**Executive Summary**

By Aprille Knox, Dennis Walsh

Since the early 2000s, Boko Haram – also known as Jama’atu Ahlus Sunnah Lid Da’awati Wal Jihad, or People Committed to the Prophet’s Teachings for Propagation and Jihad – has been a constant source of instability in northern Nigeria. Emerging in 2002 under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf, the group began its resistance movement against the Nigerian government largely through proselytization and other non-violent means, interspersed with occasional “hit-and-run attacks” on police stations and other security outposts throughout the northern states.[[1]](#footnote-0) Following a strong government crackdown in 2009, resulting in Yusuf’s death, Boko Haram has increasingly shifted strategies “adopt(ing) the tactics of global Salafi Jihadist groups, including targeted assassinations, suicide bombings, and hostage taking.”[[2]](#footnote-1) Beginning in 2011, the frequency and severity of the group’s attacks continued to grow, reaching its peak in 2014-2015.[[3]](#footnote-2)

Multiple compounding factors have complicated the Nigerian government and international community’s response to the Boko Haram insurgency. Dismal socio-economic prospects in northern Nigeria have left citizens feeling neglected and resentful of what they perceive to be a corrupt southern government;[[4]](#footnote-3) environmental degradation has created a humanitarian emergency for thousands in the region;[[5]](#footnote-4) and perceptions of Muslim marginalization have potentially increased the number of insurgency sympathizers.[[6]](#footnote-5) Meanwhile, the Nigerian military has been criticized for its lack of tact in handling the conflict - accused of numerous human rights abuses against Nigerian civilians in its attempts to weaken the insurgency.[[7]](#footnote-6) Internal dissention within Boko Haram has also complicated the response, resulting in numerous splinter factions with competing ideologies, vying for authority in Nigeria’s northern states.[[8]](#footnote-7)

Since 2015, government forces have been steadily reclaiming land in the northeast, leading many experts to assert that Boko Haram is on the defensive.[[9]](#footnote-8) Hundreds of former combatants are said to have voluntarily defected, leaving the Nigerian government with the difficult task of now upholding justice and peacefully reintegrating former Boko Haram militants into local communities, while simultaneously continuing to put pressure on existing combatants to lay down their arms. Despite previous experience with reintegration and amnesty programs in Nigeria - e.g. in the Niger Delta region - the government has sought out guidance from international actors regarding transitional justice strategies that may be well suited to address the Boko Haram challenge.

The following analysis was produced as part of the Yale University Jackson Institute for Global Affairs course “Boko Haram: Defining a Path to Integration” during Fall semester 2016. Prior to the start of the course, Professor Casey King met with representatives from the United Nations Counter-terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UNCTED), to solicit input on the current barriers to ending the Boko Haram insurgency. UNCTED requested that the class focus on providing recommendations on how the Nigerian government should reintegrate former Boko Haram combatants into Nigerian civil society, based on successes and failures in other countries under similar circumstances. In contrast to more traditional survey courses, the course was structured as a consulting engagement, with UNCTED serving as the “client” and the class as an interdisciplinary team of consultants. Early on in the course, we learned that UNCTED was preparing to meet with Nigerian government officials in Abuja on December 13th-14th, 2016, to present recommendations on reintegration and facilitate a discussion with a panel of international experts. This gave the class a clear objective: to provide insight and analysis to support UNCTED’s recommendations to the Nigerian government.

The class divided into teams to investigate different “models” for reintegrating former insurgents. Having completed our preliminary research and consulting with the client, we decided to focus on the following models for our final report:

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| ***Country*** | ***Model Title*** | ***Time Period*** |
| Sri Lanka | National Framework Proposal for Reintegration of Ex-combatants into Civilian Life in Sri Lanka | 2009-present |
| Colombia | FARC |  |
| Indonesia | Aceh, Indonesia: Post-Conflict Reintegration of the GAM | 2005-present |
| South Africa | Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) | 1995-2002 |
| Somalia | The *Xeer* Model | 2009-present |
| Algeria | Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation | 2005-present |
| Mali | Mali Reinsertion of Ex-Combatants Project | 2012-present |
| Nigeria | Niger Delta |  |
| Nigeria | Operation Safe Corridor | 2013-present |

In addition to researching these eight reintegration models, the class determined that our report would be incomplete without addressing factors which contributed to the rise of Boko Haram in northern Nigeria. In particular, we focused on the interrelated consequences of climate change in the Lake Chad region and food insecurity in northern Nigeria.

Through our research, several themes emerged regarding the key challenges and impediments to reintegration. In many cases, we saw little to no progress toward reintegration prior to a formal peace deal including disarmament between the government and the insurgent group, which is concerning given that there has not been progress toward a political settlement in Nigeria. Additionally, lack of public trust in the government and military, often explained by a history of human rights abuses by those parties, created additional barriers to reintegration. Lastly, DDR programs which emphasize punitive measures without offering a path to a productive life in civil society can restart the cycle of disenfranchisement which often precedes violent insurgency.

However, studying these reintegration models also illuminated a wide range of opportunities for the current conflict in Nigeria. Reintegration allows countries to formally involve underrepresented and disenfranchised groups and repair relationships with non-governmental community leaders. Reintegration models can offer economic incentives to ex-insurgents and communities alike, building job skills and stimulating the economy. Because of the increasing interdependency of nations, reintegration creates an “all hands on deck” approach where countries can leverage the expertise of neighbors and the international community to create a sustainable solution.

**Other themes for recommendations discussion:**

* Difference between targeting individuals and communities
* Lack of women’s participation
* Forgiveness / truth-telling / restorative justice
* Presence/lack of peace deal between gov’t and insurgency
* Government/military human rights abuses
* Lack of strong judicial system in place
* Deradicalization strategies - Bringing in external Islamic leaders to preach non-radical Islam (also used in Algeria - and OSC)
* Insurgency arose in area of neglect (similarities between Mali and Nigeria)

[Need to leave space for recommendations after we’ve decided as a class]

1. Freedom Onuoha, “Boko Haram and the evolving Salafi Jihadist threat in Nigeria,” in *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, ed. Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos (African Studies Center, 2014), 159 & 168. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Kyari Mohammed, "The Message and Methods of Boko Haram,” in *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, ed. Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos (African Studies Center, 2014), 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. **See Justin’s OSC**  [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. A. Carl LeVan, “Sectarian Rebellions in Post-Transition Nigeria Compared,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 3 (2013), 336 & 342, DOI: 10.1080/17502977.2013.783999. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. Kevin Sieff, “A famine unlike any we have ever seen,” *Washington Post*, October 13, 2016, http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/world/2016/10/13/they-survived-boko-haram-now-millions-in-nigeria-face-a-new-threat-starvation/. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. Mike Smith, *Boko Haram: Inside Nigeria’s Unholy War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. LeVan, “Sectarian Rebellions,” 342. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. Mohammed, “The Message and Methods of Boko Haram,” 29-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. “About the Crisis,” *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, accessed November 14, 2016, http://www.unocha.org/nigeria/about-ocha-nigeria/about-crisis. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)