



## FROM CIVIL WAR TO BOKO HARAM: AN ANALYSIS OF THE MAJOR IMPEDIMENTS TO A SUCCESSFUL NATION BUILDING IN NIGERIA.

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### Abstract

*Since its independence on the 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1960, Nigeria's effort to successful nation building had been greatly threatened by a combination of regional and tribal sentiments. Immediately after the nation's independence, intra-regional and interregional rivalries, resulting from claims of discrimination and marginalization, brewed. Thus Within a span of seven months, two successful military coups were staged. The first was on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 1966 and the second in July of the same year. The events that followed led to Civil war 1967-70. The war, more than anything else threatened Nigeria's internal security. Added to the lingering claims of marginalization and discrimination that followed the civil war, was political thuggery and manipulation of religion associated with the second republic and the successive military juntas. Religiously motivated aspiring groups such as Maitasine soon sprang up. While Nigeria was still recuperating from the scourge of the Maitastine crises, General Ibrahim Babangida registered Nigeria as member of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC). This generated a lot of friction among Nigerians. However, greater controversies began when President Ibrahim Babangida annulled the 1993 presidential elections. The wave of Sharia in the early days of fourth republic hit the nation's unity badly. This was followed by growing ethno-religious conflicts, organize kidnappings and banditry. It is lamentable that Nigeria survived all these crises and conflicts, but only to be threatened by a sectarian group, Boko Haram. Attempt, here is made, to historicize some of these crises frustrating Nigeria's effort to a successful national development.*

*Keywords:*

### Introduction

Ever since its independence, Nigeria is struggling to maintain its unity and survival amidst proliferating inter-regional and inter-religious contest. However, that has not been an easy task- for a country already characterized by bitterness, claims of discrimination and marginalization among it citizens. These dotted the nation's socio-political map right from its inception in 1960. The educationally backward areas (North) was accused of dominating the federal might and discrimination against the South especially in governance. Thus, within a year, two unsuccessful attempts were made by the oil reach Niger Deltan's to secede from Nigeria. The first was on 23th February 1966, when Isaac Adaka Barro declared an independent territory within the Nigeria's



eastern region. The second was in 1967 when Odumegwu Ojukwu declared Eastern Region independent of Nigeria. Although, Nigerian government finds it easier to crush Baro's rebellion, attempt to halt Ojukwu's secession result to civil war, 1967-70. The war, more than anything else, polarized, and threatened the nation's internal security. Civil war was again looming when some military officers from Middle Belt staged a coup on 13 February, 1976. The war was averted when top northern military officers foiled the coup and installed Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo as Head of State. This was to lessen tension between the dominant Hausa-Fulani and other languages of the North, (the slain Head of State Gen. Murtala Muhammad was of Hausa Fulani extraction while his murderers were from non-Hausa tribes of the the Middle Belt). Thus, Between January 1966-1976, four military coups were witnessed. Additional three coups were staged between 1983-1993. These military coups greatly threaten the nation's unity and retard national development.

Under the second republic, violent sectarian group otherwise known as Maitasine emerged in Kano. The Maitasine crises consumed more than 9000 people and properties worth millions of naira destroyed in many northern states. This was followed by proliferating ethno-religious crises and political thuggery that took a toll on the nation's internal security and unity. While Nigerians were counting their loses in the lingering political crises, the military stroke, and dethroned the Shagari administration. Crack down of human right and environmental activists, arbitrary arrests, manipulation and politicization of religion (as witnessed in pro-and against the registering the nation in the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), etc), were greatest threat to the nation's unity associated with the second military era. All these crises were, however, over-shadowed by the Sharia crises of the early days of the fourth republic and the resultant Boko Haram crises in the North East. More than 6million people had been affected by the Boko Haram crises. Lives were lost, properties worth billions of naira destroyed, towns destroyed and overtaken; stocks and stores looted; farmlands remain fallow, grazing reserves abandoned; religious houses attacked and worshipers killed; women abducted and raped. Thus, although Nigeria's unity had been greatly hit by a combination of civil war, ethno-religious conflicts among others, Boko Haram's impact on the nation's corporate existence require closer examination as we shall subsequently see. Beginning from the civil war, the research historicizes the major conflict manifests impeding successful nation building in Nigeria.

### **Background Issues**

Five interrelated historical events and movement acted to take a toll on the nation's internal security in the early days of independence. The first was the minority agitations across the nation's three regions. Second, environmental crises leading to agitations especially in the Niger Delta. Tensions were further heightened by the results of the census of 1962 and 1963. The 1964 federal elections was the fourth factor, followed by the military coups of January and July 1966. These interrelated events formed the background agitations leading to civil war and the subsequent North/South antagonisms.

Minority agitations had been entrenched by evil forces and actors of colonialism. Termination of colonial rule in 1960 did not however end these agitations, but rather heightened exiting tension in all the regions. In the North, Tivs had protested against their marginalization in 1960 and 1964. Growing minority agitations in the Western Region led to the creation of Midwestern State. In the East, minorities such as the Ogoja-Calabar had been protesting against their domination by the Igbo. Interregional agitations also ensued. Despite the North educational backwardness, it was accused of



dominating the federal might and marginalizing the other two regions, particularly, the East. Seen as parasite, the northerners were also accused of nepotism.

While minority agitations heightened, environmental activists had emerged in the oil rich Niger Delta. Major Isaac Jasper Adaka Baro had taken up arms against the state in the 1960s. Citing environmental degradation, neglect and human right abuses, Baro's militia group was the first armed group to have attempted creating a state out of Nigerian territory. Niger Delta Volunteer Force, made up of largely Ijaw ethnic group, declared Niger Delta Republic on 23th February 1966. At the eve of declaration, Adaka Baro remarked that:

*"Today is a great day, not only in your lives but also in the history of the Niger Delta. Perhaps, it will be the greatest day for a very long time. This is not because we are going to bring the heavens down, but because we are going to demonstrate to the world what and how we feel about oppression. Remember your 70-year-old grandmother who still farms before she eats; remember also your poverty-stricken people; remember, too, your petroleum which is being pumped out daily from your veins; and then fight for your freedom."*<sup>1</sup>

Baro's group was however, suppressed following a protracted violence. Gen. Yakubu Gowon declared Amnesty to Baro and his group. The secessionist leader was latter enlisted into the Nigerian army in 1967. He died fighting the Biafrans in 1968.<sup>2</sup>

