



Terrorism in Nigeria

The Threat from Boko Haram and Ansaru

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Terrorism in Nigeria: The Threat from Boko Haram
and Ansaru
By Olivier Guitta and Robin Simcox

Front Cover Image: Leader of the terrorist Boko
Haram, Abubaker Shekau, by Grin160 (Own work)
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Executive Summary

On 14 April 2014, the terrorist group Boko Haram kidnapped 329 girls from a boarding school in Chibok, northeastern Nigeria. These kidnappings have now garnered significant media interest and led to the development of a concerted international effort to track down the missing girls. This report studies the terrorism issues that Nigeria faces and the growing threat that Boko Haram poses to the largest economy in Africa. It analyses Boko Haram's international connections to al-Qaeda and its affiliates; the international co-operation that is only now taking place to combat Boko Haram, and why this needs to be stepped up very quickly; and how the Nigerian government's response to the insurgency has been hampered by practical problems.

BOKO HARAM

Boko Haram (which translates loosely as 'Western education is forbidden' in Hausa) was created in 2002 by the now-deceased Islamist cleric, Mohammed Yusuf, though forms of it have existed under a variety of names since the late 1990s. Boko Haram aspires to create an Islamic state in Nigeria, and is willing to kill Christians and Muslims they deem to be insufficiently pious in order to achieve it. Boko Haram's violent insurgency, which began in 2009, has led to over 6,000 deaths, including over 2,000 this year, excluding the latest bloody attacks in June.

The group has a loose operating structure, with disconnected cells provided with spiritual guidance by one overall emir, Abubakar Shekau. This has made it hard for the Nigerian authorities to detect and defeat them. Boko Haram has also benefited from state corruption and has been able to infiltrate the government, the army and the security services. They have even attracted at least one Western-educated recruit: a British-born man, Aminu Sadiq Ogwuche. As the group grows in notoriety, the prospect of more Westerners traveling to join the group cannot be dismissed.

ANSARU

Ansaru is a splinter group from Boko Haram that has been operating since May 2011, though only announced its existence in January 2012. Ansaru supposedly formed in protest against Boko Haram's indiscriminate killings of Muslims, criticising 'inhuman' Boko Haram operations and claiming they would restore 'dignity' to Islam. Ansaru's charter prevents attacks on Nigerians, a clear difference to Boko Haram's actions. Since its inception, Ansaru has largely focused on kidnap for ransom, primarily of Europeans.

AL-QAEDA TIES TO BOKO HARAM AND ANSARU

Boko Haram

In 2002, bin Laden dispatched one of his aides to Nigeria to distribute \$3 million to sympathetic Salafi groups. Among the recipients was Mohammed Yusuf, Boko Haram's founder. Shekau, in a message released in November 2012 praised al-Qaeda, its leaders (including bin Laden and al-Zarqawi) and its fighters across the world, threatening the US, Britain, Israel and Nigeria.

In February 2013, AFRICOM Commander General David M. Rodriguez named Boko Haram as an al-Qaeda 'affiliate' in a Senate Armed Services Committee confirmation hearing. The US government suspects there to be 'communications, training, and weapons links' between Boko Haram, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen, al-Shabaab in Somalia and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). It is with the latter group that Boko Haram's main ties to al-Qaeda exist. As early as 2006, Nigerian security sources feared that Boko Haram members were training in the Sahel alongside AQIM, with its emir Abdelmalek Droukdel confirming that his group had Nigerian elements in its midst in 2008. Furthermore, allegations of certain Boko Haram elements responding directly to AQIM

leadership have recently surfaced. According to a September 2013 House of Representatives Homeland Security Committee report, the AQIM – Boko Haram collaboration ‘is a mature relationship that allows Boko Haram an avenue to advance its capability, and gives AQIM influence over a developing al-Qaeda affiliate and a rich target list’. It also allows AQIM to expand into Nigeria, where it could spread additional chaos and exacerbate tensions between Muslims and Christians.

Ansaru

In 2011, Ansaru referred to themselves as ‘al Qaeda in the land beyond the Sahel’ and it has been described by the British government as being ‘broadly aligned’ with al-Qaeda. The International Crisis Group goes a step further, claiming that Ansaru is actually al-Qaeda’s Nigerian franchise.

Ansaru has not been active recently, with several leaders rejoining the Boko Haram fold. It has been suggested that the group reintegrated back into Boko Haram in the aftermath of the French-led invasion of Mali.

THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The seriousness of the international community’s response to Boko Haram has been mixed. For example, Hillary Clinton’s State Department did not classify Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, despite Boko Haram’s connections to al-Qaeda and pressure from the FBI, the CIA, the Justice Department and numerous members of Congress.

Such views are not just restricted to the US. Many Western officials have promised deeper engagement with the terrorism problem in Nigeria, and Africa more broadly. However, actual policies and practical commitments have been inconsistent. It is possible that the recent kidnappings represent a political tipping point and Nigeria will be increasingly prioritised by Western governments. It is in the international community’s interest that Nigeria successfully defeats the jihadist insurgency.

A lack of regional co-operation

Nigeria is often viewed by its neighbours as a rich country that should be able to resolve its domestic security issues by itself, and co-operation between neighbouring countries has subsequently been poor. A Paris summit on 17 May 2014 saw the leaders of Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Benin and Chad pledge to share intelligence and co-ordinate their activities against Boko Haram. It remains to be seen whether this is successful in light of bad relations that exists between certain countries.

In terms of Boko Haram posing a regional threat, Cameroon remains Nigeria’s most vulnerable neighbour: it serves as a recruiting ground for Boko Haram. The government there now acknowledges that this infiltration has taken place. Furthermore, allegations of a very lenient policy towards Boko Haram have been made against the government, with kidnapping of foreign citizens occurring with little retaliation. One news report even claimed that North Cameroon officials profited financially from ransom paid to release two kidnapped French citizens. Cameroon’s lack of a tough stance against Boko Haram is partially down to corruption and partially because it has received threats from Boko Haram that there will be retaliation if it were to assist Nigerian authorities in clamping down on them.

MILITARY AND INTELLIGENCE DIFFICULTIES FIGHTING THE INSURGENCY

As the US, UK, France and others have experienced in the various insurgencies they have fought, those they are fighting can merge into the civilian population, making them difficult to identify and collateral damage even harder to avoid. As part of a successful Nigerian counter-insurgency strategy, gaining the support of the civilians with whom Boko Haram is trying to embed itself will be necessary. While this will not be attainable overnight, it is ultimately what is needed to build up a better Human Intelligence (HUMINT) network for future kidnappings and counterterrorism operations, something made more difficult due to credible human rights abuses. According to Senator Mohammed Ndume (himself

once charged for his links to Boko Haram), the military are now doing their best to 'regain the trust' of civilians, although the success of this will remain to be seen. Even were this to work, however, there is a further reason why HUMINT is not forthcoming: fear of reprisals against civilians from Boko Haram.

There is a further dilemma for the Nigerian government: unfortunately, even with the best intelligence possible, Boko Haram would still thrive due to its supporters' seeming penetration of the Nigerian political and security apparatus. In January 2012, President Jonathan acknowledged that Boko Haram sympathisers were 'in the executive arm of the government; some of them are in the parliamentary/legislative arm of the government, while some are even in the judicial arm. Some are also in the armed forces, the police and other security agencies'.

