliphate promoter (Hamidu, 2022).

Similarly, ISIS trained or encouraged Boko Haram/ISWAP, Ansaru, Mahmudawa fighters to be recording and releasing their attacks, showcase their abductors faces and when beheading security personnel and others civilians captors under them. Such were hitherto not part of their modes of murder or operations by Boko Haram before the nexus (Searcey, 2019 and Forest, 2012).

Further still, Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru, and Mahmudawa now has the knowledge and technicalities of making and planting explosive devices or dirty bombs as the case maybe (Mbaegbu, 2018). Salkida (2025) noted that Boko Haram, ISWAP, use such medium to kill and caused more damages to Nigerian security operatives and security operatives chasing them or while on patrols in many villages and major roads in North East, North Central, north western Nigeria (Danjibo, 2009, Abubakar, 2025 and Danlami, 2025).

Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru and Mahmudawa now have access to more sophisticated weapons like drone, rocket launchers, antitank and aircrafts guns, among other weapons in their operations. This made the rampant cases of attacks or terrorism tougher for the state actors to contend in Northern Nigeria (Buba, 2017). Corroborating the above, Kwada (2025), quoting

higher military authorities in Nigeria, confirmed that the terrorists have and are using armed drone in the Northern Nigeria since November 2024, as well as other weapons (Danlami, 2025).

Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru and Mahmudawa now have or get more fighters easily into Northern Nigeria through ISIS so as to capture more territories. This is why today there are other nationalities as members of Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru and Mahmudawa fighting in Northern Nigeria, with the aim of expanding their Caliphate and establishing same in this part of the globe (Salkida, 2025).

There is increased in the proliferations and modus operandi of other terrorists groups and their activities in Northern Nigeria. For instance, prior to 2015, States like Katsina, Kaduna, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Benue, Niger etc were living peacefully. Terrorism was limited to North Eastern States of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Today however, *Truth Nigeria*, an online newspaper reported that Nigeria is under siege. It stated that in North West Nigeria, 30,000 radicalized terrorists, bandits roam freely across Zamfara, Katsina and Sokoto. In North Central Nigeria, Lakurawa, Ansaru, Islamic State in Greater Sahara, etc, with their tax regimes and justice system are believed to be connected with Al-Qaeda and ISIS (tgnews.com.ng 8/5/2025 & Danlami, 2025).

Nigeria's land/territory and socioeconomic activities are negatively affected by the synergy: Consequent upon the ties between ISIS and Boko Haram, there are now panic and confusion among and between security operatives in Northern Nigeria, as attacks, kidnapping, abductions, etc have become rampant in the restive Northern States attributed either to Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru, Mahmudawa or other criminal elements. In the Maiduguri, Yobe and Adamawa axis, is Boko Haram, Lake Chad axis, is the ISWAP's strongholds and Sokoto, Niger, Kwara, Katsina, Kebbi, Zamfara States respectively are stronghold of Ansaru, Mahmudawa, all in Northern Nigeria. Such or similar operations are also undertaken by other undesirable elements (Hamidu & Gambo, 2022). These now made the Nigeria operatives and members of the Multi-National Joint Task Force to be confused, disarticulated and in doubt as who are the really terrorists or criminals in Northern Nigeria.

The strength of Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru, Mahmudawa and other terrorists groups has caused many Nigerians to be displaced at both local and international levels. For instance, there were and are many indigenes and citizens from remote areas of Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Zamfara, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Katsina States that were and are displaced from their locality to other microstates like Gombe, Kano, Abuja, Kaduna, Taraba, Nasarawa, Benue, etc and some, even to outside the shores of Nigeria, into places like Chad, Cameroon, Niger Republics, etc due

to Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru, and Mahmudawa attacks, powered by ISIS (Tamba, 2015 & Danlami, 2025).

