

Are the recent Bomb-blasts in Nigeria Signals of Breakdown of Consent within the Nigerian Political Structure?

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Abstract

Nigeria has existed for one hundred years since its amalgamation in 1914. However, a cursory look at the contemporary history of Nigeria suggests the bitter truth that its continuous existence is now threatened. This paper argues that besides the devastating Civil War that threatened the unity of Nigeria, the most significant threat to Nigerian unity in the contemporary time is the anthology of bomb-blasts that has plagued the nation in recent times. This paper decries it and presents cogent reasons for these happenings. The paper counsels against its continue manifestation.

Keywords: Bomb-blasts, Northern hegemony, Nigerian Political Structure, Nigerian Unity, Ethnicity, Religion.

1. Introduction

The barest outline of contemporary Nigerian history excites fear and threat to both the average Nigerian whose spirit is anguished and the soul of the country itself whose continuous existence is threatened. However, the crisis bedeviling Nigeria today is caused largely by ethnic and religious divisions. It is pertinent to note also that, in the history of Nigeria, there has been a dangerous mix of ethnicity and religion with politics. This is such that, the political class in Nigeria often invokes ethnic and religious sentiments to gain political support and legitimacy. But the recent approach of mixing ethnicity, religion and politics in Nigeria has gone beyond the fever of the political class. The current issue is one of militant ethnic and religious movements.

Although militancy has been known as a form of ethnic/religious assertiveness, this time around it has taken a violent dimension with the activities of an alleged Islamic sect, Boko Haram, whose aims and objectives

threaten the survival of Nigeria as a corporate political entity. The situation fits into the description of Sudan by Al Said, as reported by C.B.N. Ogbogbo (1999:3) that “security has given place to danger, prosperity to misery and calamity, while affliction and distress have succeeded wellbeing... disorder spreading and intensifying.” What is more disturbing today is the speed and degree at which Nigeria is fast sliding into disaster with the resurgence of explosions. Our problems have been compounded to the point where we are now tottering on the brink of catastrophe. The right question to pose at the moment is: can we avoid the fatal plunge? Whatever our answer is, time is definitely not on our side. As a result, this work sets out to analytically interrogate and highlight the contours of the recent bomb-blasts in Nigeria.

2. Theoretical Framework

This paper considers Gramsci's model more appropriate in this circumstance. In the Prison Notebooks, Antonio Gramsci carried out a dynamic analysis on the political workings of Fascist Italy of the 19th century, where he extrapolated on the concept of hegemony. Gramsci's concept of hegemony is an important social tool for the theorization of politics (See Ernesto Laclau, 1996 and Ernesto Laclau & Ghantal Mouffe, 1985). However, for purposes of clarity, hegemony is taken to refer to a social situation in which a certain social group or an alliance of certain social groups have a total social control or authority over other social groups not as a result of direct force or by direct imposition of ruling ideas, but by winning and shaping consent so that the power of the dominant classes appears both legitimate and natural (Stuart Hall, 1977).

In theorizing hegemony, Gramsci places special significance on the binary notions of force and consent as the two processes necessary for attaining hegemony. He avers that:

The supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as “domination” and as “intellectual and moral leadership.” A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to “liquidate” or subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups (1971:57).

Thus, Gramsci uses hegemony in two important ways: as a form of domination or rule, and as a form of consensus-formation, through which the dominant groups in the society exercise power over others. Let us now situate the current flaks in the Nigerian state within the Gramscian hegemonic perspective.

From the story of Nigeria, it becomes evident that the northern hegemony has been sustained over and against all other parts and groups for several years, spanning over almost the history of the nation, not just by intellectual and moral leadership, which comes through consent, but by “domination”, which has come through the force of its population and consequent control of the armed forces. But because “hegemony is, however, not static, not permanently fixed and can be challenged by the subordinate groups” (Dipo Irele, 2000:10), there is now the experience of a sudden change. In short, the Nigerian scenario has demonstrated that hegemony is a moving equilibrium containing relations of forces favorable or unfavorable to this or that tendency (Stuart Hall, 1976). The North which has been believed to be more ethnically relevant and as such, “Born to rule,” is now, not by force but through the process of sudden opportunity and unexpected change caused by historical interplay to yield to a consensus-formation, that enabled a minority group in Nigeria to produce a President in Goodluck Jonathan.

