

**Forum:** Security Council

**Issue:** The aftermath of territories impacted by Boko-Haram

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## Introduction

Boko Haram is an Islamist jihadist organization based in northeastern Nigeria, seeking to overthrow the current Nigerian Government and enforce Islamic Law. The group was founded in 2002 by Muhammed Yusuf. It has been known for its brutality since the insurgency started in 2009 when the militant Islamist rebel group started an armed rebellion against the government of Nigeria and carried out assassinations and large-scale acts of violence in the country. The conflict between them is taking place within the context of the long-lasting problems of religious violence between Nigeria's Christian and Muslim communities with the jihadist group. The group's initial alleged intent was to eradicate the corruption and inequality in Nigeria blamed on the Western culture and to enforce Islamic Law, as the group's name means "Western education is forbidden.". Boko Haram has massacred thousands of people, from its attacks on the police, to armed forces and civilians. In total, it has caused the death of nearly 300,000 children and 2.3 million displaced people. Boko Haram is also partly responsible for regional food crises and famines. In 2015, the group pledged fidelity to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and took the name Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP). The next year the group disunited, with one cabal retaining that name and the other reverting back to the original naming. It was during the 2010's when the group reached its peak and became the world's deadliest terrorist organization in the light of people it killed.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Cabal:** Criticizing a group of politicians or other people because they meet and decide things secretly, or a small group of intriguers, especially one formed for political purposes. In relation to this issue, a cabal of kleptocrats diverted the money and the arms were never bought while Boko Haram has progressed advancing on their armory.

**Allegiance:** Support and loyalty to a particular group, person, or belief. In relation to this issue, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to ISIL.

**Counter-offensive:** A series of attacks by a defending force against an attacking enemy. Boko Haram had crucial territorial gains before losing many to counter-offensives by the local security forces.

**Abduction:** The act of taking someone away by force or cunning; kidnapping. Boko-Haram is notorious for abducting women, girls, and children, with conspicuous cases like the Chibok schoolgirls' kidnapping.

## Background Information

### Establishment of Boko-Haram

Boko Haram officially known as "Jama'atu Ahl as-Sunnah li-Da'awati wal-Jihad" or referring to itself as the "Group of the Sunni People for the Calling and Jihad" and "Nigerian Taliban" first emerged in the Muslim dominated area of northeastern Nigeria, Maiduguri as an Islamic reform movement by then leader Mohammed Yusuf in 2002. Its members pursued the charismatic Salafi preacher Muhammad Yusuf, who denounced Western culture and values and decayed, secular governance while

conjointly developing diplomatic ties to the city's elites. The Islamic sect's main purpose was to overthrow the current Nigerian Government and replace it with a pure Islamic state regime based on Sharia law. Boko Haram, which roughly translates to "Western education is forbidden" in Hausa, Nigeria's regional language, has entered into a conflict with the Nigerian government. Boko Haram operates with a decentralized structure consisting of multiple cells and hierarchical levels. The group's main sources of funding include extortions, robberies, looting, cattle rustling, Islamic donations, local businesses, kidnappings for ransom, arms smuggling, and bank robberies. There have been reports of incidents and killings targeting individuals who attempted to leave or declined to join Boko Haram.



*Boko Haram's flag raised in a Nigerian village*

### Boko Haram insurgency

The Islamic sect suffered significant losses in July 2009 when clashes with Nigerian Government forces resulted in the deaths of hundreds of its members, including its former leader, Muhammad Yusuf. In 2009, clashes between Boko Haram members and police forces escalated into several days of armed uprising in Maiduguri. The Nigerian government viciously crushed the insurrection, following the deaths of several hundreds of people as well as Muhammad Yusuf himself, who was executed in police custody. The conflict between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government led to the emergence of guerrilla warfare and an ineffective initial response from 2010 to 2012. Western governments initially viewed Boko Haram as a problem specific to Nigeria, but it was later designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the U.S. Department of State on November 14, 2013. Several

events lead to the drawance of global attention including the group being responsible for numerous attacks, including suicide bombings, massacres, and the abduction of nearly 300 schoolgirls in Chibok in 2014. Boko Haram has caused widespread destruction and displacement in Nigeria and neighboring countries, with estimates suggesting that the group has thousands of members and significant weaponry.



