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C A M E R O O N

Defeating Boko Haram

A Regional Task Force
Takes on an Insurgency

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features

8 **Battling Boko Haram**

Nigerian and regional efforts helped turn the tide against the insurgent group.

16 **Sustaining the Momentum**

The commander of a regional force believes stability and peace will brighten the future of the Lake Chad Basin.

20 **A Region Rallies**

The Multinational Joint Task Force shows the strengths and limits of collective security action.

26 **Niger Gives Ex-Fighters a Second Chance**

Diffa State launched a program to reintegrate insurgents and bring peace to its villages.

34 **The Final Push**

Operation Lafiya Dole puts enduring peace within reach for northeast Nigeria.

40 **After the Insurgency**

Dr. Hussein Solomon writes that military force alone won't eliminate Boko Haram.

44 **Nigeria's Air Force Defends the Region**

Air power is a critical tool in stopping Boko Haram.

50 **From Messages to Mayhem**

A study of Boko Haram's public communications can offer hints about its strategy.

departments

4 Viewpoint

5 African Perspective

6 Africa Today

32 African Heartbeat

56 Culture & Sports

58 World Outlook

60 Defense & Security

62 Paths of Hope

64 Growth & Progress

66 Flashback

67 Where Am I?



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ON THE COVER:

This ADF illustration includes the national flags of the countries involved in the Multinational Joint Task Force and features photos of Soldiers involved in the fight against Boko Haram.

PHOTOS: AFP/GETTY IMAGES, REUTERS



While most of the world was not watching, Boko Haram grew to become the deadliest terror organization on earth. The group was responsible for 6,664 deaths and held sway over 30,000 square kilometers in northeast Nigeria in 2014. Its goal was to establish a caliphate that would last for centuries.

Instead of waiting for intervention from outside, countries in the region joined forces to fight back. In 2014, the nations of the Lake Chad Basin activated the Multinational Joint Task Force, a 10,000-person military effort to defeat Boko Haram. The next year, Nigeria changed its national military strategy with Operation Lafiya Dole, adding a new division stationed in the northeast, moving the command headquarters to the front lines, and beefing up its counterinsurgency efforts and air power. As a result, allied forces have won back territory, including the Sambisa Forest, which had long been a sanctuary for extremists.

Today, Boko Haram is badly degraded and must resort to asymmetric tactics such as suicide bombings. The group's leadership is fractured, and support among civilians is virtually nonexistent.

Military and civilian leaders recognize that they must seize this opportunity to eliminate the terror group once and for all. By keeping pressure on the remnants of Boko Haram, the military can give civilians the stability necessary to return to their homes and rebuild. Through civil-military operations such as engineering projects, they can lay the groundwork for economic growth. Perhaps most important, through a sustained emphasis on professionalism, regional militaries can show civilians that they have nothing to fear from the armed forces. Professional and ethical conduct will win new allies in the fight against extremism.

The fight against Boko Haram is far from over, but everything is aligned for the final push. If the countries of the region maintain their focus, the terror group's days are numbered.

U.S. Africa Command Staff



A boy pushes a cart filled with water canisters past a Soldier in Gamboru Ngala, Nigeria. REUTERS



Defeating Boko Haram

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‘We Are Not Letting Up’



**Nigerian President
Muhammadu Buhari**

*addressed the nation
on October 1, 2017, in
celebration of Nigerian
Independence Day.
He spoke of advances
in the fight against
insurgent group Boko
Haram and corruption.
His comments have been
edited to fit this format.*

October 1 remains a special date for all Nigerians as this marks the day when we attained one of the most precious of human desires — freedom.

Over the years the country has gone through trials and tribulations, but October 1 is always a day for celebrations.

It is a day for thanksgiving, reflection and rededication.



On security, Nigerians must be grateful to our gallant Armed Forces for rolling back the frontiers of Boko Haram's

terrorism, defeating them, and reducing them to cowardly attacks on soft and vulnerable targets.

Nigeria is grateful to its neighbors and the international community for the collective efforts to defeat this worldwide menace of terrorism.

Not even the most organized and most equipped police and security forces in the world can escape the menace of modern-day terrorism, as we have seen in recent years in Europe and other parts of the world.

But we are not letting up. Our Armed Forces, in an effort to enhance the operational capability of troops of Operation Lafiya Dole, have established mobile strike teams in the Northeast. These will ensure the final push to wipe out the remnants of Boko Haram.

In addition, through targeted airstrikes, most of the leadership and identified logistics bases and routes of the insurgents have been neutralized. The Armed Forces have established a naval presence in the Lake Chad Basin as part of the coordinated military efforts to curtail the movements or re-emergence of the sect in the area.

The government is working around the clock to ensure release of the remaining Chibok girls, as well as other people in Boko Haram captivity. The government will continue to support the Armed Forces and other security agencies to fight not only terrorism, but

kidnapping, armed robberies, herdsmen/farmers violence, and to ensure peace, stability and security in our country.

We are fully aware that fighting corruption was never going to be a straightforward task. We expected corrupt elements to use any weapon to fight back, mainly judicial obstruction and political diversion. But we are determined to eradicate corruption from our body politic.

We have signed multilateral cooperation agreements on criminal matters with friendly countries. There are signs of increasing cooperation from the judiciary. Recently the chief justice of the federation directed heads of all our courts of first instance and appeal to accelerate hearings of corruption cases and dismiss any judicial officers found to have been compromised.



Recruits train at the Nigerian Army depot in Zaria, Kaduna State, on October 5, 2017. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

I commend the National Assembly for refocusing on its oversight committees. They should, in addition, ensure swift passage of enabling corruption laws. But fighting corruption is a bottom-to-top operation. I call on all Nigerians to combat corruption at every turn. By not asking for and refusing to accept a bribe, by reporting unethical practices or by blowing a whistle, together we can beat corruption. The government for its part will work for accountability at all levels — federal, state and local. Change will then be real.

As we enter the second half of our term of office, we intend to accelerate progress and intensify our resolve to fix the country's challenges and problems.

Malawi Hails Historic Relocation

of 520 ELEPHANTS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Malawi has successfully concluded a two-year project to move 520 sedated elephants to a reserve where the animals had been nearly wiped out by poaching.

In one of the biggest-ever wildlife translocations, in August 2017 the elephants were transported 350 kilometers by truck from two southern parks to the Nkhotakota reserve in the center of the country.

"We have taken extraordinary measures to secure a future for Malawi's elephants and at the same time are helping people who live around these critically important wild areas," said Brighton Kumchedwa of the National Parks Department.

The elephant population in Nkhotakota fell from 1,500 to just 100 in 2015. Since then security work and community relations programs have made the reserve safe for wildlife.

Africa Parks, a conservation organization that led the effort, described it as historic, adding that 261 elephants were moved in 2016 and the remainder in 2017.

The elephants were shot with a tranquilizer dart from a helicopter before being winched by their legs into crates on the back of 30-ton trucks.

They were driven overnight from the two parks,



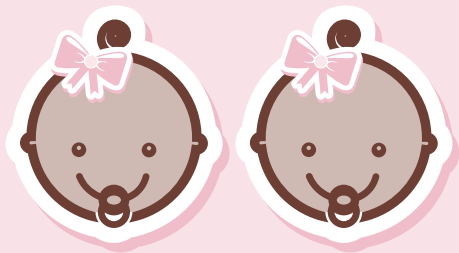
Workers move elephants to the Nkhotakota reserve in Malawi. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

which had an elephant overpopulation, to their new home in Nkhotakota, which is surrounded by an electric fence and also has buffalo, antelope, warthog and zebra.

"This successful translocation is a pivotal moment for Malawi," said Peter Fearnhead, head of African Parks. "Rehoming more than 500 elephants, and knowing they will thrive in Nkhotakota, is a story of hope and survival, and a real

example of what is possible with good collaboration."

Project organizers said there were more than 10 million African elephants 100 years ago, but only an estimated 450,000 remain today. About 40,000 are poached every year to feed the insatiable demand for ivory.



MADAGASCAR'S HEALTH
MINISTER SEPARATES

Conjoined Twins

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

In most countries, health ministers are seen as bureaucrats more interested in paperwork than medical miracles. But in Madagascar, Mamy Lalatiana Andriamanarivo recently picked up a scalpel and separated conjoined twins in a medical first for the island nation.

The surgery was performed at the Joseph Ravoahangy Andrianavalona hospital on September 13, 2017, to separate twins joined at the abdomen and lower thorax, said Jean Marie Rasamimanana, deputy technical director at the hospital in the capital Antananarivo.

"The separation of the 5-month-old twins, Mitia and Fitia, who weighed 13 kilograms and were delivered by caesarian section, involved the separation of their liver, ribs and diaphragm," he said, adding that the pair did well after the operation.

The surgery was a medical first for Madagascar. A team from the country successfully separated conjoined twins in 2009 but because of a lack of equipment in the island's hospitals, the surgery was performed in Paris.

Andriamanarivo, the minister and a pediatric surgeon, praised the breakthrough and said it would save the island's medical system a small fortune because a comparable surgery would have cost \$120,000 if performed overseas.



AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Tokpa
market in
Cotonou,
Benin

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

MAPPING BRINGS ORDER TO BENIN'S STREETS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

In Benin's economic capital of Cotonou, as in many other African cities, finding a house, office or restaurant is often like a treasure hunt. Luck, if not a miracle, is required because street names and address numbers usually are not posted. Most people in Cotonou use complex combinations of landmarks and directions to navigate town.

Sam Agbadonou, a 34-year-old former medical technician, knows the frustration. "I was called when there were breakdowns and went to health centers to repair machines that save lives," he said. "But some centers are really in the middle of outlying neighborhoods, and it is difficult to get there."

To put an end to this hassle, locals are turning to crowdsourced mapping applications that are challenging Google Maps for dominance on the continent.

In 2013, when Agbadonou heard about OpenStreetMap, an international project founded in 2004 to create a free world map, he knew it was a good idea. Agbadonou founded the Benin branch of the project, which today boasts 30 members.

With his friend Saliou Abdou, a trained geographer, Agbadonou

regularly organizes "map parties" — field trips to identify the city's geographical data. They start with the basics — street names and address numbers — and move on to other details.

"We write down everything: the trees, the water points, the vulcanizer [tire repairer] on the street corner, the tailor's shop," Agbadonou said.

Thanks to his work over the past four years, Cotonou is slowly revealing itself. For example, the Ladji district, which never used to appear on most maps, is now included. Humanitarian organizations already are using OpenStreetMap during epidemics. Amateur cartographers participating in "mapathons"

have been inputting geographical data from satellite images available on the internet into the online map.

In remote areas of a country, maps show only the outline of roads. The cartographers add houses and, crucially, water points — essential data to stop the spread of an epidemic.

For volunteers or the app's creators, mapmaking isn't just a passion, it has become a part of what it means to be a citizen. As Abdou puts it, working on the maps is his way of "contributing to the development of my country."



BATTLING BOKO HARAM

NIGERIAN AND REGIONAL EFFORTS HELPED TURN THE TIDE AGAINST THE INSURGENT GROUP

ADF STAFF



A Nigerian Soldier stands guard near the Yobe River, which separates Nigeria from Niger. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Boko Haram has left its mark in blood and destruction across Nigeria and in neighboring countries. The Islamist militant group has killed more than 20,000 people since emerging as a dangerous terrorist force in 2009. Its catalog of destruction almost defies description.

The catastrophic impact is nowhere more evident than in Nigeria's northeastern Borno State. Its economic and social devastation is difficult to calculate, and yet a state government official released a tally of the losses in August 2017 in Maiduguri.

Yerima Saleh, Borno State's permanent secretary of the Ministry of Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Resettlement, told Nigeria's *Premium Times* newspaper that Boko Haram had destroyed:

- About 1 million homes and public buildings in the state's 27 local government areas.
- Properties worth \$5.3 billion since 2011.
- 5,335 classrooms, 201 health

centers, 1,630 water facilities, and 726 power stations and transformers.