Thus, there are opinions among certain think-tanks in Nigeria that the whole crisis spelled out with the recent incessant bombings is a display of the North's refusal to accept that 'power could change hands.' If these opinions bear relevance, then it is unfortunate because hegemony is not universal and 'given' to the continuing rule of a particular class. It has to be won, reproduced, and sustained (Stuart Hall, 1976). To better express the Nigerian situation with the Gramscian perspective, it is necessary to take a cursory look at the story of Nigeria, pointing to the politics of power struggle.

3. The Story of Nigeria: The Politics of Power Struggle

Assessing the political trajectory of a society is daunting since the political behaviour of a people is a reflection of the complex of the culture, ethnicity, religion, values etc, of the society. It becomes more tedious with a society, like Nigeria, that is not a homogenous geographical entity; a society where ethno-religious identity plays a prominent role in the politics of power struggle. Victor Dike (2006:2) presents poignantly its inherent problem:

There is always fear of domination of one ethnic or regional or religious group over the other. The fear has remained because the federal government monopolizes power and any group whose homeboy is holding power at the centre could get the lion share of the national cake (and might even prevent others from getting their share). This development has contributed to the unending struggle for political

power, with some individuals often using undemocratic instruments (particularly the military to acquire and hold on to power in Nigeria).

Thus, as against what is obtainable in an ideal democracy, where power is lodged in the masses, in Nigeria power belongs to the politicians and political power is greater than the people's power.

An inchoate display of ethnicity surfaced in 1939 when the bulky Nigeria was divided into three regions – Northern, Western and Eastern, for administrative convenience of the colonial masters. The Minorities in these regions felt that they were not fairly represented, thus they started agitating for inclusion in the main agenda of governance in the nation. Consequently, a fourth region – the Mid Western Region – was created in 1963 by a plebiscite. Again, the desire for ethnic self-assertion and for the power and financial wherewithal that goes with statehood constituted the basis for the agitation for States by the Minorities. These agitations resulted in the 12 States created by Yakubu Gowon in 1967; the Murtala Mohammed/Olusegun Obasanjo regime increased the number to 19 States; IBB created two States in 1987 and added 9 in 1991 to bring it to 31 State and finally in 1996, General Sani Abacha created 6 additional States. Thus, “Nigeria is made up of 36 States, created as the government caved in to sentimental demands for States by various ethnic groups” (Victor E. Dike, 2006:18).

The foregoing alludes to the fact that not long after Independence, Nigeria was “beset by underlying tensions resulting from ethnic, religious and regional cleavages” (Anthony S. Banks, 1992:565-6). The result of this is that it has led to the wobbling of the Nigerian project with “patrimonialism” and “prebendal politics” which are common currencies, playing decisive roles in the circumstance (Richard I. Joseph 1983:21, 20-24). Patrimonialism refers to the exercise of state patronage, while prebendal politics or prebendalism implies a political attitude or disposition where political offices are primarily conceived and applied as means of self-aggrandizement and promotion of ethnic, religious or social ties.

Today, the political elite are involved in the power struggle and control of access to the so-called national cake. Hence, while almost all the ethnic groups in Nigeria are complaining of injustice, “the leaders are dancing around the real issues facing the society, changing their steps, as the political drumbeat changes, and with this nothing gets done” (Victor E. Dike,

2006:3). Consequently, many Nigerians have developed cynical views about politicians and politics. However, a hermeneutical approach to the Nigerian story of politics and power struggle presents the truth, that politics in Nigeria is dictated by ethnic and religious undertones. It becomes constructive therefore to examine (1) Politics and ethnicity in Nigeria, and (2) Politics and religion in Nigeria.

3.1 Politics and Ethnicity in Nigeria

Ethnicity is a serious problem in Nigerian politics. A good example is different ethnic groups clamouring for their ethnic presidency. Thus, the issue of the undemocratic “power shift” syndrome in Nigeria is a case of ethnic chauvinism (Victor E. Dike 2006:74-5). The major ethnic groups (Hausa/Fulani, Ibo, and Yoruba) have been in constant competition over political power. Until recently the South-South became part of the power play, where each claim that its ethnic group can produce the “savior” who will better manage the affairs of the nation.

