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UNDERSTANDING TERRORISM AND ITS CHALLENGES TO NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria has experienced various forms of organized crime and terrorism since the beginning of the Fourth Republic, terrorist activities has remain the greatest threat to the stability and security in contemporary Nigeria, expanding beyond direct violence to undermine governance, disrupt socio-economic progress and create humanitarian crisis. The challenges are deeply rooted in a combination of internal factors such as socio-economic grievances, governance deficits and limitations in security reforms as well as the adaptable nature of terrorist organizations. Nigeria has adopted a multi-faceted approach to counter-terrorism, but despite these efforts, Nigeria continues to face significant challenges in effectively combating terrorism, including the evolving tactics and increasing sophistication of terrorist groups. It is within this context that the study examines issues, challenges and implication of terrorism to Nigeria's national security using terrorist groups like the Niger Delta Militant and Boko Haram as a case study. The study adopted human security theory in the explanation of the discourse. The utility of the theory to the study is that it highlights the importance of addressing the underlying causes of terrorism and adopting a people –centred approach to building sustainable peace and security for the nation. Findings from the study revealed that the persistence of terrorism in Nigeria is rooted in unresolved socio-economic and political issues, the adaptive nature of terrorist groups, operational challenges faced by security forces and potential limitations in the comprehensiveness and implementation of the counter-terrorism strategy itself. The study recommended that Nigeria should adopt a more holistic and sustained approach that combines robust security measures with addressing the underlying causes of terrorism, strengthening governance, promoting socio-economic development and fostering regional and international cooperation.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Humanitarian Crisis, National Security, Niger Delta Militant, Terrorism.

Introduction

Since 1999, Nigeria has faced different security issues and these were usually described as criminal activities, depending on their context (Sampson, 2014; Piate, 2014). Nevertheless, after the Al-Qaeda terrorist network bombed the World Trade Centre (WTC) in the United States on September 11, 2001, the protection of nation-states' territorial authority and sovereignty by those who act on their behalf has become a global issue, as terrorism is now seen as a global threat to the security and sovereignty of countries (Duru, 2014; Piate, 2014). For this reason, there was a push by many countries to label some crimes with certain traits as terrorism. As a result, the actions of Niger Delta militants who kidnapped and damaged oil facilities to protest the state's resource takeover, along with the terrorism of religious extremists in Northern Nigeria, were now seen as terrorism. Terrorism is just one type of action that can be taken by

those who strongly disagree with the current situation (Pillar, 2001). It is linked to the use of violence by a group to achieve certain political aims or to persuade the government to act in a way that suits their group's interests. It is a way of using threat or violence against innocent and unarmed people to scare a target group into giving in to some of their demands. Terrorism is a particular way to fight, a tool, a tactic or a strategy for causing violence. The main feature is that it is designed to attack and harm ordinary people. It is a planned attack on people who are not involved in fighting, carried out by groups that want to influence people outside the immediate area (Piate, 2025). For an act to be called terrorism, it must have these characteristics. Terrorism is driven by political motives, uses violence or threats of violence and is intended to cause widespread fear in people, sometimes carried out by groups or individuals influenced by an ideology (Eselebor and Owonikoko, 2021).

Security is about being safe. It is the absence of fear, danger, turmoil, war and violence that makes people feel more at ease. Security means being free from danger, fear, anxiety or uncertainty. It means being safe from or not facing, danger. A secure state is one that is not being attacked from the outside or threatened from within. Security is all about making sure you survive. The idea of survival in the definition is appropriate since survival is essential for a state to continue living or existing. If there is uncertainty about the survival of an entity or system, it is likely to be phased out, destroyed or completely wiped out. States, governments and societies have been destroyed and wiped out by forces that threaten their existence. Security, in this sense, is when there are no serious threats to the main values and survival of an entity or system. It means changing conflict into unity, unfairness into fairness and difficulties into harmony (Imobighe, 1983; Akpan, 2010; Nwolise, 2012 and Piate, 2025). Indeed, the end of the cold war has led scholars to reconsider the concept of security. Security is now being understood to include "human security". The 1994 Human Development Report which is considered a major effort to redefine security, explains human security as being safe from ongoing dangers and sudden disruptions in daily life (UNDP, 1994). Economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security are the seven types of security that make up human security. As a result, National Security refers to the safety of a nation or state. It includes the protection of people, communities and legal institutions, as well as the interests of individuals, communities, institutions and the country, including its leadership. The government is responsible for protecting its people, their rights, the country's independence and its resources. It involves all the actions taken to prevent violence, espionage, subversion, sabotage and treason. It means a country can manage those conditions, both at home and abroad, that the public opinion of a community thinks are important for its survival, independence, prosperity and wellbeing. All in all, it is about keeping people safe from violence, crime or anything that might cause fear in a country (Ali, 2015, Karim, 2015, Eselebor and Owonikoko, 2021; Piate 2025).