POTENTIAL FUTURE FLASHPOINTS

Boko Haram is generally perceived by the West as a lesser threat than AQIM or al-Shabaab, even though Boko Haram has shown an ability to kill on a greater scale than either. Therefore, Boko Haram could attempt a high-impact, extremely violent terrorist operation in order to create significant media coverage and highlight their activities. The obvious template for this is al-Shabaab's September 2013 attack in the Westgate mall in Kenya that killed 67 people.

Boko Haram's close historic connections to AQIM also means a merger of the two groups cannot be dismissed, leading to one terrorist group covering a territory from Morocco to Nigeria with formidable financial resources and manpower. This group would be al-Qaeda's largest franchise and a very acute threat to the West.

As Boko Haram's notoriety increases, so does the threat of Western Nigerians travelling to assist the group. Certain factors may reduce this threat – for example, the Nigeria diaspora in the West is partly Christian – but the case of Aminu Sadiq Ogwuche, who left the UK to join Boko Haram, shows this could be a very real problem.

Introduction

On 14 April 2014, the terrorist group Boko Haram used a car bomb to kill seventy one people in the Nigerian capital of Abuja.¹ Initially, the kidnapping of 329 girls from a boarding school in Chibok, northeastern Nigeria, on the same day was a secondary story.² However, these kidnappings have now garnered significant media interest and led to the development of a concerted international effort to track down the missing girls. While some are thought to have escaped, over 200 are still missing.³ A Nigerian military official claimed on 26 May 2014 that the government had discovered their location, but that there were practical difficulties with using force to save them.⁴

The kidnappings have led to increased focus on the perpetrators: Boko Haram. This report studies the growing problems it poses. It analyses Boko Haram's international connections to al-Qaeda and its affiliates; the international co-operation that is only now taking place to combat Boko Haram and why this needs to be stepped up; and how the Nigerian government's response to the insurgency has been hampered by practical problems.

Boko Haram

Boko Haram (which translates loosely as 'Western education is forbidden' in Hausa) was created in 2002 by the now-deceased Islamist cleric, Mohammed Yusuf, though forms of the group have existed under a variety of names since the late 1990s.⁵ Boko Haram members mostly come from the Kanuri ethnic community that makes up 4% of the Nigerian

population.

Boko Haram aspires to create an Islamic state in Nigeria, and is willing to kill Christians and Muslims they deem to be insufficiently pious in order to achieve it. It has attacked Nigerian police and security forces, military facilities, banks, churches and schools; carried out drive by shootings, car bombs and suicide attacks; and commits kidnappings and bank robberies to finance its activities. Boko Haram's violent insurgency, which began in 2009, has led to over 6,000 deaths, including over 2,000 this year to date.⁶ In November 2013, the UN Human Rights Office stated that the group could be guilty of crimes against humanity.⁷

Since July 2013, Boko Haram has been a proscribed terrorist organisation in the UK,⁸ and since November 2013, a designated terrorist organisation in the US.⁹ In May 2014, the UN Security Council added the group to its al-Qaeda sanctions list.¹⁰

Boko Haram has a loose operating structure, with disconnected cells provided with spiritual guidance by one overall emir, Abubakar Shekau.¹¹ This has made it hard for the Nigerian authorities to detect and defeat the group. The group has benefited from state corruption and has been able to infiltrate the government, the army and the security services.

According to the French Defence Ministry, Boko

1 'Worst Attack in Nigeria Capital Kills 71 in Rush Hour', *Bloomberg*, 14 April 2014, available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-04-14/police-report-blast-at-bus-station-in-nigerian-capital-city.html>

2 'Nigerian school says 329 girl pupils missing', *The Times*, 3 May 2014, available at <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/africa/article4079819.ece>

3 'Officials: Abducted Nigerian schoolgirls likely split up, taken across border', *CNN*, 9 May 2014, available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/05/08/world/africa/nigeria-abducted-girls/>

4 'Nigeria says it has found missing girls', *Washington Post*, 26 May 2014, available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/nigeria-says-it-has-found-missing-girls/2014/05/26/6a5b60e0-e524-11e3-a70e-ea1863229397_story.html?hpid=z1&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=%2ASituation%20Report&utm_campaign=MAY%2027%202014

5 Loimeier, R., Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria. *Africa Spectrum*, 47(2-3), 137-155, (2012). available at <http://journals.sub.uni-hamburg.de/giga/afsp/article/view/555/553>

6 Zenn, J., 'Nigerian al-Qaedaism', *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, 16, 99-117 (2014), available at <http://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/1392/zenn.pdf>; 'More than 2,000 killed this year by Nigeria's Boko Haram', *CBS News*, 21 May 2014, available at <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/more-than-2000-killed-this-year-by-nigerias-boko-haram/>

7 'UN: Boko Haram May Be Guilty of Crimes Against Humanity', *VOA News*, 5 November 2013, available at <http://www.voanews.com/content/un-boko-haram-may-be-guilty-of-crimes-against-humanity/1783903.html>

8 'Proscribed Terrorist Organisations', HM Government, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/301777/ProscribedOrganisationsApril14.pdf

9 'Terrorist Designations of Boko Haram and Ansaru', United States Department of State, 13 November 2013, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/11/217509.htm>

10 'Security Council Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee Adds Boko Haram To Its Sanctions List', United Nations, 22 May 2014, available at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2014/sc11410.doc.htm>

11 'Boko Haram: Growing Threat to the U.S. Homeland', U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, 13 September 2013, available at <http://homeland.house.gov/sites/homeland.house.gov/files/documents/09-13-13-Boko-Haram-Report.pdf>, p. 10

Haram has 200 to 300 training camps in Nigeria and neighbouring countries. The training courses last between two and twelve months and recruits are given a €100 joining fee. A military action earns €1000, and acquiring weapons €2000. This suggests that Boko Haram can offer a relatively good financial package to its recruits. The French Defence Ministry also believes that there are Arab recruiters operating in these camps.¹²

While Boko Haram's current attacks are focused on Nigeria, there has been a fear among policymakers and government officials that it could expand its ambitions. For example, in December 2012, General Carter Ham, the former Commander of US Africa Command, said that 'Boko Haram's leadership aspires to broader activities across the region, certainly to Europe, and I think, again, as their name implies, anything that is western is a legitimate target in their eyes.'¹³ In light of this type of sobering assessment, the West needs to make it a priority to help the Nigerian government to successfully tackle Boko Haram.

A new factor has recently emerged that makes this issue even more pressing. Boko Haram has already attracted at least one Western-educated recruit: a British-born man, Aminu Sadiq Ogwuche.¹⁴ A previous Nigerian terrorist with links to Britain, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, chose Yemen as a place to train prior to his attempt to blow up a flight to Detroit on Christmas Day in 2009. However, perhaps Nigeria will be seen as a viable alternative to receive terrorist instruction to the likes of Abdulmutallab in the future. As the group grows in notoriety, the prospect of more Westerners traveling to join the group cannot be dismissed.

