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## **BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY: A RE-VISIT TO ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES FREE MOVEMENT POLICY**

### **Abstract:**

**BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY: A RE-VISIT TO ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES FREE MOVEMENT POLICY ABSTRACT** Nigeria is facing security challenges occasioned by activities of a terrorist group called Boko Haram. The main objective of the group is establishment of an Islamic Theocracy with 7th century Wahhabis dictum enunciated in the Quran and Hadith. Boko Haram have demonstrated capacity to perpetrate act of terror in both military and civilian zones in most parts of Northern Nigeria and Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Testimonies of BOKO HARAM combatants caught in action and surviving victims established the fact that, most of the top echelon and other ranks are citizens of neighbouring States who used ECOWAS citizens free movement agreement to come into the country, and most of them without their national identification papers. Because of this development and its threat to national security, Nigeria needs to weigh the implication of upholding clause warranting unhindered entry and exit of citizens of neighbouring countries. It is possible to be a member of the Sub-regional body and pull out of the clause of free movement of citizens, consequent to the insecurity facing the nation. Once that is done, threat and capacity to unleashed terror by Boko Haram will be drastically scaled down to negligible proportions. National interest and survival should supersede any sub-regional solidarity policy that is becoming a threat to the survival of the state and the wellbeing of its citizens. Keywords: Boko Haram, ECOWAS, Free Movement and Security

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**JEL Classification:** A30, A39, A32

## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is passing through difficult security challenges engineered by subversive cum lethal activities of an Islamic insurgent group called Jama'atu Ahlis Suna Lid Da'awati Wal Jihad a.k.a BOKO HARAM. The main aspiration and objective of this Boko Haram is establishment of an Islamic theocracy where 7<sup>th</sup> century Wahhabis injunctions will be the directing principle of the State and the constitution of the land. Boko Haram believes that only through forceful overthrow of the state their dream will be realised. Their pioneer challenge of the state was in September 2004 in Kanamma, a village they renamed Afghanistan in the North Eastern State of Yobe bordering Republic of Niger. After their first campaign in Kanamma, they launched others in Gwoza and many parts of Yobe and Borno States. In July 2009 the Commander-in-Chief President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua ordered an operation against the sect codenamed "OPERATION FLUSH" while attending a function in Brazil (Adeniyi, 2011). Operation Flush led to a bloody encounter between federal troop and the sect's religious combatants. Their Supreme commander Sheik Mohammed Yusuf and many top brass were captured and some killed in action (Gorman, 2009, [www.longwarjournal.org/islamist](http://www.longwarjournal.org/islamist)). Sheik Yusuf was captured alive and later handed over to Nigeria Police by the military head of Operation Flush Col. Ben Ahanoto (Adeniyi, 2011). Sheik Mohammed Yusuf was later reported dead by Nigeria Police allegedly during another fracas that ensued after taking him from the Army. Two uncollaborating stories emerged from his death that led to human rights community to allege that he was extra-judicially killed and advocated for a full investigation ([news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8177451.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8177451.stm)). Human Rights Watch "The Nigerian authorities must act immediately to investigate and hold to account all those responsible for this unlawful killing and any others associated with the recent violence in northern Nigeria" ([pulitzercenter.org/reporting](http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting)).

Operation flush inflicted complicated fractures on the bone of Boko Haram's capacity to operate and challenge the State. Their surviving commanders and low ranking members of the terror group went underground to regroup and nurse their injuries. While in their underground holes/cells in villages across the borders of neighbouring states, the renegades of Boko Haram combatants assessed their operational strategy and reasons that led to their easy defeat like a warm knife on butter. In the first place, it was a strategic and tactical blunders to frontally challenge a force numerically strong, more experienced in the art of warfare, better equipped, a force that has severally projected its men to other countries, and participated in many peacekeeping operations (Khobe,2000 ). The scenario was akin to a boxing fight between a welterweight and a heavyweight. Since they are on Allah's mission and hallucinating paradise in success or failure, they changed strategy to waging of urban terrorism and hitting selected military and civilian targets. Christian worship centres and military zones became their prime targets of lethal assaults. Their new strategy is working, so far, they have recorded successes in all both the military and civilian targets. Most of the states in Northern Nigeria and Federal capital Territory ( Abuja) have tested bitter pills of their terror. Some of their outstanding terror campaigns were: Independence day bombing of Abuja; Christmas day bombing in Madalla; Command and Staff college bombing; and United nations building complex in Abuja (WordPress.com of 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2013, France 24.com, and The Christian Messenger News desk 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012).