Consequently in Nigeria, as in any pluralistic society, there are strong internal impulses, mutual suspicions and dominance. There are unending struggles for the control of groups by others in the sphere of politics, economics and religion (Edward A. Shils, 1956:154). Thus, in multi-ethnic Nigeria, ethnicity has become a crucial variable that often determines political behaviour. The salience of ethnicity as observed by Olatunde J.B. Ojo (1981) is intense during the period of political change, as groups vie for political jobs and power. As a result, ethnic issues are usually at the forefront during elections because ethnic groups would begin to complain of ethnic marginalizations, thereby reducing ethnic politics to becoming a “bane” in Nigeria's political development.

Furthermore, the salience of ethnicity increases as individuals of low ranked ethnic groups rise into positions hitherto the monopoly of those higher in ethnic social structure. In the case of Nigeria, the apparently numerically greater Northerners occupy more positions in Federal Government and in the Armed Forces. This trend has resulted in agitation for the restructuring of the system for a true federalism by other ethnic groups. Hence, ethnic loyalty and division have continued to frustrate efforts to build a common national identity for Nigeria. Somehow, the elite is chiefly to blame for ethnic politics in Nigeria, but the masses are as guilty as the elite in propagating ethnic politics as they vote along ethnic lines driven by the expectation that the homeboy will deliver the goods and the gold. No doubt,

the apparent reason why the Yorubas voted *en mass* for Abiola during the 1993 presidential election was the expected benefit his presidency would bring to their ethnic group (Olatunde J.B. Ojo, 1981).

3.2 Politics and Religion in Nigeria

Religion is another significant political weapon in Nigeria. Nigeria is a multi-religious society of Christianity, Islam, Traditional belief, etc. These opposing religious beliefs have a great force in the polarization of the society. Many religious organizations provide their members with a set of perspectives or norms to guide their behaviour. It means religion could be said to impact the people's political inclination and behaviour. The tie to religion as one of the ways by which group identity is expressed and maintained has warranted a form of religious politics in Nigeria.

A high point of religion polarizing the society was issued when the case of Federal Sharia Court of Appeal came up for debate in the 1978 Constituent Assembly. But instead of the federal status demanded, the 1979 Constitution provided for States Sharia Courts of Appeal (Anthony A. Akintola, 1989:109-123). Chapter 1, section 6(5) of the 1979 Constitution provides for the Sharia Court of Appeal of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. It also provides for a Sharia Court of Appeal of a State. Since then, the issue of Sharia court has been engaging in Nigeria.

However, the opponents of Sharia argued that Nigeria is secular, and that the 1999 Constitution forbids government from adopting a religion. Chapter 1, section 10 of the document says, "The Government of the Federation or State shall not adopt any religion as State religion." This however, does not oust the provisions of sections 274-279 of the 1979 Constitution which give power to the States to make independent laws in so far as they do not endanger the continuance of the federal government of Nigeria. Thus, Sharia law is another divisive issue in a nation that has already been fractured and Balkanized by ethnic problems.

From the foregoing, ethnicity and religion are deeply ingrained in the political life of Nigeria and so, the society is strewn with cases of ethnic and religious crises. It becomes more puzzling considering that these crises have taken a new approach of bombings and it is fast threatening the unity of the nation.

4. History of Bomb Blasts in Nigeria

The history of recent bomb blasts in Nigeria could be traced to 1986, during the Gen. Ibrahim Babangida-led military regime, when Mr. Dele Giwa was killed by a mail bomb in his home in Ikeja, Lagos. Subsequently, series of other bombing incidents have been reported in the country, with majority of them happening under the despotic rule of the late General Sanni Abacha. Besides, there was an isolated case of accidental bombs explosion that took place at Ikeja cantonment in 2002 (Vanguard Newspaper, 2011).