Ansaru

Ansaru is a splinter group from Boko Haram that has been operating since May 2011, though only announced its existence in January 2012. The group was banned in the UK in November 2012 and the US

since November 2013.¹⁵

Ansaru supposedly formed in protest against Boko Haram's indiscriminate killings of Muslims,¹⁶ criticising 'inhuman' Boko Haram operations and claiming they would restore 'dignity' to Islam.¹⁷ Ansaru's charter prevents attacks on Nigerians, a clear difference to Boko Haram's actions.¹⁸ According to the State Department, despite these differences, Ansaru has 'a working relationship with Boko Haram'.¹⁹ They have also co-ordinated their activities when it is convenient – for example, in the kidnapping of a French priest in Cameroon in November 2013.²⁰

Since its inception, Ansaru has largely focused on kidnap for ransom, primarily of Europeans.²¹ In 2011, Ansaru kidnapped – and in 2012 killed – a British and an Italian hostage in Sokoto.²² The group has attempted to link such kidnappings to broader issues pertaining to Islam – for example, a December 2012 kidnapping of a French citizen was described as retaliation for the French military operation in Mali and their ban on full-face veils.²³

15 'Proscribed Terrorist Organisations', HM Government; 'Terrorist Designations of Boko Haram and Ansaru', Department of State

16 'Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency', International Crisis Group, Africa Report N°216, 3 April 2014, available at [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/nigeria/216-curbing-violence-in-nigeria-ii-the-boko-haram-insurgency.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/west-africa/nigeria/216-curbing-violence-in-nigeria-ii-the-boko-haram-insurgency.pdf), p. 26

17 'Profile: Who are Nigeria's Ansaru Islamists?', *BBC News*, 11 March 2013, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21510767>

18 'Escapees exemplify the differences between Boko Haram and Ansaru', *Long War Journal*, 19 November 2013, available at http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2013/11/two_escapes_highlight_the_diff.php

19 'Country Reports on Terrorism 2013', United States Department of State (2013), <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/225886.pdf>, p. 288

20 'Boko Haram claims it kidnapped French priest', *Al-Jazeera*, 15 November 2013, available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/11/boko-haram-claims-it-kidnapped-french-priest-2013111519496392506.html>

21 Zenn, J., 'The Continuing Threat of Boko Haram', Testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations and Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, 13 November 2013, available at <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA16/20131113/101479/HHRG-113-FA16-Wstate-Zenn-20131113.pdf>, p.6

22 'British and Italian hostages killed in Nigeria', *Guardian*, 8 March 2012, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/mar/08/british-italian-hostages-killed-nigeria>

23 'Islamist group claims kidnap of French national in Nigeria', *Reuters*, 23 December 2012, available at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/12/23/uk-nigeria-kidnap-idUKBRE8BM0C020121223>

12 Interview with French military official, May 2014

13 'Boko Haram: Growing Threat to the U.S. Homeland', U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, p.10

14 'The British face of Boko Haram', *Independent*, 16 May 2014, available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/the-british-face-of-boko-haram-man-suspected-of-masterminding-bomb-attacks-in-nigeria-was-radicalised-in-glamorgan-9388373.html>

Al-Qaeda Ties to Boko Haram and Ansaru

Boko Haram

In 2002, Osama bin Laden dispatched one of his aides to Nigeria to distribute \$3 million to sympathetic Salafi groups. Among the recipients was Mohammed Yusuf, Boko Haram's founder.²⁴

Documents discovered in bin Laden's Abbottabad compound in May 2011 show Boko Haram's leaders had been in contact with top levels of al-Qaeda, including potentially even bin Laden himself.²⁵ Shekau, Boko Haram's emir and Yusuf's successor, very obviously backs al-Qaeda rhetorically; a message released in November 2012 featured Shekau praising al-Qaeda, its leaders (including bin Laden and Musab al-Zarqawi, the former leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq) and its fighters across the world, and threatening the US, Britain, Israel and Nigeria.²⁶

Boko Haram is also tied to the broader al-Qaeda network. Over thirty members of Boko Haram are also believed to have trained in Afghanistan, with at least one being trained by al-Qaeda there.²⁷ Between 2010 and 2012, Boko Haram fighters are thought to have trained in the Lower Shabelle and Lower Juba regions of Somalia, areas of known al-Shabaab activity (although as Ayman al-Zawahiri only announced al-Shabaab to be an al-Qaeda franchise in February 2012, it was not formally part of al-Qaeda for most of this time period).²⁸

The US government suspects there to be 'communications, training, and weapons links' between Boko Haram, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen, al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda in

the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).²⁹ In February 2013, AFRICOM Commander General David M. Rodriguez named Boko Haram as an al-Qaeda 'affiliate' in a Senate Armed Services Committee confirmation hearing.³⁰ According to a September 2013 House of Representatives Homeland Security Committee report, this was 'perhaps the most direct assessment of the al Qaeda / Boko Haram relationship issued by a major US official'.³¹ Similarly, in May 2014, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan stated that 'Boko Haram is no longer a local terror group. It is clearly operating as an al Qaeda operation'.³²

It is via AQIM that Boko Haram's main ties to al-Qaeda exist. As early as 2006, Nigerian security sources feared that Boko Haram members were training in the Sahel alongside AQIM,³³ with its emir Abdelmalek Droukdel confirming that his group had Nigerian elements in its midst in 2008.³⁴ In January 2010, Droukdel then stated that AQIM would assist Boko Haram with training, personnel and equipment.³⁵ According to the UN, Boko Haram has 'gained valuable knowledge on the construction of improvised explosive devices from AQIM'.³⁶ AQIM's media wing, 'al-Andalus Establishment for Media Production' has published a statement by Shekau on

29 'Abubakar Shekau', United States Department of State - Rewards for Justice, available at http://www.rewardsforjustice.net/english/abubakar_shekau.html

30 'Advance Policy Questions for General David M. Rodriguez, U.S. Army Nominee for Commander, U. S. Africa Command Version 12, 101500 Feb 13', available at <http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Rodriguez%2002-14-13.pdf>, p.6

31 'Boko Haram: Growing Threat to the U.S. Homeland', U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, p. 20

32 "'War on Boko Haram": African, Western nations unify in hunt for Nigerian girls', CNN, 17 May 2014, available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/05/17/world/africa/nigeria-abducted-girls/>

33 'Special Report: Boko Haram - between rebellion and jihad', Reuters, 31 January 2012, available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/31/us-nigeria-bokoharam-idUSTRE80U0LR20120131>

34 'An Interview With Abdelmalek Droukdel', *New York Times*, 1 July 2008, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/01/world/africa/01transcript-droukdel.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>

35 Duarte, F. P. 'Maghrebian Militant Maneuvers: AQIM as a Strategic Challenge', Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 28 September 2011, available at <http://csis.org/publication/maghrebian-militant-maneuvers-aqim-strategic-challenge>

36 'QE.B.138.14. Jama'atu Ahlus-sunna Lidda'awati Wal Jihad (Boko Haram)', United Nations Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, available at <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/NSQE13814E.shtml>

24 'Boko Haram's Bin Laden Connection', *Daily Beast*, 11 May 2014, available at <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/05/11/boko-haram-s-bin-laden-connection.html>

25 'Bin Laden files show al-Qaida and Taliban leaders in close contact', *Guardian*, 29 April 2012, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/apr/29/bin-laden-al-qaida-taliban-contact>; 'Terrorist Designations of Boko Haram and Ansaru', United States Department of State, 13 November 2013

26 'Boko Haram emir praises al Qaeda', *Long War Journal*, 30 November 2012, available at http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/11/boko_haram_emir_prai.php#ixzz32uGUKx00

27 'Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency', International Crisis Group, p. 23 - 24