- 800 public buildings such as offices, prisons, police posts and other buildings.

"The quantum of destruction caused by insurgents is monumental, resulting in serious humanitarian crisis," Saleh said. "The damage calls for serious intervention from government, development and humanitarian organizations."

The government, through the creation of the Ministry of Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Resettlement, has rebuilt more than 25,000 homes in affected communities. It has also built classrooms, clinics, police offices, markets, roads, courts and places of worship in liberated communities, Saleh said. That work continues.

Boko Haram's history is relatively short, but its murderous accomplishments are many. How did the insurgent group grow into such a deadly force?

A BOKO HARAM TIMELINE

2002 — Boko Haram organizes under Muslim cleric Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri, capital of Borno State.

December 2003 — In the first known Boko Haram attack, roughly 200 militants assault multiple police stations in Yobe State.

July 2009 — Boko Haram kills scores of police officers in Borno, Kano and Yobe states. A joint military task force kills more than 700 militants and destroys its operational mosque. Police capture the group's leader, Mohammed Yusuf, who later dies in police custody. Police say they shot him during an escape attempt, but Boko Haram says it was an extrajudicial execution.

September 7, 2010 — Fifty Boko Haram militants attack a prison in Bauchi State, killing five and releasing more than 700 inmates.

June 16, 2011 — Boko Haram kills two in a car bomb attack on the Inspector-General of the Nigerian Police Force office in Abuja, in what is thought to be the first suicide attack in Nigeria.

August 26, 2011 — A Boko Haram car bomb kills 23 and injures more than 75 during an attack at the United Nations compound in Abuja.

November 4, 2011 — Militants detonate improvised explosive devices and car bombs, targeting security forces and their offices, markets, and 11 churches, killing more than 100 in attacks in Yobe Damaturu and Borno states.



Nigerians in a refugee camp hold a placard pleading for peace during a visit by Nigerian Vice President Yemi Osinbajo in June 2017. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

BOKO HARAM: A BRIEF HISTORY

Boko Haram's roots date back generations in Nigeria. Its recent and more public history, however, can be traced to 2002. Its official Arab name, Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad." Its more common Hausa name simply means, "Western Education is Forbidden."

The group spent its first seven years consolidating its base in Maiduguri and spreading its contempt for government corruption and Western education. It did so primarily by creating alternative schools and attacking things such as police stations to strike at "symbols of state power," according to a 2013 Al-Jazeera report.

This all changed in 2009, when group leader Mohammed Yusuf was killed while in police custody after a raid. Boko Haram struck back at police in four states. By 2010, violence had begun to intensify, and in 2013 then-President Goodluck Jonathan

declared an emergency in three states most affected by Boko Haram.

After Yusuf's death, Boko Haram reorganized under the leadership of Abubakar Muhammad Shekau, who is credited with putting the group on a more extremist path in hopes of establishing an Islamic state across the country. He communicated through video messages that some said were similar to messages by Osama bin Laden. He is thought to have been killed by security forces on more than one occasion and hasn't been seen in public since 2009.

Shekau is said to communicate only with a select number of cell leaders. Even that contact is minimal, Nigerian journalist Ahmed Salkida told the BBC in 2014. "A lot of those calling themselves leaders in the group do not even have contact with him," he said.

Still, his ruthlessness is evident. A 2014 video clip showed him laughing as he claimed responsibility for the abduction of more than 200 Nigerian schoolgirls in Chibok. "I abducted

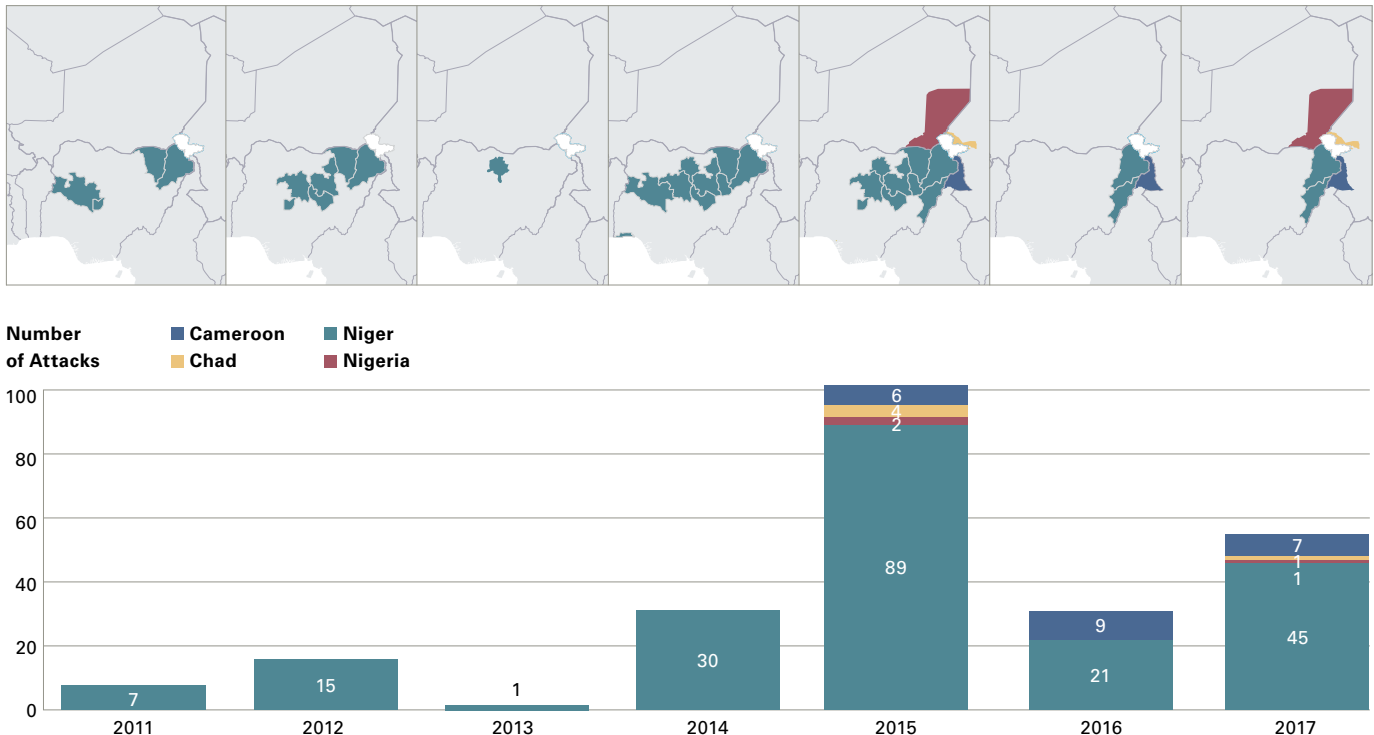
your girls," he said, according to the BBC. "I will sell them in the market, by Allah. I will sell them off and marry them off."

By 2015, however, Boko Haram leadership showed evidence of changing. Abu Musab al-Barnawi, the son of founder Yusuf, appeared in January 2015 as the group's spokesman, less than two months before Shekau pledged the group's allegiance to the Islamic State. By late summer 2016, the Islamic State had announced that al-Barnawi was Boko Haram's new leader. It's unclear what became of Shekau, although he has surfaced in video messages claiming that he has not been replaced, the BBC reported. He is said to now be leading a separate, and less consequential, faction of Boko Haram.

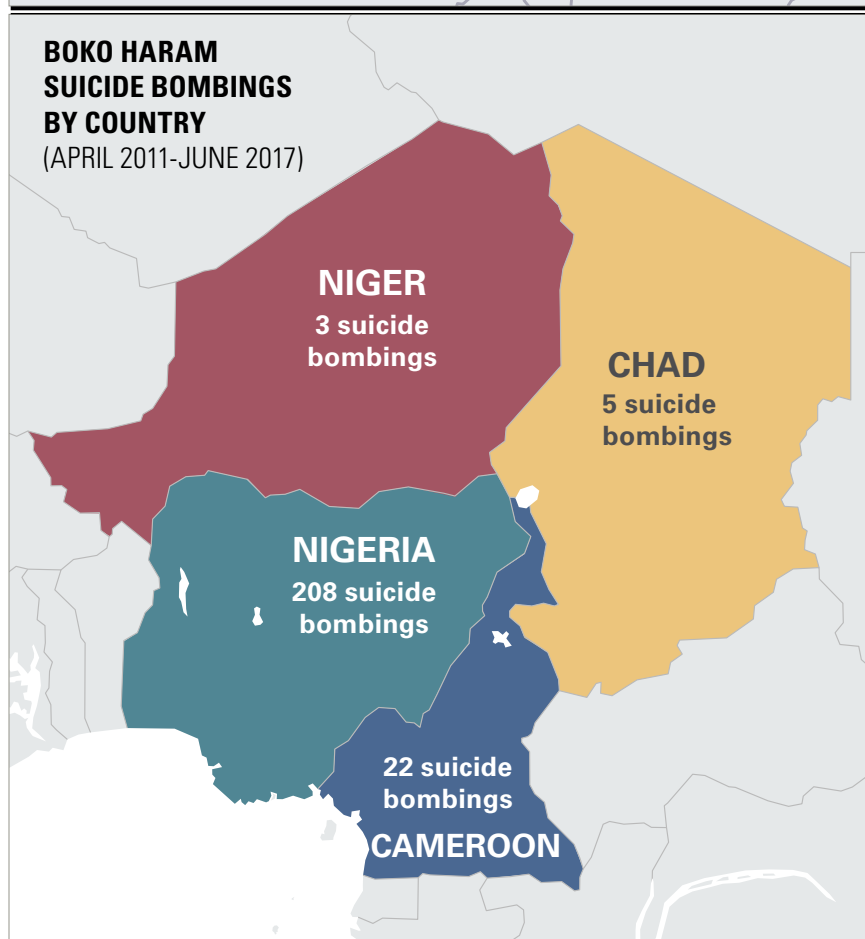
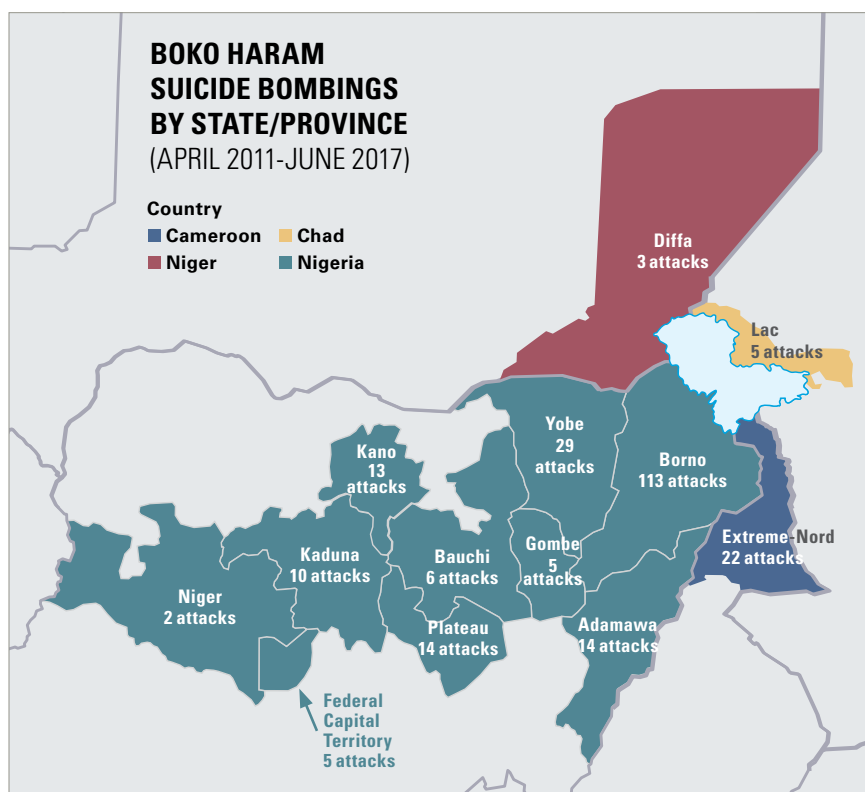
Al-Barnawi's leadership comes at a time when the Nigerian military and forces from other Lake Chad basin nations have made gains against the extremist group.