Terrorism is a major and difficult threat to national security and has also been harmful to human security, economic growth and political stability, as well as threatening the existence of Nigeria's businesses. Terrorism is undermining the existence of a nation-state, leading to economic problems, instability, a threat to tourism, energy-sector, civil-aviation, maritime, transportation and the issue of terrorism has not gone away; it keeps people in constant fear and takes away their freedom and security (Piate, 2014). Terrorism in Nigeria is closely linked to national security and puts the country's stability, development and the health of its people at risk. The deaths of tens of thousands of people, including civilians and security personnel, have been caused by terrorist activities mainly carried out by groups like the Niger Delta militant, Boko haram and ISWAP in Nigeria. As a result of these attacks, people are afraid, their daily routines are disrupted and insecurity spreads to more areas of the country. Terrorism led to

many people being forced to leave their homes, resulting in a major humanitarian crisis. Millions of Nigerians have been displaced within their own country and now face difficulties getting food, shelter, medical care and education.

Terrorist groups try to take over the country by controlling areas, setting up their own systems of government and attacking government buildings and security forces. This weakens the rule of law and makes it harder for the government to offer important services. It also causes great harm to local economies by stopping trade, farming and other economic activities. They discourage foreign investors, harm infrastructure and raise the cost of security which takes away resources from important development projects. The economic situation leads to more poverty and unemployment which can increase anger and give terrorists more chances to recruit (Piate, 2025). When insurgencies and terrorist activities involve crossing borders and forming alliances, they threaten Nigeria's independence and national unity. It can result in more crimes such as banditry, kidnapping for ransom and arms trafficking.

Nigeria has taken several steps to fight terrorism such as using the military, updating its counter-terrorism strategy, focusing on preventing extremism, securing the population, catching and prosecuting terrorists, preparing for attacks and taking other necessary actions. The Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition Act of 2022 sets up a detailed legal system to criminalize terrorism and related activities and also establishes the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) to coordinate all counter terrorism efforts. It also works with other countries and organizations such as ECOWAS, the African Union and the United States, to improve intelligence sharing and conduct joint operations. Since military action is not enough, Nigeria is now concentrating on non-violent efforts like tackling the main reasons behind terrorism, encouraging education and talks, helping ex-fighters rejoin society and making communities stronger. Nigeria is taking steps to prevent terrorism activities online and to stop terrorism financing with the help of the National Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU). Even with these efforts, Nigeria is still struggling to address terrorism, mainly because terrorist groups are becoming more advanced and using new technologies. In this context, the study looks at the problems, challenges and effects of terrorism on Nigeria's security by focusing on groups such as the Niger Delta Militant and Boko Haram.

Theoretical Explication of the Discourse

The study used the Human Security theory to explain the discourse. The major proponents of this theory are: Mahbub Ul Hag, Amartya Sen and Sadako Oguta. Human security theory moves the main concern of security from the state to the individual, aiming to protect and empower people from various dangers. In the context of terrorism and Nigeria's national security, several main assumptions are important. Human security theory argues that the main goal of security should be to protect individuals and communities, not just the borders and political independence of the state. Therefore, when dealing with terrorism in Nigeria, the main concern should be the effects these activities have on the lives, jobs and dignity of Nigerians. National security is improved when people are shielded from the threats and violence caused by terrorist groups. Unlike traditional security which mainly deals with military and state-to-state issues, human security addresses a broader range of threats such as economic, food, health, environmental, personal and community insecurity.