28 Ibid., p. 23

a jihadist forum (the first time AQIM had done so for another group)³⁷ and Boko Haram's recent messaging on the internet is also similar to that of AQIM, suggesting that training that has occurred has also included a media component.³⁸

Furthermore, allegations of certain Boko Haram elements responding directly to AQIM leadership have recently surfaced.³⁹ For instance, the kidnapping of seven French tourists in Cameroon by Boko Haram in February 2013 at the height of the French military intervention in Mali could be interpreted as an act of vengeance against France.⁴⁰

According to a September 2013 House of Representatives Homeland Security Committee report, the AQIM – Boko Haram collaboration 'is a mature relationship that allows Boko Haram an avenue to advance its capability, and gives AQIM influence over a developing al-Qaeda affiliate and a rich target list', as well as allowing AQIM to expand into Nigeria, where it could spread additional chaos and exacerbate tensions between Muslims and Christians.⁴¹

The AQIM – Boko Haram connection has also opened up a source of financing to the Nigerian group, which previously was reliant on extortion, bank robberies and taxation of areas it controlled in the north.⁴² For example, it is possible that AQIM-aligned terrorists were responsible for funding the recent focus Boko Haram has placed on kidnap for ransom of foreigners.⁴³ One report suggested that AQIM offered Boko Haram approximately \$250,000 USD to kidnap white expatriates in Nigeria, and that they trained the Nigerian group in hostage-taking.⁴⁴ Some foreign kidnappings pulled off by Boko Haram

may have been ordered by AQIM.⁴⁵

Key to co-operation between AQIM and Boko Haram is Khalid al-Barnawi, designated by the US as a Global Terrorist⁴⁶ and the 'most substantial connection' between the two groups.⁴⁷ Al-Barnawi is thought to have been trained by AQIM in around 2009 and was part of its precursor group, the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC).⁴⁸ Al-Barnawi also has an almost decade-old connection to one of AQIM's former leaders, Moktar Belmokhtar (who now heads his own al-Qaeda splinter group, al-Murabitoun)⁴⁹ and is connected to the Boko Haram offshoot, Ansaru (see below).⁵⁰

Boko Haram's links to AQIM have also been expanded by its activities in Mali where, according to the UN, 'a number of Boko Haram members fought alongside al-Qaeda affiliated groups in Mali in 2012 and 2013 before returning to Nigeria with terrorist expertise'.⁵¹ Prior to the French military invasion of January 2013, one AQIM training centre close to Timbuktu was attended by a significant number of Boko Haram fighters, with more Nigerians present at the training camp than any other foreign trainees.⁵² Ansar al-Dine (AAD), which has received funding from al-Qaeda, also hosted hundreds of members of Boko Haram in territory it controlled in Timbuktu,⁵³ while the Nigerian group is also thought to have trained with – and assisted in operations alongside – the al-Qaeda splinter group, the Movement of Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) in Gao.⁵⁴ Boko Haram also assisted MUJAO, AAD and AQIM in setting up a base nearby to Timbuktu at the beginning of 2013,

37 Pearson, E. & Zenn, J., 'Boko Haram: behind the violence', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 22 May 2014, available at <http://mondediplo.com/blogs/boko-haram-behind-the-violence>

38 'Boko Haram: Growing Threat to the U.S. Homeland', U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, p. 22

39 Ibid.

40 'Boko Haram recrute des djihadistes pour Aqmi', *Le Temps d'Algerie*, 14 May 2014, available at <http://www.letempsdz.com/content/view/121679/177/>

41 'Boko Haram: Growing Threat to the U.S. Homeland', U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, p.20 – 21

42 'Nigeria's Boko Haram: Al-Qaeda's New Friend in Africa?', *Time Magazine*, 31 August 2011, available at <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2091137,00.html>

43 Zenn, J., 'Boko Haram's Evolving Tactics and Alliances in Nigeria', *CTC Sentinel*, 25 June 2013, available at <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/boko-harams-evolving-tactics-and-alliances-in-nigeria>

44 Zenn, J., 'A Brief Look at Ansaru's Khalid al-Barnawi - AQIM's Bridge Into Northern Nigeria', *Militant Leadership Monitor*, 4, 3, March 27, 2013, available at [http://mlm.jamestown.org/feature-single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=40648&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=539&cHash=1dcdf420fd7aee0653e8c2680b71fee7#.U4XNfldVi5](http://mlm.jamestown.org/feature-single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=40648&tx_ttnews[backPid]=539&cHash=1dcdf420fd7aee0653e8c2680b71fee7#.U4XNfldVi5)

45 'Boko Haram: Growing Threat to the U.S. Homeland', U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, p.23

46 'Terrorist Designations of Boko Haram Commander Abubakar Shekau, Khalid al-Barnawi and Abubakar Adam Kamar', United States Department of State, 21 June 2012, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/06/193574.htm>

47 'Boko Haram: Growing Threat to the U.S. Homeland', U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, p. 13

48 Zenn, J., 'A Brief Look at Ansaru's Khalid al-Barnawi - AQIM's Bridge Into Northern Nigeria', *Militant Leadership Monitor*

49 'Boko Haram: Growing Threat to the U.S. Homeland', U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, p. 13

50 Ibid.

51 'Security Council Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee Adds Boko Haram To Its Sanctions List', United Nations, 22 May 2014

52 'Timbuktu: al-Qaeda's terrorist training academy in the Mali desert', *The Telegraph*, 11 February 2013, available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocan/mali/9860822/Timbuktu-al-Qaeda-terrorist-training-academy-in-the-Mali-desert.html>

53 'Timbuktu Training Site Shows Terrorists' Reach', *Wall Street Journal*, 1 February 2013, available at <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323926104578278030474477210>

54 Zenn, J., 'Boko Haram's International Connections', *CTC Sentinel*, 14 January 2013, available at <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/boko-harams-international-connections>

which led to a skirmish with Malian soldiers.⁵⁵

Ansaru's ties to al-Qaeda

In 2011, Ansaru referred to themselves as 'al Qaeda in the land beyond the Sahel'⁵⁶ and it has been described by the British government as being 'broadly aligned' with al-Qaeda.⁵⁷ The International Crisis Group goes a step further, claiming that Ansaru is actually al-Qaeda's Nigerian franchise.⁵⁸

Certainly the group is linked to AQIM.⁵⁹ According to Jacob Zenn of the Jamestown Foundation, most of Ansaru's members are Nigerians 'with militant origins dating back to their training in the Sahel (Mauritania, Algeria, Mali, Niger) in the late 1990s and early 2000s', fighters who would later form AQIM.⁶⁰ The core of its leadership constitutes some of those who trained with al-Shabaab and AQIM in approximately 2009.⁶¹

This includes Mamman Nur, a Cameroonian who lost a power struggle with Shekau for leadership of Boko Haram after Yusuf's death.⁶² Between 2009 and 2011, Nur is thought to have joined up with al-Shabaab in Somalia, subsequently made contact with AQIM, and then returned to Nigeria in order to oversee the August 2011 bombing of the UN building in Abuja, which led to twenty six deaths.⁶³ The fact that this was a suicide bombing – following on from another suicide attack against a police headquarters building in Abuja earlier that summer⁶⁴ – showed attacks in Nigeria were beginning to follow that of al-Qaeda's more closely. Ansaru fighters also took part in the In Amenas gas complex attack in Algeria in January 2013, in which hundreds of workers were

held hostage, with thirty nine being killed.⁶⁵

Ansaru has not been active recently, with several leaders rejoining the Boko Haram fold.⁶⁶ It has been suggested that the group reintegrated back into Boko Haram in the aftermath of the French-led invasion of Mali.⁶⁷ Therefore, it is likely that it is this group that will remain the pre-eminent threat to Nigeria and the broader region.