Continued on page 14

EXPANSION OF ATTACKS GEOGRAPHICALLY OVER TIME (APRIL 2011-JUNE 2017)



Source: Combating Terrorism Center's report "Exploding Stereotypes: The Unexpected Operational and Demographic Characteristics of Boko Haram's Suicide Bombers" ADF ILLUSTRATION



Source: Combating Terrorism Center's report "Exploding Stereotypes: The Unexpected Operational and Demographic Characteristics of Boko Haram's Suicide Bombers" ADF ILLUSTRATION

January 20, 2012 — Boko Haram launches coordinated attacks against the military, police, a prison and other targets in Kano State, killing more than 200.

April 30, 2012 — The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) reactivates and expands the mandate of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) so it can fight Boko Haram.

April 19, 2013 — Boko Haram battles security forces from Chad, Niger and Nigeria in Baga, Borno State, killing nearly 200 people.

June 4, 2013 — Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan lists Boko Haram and splinter group Ansaru as terrorist organizations.

August 14, 2013 — Nigeria's Ministry of Defence announces that Boko Haram's second in command, Momodu Baba (known as Abu Saad), has been killed.

April 14, 2014 — Boko Haram militants kidnap 276 teenage girls from a boarding school in Chibok in Borno State, sparking global outrage and a social media campaign.

May 13, 2014 — Hundreds of militants storm three villages in Borno State. Villagers resist, killing more than 200 Boko Haram fighters.

July 17-20, 2014 — Boko Haram raids the Nigerian town of Damboa, killing 66 residents. More than 15,000 flee.

August 24, 2014 — In a video, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Muhammad Shekau proclaims a caliphate in northern Nigeria.

BOKO HARAM TURNS TO WOMEN, CHILDREN AS SUICIDE BOMBERS

ADF STAFF

As Boko Haram saw its territorial gains recede in the face of military operations, the Islamic insurgent group began to turn to asymmetric tactics, namely suicide bombers. That, in itself, is not particularly unusual for terrorists.

Using women and children is.

Jason Warner and Hilary Matfess of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point wrote about this tactic in “Exploding Stereotypes: The Unexpected Operational and Demographic Characteristics of Boko Haram’s Suicide Bombers.” Their study shows that from April 11, 2011, to June 30, 2017, Boko Haram sent 434 bombers to 247 targets in 238 separate attacks.

Of these bombers, at least 56 percent were women, and at least 81 were found to be teenagers or children. “Boko Haram has deployed not only more total female bombers than any other terrorist group in history, but more female suicide bombers as a percentage of its overall suicide bombing cadre than any other group,” Warner and Matfess wrote.

The preference for girls over boys

is about 4-to-1. Of the 81 child or teen bombers, 23 were girls and 42 were teen girls, the study shows. This compares with five boys and 11 teen boys.

The New York Times interviewed 18 girls for an October 2017 report on the use of young girls as suicide bombers. The girls told of how fighters strapped bombs onto them and directed them toward crowds in markets, bus stops, camps and other soft targets. The insidious intent of the tactic cannot be overstated. “Exploding Stereotypes” suggests that as Boko Haram pioneers the use of children as suicide bombers, especially girls, they have been “surprisingly effective, outstripping the casualty rate of their adult counterparts.”

Boko Haram began using female suicide bombers in 2014, three years after its first suicide bomber, and it used 244 women up through the first half of 2017. That’s more female suicide bombers than any other insurgent group in history. The next-highest number was 44, used by the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka over 10 years, Warner and Matfess wrote.

“Exploding Stereotypes” indicates that the kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls, and the attendant global notoriety that accompanied the abductions, may have shown that female suicide bombers offer “distinct advantages over males.”

At 56.2 percent, females comprise a higher percentage of Boko Haram’s total number of suicide bombers, and that number appears to be rising. In the first half of 2017, nearly two-thirds of bombers for whom gender was known were female, according to the study. Females also are more likely to be sent to civilian targets.

The use of children and teens serves a couple of purposes. First, youths typically are more difficult to detect and can penetrate secure areas more easily. Also, their use as suicide bombers serves as a signal of Boko Haram’s seriousness and potential brutality, the report states.

Warner and Matfess’ study included three female child suicide bombers as young as 7. Two of the girls blew themselves up in a Nigerian market in



The mother of a kidnapped Chibok schoolgirl shows a photo of her daughter.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Maiduguri in December 2016, killing one other person and injuring at least 17, according to the *Evening Standard*. Earlier, another 7-year-old girl killed five and injured 19 in a Potiskum, Nigeria, market in February 2015, according to the *Daily Mail*.

The report found that young suicide bombers were somewhat more effective than Boko Haram's average, which is 9.4 casualties per attack. "When deployed singularly, they are most effective, at 11.3 casualties per bomber," the report states. "However, their rates of failure are also high. Nevertheless, young bombers, when dispatched together, may be especially lethal, likely partially because of their ability to encourage each other to detonate."

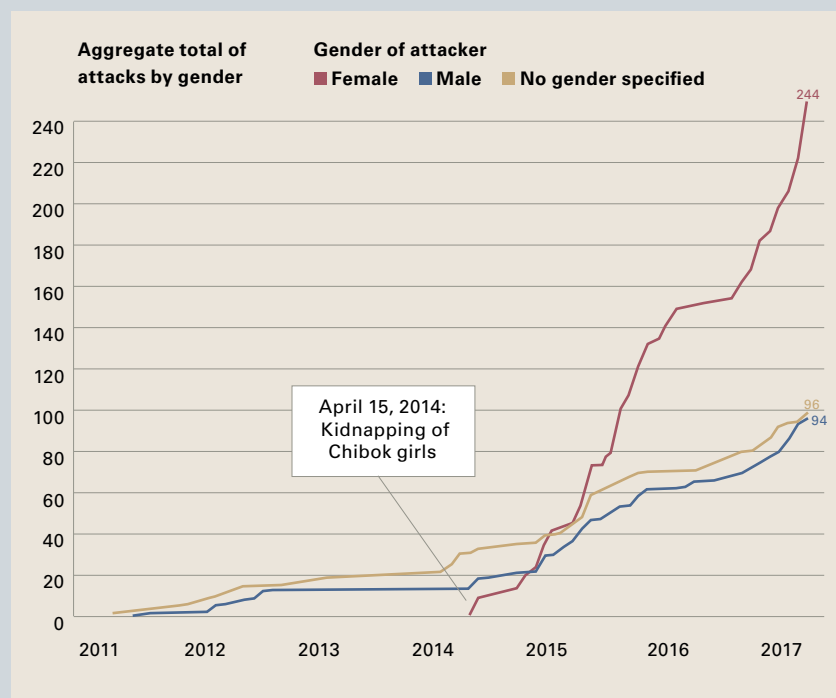
A December 2016 Reuters report demonstrates the lethality that young suicide bombers can cause. Two schoolgirls killed 56 and wounded 57 in an attack on a market in the north-eastern Nigerian town of Madagali.

The combination of paired attacks, young and female bombers and the

targeting of civilian spaces give Boko Haram the opportunity to become even more lethal. Warner and Matfess wrote that Boko Haram suicide bombings have evolved through four phases, ending up in a period that began in January 2016 and continued through May 2017. In that time, the percentage of bombings involving women or youths increased from about 60 percent to nearly 68 percent.

Security forces must expect Boko Haram to continue to adapt suicide bombing tactics to the operational environment. Counter-messaging to prevent bombings may help, including informing communities of the civilian — and Muslim — toll that suicide bombings inflict, the report states. Security and community officials also could provide an "in-the-moment off-ramp" to those drafted as bombers, showing them a path to defection. Doing so would help communities recognize a potential bomber and give options to those who may have signed on to Boko Haram for nonideological reasons.

BOKO HARAM SUICIDE BOMBER ATTACKS BY GENDER (APRIL 2011-JUNE 2017)



Source: Combating Terrorism Center's report "Exploding Stereotypes: The Unexpected Operational and Demographic Characteristics of Boko Haram's Suicide Bombers" ADF ILLUSTRATION

October 7, 2014 — The LCBC establishes the MNJTF under its current form in Niamey, Niger.

November 25, 2014 — The African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) endorses activation of the MNJTF.

January 3, 2015 — Hundreds of Boko Haram gunmen seize the town of Baga, neighboring villages in northern Nigeria, and a multinational military base in a multiday raid, leaving up to 2,000 people dead.

January 29, 2015 — The PSC formally approves deployment of the MNJTF for 12 months, a move that has since been renewed.

March 7, 2015 — In an audio message purportedly from Shekau, Boko Haram pledges allegiance to ISIS.

March 12, 2015 — An ISIS spokesman announces that the caliphate has expanded to West Africa and that ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has accepted Boko Haram's pledge of allegiance.

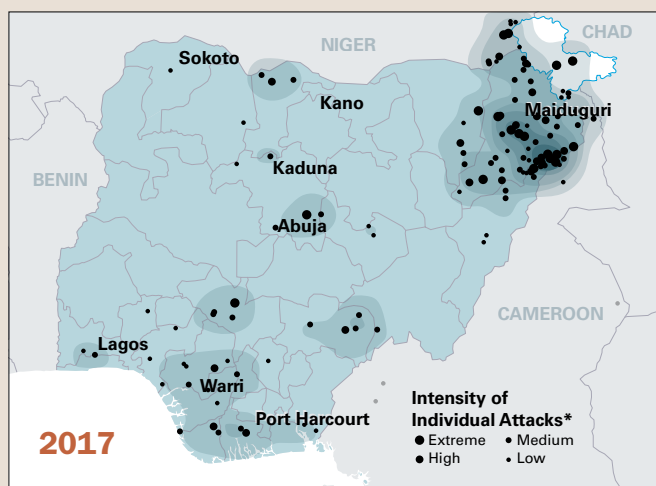
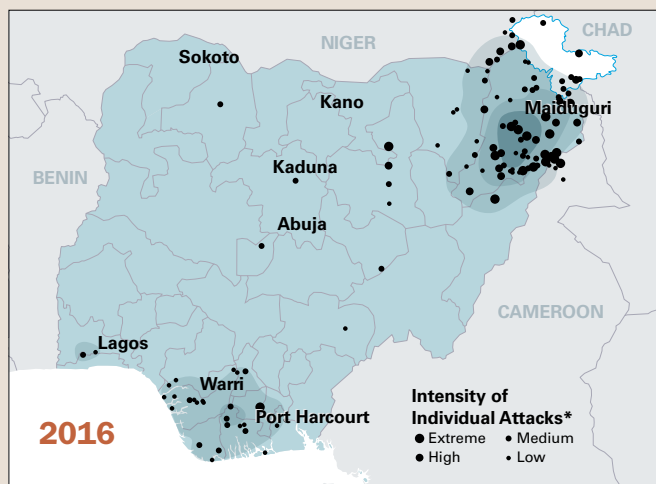
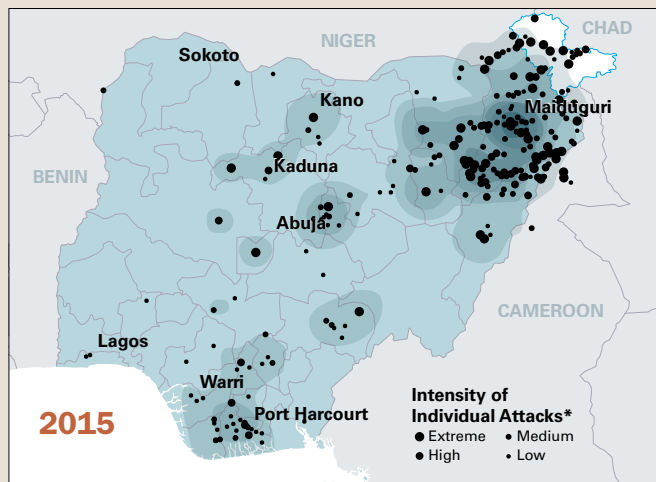
April 28-April 30, 2015 — Nigerian troops rescue about 450 women and girls in the Sambisa Forest during an operation to destroy Boko Haram camps and rescue civilians.

