



# #BeyondtheHashtags:

Taking the anti-terror campaign beyond street and online action

2014

**SPACES FOR CHANGE**



# #BeyondtheHashtags:

Taking the anti-terror campaign beyond street and online action

*“We have protested on the streets. We have vented on Twitter and Facebook. We now want to ask hard questions about the handling of the counter-insurgency operations. We now demand answers to the many unresolved questions about the #AbductedBornoSchoolGirls saga!”*

- Funke Tega-Phillips



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**Spaces for Change (S4C) is a non-profit organization working to infuse human rights into social and economic governance processes in Nigeria. Through research, policy analysis, advocacy, youth engagement, public interest litigation and community action, the organization aims to increase the participation of Nigerian youth, women and marginalized constituencies in social and economic development, and also help public authorities and corporate entities to put a human rights approach at the heart of their decision-making.**

Published by: **Spaces for Change.S4C**

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**Published in May 2014**

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# #BeyondtheHashtags

Over 200 hundred students of Chibok Girls Secondary School, Borno State have entered the second month in the captivity of Boko Haram insurgent fighters that have terrorized the northern part of Nigeria over the last five years. The abduction of the school girls triggered street protests and online campaigns with hashtags such as #BringBackOurGirls, #AbductedBornoSchoolGirls, #ChibokGirls, gaining global attention and international military assistance to Nigerian security forces.

What began as local insurgency in the north eastern part of the country has gradually mutated into full-blown terrorist activities, with over 12,000 persons killed, maimed and injured in bomb explosions, school and house burnings, community raids, assassinations, jail breaks, reprisal attacks and violent confrontations between insurgents and security operatives. Although the Nigerian security forces, supported by foreign troops, have intensified efforts to secure the release of the abducted school girls, it has become increasingly apparent that the wide range of military, legislative and executive measures that have been put in place to counter the growing scale of terrorist activities have not been as effective as they should be. In particular, hard questions have been asked probing the adequacy of military infrastructure, welfare of military personnel, conflicting data of the missing girls, religionization of the security crisis, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and so forth.

#BeyondtheHashtags is a conversation seeking to interrogate and evaluate the handling of the counter-terrorism operations in the northern part of the country, with a special focus on the abduction of hundreds of Chibok school girls. The May 20, 2014 Citizens Forum drew an impressive cast of independent legal experts, human rights advocates, community leaders, students, public servants, security operatives, media professionals, concerned citizens and civil society organizations, united by the determination to take the anti-terror campaign beyond street and online action.

Building on the existing advocacy spaces and bonds of solidarity deepened by the hashtag campaigns, the forum offered a no-holds-barred arena to track the needs and gaps in the management of the Nigerian security crisis, and mutually demand answers to unresolved questions across the non-contentious divides. In addition to offering scholarly understanding of the legal foundations for Nigeria's security, justice and human rights architecture, both the panelists and participants enjoyed the rare opportunity of meeting and learning from each other: discussing and clarifying their common goals and disparate experiences, acknowledging the obstacles to Nigeria's insecurity problem, even as they began to propose realistic strategies for overcoming them.



## Issues in Focus – Panelists

Presentations and moderated discussions by #BeyondtheHashtags Forum panelists identified the security gaps to be filled in the counter-terror campaign; the challenges to be met through improved planning; the possible complementarity of skills, experiences and efforts; and the synergies that can and should emerge from beyond current operations and expectations. The conversation was constructed around the following topics:

- Collective Approach to Fighting Terrorism: CSP Monday Agbonika, Divisional Police Officer, Central Police Station, Adeniji Adele, Lagos Island
- The Judiciary's Role in the War Against Terrorism - Ayo Obe, ex-CLO President
- The Rule of Law Vs. Insurgency: Bamidele Aturu, legal expert and member of the Nigerian Bar
- An Urgent Call for Security Sector Reforms - Okechukwu Nwanguma, Network on Police Reforms in Nigeria (NOPRIN)
- Bettering the Welfare of Security Personnel - Laila St Mathew Daniels, ACTS Generation | Jasper Azuatalam, Movement for Accountability and Good Governance
- Empowering Youth Against Terrorism - Olawale James Ajani, President, National Youth Council of Nigeria
- Providing Maximum Protection for School Childrem - Betty Abah, Centre for Children's Health Education, Orientation and Protection (CEE-HOPE Nigeria) | Amy Ayokunle, Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND)
- Terrorism: Examining the Role of Lawyers - Emmanuel Majebi, member of the Nigerian Bar Association
- Rebuilding Crisis-torn Communities - Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri, executive director, Spaces for Change