*Boko Haram's leader*

### Abubakar Shekau's Leadership

In July 2010, Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram's former second-in-command of Boko Haram, took over as the group's leader and released a video threatening violence against Western influences in Nigeria. In the same month, Shekau made a second statement in which he expressed support for al-Qaeda and threatened the United States. Since Shekau's leadership, Boko Haram's operational capabilities have significantly improved, with a rising use of improvised explosive devices, vehicle-borne IEDs, and female suicide bombers targeting a wide range of targets (National Counterterrorism Center). The group's first vehicle-borne IED attack occurred in June 2011. On August 26, 2011, Boko Haram carried out its first attack against a Western target, a vehicle-bomb attack on the UN headquarters in Abuja, resulting in the deaths of at least 23 people and injuries to more than 80. A spokesperson for Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the attack and vowed to continue targeting US and Nigerian government interests. During Abubakar Shekau's

leadership, Boko Haram divided into two rival factions, JAS, which was led by Shekau and ISWAP. The two groups' skirmishes between them escalated in 2021 with the situation spiking to new levels during the last stage of Shekau's leadership. Abubakar Shekau continued leading the group until his death in May 19, 2021 in which he blew himself up during ISWAP warriors conquering the forest of Sambisa. Later this event, The breakaway bloc, currently acknowledged as ISWAP, located into the Alagarno and Lake Chad Basin, forcing out or taking command over Boko Haram assets in the areas and consecutively evolving into the dominant terror group in the axis. Although Shekau's death was confirmed neither by Boko Haram nor the Nigerian government, according to the audio obtained by news agencies, ISWAP stated that Shekau died setting off explosives on himself ensuing a battle between the two groups ("Abubakar Shekau: Nigeria's Boko Haram Leader Is Dead, Say Rival Militants").



Boko Haram's former leader, Abubakar Shekau

### ISIL and Boko-Haram

In 2014, Boko Haram's operational capacity grew significantly, with the group launching frequent attacks on Christians, security and police forces, the media, schools, politicians, and Muslims deemed as cooperators. Boko Haram's international profile also heightened in 2015 when it pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in March, adopting the name "ISWAP"

(ISIL-West Africa Province) and several other versions and conducting simultaneous suicide bombings in N'Djamena, Chad, in June and the first such attack carried out in the country's capital. In February 2020, ISWAP was added to the ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaeda UN sanctions list. The Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC concluded in December 2020 that there is a reasonable basis to believe that war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed by Boko Haram since July 2009.

### The group's international profile

Boko Haram's violent actions such as the abduction of 276 schoolgirls in Borno State, Nigeria, in April 2014 led to global criticism and in February 2015 triggered a large regional counterterrorism offensive operation against the group that displaced it from the majority of its strongholds and main bases in Nigeria. Nonetheless, Boko Haram remains resilient, conducting attacks not solely in Nigeria but also in neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Chad, Niger, underscoring the ongoing threat it poses to Western and regional security interests. The US State Department designated Boko Haram a Foreign Terrorist Organization in November 2013. In 2014, the group was included in the UN Security Council sanctions list. As reported by the Global Terrorism Index, the group was rated as the second deadliest terrorist group in 2019.

### The recent status of Boko Haram

Although Boko Haram has mainly concentrated its efforts on a wide range of targets such as churches and places of worship, public schools, police stations, government official buildings, banks and newspapers, the general population of northeast Nigeria has endured the burden and strain of their attacks. As aforementioned, Boko Haram has also passed through Nigerian borders into Niger, Cameroon, and Chad for the purpose of carrying out illegal operations and circumventing authorities. Since 2017, the impact of Boko Haram's violence has resulted in over 100,000 people being displaced and 7,000 seeking refuge in Chadian territory. This situation, which intensified in 2015, exacerbated existing tensions between communities and made it more difficult for national authorities to manage conflicts at the regional level. Some community leaders have become



caught in the violent conflicts, facing pressure from national authorities, accusations of complicity, or direct targeting by Boko Haram, with one leader even losing their life. The Buduma ethnic group, which was suspected of collaborating with Boko Haram, faced significant stigma, although this has decreased as the level of violence has subsided.