May 25, 2015 — The MNJTF command headquarters is inaugurated in N'Djamena, Chad.

July 19, 2015 — Nigeria's Army launches Operation Lafiya Dole, which means "peace through force" in Hausa, to fight Boko Haram. It replaces Operation Zaman Lafiya.

LOCALIZED RISK DUE TO REPORTED TERRORIST INCIDENTS*

Low  Extreme



*Intensity of reported attacks based upon number of victims who died, were wounded or taken hostage

Source: Verisk Maplecroft
ADF ILLUSTRATION

Continued from page 10

THE MULTINATIONAL JOINT TASK FORCE

Security concerns in northern Nigeria and surrounding countries are nothing new. In 1994, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) decided to form the Multinational Joint Security Force to combat cross-border banditry in the region. But it was four years later before the force took shape. "The force remained relatively lethargic, restricted to the organization of a few patrols," according to a September 2016 Institute for Security Studies (ISS) report.

In 2012, the LCBC updated the force's mandate to combat Boko Haram. In October 2014, the force was renamed the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) as LCBC countries Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, as well as Benin, met in Niamey, Niger, to discuss deploying a multinational force and establishing a command headquarters to combat Boko Haram. The extremists, by then, had become a regional problem, not just a Nigerian concern.

By mid-2015, the heads of state and government of the LCBC and Benin met in Abuja, Nigeria, and adopted a concept of operations, command structure and a command headquarters, according to the ISS. Nigeria won the right to command the force for its duration because Boko Haram mostly operates in Nigeria. Cameroon filled the position of deputy force commander, and the MNJTF command headquarters was established in N'Djamena, Chad.

The size of the MNJTF has varied since its inception, starting with 7,500, growing to 8,700 and leveling off at about 10,000 personnel. As of August 2015, ISS estimates put each country's contribution as follows: Benin, 150; Cameroon, 2,450; Chad, 3,000; Niger, 1,000; and Nigeria, 3,000.

The ISS reports that MNJTF patrols began in November 2015, but that large-scale operations began in February 2016. Now the MNJTF has attracted attention outside Africa. French officials traveled to N'Djamena in July 2017 to meet with task force commanders. French Minister of the Armed Forces Florence Parly said the purpose of the visit was to congratulate the MNJTF and to learn how to administer efforts to combat instability in



A Nigerian Soldier patrols in Baga, Borno State, in 2013. Boko Haram killed nearly 200 people in Baga in April 2013 and up to 2,000 during a January 2015 raid.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

the Sahel region through the G5 Sahel Joint Task force, according to Global Sentinel. Brig. Gen. Moussa Mahamat Djoui, MNJTF deputy force commander, said success has been based on trust, commitment and the timely sharing of intelligence among staff members.

PROGRESS MADE; WORK TO DO

The work of the Nigerian military and the MNJTF has been essential in degrading Boko Haram as a front-line fighting force and as a holder of territory. David Doukhan, research fellow at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, wrote in October 2017 that military operations led to Boko Haram losing territory, ammunition, equipment, bases and manpower. Displaced residents have begun returning to the region.

Although the advances count as progress, Doukhan cautioned they should not be promoted as victory. Indeed, much work remains — beyond just military operations — to claim final victory against Boko Haram. “These structural changes, coupled with the Nigerian military offensive backed by the MNJTF, forced the terrorist group

to return to its initial decentralized organizational structure, which renders military operations more complicated,” he wrote, “but the radical ideology is deeply embedded among the population.”

Boko Haram, he explained, has shown a remarkable capability to regroup after setbacks. Rooting out insurgents can require a large force engaged in a war of attrition against scattered adherents dedicated to guerrilla tactics. Nigeria also will need to undertake a demobilization, disarmament and rehabilitation program and a reconciliation program, such as Operation Safe Corridor, through which the government rehabilitates and reintegrates repentant Boko Haram fighters into society.

“The Nigerian army and the MNJTF struck blows of victory but did not achieve a knockout defeat. The path to peace is long,” Doukhan wrote. “Purging the region of radical jihadist ideology is feasible only through comprehensive and long-term treatment of the political, social, and economic factors that fuel the sympathy for the group and its radical ideology.” □

September 23, 2015 — The Nigerian military raids Boko Haram camps in two villages, rescuing 241 women and children and arresting 43 militants.

February 11-14, 2016 — Cameroon attacks a Boko Haram base in Ngoshe, Nigeria, neutralizing 162 militants, liberating about 100 hostages and seizing weapons in Operation Arrow 5.

March 2016 — Thousands of Cameroonian and Nigerian Soldiers launch Operation Tentacle to root out Boko Haram in the Sambisa Forest.

April 2016 — Nigeria launches Operation Safe Corridor to rehabilitate repentant and surrendered Boko Haram fighters.

April 2016 — Nigeria initiates Operation Crackdown to drive Boko Haram from the Sambisa Forest and surrounding border areas.

June 2016 — The Nigerian Air Force launches Operation Gama Aiki, which means “finish the job” in Hausa, as a follow-up to Operation Crackdown.

August 3, 2016 — ISIS publication al-Naba says Abu Musab al-Barnawi is the new leader of Boko Haram.

October 13, 2016 — Boko Haram militants hand over 21 Chibok schoolgirls after negotiations with the Nigerian government, the first mass release of any of the more than 200 girls kidnapped in April 2014.

May 6, 2017 — Boko Haram releases 82 Chibok schoolgirls after negotiations with the Nigerian government.

Sources: African Union, BBC, CNN, ISS, *The Nation*, J. Peter Pham, Pulse.ng, This Day Live, Vanguard, Voice of America

Sustaining the **MOMENTUM**

The Commander of a Regional Force Believes Stability and Peace Will Brighten the Future of the Lake Chad Basin

ADF STAFF



Nigerian Army Maj. Gen. Lucky Irabor is commander of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) headquartered in N'Djamena, Chad. From 2016 to 2017 he served as theater commander of Operation Lafiya Dole, Nigeria's military mission to defeat Boko Haram. A signals officer, he has served in numerous peacekeeping missions including the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group in Sierra Leone. He also served as 3 Division Signal Brigade commander in Nigeria's northeast and, at the direction of the president, established the Command and Control Center in Maiduguri in 2015 to coordinate the counterterror effort. He spoke to ADF by phone in November 2017 from the MNJTF headquarters. His remarks have been edited to fit this format.

ADF: *In March 2016, you were appointed theater commander of Operation Lafiya Dole. What were your thoughts when you received this assignment, and what did this operation represent in terms of a new strategy?*

Maj. Gen. Irabor: In January of that year I was posted to be the deputy theater commander and so, in just a span of three months, I was appointed theater commander. So, of course, it brought a whole new challenge to me even though I was aware of what the issues were. I was already privy to what the chief of Army staff had intended for the approach to be. I was able to quickly come to terms with what I needed to do in the theater in terms of realigning the command philosophy, also issues having to do with logistics, troop morale and training requirements. We needed to have a very good rapport with the higher command chain: the chief of Army staff and the chief of defense staff. That relationship had to be properly understood to make sure that whatever actions one was taking in the field had the desired impact. These were some of the challenges one had to confront, and if you get that aspect of the operation right, then you're likely to make headway.

ADF: *When Lafiya Dole was first announced, much of the territory of northeast Nigeria was either in the process of being liberated or already had been liberated. Between February and May 2015, 36 towns were retaken from Boko Haram. It seems like the most important thing for Lafiya Dole to accomplish was holding and securing territory. Is this correct?*



Maj. Gen. Irabor: It really required a strategic shift. What we found was that there was a need to be closer to the troops in the front lines, to improve the logistics disposition of the troops. There was also the need to improve on the general motivation of the troops in terms of welfare. Of course, at the time I took over, we were already beginning to see a reversal of losses. But it was at a much slower pace. When we took over, there was a need to increase the speed of recovery of territories. By sustaining the momentum, we recovered 18 local governments in Borno State as well as three local governments in Adamawa State, as well as two local governments in Yobe State that were totally under the control of Boko Haram. By the time I left, all the local governments throughout the northeast were liberated. So it was just left for us to sustain the pressure and ensure that the little hideouts in some of the jungles were destroyed. As time went on, the threat transformed to what you now find. In a bid to remain relevant, Boko Haram resorted to using improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in greater numbers as well as vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIEDs) and person-borne IEDs.

ADF: *The worst year for suicide attacks was 2015, when Boko Haram conducted 101. The next year it decreased, and it has not returned to previous highs. Were there strategies that you used to combat the asymmetric threat?*

Maj. Gen. Irabor: What we did was procure equipment for countering IEDs; that had a lot of impact on the troops. Each time we had an incident of a VBIED attack on the troops it was quite demoralizing; it was

Chadian Soldiers fly to Diffa, Niger, to take part in the multinational effort to defeat Boko Haram. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

quite devastating. So we made an effort to procure some of the counter-IED equipment, which boosted the morale of the troops and reduced the impact of the attacks. We also increased our intelligence gathering to know the sources of the IED materials and where they were located. We made a concerted effort to locate them and have them destroyed. That helped to reduce the incidents until they resorted to using girls as tools to carry these devices to evade some of the measures that we were undertaking.

ADF: *In December 2016, Nigerian forces retook Camp Zairo, Boko Haram's base of operations in the Sambisa Forest. How important was this symbolically and strategically?*

Maj. Gen. Irabor: I remember it very vividly. It was an operation that I planned along with my commanders and staff. We took time to deliberate and to know what to do. It was very strategic. Before that operation, Boko Haram and its leader Abubakar Shekau, specifically, appeared like they were skilled and dangerous. When we entered Sambisa Forest and Camp Zairo precisely, the myth that surrounded the forest and the leadership of Boko Haram was broken. That sense of the inviolability of his command structure was broken. We code-named it Operation Rescue Finale. It made a lot of impact. It precipitated the release of additional Chibok girls. After that, the pressure was

much more on the leadership of Boko Haram. They had no choice but to increase the negotiation with the federal government and quickly release some of the Chibok girls. For our part we felt that we made a serious gain in terms of going into that forest, and the troops were really motivated. Any victory like that is a morale booster, which helped us to galvanize the troops to greater measure. It also weakened the Boko Haram terrorists, especially the Shekau faction. After that operation, Shekau and his leadership have never been seen. In terms of the importance of retaking Camp Zairo, we say it was quite strategic and actually the high point of the operation while I was theater commander.

ADF: *The Multinational Joint Task Force was activated in 2015, and you became force commander in 2017. Are countries now working together in joint operations? Are they sharing intelligence? How has the MNJTF improved bilateral and multilateral*

security relationships in the region?