# The War against Terrorism: Gaps, Issues and Challenges

The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government:

S. 14(1) (b) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria

- **Collective Approach to Fighting Terrorism**

Terrorism is a new phenomenon in Nigeria, compared to other parts of the world like Iraq, Israel, Palestine and others nations that have long been devastated by the violent activities of terrorists and religious extremists. Since the emergence of Boko Haram<sup>1</sup> Islamic sect in 2009, its unbridled activities have grown beyond the imagination of its creators, thrusting Nigeria into a cesspool of snowballing security crisis. At the beginning of the insurgency, the use of AK-47 rifles and other dangerous weapons like machets, daggers, bows and arrows were common. Early 2011 saw the introduction of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) or home-made bombs, planted and effected with deadly precision, ostensibly with the active connivance of fundamentalists from other radicalized nations such as Sudan, Niger Republic and Somalia. The sect is reported to have links with the internationally-dreaded Al-Qaeda, with the intent of destabilizing the nation and creating the impression of general insecurity.

In order to stem the rising tide of terrorism, citizens must seriously reconsider the notion that security is the exclusive responsibility of the government. Everyone should be on red alert, and actively involved in the business of security. If that is deeply ingrained in the consciousness of the populace, then it would be very easy for people to recognize security threats, and take concerted steps to secure their lives and properties.

An average police man on the streets of Lagos cannot tell what an improvised explosive device (IED) looks



<sup>1</sup> Boko Haram is a Hausa phrase which literally means, “western education is forbidden or sinful”. The phrase is often used to refer to the controversial Borno-based Islamic sect, *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* which in Arabic means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad. Founded by late Muslim cleric, Mohammed Yusuf, the sect is agitating for the imposition of Shariah law in the northern states of Nigeria.





like, even though such explosives can be easily identified. An example of an IED is a gas cylinder with wires attached to it. Empty cans with attached wires to them can also be used as IEDs. Citizens must alert security agencies whenever they see such items. Further aggravating the poor knowledge base about the detection of explosive devices is an outdated information dissemination system for communicating terrorist threats, compounded by distrust between security operatives and citizens. The Boko Haram insurgency has exposed the inadequacy of our information system, especially within military and police institutions. In this digital era, the information system of security institutions needs a technological backup, as a matter of urgency.

At the root of the security challenges in the country is the absence of a dedicated intelligence gathering system which has immensely contributed to the success of anti-crime and anti-terror campaigns in developed countries. Boko Haram insurgency flourishes due to the lack of intelligence-led policing systems. It is also not the type of insurgency fought like a James-Bond movie style, but one that should be guided by information and intelligence. Absent cooperation between citizens and security institutions, misinformation thrives, making it difficult to combat terrorism effectively. Overturning this mutual distrust will help security agencies process information into intelligence that can guide security planning and inform institutional interventions.

One of the ways of enhancing intelligence gathering within police institutions is through community policing. Community-oriented policing has the following key principles: service delivery, empowerment, intelligence and accountability. In Adeniji Adele Central Police Station in Lagos Island, for instance, where community-oriented policing is fully in practice, community members working closely with policemen attached to the police station formed working groups to find solutions to a range of community problems. The working groups meet periodically to report back on specific threats, and categorize risks along thematic lines. This report back mechanism helps the police to determine risks and propose joint action for surveillance and apprehension of offenders.

More so, Nigerian organizations have scant regard for security, and generally lack awareness on how to critical emergencies related to fires, flood, bomb blasts, kidnapping, rape and other violent crimes. In emergency situations, awareness isn't just enough, but must be matched by practice. Without practice, it is hard to start apply knowledge during times of emergency. Risk assessment security briefings should be undertaken regularly by organizations. Install CCTV in homes and workplaces also helps criminal investigations.

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..... CSP Agbonika



**Rule of Law Vs. Insurgency<sup>2</sup>:** It is important to look at the character of the state, before determining how to operationalize the rule of law. The current laws in the country were made by the ruling elites to protect their interests. That is why every attempt to change the constitution always meets stiff resistance. Under the ongoing constitutional amendment process, three different alterations have taken place already, without any common ground reached on the definite constitutional provisions. Such naked perversion of the rule of law is a major characteristic of a “deformed capitalist state” or a “rogue” state because its leaders or ruling class is superior to the constitution, and as such disregard the rule of law with impunity. They are more concerned with primitive accumulation of wealth. The perversion of all the decent principles of the rule of law, corruption and impunity are the main features of that deformity.