Boko Haram, ISWAP, Mahmudawa, and Ansaru strength is boosted to unleash onslaught and captured many remote communities/villages in Northern States like Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Zamfara, Kebbi, Sokoto, Niger, Katsina, among others became a ghost town (Buba, 2017, Abubakar, 2025 and Danlami, 2025). The civilian population left their habitat for their safety and security, thereby making some of such remotes areas ungoverned spaces; at some instances, the terrorists established their hegemony in those areas as their captured territories.

Mahmudawa, Ansaru, Boko Haram, ISWAP captured many farmlands and agricultural practices in most remote rural area in Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara, Niger, Katsina, Adamawa, Borno, Yobe States, etc. Those rural dwellers in those areas ran away for their lives, hence destroying personal and the rural socioeconomic activities, which primarily is farming, hunting, etc (Davieson, 2014 and Hamidu, 2024). Terrorists' groups are now stronger and they are able to chase away people from their homeland, farmland and other commercial places. This also caused food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty to and on the people in Northern Nigeria. This is consequent upon the displacement of the indigenes, abducting and even killing of some of the citizens, which made it compulsory for them to ran away or find it difficult to pursue their day to day activities and sources of their livelihoods are threatened due to terrorism orchestrated by Boko Haram/ISWAP Mahmudawa, Ansaru (Danlami, 2025).

There is an increased dwindling and unstable socioeconomic and commercial activities, movement of goods and services in many states in Northern Nigeria, and across the international boundaries due to abduction of motorists and passengers, fear of landmines buried on some roads, ambush or kidnapping and outright slaughter of their captors by the terrorists. Hamidu (2024) noted that this made using or plying some roads/routes to be at high risk and sometimes the security operatives close some roads for security reasons. This made transport fare from one place to another higher, and this also contributed to increase in the cost of vital items needed by the indigenes/citizens living in those frontline areas/states (Hamidui, 2024). There is always news or cases of death, attacks and other unpleasant occurrences in and from various communities in Northern Nigeria, as noted by Jimoh (2025). He reported that in thirteen years, about 91, 740 Nigerians, in the Northern region were killed. Corroborating the above, Aborisade and Aleke (2025) quoting Senator Ali Ndume revealed that many people, including security operatives were killed by Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru an Mahmudawa terrorism. The United Nations, through its Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon says Boko Haram insurgency killed 27,000 civilians in ten years (Ajayi, 2019:8) Such unfortunate news has negative effects on the psyche of the people living in the region and beyond and sending wrong

and fearful signal to members of the international communities. Abubakar (2025) also confirmed that terrorism killed many people in Northern Nigeria.

In Northern Nigeria today, several states and local government areas in Nigeria are under frequent attacks, people are abducted or kidnapped; homes and other places of worship or business are burnt or destroyed (Abubakar, 2025). These frequent occurrences are or could be seen globally due technological advances, thereby showcasing Nigeria as insecure and unstable democracy. Consequently, Nigeria is today recognized and recorded as one of the terrorists' dominated areas or stronghold of terrorists in the West African sub-region, as reported in Global Terrorism Index (GTI, 2020) and Abubakar (2025); a very bad international image for a developing democracy.

Elections and democratic processes in Northern and other parts of Nigeria were threatened or put in jeopardy. For instance, many villages became ghost towns; hence, indigenes of those places could not cast their votes in their rightful pooling units. Some had to be transported to other safer places; others did theirs in displaced peoples' camps, while other people lost their voter's card. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) postponed Nigeria's election due to insecurity orchestrated by terrorists (Emmanuel, 2015). Further still, some states like Borno and Yobe could not hold local council elections due to terrorists' activities in most remote areas. Terrorism orchestrated by ISIS backed terrorist groups in Northern Nigeria made voters and politicians to be afraid of going out to campaign, cast their votes and the local administrators are not free to remain in their units and govern their people well as noted by Hamidu (2024).

The constructions of roads, houses, hospitals, provisions of basic amenities and other infrastructural development in many rural areas in Northern Nigeria are halted or affected, due to insecurity orchestrated by Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru and Mahmudawa, Lakurawa attacks, abductions of expatriates, engineers, contractors for ransom or even outright indiscriminate killing of people, including military personnel as revealed by Habiba (2025) and Dalam, (2025).