Another feature of Boko Haram's insurgency is highway banditry and banks robbery. This is to spread terror and boost their economic base. Most of them are men with wives and large families, so they steal from commuters and banks to sustain the holy war and their enlarged families. Nigeria operates an economy where intra and inter states traders shuttle with large cash for their commercial activities. Many reasons are accountable to this risky movement with large quantum of Cash, but the most compelling factor is lack of banks and reliable banking system in most of the rural areas they conduct their businesses. Through this highway banditry and banks robbery they were able to foot some bills of their activities.

At a point the federal government unilaterally ceased fire and invited them on the table of discussion to avoid much shedding of blood and loss of lives of innocent citizens and proposed an amnesty programme that will make the jihadist surrender their weapons and reintegrate back into the society (News Express 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013). Days after the Presidential pardon and unveiling of amnesty programme, Imam Shekau the spiritual and military leader of the group via a Youtube message rejected the Presidential pardon and amnesty overtures and sarcastically said it is the President that deserved amnesty and pardon for killing his holy fighters and followers (Vanguard News of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2013). Imam Shekau intensified their campaign of assaulting military and Christians worship centre in their strongholds of Borno and Yobe State. Their subversive activities went full cycle by their pulling down of Nigeria flags and hoisting of theirs in villages bordering Nigeria and Chad, signalling the beginning of an Islamic Republic of Nigeria. That automatically exhausted the barn of patience the country has for peaceful settlement of the dispute, consequently a state of emergency was declared on three North Eastern states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2013 (News Express 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013). A full scale military campaign followed the declaration of the State of emergency by Nigeria Armed Forces. In a matter of days, Boko Haram fighters were pushed outside the borders of Nigeria to villages or camps in neighbouring Republics of Cameroon, Niger and Chad. That only inflicted initial setback to the jihadists but they bounced back and engaged Nigeria Armed forces in fierce battles in different locations and occasions.

As the war progresses a strange phenomenon started appearing, that is the presence of foreign mercenaries in the ranks of Boko Haram combatants. This was known through confession of captured combatants and dead bodies killed in action by Nigeria Armed forces. Most of the dead bodies were not blackmen but Arabs or men with distinct biological features not known with any Nigerian peoples (Thisday Live 18<sup>th</sup> January 2014). A captured combatant gave this account to Nigeria Armed forces on interrogation "we do have members from Chad, Niger, and Cameroon actively participates in most of our attacks" Other instance where their presence was confirmed was through their highway banditry and banks robberies. While staging their terror, they command their victims in Hausa. Hausa is widely spoken in most of the West African Countries, but has different species and mode of pronunciations. Most of Nigerians speak and write the Kano brand of Hausa and once you don't speak that, it is clear that you are not a Nigerian. Surviving victims of such banditry and robbery gave testimonies

that they heard their attackers speaking and commanding them a strange brand of Hausa that they hear on BBC when their reporters in either Niger or Cameroon are filed reports.

It is clear that most of these foreign commanders and fighters in Boko Haram are citizens of neighbouring countries who used Economic Community of West African States ECOWAS free movement of person and goods protocol to sneak in and out of the country with relative ease. Another factor abetting this easy entrance is the porous nature of the borders which has more than one thousand four hundreds illegal entrances (Danfulani, 2014). However, a broadspectrum of analysts piqued that, Economic Community of West African States free movement protocol is the Reason-in-Chief that helps Boko Haram's combatants in moving with their weapons and men and attack designated targets and rush back to their bases across borderlines with ease.