From the above, it can be gleaned that the rule of law in operation in Nigeria today has all the necessary ingredients to naturally provoke an insurgency. *“In fact, If I were young, I would be leading an insurgency, right now, for the enthronement of the genuine rule of law”*, Bamidele Aturu stated. The brazen deprivation of citizens’ rights and distortion of rule of law systems in Nigeria is such that should provoke Nigerians to challenge the status quo.

That weakening of rule of law systems spreads across all sectors of governance, including the justice and security sectors. As continuing acts of terror shatters the security fabric of the nation, the judiciary’s role in such difficult times is one of great importance. In other words, any country that claims to be a democracy must have an effective judiciary to interpret laws and ensure that the rule of law is upheld even in situations of emergency. In doing this, judges must be honest and interpret

laws in a way that guarantees public safety. Also, an effective judiciary must not grant ex parte orders frivolously as often seen in the judicial community.

Worst hit by the weakening rule of law systems and mechanisms in Nigeria is the Nigeria Police Force. Members of the Nigeria Police Force are not trained to carry out intelligence-led policing, so they resort to *panic policing* which has more often times than not, seen them playing into the hands of Boko Haram fighters. There is need to do away with the archaic, obtrusive and menacing style of policing that is currently practiced. Policing should be intelligence-led, not noticeable in an unpleasant way. It

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Bamidele Aturu, a legal expert, human rights activist and member of the Nigerian Bar Association





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should rather be unobtrusive, should not attract unnecessary attention. Policing need not attract attention to be efficient. When you see police officers or other security agents wield arms openly in any developed society the way we often see it in Nigeria, it means there is a situation. Panic policing should be replaced with unobstructive policing whereby policing operations are covert and discreetly done.

Another problem slowing down progress in the performance of the Nigerian police is their impatience for the outcome of judicial proceedings. It is this impatience that propelled the police to kill former Boko Haram leader, Mohammed Yusuf while he was in their custody, an act responsible for the escalation of the insurgency in north east Nigeria today. Although the rule of law may seem slow, sometimes allowing hardened criminals and perpetrators of political crimes to escape from the claws of justice, it still ought to be respected and adhered to.

In order to increase the capacity of the police to effectively respond to security threats, the police should be better trained, and properly funded, and that there should be “careful scrutiny” during the recruitment processes of security personnel.

**The Role of the Judiciary Fighting Terrorism<sup>3</sup>:** The security challenges in Nigeria today are not an entirely new phenomenon as many other nations have walked through this rough path before. In the 70s, England witnessed a wave of violence resulting from the operations of the IRA, that frequently bombed English targets. The March 8, 1973 London bombing is one of the most infamous IRA operations involving sisters Dolores and Marion Price and nine others who placed four car bombs in Heathrow airport. Two of the teams were apprehended and two bombs defused, while the remaining two bombs exploded, killing one man and injuring some 180 other people.

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<sup>3</sup> Discussion moderated by Ayo Obe, ex-CLO leader



Recognizing that the IRA had become increasingly sophisticated, the security forces in England began to use codes to track emergencies and security threats, improving on its intelligence, logistical coordination and expertise of its terror-combat systems. Massive human rights violations accompanied Britain's efforts to combat terrorism, especially the stereotyping



***Unlawful detention, torture and extrajudicial killings should never be condoned, even under a state of emergency. The judiciary's role in fighting terrorism is to ensure the rule of law is upheld regardless of the gravity and intensity of the security situation.***

***Arrested persons, including terror suspects should be released if there's no evidence against them. Mohammed Yusuf's case has shown that killing suspects while in custody is counter-productive, as this amplifies the scale of reprisal attacks from insurgents.***

- Ayo Obe

of Irish people, suspected and "imagined" of having links to the IRA terrorists. For instance, a controversial miscarriage of justice occurred in February 1974 when Judith Ward, a woman with a history of mental illness, was jailed for an IRA bomb attack planted on a coach carrying servicemen and their families, killing 11 people. The British judiciary stepped up its scrutiny during that dark episode in the British history, clipping a variety of security-related activities that breached the human rights of citizens.

In Nigeria, human rights atrocities on a scale similar to the IRA era, have reportedly accompanied the counter-insurgency operations in northern Nigeria. As was seen in the Britain example, the judiciary has a duty and obligation to uphold the rule of law, even in a situation of insurgency.