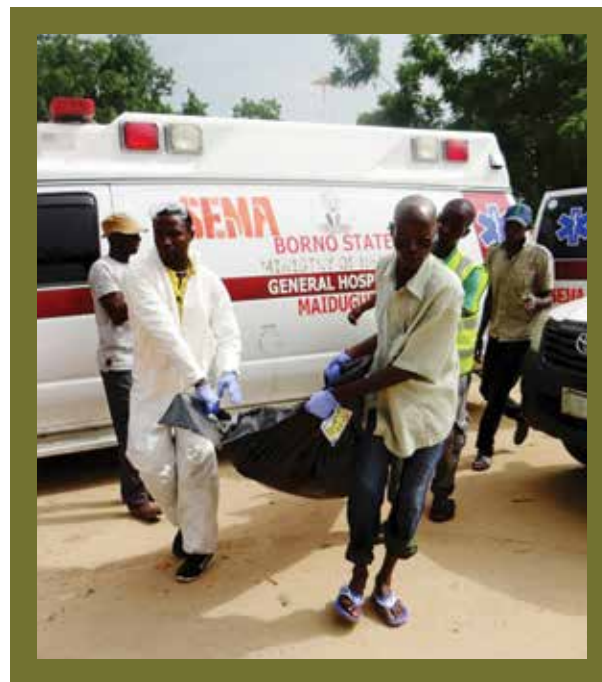
“ There is an understanding that you can’t just work within your borders because the threat does not respect borders. ... The cooperation is at its best, and I’m hopeful that that will be sustainable beyond the containment of this threat. ”

Maj. Gen. Irabor: The relationship has not only improved, it is now at its best. The agreement and the cooperation with the political leadership has trickled down the entire chain of command. On the ground, the sector commanders have been mandated to have bilateral operations with different national operations. There is an understanding that you can’t just work within your borders because the threat does not respect borders. We have changed the stovepipe arrangement that once existed. That has helped us to remove the mistrust that existed for a long

time. Additionally, the intelligence agencies are now sharing information. We have a common platform where there are exchanges of intelligence on issues that have to do with this operation. The cooperation is at its best, and I’m hopeful that that will be sustainable beyond the containment of this threat. I think that is something that we could leverage in the future in terms of development.

ADF: *Is there a weakness in the MNJTF that needs to be corrected?*

Maj. Gen. Irabor: Of course, in every engagement you always find there are challenges. For now, the resources are a huge challenge. Beyond the resources in terms of logistics, we equally have the challenge of intelligence. Intelligence can never be sufficient. The operation that we are conducting is intelligence-driven. For you to make a significant impact will



Rescue workers carry a body from an ambulance after a suicide attack at a market outside Maiduguri, Nigeria. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

require intelligence to fine-tune your operations and be more decisive. We also know that the troop-contributing countries are not all on the same page in terms of capacity. It’s not uniform across the board. But, of course, that’s an opportunity for us to begin to know what we need to harmonize in the future. There are also issues that have to do with other stakeholders outside of the LCBC [Lake Chad Basin Commission] countries who, based on biases they had in the past, have made it hard to receive the type of support in terms of quantity and at the time it is desired. Now, everyone is beginning to understand that the MNJTF is not as they thought. Things are much better. We hope that line of thought will be strengthened and reinforced to get greater support to overcome this challenge. But I don’t give in to such challenges. I believe there’s always an opportunity to improve upon whatever one has on hand. I believe in convincing those who are “doubting Thomases” for them to know that a greater good lies in what we have here.



ADF: *Do you see the MNJTF as a model for other regions facing similar transnational extremist groups?*

Maj. Gen. Irabor: I do see the MNJTF as a model. Only two months ago, the G5 Sahel leadership was here to study what we're doing and see what they need to ensure they get their foot on the right ground. I'm hoping to pay a visit to them, because I believe their force will be complementary to what we are doing.

In threat management you must understand the local specifics of various regions or subregions. The countries of the LCBC have a common understanding of what the threat is and what the impact is. It's also knowing that no man is an island to himself, we're better together, and the joint approach is necessary for solving a problem. That helps to galvanize the cooperation. Going forward, if other regions where you have similar threats can have that common understanding to know that prosperity is in the shared interest of all nations, it will be easier to craft conflict management mechanisms. What we have here is a good model that others can copy. Of course, there is room for improvement, and we are already beginning to review the concept of operations and see where we can strengthen it. But it's a good model.

ADF: *Now that the insurgency is degraded, what needs to happen in the coming year to consolidate these gains and lay the groundwork for an enduring peace?*

Maj. Gen. Irabor: First and foremost, we are not suspending our military operation, we are rather going to sustain it. That is key for any other measures we're going to take. [In November 2017] we concluded the

Girls talk in front of a school in Maiduguri, Nigeria, that was forced to close due to regional Boko Haram attacks. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

first meeting on stabilization of the Lake Chad Basin. We're beginning to look at how to craft a strategy to stabilize the region. We need to implement measures to improve the local government structures within the various states. We need to do more to ensure that education is prioritized. The Lake Chad Basin was left an ungoverned space for a long period of time. We believe that the empowerment of the people, especially women and children, will be critical. We also believe the local, traditional conflict management mechanisms can be incorporated into what we have going forward. There also needs to be serious youth engagement. If you come around here, you will find a good number of able-bodied youths who are more or less idle. So, measures to take them off the street so they can be engaged constructively would be very useful.

It's very critical for other strategic partners outside the region to understand what the challenge is and what kind of support needs to be given. Let it be very transparent, objective-driven, purposeful. Giving support to the MNJTF is not just support to them alone; it is support to strengthening the peace and security of the entire world. If greater support is given to the kind of engagement that we have here, it will have an impact on other parts of the world. Terrorists can be grown from anywhere and travel to perpetrate their acts on other parts of the world. When very objective and transparent support is given to what we are doing here, we will be strengthening peace and security globally. □

A REGION RALLIES

The Multinational Joint Task Force Shows the Strengths and Limits of Collective Security Action

ADF STAFF

With an ability to hop across borders and exploit weak spots in the four countries surrounding Lake Chad, Boko Haram took advantage of a divided region to gain strength. The affected countries decided there was only one way to tackle this problem: Join forces.

The result was the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), a 10,500-person regional military effort designed to stamp out Boko Haram once and for all.

The MNJTF was established by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) in 1998 to fight highway banditry and other cross-border crime. It was reactivated in 2014 and authorized by the African Union to conduct combat operations against Boko Haram, intercept trafficked weapons, liberate hostages and encourage defections.

It became operational in 2015 but did not conduct its first mission until 2016. Four LCBC member states — Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria — as well as Benin contribute troops. Each of the four countries surrounding the lake has a regional headquarters, and the mission headquarters is in N'Djamena, Chad.

The task force has had false starts and setbacks, not the least of which is a \$700 million budget without a reliable funding source. But observers are encouraged by what it represents: a true African solution to an African security problem.





A boy salutes members of the Nigerian military on patrol in Maiduguri.
REUTERS



Military and civilian leaders gather for the inauguration of the Multinational Joint Task Force headquarters in N'Djamena, Chad.

AFRICAN UNION

"For the first time, we see five African countries handling their real security problems," said Hans de Marie Heungoup, a Cameroonian security expert with the International Crisis Group.

"Boko Haram is not a small thing — we're talking about a group that

was [thousands of] fighters — so we are talking about a serious threat. African countries have been able to handle this with almost no support from Western countries. This is a very big lesson learned."

Early Success

The first hard evidence of the task force's strategy came in the summer of 2016 with Operation Gama Aiki, or "Finish the Job," in the Hausa language of northern Nigeria. The coalition began striking Boko Haram strongholds around the Lake Chad basin.

From the north and northwest of the lake, Chadian and Nigerien forces, backed by combat helicopters, hit Boko Haram enclaves. Their goal was to wipe out bases on Niger's side of the border and cross over to Nigeria to liberate the area near the Yobe River, which had become a launching pad for attacks. At the same time, Nigerian forces moved north along the Cameroonian border, pushing Boko Haram militants into the Sambisa Forest. To the east, 2,500 Cameroonian forces left the town of Makari, crossed into Nigeria, and attacked a Boko Haram base near the town of Saguir.

In all, it was an impressive effort coordinated from the N'Djamena headquarters. According to the MNJTF, during the first five months of 2016, the task force freed 4,690 Boko Haram-held hostages, "neutralized" 675 Boko

Haram members, arrested 566 members and dismantled 32 camps. In October 2016, 240 alleged Boko Haram members and their families surrendered to MNJTF forces in Baga-Sola, Chad, after efforts to block Boko Haram supply routes and isolate its strongholds.

"Their end has come. Boko Haram is on the downward trend," Maj. Gen. Lucky Irabor, MNJTF commander, told Soldiers in 2017. "That alone should motivate you to know that the war is being won, and for you to give in the last of your energy and your commitment so that they would be completely defeated."

**"For the first time,
we see five African
countries handling their
real security problems."**

~ Hans de Marie Heungoup, Cameroonian security expert, International Crisis Group

Complicated Chain of Command

The MNJTF structure is complex by necessity. It requires the legitimacy of multinational organizations but also must have the buy-in of individual heads of state and military commanders who do not want to cede authority on major decisions. It is a delicate balance. If any of these stakeholders are left out, the project could fall apart.

The civilian head of the task force is the executive secretary of the LCBC.

He directs the day-to-day political, strategic and operational actions of the mission. The MNJTF also relies on an AU "mission support team," which offers technical assistance and coordinates partner support. Military operations are overseen by a force commander based in N'Djamena, who, according to unanimous agreement, is Nigerian. Finally, the four sector commanders and civilian and military leaders of individual countries have wide latitude as to what operations they will and will not authorize.

It is, said Heungoup, "a coordinated force, not an integrated or fusion force." At the end of the day, it is the national militaries that decide what will happen. "The

MNJTF Command Structure

ADF ILLUSTRATION

LCBC executive secretary/MNJTF head of mission
Assumes day-to-day political, strategic and operational supervision

POLITICAL

LCBC

STRATEGIC

AU
Strategic support cell within the Peace and Security Department of the AU Commission
(Oversees MNJTF, coordinates and manages partners' assistance)

OPERATIONAL

MNJTF Headquarters
Commands, controls and coordinates military actions

AU support team in N'Djamena
Technical and logistical support to the MNJTF

SOURCE: INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES



A Nigerian Soldier patrols the town of Banki in northeastern Nigeria.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

A demonstrator in Niamey, Niger, holds a sign that reads, "Act Together Against Boko Haram."

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Agissons Ensemble Contre Boko Haram



MNJT Base Locations



MNJTF doesn't have money to pay for Soldiers or to equip Soldiers," he said. "This means, in practice, the Soldier is not 100 percent under the command of the Nigerian commander even if theoretically it is the case. The Ministry of Defence will still have a say in what he is doing."

According to the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the task force should be viewed as a "framework for coordinating actions in order to obtain a multiplier effect." The MNJTF is not intended to supersede national efforts of the four Lake Chad countries or even bilateral efforts against Boko Haram.

Cooperation

A historical mistrust between military and political leaders exists in West Africa as it does in many other parts of the world. Cameroon and Nigeria, for example, have feuded over borders for decades.

Some of this hostility hampered the task force at the beginning. Nigeria was vocal about not wanting foreign armies to encroach on its territory in pursuit of Boko Haram. According to Heungoup, requests by Cameroon and Nigeria to cross borders in pursuit of Boko Haram were regularly refused in 2013 and 2014. A major event that helped change this was the election of Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari in May 2015. He voiced strong support for the MNJTF and, between June and August 2015, visited the heads of state of the other four task force countries to reaffirm his commitment.

"Buhari brought new impetus to the joint response efforts, as illustrated both by his commitment to contribute up to \$100 million to establishing the MNJTF and his decision to take on its leadership," wrote William Assanvo and co-authors in an ISS report on the task force.

The MNJTF cooperation model has evolved. Although it does not typically include mixed units or joint missions, it does include the right of pursuit across borders, generally to a distance of 25 kilometers, and a significant amount of information sharing.

"Right now there is a sharing of intelligence, and it was not the case at the beginning," Heungoup said. "Strategic intelligence, and even tactical intelligence, that means plans of operation, targets, projects. ... This is not something that has been achieved in one day because at the beginning they were very reluctant. It developed gradually."

An example of this cooperation is Operation Arrow Five, a raid on the village of Ngoshe, Nigeria, by the Cameroonian Armed Forces in February 2016. Located 20 kilometers from the Cameroonian border, Ngoshe was a Boko Haram stronghold and served as a manufacturing plant for improvised explosive devices and land mines. With help from Nigerian intelligence, Cameroonian forces liberated the town and killed 162 Boko Haram fighters. Nigerian forces prevented a retreat by fleeing terrorists.