### **ECOWAS FREE MOVEMENT PROTOCOL**

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1975 in Lagos after many consultative meetings that officially started in 1972 with its secretariat in Lagos Nigeria (now relocated to Abuja). It originally started with 12 States but in December 1999 Mauritania official withdrew its membership as a result of some decisions taken at a summit.

ECOWAS aims to:

***“Promote coo-operation and integration in economic, social and cultural activity, ultimately leading to the establishment of an economic and monetary union through total integration of the national economies of member states. It also aims to raise the living standards of its peoples, maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations among member states and contribute to the progress and development of African continent” (ECOWAS charter).***

There was another protocol in 1993 that enlarged the bounds to economic and political cooperation among member states with the aim of achieving a common market and a single currency. At the political level the protocol created a room for West African parliament, economic and social council, and ECOWAS court. (ECOWAS CHARTER).

ECOWAS has six structures viz Heads of State and Government, Council of Ministers, Community Tribunal, Parliament, Secretariat, and Specialised Commission. ECOWAS six organs are to help in realising the 1975 charter and other subsequent amendments thereafter. The secretariat runs the day to day activities of the body and coordinate activities of its numerous agencies; the head of the secretariat is an Executive Secretary who is elected for a term of four years in office with a chance of a renewal after the expiration of his first mandate. He can be a citizen of any of the Member States. Interestingly most of these specialised agencies have taken off since the coming into being of the 1993 protocol that legalised their existence. Some of the numerous agencies are performing roles that engineered their establishment while others are struggling to find their footing within their legal framework. Two bodies viz ECOWAS Parliament and Court have been living up to their billings. The sub-regional court has entertained and still entertaining cases tabled by States as well as individuals especially bordering gross violation of Human Rights. And the Parliament has

been sitting and deliberating on areas of common interest within the legal framework of the body.

A strong desire for free flow of persons and goods in the region instigated a free movement protocol by member states that will legalise such movements. Consequently, the ECOWAS fashioned and enacted a Free Movement Protocol in Dakar in 1979, and all States signatory to the 1975 charter that brought the Union into being have rectified the free movement protocol in 1980 (Agyei and Clotey, 2001). Like most international treaties ECOWAS free movement charter was designed and implemented in stages because of multifaceted variables of lack of accurate data bank of citizens, identification cards/papers in most of the countries, and security considerations. A combination of enumerated variables masterminded a gradual implementation of the protocol. That was also adopted in order to give room for assessment of each stage and how to make amendments preparatory to moving to higher stage.

The first phase was the right to shuttle within the zone without a visa for 90 days (Ladan, 2009). This right was attached with some conditions like:

(1) Citizens who wish to enter a State(s) other than theirs must have valid traveling document. This proviso is implying that the right to free movement must meet conditions of having valid traveling documents showing identity of persons, their states of origin, and destination. Purpose of the journey must be clearly stated. These are must fulfilled conditions and once they are made, such a traveller is covered by the protocol (ECOWAS CHARTER)

(2) Travellers must have a certificate of health certifying that they are free of ailments capable of causing hazard to other persons. Persons willing to cross to other States must have papers giving them clean bill of health by his country's health authorities. Some of those certificates or health cards must have clear evidence of immunization against yellow fever, hepatitis, Cholera etc. This is to prevent spreading of communicable diseases to areas free of such ailments. As a belt with not not-too-effective primary and secondary medical facility and delivery system, it was thought wise to dwell more on preventive approach than curative measures (ECOWAS CHARTER)

Step above was followed by the right of residency which came to full force in July 1986. Under this stage, commercial cars can move around the zone without hindrance so long as he or they have valid international driving license, matriculation certificate, log book, insurance policy, and international customs document. Commercial vehicles that made such conditions can stay in a sister State for 15 days. Within the days permissible, the protocol barred them from embarking on commercial activities. On another hand private vehicles willing to move to states other than theirs must also fulfilled conditions similar to those of the commercial vehicles. The only difference is the number of days allowed to stay in a foreign country; the protocol gives them a time limit of 90 days. However, if any commercial or private vehicle owner desires to stay beyond the 15 or 90 days allotted to them respectfully, they can apply for extension from the host authorities. It is at the discretion of the host authorities to approve or reject such applications (ECOWAS FREE MOVEMENT CHARTER article 5 I to iv).