Terrorism in Nigeria negatively affects several aspects of human security. It leads to deaths, makes people homeless and takes away their belongings, disrupts farming and food supply, delays medical care and can increase conflicts in society. It is believed that various threats in Nigeria are linked and help each other, so poverty, unemployment, lack of education and environmental damage can make people more vulnerable to terrorist groups. As a result,

terrorism can make these problems worse, leading to a cycle of insecurity. Human security is based on the belief that all individuals have rights and deserve to live with dignity, so security measures should protect these rights and promote human dignity. Terrorism, by definition, goes against basic human rights such as the right to live, be safe and not fear. According to human security, for counter-terrorism strategies to succeed and last, they must follow human rights and the law. Human security theory also highlights the need to deal with the main reasons for insecurity and stop conflicts and violence from getting worse. In the case of terrorism in Nigeria, it is important to address the military issue as well as the social, economic, political and cultural factors that lead to terrorism such as poverty, being marginalized and not having enough opportunities. The theory is useful because it helps explain the challenges of terrorism to national security in Nigeria by looking at the weaknesses and needs of both individuals and communities. It points out that dealing with the main reasons behind terrorism and focusing on the people are key to achieving lasting peace and security for the country.

Terrorism and National security in Nigeria

The Niger Delta militancy and the Boko Haram insurgency are the main terrorist threats to national security in Nigeria. They have not only threatened the safety of Nigeria but also its unity, borders and independence. After summarizing the situation, we are left to wonder how we ended up here and how these terrorist groups function. Oil is the biggest industry in the world and it matters to every country. Since regions that produce goods are far from regions that consume them, it is the most important factor in the world's tonnage of international trade and shipping. Therefore, with its influence on national and global matters, oil is often mentioned in the news. It is often hard to see the importance of such news without knowing how the industry is organized worldwide and what impact it has on people, countries or groups in the countries where it operates (Piate, 2014). The Niger Delta is rich in both physical and human resources, including most of Nigeria's oil and gas, fertile land for farming, great fishing and large forests. This means that there is a great chance for the economy to grow and develop sustainably. Instead of making the region prosperous, the natural resources have helped a small ministry while the majority of people have become poorer due to the continuous exploitation of the resources. Since the region has not gained much from the exploitation of its resources, the people now feel let down and cheated by the federation. Before oil was found in the region, the people earned a living by farming, fishing and hunting the resources of the land, water and forest. Realizing how important the environment is for their well-being and for those who will live after them, the people cared deeply for it and tried to protect it. Sustainable development should be done in a way that protects the environment and uses resources to help people, so they are no longer held back by poverty, disease and ignorance. Any danger to the environment that supports human life puts people's existence and growth at risk. The Nigeria State after colonialism was not prepared to handle major development tasks due to not having control over the economy. The independence of the post-colonial Nigeria State was not strong and could easily be influenced by foreign transnational corporations to benefit the ruling class and oil companies, not the people. In these conditions, the Nigerian government cannot develop the country to ensure its people's security because it does not control its economy (Piate, 2017). Since gaining independence, the Nigeria State has introduced several policies, including centralizing power, changing the way revenue is shared, disadvantaging oil-producing states, increasing participation in the oil industry and adopting policies that help the oil industry. The government can react to ethnic minority unrest by using Redistributive, Reorganization, Regulative or Repressive methods (Owugah, 2001; Okonta and Douglas, 2001; Okoko, 2002; Owugah 2002). The government has made minor changes to Federal Revenue Sharing to address and soothe the strong demands of oil bearing communities for a significant share of the

resources from their areas. In response to ethnic minority calls for autonomy, participation and decentralization, reorganizational policies have set up units of constituent, federally funded, state and local authorities. Because its redistributive and reorganizational policies did not work, the Nigerian state has turned to using regulatory or repressive measures against ethnic minorities. The lack of attention by the Nigerian State to the development of oil bearing communities in the Niger Delta led to the transformation of a peaceful protest into a militant movement. The reason for Niger Delta militancy was mainly due to the fact that oil resources are limited and they wanted to ensure their environment was not destroyed, so they could return to farming, fishing and hunting if the oil ran out.