The inability of the Nigerian Police to present water tight cases before the judiciary against terrorists is one of the major reasons why terrorism has flourished in Nigeria. Resorting to extra judicial killings to quell the insurgency, as exemplified by the unlawful killing of late Boko Haram leader, Mohammed Yusuf, is antithetical to democratic tenets and human rights norms. Instead of quelling the insurgency, Yusuf's unlawful killing has fuelled the resilience of the sect to continue acts of terror,

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thereby escalating the security crisis in the country.

Arrested persons, including terror suspects should be released if there's no evidence against them. The Mohammed Yusuf's case has shown that killing suspects while in custody is counter-productive, as this amplifies the scale of reprisal attacks from insurgents. The slow nature of the judicial processes isn't enough reason for the police and security agencies to take the law into their hands or resort to self-help. The judiciary can only convict terrorists based on the forensic evidence put before it by the police. Unlawful detention, torture and extrajudicial killings should never be condoned, even under a state of emergency. The judiciary's role in fighting terrorism is to ensure the rule of law is upheld regardless of the gravity and intensity of the security situation.

Furthermore, the adoption of Sharia law as state religion in some northern states flouts the Nigerian Constitution. The Sharia codifies a mix of religious and cultural norms of traditional Islamic communities. The human rights corpus however, is universal, inalienable and has primacy above cultural and religious codes.

**Urgent Reforms in the Security Sector<sup>4</sup>** is imperative if the nation is to win the war against terrorism. The Nigeria Police Force is not well equipped with the adequate weaponry to fight terrorism

and ensure peace. Substantiated reports claim that security operatives posted to the northern part of the country had often deserted the battlefield upon discovering that Boko Haram members had better, more sophisticated guns and ammunitions than they had. Security operatives are generally not well motivated

to carry out their duties. Recently, a military commander escaped death after a group of angry soldiers, expressing their unhappiness over their poor welfare, turned their guns at his vehicle and pulled the trigger. In 2009, 27 soldiers that served in the United Nations Mission in Liberia were jailed for life by a military court martial. The former UN peacekeepers were court martialed for demonstrating on the streets of Akure in southwestern Nigeria over unpaid allowances. The life sentence was later reduced to seven years.



***The Boko Haram insurgency has advertised the inefficiency of security operations and infrastructure, making it very critical to reform the security sector. The reforms must begin with making the Nigerian Police Force truly independent, and divorced from the grip of the executive arm of government.***

**- Okechukwu Nwanguma**

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Okechukwu Nwanguma, Network on Police Reforms in Nigeria





If these many concerns within security institutions are not addressed, soldiers would soon find it more lucrative to join the insurgents and swell their ranks.

The Boko Haram insurgency has advertised the inefficiency of security operations and infrastructure, making it very critical to reform the security sector, beginning with making the Nigerian Police Force truly independent, and divorced from the grip of the executive arm of government. Appointing the executive headship of the police should not be in the hands of the political leadership. Since the president is the operational and policy head of the police force, it means the Inspector General of the Police is tied to the apron strings of the president and subject to the whims and caprices of the president.

Decentralization of the Nigeria Police is another way of reforming the security sector. This will lead to the creation of the state police formations, which has been proven world over to be the best form of policing. The fears against state police are well founded, given the propensity of state executives to abuse power. But laws, systems and effective mechanisms will take care of these fears and check potential abuse by state executives.

### **Bettering the Welfare of Security Personnel:**<sup>5</sup>

There have been a lot of questions about whether these soldiers fighting the insurgents are adequately taken care of and well-motivated to engage and quell the insurgency. Corroborated investigations by both media and watchdog organizations have shown that soldiers at the frontlines battling the insurgents struggle under deplorable working conditions. Findings show that security operatives involved in the counter-insurgency operations are paid N1,000 and the same amount was paid to soldiers, riot policemen, State Security Services officials and other security operatives under the Joint Task Force. Out of the N45,000 month salary paid to each security operative, the authorities deducted the sum of N15,000 from each personnel as feeding allowances in the camps.



<sup>5</sup> Laila St. Mathew Daniels of ACTS Generation and Jasper Azuatalam from the Movement for Accountability and Good Governance



Investigation further revealed that the present arrangement makes a provision of N50,000 for the family of any soldier or security operative who gets killed in action.

Members of the security forces are not well fed or well paid and are not even properly treated when injured. On several occasions, soldiers have had to buy drugs to treat themselves for injuries sustained in the frontlines because the only drugs available in the infirmary were paracetamol tablets.