ECOWAS free movement protocol of 1979 and subsequent amendment also gave citizens of the belt the right to reside and establish legal businesses in countries other than theirs. This is to boost economic growth and integration within the region. It is believe that if laws

forbidding establishment of businesses and residence are relaxed, there will be a rise in inter-states economic activities- which will translate to economic growth and creates job opportunities.

ECOWAS permitted establishment of national and regional committees to monitor compliance to and commitment of member States to observing to the later the spirit enshrined in this protocol. From its coming into force to date, very little cases of violations have been reported by either the national or regional committees. The success recorded in observing this are a function of many factors. In most of the countries, means of even identifying foreign nationals with legal residency permits or papers enunciated in the protocol are generally weak and or non-existence in most cases. There is also very low awareness among travellers or residents whose rights are trampled on to register their grievances to their country's embassies or local monitoring team for proper redress or documentation (Global Times 6<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

### **ECOWAS PROTOCOL AND ILLEGAL ALIENS IN NIGERIA**

The coming into force of the protocol has given rise to massive movement of persons across borders and increased residency of foreign nationals in countries other than theirs. That was possible because of the easy conditions the protocol gave citizens within ECOWAS zone. ECOWAS conditions are little low hurdles placed on the track that even dwarfs can jump over with ease of knife on a ripe pawpaw. Another factor that instigated this upsurge is porous borders between most of the states, they borders are porous with thousands of illegal entry points that people use in moving in and out of their countries (Agyei and Clothey, 2009). This has given rise to hundreds and thousands of people living in countries other than their country of origin.

ECOWAS secretariat in Abuja Nigeria and immigration authorities of all the signatory States cannot give accurate account of aliens living in their countries. Only a few Sates within the zone have functional data that keep up-to-date records of immigration and migration of people in their counties. Where such records are found, they fall short of the realities of alien living in each countries because they are records of aliens and citizens that moved out of their States through official entry and exit points. And it is a known fact that in all the countries illegal entry routes are in thousands while legal ones are just a few dozens. Sequel to this reality, only an insignificant fraction is captured in official books of immigration authorities of most of the member States. Many reports indicates that activities on this borders run round the clock while very minimal is happening within legal entry points (Danfulani,2014).

In Nigeria alone, immigration authorities, ministry of internal affairs, and House of Representatives Committee on internal affairs stated in different findings that there are over 1400 illegal entry points in Nigeria, and the illegal routes are used more than the official tolls which are less than ninety. This reality stands on all the ECOWAS member States, because cases of porous and unmanned borders are a basic feature of all West African States. Despite the fact that Nigeria immigration website, their regional offices, and headquarters do not have statistic or estimate of West African living in the country the reality seen in street shows that

there are millions of nationals of other West African countries illegally living in the country. In Northern Nigeria they roam the streets of all the State capitals as beggars, some others engage in; shoe cobbling, tea selling, herbal medicine practices, and providing security to homes of the privileged Northern Nigerians. They are in other cities south of River Niger but their presence is not so thick like States North of River Niger. Over 99% of these aliens came in through illegal routes and are living in the country without valid identification papers and traveling documents as enshrined in the ECOWAS free movement charter. Most of them do not also have residency permits from immigration authorities in Nigeria, and they are not making any attempt to properly document their presence.

Nigeria immigration department have not been able to effect laws regarding illegal immigrants living in the country because of ECOWAS free movement treaty and other political considerations. Most of these aliens are from immediate neighbouring States that Nigeria has other bilateral treaties and principle of good neighbourliness with. There are bi-lateral ties with all the neighbouring states in many areas. And these agreements are beneficial to Nigeria and her neighbours, therefore moves like deporting illegal immigrants often carry with them heavy political implications. This is making immigration and other departments charged with the business of registering or issuing residency or expulsion orders walk a tightrope, and often times gage the political temperature before performing their constitutionally stipulated and assigned duties.