### The impact of the conflict on the region, communities and lake's economy

The expansion of the Boko Haram crisis to the Lake Chad region and its shores yet presents security threats and could lead to instability due to the fragile coexistence of various communities. Since January 2015, the seasonal movement of people and the influx of displaced civilians, refugees, and repatriated individuals have strained social cohesion. In January 2017, there were 100,765 registered people displaced in the region, along with 20,995 unregistered and nearly 7,000 Nigerian refugees, most of whom had fled Boko Haram violence or been forced to leave the islands by national armies.

Community networks have helped mitigate the impact of these crises, but their capacity to absorb new arrivals is limited. The majority of displaced people, particularly the Buduma, have settled in unplanned sites, with only a few finding refuge in designated host villages. The region's economic challenges and increasing militarization have further strained the population's resilience.

Moreover, trade on the Chadian islands and Lake Chad's shores has been significantly impacted by Boko Haram's activities, similar to the situation in Niger. The state of emergency, although not officially extended since October 2016, continues to have an unofficial effect, with restrictions on motorbike travel and fishing gradually easing but circulation constraints and curfews still in place, leading to sluggish economic activity. The border with Nigeria, a crucial trade route, remains officially closed, causing livestock movements to resume informally, leading to local disease outbreaks and losses for herders. Agriculture and fishing have also been affected, although the recent farming season showed improvement compared to 2015, slightly enhancing food security indicators in Chad, especially in the lake region. The economic strain not only impacts Boko Haram's finances but also leaves vulnerable populations in the Lake Chad basin dependent on food aid, striving to return to

normalcy amidst demographic pressures, economic insecurity, and historical community disputes. While conflicts over land rights, particularly between the Kanembu and Buduma communities, have led to violent incidents like the 2015 attack on Koulfoua, tensions have somewhat eased since the decline in Boko Haram attacks in Chad from early 2016, although inter-communal tensions persist.

## **Major Countries and Organizations Involved**

### **Boko Haram**

Boko Haram is an Islamist jihadist group based in northeastern Nigeria, with current operations carried out also in Mali, Chad, Niger and northern Cameroon. The group has divided into several factions, including JAS, ISWAP, and Ansaru, in which all of them renounce democracy, secularism, Western education and values and aim to constitute an Islamic state implementing Islamic law.

### **The Government of Nigeria**

The Government of Nigeria has been incompatible in its attempts, substituting between withdrawal and the excessive use of units to oppose Boko Haram and ISWAP. Its answer to humanitarian threats have been also questionable; Nigerian officials have flocked civilians into supposed encampment towns (Thursday et al.). This policy falsely identifies the fundamental reasons of the conflict and is profoundly counterproductive. So far, it has resulted in dread and mistrust since the government has asserted that civilians who chose not to displace are Boko Haram sympathizers. This assertion has connotations for U.S. policy toward Nigeria primarily and its aid programs especially in the northeast area.

### **Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF)**

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) was established as a regional security agreement by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) in order to focus on countering the threat posed by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region. The main objective of the MJTF is to provide a safe environment in areas affected by the insurgency, prevent brutal attacks against civilians, expedite stabilization programs,



help humanitarian operations, and ensure aid to affected populations (“A Quest to Win the Hearts and Minds: Assessing the Effectiveness of the Multinational Joint Task Force”). The MJTF embarks upon both military and non-military operations for achieving these objectives. Although facing confrontations including inadequate funding, operational command and control voids, insufficient equipment, and intelligence-sharing problems, the MJTF has registered crucial successes in opposing Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) terrorists. These successes involve an evident lessening in conflict incidents in the area, forming conditions for the recovery of refugees and displaced people, and continuing trade activities between northeastern Nigeria and adjoining markets in Cameroon and Chad. The partnership between the African Union (AU) and the MJTF is very significant for funding the mission efficiently and dealing with fundamental issues to accomplish its core duties in the area.

### Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)

ISIL, also known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, is a Salafi-jihadist group that is mainly administered in Iraq and Syria. In March 2015, Boko Haram pledged fidelity to ISIL and adopted the name ISWAP. This alliance between them aided Boko Haram to access ISIL's resources and expand its operations beyond Nigeria and onto its neighboring countries. ISIL's aim with Boko Haram is to reinforce its regional existence, intensify its operational capabilities, and advance its millenarist beliefs. The coalition between Boko Haram and ISIL has also resulted in a split within Boko Haram, with one bloc led by Abubakar Shekau, otherwise called as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'adati wal-Jihad (JAS), and the other led by Abu Musab al Barnawi, ISWAP.

### ISWAP (Islamic State's West Africa Province)

ISWAP is a Salafi-jihadist group that split from Boko Haram in 2016 which aims to create an Islamic state based on Sharia law, like its parent group. However, ISWAP distinguishes itself through its focus on attacking Christians and those who do not adhere to Islamic law, as well as its efforts to win over local communities by providing services (“1.3.1. Boko Haram, Including JAS, ISWAP and Ansaru”). In 2020,

there were indications of a shift in ISWAP's stance, with attacks on Muslim civilians. The group, led by Abu Musab al-Barnawi, operates mainly in northeastern Nigeria and is recognized for its more advanced and structured attacks on military bases and oil exploration sites. ISWAP also treats abducted schoolgirls well before releasing them after a brief period. The group has established an administration in the territories it controls, offering services to residents and training child soldiers. ISWAP has close ties with the Islamic State's central group and employs many of its strategies, such as suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices and drones. The group has also established a "Khilafah Cadet School" for 8-16-year-old boys, where they are carefully selected, indoctrinated, and trained militarily ("1.3.1. Boko Haram, Including JAS, ISWAP and Ansaru"). ISWAP is considered a significant threat to Western and regional interests due to its ongoing attacks in Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger.

#### JAS (Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'adati wal-Jihad)

JAS, is a faction of Boko Haram operating primarily in Nigeria and its neighboring countries. They aim to overthrow the secular Nigerian government and establish an Islamic state governed by Sharia law. Led by Abubakar Shekau, JAS employs violent tactics targeting both non-supporters and Muslims who don't align with their ideology such as suicide bombing, massacres and attacks on churches and schools. Their funding comes from various criminal activities like extortion, kidnapping for ransom, and arms smuggling. JAS has committed widespread human rights violations, including the infamous 2014 kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls in Chibok, Nigeria ("1.3.1. Boko Haram, Including JAS, ISWAP and Ansaru"). Although being pushed out of some strongholds by regional counterterrorism efforts, JAS still remains a significant threat to both Western and local interests. The US State Department designated Boko Haram, including JAS, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in November 2013. JAS leader Abubakar Shekau and his forces were ambushed and seized by ISWAP in May 2021. It's predicted that JAS has between 1,500 to 2,000 members.

#### Ansaru

Since its upsurge in 2009, the Boko Haram insurgency has contrarily influenced nearly fifteen million people, displaced over two million people and led to an estimated 20.000 to 30.000 killings. As a consequence of ferocious tactics used by Boko Haram, a group named Ansaru, in which it is supposedly connected to Al Qaeda, arised in the beginning of 2012. In 2020, Ansaru administered its initial attacks in five years of democratic governance in Kaduna state.