Greater controversy began when the Eastern Region boycotted the 1964 federal elections and threatened to secede from the country.<sup>3</sup> Prior to the election, alliances were made and political treacheries staged. Sardauna's-led Northern People's congress (NPC) allied with the Samuel Akintola's Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) to form NNA. The main Mid-Western opposition party, MDF; the Niger Delta Congress also joined the NPC's led NNA. The Action Group (AG) and NCNC formed alliances under United Progressive Alliance (UPGA). In the end, UPGA rejected the election that saw NPC/NNDC alliance emerging victorious.<sup>4</sup> Youth were manipulated to appreciate the failure of UPGA as the failure of southerners, not of its political elites. Vandalism ensued with northerners being at the receiving end. Under operation *Wetie*, northerners living in the West, including Lagos, were attacked and their properties destroyed. In the suburb areas of Lagos and low income areas for example, Northerners were sprayed with petroleum and set on fire by the politically backed operation *Wetie* thugs. An eyewitness account, a Police Detective attached to Police Criminal Investigative Department (CID) in Lagos has these to write:

*"Political thugs of the Action Group way-laid vehicles from the north sprayed anybody in hausa dress with petrol and set them on fire. Their houses and their hideouts were not spared either. Houses targeted for burning were selected and marked with special signs at night or at day time before the operation. A ransom might be requested and if up to the time of destruction it was not paid, the operation would be carried out"*<sup>5</sup>

Politically, Awolowo's loyalist had been antagonizing governance in the West while upsetting relations between the nation's Prime Minister and President became soaring.



Apart from the failure of the NCNC and AG coalition to win election in 1964, at the background was the Sardauna's northernisation policy that disheartened many southerners, particularly the Igbo people. The bulk of northern regional government's civil servants were southerners. Under the northernisation policy, these southerners were to be replaced with northerners. This implies loss of livelihood to many southern-north civil servants.

Assaults on northerners; derogatory name calling, and abuse were staged by the southern own media houses aimed at bringing to the glare of Sardauna the realities of problems associated with his northernisation policy. For safety of northerners living in the south, Sardauna would have to abandon his northernisation policy. Sardauna was in effect, dubiously presented with two options: first, to either pursue his northernisation policy but northerners would have to leave Lagos to preserve their lives. Second, to abandoned his northernisation policy, hence the domination of the northern regional government by southerners. None was achieved. Sardauna's northernisation policy continued. Attacks on northerners linger.

Since the educationally advanced South owned the media houses, press was used to insult and negatively paint northerners as wicked and corrupt. Drum Magazine, the Outlook, and the Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Services (ENBS) were the leading media houses disparaging the North and its leadership. Inflammable speeches were made, with no recourse to the national unity. No remorse and no restraint. Northern political leaders even those opposed to Sardauna, like Mallam Aminu Kano began to express their dissatisfaction over southern press provocative broadcasts against the North. Analyst, both foreign and domestic caution for the potential of such hate speeches to heightened tension in the country. Ojukwu had for example wrote an inciting article titled, "BY THE GRACE OF ALLAH" in outlook in July, 1964.<sup>6</sup>

It was within these risen tensions, resulting from 1964 elections and the Sardauna's northernisation policy that the Igbos staged a military coup on the 15-January 1966. The January 1966 coup otherwise known as the Igbo coup, was led by Majors Kaduna Nzegwu, Ifeejuna, Wole Ademoyega, Don Orkafor, Anuforo, Humphry Chukwuka and Captain Emma Nwora Nwobisi. The coup targeted and executed Northern political and military officers. Those executed Included Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Northern Premier; Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the nation's Prime Minister, Samuel Ankintola, the Western Premier. The nation's Finance Minister, Festus Okotie Ebo, despite being Igbo, was accused of conspiring with the North and therefore executed by his fellow Igbo contingents within the army. Northern military personnel killed included Brig. Zakariya Maimalari, Col. Ralph Shodeine, Col. Yakubu Pam, Col. Abogo Lagerma and Col. Kur Muhammed. The only Igbo army officer that was killed was LT. Col. Arthur Unegbo for his refusal to hand over armory keys to the coupists. One Yoruba military Officer, Brig. Samuel Ademulegun was killed for his alliance with the north.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the violence resulting from 1964 federal elections and the Sardauna's northernisation policy were at the back ground of the January, 1966 military coup. This was even evident from the maiden broadcasts of the newly Head of State, Agui Ironsi,

*for some time now, there have been escalating political disturbances in parts of Nigeria with increasing loss of faith between political parties, and between political leaders themselves. this crises of confidence reached a head during the elections in the western region in October last year .there were charges by the opposition parties of*



*rigging of the elections and general abuse of power by the regional government in the conduct of the elections. Riots, arson, murder, and looting became widespread in western Nigeria since October. The situation deteriorated and certain army officers attempted to seize power.*<sup>8</sup>

Whatever justification the coup plotters have, for one section of the country to stage a coup and murdered high-ranking political and military officers of the remaining regions, particularly, the North, ethnicity and regionalism cannot be discarded in the coup. For, if northern political leaders were killed for institutionalizing corruption and nepotism as argued by the coupists, northern military officers would have been at least spared by the marauding Igbo soldiers. While the nation's President jet out few days to the coup, in what appeared to be conspiracy rather than medical vacation, none of the political leaders from the East was killed. In both the East and West, only two political leaders and two military officers were killed. Festus Okotie, Finance minister and Samuel Akintola, premier of the Western Region were murdered for their alliance with the North. The latter for example joined hands with the North to defeat southern UPGA coalition during the 1964 election. The 15th January 1966 coup was in all its intent and purpose, an Igbo onslaught against the North, just as the July coup was the North against the East.

Killing of top northern political and military officers sent deep wounds in the minds of northerners, particularly northern-Lagos residents. It did not however attract reprisals or crises either in Lagos or Kaduna, the northern government regional government headquarters. In both Lagos and Kaduna, military officers and public servants remain unemotional and reported to their work after the coup. Routine daily activities continue. Two factors acted to heightened tension in the North leading counter coup of July 1967. First, instead of punishing the coup plotters, rumors have it that Ironsi had even been giving preferential treatment to the coup plotters.<sup>9</sup> Second, raspberries and hissings by southerners against the northerners result to violence. Northerners were for example told to their faces that "your father is dead; we are now your fathers"; suggesting to the murder of Prime Minister Balewa and Sardauna, the northern premier.<sup>10</sup> Sardauna's dead pictures were afterward circulated in a derogative manner, with a caption of his regret for his misdeed. This was done by Southern owned media houses deliberately to incite and ignite tension in the North. Drum magazine for example produced and circulated floated, transposed corpse of Sardauna in June 1966.<sup>11</sup> Playing of a dramatized version of torture and travails to which the late Prime Minister was subjected by Igbo contingent in the North further heightened tension in the country. It was a combination of these that led to the *Araba* riot in May 1966. Beginning from Kano, the riot spread to other parts of the North such as Gusau, Sokoto and Kaduna. Thus apart from the fact that the coup in itself greatly threatened the nation's internal security, utterances, inflammable speeches and inciting statement of southerners was to set the nation apart as many Igbo-northern resident were evicted out of the North.