55 'Mali soldiers fire warning shots at Islamist fighters: army', *Gulf News*, 8 January 2013, available at <http://m.gulfnews.com/news/world/other-world/mali-soldiers-fire-warning-shots-at-islamist-fighters-army-1.1129421>

56 'British and Italian hostages killed in Nigeria', *Guardian*, 8 March 2012; Zenn, J., 'Nigerian al-Qaedaism', *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* (2014)

57 'Proscribed Terrorist Organisations', HM Government

58 'Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency', International Crisis Group, April 2014, p. 27

59 'Country Reports on Terrorism 2013', United States Department of State (2013)

60 Zenn, J., 'The Continuing Threat of Boko Haram', Testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, 13 November 2013

61 'Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency', International Crisis Group, April 2014, p. 26

62 Zenn, J., 'Nigerian al-Qaedaism', *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* (2014)

63 'Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency', International Crisis Group, April 2014, p. 23 – 24; Zenn, J., 'Nigerian al-Qaedaism', *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* (2014)

64 'The Story Of Nigeria's First Suicide Bomber', *Sahara Reporters*, 26 June 2011, available at <http://saharareporters.com/news-page/story-nigerias-first-suicide-bomber-blueprint-magazine>

65 Zenn, J., 'The Continuing Threat of Boko Haram', Testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, 13 November 2013

66 Zenn, J., 'Nigerian al-Qaedaism', *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* (2014)

67 Zenn, J., 'Boko Haram's Evolving Tactics and Alliances in Nigeria', *CTC Sentinel*, 25 June 2013

The International Response

The seriousness of the international community's response to Boko Haram has been mixed. For example, Hillary Clinton recently said that the abduction of the girls by Boko Haram was 'abominable, it's criminal, it's an act of terrorism and it really merits the fullest response possible, first and foremost from the government of Nigeria'.⁶⁸ Yet, when she was Secretary of State, her department did not classify Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, despite Boko Haram's connections to al-Qaeda and pressure from the FBI, the CIA, the Justice Department and numerous members of Congress.⁶⁹

According to former US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jonnie Carson, this was because 'the bulk of the Boko Haram movement' was focused on 'trying to discredit the Nigerian Government', and was not necessarily terrorist.⁷⁰ Carson also claimed that designating Boko Haram could 'raise its profile, give it greater publicity, give it greater credibility, help in its recruitment, and also probably drive more assistance in its direction'.⁷¹ It took until November 2013 for the US to designate Boko Haram as an FTO.

Recently, Sarah Sewall, Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, told the House Foreign Affairs Committee on 21 May, 2014 that '[t]his kidnapping – and addressing the threat of Boko Haram more broadly – would be daunting for any government. That is why the United States is doing all it can to help Nigeria address these challenges – today and longer term'.⁷² Yet such problems are not just restricted to the US. Many Western officials have promised deeper engagement with the terrorism problem in Nigeria, and Africa more broadly. However, actual policies and practical commitments

have been inconsistent.

It is possible that the recent kidnappings represent a political tipping point and Nigeria will be increasingly prioritised by foreign governments. The stakes are too high for the West not to get involved forcefully going forward and it cannot afford for any more of Nigeria to be run by jihadists. For example, when AQIM took over major amounts of territory in Mali in late 2012, the French did not hesitate to intervene militarily to dislodge the terrorists from the country; and Nigeria is a much bigger prize than Mali.

A LACK OF REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

Nigeria is often viewed by its neighbours as a rich country that should be able to resolve its domestic security issues by itself, and co-operation between neighbouring countries has subsequently been poor.

Congolese President Denis Sassou Nguesso has stated that the solution to the Boko Haram crisis should be African-led,⁷³ yet the African Union's response has been largely inadequate.⁷⁴ In this context, the broader international community's assistance will be very much required.

Even though there are some regional co-operation initiatives, such as the Fusion and Liaison Unit, which allows countries such as Nigeria, Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Libya, Burkina Faso and Chad to share intelligence, often on counterterrorism issues,⁷⁵ the results can be disappointing. Even after Niger's Foreign Minister, Mohamed Bazoum, underlined in January 2012 how the ties between AQIM and Boko Haram 'required a unified regional security approach to combat the threat',⁷⁶ and after a regional meeting in Chad ended with a commitment of 1,000 troops from

68 'Clinton: Kidnapping in Nigeria "Act of Terrorism"', *Associated Press*, 7 May 2014, available at <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/clinton-kidnaping-nigerian-girls-abominable>

69 'Hillary's State Department Refused to Brand Boko Haram as Terrorists', *Daily Beast*, 7 May 2014, available at <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/05/07/hillary-s-state-department-refused-to-brand-boko-haram-as-terrorists.html>

70 'U.S. Consulate in Nigeria Asked Clinton State Dept. Why Boko Haram Wasn't Called "Terrorist Organization"', *Weekly Standard*, 8 May 2014, available at <http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/us-consulate-nigeria-asked-clinton-state-dept-why-boko-haram-wasnt-called-terrorist-organization-791138.html>

71 'Hillary's State Department Refused to Brand Boko Haram as Terrorists', *Daily Beast*, 7 May 2014

72 Sewall S., 'Boko Haram: The Growing Threat to Schoolgirls in Nigeria and Beyond', United States Department of State, House Foreign Affairs Committee, 21 May 2014, available at <http://www.state.gov/j/226424.htm>

73 'Nigeria: L'Afrique doit prendre "son destin en main"', *Le Figaro*, 16 May 2014, available at <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2014/05/16/97001-20140516FILWWW00385-nigerial-afrique-doit-prendre-son-destin-en-main.php>

74 'Nigeria: «Un sommet utile mais qui vient un peu tard», *RFI*, 18 May 2014

75 'Afrique de l'Ouest: Unité de fusion et de liaison - Un rempart contre le terrorisme dans le Sahel', *All Africa*, 12 April 2012, available at <http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201204130875.html>

76 'Boko Haram got al Qaeda bomb training, Niger says', *Reuters*, 25 January 2012, available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/25/ozatp-sahara-bokoharam-qaeda-idAFJ0E8000K20120125>

each country to fight off Boko Haram, ultimately nothing was implemented.⁷⁷

A Paris summit on 17 May 2014 saw the leaders of Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Benin and Chad pledge to share intelligence and co-ordinate their activities against Boko Haram.⁷⁸ It remains to be seen whether this is successful in light of bad relations that exists between certain countries.