Although the shared responsibility is a strength of the task force, some observers have noted that it allows a sort of diffusion of responsibility. Since not all militaries are equally strong or well-equipped, Boko Haram seeks out weak spots. According to the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA), after Boko Haram attacked a Nigerian base in 2016 and killed 32 Soldiers, Niger was forced to request assistance from Chad, which took about a month to arrive. There is also evidence that since 2015 the group has given up on holding territory and has shifted to asymmetric tactics.

For the MNJTF to be truly effective, IDA argues, it must be agile and coordinated. "The individual efforts of regional militaries have led to uneven efforts against the group," wrote Hillary Matfess, a researcher at the IDA. "The failure to coordinate a regional effort has resulted in military efforts that move Boko Haram around, rather than eradicate the insurgency."

A Model Worth Replicating?

The task force is viewed as a response to a serious problem that did not rely heavily on outside assistance from Western countries or from the African Union. The AU provided some communications equipment, vehicles and generators while the European Union pledged 50 million euros.

The MNJTF was created out of a coalition of willing countries and has built its strategy on the fly. Experts, including Cedric de Coning of South Africa, have argued for this type of ad hoc solution that is quickly developed to counter a specific threat. The ad hoc model would replace the old model of standby forces and predetermined coalitions. De Coning said this is needed in Africa, where coalitions must be based on national interest and capabilities.

Heungoup said other regions should take heart in the success of the MNJTF but shouldn't assume it can be copied elsewhere. It worked in the Lake Chad basin because several of the countries involved had well-trained, battle-tested militaries. This is not the case in every region of the continent.

"It works because Cameroon has a real army — it has its weaknesses, but it is a real army capable of inflicting heavy losses to Boko Haram even without the MNJTF being created," he said. "The same with Chad — we know what Chad has done in Mali and elsewhere. It worked because they gathered countries with effective armies. Could that be replicated everywhere? I'm not sure."

It also worked because the seriousness and immediacy of the crisis demanded a swift response. It was not something that could be put off or delayed in the hopes it would solve itself.

"It was countries with a threat directly on their territory, so they could not delay," Heungoup said. "They could not play with diplomacy. They could not go in the MNJTF just to recycle the troops that they could not pay. It was an existential threat." □



Niger Gives Ex-Fighters a SECOND CHANCE

*Diffa State launched a program to reintegrate insurgents and bring **peace** to its villages.*

ADF STAFF

The need for DDR — disarmament, demobilization and reintegration — of surrendering insurgents is as old as warfare itself. Rebels grow tired of fighting, they surrender to their victors, and they go through a process of rehabilitation before returning to society.

In the case of Boko Haram insurgents, DDR is particularly complex. It can include not just surrendering fighters, but their wives and children, as well as former hostages. Boko Haram also has an extremist ideology with fighters vowing to destroy the state and kill innocent civilians. Finally, the conflict is ongoing, leading to the question: How do you design a DDR program during a war that has not ended?

Refugees
congregate near
Diffa, Niger,
after being
forced from
their homes by
Boko Haram.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

"From Nigeria to Somalia, DDR now has to deal with defectors or those captured or liberated on the battlefield in the context of radicalization and in the absence of a peace agreement framework," wrote Vanda Felbab-Brown of the Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence. "Moreover, the 'R' often becomes simple 'reinsertion,' a far narrower concept than reintegration and a step that takes place before any formal disarmament and demobilization."

Felbab-Brown visited Niger in May 2017 to observe that country's DDR techniques. She noted that there were two different groups in need of rehabilitation: the former fighters and their victims.

"Many of Boko Haram's captives were never radicalized, but merely enslaved; some may have committed heinous crimes under duress," she wrote. "It is crucial to establish a process that separates them (through a judicial process and perhaps imprisonment) from others who can be released after DDR or other assistance."

That creates problems of its own.

"Without legal mechanisms or sorting criteria, the abuse of captured victims may be perpetuated or dangerous people may be released," she wrote.

Laouali Mahamane Dan Dano, governor of Niger's Diffa region, said his country has to approach DDR from a unique perspective. Many of the surrendering fighters, he said, are victims themselves.

"Why did those young men join Boko Haram in the first place?" he said, in an extensive interview. "How did they get recruited? Some of them, the first ones that joined Boko Haram, took it like it was just a game and finally they found themselves trapped. What they were expecting and what they were thinking is different from what they found on the ground over there."

"These boys are Nigeriens like us," he said. "They are citizens like us, and they made a mistake. So the best way to find a solution is to try to give them a second chance."

The governor noted that some young men joined Boko Haram because they felt they had no place else to go.



“Many of Boko Haram’s captives were never radicalized, but merely enslaved; some may have committed heinous crimes under duress.”

— Vanda Felbab-Brown
of the Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence





“These boys are Nigeriens like us. They are citizens like us, and they made a mistake. So the best way to find a solution is to try to give them a second chance.”

— Laouali Mahamane Dan Dano
governor of Niger's Diffa region

"In 2011, 2012, 2013, Diffa went through flooding," he said. "Many people lost their farms. They used to grow pepper and make money each season, but they lost their source of income. Boko Haram seized that opportunity to offer them money and recruit them."

Observers said Niger is paying much more attention to DDR than are other countries in the region. It is organizing conferences on DDR and educating its citizens about the importance of the program. As of mid-2017, the Diffa program had 150 participants, a figure that included wives and 28 young boys. But experts are concerned that Diffa lacks the resources to house former fighters separately from women and children. It is regarded as a critical shortcoming, one that is contrary to most accepted DDR practices.

There also is the matter of new training for the former fighters. Because of competition among farmers and pastoralists over land, Diffa has chosen to retrain defectors as mechanics. But the villages the former fighters would be returned to often have no need for mechanics, Felbab-Brown noted. Many of the villages even prohibit motorcycles, because Boko Haram uses them for suicide bomb attacks.

Villagers also resent that former traitors are now getting special treatment, while the villagers themselves do without. Like the former jihadists, the villagers are dealing with poverty and unemployment. Felbab-Brown said that previous experiences with DDR in other countries have shown that if local communities are given comparable assistance to what the former fighters receive, they are more willing to take them back.

Aboubaker Issa, a youth leader in Diffa, believes his region has its priorities all wrong.

"First, the government should meet those communities that lost everything, living under trees," he told the news agency IRIN. "Meet those people, comfort them, and bring them back to their houses, give them means to resettle. After that, the government can turn to ex-combatants and help them come back to their communities."

The governor said critics and outside observers don't understand Diffa's challenges. He also pointed out that for every one defector who receives training, five law-abiding citizens are trained.

"Each and every country and each and every region of the world has its own reality," he said. "What we are doing here, the steps we have taken so far have produced results. ... The frequency of attacks on the village has been reduced. The best thing for the Western partners to do is try to support us and try to understand the steps we have taken so far."

The governor stressed the need for mental health workers and psychologists to participate in the DDR process. In the meantime, Niger, along with other areas of Africa, is using "religious

re-education," hiring imams to help deradicalize former fighters. Imams are more readily available than are mental health professionals, and sources of money to hire them are easier to find.

Diffa authorities point to December 2016 as a key moment in their DDR efforts. That month, 14 Boko Haram fighters surrendered to authorities, a move that came as a surprise to people throughout the region. But Diffa officials had been "quietly testing a tactic of asking families whose children had joined Boko Haram to spread word of an amnesty," according to African Arguments, a news website.

Before the new tactic, the region's main response to Boko Haram had been military, and with some success. At the end of 2017, Boko Haram was not the force it had been in years past and had splintered into two competing groups. But although the assaults, bombings and kidnappings have sharply decreased, they have not stopped. In an incident in July 2017, Boko Haram fighters riding camels killed nine people and abducted 40 others in a raid on a Nigerien village.

No one is saying that a military response is not essential; the Diffa strategy has been viewed as a way to augment it.

In a 2017 study, the International Crisis Group concluded that programs like Niger's are essential but must be carefully balanced. The group's recommendations for Niger: "Formulate demobilization and reintegration policies for former Boko Haram combatants, especially those who have not been involved in serious crimes, while consulting Boko Haram's victims and their representatives to avoid a cycle of score-settling. The recent establishment of demobilization sites is welcome but the reintegration of former insurgents is a sensitive issue that requires skillful handling and major long-term investment by the government and its partners."

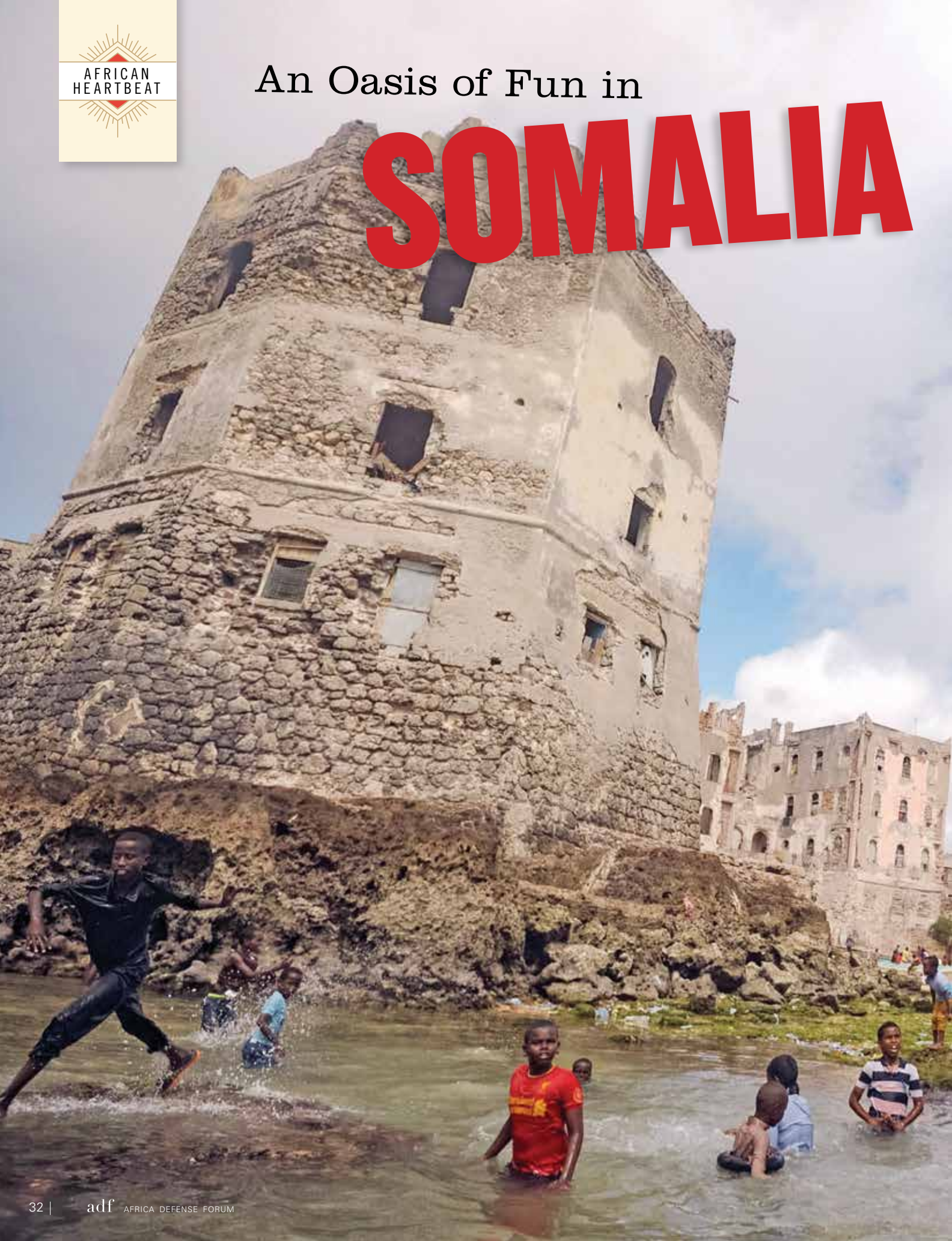
Such amnesty programs in the midst of ongoing wars have succeeded before. Uganda employed a similar strategy against the Lord's Resistance Army in the early 2000s. Researcher Edward Rackley said the policy is "widely believed to have weakened rebel ranks."