It was within this purview that the northerners staged a revenge coup on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1966. Maj.Gen. Agui Ironsi was overthrown and 32 year old Gen. Yakubu Gowon assumes leadership of the state. Following the success of the second coup, there were exodus of Igbo from North and Lagos to the East, particularly, Enugu. This was especially so after Ojukwu call all easterners to return to their region, in preparation for Igbos secession from the Nigerian federation.

On the other hand, rebelling eastern regional governor, Odumegwu Ojuku made several demands for peace to reign and for him to submit to the newly federal power centered on Gowon. First, should



Gowon want the loyalty of the eastern governor; the later most receive the body Ironsi dead or alive. Second, Ojukwu demanded that seniority must be followed in the appointment of the nation's head of state. Brigadier Ogundipe, Col Adebayo and Col. Bassey were Gowon's seniors; all of whom southerners. According this way thinking therefore, one of them should be Head of State. This was dismissed by the northern coupists. To bring Ojukwu to the negotiating table, several traditional and religious leaders were involved but to no avail. Defiant Ojukwu now dictated for a meeting in Aburi, Accra, Ghana on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> January 1967. The meeting was under the chairmanship of Gen. Joseph Ankara, Ghana's Head of State. Nigeria's delegation to the meeting was headed by Gowon while Ojukwu led his fellow revolters.

Outside in Aburi, so many demand were made by Ojukwu, some of which agreed to by Gowon. Under Aburi pact, certain federal assets, institutions and agencies were conceded to the East. For example, P & T, Railways, the broadcasting station, Coal Corporation and Ports were all given to the East. Yet these did not end Ojukwu's secessionist threats. Decree No.8 that decentralized federal powers and gives confederate statues to the regions did not end Ojukwu's defiance. Instead, federal assets were now being seized and hijacked by Ojukwu. Revenues accruing to the federal purse from the East were also diverted to the eastern regional government. For example, more than 115 oil tankers had been seized; Posts and Telegraph Department vehicles were confiscated by the eastern regional government. Air operations disrupted and Air-plane bound for Lagos from Benin hijacked. Railway operation in the East disrupted, flow of oil from the East hampered, and goods on transit were seized. Restrictions and bans were imposed on non-easterners residing in Igbo land. Inflammable speeches were made in the media and the Nigerian military leadership abused in the most disparaging way. Practically, Ojukwu was operating an independent state even before the official declaration of Biafra on 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1967.

Amidst intelligence report that Ojukwu was planning to declare his Biafra state, in the mid-night broadcasts on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1967 Gowon balkanized the existing regions into 12 states. States created were North-Central, North west, Kano, North eastern, Benue-Plataeu, West Central state, Lagos, Midwest, Kwara, South eastern state, East central state and Rivers state. Six States were in the South and Six in the North. State of emergency was also proclaimed on the Eastern region. Ever since the Ojukwu's secessionists thread started, creation of state was the first major attempt by the federal military government to contain his insurrection.<sup>12</sup> The creation of state was a serious blow on Ojukwu's impending Biafra struggle. First, with the creation of states, Igbo people were strategically denied access to the sea. Rivers State and South-east had blocked the Igbo heartland from direct access to the sea. Secondly, with minorities already agitating for their domination by the Igbos, two states of Rivers and South-east liberated them from the domination of the Igbos. This makes it very difficult for the Igbo people to sustain minority support for their impending Biafra and eventually war. This was particularly so when indigenus Rivers and south eastern contingents (Lt.Col. Jacob and Navy Commandeer Alfred Duette-Spiff) were appointed to govern these newly created states. With state creation and with their sons now becoming governors, allying with Ojukwu to realize Biafra would be suicidal. It is more of going back to the oppressor after been freed. Three, the main motive driving Ojukwu was the oil deposit in the East. By creating states, all the oil producing areas goes to the two minority owned states. This did not only take a toll on Ojukwu's economic potentials, but eroded foreign support that may be supporting Biafra's because of oil. Multinational companies and corporations wanting to support Ojukwu were now forced to reexamine their stand. Most of them opted to support Lagos power, while few hypocritically remain neutral. This is because



multinational companies and their home countries interfere only in the domestic affairs of developing nations where strategic economic interest is at stake. In the case of Biafra, the creation of state had rendered Igbo heartland economically impotent, unattractive to the gluttonous oil companies. Thus, in the best of their economic interest, multinational companies were invariably forced at least, to remain neutral or support Lagos power. Forth, denying the Igbo direct access to the sea means that shipping of arms and oil to and from outside was halted and blocked by Rivers and South east. Adding fuel to fire, the federal military government overnight change the nation's currency. Thus, strategically Ojukwu's threats of civil war, was dead on its arrival.

Frustrated by how he was dislodged, just three days after the creation of state, on 30<sup>th</sup> may 1967, the Military Governor of the defunct eastern region declared his region "A free, sovereign, independent state by the name and title of Republic of Biafra".<sup>13</sup> Thereafter, Eastern rebels crossed the Benue/East border and began to loot stores and shoot innocent souls. Police were deployed to arrest the carnage. Military were stationed at strategic East/West and East/North borders to limit easterner's expansionist tendencies. Civil war had thus started.

#### **Nigerian Civil War, 1967-70**

Prior to the declaration of Biafra Republic, military, police, customs and immigration officials of Eastern origin had been transferring arms and ammunitions fraudulently to the East. Ojukwu had himself been amassing arms since he was appointed governor of the Eastern Region. Business and traders were also transferring their moneys and other movable goods to East. Apart from the small and light arms procured by the Biafran agitators led by Ojukwu, the rebels had also acquired one B-26 bomber from France.<sup>14</sup> Other major contents of the Biafra's arsenal included two B-25 bombers, French built helicopters, twelve T-6 Texans armed single engine pump trainers and eight Alouette helicopters. Foreign mercenaries were also hired to serve as Pilots, soldiers and trainers<sup>15</sup> it is not surprising therefore, that Biafran soldiers launched air strikes against Air bases in Kaduna, Markudi and Kano. Oil installations, terminals and depots were bombarded.

On the other hand, NAF had just (before the war) been created with only a dozen aircraft. Nigerian army was under staffed and poorly equipped. For example, Col. Mamman Shuwa, commander of One Davison, Nigerian army had at the start of the war declared that he had only 200 Guns for the more than 3000 men under his command! The then North-western State Governor and one of the principal architects of 29<sup>th</sup> July 1966, Alh. Usman Faruq had captured the level of unpreparedness on the part of Nigerian government as thus:

*"at the mid-day of 6<sup>th</sup> July 1967, we had practically nothing in store to carry out even the police action which the federal government ordered in response to Ojukwu's action" ...only big guns of the NO.1 Brigade of the Nigerian Army were in the possession of the Nigerian Government. Guns that had only ammunition to last the fighting units for not more than a week.*<sup>16</sup>

At the start of the war therefore, Biafra was much more equipped and prepared for the war than the Nigerian government.