The actions of Niger Delta militants have negatively affected the national security of Nigeria by kidnapping oil workers, stealing oil, disrupting oil production and reducing the amount of foreign investment. Militant groups have often kidnapped and held hostage foreign oil workers as a main tactic. According to statistics from Niger Delta Development Monitoring and Corporate Watch, a non-governmental organization, between 1999 and 2007, there were 430 hostage taking incidents in the region and Bayelsa had the most with 210 incidents (Tide, 2007). Most of the time, the kidnappers demanded millions of dollars in ransom before releasing their victims. Even though the number of kidnappings by militants in the Niger Delta is low, the impact of these kidnappings on Nigeria's economy has been significant, especially since most victims were foreign workers and development partners. It discouraged other countries from working with Nigeria and took away opportunities for development from the country. It has caused a decrease in the amount of investments and capital entering the region. Because of the militant's activities, the region has become unsafe which makes it hard for security agencies to protect all oil facilities. As a result, illegal oil bunkering has become widespread in the region. The money from illegal bunkering is used by the militants to buy better weapons and support their activities. The actions of these militants have also resulted in fewer employees at oil companies and disruptions to their business. Between 1999 and 2007, the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) laid off 3,500 workers and the Indoroma Petrochemical Company stopped operations, leaving more than 5,000 youths without jobs and worsening unemployment (Punch, 2007; Sunday Trust, 2007). It has also slowed down the growth of businesses. The company's production at the Bonny terminal has fallen from one million bpd to about 300,000 bpd. The same applies to the Impact of militancy on Foreign Direct Investment, as Timi Alaibe explains in his treatise, where he points out that by January 2009, militancy in the Niger Delta had almost brought Nigeria's economy to a standstill. There has been a significant decrease in investment into the upstream part of the oil industry. Foreign investors were increasingly choosing Angola and Ghana as better places to invest than Nigeria. At that time, Angola became the continent's top producer of crude oil, surpassing Nigeria. The lack of investment in oil and gas made it difficult for Nigeria to meet its planned growth in crude oil reserves. It was found that the unrest in the Niger Delta was the main reason why investors were moving to other African countries with better security.

Militants Activities in the Niger Delta From 2002 – 2008

Date/Year	Event	Location	Company Affected
May 2002	Militant youths attack.	30 houses set ablaze and three persons killed in Bori, headquarters of Ogoniland in Rivers State	Houses belonging to individuals

March, 2003	Militants attack	Upomani village	Total and ELF tank farm attacked, killed five soldiers and destroyed property worth billions of naira.
Nov. 2004	Ijaw youths protest	Odima Community in Brass Bayelsa State	Attacked, shut down and occupied Shell Petroleum Dev. Company Station.
January, 2006	Militant kidnapped 4 foreign workers	Forcados export terminus	Shut down Shell's offshore E.A. oilfield and blow up crude oil pipeline.
February 2006	Militant attack, abducted nine workers		US oil services company, NNPC and Shell loading platform.
March, 2006	Militant attack		Agip and Italian oil company, pipeline blown up.
May, 2006	Unknown gun men	Port Harcourt	Killed an oil Executive of Baker Hughes (an American Company)
May 11, 2006	Gunmen kidnapped 3 oil workers	Port Harcourt	Saipem, an Italian Oil Contracting Firm
June 2, 2006	Gunmen kidnapped 6 Britons. I Canadian and an American	Port Harcourt	Bulford Dolphin Oil rig, own by Norwegian oilfield services
June 7, 2006	Militant attacked oil facilities, killed five soldiers and kidnapped five South Korean contractors	Niger Delta	Shell
June 20, 2006	Unknown gunmen kidnapped two Filipinos with Beaufort International	Port Harcour	
July, 2006	Gunmen kidnapped Michael Los, while Niger Delta Mob seized Agip Ogbainbiri Flow Station taking 24 workers hostage	Bayelsa	Dutch Oil

August, 2006	Armed men kidnapped Schiffarth	Port Harcourt	Schiffarth Guido works for Bilfiger and Berger
August, 2006	Gunmen abduct 3 Filipino oil workers	Port Harcourt	Filipino oil
Between 9th and 10th of August	Kidnapping of foreign oil workers	Port Harcourt	Norwegian oil workers, Belgian and Moroccan contractors
August, 2006	Kidnapping of foreign oil workers	Nightclub in Port Harcourt	Oil Companies lost six (two Britons, a German, an Irish, a Pole and an American)
August, 2006	Gunmen kidnapped a Lebanese	Port Harcourt	A Lebanese Company
August, 2006	Gunmen kidnapped oil worker	Port Harcourt	Saipem Italian Oil
Oct., 2006	Gunmen ambushed oil workers	Shell facilities in the Cawthorne Channel boats carrying supplies of Shell Niger Delta	Royal Dutch Shell (twenty five Nigerian employees were seized).
Oct., 2006	Militants raid	Port Harcourt	Exxon Mobil lost seven foreign oil workers (four Britons, one Indonesian, one Malaysian and an Romanian).
Nov., 2006	Militants raided survey ship	Off the coast of Bayelsa	Petroleum Geo-Service (PGS) lost British and American employees.
Nov. 22, 2006	Militant/Soldier clash	Port Harcourt	British Oil Company lost a worker during an attempt by Nigerian soldiers to free seven hostages abducted by militants.
December 7, 2006	Gunmen raided residential facility	Port Harcourt	Oil Company lost 3 Italians and a Lebanese
December 14, 2006	Gunmen invade the Nun River logistics base.	Bayelsa State	Royal Dutch Shell lost 5 workers to kidnapping.
December 18, 2006	Car bombs	Port Harcourt	Agip and Shell