However, unlike in Uganda, as of late 2017 the Diffa initiative had no legal process for giving former Boko Haram fighters legal status as pardoned deserters.

In April 2017, Rackley wrote that Diffa's unflagging attention to DDR is its biggest strength. "As a locally designed and executed initiative, it is also impressive and promising," he wrote. "Often when disarmament, demobilization and reintegration schemes are implemented, they are imported internationally with little ownership. But this is not the case with Diffa, and other regions facing the same problem are watching the bold experiment closely." □

An Oasis of Fun in

SOMALIA



ADF STAFF

Lawlessness and terror have plagued Somalia for years.

Although an African Union peacekeeping force has improved matters in the East African nation, violence is still a threat.

In late October 2017, militants attacked the Hotel Naso Hablod in the Hamarweyne district of Mogadishu, killing 29 people during a 12-hour siege. At least 12 of those killed were police officers.

Earlier that month, children in T-shirts and shorts played in the water near the ruins of a building in the same district, underscoring the dichotomy of life in Somalia: Children play. Adults buy goods in city markets.

Somalis have refused to let violence defeat them or define them.

“With a place like Somalia, defined by stereotypes beyond its borders, it has become acceptable to think of the country as holding only war and extremism, and to forget that the lives there are multi-layered, possessing similar and universal concerns, interests, and desires,” wrote Alexis Okeowo in an October 17, 2017, piece for *The New Yorker* magazine just a few days after a truck bomb killed at least 300 people in Mogadishu.

Yes, life in Somalia still is fraught with potential danger and destruction at the hands of al-Shabaab. But life finds a way to continue in the joyous yells and laughter of children splashing in the water.



Somali children dive, play and swim near the ruins of an old building on the seashore of Hamarweyne district in Mogadishu in October 2017. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



the FINAL PUSH

ADF STAFF

OPERATION LAFIYA DOLE PUTS ENDURING PEACE WITHIN REACH FOR *NORTHEAST NIGERIA*

The military operation was as important symbolically as it was strategically. On December 22, 2016, Nigeria's Armed Forces advanced on "Camp Zairo," a base deep in the Sambisa Forest that had served as Boko Haram's nerve center.

The assault began in the early morning with an aerial bombardment. Alpha Jets, F-7 supersonic jets and Mi-35 combat helicopters pounded the camp. After the bombing, ground troops backed by close air support advanced with little resistance and, during a mop-up operation, arrested 1,240 suspected Boko Haram fighters and family members. Thirty other fighters who fled were intercepted by forces from Niger, who were part of the Multinational Joint Task Force operating on the shores of Lake Chad.

The forest redoubt bore the hallmarks of the terror group. Slogans in Arabic were painted on the walls; armored personnel carriers were found burned out, destroyed before a hasty retreat; and troops discovered unmarked graves. Perhaps most significant were the black flags that Boko Haram extremists such as leader Abubakar Shekau had tauntingly displayed in propaganda videos. Nigerian Soldiers took down a flag and presented it to their commander as a symbol of victory.

"I can categorically say that never again will Boko Haram terrorists occupy any of our land," Nigerian Minister of Defense Mansur Dan Ali said in a speech months later when the Army's 7 Division held annual exercises at Camp Zairo.

Nigerian Soldiers hold up a Boko Haram flag captured from the town of Damasak.

REUTERS

A Nigerian Soldier stands guard on the outskirts of Damasak in northeast Nigeria.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



However, Nigerian Chief of Army Staff Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai cautioned that the extremist group was dislodged but not eradicated. The fight would go on. “Today Boko Haram are in hiding,” he said. “Tomorrow you wake up, and the spate of attacks seem to continue.”

‘PEACE THROUGH FORCE’

Retaking the Sambisa Forest was the signature achievement of the Nigerian military’s Operation Lafiya Dole, which means “peace through force” in the Hausa language.

Launched in July 2015, Lafiya Dole marked a strategic shift in the counterinsurgency effort that was already 4 years old at the time. It aimed to address complaints among front-line troops that they needed help. They said they were underequipped, that decisions took too long, and that corruption was hampering the fight. One of the first changes made by President Muhammadu Buhari when he took office was to move the theater headquarters from Abuja to Maiduguri in the northeast, the epicenter of the insurgency.

In announcing the move, the military said it would “add impetus and renewed vigor” to the fight against Boko Haram.

Observers believe it sent a strong message up the chain of command. “Prior to this relocation there was a major

disconnect between those who had a strategic command position in the military and the troops on the ground who were actually confronting the insurgents,” said Dr. Freedom Onuoha, senior lecturer at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. “It was meant to bring them closer to the units on the front line. To feel their pulse and respond to their concerns.”

Under previous administrations, the fight against the insurgency had been led by the Army’s 3 and 7 Divisions. Under Lafiya Dole, the military added the 8 Task Force Division headquartered in Monguno and a logistics base in Damaturu to speed resupplies. Borno became the only state in the country with two divisions garrisoned within its borders.

Nigeria also announced plans to increase its Army personnel strength from 100,000 to more than 200,000 over eight years.

COUNTERINSURGENCY

By the time Lafiya Dole was announced, most territory in Nigeria had been retaken from Boko Haram. Between February and May 2015, Nigerian or allied forces liberated 36 Nigerian towns. The phrase “never again” became a popular hashtag on Twitter, with Nigerians vowing that they never again wanted Boko Haram to plant its black flag on Nigerian territory.



LAFIYA DOLE BY THE NUMBERS

300,000 hostages and displaced people liberated or given secure housing.

1,009 Boko Haram members surrendered voluntarily.

1,140 Boko Haram members arrested.

1,500 Boko Haram suspects under investigation.

200 Boko Haram camps and enclaves destroyed.

Source: Nigerian chief of Army staff, January 2017

The Army needed a new strategy to make that a reality. It followed the traditional military counterinsurgency steps of “clear, hold and build.”

“With over two years of attempting to ‘clear’ Boko Haram from built-up areas, the task at hand now, and one that proved difficult in its own right, was that of ‘hold,’ ” wrote Nigerian military scholar Akali Omeni.

This “hold” strategy required simultaneously securing towns while maintaining the pressure on the outskirts where terrorists lurked. Between late 2015 and mid-2016, the Nigerian Army formed six new brigades. Each was headquartered in a northeastern town and surrounded by three “outfield” battalions roving the rural areas. The garrisoned and outfield battalions had small quick-reaction force (QRF) units attached to them that emphasized mobility and maneuverability over firepower, Omeni wrote. “These units are trained to rely on a [counterinsurgency] action-set, beyond basic infantry tactics,” he wrote. “More than the average Nigerian Army Soldier, therefore, QRF personnel know what to look out for, when out on patrol.”

The goal was to add layers of resistance to insurgents who were intent on asymmetric attacks. The less freedom of movement they had, the more difficult it became to transport supplies and reach vulnerable civilian areas. “Suicide bombers will have more checkpoints to pass through,

increasing the risk of detection,” Omeni wrote. “Additional Army patrols, and the retention of police components within outfield battalions will mean IED [improvised explosive device] materials will be more difficult to transport undetected. Added troop numbers in forward areas, along with increased mobility within battalions, means egress for the insurgent will be more difficult.”

There is some evidence that this strategy paid dividends. Boko Haram suicide bombings dropped from an all-time high of 101 in 2015 to 30 attacks in 2016. There was a slight uptick in 2017, but not near the highs of two years earlier.

Finally, in August 2017 the Nigerian Army activated its mobile strike teams (MSTs). Trained at the Army Special Forces School in Yobe State, they were prepared to “conduct long-range patrols and ambushes deep into the hinterland,” said Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru, who commanded Lafiya Dole from May to December 2017. “We had the MSTs with the sole purpose of reaching out to find Boko Haram wherever they are,” he said. “The idea was to reach out and destroy those small pockets [of insurgents]. They have been very invaluable and effective in doing that.”

The Nigerian Army also placed renewed emphasis on “after-action reviews” — intense analyses following a mission of what worked and what failed. The goal was to quickly react to changing tactics used by Boko Haram. “The

KEY DATES

AUGUST 16, 2015:

Nigerian Army headquarters moved from Abuja to Maiduguri.

APRIL 2016:

Nigerian Army launches Operation Crackdown to clear the Sambisa Forest.

DECEMBER 22, 2016:

Nigerian forces capture Camp Zairo, a key Boko Haram enclave in the Sambisa Forest.

JULY 3, 2017:

700 suspected Boko Haram members surrender on the fringes of the Sambisa Forest.

SEPTEMBER 7-16, 2017:

Nigerian Air Force conducts Operation Ruwan Wuta, an intensive day and night aerial bombardment campaign targeting remaining Boko Haram enclaves. The NAF conducts 180 sorties and 208 flying hours in 10 days.

JULY 16, 2015:

Operation Lafiya Dole is launched, replacing Operation Zamina Lafiya.

JANUARY 2016:

Nigerian Army forms the 8 Task Force Division, based in Monguno, with the sole task of counterinsurgency operations.

NOVEMBER 1, 2016:

8 Task Force Division launches Operation Hardknock to clear pockets of terrorists along the Niger-Nigeria border.

MAY 10, 2017:

Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru is appointed theater commander of Operation Lafiya Dole; Maj. Gen. Lucky Irabor moves to take over command of the Multinational Joint Task Force.

AUGUST 2017:

Nigerian Army activates its mobile strike teams.

DECEMBER 2017:

Maj. Gen. Rogers Nicholas is appointed theater commander of Operation Lafiya Dole.

man you are fighting is adapting his tactics. For you to stay ahead of him, you must use the aspect of competitive adaptation. That is what we've been doing," Attahiru said.

THE IDEOLOGICAL FIGHT

Boko Haram gained strength, in part, from convincing civilians in the north that they were the victims of a corrupt and illegitimate Nigerian state. Heavy-handed tactics by the military that led to civilian deaths early in the campaign gave this argument some credibility. Even moderate civilians said they felt stuck between two sides they feared. Lafiya Dole sought to change that.

"What we needed to do was to isolate Boko Haram from its support base," Attahiru said. "Because whether you like it or not, the population can be the support base."

Beginning in 2014, Nigerian Soldiers participated in town hall meetings and traditional celebrations known as *durbars* to listen to and respond to the concerns of the people they were protecting. The military also encouraged "census patrols" among lower-ranking officers, including captains, lieutenants and sergeants who were asked to spend time talking to civilians. This not only put a friendly face on the military presence, it helped Soldiers gather information. "Previously, army personnel had been too heavily garrisoned, and what existed as 'patrols' were not, in fact, meant to interact with locals," Omeni wrote. "This new category of interaction ... has been vital to the collection of information useful to campaign objectives."

Furthermore, the Army placed a renewed emphasis on civil-military operations. Efforts included drilling wells for clean drinking water and rebuilding roads and schools. Demining experts used Bozena minesweepers to clear roads in Borno State that had become deathtraps for civilians. On September 19, 2015, Nigerian Army Engineers repaired a bridge linking Maiduguri and Gamboru Ngala, which Boko Haram had destroyed. This vital link reopened commerce between the two cities and improved people's lives.

In camps for internally displaced people (IDPs), military doctors treated maladies ranging from malaria to malnutrition, tooth decay to hypertension. In August 2015, IDPs from 13 villages around Konduga and Sambisa went to the 7 Division hospital for treatment.