Terrorist attacks in Northern Nigeria lead to the collapse of cottage industries that were making boats/canoes for catching fish and other sea food; hunting and smoking those fishes, bush meat (local ways/method of preservation for exports), and markets like the Baga international fish market, Bama-Banki onions production, hide and skin, dairy companies etc in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States. This consequently caused poverty among the young people, made some to be structurally unemployed, and increased the rate of unemployment and underemployment in the Northern region (Hamidu & Gambo, 2022).

There are cases of outbreak of preventable sickness due to terrorism which compelled people to leave their habitat, thereby eating and drinking whatever is available without medical or health

consideration. Local health personnel were also displaced and people in displaced peoples' camp just existed irregularly or are over congested. These serve as fertile ground for the outbreak of preventable diseases like malaria, dysentery and others in Northern Nigeria without effective means of addressing them promptly. There were instances and places where such outbreaks were mention/ recorded, even claiming lives (Yerima & Hamidu, 2020). Terrorism orchestrated by the aforementioned groups has caused many hospitals to be closed medical personnel abducted, hence, a threat to public health.

There is illegal exploration/ mining of some natural endowments in numerous vulnerable and isolated remote places in Northern Nigeria and sell in or through illegal markets and marketers to get more funds and acquire more weapons to prosecute their expansionist and annexation advances in and beyond the West African sub-region. Desire for mineral resources has been identified as one of the causes or fuelling terrorism in some African States or communities, including Nigeria (Thurston, 2017). From the proceed of the mineral exploration and selling, ISIS will be strong enough to get and pay more fighters as mercenaries to come and aid terrorism within Nigeria and even outside the West African sub-region,; she can as well buy more fighting equipments under industrial military complex regime to support/empower Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansur, Lakurawa, Mahmuduwa to capture more territories. Sustaining ISWAP strength in Nigeria is a pride for ISIS as they are seen as it tentacle on global scale.

More territories are captured and Sharia law are introduced or implemented in those terrorists captured remote areas in Northern Nigeria. The Nigerians who could not escape and are forced to stay there, under the terrorists, means they are under two contrary administrations: religious and western system of administrations. Such Nigerians will either be paying the terrorists levies and taxes for them to stay safely, obey the terrorists terms and conditions, join and support their preaching and religious missions or face stiffer punishment or even be killed, without Nigerian authorities protecting them (Thurston,2017).

There is now threat to universal or individual rights and freedom. For instance, United Nations Organizations through its agencies like United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), among others, aimed to safeguard and provide fundamental human rights to people in all localities through education and freedoms. Boko Haram/ISWAP, Mahmudawa, Lakurawa, and Ansaru's critical approach against western education, disdain for secular and democratic system in its strong hold and across the global system is at variance to the UNO's philosophy. Capturing numerous territories by these groups means the citizens rights to education, conscience, freedom of speeches, movement will and are all curtailed and there is the imposition of religious Islamic religious laws.

Further still, educational system and industries are affected by terrorism in Northern Nigeria. ISWAP in 2018 abducted 110 school girls in Dapchi, Yobe state and returned all, except Leah Sharribu, in Dapchi in Yobe States, the ones in Kastina, Kaduna, Zamfara States, killing and kidnapping of teachers, destruction of classrooms and other school structures in Northern Nigeria (Hamidu, 2024). Such attacks caused closure of schools, institutionalized apprehension on the minds of students, parents and teachers and ultimately increase rate of illiteracy, out of school children and abuse of children in Northern Nigeria. This is also a threat to global quest for mass literacy across the globe.

There are power failures or shortages of electricity in the Northern sub-region. This made most communities in Northern Nigeria to be in darkness due to vandals' activities on electricity poles, transformers, cables, among others. This caused darkness and created the desires/needs for fuel to power generators, etc. The use of generators caused air and noise pollution in most Northern communities; tailors and other businesses using electricity also suffers loses and indigenes or people that must use their phones, expend more for charging. The high demand for fuel and cost of transportation also made its price to go higher (Hamidu & Gambo, 2022).