Surprisingly, bomb blasts took a new turn in Nigeria in March 2010 as an act of terrorism during the civilian regime of the then President Umaru Musa Yaradua. This incident took place when some bombs went off in Warri during the Amnesty Dialogue to tackle the cases of militancy in the Niger Delta region. Then, the October 1, 2010 twin bomb blasts close to the Eagle Square during the epic celebration of Nigeria's golden jubilee in Abuja followed, and since then bombings have become a currency in Nigeria. To be specific, the chronology of the earlier cases of bomb blasts in Nigeria is as follow:

The Earlier Cases of Bomb Blasts in Nigeria

S/N	DATE	PLACE	CONSEQUENCE
1	October 19, 1986	Ikeja, Lagos	Dele Giwa was killed
2	May 31, 1995	Ilorin Stadium	
3	January 18, 1996	Durbar Hotel, Kaduna	suspected bomber killed
4	January 20, 1996:	Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano	
5	April 11, 1996	Ikeja Cantonment, Lagos	
6	April 25, 1996	Air Force Base, Ikeja	
7	November 14, 1996	Murtala Mohammed Airport	A Chief Security Officer was killed
8	December 16, 1996	Lagos	Colonel Marwa's convoy
9	December 18, 1996	Lagos	Bus belonging to the Lagos State Task Force on Environmental Sanitation was hit by bomb
10	January 17, 1997		Bus belonging to Nigerian Army was hit by bomb
11	April 22, 1997	Evans Square	Claims 3 lives, injures several
12	May 12, 1997	Ibadan; in front of Federal Min. of Works and Housing at Eleyele Road, near Jericho Hospital	

13	December 13, 1997	Abuja airport	Lt. Gen Oladipo Diya escapes death
14	January 27, 2002	Ikeja cantonment	Over 1000 people died
15	March 15, 2010	Warri; during an Amnesty Dialogue	
16	October 1, 2010	Abuja; during Nigeria's 50th Independence anniversary	
17	January 1, 2011	Abuja; an Army Barracks Mammy market	
18	April 8, 2011	Suleja, Niger State; at INEC office	
19	April 26, 2011	Maiduguri, Borno State	
20	May 29, 2011	An Army barrack in Bauchi	
21	June 16, 2011	Police Force Headquarters, Abuja	claimed eight lives, destroyed 33 vehicles and damaged 40 others
22	August 2011	UN headquarters in Abuja	killing at least 24 people
23	December 25 th 2011	Madalla	killing at least 27 people

5. Boko Haram: Indicted for the Recent Bombings

Boko Haram whose name means “Western education is forbidden” ordinarily signifies a revolt to Western education, but in practice, it goes differently. Its official name is “People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad,” which is the English translation of *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awatiwal-Jihad*. The residents of Maiduguri (northeastern Nigeria), where the group was formed, dubbed it *Boko Haram*, the term which comes from the Hausa word “*Boko*” meaning “western education” and the Arabic word “*Haram*” figuratively meaning “sin” but literally meaning “forbidden.” Thus, *Boko Haram* translates into “western education is forbidden” (Wikipedia, 17/04/2012). The name is due to its strong opposition to anything Western, which it sees as, from its religious understanding and perspective, corrupting Nigerian Muslims (F. Chothia, 2012).

Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for most of the recent bombings in Nigeria and such bombings by the sect has steadily increased in number, frequency and sophistication, leading to an astronomic death toll and destruction of property. The attacks have not abated despite the raids of the armed forces on their so-called bomb factories and the arrests of a number of alleged *Boko Haram* members by authorities. Also, there has been intense speculation on whether *Boko Haram* has formed links with outside extremist groups, including Al-Qaeda's North African branch.

The group, which is believed to have a number of factions with varying aims, launched an uprising in 2009 that was put down by a brutal military assault which left some 800 dead as well as its mosque and headquarters in the north eastern city of Maiduguri in ruins. It then went dormant for about a year before re-emerging in 2010 with a series of assassinations.

On official note, the group was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 in the city of Maiduguri with the aim of establishing a Shari'a government in Borno State under former Governor Ali Modu Sheriff (T. Johnson, 2011), and a religious complex that included a mosque and a school where many poor families from across Nigeria and from neighboring countries enrolled their children, was established. It was reported that Yusuf successfully attracted followers from unemployed youth "by speaking out against police and political corruption" (Wikipedia, 2012). However, the complex was relocated to Yusuf's home state of Yobe in the village of Kanamma near the Niger border in 2004 (Al Jazeera, 2009-07-27). Until recently, very few – including the Nigerian security and intelligence agencies – knew very little about the group's origin and philosophy, its *raison d'être*, and its goals and endgame. Eight years after it came into existence, and in spite of the calamity the group has caused, the government seems not to know how to clip the group's wings (S. Abidde, 2012).