Another snag prohibiting effective performance of duties by these departments is shortage of manpower to carry out a massive exercise of arrest and deportation of illegal aliens that are living in the country in millions. All statistics shows gross shortage of manpower vis a vis the enormous task bestowed by their legal frameworks. They lack enough to perform their administrative routine in their headquarters, regional, states and local government outposts. Despite the demand for additional staff and security challenges facing Nigeria, very little is done to address this issues. A few that they are not properly equip in terms of training in modern techniques of discharging their duties. Most of them do not have enough equipment like patrol vans, cameras, bio-metric computers and good working environment.

Another related problem is similarities in biological features of these aliens with Nigerians which often times makes identification difficult. Illegal aliens living in Nigeria certainly look like Nigerians living in many border towns; it is very hard understanding which side they fall. This is giving immigration department a huge problem because they end up with hundreds of litigations challenging their actions of mistaken arrest and attempted deportation of Nigerians out of their country. This is making them move with caution because of fear of litigation and other political considerations that might arise because of their action. Since enforcement authorities are federal bodies, State where such citizens come from can easily turn the entire mistake into an issue beyond brother through invoking ethno-religious or regional sentiments into the operation. Nigeria had been a country where such variable thrives because the history of the country which started with 1914 amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates by Lord Lugard, upheaval can rise from that.

Because of these and other factors, aliens are today living without papers and move in-and-out of the nation without restrictions or observing conditions enshrined in ECOWAS free movement treaty signed in 1978 and rectified by all signatory states in 1980.

### **A NEED TO RE-VISIT ECOWAS FREE MOVEMENT PROTOCOL**

Nigeria is neck deep in a war against a Boko Haram, an Islamic militant group classified by world bodies and leading nations like United States as a terrorist group with links with Al-Qaida and El-shabab operating in East Africa. Many reports show that large percentage Boko Haram insurgents are foreign nationals of neighbouring ECOWAS States of Niger and Mali. This claim is supported by the number of arrests made and dead bodies found in insurgents ranks by Nigeria Armed forces fighting the Jihadists in their north-eastern stronghold. Arrested fighters have been severally displayed to the public by commanders of Joint Task Force fighting Boko Haram fighters.

This also goes with cases of highway and bank robbery in Nigeria. Time without number criminals luck ran against them in the theatre of operation and testimony of their victims shows that they are foreigners with a distinct biological feature or a brand of Hausa not spoken in Nigeria. Hausa language is spoken in most of the West African countries and Cameroon. But their brand of Hausa is different with the one widely use in Nigeria. Nigeria speaks the Kano version of Hausa and if by chance you hear another version, is either that person is a foreigner or born outside Nigeria. It is because of this simple understanding that victims of their robberies easily discerned that their tormentors are not Nigerians. And it has been established that Boko Haram fighters staged most of those dastard acts. They go into robbery to support their large families they left in the service of Allah and to support their Holy War (Danfulani, 2014)

Of recent another link with foreign fighters has been discovered that is Malian Tuareg fighters in the rank of Boko Haram combatant. When ECOWAS sent peacekeepers to freeze activities of Malian rebels with link to international terror groups, Nigeria provided the largest contingent to warring State. Before full deployment of forces as supported by regional and sub-regional bodies (AFRICAN UNION AND ECOWAS) Tuareg rebels controlling the Northern parts of Mali threatened to extend their terror to Nigeria (Citizen Confidential, 12 May 2012). Tuareg combatants had easy access to Nigeria through porous borders with Niger and Benin Republics. The same free movement treaty made their movement from Mali to Benin and Niger Republics to Northern Nigeria smooth. They have fortified the fighting ranks of Boko Haram terrorists under the notion of spreading 7<sup>th</sup> century Wahabbist theocratic philosophy by force, and paying Nigeria back for its role in sending the highest contingent Mali to frustrate their ambition of creating a separate State from Mali. Since their joining the fighters the capacity of Boko Haram to spread terror in north western Nigeria has increased and taken to an unimaginable height. It is hard if not impossible knowing how many of these foreign fighters are fighting along the Boko Haram combatant, but it is an uncontestably realism that they are directing the whole campaign against Nigeria Armed forces. The proficiency of their assaults on targets and the way they move back to their save havens across the borders, leaves little chance to doubt that they are perfectly coordinated by foreign



