

**Warning: This Report Contains Graphic Images**<sup>1</sup>

## **An Urgent Appeal for E.U. Engagement on the Issue of Boko Haram in Nigeria : Stop the Waste of Human Life**

By Catherine Boyle ([www.catherinefilms.net](http://www.catherinefilms.net)) & Ahmad Gimba,  
Associate Member of Nigeria Computer Society (AMNCS)

*When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.*

*- African proverb*

Largely unseen by the Irish, and indeed the overall European, general public is the profoundly disturbing escalation of violence in north-eastern Nigeria: members of the militant Islamist movement Boko Haram (“Western education is forbidden”) are clashing regularly with Nigerian soldiers, and it is local communities that are paying the price for this ongoing violence.



Originally founded as a Sunni fundamentalist religious sect in 2002 by one Mohammad Yusuf, by 2009 Boko Haram had developed into a Salafist-jihadi group under the influence of the Wahhabi movement.<sup>2</sup> They are calling for an Islamic state to be established in Nigeria and they oppose

---

<sup>1</sup> All of the photographs contained herein were posted anonymously to the internet by local people from impacted communities seeking to communicate to the outside world what is happening to them. No infringement of copyright is intended on our part; we simply are not in a position to shoot our own photographs at this time, given the volatile security situation.

<sup>2</sup> Lauren Ploch Blanchard (June 10, 2014). "[Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions](#)". Congressional Research Service.

the Westernization of Nigerian society which, they claim, has caused the country's wealth to become concentrated in the hands of a small political (mainly Christian) elite.<sup>3</sup>

Between July 2009 and June 2014, Boko Haram allegedly killed over 5,000 civilians – 2,000 of them during the first half of 2014.<sup>4</sup>



While the kidnapping of the 200 Chibok schoolgirls on April 14, 2014 has no doubt become the most infamous of Boko Haram's actions, at least in the eyes of the international community, many other acts of violence are continuing to take place – yet our Western mainstream media are paying them little or no heed.<sup>5</sup> Only recently, the group announced the establishment of a caliphate in Gwoza, Borno State.<sup>6</sup>

Here it must be acknowledged that parallels abound with other, similar situations in various countries:

<sup>3</sup> "African Arguments Editorial – Boko Haram in Nigeria : another consequence of unequal development". African Arguments. November 9, 2011; Bartolotta, Christopher (September 23, 2011). "Terrorism in Nigeria: the Rise of Boko Haram". *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*.

<sup>4</sup> These figures were cited by the Africa Program at the Council on Foreign Relations (2014). "[Nigeria Security Tracker](#)". *www.cfr.org*. Council of Foreign Relations. An alternative local report suggests that 5,000 civilians perished between January and August of 2014 alone.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, <http://www.naij.com/279260-gwoza-still-boko-haram-territory-ndume.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/08/can-nigerian-youth-destroy-boko-h-2014831729932280.html>

- Afghanistan's Taliban originated as a small-scale religious movement of humble aspirations, then expanded and radicalized as a result of external funding and the added participation of hardline jihadists from a wide range of countries;<sup>7</sup>
- In the case of Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda, as well, the question of external funding sources most certainly deserves scrutiny<sup>8</sup> ;
- Boko Haram flies the same black Salafist flag as do Al-Shabaab in Somalia and, most recently, ISIS in the Middle East – and once again, as of September 2014 mainstream media are now broadcasting reports of U.S./Western funding for ISIS and other so-called Syrian “rebels”.<sup>9</sup>

Realistically, the actions of extremist groups like these cannot be curtailed until or unless the funding and moral support for such groups – for example, by Saudi Arabia and its known allies - is removed.

While Nigeria's government has been talking the talk when it comes to taking on Boko Haram, at least for now they seem incapable of walking the walk. On August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014 a group of soldiers in Maiduguri, Borno State actually resorted to mutiny, stating that they refused to engage in combat with Boko Haram until or unless they were provided with adequate weapons to contrast the militants' superior equipment.<sup>10</sup>

This is indeed a baffling state of affairs, in light of the Nigerian military's history of courageous engagement in other conflicts<sup>11</sup>: why, therefore, are Nigeria's soldiers now simply fleeing when military bases are attacked? Why have they been standing by and watching as Boko Haram targets civilians?

Might some sort of clandestine “arrangement” have been reached among the Nigerian government, the country's military and the insurgents? As one Nigerian colleague wrote to me:

---

<sup>7</sup> Interviews with eyewitnesses conducted by Catherine Boyle in Afghanistan in 2004-2005.

<sup>8</sup> Consider, for example, the history of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, funding Al Qaeda, as recounted in the 2007 film *Charlie Wilson's War*: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlie\\_Wilson's\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlie_Wilson's_War) (as well as in many print sources).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/obama-administration-is-paying-monthly-salaries-to-thousands-of-isis-and-al-nusrah-syrian-rebels/5403588>

<sup>10</sup> *Daily Trust* [August 20, 2014]. <http://bit.ly/1mkpwjc>

<sup>11</sup> To wit: Nigerian military participation in the Congo around 1962; the leading role of the Nigerian military under the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in the crises of Liberia and Sierra Leone; the role of Nigerian troops when rebels vowed to oust Charles Taylor; Nigerian troops' recent participation in the Mali crisis.