KEY REGIONAL ACTORS

Cameroon

Cameroon is a key country. It remains Nigeria's most vulnerable neighbour and has already suffered from major attacks and kidnappings. For example, on 17 May 2014, two were killed and ten Chinese workers kidnapped in an operation conducted by approximately 150 heavily-armed Boko Haram fighters in seven SUVs.⁷⁹ The Cameroonian security forces have also been targeted; for example, on 4 May 2014, two security officials were killed in Kuseri by suspected Boko Haram elements.⁸⁰

Cameroon serves as a recruiting ground for Boko Haram, with the group recently enrolling young Cameroonians from the Kanuri community. The government there now acknowledges that this infiltration has taken place.⁸¹ About 200 youngsters, aged from fifteen to nineteen, have been recruited since February 2014 alone, and are currently training in Nigeria. While most are drawn by financial considerations, others have been forced to enrol for fear of being killed.⁸²

The state has now reinforced the military presence on its borders. The Cameroon-Nigeria border is now theoretically closely monitored, yet surveillance does

not seem efficient. Journalists from *Jeune Afrique* were able to travel from the Amchide border town in Cameroon to Maiduguri in Nigeria (Boko Haram's hub) without passports and going through nineteen checkpoints without any problems. Corruption is rife and most officers in charge of checkpoints accept money for a safe passage and turning a blind eye.⁸³ Furthermore, allegations of a very lenient policy towards Boko Haram have been made against the government,⁸⁴ with kidnapping of foreign citizens occurring with little retaliation. One news report even claimed that North Cameroon officials profited financially from ransom paid to release two kidnapped French citizens.⁸⁵

In light of this, Cameroon has been viewed as the 'weakest link', with Nigeria's head of counter-terrorism complaining on 30 May 2014 that its neighbour was not doing enough to fight off Boko Haram.⁸⁶ For example, Cameroon has not agreed to let Nigerian troops pursue Boko Haram onto its territory, which makes it much easier for jihadists to escape and regroup in a safe haven.⁸⁷

Cameroon's lack of a tough stance against Boko Haram is not entirely down to corruption; it has also received threats from Boko Haram that it will be punished harshly if it were to assist Nigerian authorities in clamping down on them.⁸⁸

Cameroon is also a conduit for its weapons supply. Nigerian jihadists receive weapons through smuggling routes that go from Sudan, Chad, the Central African Republic and finally transiting through north Cameroon.⁸⁹

Despite having a mutual enemy in Boko Haram, Abuja and Yaounde have a cold relationship, something

83 'Cameroun - Nigeria : Boko Haram, la menace fantôme', *Jeune Afrique*, 1 May 2013, available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/JA2728p024-031.xml0/>

84 'Boko Haram : Cameroun et Nigeria enfin sur la même longueur d'onde?', *France 24*, 21 May 2014, available at <http://www.france24.com/fr/20140521-boko-haram-cameroun-nigeria-goodluck-jonathan-paul-biya-paris-renseignement-cooperation/>

85 'Boko Haram infiltre l'administration camerounaise', *La Septentrion*, available at <http://www.leseptentrion.net/2014/05/boko-haram-infiltre-ladmission-camerounaise/>

86 'Cameroon weakest link in fight against Boko Haram: Nigeria', *Reuters*, 30 May 2014, available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/30/us-nigeria-boko-haram-idUSKBN0EA11E20140530>

87 'Jonathan - Our Soldiers Can't Pursue Boko Haram to Cameroon', *All Africa*, 18 May 2014, available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201405190454.html>

88 'Boko Haram threatens Cameroon over Nigeria', *Punch*, 16 February 2014, available at <http://www.punchng.com/news/boko-haram-threatens-cameroon-over-nigeria/>

89 'Cameroun - Nigeria : Boko Haram, la menace fantôme', *Jeune Afrique*, 1 May 2013

77 'Nigeria: «Un sommet utile mais qui vient un peu tard», *RFI*, 18 May 2014, available at <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20140518-france-nigeria-boko-haram-sommet-elysee-hollande-jonathan-lyceennes-enlevement-isl/>

78 'Africa leaders declare "war" on Nigeria Boko Haram', *BBC News*, 17 May 2014, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-27451966>

79 'Cameroun: La Psychose Boko Haram S'empare Des Camerounais', *Camer.be*, available at <http://www.camer.be/33733/11:1/cameroun--la-psychose-boko-haram-s-empare-des-camerounais-cameroon.html>

80 'Cameroun, Tchad, Niger, Bénin: ces pays sous la menace de Boko Haram', *Jeune Afrique*, 15 May 2014, available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAWEB20140514174552/>

81 Ibid.

82 'Cameroon: Boko Haram recrute des jeunes à la frontière avec le Nigeria', *Jeune Afrique*, 3 April 2014, available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAWEB20140403115835/cameroun-terrorisme-boko-haram-nigeria-cameroun-boko-haram-recrute-des-jeunes-a-la-frontiere-avec-le-nigeria.html>

which is exacerbated by disputes over the oil-rich Benkassi peninsula.

Central African Republic (CAR)

Boko Haram has made reference for the need to defend its fellow Muslims in the CAR. In a 14 February 2014 communique, Shekau personally pledged to attack Christians in the CAR to avenge the deaths of Muslims in the country.⁹⁰

In November 2013, the CAR's then-Prime Minister Nicolas Tiangaye downplayed concerns about jihadist activity in the country. However, Edmond Mulet, assistant secretary-general for peacekeeping operations at the UN, told Voice of America 'we have some indications that there is some kind of [Boko Haram] presence here.'⁹¹

Chad

Chad has not yet suffered from any Boko Haram attacks. Its borders are tightly controlled, with computerised checks at borders posts with Cameroon and systematic searches of all vehicles and persons entering the country.⁹² Chadian security services are also using intelligence from local tribal leaders and the Nigerian refugee population is closely monitored.⁹³

Niger

Monitoring of the 1,500 km border with Nigeria has not increased in the past few weeks⁹⁴ and the Nigerian refugee population in Niger has swelled to 41,000 in recent months.⁹⁵ According to an NGO source speaking to *Jeune Afrique*, this has included members of Boko Haram and radical imams.⁹⁶ Boko Haram has subsequently been able to operate with relative ease in Niger,⁹⁷ and, on 6 May 2014, fighting broke out at the Nigerian border between security forces and Boko Haram members armed with AK-47s.⁹⁸

90 'From the Sahel to the Savannah: Could Islamist Militants Set Up Shop in the CAR?', *Think Africa*, 26 February 2014, available at <http://thinkafricapress.com/central-african-republic/jihadist-intervention-car-crisis-could-it-happen>

91 'Lawless CAR Attracting Terrorists' Attention', *VOA News*, 22 November 2013, available at <http://www.voanews.com/content/lawless-car-attracting-terrorists-attention/1795564.html>

92 'Cameroun, Tchad, Niger, Bénin: ces pays sous la menace de Boko Haram', *Jeune Afrique*, 15 May 2014

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

98 'Niger: combats entre l'armée et Boko Haram deux blessés', *Jeune Afrique*, 7 May 2014, available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/actu/20140507/T055326Z20140507/T055307Z/niger-combats-entre-l-armee-et-boko-haram-deux-blesses.html>

Benin

According to *Jeune Afrique*, local authorities in Benin are largely unconcerned about Boko Haram, though some officials have expressed unease about a growing number of madrasas in the north of the country and a growing Nigerian refugee population.⁹⁹

99 'Cameroun, Tchad, Niger, Bénin: ces pays sous la menace de Boko Haram', *Jeune Afrique*, 15 May 2014