Daily Trust Newspaper reports that, a spokesman for the Boko Haram, Abul Qaqa, claiming responsibility for the Christmas day bombings across the North, told journalists on phone that:

By the grace of God, we are responsible for all the attacks today. What we did was a reminder to all those that forgot the atrocities committed against our Muslim brothers during the Eid el-Fitr celebrations in Jos. Many Muslims were killed but the Federal Government and the international community maintained sealed lips. There will never be peace until our demands are met. We want all our brothers who have been incarcerated to be released; we want full implementation of the Sharia system and we want democracy and the Constitution to be suspended (26-25-2011).

Consequently, the recent activities of Boko Haram have been very damaging both physically, psychologically, religiously, politically and economically. And because its theatre of operation is very wide, no one can predict where it is going to strike next. It operates at will and at its own

choosing and it seems to have this aura of invincibility. These factors give the group a clear advantage over the government and the people.

6. Rationale for Boko Haram?

There is the possibility to justify Boko Haram as a repudiation of Western imperialism and domination but that will, by implication, amount to a justification of the philosophy of violence. Although violence has its own value, it must be regulated, calculated and moderated with the aid of dialogue. In short, the recourse to violence as the only option is at best exaggerated and highly restrictive.

Sequel to the foregoing, the philosopher of nonviolence, Mohandas K. Gandhi gives us the following lesson:

I have learned by bitter experience, through a period of close upon thirty years, the one supreme lesson, namely, to conserve my anger, to control it, and just as heat conserved is transmuted into energy, so also our anger, conserved and controlled, can result in a power that becomes irresistible throughout the world (Green, 1993:60).

In demystifying and rejecting violence, nonviolence graciously prepares a bright and democratic future, the very one where force will have no say. Whereas the myth of violence ends up by valorizing violence as a legitimate resource, Gandhi's nonviolent option banishes forever the use of force from human society.

What then could be gleaned from the dastardly acts of *Boko Haram as its raison d'être*? Dahiru Yahaya (2011-10-16) advanced two reasons for it. First, he avers that Boko Haram is a conspiracy against Nigeria, which is a deliberate design to bring it down to the benefit of the perpetrators. But he emphasized that it started since the colonial era:

When the colonialists came to Nigeria the first conspiracy was to convert Muslims to Christianity through the use of missionaries.... However, they realized that Muslims cannot be converted to Christianity and only non-Muslims accepted the new faith. The colonialist later opted to the second conspiracy which was to separate Muslims from Islam.... Thus, they wanted to produce a secular Muslim bereft of Islamic values, Qur'an and the holy Prophet (AS).... So, a secularist can work against the interest of Islam and Muslims (2011-10-16).

Yahaya noted that in all the cases, the motive of the conspiracy is domination; to dominate mind and resources. But, for him, the trend cannot continue as everyone is aware of his resources and how to control it.

The second reason Yahaya gave was that resisting oppression was established in Islam by Ahlul Bayt particularly by Imam Husain and also mental or intellectual hijrah is also established matter in Islam. For him, because of the situation in Nigeria, different methods of checking oppression are employed by different scholars at different time, and the methods differ for each era and time. Thus, Boko Haram is one of such methods, the only difference, according to him, is that Boko Haram subscribed to Islam without subscribing to time and changes. He concluded that *Boko Haram* is a result of bad governance where people do not have meaning in their lives except frustration:

In Nigeria even the life of citizen is not protected. So Nigerians are pushed to (the) wall, only the poor are taxed while (the) rich are not. Everybody knows that things are not right in Nigeria. Now, methods of checking these excess varies from group to group. When others prefer to die than to live in the condition, others subscribed to other methods. This is the beginning of Boko Haram, and many groups are coming up (2011-10-16).