Nigeria's security budget has increased considerably in the last two years and citizens are asking whether the allocations have matched actual spending in the sector. Compounding the questionable spending of security resources is the bureaucratic bottlenecks for funding approvals for military operations and the corrupt practices of senior military officers. The recent acts of impunity send warning signals of violations that must be thoroughly investigated and the offenders brought to justice<sup>6</sup>.

### **Providing Maximum Protection for School Children<sup>7</sup>:**

Education is not taken seriously in most Borno communities. Schools are often situated in isolated areas, leaving students vulnerable to attacks from Boko Haram members. The systemic security problems in Nigeria cannot be solved by hashtags alone, but through improved school enrollment, improved school attendance and improved security in Northern schools of Borno. These were the findings of a recent fact-finding mission to Maiduguri, Borno State.<sup>8</sup> There is also need to establish for trauma centers to deal with the psychological and emotional shock of affected parents, families and the abducted Chibok girls when they return<sup>9</sup>.



***"I am happy about the international publicity of the #bringbackourgirls hashtag," Amy Oyekunle said. "But beyond the hashtag, I think that Borno needs a very strong sense of strategy in terms of how they would recoup and deal with the insurgency...We saw a lot of women who had lost their husbands...a lot of children have been killed. And then there's the tendency that parents might not even send their children back to school because of the Boko Haram attacks on schools."***

***- Amy Oyekunle, KIND***

<sup>6</sup> Jasper Azuatalam. Movement for Accountable and Good Governance

<sup>7</sup> Amy Oyekunle of the Kudirat Initiative for Peace (KIND) and Betty Abah of the Centre for Children's Health EDUCATION, Orientation and Protection (CEE-HOPE Nigeria)

<sup>8</sup> Research mission was conducted in May 2014 by Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND)

<sup>9</sup> Laila St. Matthew Daniels



**Terrorism: Examining the Role of Lawyers**<sup>10</sup>: The insurgency has considerably disrupted legal practice in the North East, while lawyers and institutions of the rule of law have been targets of attacks as well. When terrorists are apprehended and arraigned before the court, lawyers and judges play the primary roles of defending suspects and ensuring they are given fair hearing. Other roles include bringing cases before national and international tribunals; increasing awareness and capacity of affected individuals and communities to use the courts to seek redress; developing a jurisprudential research and advocacy agenda for the prosecution of terror suspects; facilitating mutual learning from developments in different jurisdictions and advocating for expeditious trial of cases involving terror suspects.

**Empowering Youth Against Extremism and Terrorism:**<sup>11</sup> must begin with job creation and expanding employment opportunities for millions of unemployed young Nigerians. Youth that are employed and fully engaged hardly have time for terrorist activities. In addition, measures must be put in place to check and prevent school dropout rates among the youth. Aminu Sadiq Ogwuche, a suspect wanted in connection with the April 14, 2014 deadly attack in Nyanya motor park in Abuja, Nigeria which killed at least 75 people, dropped out of university in Britain, where allegedly radicalised. Beyond the hashtags, future actions against terrorism must be sustained even when the girls are found. Similarly, religious activities should be regulated, to checkmate extremism among the youth<sup>12</sup>. Ayo has a core message for the youth: *the younger generation should be more involved in this project called Nigeria*.

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<sup>10</sup> Emmanuel Majebi, a member of the Nigerian Bar Association

<sup>11</sup> Olawale James Ajani, President, National Youth Council of Nigeria

<sup>12</sup> Jasper Azuatalam





## Concluding Observations



**Corruption:** Human rights advocates, independent legal and security experts, media, non-governmental and civil society organisations already working and campaigning around sexual violence in conflict, conflict transformation and peace-building, women rights, children and youth issues, including citizens from all walks of life identified the gaps in national security and human rights protection systems which have become more severe in the context of terrorist and extremist activities in the northern part of Nigeria. Secondly, dealing with Boko Haram-led terrorism in an environment of government corruption and human rights abuses is unlikely to yield lasting peace and positive outcomes. Not only that, inaction on the part of citizens to challenge impunity and social injustices emboldens insurgents to operate lawlessly, and breeds official nonchalance.

**Boko Haram insurgency is not a regional crisis:** Many Nigerians, including institutions of civil society often view the insurgency in north east Nigeria as a localized regional conflict, with the result that many actors that should be concerned and working collaboratively to find solutions to the problems do not see any role for themselves but rather as problems to be solved by local communities and groups based in the northern region. To win the war against festering insecurity, the Boko Haram insurgency must be



viewed as an urgent national crisis requiring a comprehensive national response to the situation.