Numerous prisons in Northern Nigeria were attacked by terrorists and freeing inmates despite heavy security operatives presence. Among other prisons in Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Bauchi states, Habib (2025) revealed that Ansaru, one of the ISIS's backed terrorist group in July 2022 attacked and broke Kuje medium security prison freeing inmates. The broken prison was just 40 kilometre (25 miles) away from the capital and the Aso Rock Presidential Villa. This is dangerous for Nigeria, also an indication that no parts of Nigeria that foreign influenced terrorists cannot attack or attempt to attack in Nigeria.

Weakening and threatening of both national and international security operatives in and across the Nigerian borders. The nexus with ISIS empowered the Nigeria terrorists groups to be confronting and even attacking the Nigerian security operatives without fear. In some of such attacks in places like Monguno, Gwoza, Baga, Danboa, Buni Yadi, Sokoto, Zamfara, Kaduna, Kebbi, Niger etc, numerous arms and ammunitions were taken away from the security operatives by the terrorists as confirmed by Olugbode, (2025). In some of such attacks, some weapons-gun truck, tanks, were destroyed and many of the military personnel were killed by the ISIS supported Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru, Mahmudawa, etc (Danlami, 2025).

Boko Haram, ISWAP, Mahmudawa and Ansaru now make and plant landmines and other dangerous devices on the ground, etc. This did not only caused the death of many military and paramilitary personnel pursuing them, but caused or posed more dangers on ecology, affecting aquatic animals, movement of goods and services and other agricultural or recreational practices

in Northern Nigeria. As a testimony on this, there were and are instances of explosion in and from underground, claiming many lives and destroying property in several Northern States (Hamidu, 2024). ISIS support for Boko Haram, ISWAP, Mahmudawa, Lakurawa, and Ansaru made her to withstand Nigerian armed forces, ransack villages, abducts women and children, etc. This has and will make women, girl-child and other teenagers to grow with terrorist mentality. Some may resort to terrorism at tender ages, carrying and using weapons, etc which is a threat to civil authorities. Further still, owing to frequent attacks and killing of military and paramilitary operatives by ISIS backed Boko Haram, ISWAP, Mahmudawa, and Ansaru, many young men and women from Northern and other parts of Nigeria are and will be afraid of joining the Nigeria's armed forces. Because some of them saw members of the armed forces being killed, others injured without immediate compensation or attention and the terrorism is not ending.

Many Nigerians, both military and civilians have lost and will continue to lose their lives due to ISIS backed Boko Haram, ISWAP, Mahmudawa, Ansaru and Lakurawa terrorism, in the sub-region. For instance, numerous writers, few, among which include Abubakar, (2025), Danlami (2025), Habiba (2025) and Hamidu, (2024) recorded that many Nigerians lose their lives in Boko Haram, ISWAP, Mahmudawa and Ansaru related killings and sometimes in cross-fire that ensued. Such killing or losses of lives is depopulating the Nigeria, reducing as well as reducing the numbers of the armed forces the country had. Northern Nigeria's borders and that of adjoining countries are now vulnerable, facilitating gun trafficking and other criminal activities. In other words, activities of ISIS backed Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru and Mahmudawa has created and institutionalized supply and marketing of guns and other weapons, within Nigeria, into some West African countries and beyond as noted by Hamidu (2024).

Authorities now focused on military wares and gadgets to the detriments of other needful socioeconomic and infrastructural materials in Nigeria and for Nigerians. Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru and Mahmudawa activities compelled Nigerian authority to expend more to buy and supply more arms and ammunitions to its troops, maintain vehicles, supply fuel and other items to meet the logistical need of the operatives. Saye (2021) explained that terrorism in Northern Nigeria has led or caused authorities to expend more in supplying military wares, logistics to contend terrorism in the region than on other critical sectors of the economy like education, citizens' welfares, infrastructure, electricity, medical and health facilities, etc. Even those facilities provided are vandalized by the terrorists' attacks, thereby making life and living difficult for the rural dwellers in most remote areas (Hamidu, 2024).