By the end of 1968, as poorly as equipped Nigerian army were, Biafrans were pushed out of the major towns of Benin, Ore, Warri, Enugu, Asaba, Calabar, Porthacout, Onista, Aba, Uyo, Opobo,



Abaliki; their surrounding towns and villages were all liberated. By mid-1969, it became clear that Biafra could not stand as agitated and promised by Ojukwu, who had now jet out to Ivory coast.

Deep in the Biafras heartland, civilians were subjected to forceful conscription into the Ojukwu's army. Others were trapped by the spraying bullets from the federal might. Hunger ensued ostensibly owing to blockade of the entire route to the East. By December 1969, realities were glaring to Biafrans. This was particularly so after Owerri was captured and Uli on 9<sup>th</sup> and 11, January 1970. Two days later, on 13 of January, Ojukwu's deputy Phillip Effiong officially surrendered to the federal might. The war had thus ended. Shortage of personnel, inexperienced and unprofessional troops, shortage of equipment and food; greed and indiscipline led to the failure of Biafra.

Although, the war had ended, remnant of the war had continually held Nigeria's internal security in captivity. Many defeated Biafran soldiers published myth and hearsays as histories of the events culminating to civil war. While the Biafran veterans were glorified, sense of suffering and travails to which the Igbos had gone was exaggerated, thereby nurturing revengeism at least among the misinformed southern youths. Hence abusive and derogatory name-calling against the northerners. Growing hostilities in the Niger Delta and the renewed vigor for secession led by Nnamdi Kanu, is perhaps traceable to civil war.

The creation of states out of the existing regions to contain Ojukwu's secessionist threats paved way for greater demands for states and local governments for minority groups within a particular region. As many as these states were created, minority agitations resulting from claims of marginalization and discrimination prevailed and dispute between and among erstwhile peaceful neighbors ensued. Soon, Nigeria's unity was to face another threat resulting from boundary dispute. With Ojukwu's threat and the eventual states creation, boundary disputes between one state and the other surfaced. Thus, disputes were recorded between, for example, Bauchi/Yobe; Borno/Gombe; Gombe/Taraba, Benue and Kogi; Benue/Nasarwa; Kwara/Niger; Kogi /Kwara, all in the former Northern region. In the former Western Region border conflict, exist between Ekiti/Osun; Ogun/Ondo; Osun/Oyo etc. In the Eastern region conflict exists between Cross-River/Rivers; Delta/Edo; Rivers/Abia; Anambra/Edo etc<sup>17</sup> The conflicts sometimes manifest in the confrontations between communities cohabiting these conflicting states. Thus conflict is witnessed Between Amagu/Adadama in Ebonyi and Cross River States; Aguleri/Umuleri in Anambra state ; Tiv/Jukun in Taraba/Benue states among others. Without the threat of civil war, these states would not have been created and thus their attendant consequences would have not been averted.

Civil war had antagonized centuries-long relationships and heritage across the Nigerian area. After the war, individuals sharing apartments or quarters; work and commuted together begin to see one another with contempt and disdain. This did not augur well for the Nigeria's unity as many ethnic groups prefer to be identified with their regions than the nation. The nation's security architecture has also taken up these undertone. Nigerian army is today, seen as pro-northern by the generality of the Igbo for their role in the civil war. This can be clearly seen when the Nigerian army Launched Operation Python Dance in September 2017 primarily to crush emerging rebellion from the Biafra protesters.

Sharing of the nation's resources and portfolios based on region and ethnicity as enshrined in the federal character further heightened division and tension in the country. With the federal character introduced after the civil war, regionalism, ethnicity and nepotism has taken over competence and professionalism. This has penetrated all aspects of governance, particularly public service with it





attendant consequences on governance. The federal character rather than unite the country as envisaged; only ended up arousing awareness of, and loyalties to primordial identities. It is not surprising therefore the same set of northerners that staged a revenge coup and fought civil war, was to later fight themselves for ethnic and religious reasons. This can be clearly seen during the subsequent military coups of 1975 and 1976.

### **Second Military Regime**

Reconciliation and rehabilitation program of Gowon-led regime temporarily lessen tension in the country. Governance was stabilize and consolidated around Gowon in Lagos. On 1<sup>st</sup> October 1974, Gowon made it categorically clear that his earlier decree of handing over power to civilian administration in 1976 was not feasible.<sup>18</sup> Subsequently, on 29 July 1975 Gowon was overthrown and General Murtala Muhammed became the third Head of State. Few months later, on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1976 Murtala was himself assassinated in an abortive coup orchestrated by Lt.Col. Buka Suka Dimka and Major Gen. I.D Bisala, the nation's Defence, minister among others. This coup was however foiled by a team of officers led by Col.Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. The coup plotters were afterward executed. However, but for the immediate intervention of top northern military officers, the impending civil war and secessionist threats by northern muslims would not have been averted. However, tension had mounted between the northern minorities of middle belt and the dominant Hausa and Fulani north. To lessen tension and to forestall impending war between the Middle belt from which the alleged coup plotters- Gowon, I D Bisala, and Dimka hailed, and the core North from which Murtala came, Gen Olusegun Obasanjo was allowed to lead the nation.

In his determination to return the nation unto a democratic path, Obasanjo lifted the ban on political activities in 1978 and set up a constitution drafting committee for democratic Nigeria. Contrary to the first republic political arrangements where no affiliation was made to religion, forth republic politicians featured and reflect religion in their bid to win elections. Alex Ekweme, a southern Christian deputised Shehu Shagari of NPN. Awolowo, a Yoruba Christian had chosen his deputy from among the core Muslim North. Ever since then, religion continues to play a leading role in politics and governance of the country. This was clearly seen in the constituent assembly entrusted with powers of drafting constitution for democratic Nigeria.

The Assembly run into problem immediately after it was formed in 1979. Division came when Sharia issue was tabled before the assembly. Although Sharia courts exist, adjudicating on personal laws such as marriage and inheritance, the 1979 constitution drafting committee provides for Sharia Court of Appeal to allow dissatisfied Muslims (with the judgments of the state Sharia Court of Appeal), to appeal their cases to these envisage courts. The scope of the existing Sharia court was to also broaden to adjudicate on criminal cases. These teared the assembly apart, with majority of Muslims supporting the Sharia Court of Appeal and generality of Christians rejecting it. This pro and against the sharia court of appeal among the assembly men, generates a lot of bitterness necessitating the intervention of the head of state. With the intervention of Gen.Olusegun Obasanjo, a compromise was reached. The initial proposal of the Sharia court of appeal tabled before the Assembly is to be headed by learned Muslim Grand mufti, aided by at least three (3) *mufti*. Instead, learned Muslim jurists should be part of Supreme Court judges to adjudicate on appeals from state sharia courts. Thus instead of establishing separate court for Muslims, sharia laws were now integrated as part of the supreme courts. Sharia is therefore a branch within the Supreme Court not an independent judicial entity.