**Call for State Police:** The intensity of terrorist activities in the northern region and high crime rates in the southern region, compounded by the federal government's helplessness in the face of mounting insecurity, has resuscitated the debate on state police. The ongoing constitutional amendment process presents another opportunity to consider the propriety or otherwise of having a decentralized police force.

Would the security situation in the country rouse the Nigerian parliament to consider a constitutional amendment moving police affairs from the exclusive list to the concurrent list, thereby allowing state governments to exercise full control over the instrumentalities of public security in their respective states? Decentralization of the police force is not only in tandem with the pursuit of true federalism, but also enables community and citizen participation in crime control.

**Increased Citizens' Security Consciousness:** Advocates and advocacy groups agreed on the need to empower citizens to alert security agencies when they see any sign of security threat within their communities. In the United States for instance, a child knows that s/he will dial 911 when s/he finds himself in a dangerous or emergency situation, but this is not the case in Nigeria, where majority of citizens, including the enlightened ones do not know that a similar 112 code exists<sup>13</sup>. As with Israel where security consciousness is a way of life, and has shaped the behavior of ordinary citizens, Nigerians must take practical steps beyond the #BringBackOurGirls web campaigns, by investing in surveillance techniques, teaching citizens right from the lowest grade school to avoid suspicious packages, internalizing the fact that there might be terrorists and attacks anywhere and everywhere.

**Safer Schools – Safer Communities:** Beyond the hashtags, advocates and organizations need to understand the broader security and human rights needs of the crisis-torn communities in northern Nigeria that increase the vulnerability of young school children to recurring violence and abductions. We must educate them about the redress mechanisms available to them. We must reach out to them and build strategic partnerships for delivering services aimed at assisting girls in need of financial and social resources. Citizens and organizations must now collaborate more effectively and strategically with security agencies to improve policing and surveillance activities.

One key factor accelerating the spread of the Boko Haram sect is the ease with which it employs young people as a networking, arm-smuggling and information-gathering base. Constantly high unemployment and low literacy levels in the northern region combined with the dearth of productive opportunities contributes to the decision of unemployed youths to get involved in criminal and nefarious activities. In effect, the increasing violence is a reflection of the suffocating poverty in the region. Oil-rich Nigeria officially

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<sup>13</sup> Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri, Spaces for Change



became Africa's largest economy in April 2014 after the economy was rebased. But Africa's most populated nation remains one of the poorest countries in the world. And many of the those poor people are found in northern Nigeria.

"In Borno, we found that the poverty rate in the state was unacceptably high. It's compounded by lack of access to education for most children between the ages of 6 and 16. So in a community where poverty is rife and citizens don't have access to education, it creates a very conducive environment for terrorism to thrive", says Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri of Spaces for Change<sup>14</sup>. For the government to win the war against terror, a military strategy must be combined with an economic strategy to lift people out of poverty. Such a strategy must encourage young school girls and boys to have access to education and realize their full potentials. Without those two combined strategies, it is very doubtful that the war against terrorism will be very successful, she says.

**Ending Sexual Violence Against Women:** In a recent video, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau boasted that he will sell the abducted Chibok girls in his captivity. Narratives shared by some of abducted girls that escaped from the insurgents' den in Sambisa forests revealed that captured women are often subjected to repeated sexual violence. Not only that, victims of sexual violence are stigmatized, infected with venereal diseases, impregnated and often drop out of school. BeyondtheHashtags participants unanimously called for an end to the use of acts of sexual violence against women and girls as a tactic of war and for the perpetrators to be punished. The military authorities make take concerted steps to further protect women and children from sexual violence in conflict situations. The Nigerian government must make concerted efforts to improve child protection systems, especially for the girl-child at the state and community levels. Under the present circumstances, the Federal government in cooperation with state governments and the civil society are obligated to design and implement initiatives aimed at preventing violence from re-emerging, in resolving ongoing conflict and in rebuilding communities devastated by conflict.

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<sup>14</sup> Excerpt from *Demolishing Foundations of Peace*, a June 2012 Spaces for Change's research study which profiled the specific impacts of the security crisis on vulnerable groups such as women, children and the youth, detailing how insecurity has massively curtailed the enjoyment of, and full realization of social and economic rights in the northern region of Nigeria.



