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TERRORISM AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Terrorism and insecurity: The word terrorism comes from the reign of terror instigated by Maxmilien Robespierre in 1793 following the French revolution. This implies that terrorism is not a child of modernity; it is as old as the existence of man. Terrorism does not lend itself to one single acceptable definition. The term according to Terrorism Research is better understood from the point of view of the person that is being represented. This is because to the victims of terrorism the perpetrators are terrorists while to the perpetrators, terrorism is an act targeted at reforming or enforcing change. Against this background, Terrorism Research describes terrorism as a tactic and strategy, a crime and a holy duty, a justified reaction to oppression and an inexcusable abomination. For Hornby (2000), terrorism is the use of violent action in order to achieve political aims or force a government to act. The United States Department of Defense cited by Terrorism Research , defines terrorism as “the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological.” The people or individuals that carry out acts of terrorisms are known as terrorists.

Characteristically, terrorism involves the following: • Use of unlawful violence believing that violence will usher in a better system • Use of unlawful and assorted dangerous weapons • Motivated by goals that might be political, religious or ideological • Secretive in membership recruitment and locations of residence • Fewer in number comparable to the larger society they attack • Have strong will and could die for the course they uphold • Most times, operate as syndicates • Derive financial and military supports from national and international loyalists • They are militant, they use coercion, intimidation and instill fears in people Their tactics involve: • Suicide bombing, car bombing, rocket propelled grenades, assassinations, abductions and kidnapping, disguising and hijacking. Their targets are extermination of human lives and destruction of properties. These are achieved by attacking: • Public squares, government buildings and installations, churches and mosques, schools, bridges, police stations, military barracks and installations as well as market squares and prisons to free inmates particularly their members incarcerated. Terrorism is of both national and international concern. This is because their activities most times are not concentrated in a particular place. Its waves span across geographical boundaries both local and international. Terrorist activities had led to displacement of people, loss of lives and properties, feelings of suspicion, anger and hatred as well as psychological and emotional trauma and general state of insecurity .These crises have heightened tensions and insecurity in Nigeria and they have assumed a frightening dimension until recently that they are being overpowered by combined military efforts of Nigeria and surrounding nations. “Boko Haram” aside, insecurity in Nigeria is heightened by the activities of other ethnic militias such as the Niger Delta militants’ etcetera, whose activities manifest in kidnapping, abduction, pipeline vandalism, armed robberies, and hostage taking. Other activities that have heightened insecurity in Nigeria also include human and drug trafficking, porous borders that allow infiltration of illegal aliens, arms and ammunitions, ethno-religious conflicts, political based violence, economic based violence and periodic outbreak of some deadly diseases with the most recent being “Ebola”. “Ebola virus” was dreaded because of how it could easily be contacted. It was a major health challenge that Nigeria had to fight and overcame soon after it was discovered in the country. These life threatening activities frustrate economic and technological transformation keeping Nigeria in a perpetual state of economic dependence, loss of productive human resources and general apathy and discontentment. Unless this situation is checked and reversed, Nigeria will remain dependent and undeveloped perpetually. The activities of the Islamic sect (Boko Haram) had led to loss of lives and properties in the country especially in the Northern part of Nigeria. Some of these activities include bombing, suicide bomb attacks, sporadic shooting of unarmed and innocent citizens, burning of police stations, churches, kidnapping of school girls and women, etc. Kidnapping, rape, armed robbery and political crises, murder, destruction of oil facilities by Niger Delta militants alongside the attacks carried out by Fulani Herdsmen on some communities in the North and South have been another major insecurity challenge facing the country. Nigeria has been included among one of the terrorist countries of the world. Many lives and properties have been lost and a large number of citizens rendered homeless. Families have lost their loved ones. Many women are now widows. Children become orphans with no hope of the future. This has implications for national development. Government had made frantic efforts to tackle these challenges posed by terrorism and insecurity in the country and put an end to it but the rate of insurgency and insecurity is still alarming. The events surrounding September 11, 2001 and other recent events of terrorism across the globe especially the current wave of terrorism in Nigeria, had focused our minds on issues of terrorism and insecurity. This study therefore, investigated empirically the challenges of insecurity and terrorism on national development in Nigeria. The scope of the study spans from 1990 to 2012. Data used for this study was sourced from Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical bulletin, Newspapers and related journal articles on security issues. Using ordinary least square method of analysis, the result showed that terrorism and insecurity impacts negatively on economic development. It has made government to divert resources meant for development purposes to security votes. Expenditure made by government on security matters had significantly and positively impacted on economic development implying that expenditure on security matters has helped to ameliorate the negative effect of terrorism and insecurity despite the fact there is a crowding-in effect of security expenditure on economic development. This finding is in line with other studies on different countries of the world. It is therefore recommended that government should declare war on terrorism and seek assistance/advice from international communities who have in the time past faced this kind on challenge and were able to tackle it. The Nigerian Military should be empowered more with arms to fight this insurgency. Government should beef up security in the eastern and southern parts of the country to curb the menace of insecurity. Grazing grounds or/and ranches should be built in all states of the country for Fulani herdsmen who rear cattle.

Conclusion: Terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria are retarding the economic and technological advancement of the nation. Many Nigerians live everyday in tensions and suspicion. Many productive lives have been lost, available ones are displaced and live in constant fears and pain of the lost of loved ones. Foreign investors are scared away from Nigeria. The nation’s educational institutions are not spared either as institutions of learning are equally points of targets and attacks of terrorists and other hoodlums. Terrorism and insecurity are symptoms of poor moral, values and religious education.