Consequent upon the terrorism of Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru, Mahmudawa, Lakurawa, authorities in Nigeria were forced to obtain and supply military wares for its troops, give palliatives to the displaced persons either within or outside the affected Northern states. Such

activities are or became associated with bribery and corruption in terms of the quantity and quality of items/equipments bought, in the processes of sharing and delivering such equipments and items (Aborisade & Aleke, 2025). Within and across the rank and file, even from other paramilitary and political leaders, accusations of corruptions abound. For instance, ShallPella (2025) reported that Major Ademola Owolana disclosed that 18 soldiers and 15 mobile police, traditional rulers and civilians were arrested for corrupt practices. They were involved in selling of ammunition or arms racketeering to terrorists, bandits, etc in States like Borno, Bauchi, Ebonyi, Enugu, Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Lagos, Federal Capital Territory, among others; and that millions of Naira were discovered in the accounts of those apprehended. This, military authority said is threatening the halting of terrorism and hampering government's effort in improving the indigenes' welfare (Hamidu, 2024).

Threatening international relations and cross border activities. Owing to synergy between ISIS and their Nigerian comrades, most countries in West Africa and beyond are now also endangered. For instance, some member countries of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) like Niger, Chad, Guinea; and other countries like Cameroon, Central African Republic sharing land and maritime borders with Nigeria are also not free from the terrorists attacks as they sometimes criss-cross the international borders to attack. Also, those countries have many Nigerians relocating there for their safety as international refugees or displaced persons due to terrorism (Tamba, 2015 and Hamidu, 2024). The cases of international displacement and international boundaries involved the crossing of both innocent and criminal elements from and to the neighbours' borders. Some of such mass crossing often created room for other forms of crime and criminal activities like smuggling of contraband goods, weapons, drinks and trafficking in persons and humanitarian crises within and across the West African sub-region (Tamba, 2015).

Macro and micro-agricultural practices like the farming of groundnut, millets, sorghum, fishes and other economic products secured from Northern Nigeria and transported into places like Cameroon, Chad and other Central African countries are and will no longer be easy for those native farmers, whose houses and farmland are vandalized and they themselves are displaced. Such ugly and unfortunate deeds serve as great threats to personal, local, national and international economy and threatening cross border economic relations, existing between Nigeria and its neighbours across the borders as observed by Tamba (2015).

ISIS backing of Boko Haram, ISWAP, Ansaru and Mahmudawa caused or led to more apprehension and discouragement to foreign investors to come into Northern Nigeria and invest in various sectors of the economy, in spite of the availabilities of large arable lands, cheap labour force and great market in and across the West African sub-region. Lack of peace and security is

truly a threat to all forms of investments, socioeconomic activities and infrastructural development in Northern Nigeria owing to the risk and challenges involved.

Nigeria has and is becoming a safe haven for international terrorists' syndicates. For instance, top leaders of Mahmudawa (Muhmud al-Niger, aka, Mallam Mamuda) and Ansaru (Mahmudu Muhammed Usman, a.k.a, Abu Bara'a), people with international connections were said to be arrested in Nigeria, according to the nation's National Security Adviser, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu (Habib, 2025). This also implied that the nation's borders and intelligence system need more proactive approach and overhauling, as the safety of Nigeria and Nigerians is uncertain (Danlami, 2025).