From another perspective, Sheikh Sani Yahaya Jingir, the chairman national council of Ulama of Izalatil Bidiah Waikamatis Sunnah (JIBWIS), insisted that there is more to the Boko Haram phenomenon than meets the eye. As reported by Leadership Newspaper (2012-04-16), he accused the west of accomplice saying, "The West may have hands in it because they predicted the disintegration of Nigeria by 2015." Sheikh Jingir, explained that the current killings and manner of the attack showed clearly that it was a grand ploy to ground the North as according to him "how comes someone who hates western education will be terrorising people in Maiduguri where the level of education is low and not the south with high rate of education?" Concluding, he said, "if it is western education they don't want in Nigeria, how comes it is only the North that the killings and bombings persist while in other regions there are no such things? There is more to it" (*Leadership*, 2011-10-16).

Furthermore, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi expressly used official national statistics on population and revenue allocation to identify the thirteen percent (13%) derivation paid to the oil-producing states of Nigeria's Niger

Delta region as being the main cause of the Boko Haram phenomenon in especially the North-East region of the country. Sanusi described Nigeria's revenue allocation formula as being patently anti-North, saying:

There is clearly a direct link between the very uneven nature of distribution of resources and the rising level of violence... When you look at the figures and look at the size of the population in the North, you can see that there is a structural imbalance of enormous proportions. Those states simply do not have enough resources to meet basic needs while some States have too much money... This imbalance is compounded when the cost of an amnesty program for militants in the delta is included together with an additional 1 percent for a special development body for the Niger Delta (Business Day, 2012-04-11).

A position of this sort coming from an educated and respected Economist of the North can generate violent agitations against government.

A different rationale for the dastardly acts of the Boko Haram is presented by the Federal Government, who opines that the recent bomb blasts in Nigeria were politically motivated and handiwork of detractors who wanted to bring down the present administration led by Goodluck Jonathan. The then Minister of Interior, Capt. Emmanuel Iheanacho (rtd), said;

...Nobody is going to stampede the government; nobody is going to blackmail the government. People are entitled to have political differences. But certainly, they are not entitled to try and interfere with other peoples' lives by planting bombs, by threatening to kill and maim people (Nigerian Tribune, 2011-01-04).

The foregoing reasons advanced by different perspectives make the *Boko Haram* saga an enigma to which a simple approach would be grossly irrelevant. Consequently, it is imperative to critically examine its implications.

7. Implications of the Recent Bomb Blasts on the Continuous Existence of Nigeria

To ensure an effective relay, the implications will be considered under the different aspects of human relations in the society, which include social, political, economic, moral, and religious, among others. However, the following implications have already been implicitly articulated above. So, what is required now is to deductively point them out.

From the social angle, the bombings could lead to the fading away of what is called the Nigerian community or society. Until recently, the name Nigeria suggests a nucleus of a nation striving to attain oneness. In the contemporary, sequel to the bombings, the name Nigeria evokes the feeling of a declining and eroding nation in its meaning and referent, leading to the fear of the unknown. This feeling of disintegration that these bombings possibly cause is informed by the fact that, it helps to heighten and strengthen ethnicity to the disadvantage of national unity. Nigerians could prefer to relate to people of their ethnic groups, while those of other ethnic groups are treated with so much suspicion and distrust as enemies of national growth and development.

Also, some important cities like Abuja, Jos and Kaduna that epitomize and embody the sense of Nigeria are fast losing that enviable status. Such cities usually display an aura of the unity of Nigeria, as tribal sentiments and ethnic segregations are far from practice. They have always served as synergies and lubricants to the unity of Nigeria as everyone lives and feels like a Nigerian when in such cities. Nowadays, Jos, Kaduna, or even Abuja are ordinarily no more safe havens, and *loci* of meeting and living together in peaceful coexistence with no brazen ethnic and religious oppression. The North must work harder to ensure these cities within its geographical borders reclaim their status. It gives credence to the power brokers of the North as maintaining the needed order of the Region.

Furthermore, Nigerians no longer have trust in one another. Our reference here is to the masses and not to the elite, because the masses make the country work. The masses must therefore form a synergy to make Nigeria work. It must avoid every deception that will make them engaged in the shootings and bombings that have crippled the social nucleus of the nation, because the elite do not always suffer from such breakdown of socio-economic structures and system, it is the masses that do. Therefore, the masses must avoid the mistrust of themselves, especially along ethnic and religious lines caused by the so called elite. It must be known that ordinarily in the sharing of the national cake, the elite are not divided along ethnic and religious lines. It is mostly when they want to be relevant in their Constituencies that they flog up ethnic and religious sentiments.