professional who have undergone training in countries where international terrorist groups have advanced facilities and camps. Before these phase of their subversive activities, their operations were too amateurish and always leaving traces. In Kaduna, the former headquarters of northern Nigeria, an attempt was made to bomb a newspaper house, but because the bomber was not properly trained or schooled on the benefit of dying in a holy mission, he couldn't detonate bombs fully loaded in his car, he left the car and started running like a common criminal. Because it was close to a busy market, he was rounded up by a great mob, since he was not properly trained; he couldn't do anything funny like detonating the ones in his pockets to at least get some people down with him. Without much push, there and then he started revealing many interesting stories about his mission and people that gave him the go-ahead. Scenes like this are a thing of the past because of arrival of professional into their campaign of terror and aspiration of hoisting an Islamic Theocracy in a democratic Nigeria of believers of many faiths and animist live.

Most of the terror fighters were recruited amongst illegal aliens living in Nigeria and those criss-crossing the porous borders through abusing privileges enshrined in the ECOWAS free movement protocol of 1979 and other subsequent amendments thereof. Over 99% of foreigners recruited within the country by the Jihadists are people who came into the country through illegal routes and without valid entry papers, but having it easy staying because of ECOWAS protocol. And the country's difficulties in enforcing relevant provisos of the protocol that warrants persons to meet up with certain conditions if they want to come in or stay to pursue legal economic activities that the treaty envisioned. Unfortunately, authorities do not know their residency addresses because of their illegal status, because that, very little can be done to mop them up and repatriate them back to their home countries.

It is no longer at ease for Nigeria a country that the history of ECOWAS cannot be told without highlighting its pivotal role to realising the dream in the 70s, because of that the secretariat was first located in Lagos and later relocated to Abuja. Nigeria has sacrificed a large quantum of human and financial capital to making sure that the sub-regional body live above board. In the late 80s Nigeria singlehandedly mobilised other states and formed Economic Community of West African State Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and succeeded in restoring order in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The country did not only constitute majority of combatants sent in Liberia and Sierra Leone but bore the burden of financing the troops. Because it happened in a military regime, issues involving logistics and financing the project was enmeshed in secrecy under security votes that falls under classified State secrets. Pundits accused the Government of using ECOMOG to syphoned monies out of the public treasury for parochial ends. However ECOMOG was a history making initiative from a regional body because before it none ever existed like that in any angle of the globe. It took United Nations years to table a motion that legalises it and gave it support desirable for its peacekeeping and building operations. Nigeria is also the highest financier of many social and economic programmes of the body, since creation of such bodies.

All efforts done by Nigeria to realizing the dream of the body are no doubt worth the stress and sacrifices when place on the scale of the mission of the founding fathers. And if developments especially security challenges are not up for tackling, it would have been wise to walk an extra mile or stretch a bit and see how others will come in and share part of the

burden. But the pillar of the state is being challenged and the survival is shaky. Nigeria is becoming a jungle where local terrorists in conjunction with their continental and intercontinental cohorts are combining effort to destabilise and violently overthrow. The State is rising to the challenges by first embarking on a diplomatic move to make peace through an amnesty programme that will make them down their weapons and reintegrate back into the society and contribute their quota in nation building. Because their mission is divine and there is no losing if killed in action, they refused the olive branch and soldier on with their terror campaign. In response to their intransigence and recalcitrant disposition a state of emergency was declared, marking the beginning of a full blown war between them and members of the armed forces. A few months after the declaration of a state of emergency Nigeria Armed Forces recorded successes by making them be on the run therefore denying them time and convenient of planning. This success couldn't last because of massive infiltration or support of combatant they got from neighbouring countries.