*What puzzles me most is the inability of former retired Generals, heads of states from the region to come out and condemn the Fed Govt. except General Buhari who after condemning the Govt., there was a suicide bomb attack on his life few days after. In summary, it's a fact Govt. has a hand in the genocide perhaps to depopulate the region for election purpose in 2015, to avenge what happened during the 1967-1970 Nigeria-Biafra civil war.<sup>12</sup>*



The larger question which arises, however, is this: who exactly is funding Boko Haram, and through what local organizations/bodies is this aid being channeled?<sup>13</sup> Where are Boko Haram getting this superior weaponry?

Since as far back as 2009, Wikileaks has been intercepting cables from the American Embassy in Nigeria and speculating as to U.S./CIA involvement with, and support for, Boko Haram as a means of undermining Nigeria's potential influence as a U.S. power rival on the African continent.<sup>14</sup> As if by coincidence, Nigerian media sources abound in accounts of U.S. predictions that the Nigerian state will have dissolved by the year 2015, though all such accounts are stoutly refuted by the U.S. government (including by former U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Terence McCulley ).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup>

<sup>13</sup> One tragic hypothesis is tacitly implied here: <http://leadership.ng/features/for-the-record/384741/cash-jet-pastor-ayo-oritsejafor>

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, [https://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09ABUJA2014\\_a.html](https://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09ABUJA2014_a.html) ; <http://www.globalresearch.ca/responsibility-to-protect-is-nigerias-boko-haram-insurgency-another-cia-covert-operation-wikileaks/5381225>

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, <https://tribune.com.ng/quicklinkss/politics/item/6448-nigeria-and-2015-break-up-prediction/6448-nigeria-and-2015-break-up-prediction> (which includes the former U.S. Ambassador's refutation), or simply google "CIA prediction Nigeria break-up 2015," or something similar. The full text of the actual report issued by the U.S. National Intelligence Council in January of 2005, entitled "Mapping Sub-Saharan Africa's Future," may be found here: [http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nc/africa\\_future.pdf](http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nc/africa_future.pdf). Yet even the latter report bears the caveat that it "does not represent the views of the U.S. government."

Local people in north-eastern Nigeria are now also wondering whether their government is dragging its heels for Machiavellian political reasons: the greater the insecurity domestically, the easier it will be for them to maintain the political status quo and retain their power.

So, where does the European Union stand in all of this?

During the period 2009-2013, the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund gave 700 million euro to the Nigerian government; the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund has allocated a further 500 million euro to be disbursed over the period 2014-2020.<sup>16</sup> Development is, of course, a crucial activity which deserves to be promoted – but what conditions (if any?) have been attached to this aid from the E.U.? Moreover, should aid of such proportions be provided to countries which allow violence to fester at home, to the severe detriment of their own citizens?

Does the European Development Fund liaise on such matters with the E.U. External Action Service, which claims to have earmarked 200 million euro for “Niger Delta security” challenges stemming from the presence of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) insurgency in the south of Nigeria, yet makes only a passing reference to its involvement in northern Nigeria, citing an unspecified “several projects”<sup>17</sup>?

It would appear that European Union agencies, following the example set by the Nigerian government itself, have opted to lend an ear to the grievances being expressed by MEND militants with a view to resolving the conflict or at least de-escalating it... yet the Boko Haram situation inexplicably drags on, seemingly untouchable or perhaps simply ignored.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Nigerian refugees have recently fled into Niger, Cameroon and Chad – yet the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) states that they are hampered in their efforts to support these people due to the volatile security situation on the ground.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/FED/fed\\_en.cfm#rap](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/FED/fed_en.cfm#rap)

<sup>17</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/nigeria/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/nigeria/index_en.htm)

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/541831e19.html>



In light of the European Union's multi-faceted commitment to the rest of the world as a "contributor to peace," a "responsible neighbor" and a "human rights defender", among many other roles<sup>19</sup>, where is the initiative-taking when it comes to Boko Haram? The most recent statement issued by the E.U. External Action Service in this regard was on June 26, 2014, tersely expressing regret at the bombing of a shopping center in the Nigerian capital of Abuja in which 21 people lost their lives.<sup>20</sup>

Surely it is time for the European Union, on the basis of the values it espouses, to assume a more proactive role in engaging with the Nigerian government, to bring an end to the violence from which innocent civilians are continuing to suffer -?

In a nutshell: to constructive and transparent development aid we say – **YES**; to violence and slaughter we say – **NO**.



---

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.eas.europa.eu/what\\_we\\_do/index\\_en.htm](http://www.eas.europa.eu/what_we_do/index_en.htm)

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.eas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2014/140626\\_02\\_en.pdf](http://www.eas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2014/140626_02_en.pdf)