While this effort has lessened the sharia debate that was tearing the assembly apart, it did institutionalized religiosity and politicization of religion for political purposes. While Muslims had continually pressure for sharia, Christians remain steadfast and determine to block any attempt to reintroduced sharia in Nigeria

### Second Republic

With the sharia crises winding down, Alh. Shehu Shagari was sworn in October 1979. The newly civilian administration was to face the biggest threat to national unity in the post-civil war era. While political crises predominated the second republic, Maitastine violence emerged in the 80s. The uprisings were led by Muhammed Marwa, a Kano-based Cameroonian. Marwa migrated to Kano in 1945. Just as Boko Haram, Maitastine was characterized by bitter public condemnation of state and abhorred western education. Maitastine, unlike Muhammed Yusuf, belongs to Sufi school of thought. He is a product of Al-majiri school system. Yusuf though, a product of Al-majiri too, but was mentored by the Salafist. Maitastine is a *Gardi*. The Gardawa and urban poor form the core of Maitastine foot soldiers. The uprisings were witnessed in Kano, Kaduna, Yola, Bauchi, Gombe and Maiduguri. Note that Bulunkutu, the hot spot of Maitastine uprisings in Maiduguri in the 1980s, was also the headquarters of Yusuf Boko Haram in the 21st century Maiduguri. This violence had damning effect on the nation's security. In Kano alone, about 4,177 people died in the 11 days confrontations with the police<sup>19</sup>

Just as Boko Haram, several conspiracy theorists were propounded to explain Maitastine uprisings. Rightly or wrongly, Libyans, Iranians and Israel's MOSSAD were all fingered in the Maitastine crises.<sup>20</sup> Many Muslims belief that Maitastine was not himself a Muslim, rather contracted to destroy Islam. This was particularly so when documents revealed that Quran used by Maitastine and his members were specially designed for them. He replaced prophet names in the Quran with his name and distributes such Qurans to his followers. Maitastine had thus replaced and declared himself a prophet.<sup>21</sup>

The Maitastine crises co-exists side-by-side with ethno-religious conflict. In the early 1980s, two of such crises had been witnessed in Kano. The first has been in Fage over the erection of a church in 1982. This was followed by another protest over the Visit of Reinhard Bounke. Muslims argued that since government did not allow Ahmed Deedat, a South African Islamic preacher to come to the country, there was no reason for allowing the German evangelist to visit Nigeria.<sup>22</sup>

On the political arena, there were many crises each tearing the country apart. Thugs and assassins were hired to eliminate political opponents and critics. Dr.Bala Muhammed, an adent NPN critic in Kano was assassinated in broad day light. While some political opponent loss their lives, others simply loss their power and relevance. Orchestrated by some power blocs, Alh. Balarabe Musa was for example impeached as Kaduna State Governor. State apparatus were also deployed to intimidate and harass rival politicians and critics. Patrick Wilmot and Shugaba Darman were threatened with deportation. There were massacres such as those of students of University of Ife; peasants in Bakalori among others. There were tension especially in Kano, Kaduna and Maiduguri. By 1983, the multiplicity of these crises was such that the leadership body language is tilting toward the impossibilities of guaranteeing even personal security to its subjects. Attempt by certain power blocs to return to power or rigged election in 1983 plunged the nation in mess. Political thuggery and vandalism especially in the western region prevailed. Crude contest between the Governor of Oyo of state, Chief Bola Ige and his deputy, Chief Sunday Afolabi lead to violence in Oyo. The worst of



the crises occurred in Ondo, where human beings were rusted and properties worth billions of naira razed to ashes. Capitalizing on these crises, the military set in on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1983, with Gen. Muhammadu Buhari as the head of government. The military had once again returned to power for the second time.

### **Second Military Regime, 1983-99**

The attitude of the Buhari regime, his war against indiscipline and apparent disregard for human right ushered in a new era of human right activism. Many lost their hard-earned properties and assets due to reckless looting of stores and stocks by government officials. While preparations were on top gear to amend the nation's constitution, Buhari's government was overthrown and Gen. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida became the Head of State and made little amendments as regard sharia laws.

While Nigeria was still recuperating from the scourge of the Maitastine uprisings, General Ibrahim Babangida upgraded Nigeria's observer status in the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) to full member in 1986. This generated many frictions and hate speeches among Nigerians. IBB's move was vehemently rejected by the generality of the Christian pressure groups, clergymen and elites. For example, the coalition of catholic bishops made it categorically clear that: 'we do not and shall not agree to Nigeria's membership of the OIC.'<sup>23</sup> Individual clergy men like Archbishop Okogie of Lagos, Peter Y. Jatau, the Catholic Archbishop of Kaduna, Professor Aluko, etc all objected to Nigeria's membership to OIC.<sup>24</sup> Other christians in the corridors of power were not left behind. Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe, who was Babangida's close ally openly criticized the move. On the other hand, Muslim groups began to defend and counter these criticisms. Jama'atu Nasir Islam (JNI) for example described the criticisms as 'insensitivity of Christians towards matters that concern Muslims'.<sup>25</sup> This pro and against Nigeria's membership in OIC have further bred tension and divided Nigerians along religious and ethnic lines. It was during this period that the proverbial phrase, "Islamization agenda" was added to the vocabulary of manipulation of religion in Nigeria. As the pressure mounted, joint committee of Christians and Muslims was set up to assess Nigeria's membership of the OIC. Accusation and counter accusation from among the Muslims and Christians do-gooders, each depending on his stand from religious vantage point continues. The nation was thus polarized along religious lines, in addition to ethnicity and regionalism of the previous era. Since then no year passes without records of ethno-religious clashes in Nigeria.

Beginning from March 1986, crises involving Christians and Muslims were recorded in Ilorin, which was followed by another clash in Danfodio University, Sokoto. In 1987, there was another crisis in Zaria, Funtua, etc. Major crises in the 90s were witnessed in Kano but particularly Zangon-Kataf. This later crisis of February and May 1992 led to other crises in Zaria for example. During the February 1992 Zangon-Kataf crises, about 471 people were killed and 518 wounded. 229 houses were destroyed and 218 vehicles destroyed.<sup>26</sup> Crises involving the Hausa settlers and their host Yoruba indigenes have been witnessed in Shagamu. Scores were killed and properties worth billions of naira destroyed. In Jos, there were recurrent crises since 1994 to date.