	explosion		P.D.C. lost residential facilities.
December 21, 2006	Militants attacked oil facilities	Obagi oil field in Rivers State	Total Oil lost three staff
January 5, 2007	Gunmen kidnapped and bombed facilities	Port Harcourt, Bonny Island and Warri	Chinese Telecom Firm and Shell PDC lost workers and residential facilities.
January 10, 2007	Gunmen attacked a base operated by South Korea	Bayelsa State	South Korea's Daewoo Engineering lost ten workers to kidnapping.
January 16, 2007	Gunmen attacked boat, operated by South Korean firm Hyundai.	Around Bonny Island export terminal	South Korean firm Hyundai lost free people including a Dutch oil worker.
January 20, 2007	Militants seized a 24 Filipino crew members	Around Warri Port	German shipping line Baco-liner Cargo ship.
January 23, 2007	Gunmen kidnapped two engineers	Port Harcourt	Foreign Oil Company lost an American and Briton
January 25, 2007	Militant kidnapping	Bayelsa State	Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC) and Shell lost nine employees to kidnapping
February 6, 2007	Gunmen kidnapped oil workers	Port Harcourt – Owerri road	Filipino Oil
February 7, 2007	Gunmen kidnapped oil workers	Port Harcourt	Total Oil Co lost a Filipina woman and a French oil worker Gerard Laporal
Feb., 2007	Militant raided church/public facilities	Port Harcourt	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints lost 4 missionaries
Feb., 2007	Militant raid	Port Harcourt	Hydrodrive lost 3 Croatian workers

Source: Akubor (2014)

While efforts were being made to address the security issue in the Niger Delta, Boko Haram began to cause trouble. Boko Haram was formed by Muhammed Yusuf, who led a small Sunni Islamic group called Jamalatu ahlis Sunna Lid da'awati Wal-Jihad, with the aim of creating an Islamic state in Nigeria and has since become famous for promoting violent extremism after 2009 (Ibaba, 2018). Ajayi (2012) states that the sect rejects western education, western culture and modern science. The group urges Muslims to strictly follow Islam and believes that western influence is what makes the religion weak. Alao et al. (2012) stated that the killing of their leader Yusuf has resulted in more violent attacks in churches, mosques,

security agencies and media organizations, causing many deaths and making the government appear unable to control the insurgence.

There are several explanations for why Boko Haram (al-Qaeda Franchise) has appeared in Nigeria. The socio-economic factor school of thought in this argument claims that Boko Haram is strongly linked to poor infrastructure, poverty, unemployment and lack of education. Johnnie Carlson, who was once the United States Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, confirmed this view during a talk at the Washington Centre for strategic and international studies.
Nigerians want to see progress and improvement, but northern Nigerians feel it more strongly. Many in Nigeria may find life tough, but it is even worse in the north, where most people believe the government does not care about them and their poverty is due to government corruption and neglect (Nigerian Tribune, 2012).

Late Alhaji Adamu Ciroma, who was the convener of the Northern political forum, also argued that the actions of the sect were linked to poverty and other issues affecting the lives of ordinary people such as education, health and agriculture which were mostly ignored by the state governments in the North (The Nation, 2012). Kashion Shettima, who was Governor of Borno State and is now the vice president of Nigeria, also pointed out that the Boko Haram was caused by the poor being upset with previous leaders for not providing basic services such as clean water, electricity and healthcare in the state and the north (The Guardian, 2012). Similarly, Sanusi Lamido, who was the Governor of the Central Bank and is now the Emir of Kano, pointed out that the unequal way resources are shared in the country is linked to the rise in violence by Boko Haram (This Day, 2012). Shehu Sani, who was once president of the Civil Rights Congress in Kaduna, believes that the gap between the North and South of Nigeria which has made the North poorer and more economically disadvantaged, is the reason the region is more likely to see extremist ideas (This Day, 2012). The same idea was emphasised at the end of the conference on security challenges in Nigeria on September 9, 2011, organised by NIIA, as the communiqué stated that if Nigeria improves its infrastructure, economy, job opportunities and education, terrorism and the local al-Qaeda's attacks will be greatly reduced or eliminated. In an article for the New York Times, Herskovits (2012) claimed that the main reason for violence and anger in both the North and South of Nigeria is widespread poverty and hopelessness. The issue with this argument is that those who support the socio-economic reason for Boko Haram's rise in the North do not consider the role of elites in creating poverty there. As Agwu points out, in the North, poverty is regarded as a proper part of society. It is some Northern elites who are responsible for creating and continuing to believe in the poverty in their region for both social and religious reasons (Agwu, 2013).