Politically, the bombings constitute a total threat to the government and political stability of Nigeria. Rather than focusing on harnessing resources

for the well being of the citizens, the government is distracted by these bombings and it dissipates its valuable income and time in seeing to end the destructive incidents around. The danger of this scenario is that it can generate or support a *coup d'état* arising from insecurity, and that will be a dive back to the torturing experience of military rule. It becomes clear that the bombings are shaking the democratic structure which Nigeria had waited so long and sacrificed so much to achieve.

In addition, the bombing is creating a new political culture of violence. The bombings could create in Nigerians the theories of "Might is Right" and "Survival of the Fittest" as the best option. Should we get to that level, it will lead to grave social and moral limitations, because in the future other ethnic and/or religious groups may assume that violence is the only means by which they can be heard, and their socio-economic needs, granted. Should we be reduced to that level, we will lose the sense of civility and humaneness.

On the economic plane, the recent spate of bombs and other terrorist attacks in Nigeria is claiming more than lives and limbs. Ordinarily, one of the major requirements for the growth and development of an economy is the ease with which persons and capital move from one section to another. The more citizens of a country are free to live, work, invest and prosper in all parts of the country, the faster the pace of development. Once the mobility of capital, labour and citizens as economic agents is abridged by insecurity and violence, then the prospects of economic growth, maturity and development of the entire national economy becomes jeopardized. Therefore, one could hold that the Boko Haram assault is directly affecting the economic survival of the northern states in particular and the nation in general. What happens in the North reverberates internationally against Nigeria as it reflects the overall environment in which life is lived and business is done in the country. Kano, for instance, in addition to being a major historic hub for trade between Nigeria and its northern neighbours and indeed the rest of North Africa and the Arab world, it is the commercial nerve centre of the defunct Northern Nigeria. Its cosmopolitan nature means that its population, while heavily indigenous, consists of an admixture of Nigerians from all over the federation as well as foreigners, some of whom have lived in Kano across several generations. The effective economic life of Kano therefore consists of the commercial activities and artisanal undertakings of its cosmopolitan population. In the

contemporary, the spate of bombings in the North (Kano inclusive) is deeply affecting the economy of Kano and the North at large. The side effect being that the Boko Haram activities have created a fast lane to the impoverishment of the nation, as there is massive relocation of people from some particular parts of the country, while others are now afraid to invest in some particular areas and in Nigeria in general by foreigners. It will be unfortunate for the nation to be dubbed as having investor-friendly parts, while others as investor-non-friendly. This can negatively affect industrialization, urbanization, socialization, etc. What this enemy-of-progress thus leaves behind is a poor country; Nigeria.

Also, the human cost of the bombings is unquantifiable especially as the number of victims has been on a geometric increase as the bombings have become incessant. What it leaves in its wake is more dependents. From the moral angle, the sense of good and bad is fast eroding. This is because some religious and political arguments are being put forward to justify the shameless killings resulting from the bombings. So, the pride and dignity of the Nigerian person is taken for granted, when the ruthless killing of a huge number of Nigerians is not taken as unfortunate and evil. Consequently, the bombings have occasioned gross violations of human rights and are creating a war generation in Nigeria. This is because the children of this age will be inclined to shootings, bombings and war.

Above all, Boko Haram's continuous attack on Christians makes it a religious rather than political attack. Whether by design or by default, the diary of Boko Haram's activities clearly indicates that the Christians are bearing the major brunt of most of its terrorist actions, especially in view of the fact that Christian festivals are now associated with heightened security concerns and eventualities.

8. Conclusion

The question that comes to mind now is: what exactly is Nigeria? It now seems as if Nigeria, as a country, has long passed its expiry date. There is a clear possibility of war and division because the activities of Boko Haram might already have signaled a breakdown of consent within the political structure of the Nigerian society. The people of Nigeria have lived together for one hundred years and it is a challenge on us not to allow the labours of our heroes past to go in vain, but work harder hence to repair the damage caused and improve on our past. We must begin by reinventing our mental attitudes towards nationhood, nationalism and patriotism. The task of

thinking a way out of this impending danger is more relevant than putting up luscious banquets to celebrate the Nigerian centenary.

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