Military and Intelligence Difficulties Fighting the Insurgency

Insurgency

In some regards, the Nigerian security forces appear well equipped to track down Boko Haram and the kidnapped girls. Approximately a quarter of the Nigerian government's 2012 budget was allocated to the security sector,¹⁰⁰ and efforts have been made to improve training, equipment and co-ordination of the Nigerian military and security services.¹⁰¹ The Nigerian military is approximately 200,000 people strong, operates over twelve combat aircraft and possesses helicopters and other heavy military hardware.¹⁰² According to President Jonathan, approximately 20,000 troops are now operating in areas where Boko Haram is active,¹⁰³ and up to four army battalions, 1,000 special operations fighters and ten army search teams have been dispatched to the northern part of Nigeria where the girls were kidnapped to support the Army's 7th Division.¹⁰⁴

However, as the girls are almost certainly being kept captive in Boko Haram strongholds or in neighbouring countries, a military engagement will be necessary; and according to Alice Friend, the Department of Defense's principal director for Africa Affairs, the 7th Division 'do not have the capabilities, the training or the equipping that Boko Haram does.'¹⁰⁵ The brutality of Boko Haram's attacks has led

to a fear of the military engaging them in battle.¹⁰⁶ Even with the help of Western nations, a military intervention carries great risks. For example, the British hostage Chris McManus was executed by his kidnapers in Nigeria in 2012 when British Special Forces attempted to rescue him.¹⁰⁷

An additional problem, according to US Secretary of State John Kerry, is that there are 'credible allegations that Nigerian security forces are committing gross human rights violations.'¹⁰⁸

There is an obvious danger of demoralising the military further if it is simultaneously castigated for both cowardice and excessive force. Yet it is important to note that the Nigerian security forces' heavy-handed tactics incidents have not only destabilised the state further, they have had two significant practical effects relevant to the search for the kidnapped girls.

Limiting Western assistance

The US government has been unable to work closely with the Nigerian security forces as doing so would violate the 1997 Leahy Law,¹⁰⁹ which prevents the US Defense and State Departments from providing assistance if there is 'credible information that [a foreign security force] has committed a gross violation of human rights'. The sale of lethal weapons from the UK to Nigerians is prohibited for the same reason.¹¹⁰

Alice Friend has stated that such issues have resulted in a 'persistent and very troubling limitation on our

100 Herskovits, J., 'In Nigeria, Boko Haram Is Not the Problem', *New York Times*, 2 January 2012, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/02/opinion/in-nigeria-boko-haram-is-not-the-problem.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>

101 'Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency', International Crisis Group, April 2014, p. 31

102 'Failure to find kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls haunts parents', *The Star*, 30 April 2014, available at http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/04/30/failure_to_find_kidnapped_nigerian_schoolgirls_haunts_parents.html

103 "'War on Boko Haram': African, Western nations unify in hunt for Nigerian girls", *CNN*, 17 May 2014

104 'U.S. eager to help Nigerian search for girls but cautious in sharing intelligence', *Washington Post*, 15 May 2014, available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-eager-to-help-nigerian-search-for-girls-but-cautious-in-sharing-intelligence/2014/05/15/c5ad010e-dc5c-11e3-bda1-9b46b2066796_story.html

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid.

107 'Chris McManus killed by kidnapers minutes after rescue mission began', *Guardian*, 17 May 2013, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/may/17/chris-mcmanus-killed-by-kidnappers-nigeria>

108 'State of Emergency and Fighting in Northern Nigeria', United States Department of State, 17 May 2013, available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/05/209576.htm>

109 'U.S. officials frustrated by Nigeria's response to girls' kidnapping', *Los Angeles Times*, 15 May 2014, available at <http://www.latimes.com/world/africa/la-fg-us-nigeria-schoolgirls-20140515-story.html>

110 'Why Nigeria has not defeated Boko Haram', *BBC News*, 15 May 2014, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-27396702>

assistance'.¹¹¹

Initially, the US was only able to provide approximately thirty advisors from the FBI, Defense and State Departments, who provided expert assistance in Abuja.¹¹² However, the US was then also able to finalise a formal agreement with the Nigerian government to share analysis of intelligence relating to finding the kidnapped girls (such as specific images).¹¹³ However, this would not include raw intelligence and is only a temporary agreement.¹¹⁴ One US official said that '[t]here is a belief and a trust that they will use that information to try to locate the schoolgirls',¹¹⁵ and the Nigerian government had to agree that the use of US intelligence would be consistent with international human rights law.¹¹⁶

While US assistance may be of some use, Richard Downie of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies believes that the 'small group of personnel that the US is providing... may help, but it's unlikely to be a game changer'.¹¹⁷

Hindering intelligence gathering

Despite owning two surveillance drones, the Nigerian government lacks capacity to provide effective surveillance. One former US military officer stated that the US 'trained the Nigerian air force to fly [a surveillance drone]... [b]ut one of the two (they bought) crashed, and we're not sure the other one is operational'.¹¹⁸

Therefore, Nigeria will be reliant on foreign assistance for Imagery Intelligence. US surveillance drones, a

manned surveillance plane and satellites have tracked the movements of Boko Haram fighters, including their establishing of training camps.¹¹⁹ The UK government is pledging to send a surveillance plane, with China, Israel and France also promising to share intelligence and satellite images.¹²⁰

However, this may only be of limited use. It is believed that the kidnapped girls have been split up into several groups and moved to mountainous and rural areas with heavy forestry.¹²¹ Surveillance drone senses may not be able to see through heavy foliage.¹²² For an expert quoted in *The Telegraph*, it is like finding 'a needle-in-a-haystack'.¹²³

This means there will need to be a greater focus on Human Intelligence (HUMINT). As the US, UK, France and others have experienced in the various insurgencies they have fought, those they are fighting can merge into the civilian population, making them difficult to identify and collateral damage even harder to avoid. For the Nigeria military to fight this war in a more conventional manner – as Senator Mohammed Ndume (himself once charged for his links to Boko Haram¹²⁴) has suggested was occurring – will be ineffective.¹²⁵

While a counterinsurgency strategy is necessary, it must be tailored. In 2006, the hugely influential counterinsurgency strategist David Kilcullen wrote that, 'today's insurgencies differ significantly — at the level of policy, strategy, operational art and tactical technique — from those of earlier eras'... Insurgents may not be seeking to overthrow the state, may have no coherent strategy or may pursue a faith-based approach difficult to counter with traditional methods.¹²⁶

111 'U.S. eager to help Nigerian search for girls but cautious in sharing intelligence', *Washington Post*, 15 May 2014

112 'U.S. officials frustrated by Nigeria's response to girls' kidnapping', *Los Angeles Times*, 15 May 2014

113 'U.S. to Share Intelligence on Girls With Nigeria: So What?', *U.S. News*, 19 May 2014, available at <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/05/19/the-ugly-side-sharing-drone-investigation-intelligence-on-boko-haram-with-nigeria>

114 'US to share intelligence analysis with Nigeria', *The Hill*, 19 May 2014, available at http://thehill.com/policy/defense/206502-us-to-share-intelligence-analysis-with-nigeria#.U3o1IVB_2Pw.facebook#ixzz32M1znkF8

115 'U.S. eager to help Nigerian search for girls but cautious in sharing intelligence', *Washington Post*, 15 May 2014

116 <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/05/17/world/africa/nigeria-abducted-girls/>

117 'Former U.S. General In Africa: "I Think We Can" Help Find Nigerian Girls', *NPR*, 8 May 2014, available at <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2014/05/08/310695559/former-u-s-general-in-africa-i-think-we-can-help-find-nigerian-girls>