On the other hand, with the Sharia debates winding down and religious conflict glaring, there came an institutionalized threat to the nation's unity and security. The first was by the military and the second by the thugs, aided by politicians. Backed by some prominent Niger-Deltans, on 22 April 1990 Major Gideon Orkar Gwarzo staged a coup and "asked the states of Borno, Bauchi, Katsina, Kano, and Sokoto to be exercised from the Nigerian federation".<sup>27</sup> But for the quick intervention of "IBB boys" who foiled Orka's coup, Nigeria would have been thrown into another civil war.<sup>28</sup>



The second crises begin with the preparation to 1993 general elctions. It began when both the National Republican Convention (NRC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) cancelled their earlier held primaries. Another primary election saw Alhaji Bashir Tofa and Mashood Abiola as the presidential flag bearers of National Republican Convention (NRC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) respectively. Despite that, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) rejected muslim-muslim ticket; overwhelming majority of its members went for Abiola; because Abiola was seen as more liberal since he was not from among the Muslim core north. His sympathy to southern Christians was therefore envisaged.

Presidential elections were held on 12 June 1993. Few hours after collation had begun, tension aroused. While uncertainties linger as to who is the winner of the elections, the NRC governors have met and decided to carve out a territory for themselves should MKO Abiola emerge winner.<sup>29</sup> The military also threatened to plunged the nation should Abiola emerged victorious. Everywhere there was tensioned. It was within this purview that the elections were annulled. Once again, Nigeria was plunged into turmoil. Although, the election was inconclusive in the modern electoral terms, the Yoruba people believed that the annulment of the election was a deliberate attempt to frustrate the Yoruba race from occupying the oval office in the Villa. A militia group known as Odua People's Congress (OPC) emerged. This group with the support of Yoruba political elites threatened to break the West from the Nigerian federation.

Although, pressure from human right activists and pro-democracy do-gooders have not succeeded in making the head of state reversing his decision, the intense of the pressure saw IBB out of power and Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Ernest Shonikan was instituted. After reigning for only 82 days, Shonekan was overthrown by Sani Abacha on 17 November 1993.

Added to these seemingly unending confusion and tensions, was the transformation of claims of discrimination and marginalization of the previous era. Northerners were constantly despised and abuse as parasites by their southern counterparts. One group after another continually emerged each threatening the nation's internal security. Prominent among the groups included the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), founded by Ken-saro Wiwa; Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND); the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF); Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV). Bakkassi Boys, the Egbesu Boys, Ijaw Youth Congress, Ijaw Nation Congress (INC) were among some of the groups agitating for either increased economic and political space for their constituencies or demand independence from Nigeria. All these groups have threatened the nation's internal security in no small measure.

The newly Abacha regime did not however take it lightly on the Niger-Delta aspiring groups and environmental activists, agitating for the breake up of Nigeria. Alongside pro-democracy and human right activist, these Niger Delta agitators were purged. Many were sent to exile; while others imprisoned. Unlucky once have their life terminated. Ken Saro wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists were for example executed by the Abacha regime. Amidst rising tension, Abacha dies and General Abdussalam Abubakar assumed power.

By the time of Abacha's death, there was tension everywhere. Eastern region's agitation was getting momentum. The Yoruba people had continually agitating for Oduduwa republic. This agitation was only put to rest when two Yoruba were put to represent the major political parties in the run-up to the 1999 presidential elections. Olusegun Obasanjo represents Peoples Democratic Party, while Olu Falae stands for Alliance for Democracy.



Greater conflict over sharia was again revived in 1988 when Christian contingent within the constituent assembly demand for complete removal of sharia from the Nigerian constitution. The issue was only laid to rest when the President declared sharia clause as “no-go-area”. With that sharia was completely phase out of the scope of constitution drafting committee-paper.

In all these agitations, Nigerian government unparalleled resistance is legendary and commendable. The threat of civil war was halted. The Maitatsine led secessionists violence was crushed. The Yoruba clamor for independence was silenced, but the ensuing crisis in the fourth republic was to polarize the nation.

#### **Fourth Republic**

Developmental project under the fourth republic did not match the proceeds of petroleum resources accruing to the nation, ostensibly for endemic corruption that eaten deep the fabric of public institutions and organizations. Apart from institutionalizing corruption, fourth republic had witnessed the use of thugs and miscreants in unprecedented level. Ethnic cinders were also fanned and media employed to ignite tension where there is none. Institutional and organize manipulation of religion for political ends has been the greatest evils associated with the fourth republic. All these greatly threatened the nation’s internal security in no small measure.

By early 2000, Nigerians had become more restive than ever. Divisions and antagonism resulting from ethnicity and religiosity had claimed thousands of lives and properties worth billions of Naira. Between 1999-2000, ethno religious conflicts had consumed more than 18,000 people. Two major ethno religious conflicts were witnessed in 2002. There was a Miss World crisis in Kaduna and other part of the north in 2002. This was followed by a clash between Hausa and Yoruba communities in Lagos in 2002. By 2006, crises resulting from the blasphemous Danish cartoon of the prophet was recorded in many cities across the North. In the 2008 religious crises in Jos, plateau state, hundreds were killed and thousands displaced in the Jos city alone. Researches have however shown that between 2006 and 2011, an estimated 3,000 Nigerians die each year, from ethno religious conflict. This has placed Nigeria as the most violent country in Africa.<sup>30</sup> This was particularly so when records revealed that between 17 and 20<sup>th</sup> January, more than 300 people were killed, 10,000 people displaced and thousands of homes destroyed in ethno-religious crises in Jos and its environs alone. Additional 200 people lost their lives in three villages of Plateau State.<sup>31</sup> Presidential advisory committee established to investigate the killings had submitted it report in August 2011. Neither the committee’s findings nor the one formed earlier after the 2008 crises was implemented or made public.

More threatening to the nation’s unity was the growing kidnappings and banditry especially from 2007 onward. This began from the gun-carrying agitators in the Niger-Delta. Frustrated by how they were used and dumped, and to sustain their livelihood, these political thugs resort to crimes. By 2007, a conglomeration of various criminals had formed an organized armed group of kidnappers and vandals. It is not surprising that these groups grew in power and number capable of attempting the life of a seating governor. In 2008 for example, Abia State Governor Chief Thodore Orji escaped being kidnapped. Series of attacks on banks informed the closure of many banks’ banking halls and suspend operations, for Example Aba in 2010. Many other indigenous business men, traditional rulers ad even priest were kidnap.<sup>32</sup> As the attacks on these important personalities linger, many law makers, traditional rulers, business moguls have all relocated from the troubled Niger Delta states to a relatively peaceful one. Multinational companies such as Seven up plc, PZ plc and



Uniliver among others have all move from Aba to Enugu due to incessant kidnappings of their staffs.<sup>33</sup>

It was within these hardened criminals and kidnappers that new wave of agitation emerged in the Niger Delta. Thus some decades after the civil war, IPOB and MASSOP emerged with the same mission of creating a territory for Igbos out of Nigeria. Ministry of Niger Delta was established in addition to Amnesty programme, trainings and rehabilitation of the repentants led by the Yar'adua administration in 2010. Yet these groups had continually threatened the nation's unity, such that they were today, ranked number ten in the global terrorism radar.