# Overview of gaps and needs in the counter-insurgency operations

The Citizens' Forum's analysis of gaps and needs in the counter insurgency operations was preceded by collations of online commentaries over a two week period in Spaces for Change's social media conversation platforms: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/spacesforchange/> Beginning from February 2014 when 20 young female students were reportedly abducted from Government Girls Senior Science Secondary School and Ashigar School of Business and Administrative Studies, Borno State, Spaces for Change.S4C launched a people-powered campaign using both the formal and informal media to heighten awareness of the growing threats to educational freedom of young school girls in northern Nigeria.

Capitalizing on its strong online presence especially on Facebook, S4C moderated daily web conversations around the abductions to sustain the tempo of public outcry and demand for the immediate rescue and safe return of the Borno school girls. Within the intensely polarized debates generating hundreds and thousands of commentaries on the violent crisis devastating the northern region are cogent and compelling questions interrogating the effectiveness of military, legislative and executive interventions designed to contain the insurgency. A summary of citizens' questions are compiled below:

## Summary of Citizens' Concerns and Questions

### ➤ *Gaps in the Chibok Abduction Saga*

There are factual gaps in the narrative of the circumstances surrounding the Chibok abduction saga as detailed below:

- i. That over 200 girls were moved in trucks for several hours without any restraint by security forces raises a red flag on how the evacuations were carried out, and puts a bigger question mark on the effectiveness of military action in the states under emergency rule.
- ii. What was the motive behind the initial resistance to publish the names of the abducted girls?
- iii. As reported by certain international non-governmental organizations, the Nigerian military was given 4 hours advance notice before the attack. Villagers also alleged that there was no security presence in Chibok for weeks following the incident. Why did it take the government so long before taking the necessary military and political action on the abductions? There is still no clarity as to the response time.
- iv. A Senator representing Borno North Federal Constituency in the Senate, Senator Ahmed Zanna, openly declared that he knows where the dreaded Boko Haram

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sect are hiding the kidnapped female students of the Government Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State. Why was this lead not pursued? Does this imply that military authorities often ignore the pursuit of possible leads that might assist in securing freedom for the kidnapped schoolgirls?

- v. 20 girls were reportedly abducted from Government Girls Senior Science Secondary School and Ashigar School of Business and Administrative Studies, Borno State. Have they been found? Does anyone know the whereabouts of these young girls? Why were there official attempts to discredit this incident as a mere a hoax?
- vi. Aside from Girls Government Secondary School, Chibok, are there other schools where the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) examinations were conducted?
- vii. Why did the Borno State government fail to heed WAEC's directive suspending the conduct of examinations in troubled communities? What measures did the Borno State government put in place to ensure the safety of school children taking part in the WAEC examinations?

➤ ***Persistent data gaps***

For 32 whole days, there is no consistent data of the missing girls. We only know large numbers of school girls were abducted, but till this date, the accurate data and personal information of the missing girls are largely unavailable. What is/are the factor(s) responsible for this data gap?

➤ ***Unresolved killing of young school boys at Federal Government College, Bun-yadi***

- i. Who withdrew the security personnel stationed at the Federal Government College Bun-yadi, Yobe State, enabling Boko Haram insurgent fighters to kill 49 young boys without any restraint? This withdrawal of security forces tends to corroborate claims that military authorities indeed, had advance notice of the Chibok abductions?
- ii. What is the level of security protection given to schools in the north eastern part of the country? How many officers are deployed to secure each of these schools? Are there rapid response mechanism institutionalized within schools and volatile communities to facilitate swift military response to terror alerts?

➤ ***Acts of mutiny***

There have been a lot of questions on whether these soldiers fighting the insurgents are adequately taken care of and well-motivated to engage and quell the insurgency. There are substantiated media reports of mutiny and protests by junior military officers of the Nigerian Army, accusing the military authorities of poor welfare conditions and low-incentives. This is the first time the military is coming out publicly to protest. These





protests were carried out despite the prohibition of acts of insubordination under the Military Act.

These allegations are grave. What could have caused this mutiny and what steps have been taken to address the concerns of the protesting officers who risk their lives at the frontlines?

➤ ***Budgetary spending on security infrastructure***

Budgetary allocations to national security have increased by almost 500% in the last two years. Citizens are asking whether the allocations have matched actual spending in the sector. We demand the Federal Government, for the sake of transparency to provide detailed breakdown of security expenditure: indicating sums spent on infrastructure procurements; salaries; soldiers' welfare, administration; intelligence; communications and so forth? Is it possible to have actual statistics of soldiers and armament deployed to curtail the insurgency?