## Timeline of Events

| Date        | Description of event  |
|-------------|---|
| Late 1990's | Boko Haram, officially known as "Jama'atu Ahl as-Sunnah li-Da'awati wal-Jihad," is established with the group striving to overthrow the Nigerian Government and demanding the establishment of an Islamic regime. |
| July 2009   | Frequent encounters with Nigerian Government forces result in the deaths of many members of the group, along with the former leader and the founder of the group, Muhammad Yusuf.                                 |
| July 2010   | Abubakar Shekau acquires leadership, expanding attacks on Western forces in Nigeria.  |

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>April 2014</b>   | <b>Boko Haram escalates attacks, including the high-profile case in Chibok, with the abduction of nearly 300 schoolgirls in Chibok, evoking global attention.</b> |
| <b>March 7 2015</b> | <b>Pledges fidelity to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), increasing its attacks and dominance in Nigeria and neighboring countries.</b>            |

## Relevant UN Resolutions and Other Documents

- [Resolution 2349 \(2017\)](#): targets solving the Boko Haram terrorist threat in the Lake Chad Basin. The resolution restates the constitutional responsibility of Member States to take care of non-military persons on their areas of land. Moreover, it invites the countries of the region "to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, to allow safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access, and to facilitate the restoration of civilian security and the rule of law in areas under The Control of the Government, and to guarantee the free movement of goods and persons". Furthermore, it requests them to enhance coordination with United Nations agencies.
- [Second report of the Secretary- General on the situation in Nigeria](#): This report was submitted following the Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) and consecutive resolutions on children and armed conflict. The report includes information about the effect of armed fighting on children during the course of the conflict. The report puts emphasis on the three states in north-east Nigeria affected by the conflict: Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Within its context, the report contains heavy violations against children carried out by parties to the conflict, along with Boko Haram, the Nigerian Security Forces and Civilian Joint Task Force. It is also mentioned in the report that the increasingly unstable and

briskly changing security situation in north-east Nigeria often emerged in the limited access for the United Nations, preventing its ability to validate violations. The report involves recommendations to cease and hinder grave violations in Nigeria and advance the protection of children.

## **Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue**

The aforementioned Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) was established as a regional security agreement by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) in order to focus on countering the threat posed by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region. The main objective of the MJTF is to provide a safe environment in areas affected by the insurgency, prevent brutal attacks against civilians, expedite stabilization programs, help humanitarian operations, and ensure aid to affected populations. The resolution 2349 (2017), encouraged governments to increase regional military cooperation, and urged Lake Chad Basin Governments to apply persistent policies to encourage absconding from the groups Boko Haram and ISIL, to rehabilitate those who had already defected, and to make sure there was no exemption from punishment for those responsible for carrying out the attacks. The Council moreover invited the Secretary-General to conduct a shared visit to the Lake Chad Basin region with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the President of the World Bank Group and the President of the African Development Bank.

## **Possible Solutions**

Multiple solutions and recommendations to the government of Nigeria and to its partners may be suggested in order to prevent the violence resulting from the conflict through going beyond the security response such as hindering the advancement of armed community militias. Moreover, seeking and enhancing the efforts to mediate between communities on the shores of Lake Chad and providing equitable and rightful access to the lake's resources can be proposed.

Also, in order to ease the pressure on the judicial system and prepare for the reintegration and the appropriate treatment of Boko Haram militants, the resources allocated to the judicial system should be increased and demilitarization and reintegration policies for former Boko Haram battlers should be defined, specifically for those who have not committed severe crimes, in accordance with consulting Boko Haram's victims and their representatives to prevent an alternation of score-settling. This should be encouraged to Nigeria's partners and neighboring countries as well in order for them to aid contributing human resources to increase the resources allocated to the judicial system.

For another crucial aspect of the aftermath of the insurgency, to suspend economic restrictions related to the state of emergency and create a plan to recover the economy of the region as quickly as possible could be through the redirection of the suspended economic flows and reassuring exporters to choose safer roads toward Nigeria until the southern Komadougou area becomes sturdy and safe again. Enhancement of capacities of the public administration to accommodate the population with concrete judicial, health and education services, can be suggested for the public's wellness and education. Lastly, in order to more adequately administer the security forces and their budgets, it is advised that the High Authority for the Fight Against Corruption (HALCIA) should investigate the use of funds apportioned to the war effort.



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*Combined Multinational Formation, Comprising Units, Mostly Military, from Benin,*

*Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. It Is Headquartered in N'Djamena and Is*

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