The political factor school argues that the socioeconomic school is simply a politicized way of looking at a serious issue. They believed that Boko Haram's rise was a reaction to the North being denied its turn at the presidency, the PDP's decision to break the zoning agreement and the way the then President Goodluck Jonathan took over the presidency. General Azazi, who was the National Security Adviser at the time, stated at the South-South economic forum in Asaba, Delta State, that the PDP's decision to break its internal zoning arrangement was the main reason for the Boko Haram challenge (The Guardian, 2012).

Some experts, however, are seen as a mix of the ideas and spirit of the socioeconomic factor school with the conclusion of the political factor school, as they argued that the emergence of Boko Haram was due to religious fanaticism, but this would not change the main reason for the sect's actions: spreading the prophet's teachings and Jihad. For these thinkers, the idea of schools causation cannot explain why Major Nidal Malik Hassan, who was well

educated and had a good job in the US Army, was influenced by An war al-Awlaki's extremist ideas and joined al-Qaeda to carry out the Fort Hood Military Base attack in November 2009, killing 12 soldiers and wounding over 30 others (New York Time, 2009). It seems that Boko Haram is not caused by poverty but by the influence of radical ideas and brainwashing. The position is based on the belief that after the Kano bombing that killed between 166 and 200 people, the sect has repeated that our war is against the government that opposes Islam, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) that kills Muslims and anyone who helps them, even if they are Muslim (Daily Sun, 2012).

The Boko Haram problem continues because of both international and local support, as some Nigerians are sympathetic to the sect. Therefore, these factors explain why the situation is so difficult and why the Sahel and much of tropical Africa have become the new areas where al-Qaeda is active, as seen in Boko Haram in Nigeria and al-Shabaab in Somalia. Again, the Nigerian justice system does not stop terrorism, but rather encourages terrorists to choose Nigeria as their home. Abdulmutallab was sentenced to life in prison by the United States for the failed bombing of Northwest Airlines flight 253 over Detroit, but a Boko Haram chieftain, Ali Sanda Umar Kodunga, who killed hundreds of people, was only given three years in jail (The Guardian, 2012; Daily Sun, 2011). The main issue in fighting terrorism in Nigeria is not the absence of laws but the lack of strong political will, corruption among law enforcement and some Nigerians supporting the extremist sect, as shown by the celebration of Osama bin Laden's 9/11 attacks by some groups in the North.

At present, terrorism is the cause of the physical and structural violence that Nigerians experience in different places, mainly in the North-East (Udama, 2013). In the Northern part of Nigeria, it is rare for communities to be safe enough for people to carry out their daily activities without the risk of being kidnapped or killed by bandits or herdsmen. It is usually the news of some people, mainly children, being abducted and killed in Borno, Yobe, Katsina, Zamfara, Niger and Kano (Gambo and Nankap, 2022). The abduction of 276 female students from Government Girls Secondary School Chibok by Boko Haram on April 14th – 15th, 2014, the kidnapping of more than 300 school children in Kankara, Katsina State (BBC News, 2020), the kidnapping of 42 people including 27 students in Kagara, Niger State (The Guardian, 2021), the 317 school girls also kidnapped in Zamfara (BBC News, 2021; Piate and Eminue, 2022). In all, Boko Haram sect has killed 3,118 people, injured 2,793 people and displaced 9,305 people in 88 coordinated attacks from 2009 to 2014 (Piate, Sunday and Kia, 2024).