Conclusion

The nexus between ISIS and Boko Haram in Nigeria had significant impact and implications on Northern Nigeria, the Nigerian state as a whole and its neighbours. ISIS nexus and backing has caused or led to numerous sections of the Nigerian territories not to be well protected, as the terrorists have their strongholds in some forests, they are in charge or in full control of some local government areas in Borno, Yobe Zamfara, Katsina, Kogi, Kebbi, Plateau, Sokoto, Benue, Adamawa, etc. Therefore, safeguarding of Nigeria's territorial integrity and maintaining its sovereignty by government forces is uncertain (<https://africancentre.org>, Habiba (2025) and Olugbode (2025). It is the stance of this study that though ISIS seems weak and overpowered in the Middle East and other continents across the globe; ISIS is actively operating in Africa and in Nigeria in particular, destroying the socioeconomic base of the Northern region; causing psychological trauma on the lives of the citizens and other nationalities; making some towns and villages in Northern Nigeria and others communities in Cameroon, Chad, Niger Republics ghost centre and ungovernable spaces. This can also prompt one to say that Nigeria is drifting toward a failed state, where there is no credible and recognized political authority that can and does guaranteed the security of lives and property in most remote areas, in all Northern states. The use of linkage theory is therefore justified and relevant in this study; because it is the linkage between ISIS and Boko Haram that boosted the prowess and vigor of terrorists groups in Nigeria and beyond. Unfortunately, nation-states in Africa and particularly authorities in Nigeria have failed to realize that Boko Haram, ISWAP, Mahmudawa, Ansaru and other terrorists' organizations are externally induced and sponsored as transnational terrorists' organizations and no more a local insurgent or terrorist groups as noted by or from an earlier study conducted by Hamidu (2022).

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, the under listed policy action should be explored and implemented by national and international authorities, thus:

- a. Political authorities must and should use all available medium and media to orient and re-orient Nigerians to be patriotic and love their country and make them to see that there is no other place like their country, no matter what. This will help them to expose those bad elements and refuse to partner with aliens that have come to destroy the Nigerian states and its economy.
- b. Political authorities should be proactive and pragmatic in meeting the needs of the citizens and indigenes without primordial interests or considerations. When the citizens/indigenes are equally treated, respected and given sense of belonging, they will also give their best for the advancement of the states and all its component units.
- c. Authorities should create more job opportunities by establishing cottage industries, investing in agriculture and buying the yields directly from the farmers at reasonable amount, recruiting some of the willing and able young men and women into the military and paramilitary organizations in the country is imperative. This will reduce youth restiveness and improve the purchasing power of the young men and women in the sub-region; and in turn reduce the temptation of being vulnerable to be bought over by terrorists and other criminal elements.
- d. Nigerian security operatives must be overhauled as there are suspicion and fears of bad elements among them; there are lacks of congruence among and between the various units. This has led to misfire, quarrel and lack of synchronizing their activities against the terrorists. Authorities should be decisive and seriously monitor the recruitments, training and posting of personnel, the calibre of the weapons bought and how they are used. Sometimes, there are claims that the military-wares bought does not go to the right people at the right time, hence, endangering the lives of the personnel/operatives on the frontline, while those in safer places gets more arms and ammunitions.
- e. Sovereign nation-states in and across the West Africa should synergize and have good linkages as matter of urgency to reinvigorate their border surveillances and patrol to apprehend and prosecute those mercenaries and weapons being taking in and out of those trouble spots. The security and safety of Nigeria should be seen and treated as the safety and security of Chad, Niger, Cameroon Republics etc. This therefore called for pragmatic approach by Nigeria and all its neighbours to rise against terrorists global agenda by jihadist whose aim is to dethrone political and traditional authorities, halt fundamental human rights and forcefully imposed their believes and ideologies on global citizens. To this end, individual nation-states, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Union (AU) and United Nations Organizations (UNO) should enact

and supports strong legislation against terrorism, and unilaterally support military operations against terrorist organizations in every parts of the continents for global peace, security and socioeconomic development as we all share common lives.

- f. States across the globe should accept research findings and recommendations like the ones from this and other researched papers to enable them take necessary and pragmatic actions. Researches from numerous independent scholars, cooperates organizations or institutions gives vital and realistic points to be considered. Nigeria, ECOWAS, AU and UN, among other international organizations should sponsor and support researchers, take those researches serious and act on them as vital sources of primary data. The aforementioned if followed, will help the Nigerian states and members of the international community to halt and overcome ISIS global terrorism in no distant time.

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