In the North violent political thugs also emerged to become hardened criminals. There criminal syndicates such as the *Yansara suka* in Bauchi and Kano, *Yankalare* in Gombe and ECOMOG in Maiduguri. These groups had threatened and disrupts public peace across many northern cities, in no small major. I have witnessed how rampaging *Yankalare* in Gombe cut the breast of young female hawker. I have seen how in the Holy month of Ramadan conflicting gangs of *Kalare* boys battled one another such that the entire area had to be boycotted by peace loving people of Gombe. Businesses and shops were short down to avoid being looted by the drug addicts *Kalare* boys. The same situation has also been reported in places like Kano, Bauchi and Maiduguri for example. My informant had told me that in Bauchi, *Yansara suka* took up the whole street attacking any one insight for ours with impunity. These thugs were in most instances, despite the atrocities they committed, released many times they were arrested with the intervention of their political god-fathers. My interactions with thugs in the JekaDafari areas of Gombe revealed that most of the arms, these thugs used were supplied to them, by their political god-fathers, for political purposes, but pursue other criminal endeavors aside the one dictated by their mentors. I have witnessed how a political party State Youth leader arrived party convention with his cars loaded with cutlasses and other dangerous locally made weapons. The drug addicts *kalare* boys were hailing their God-father and fighting over the most dangerous weapon. In the end, senior members of the criminal gang leaders were given the most dangerous arms while their 'boys' carried smaller cutlasses. These were happening to the glaring of a state governor. While political thugs employed to fight political battles become hardened criminals and militants after the elections, in Maiduguri they become terrorist. ECOMOG was the political thugs of Senator Ali Modu Sherif and formed the bulk of Yusuf followers.

The political elites in their power struggle did not only manipulate youths, but also use religion to achieve their political aims. Muslims and Christians were made to believe that they were politically and economically marginalized by the dominant religion in their host communities. This ushered in ethnicity and religiosity in democratic contests. Where a candidate of particular religion failed to win election, inciting statement was used to woo his religious men to disrupt public peace. In most constituencies, the dominant religion always produced legislators and the dominant religion or ethnic group in the state produced state governors. Not because these candidates were capable and suitable, but because the electorates were made to believe that without their religious' men in power, they will be marginalized and their religious men oppressed. In situation where such over ambitious politicians lost elections, electorate were incite to disrupt public peace. Hence post-election violence that consumed hundreds of peace-loving electorates.

Of the greatest evil associated with the manipulation of religion, during the fourth republic was the use of sharia slogan by various state governors to win elections. Fearing losing their power,



politicians embark on Sharia campaigns to woo electorates to their folk. Following the introduction of sharia by the Zamfara state government in 2000, 11 states across the North introduced or attempt to establish sharia in their states. This creates tension in the North as many christian groups saw it as an attempt to islamize them. In many northern cities, christian groups roamed the streets protesting against the introduction of sharia. Demonstrations were staged, and confrontations ensued. These crises threatened not only the nation's internal security but also the corporate existence of Nigeria as a nation. The crises resulted in the destruction of businesses, properties and public buildings, in places like Gombe, Kano, Kaduna, Zaria, Sokoto among others. Cars, buildings and shops were vandalized. This was the result of what began as mere demonstration turn out be religious violence. People were beaten in many cities across the north. Unlucky ones were killed by the mob.

In the ends, neither sharia nor religion purified; rather, hate rate and animosity sawn in the minds of different religious zealots, cohabiting the same environment. The sharia governors abandoned the Sharia projects immediately they were elected into their various offices for the second time. However, their campaign for sharia had instilled hope in the minds of already religious zealots wanting to purify Islam. Many of these religious zealots were actually part of the Sharia committees in these various respective Sharia states. Muhammad Yusuf for example was member of Sharia committee in Borno State. His teacher, Sheikh Jafar Mahmud Adam was member of Kano State Sharia committee.

Frustrated by how these politicians played with their intelligence, these religious zealots simply withdraw to continue their preaching. Some of them began to nurture grudges toward the government and anybody perceived to be anti-sharia. It was actually in Maiduguri where such religious zealots organized themselves and began to preach for the implementation of Sharia, with or without government support. Within shortest possible time, their counterparts in other states soon joined them. In addition, since most of the politicians who have exploited the sharia issue were western educated elites, and government functionaries, these religious zealots developed hate-rade toward the entire system-western education and government. Their constant criticism of, particularly western education earned them the name, Boko Haram. More than anything else, this violent pro-sharia group threatened Nigeria's internal security and unity.

### **Boko Haram**

With Zamfara state launching the Sharia, many religious zealots across northern Nigeria began to pressure for sharia in their states. In Borno State, faithful especially at Borno State College for Legal and Islamic studies (BOCOLIS) were agitating for sharia. Both teachers and their students, among whom included Abubakar shekau and Mamman Nur collaborated to press for sharia in the state. Other religious zealots such as Muhammed Yusuf were also demanding for sharia. Since the sharia became tool for political mobilization, Governor Malla Kachalla did not hesitate to introduce Sharia in his state. Soon there was a Sharia implementation committee in place, with young sharia advocate, Muhammed Yusuf as part of the Sharia implementation committee in Borno.

To the disappointment of Yusuf, the sharia committee to which he was a member, instead recommend social and poverty alleviating programs before the implementation of full sharia law in the state. In other words, some aspects of the sharia should be delayed pending the improvement of economic condition of Bornoan masses. However, Yusuf wanted quick and complete implantation of sharia laws.<sup>34</sup>



Thus Frustrated by the process, and the recommendations of Sharia committee, Yusuf broke away from the committee and began castigating the process to which the sharia is been implemented in Borno. It was within this circumstances that Senator Ali Sherif, the ANPP gubernatorial candidate, allegedly woo Yusuf to his side on the agreement that if the later supported the former to his eventual victory, Sharia will be fully implemented in Borno state. Muhammed Yusuf who had now become popular especially among youths joined hands with Sheriff political thugs, ECOMOG.<sup>35</sup> The coalition of the two religious fanatics and thugs began to intimidate, attacked, maimed and killed sheriff political opponent.

