TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

The definition of terrorism is not a simple word definition, scholars can all agree that the word is malleable and therefore can accept many different definitions and interpretations. Terrorism when put plainly is any unlawful use of violence or intimidation against citizens of a country or in pursuit of political aims. The use of force to coerce the government or its citizens to further a certain political or social objective. Those who engage in such acts are called terrorist, and they engage in such acts to exploit the existence of the media to achieve the maximum publicity of their ambitions to reach targeted audience, so as to meet their group goals. An example can be seen in the use of the media by the “boko haram insurgents” of the northern part of Nigeria. They use the media to pass across their ambitions.

**Types of terrorism**

According to Grob Fitzgerald (2005), terrorism can be divided broadly in to 4 broad forms; national terrorism- where terrorist activities involves national borders; revolutionary terrorism- activities of terrorist groups aimed at philosophical and political nature of government; reactionary terrorism- activities aimed to counter certain policies or prevent certain events from occurring; and pathological terrorism- the use of terrorism for the sheer joy of terrorizing others. In Nigeria, the one which is common is the revolutionary type and an example of such a group in Nigeria is the ‘boko haram group’. In Nigeria, there exist categories of terrorism, and this includes hijacking, kidnapping, bombing, assassination, aimed assault and barricade. These are the six categories common to Nigeria as a country.

**Terrorist groups as a case study in Nigeria**

An example of such group is ‘boko haram’ which is roughly “interpreted as western education is not accepted in Hausa”. A most well-known and dominant terrorist group of northern Nigeria. They began their operations in as far back as 2002, being led by Mohammed Yusuf, with a mission to purify Islam in the northern state of Nigeria, killing both Christians and Muslims they see as fake. It started as a non-violent group, but due to insurgency in the year 2009, the group has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced over 2.3 million others. They killed 6000 people in the year 2014, and in the same year, in the month of April, they were responsible for the kidnapping of over 276 boarding school girls from Chibok, though some have escaped, over 200 are still missing. They continued to grow claiming some territories in Borno State. Due to corruption in security services and the violation of human rights have hampered the measures. There exist another group known as the Ansaru, which is said to have broken out of the boko haram group as an opposition to the attacks on Muslims by the boko haram insurgents.

**Causes of terrorism in Nigeria**

There are many causes of terrorism in Nigeria, among which includes hindered intelligence gathering, which results from poor surveillance and unwillingness of citizens of the country to cooperate with the authorities. The cause is as a result of the government which have failed to secure the trust of its citizens and give proper protection to its citizens and informants. Many believe that if they talk, they would be killed, and the promised protection from the government is all a lie. In recent years, the boko haram group have come out boldly to say that they were only attacking Christians, fake Muslims and government agents (security agents), and if anyone cooperated with the government, they too would be seen as the enemy. Despite such statement, the government failed to reassure its people, which led to the issue of hindered intelligence.

Also, corruption among the arms of government and the security agents, is also another cause of the insurgency. Corrupt officials, who try to get money from the terrorist by giving confidential information to the terrorist, and also sympathizers of the terrorist group who try to hide and divert funds to strengthen the mission of these terrorist, is another cause of terrorism in Nigeria. By doing all these, the terrorist group grow in strength and overwhelm the security system of the Country, making it unsafe for its citizens.

Similarly, poverty and lack of education is another cause of the insurgence. In recent survey, Nigeria has been listed among countries having the poorest of people, with most of the population of the poor being from the northern part of the country. Sokoto is said to be the state having the greatest percentage of poor people (over 70%). With the lack of money to eat, it would only be sane to say that only those whom might have had their fill or the rich may as well consider sending their children to school, or they themselves trying their possible best to help educate themselves. As a result, many of them are deceived to join the terrorist on their false ambitions, just because they lack the knowledge, and also because they want to earn something for a living. They are children called “Almajiri”, they have no means of sustenance and even unable to go to school. These are the kind of people whom the terrorist recruit, because they see them as easy to manipulate.

**Effects of terrorism on Nigeria**

The effects of terrorism are numerous and have a negative toll on Nigeria as a country. Aside the fact that many Nigerians have been displaced, killed or even continued their life in panic and fear of numerous attacks, it is important to note its effect on Nigeria as a whole. According to world terrorism index, Nigeria have been ranked amongst the five nations worst hit by terrorism (other countries include; Syria, Pakistan, Iraq and Alfganistan.). This sends a negative ripple effect on the Nigerian economy. The country will begin to loose investors, as many of which are not assured of security of their businesses in the country, and would prefer to conduct their businesses somewhere else.

Another issue is the loss of man-power and other resources. The economy of a country cannot grow without the people, who worked dedicatedly every day to earn a living and in turn generate revenue for the government, who in turn use certain policies and laws to grow the economy. As the terrorist conduct their activities, many people are caught up in their cross-fire and may eventually lose their lives, thereby reducing the manpower of the country. Even resources such as raw materials for goods can be lost during their attacks. An instance can be seen in the pipeline bombing in Niger Delta by Militants. Nigeria is one of Africa’s biggest exporter and the country’s main export earner. The militants have caused the loss of over 300 barrels worth of crude oil which have had its toll on the economy. It is also important to note that, a government who fails to protect the interest of the people, should also know that it would lose the trust of the people. Some individuals tend not to pay their tax because, they feel they and wasting their money.

**Possible Solutions to Terrorism in Nigeria**

**T**here haven’t been any suitable solution to the problem of terrorism in Nigeria but one see amnesty as one. On august 6, 2009, the Nigerian government granted amnesty to militants, to reduce unrest in the oil-rich region of the country. This proved very effective as many of the militants accepted this amnesty which have added people back to the work force of the country and reduced the loss of resources in Nigeria. This solution is still a work in progress with the boko haram terrorist in Nigeria.  
 Also, the proffering of free education, free health care center, and the creation of new jobs for people who are either internally displaced or have nowhere to go is another step in resolving the issue of terrorism in Nigeria. Many people who have no means of sustenance tend to develop wrong ideas about the government and join certain terrorist group in the name of exerting their anger on the government. Most of them are just blinded by the lack of job and health care system, they are not educated enough to understand that the Government have different arms and policies of may or may not help them, or are put in place because of the countries inability to feed every single citizen. An example of such people are the “almajiri”. They are young and can easily be manipulated. In short the lack knowledge of the government and thus free education should be a step in the right direction for Nigeria.

The problem of terrorism is still existing in Nigeria, but with the help of the people and the persistent push from the government in protecting its citizens, this problem would be a thing of the past. Also, the proffered solutions can also help in controlling the situation.