

**A STUDY OF JIHAD IN ISLAM IN THE CONTEXT OF BOKO-HARAM
INSURGENCY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH IN NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates Jihad in Islam in the context of Boko Haram insurgency and its implications for the Church in Nigeria. The study critically examines the correlation between the concepts of Jihad in Islam and Boko Haram ideology in Nigeria. Boko Haram is an Islamist group which operates largely in the north-east States of Nigeria. The sect avowed aim is to wrest control from the Nigerian government and to carve out Islamic State and impose a strict form of Sharia law across a nation with over 170 million people. Descriptive survey research design was employed. A total of 106 respondents randomly selected from people that were displaced by the Insurgency and relocated to Gidigbo Quaters, Iwo in Osun State. Designed questionnaire were also used to collect information as regards their bio data, the Concept of Jihad in Islam, Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria, the effect of Boko Haram Insurgency on Nigeria and the implication of Boko-Haram for the Church in Nigeria. MINITAB Statistical Package version 32.0 was used for the statistical analysis. Simple percentage and Chi-Square distribution were used to analyse the data collected. The results indicated that there is a significant difference between the concepts of Jihad in Islam and the ideology of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria; the insurgency has negative effect on the economy of Nigeria, because the sect's activities in Kano, Kaduna, Bornu, Yobe and Bauchi is gradually changing the economic structure of the whole northern Nigeria; and the sect's activities are threats to the Churches in Nigeria, due to the fact that the sect is responsible for most of the bombing of Churches in the Northern Nigeria. In conclusion, the study offers some fresh and multifaceted recommendations on how to effectively address the menace of Boko Haram in Nigeria. On this note, Our government should learn from the multitude conflicts that arose in the past in this country in order to be proactive and stop acting as an arm chair theorist on grave issues of national security that consistently threatens the corporate existence of Nigeria and renders the nation relatively economically impotent; The Churches in Nigeria should wake up to their responsibilities by using every medium to tackle the menace of Boko Haram. The Church should use the medium of social media to preach against insurgency, and most importantly the Church should embark on serious prayer against the plan of the sect on the propagation of the gospel across the northern Nigeria and lastly, there is an urgent need for the religious leaders and the followers of different religion conviction in Nigeria to come together to publicly denounce all forms of religious intolerance and sectarian violence and encourage, especially through sermons, the need for religious harmony and tolerance of other faiths.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings of this study bring into the conclusion that all activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria are not correlated with what Islam stands for. Since Islam is claimed to be a religion of peace, then Boko Haram does not represent the interest of the true worshippers of Allah. The sect's activity is a bad signal to both local and foreign investors, because no investor will invest in a non peaceful environment. More so, the insurgency has caused restriction in the propagation of the gospel, because the sect maimed, killed people and burnt their Churches in the affected areas. Hence, the increasing spread of the activities of the Boko Haram in Nigeria and the destruction of lives and properties are serious issues that should not be dismissed with a wave of hand. Then, all hands should be on deck to support the government in waging war against the insurgency.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following suggestions are therefore recommended:

Our government should learn from the multitude of conflicts that arose in the past in this country in order to be proactive and stop acting as an arm chair theorist on grave issues of national security that consistently threatens the corporate existence of Nigeria and renders the nation relatively economically impotent.

Poverty and unemployment make crime very attractive and irresistible to the youth of this nation, as we know that an idle hand is the cheapest instrument in the hand of devil. This finding is conscious of the fact that the ideology of the sect is more important to them than any issue that concerns the nation, but by ensuring that youth are gainfully employed and there is an equitable distribution of wealth in the Country, this will cause reduction in the recruitment of our youths into the sect.

Government should actively involve the cross section of Northern Emirs and prominent individuals in a reasonable dialogue with the leaders of the sect. However, this does not mean that government should shy away from meting out deserving punishment to those found culpable of perpetrating evil in the Country.

More so, it is advisable for the government to adopt an effective measure to ensure homeland security. The arrangement should develop from the grass root with the belief that if every village or town is secured, the Country will in turn be secured. Therefore, the traditional rulers and the notable individuals in each local government within the Country must be effectively accommodated into local policing provided they were not imposed on the helpless communities by the same government.

Boko Haram has grown stronger and increasingly more sophisticated over the past six years and eliminating the sect will require a broad-based strategy that employs the establishment of a comprehensive plan rather than the imposition of more martial law. While sophisticated and targeted security efforts are necessary to curtail the menace, government should also work over the populace by addressing the social and economic problems that have created the environment in which Boko Haram can thrive.

The Churches in Nigeria should wake up to their responsibilities by using every medium to tackle the menace of Boko Haram. The Church should use the

medium of social media to preach against insurgency, and most importantly the Church should embark on serious prayer against the plan of the sect on the propagation of the gospel across the northern Nigeria.

Official impunity is another major grievance for many and an effective recruiting tool for Boko Haram. Government should investigate and prosecute not only crime committed by the Boko Haram members, but also those perpetrated by the political leaders and the security officials.

There is an urgent need for the religious leaders and the followers of different religion conviction in Nigeria to come together to publicly denounce all forms of religious intolerance and sectarian violence and encourage, especially through sermons, the need for religious harmony and tolerance of other faiths.