Apart from immediate physical security challenges there are other negativities associated with the activities of Boko Haram like losing of Direct Foreign Investment and withdrawal of certain regional offices to neighbouring country. One of such decision was making Katoka International Airport Accra the hob of West African Aviation instead of Lagos. Investors felt, and quite genuinely the operating environment was not safe for their staff and capital in a country vulnerable to terrorist assaults. More on this lane is the instability it is causing the capital market and other areas of the economic sub-sector like banking, oil and gas, real estate, and construction. These sub-sectors of Nigeria economy have suffered and still suffering because of insecurity and from all indications the situation is not improving by day.

Boko Haram campaign has also inflicted a complicated fracture on already fragile national unity by making sectional and religious leaders to thread accusations on who is the secret sponsor and principal supporter of Boko Haram. Southern Nigeria who mostly Christians are accusing core northern politicians of creating the group to destabilise the Government of a Southerner because of his defeat of General Mohammadu Buhari whose support base is the north. On the other hand the northerners are accusing President Jonathan of secret support to the group to cover up his ineptitude and corrupt government that failed to be faithful to the social contract entered with Nigerians in 2011. Claims and counter claims bordering who is behind the terror group have torn the country into many factions that the magnitude of the threat is equal to that of Boko Haram.

By all standards of measurement war on terror is esoteric and very difficult to prosecute due to sundry factors. Countries with sophisticated intelligence gathering and robust military are finding it difficult winning the wars anchored on religious philosophy hence the progress and retrogression in the global campaign against terror worldwide. At the moment Nigeria Armed Forces are trying and working under hard conditions because it is not the kind of war they envisaged from conception. The basic principle guiding their defence policy and planning is preparing to defend the country if attacked by external forces like armed forces of neighbouring States. Now that cannot stand consequent to activities of Boko Haram and the titanic challenges it is posing to the country. To effective nip in the bud this potent thread; there must be a complete reorientation of the armed forces and change in it philosophy. This can't be done in a while; it will take a very long time to achieve that. It will involve major

aspects like procurement of armaments, revolution in immigration and other border management departments and bi-lateral protocols with most of our neighbouring States to extract some concessions of projecting troops deep into neighbour's territories.

There is no gainsaying that most of the factors enumerated hereinafter are some major steps that ameliorate the Boko Haram insurgency but the best is a sharp temporary pulling out from the ECOWAS free movement protocol because it will give Nigeria a legal opportunity to massively address this problem of illegal aliens from other West African countries are sneaking and out without hindrance because of the country's commitment to the 1978 protocol. This will enable tighten the borders and swoop on those living in towns and cities without valid papers. Regional solidarity must not becloud the country's sense of reasonability and urgency of this matter. It all borders national interest and survival not shackling under the myths and realities of the 70s and early 80s. If it was convenient to encourage and observed the protocol then, the situation has drastically changed, and a good foreign policy must take cognisance of prevailing situations not dreams and aspirations of the past.

Before embarking on a temporary step-out of the protocol a diplomatic move must be in motion to unequivocally explain the situation in official and backchannels to member States. They must be told in very clear terms that their nationals are not targets of the action but the decision was borne out of an urgent national desire for survival and security of its over one hundred and seventy million people. The pull out should not be total because it will complicate a lot of activities and make many countries suffer, goods can flow but aspects warranting free movement and temporary and permanent residency be revoked because of national security. When that is done, it will provide legal grounds for immigration and other departments charged with alien residency permit and their deportation to swing into action without creating a diplomatic uproar with neighbouring States. Decisions of this magnitude is very difficult to embarked upon because of its long term implication,, but there seems not to be a better option now because of the growing security challenges the country is facing.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is incontrovertible that fighting the Boko Haram insurgency is a not one way traffic. Since the military angle is being handled by the Armed Forces, a diplomatic front is opened through a temporary pulling out of ECOWAS treaty on free movement of persons and goods. This will enable the country fight illegal immigrants that constitute a commanding percentage in the troops of insurgents terrorising Nigeria. The decision will be very unpopular in other States, but national interest supersedes feelings of other nations. If this decision is boldly taken, the effect will be very soon seen in the war against Boko haram terrorist.

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