118 'Failure to find kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls haunts parents', *The Star*, 30 April 2014

119 'U.S. officials frustrated by Nigeria's response to girls' kidnapping', *Los Angeles Times*, 15 May 2014

120 Ibid.

121 'Boko Haram leader: Is there a method to his madness?', *CNN*, 8 May 2014, available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/05/08/world/africa/boko-haram-leader-plan/>

122 'Failure to find kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls haunts parents', *The Star*, 30 April 2014

123 'Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists?', *The Telegraph*, 12 May 2014, available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/10824353/Who-are-Nigerias-Boko-Haram-Islamists.html>

124 'Nigeria senator Ali Ndume "linked to Boko Haram"', *BBC News*, 22 November 2011, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15829203>

125 'Nigeria: un sénateur critique l'inaction de l'armée face à Boko Haram', *RFI*, 18 May 2014, available at <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20140518-nigeria-senateur-critique-armee-boko-haram-mohammed-ali-ndume/>

126 Kilcullen, D., 'Counterinsurgency Redux' (2006), available at http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/uscoin/counterinsurgency_redux.pdf, p.11

As part of a successful Nigerian counter-insurgency strategy, gaining the support of the civilians with whom Boko Haram is trying to embed itself will be necessary. While this will not be attainable overnight, it is ultimately what is needed to build up a better HUMINT network for future kidnappings and counterterrorism operations; and, according to Ndume, the military are now doing their best to 'regain the trust' of civilians.¹²⁷ The success of this will remain to be seen.

Even if it is the case, it remains very challenging for Nigerian authorities to build a source network. Some military abuses have resulted in locals not trusting government forces, and subsequently being more unwilling to assist them. Therefore, as Declan A. Amaraegbu wrote in 2013 the *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 'Boko Haram operates undetected because the local residents do not trust the government well enough to offer intelligence information.' He believes that to resolve this,

*[t]he local population should be taken into confidence by offering them opportunities and a sense of belonging...they can act against the terrorists because they have good knowledge of the local terrain and can give more accurate information about the activities of the group, their movement and location...the only people in a position to do this are members of the local community.*¹²⁸

Even were this to work, however, there is a further reason why HUMINT is not forthcoming: fear of reprisals from Boko Haram. After its latest attack in the summer of 2012, it issued a statement saying

We only kill government functionaries, security agents, Christians and anyone who pretends to be a Muslim but engage in assisting security agents to arrest us... [W]e wish to strongly warn people to desist from collaborating with security agents... [w]e want to stress that in our struggle, we only kill government functionaries, security agents, Christians and anyone who pretends to be a Muslim but engage in assisting security agents to arrest us. We are also aware of the activities of some women who have been recruited

127 'Nigeria: un sénateur critique l'inaction de l'armée face à Boko Haram', *RFI*, 18 May 2014

128 Amaraegbu, D., 'Failure of Human Intelligence, Boko Haram and Terrorism in Nigeria', *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 15, 4 (2013), available at <http://www.jsd-africa.com/jsda/Vol15No4-Summer2013B/PDF/Failure%20of%20Human%20Intelligence.Declan%20Amaraegbu.pdf>, p.79

*to spy on us. This is a final warning to all of them. Whenever we catch any woman spying on us, we would slaughter her like a ram.*¹²⁹

Some attempts have been made to change this: for example, the government has introduced a text messaging service in which locals can anonymously identify Boko Haram members and their movements.¹³⁰ However, the overall problem remains.

There is a further dilemma for the Nigerian government: unfortunately, even with the best intelligence possible, Boko Haram would still thrive due to its supporters' seeming penetration of the Nigerian political and security apparatus. In January 2012, President Jonathan acknowledged that Boko Haram sympathisers were 'in the executive arm of the government; some of them are in the parliamentary/legislative arm of the government, while some are even in the judiciary arm. Some are also in the armed forces, the police and other security agencies.'¹³¹

One practical consequence of this is a poorly-paid police force accused of selling information about informants to Boko Haram.¹³² Another was when, in August 2012, the names, addresses and financial details of over sixty State Security Service members were placed online.¹³³ Yet not all collusion comes with Boko Haram because of ideological sympathies. For example, there have also been reports of northern governors bribing the group simply in order to not become targets for attack.¹³⁴

This problem seemingly persists today. Speaking about rescue attempts made for the kidnapped girls, one Nigerian soldier recently commented that 'our efforts are being countered in a way that it is very clear they are being tipped off about our movements.'

129 'We attacked Sambo's home, says Boko Haram', *The Nation*, 1 August 2012, available at <http://www.thenationonlineng.net/2011/index.php/news/55903-we-attacked-sambo%E2%80%99s-home,-says-boko-haram.html>

130 Warner, J. & Zenn, J., 'After kidnappings, Nigeria must step up', *Boston Globe*, 15 May 2014, available at <http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2014/05/15/boko-haram-kidnappings-nigeria-must-step/p69X3KAaGqT-VpX4WnKMr2K/story.html>

131 'Nigeria's Goodluck Jonathan: Officials back Boko Haram', *BBC News*, 8 January 2012, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16462891>

132 'Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency', *International Crisis Group*, p. 32

133 'Boko Haram: Growing Threat to the U.S. Homeland', *U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security*, p. 30

134 'We're on Northern gov's payroll - Boko Haram', *Vanguard*, 24 January 2012, available at <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/01/we-re-on-northern-govspayroll-boko-haram/>

Any time we make a plan to rescue [the girls] we have been ambushed... Definitely somebody high up in the chain of command is leaking up information to these people'.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ 'Kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls taken as brides by militants, relatives told', *Guardian*, 29 April 2014, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/29/kidnapped-nigerian-schoolgirls-marriage-claims>

Potential Future Flashpoints

- In February 2014, Shekau declared that his group would launch attacks against oil facilities in the Southern Niger Delta region. If they were able to pull off such attacks, this would get the attention of Westerners and raise the stakes when it comes to economic interests, investments and the energy market as a whole; and show that Boko Haram has the capacity to target the South, something it has had limited success with so far.
- Boko Haram is generally perceived by the West as a lesser threat than AQIM or al-Shabaab, even though Boko Haram has shown an ability to kill on a greater scale than either. This could soon change. Shekau must have been surprised by the intense interest from the international community and media reaction to the kidnapping of the schoolgirls. Kidnapping Westerners or conducting a high-impact, extremely violent terrorist operation in order to garner significant media coverage and highlight their activities is likely. The obvious template for this is al-Shabaab's September 2013 attack in the Westgate mall in Kenya. This attack could take place in Nigeria or a neighbouring country.
- As Boko Haram's notoriety increases, so does the threat of Western Nigerians travelling to assist the group. Certain factors may reduce this threat – for example, the Nigeria diaspora in the West is partly Christian – but the case of Aminu Sadiq Ogwuche, who left the UK to join Boko Haram, shows this could be a very real problem.
- The more foreign nations engage on the ground in Nigeria, the likelier it is that Boko Haram will internationalise its jihad. The group will likely emerge as an increasingly regional threat over the coming months.
- Boko Haram's close historic connections to AQIM means a merger of the two groups cannot be dismissed, leading to one terrorist group covering a territory from Morocco to Nigeria with formidable financial resources and manpower. This group would be al-Qaeda's largest single franchise and a very acute threat to the West.