Information regarding the scale, nature and amount of external funding assistance to Nigerian military formations are often shrouded in secrecy. Is this likely to change in light of persisting citizen demands for increased transparency and accountability in the handling of the security crisis in Nigeria?

➤ ***Inconsistency, uncoordinated dissemination of security information***

The high level of inconsistency in security communications among government agencies is very worrisome. No thanks to the evident absence of coordination of security information among agencies and organs of government, citizens do not know which agency to look up to get accurate security information. By way of illustration, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Interior, the Presidency and other organs of government have all issued contrasting views regarding the prisoner swap deal proposed by Abubakar Shekau, leader of the Islamic insurgent group, Boko Haram. Why would different departments of government have issued conflicting statements on the abduction saga.

More disturbing is that security information released by agencies are increasingly losing its believability value. In the wake of the abduction saga, the Defence Headquarters released the initial false communication about the successful rescue of abducted Chibok girls, which they later recanted. Similarly, contrary to claims by the Joint Task Force and the Federal Government that Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram leader, has been killed, the sect leader re-surfaced again and became even more vicious in his killing spree. Is there an end in sight to all of the frequent conflicting information issued by agents and agencies of the Nigerian government?





➤ ***Judiciary roles in the fight against terror***

A number of terror suspects have been paraded by the State Security Service. Is the judiciary dispensing justice expeditiously in cases involving terrorist suspects? The Department of State Services, DSS, has paraded five suspects, who carried out the May 14 bomb blast at Nyanya bus terminal that claimed 74 lives and injured many others. Beyond the routine parades, will Nigerians see an expeditious trial and conviction of these suspects?

➤ ***Extension of state of emergency in the 3 north eastern states: Adamawa, Yobe and Borno?***

The declaration of a state of emergency in the north eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa has failed to clip the deadly activities of the Boko Haram insurgency group. Is an extension of emergency rule justified in light of the deteriorating security conditions and the apparent ineffectiveness of military action? Who is responsible for the assessing the effectiveness or otherwise of the state of emergency declared in these three northern states, and how is this carried out? What kind of administrative, financial and social support is available to the large-scale number of persons displaced by the insurgency in the North East? There are over 500,000 refugees scattered around Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

➤ ***Negotiate with Boko Haram?***

Official communication, especially by the Information Minister, Mallam Labaran Maku, claims that the Federal Government will negotiate with the insurgents. In contrast, the Senate President, Senator David Mark stated that the Nigerian government will not negotiate with the sect. What is the official government position regarding the possibility of a negotiation to secure a ceasefire with the Islamic insurgent fighters?

➤ ***Committeeism Vs Duplicity of roles?***

The terms of reference of the Presidential Fact-finding Committee on the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls conflicts with that of several statutory agencies such as the Nigerian Army, the Nigerian Police Force, the National Emergency Management Agency, the State Security Service and lots more. This duplicity of roles is not only capable of jeopardizing the success of the rescue operations, but also, potentially usurps the stipulated functions of specific statutory agencies?

➤ ***Nigerian military capabilities questioned***

As far back as 2012, it was reported that Nigeria had purchased drones from Israel. Would external military assistance be necessary if those drones were indeed purchased? Why were these drones not deployed to fight insurgents in the North-East

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when the crisis had fewer complications as currently witnessed now? How come Boko Haram can still hold sway in Sambisa forest after 12 months of imposing a State of Emergency in Borno State?

➤ ***Frequent jailbreaks by Boko Haram suspects***

There have been quite a number of reported jailbreaks by apprehended members of the Boko Haram sect. The March 30, 2014 jailbreak at the State Security Service (SSS) detention facility is a classic example. It is important to find out whether the frequency of jailbreak attempts is connected to the shortage of personnel or under-equipped armament?

The National Security Advisers' Soft Approach to Countering Terrorism framework reveals that 2 prisons have been refurbished for the purpose of de-radicalizing convicted terrorists, suspects awaiting trial and those released through court orders while 60 prison psychologists will undergo specialized training in the handling of terror suspects. Have officers managing detention facilities where terrorists are held undergone the stated specialized training?

➤ ***Proper documentation of security officials***

Questions have been asked whether a proper documentation of the number of officers serving in each of the security agencies exists. Besides losing appreciable resources to ghost security operatives every month, this uncertainty makes identification of fake soldiers impossible. Boko Haram insurgents have capitalized on this in the past to unleash their terrorist activities. Armed robbers have also exploited this gap to perpetrate violent crimes and robberies with minimal restraint.



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