Terrorist Attack in Nigeria

S/N	DATE	PLACE OF INCIDENCE	SUSPECTS	VICTIMS
1.	19/10/1986	Dale Giwa's house; Ikeja, Lagos	IBB	Dele Giwa
2.	31/5/1995	Ilorin Stadium	Unknown	Figure unknown
3.	18/1/1996	Durbar Hotel, Kaduna	Suspects killed but name not available	Figure unknown
4.	20/1/1996	Aminu Kano Int'l Airport, Kano	Unknown	Figure unknown
5.	11/1/1996	Ikeja Cantonment, Lagos	Unknown	Figure unknown
6.	25/4/1996	Air Force Base, Ikeja, Lagos	Unknown	Figure unknown
7.	Murtala	Unknown		Chief Security

	Muhammed Airport			Officer
8.	16/12/1996	Not available	Unknown	Col. Marwa's convoy
9.	18/12/1996	Not available	Unknown	Task force on environmental sanitation
10.	17/5/1997	Not available	Unknown	Nigeria Army bus hit
11.	22/4/1997	Evans square	Unknown	3 died, several people injured
12.	12/5/1997	Abuja Airport	Unknown	Lt. Col. Oladipo Diya escapes death
13.	27/1/2002	Ibadan	Unknown	Federal ministry of works and housing human victim not known
14.	26/7/2009	Bauchi State	First clash with security agencies on Dutsen Tanshi	39 civilians dead, 2 policemen dead, 1 soldier killed.
15.	27/7/2009	Yobe State	First attack in Yobe leading to invasion of Potiskum divisional headquarters	5 civilians dead, 3 policemen dead
16.	29/7/2009	Yobe State	Confrontation with security men at Mamundo village	33 BH dead
17.	29/7/2009	Borno State	All right battle between BH and combined security operatives	Scores killed and operation base destroyed.
18.	7/1/2010	Borno State	BH gunmen on motorcycle fired at a tea shop in Gazangi-Tashan Gandu	3 civilians dead
19.	2/4/2010	Bauchi State	Attack on prison at Maiduguri	1 prison warder killed
20.	15/5/2010	Warri, Delta State	Niger Delta Militants	Figures not available
21.	1/10/2010	Abuja	Boko Haram	Figure not available
22.	8/4/2011	Suleja, Niger State	Boko Haram	Figure not available
23.	26/4/2011	Maiduguri, Borno State	Boko Haram	Figure not available
24.	1/1/2011	Abuja	Boko Haram	Army market, human victim

				not known
25.	28/1/2011	Bauchi State	Killed governorship candidate of (ANPP) Alhaji Modu Fannami Gubio	5 injured
26.	2/3/2011	Kaduna State	Attack residence of divisional police officer	2 policemen killed
27.	7/4/2011	Borno State	An explosion of bomb	Many injured
28.	8/4/2011	Kaduna State	An explosions at independent electoral commission office Suleja	11 civilians killed
29.	21/4/2011	Borno State	Two suspected bomb makers	2 BH dead
30.	25/4/2011	Kano State	Three bomb blast at Tudu palace Hotel and Kano motor park in Maiduguri	Figure not available
31.	5/5/2011	Bauchi State	Bomb explosion in Damaturu	1 policeman injured
32.	5/5/2011	FCT Abuja	Attack on Bauchi State government house at Abuja	1 civilian dead, 1 policeman dead others injured.
33.	5/5/2011	Bauchi State	Attack on two Islamic clerics, Sheikh Goni Tljiam and Mallam Alhaji Abur at his residence	2 islamic clerics dead
34.	9/5/2011	Bauchi State	Attack on Ibrahim Dudu Gobe	1 civilians killed
35.	13/5/2011	Bauchi State	Bomb explosion at Londo Chinki Maiduguri	2 civilians killed
36.	15/5/2011	Bauchi State	Bomb exposition at military barrack	3 policemen dead, 2 soldiers dead
37.	29/5/2011	Bauchi State	Attack Shehu of Borno's brother, Alhaji Abba Anas Graba El-Kanemi	14 soldiers dead
38.	31/5/2011	Borno State	Attack on police station in Maiduguri	1 civilian dead
39.	28/5/2011	Borno State	A blast at the mammy market of Shandawank Barracks	13 civilians dead, 40 injured.
40.	29/6/2011	Bauchi State	An explosion at Zuba of Kubwa in Abuja	8 civilians lose their legs.
41.	1/6/2011	Borno State	Attack on police station in Maiduguri	5 policemen dead