This period coincided with the return of some former Afghan Mujahidun fighters, including Muahmmmed Alli-the initial founder of the group that later came to be known as Boko Haram. These former afghan Mujahidun fighters envisaged an Islamic State similar to the one established by Taliban in Afghanistan. With Mohamed Yusuf already advocating for sharia, these returnees found suitable allies. Not satisfied with Governor Kachallas commitment to Sharia, the coalition of Ali's followers and Yusuf disciples now decided to move away from Nigerian secular and unislamic society to form their purified society in Kanamma, Yobe State. Not long after the group arrived Kanamma, conflict aroused with the local communities over fishing and farming rights. The Police intervened and dismantled the groups' settlements. The radicals move to Mandara and Gwoza mountains where they were further dislodged by Nigerian security agencies.

Evading arrest after the uprising, Muahmmmed Yusuf fled to Saudi Arabia, where he stayed for six months.<sup>36</sup> With the intervention of Borno state government, Yusuf return afterward to continue his sharia activism. By 2007, Yusuf oratorical skills and generosity had enticed many youths into his folk. Verbal attacks and criticisms against the government mounted and opposing Islamic clerics harassed and killed. By early 2009, members had started going out for training in preparation for Jihad. Disillusion by the crowd at markaz, Yusuf decided to take on Nigerian government in July 2009. In the ensuing battle, more than 800 people were killed, including Muhammed Yusuf himself.

By mid-2010, Abubakar Shekau had resurrected the group and had announced their arrival by freeing its detain members in Bauchi prison. Fighters were sent out for training to other terrorists' camps in Mali, Somalia, Algeria, etc. The return of these fighters was to transform Shekau's fundamentalist group to a full terror group, terrorizing all and sundry. The new war slogan knew no boundary. The proverbial 'other' was removed, all was seen as one-enemies that should be kept at arm length.

Boko Haram more than anything else post a great threat to Nigeria's Unity. Attacks on religious institutions particularly churches heightened tensions and severed relations between Muslims and their Christian counterparts.<sup>37</sup> Amidst the escalations of the crises, there were reprisal attacks in places like Kaduna, Jos, Madallah, among others. Muslims and Christians began to point fingers at each other, each accusing the other of orchestrating Boko Haram hostilities. Not only were inter-faith mutual coexistence disrupted, Boko Haram crises renewed North-South antagonisms as many southern contingents in the North began to see the sect as fighting proxy wars to displaced them from the North.

Perhaps no crises had ever displaced Nigerians as the Boko Haram crises. In three North eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa alone, an estimated 6million people had been affected by the





crises. 60% of the displaced were farmers.<sup>38</sup> Displacements and destruction of towns and villages is accompanied by dire consequences on economy and security. In Marte for example, the displacements of over 19,000 farmers led to abandonment of about 12,350 acres of wetland rice.<sup>39</sup> Not only were people displaced, but unlucky ones got their lives terminated by the rampaging sect members. Between January and June 2013 for example, Boko Haram members had killed about 1,735 people. Additional 3,477 were killed between January and June 2014.<sup>40</sup> By the end of 2014, Boko Haram had become a deadliest terror group in the world, far surpassing ISIS and Alqaida in the global terrorism radar.

Not only was the nation's unity challenged with the crises, but also Nigeria's territorial integrity greatly threatened by Boko Haram. Between 2010 and 2015, some 20 Local government areas of Borno and some additional LGAs in Yobe and Adamawa had been completely overtaken by Boko Haram. Overtaken territories included Dikwa, Gubio, Guzamala, Abadem, Kukawa, Mobbar, Kala Balge, Gamborun Ngala, Bama, among others. By implication, some 35 LGAs out of the Nigeria's land mass had been under the control of Boko Haram. Not less than 2.5 million persons within these areas were displaced to IDP camps within and outside Nigeria. Thus, apart from civil war, no any other crises that greatly undermined Nigeria's territorial integrity than Boko Haram.

### Conclusion

Since 1960, Nigeria's constituted authorities were challenged, its constitution rejected and its internal security greatly threatened by series of upheavals, crises and conflicts. Claims of marginalization and discrimination were at the root of all the crises threatening Nigeria's existential legitimacy. Sardauna's northernisation policy angered many in the South. Tension further mounted following the failure of the NCNC/AG coalition to defeat the alliance of NPC/NNDP during the 1964 elections. By 1965 assassinations of political opponents, arson, and killings under operation *wettie* predominated. What followed was a military coup on 15 January, 1966. The execution of many northern Military and political officers did not result to violence. What triggered the conflict especially in the North were the inciting utterances of southerners living in the North. The celebration of the death of Sardauna and the circulation of recorded clips of how Tafawa Balewa was executed by the coup plotters heightened tension among the northerner commoners.

The elite on the other hand were angered particularly by the failure of Ironsi to punish the coup plotters. Amidst *Araba* tension in many northern cities, particularly in Kano, northerners staged a revenge coup on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1966. The counter coup of July revived East secessionist threats. Allegations of Igbos being molested in the North is being aired on daily bases by newspapers and broadcasting houses such as the Outlook and ENBS. Between August and September, 1966 easterners had been fleeing the North en masse in response to Ojukwu's call for all Igbos to return to the East. To contain the Ojukwu's secessionist threats, the existing regions were Balkanized into 12 states. This did not however end hostilities in East. Three days after the creation of state, Ojukwu declared independent republic of Biafra. Attempt to crush this insurrection led to civil war, 1967-70. The war more than anything else threatened the nation's internal security. Hundreds were killed, properties worth millions of naira destroyed and Hausa and Fulani/Igbo antagonisms deepened. The refusal of the Biafra secessionist to hand over more than 75% of their weapons despite the Gowon's 3Rs, explain the prevalence of arms in the Niger Delta and the multiplicity of criminal gang syndicates, kidnappers and secessionists. But for its God-given shock absorbers, Nigeria would have been dismembered when general IBB annulled the 1993 presidential elections. A militia group



known as Odua People's Congress (OPC) emerged. This group with the support of Yoruba political elites threatened to secede out of Nigeria. This agitation was only put to rest when two Yorubas were nominated to represent the major political parties in the run-up to the 1999 presidential elections. Olusegun Obasanjo represents Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), while Olu Falae stands for Alliance for Democracy (AD). While Yoruba's agitation was winding down, growing religiousity and ethnicity ensued. Between 1980-2014, Nigeria witnessed about 178 conflicts, 104 out of which have religious connotations. These crises have shaken up the very foundations upon which Nigeria was founded. Nation's internal security is threatened, properties worth millions of naira destroyed and poverty ensued. It is however commendable that Nigeria survived all these crises, but only to be confronted by another frightening sectarian group, Boko Haram. Indeed, with the multiplicity of these crises and issues growing from simple to complex; from regional to national, one is afraid if the nation could surmount and maintained its unity without addressing structural inequalities across the nation.

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