42.	12/6/2011	Bauchi State	Attack on drinking joint at Damboa	4 civilians dead
43.	16/6/2011	Bauchi State	Bomb explosion at Damboa	4 civilians dead
44.	16/6/2011	FCT Abuja	Bomb explosion at the force headquarters	2 policemen dead
45.	16/5/2011	FCT Abuja	A massive explosion at the national police headquarters building in Abuja	Figure not available
46.	4/7/2011	Borno State	Bomb blast	4 civilians dead, 10 injured
47.	13/7/2011	Borno State	Bomb blast	5 civilians dead, 2 soldiers injured
48.	26/8/2011	FCT Abuja	Bomb blast at UN House Abuja	33 civilians dead, 11 UN personnel and several people injured.
49.	17/10/2011	Borno State	BH storm police barracks	14 vehicles burnt
50.	8/12/2011	Kaduna State	Bomb blast	15 civilians dead several others injured.
51.	20/12/2011	Yobe State	Bomb blast	3 suspected BH injured
52.	25/12/2011	Niger State	Bomb blast at St. Theresa's Catholic Church	Several people injured.
53.	15/1/2012	Gombe	Deeper Life Bible Church in Gombe	8 worshippers dead, 18 injured.
54.	16/1/2012	Adamawa State	Christ Apostolic Church, Jimeta, BH spraying worshippers with bullets	16 worshippers dead.
55.	21/1/2012	Kano State	Several bomb blast at police stations	200 killed including civilians and policemen
56.	27/1/2012	Kano State	Bomb blast	2 civilians dead
57.	20/9/2012	Plateau State	Attack on the State capital	9 civilians dead
58.	17/10/2012	Plateau State	Attack on security	1 soldier macheted, 3 BH killed.

Source: Piate (2025).

There are several reasons why Boko Haram insurgency continues in Nigeria such as weak borders, poor teamwork among the national security agencies, corruption, lack of regional cooperation with neighbouring countries and high unemployment and poverty (Sunday and Piate, 2024). Terrorism in Nigeria, mainly caused by groups such as Niger Delta Militant and Boko Haram, is a serious and lasting threat to the country's security. Since it first appeared, terrorism has grown from being a problem in the North-East to a threat that can affect the entire country (Sunday, Piate, Abunimye, Ishaya and Edet, 2024). Terrorism has resulted in the deaths of many people and the destruction of a great deal of property. In addition to the North-East, these groups have attacked in other states, including the Federal Capital Territory, showing how widespread and unpredictable they are. Their actions have led to many people being displaced within their own country and to other countries. As a result, there is now a major humanitarian crisis, with many children suffering from malnutrition, abuse, a lack of education and forced marriages. It also has a major negative effect on Nigeria's social and economic growth. It leads to a loss of human and material resources, discourages foreign investors, reduces tourism and shifts funds from useful sectors to security. It makes poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment worse in the regions that are affected. The damage to businesses, the shutting down of schools and health centers and the disruption of food supply make things even worse. Since the threat remains constant, it makes people wonder about the success of current counter-terrorism efforts and points out problems with political leadership and governance. Nigeria's efforts to fight terrorism have mainly depended on the military, but this approach has not been enough to eliminate the threat. Once more, the lack of trust between the military and local people makes it difficult to gather intelligence. Moreover, when intelligence is not shared well and security agencies do not coordinate enough, it becomes difficult to respond effectively. Lack of funds and difficulties with logistics still prevent military strategies from being effective. When security officials are corrupt, it makes it harder to fight terrorism. Boko Haram have proven flexible, using quick attacks, blending in with the local community and taking advantage of the lack of soldiers outside main camps to kidnap aid workers, attack humanitarian centers and take over main roads. The growing partnership between terrorists and bandits makes it more dangerous for vulnerable targets, institutions and infrastructure. Many of these groups rely on kidnapping for ransom as a major source of their income. When borders are not well managed, it becomes easier for drugs, small arms and light weapons to be smuggled which supports organized crime and extremism. In some cases, the state's actions against terrorism have been harsh, leading to concerns about human rights and making it harder for communities to trust the authorities which can unintentionally lead to more radicalization.

Conclusion

Although different crimes have occurred in Nigeria lately, the Niger Delta Militant and Boko Haram insurgency are still the biggest danger to the country's stability and security. Their actions are still a major and developing danger to Nigeria's safety, affecting the government, economic development and causing humanitarian problems. The main problems come from within such as economic and social issues, weak governance and difficulties in reforming the security sector, as well as the ability of terrorist groups to adapt. The study found that terrorism continues in Nigeria despite efforts to stop it, mainly because of unresolved social, economic and political problems, the adaptability of terrorist groups, difficulties faced by security forces and possible gaps in the counter-terrorism strategy.

The way forward is that Nigeria should work on a comprehensive and continuous strategy that includes strong security, tackling the reasons behind terrorism, improving governance, boosting development and encouraging cooperation with other countries.

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