Attahiru said the Nigerian Army has



A man looks at photographs of previous military administrators and governors in Maiduguri, Nigeria. REUTERS

Chibok schoolgirls who had been held captive by Boko Haram are reunited with their families in Abuja, Nigeria, in May 2017. REUTERS



provided security so nongovernmental organizations and the U.N. can offer job training and other aid to formerly displaced people. The Army also is training local police and civilian defense groups.

"We have a people-centric approach to countering the insurgency," Attahiru said. "We have respect for local people, and we put their well-being ahead of any other consideration. Insurgents cannot operate without the support — active or passive — of the local population. So by getting the support of the local population, we've been able to remove that support for Boko Haram."

Above all, Lafiya Dole sought to demonstrate the professionalism of the Nigerian Soldier. A Human Rights Desk was set up in the defense headquarters where six lawyers investigate accusations of unethical behavior by Soldiers. A number of high-profile officers, including a former chief of defense staff, have been charged with corruption and faced trial. This signaled to civilians that unprofessional behavior would not be tolerated.

"In terms of what was happening before the launch of the operation, the feeling was that the military had violated some of the rights of the civilian population, which therefore created mistrust," Onuoha said. "From a professional point of view, the mission was meant to give a banner of a new deployment that would respect the human rights of the people as a way of winning their hearts and minds."

The Nigerian Army refused to cede ground on the ideological battlefield. It established a Media Campaign Centre to update journalists on Lafiya Dole operations and beefed up its social media presence. It established Lafiya Dole FM, a radio station broadcasting in English, Hausa and Kanuri, that updated the local population on the campaign and dispelled rumors. Finally, the Army heightened psychological operations by using videos, leaflets and even radio jingles designed as outreach to members of Boko Haram who would consider defecting. Operation Safe Corridor and reintegration camps were meant to give fighters a way out. The goal, said Nigeria's chief of Army staff, was to destroy Boko Haram's "propaganda machine."

"We have defeated Boko Haram physically, and we follow them to social media and defeat them as well," Buratai said.

Attahiru said this holistic approach to counterinsurgency has taken years to learn. He believes Lafiya Dole is now on the right track. "We have been able to identify the drivers of conflict, and we are going to also develop partnerships with local allies," Attahiru said. "By targeting the drivers of this conflict the whole idea is to break the cycle of violence." □



AFTER *the* INSURGENCY

DR. HUSSEIN SOLOMON

MILITARY FORCE ALONE WON'T ELIMINATE BOKO HARAM; THE COUNTRY MUST ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS THAT LED TO THE GROUP'S CREATION.

Since the insurgency started in 2009, the extremist group Boko Haram has killed tens of thousands and forced 2.6 million people from their homes. The group is the single biggest threat to peace and security in Nigeria.

But Nigeria's military and civilian leaders agree that stopping Boko Haram will require more than just bullets and bombs.

"You can never solve any of these problems with military solutions," said Gen. Martin Luther Agwai,

Nigeria's former chief of defense staff. "It is a political issue, it is a social issue, it is an economic issue, and until these issues are addressed, the military can never give you a solution."

a broad counterterrorism strategy, it can never on its own deliver peace and prosperity. The central purpose of such armed force is to contain war within a limited area and win that war — not promote peace. Ending the violence of the extremists is its primary mission.

However, this does not end the threat posed, given the structural conditions fueling such extremism. This containment of war provides the conditions on the ground for other government departments, civil society organizations and the international community to work toward ending the structural conditions fueling violence.

Understanding the Roots of Boko Haram

The origins of Boko Haram go back to 1802-1804, when religious teacher and ethnic Fulani herder Usman dan Fodio declared his jihad to purify Islam. In the process, he established the Sokoto Caliphate. Many in the Boko Haram movement cite re-establishing this caliphate as their principal goal.

More recently, the Maitatsine uprisings of 1980 in Kano, 1982 in Kaduna and Bulumkutu, 1984 in Yola, and 1985 in Bauchi represent an effort to impose a religious ideology on a secular Nigerian state. These echo Boko Haram's attempt to force the national government in Abuja to accept its brand of Islamic Sharia across all 36 states in Nigeria.

Between 1999 and 2008, 28 religious conflicts were reported — the most prominent being the recurrent violence between Muslims and Christians in Jos.

Religion, however, does not exist in a historical vacuum. It is interconnected with issues including ethnicity, politics, economics, migration and violence. Religious differences often

have been used by politicians and other leaders to further their own goals. To understand the recurrent religious violence in northern Nigeria, we need to explore the context in which this Islamist fundamentalism thrives.



Lagos, Nigeria

Africa's men and women in uniform still need to understand the limits of force when responding to extremist groups such as al-Shabaab, Ansar al-Dine, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram. Although military force is an essential component of

Entrenched Inequality

One such structural driver is economics. It is no coincidence that northern Nigeria has been prone to radical uprisings — it happens to be the poorest part of the country. Twenty-seven percent of the population in the south live in poverty, compared with 72 percent in the north. The north's precarious economic situation has been further undermined by desert encroachment, recurrent drought and a rinderpest cattle disease pandemic.

The effects of economic globalization have worsened the north-south divide. Although large deposits of oil have benefited the south, the few industries in the north — largely textile mills — have failed to compete with cheaper Asian imports. A Nigerian-made textile wrap costs 1,500 naira (just over \$4). A similar one imported from China costs just 550 naira (about \$1.50). Under these circumstances, the number of factories in the main northern city of Kano has fallen from 350 in 1987 to 103 today. Youth unemployment has increased in the north, and it is from these vulnerable, alienated youth that Boko Haram recruits.

The growing impoverishment of the citizenry stands in sharp contrast to the growing wealth of the political elite. Since the end of military rule in 1999 up to the Goodluck Jonathan administration, Nigerian politicians have reportedly embezzled between \$4 billion and \$8 billion per year. This adds to the alienation between state and citizen, where the state is viewed as illegitimate. Under these circumstances, one can understand the resonance of the Boko Haram rhetoric when they say the Nigerian state is *taghut*, or evil.

From here it is a small step to further argue that the Western secular state has failed. Indeed, it is precisely the failure of governance to guarantee security, with attendant rising criminality, which also resulted in northern states implementing Sharia. Boko Haram's discourses for Sharia

would have had scant appeal had successive governments provided basic security to its citizens — especially those in the north.

"The sooner we deliver economic reforms and greater prosperity to all Nigerians, the sooner we can achieve more inclusive society and minimize societal divisions and grievances," said Dr. Bukola Saraki, president of Nigeria's Senate.

Defeating Boko Haram won't be enough to restore order to Nigeria. The nongovernmental organization International Crisis Group says Nigeria must return government administration to marginalized peripheries, "so as to provide crucial basic services — security, rule of law, education and health — and address factors that push individuals to join movements like Boko Haram."

Identity as a Weapon

Another structural factor is the politics of identity. Nigeria's 190 million people are divided into more than 500 ethnic groups speaking 250 to 500 languages. The population is further divided along religious lines with 50 percent being Muslim, 40 percent Christian and 10 percent adhering to various indigenous faith traditions. To compound matters further, these differences are mutually reinforcing where ethnic, regional and religious identity markers serve to heighten divisions.

Since independence, successive Nigerian governments have struggled to define a common Nigerian nationality. Indeed, one could argue that the exclusionary character of the Nigerian state is designed to accentuate, as opposed to attenuate, differences. Local and state governments are exclusionary in how they differentially confer rights on people living in an area. At the local governmental level, for example, there is a marked distinction between "natives" and "immigrants." Natives, or "indigenes," share the same



Rescue workers remove a body after a suicide attack at the University of Maiduguri, Nigeria, on July 24, 2017. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



A vendor sells newspapers that include the names of the released Nigerian Chibok schoolgirls in Abuja, Nigeria, in May 2017. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Children displaced by Boko Haram attacks attend lectures in a school in Maiduguri, Nigeria. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic characteristics and are termed “local citizens.” Immigrants, or “settlers,” have different ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics from the “locals” and are considered to be noncitizens, irrespective of how long they have lived in a particular area and the fact that they are all Nigerian citizens.

The consequence of the exclusionary nature of the Nigerian state is clearly seen in narratives among ordinary Nigerians when explaining the violence. Religion, ethnic and regional identities all play a part. While the popular media has portrayed the conflict as a Muslim-versus-Christian issue, there is another ethnic dimension to the conflict: a case of reinforcing fault lines. The Islamist Boko Haram may be targeting Christians living in the north; however, the perception among the Igbo is that the Hausa Fulani and Kanuri Boko Haram are targeting the Igbo ethnic group — that this is systematic ethnic cleansing.

In response to Boko Haram targeting Christians in the north, the Igbo group, Ogbunigwe Ndigbo, gave all northern Muslims living in the south two weeks to leave or face death. In Lokpanta, the Muslim Hausa community, which had been living among the Igbo for decades, took the warning to heart and left the area by the truckload.

This perception is given added credence by Corinne Dufka, a senior West Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch. After extensive research on the victims of Boko Haram violence, Dufka believes that Boko Haram is killing people in northern Nigeria based on their religion and ethnicity.

The conclusion is inescapable: No military-centered response will bring about sustainable peace in northern Nigeria unless the underlying structural variables — economics, governance and identity — also are addressed. In a similar vein, the countering violent extremism narrative will not find traction unless issues of poverty, corruption and virulent ethnic nationalism are resolved. □



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Nigeria's Air Force Defends the Region

AIR POWER IS A CRITICAL TOOL IN STOPPING BOKO HARAM

ADF STAFF



Nigerian pilots fly in formation during the Air Force's 53rd anniversary celebration in April 2017. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On Friday, September 1, 2017, Boko Haram extremists took a break from their warfare to observe a holiday. Hundreds of the fighters gathered under trees in the Sambisa Forest in Borno State, northeast Nigeria.

Nigerian surveillance spotted them.

The Nigerian Air Force (NAF) dispatched fighter jets.

An Alpha Jet began the attack with bombs, “neutralizing” hundreds of the fighters, said a report published in Nigeria’s *Daily Post*. A second jet followed with a bomb attack, and a third fighter used rockets to strafe fleeing insurgents. “After the attacks, a few Boko Haram survivors were seen scampering from the location,” the newspaper reported. Only days before the raid, the chief of the air staff, Air Marshal Sadique Abubakar, told troops at the NAF base in Yola that global experience “has shown that air power is critical to the defeat of asymmetric warfare such as the Boko Haram insurgency.”

“All hands must therefore be on deck to ensure the effective projection of air power to complete the defeat of the Boko Haram challenge,” he said.

Nigeria’s Air Force has its hands full. Boko Haram began in northern Nigeria, but it also has roamed parts of

neighboring Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Of the countries in the region, Nigeria is, by far, the most formidable air power.

According to globalfirepower.com, Nigeria’s Air Force is the largest in the region. Its air fleet is about the size of the combined fleets of neighboring Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Nigeria’s total fleet is estimated to be about 110 aircraft, including fighters, transport planes, helicopters and trainers. Such figures are seldom exact since aircraft go in and out of service for extended periods or are even retired without it being noted.

Obsolete or retired aircraft are indicative of the struggle to maintain air fleets across the continent. Abubakar has stressed that the NAF is improving aircraft and equipment maintenance, allowing it to fly more than 9,000 hours in 2015 and 2016 in counterinsurgency operations.



Nigerian Air Force officers display weapons and ammunition during the 53rd anniversary celebration of the service in April 2017. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Air Marshal Sadique Abubakar marks the 53rd anniversary of the Nigerian Air Force in Makurdi in April 2017. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



A Nigerian officer pilots an aircraft used to fight maritime crime. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

MAKING A BETTER AIR FORCE

According to the news portal defenceWeb, Nigeria began to modernize its Air Force in 1999, when 16 years of military rule gave way to a new democratic government. Nigerian officials began examining Air Force capabilities and started programs to refurbish and replace old equipment. Better maintenance has been re-emphasized in recent years. Since 2016, the NAF appears to have adopted a “make the best of what we have” philosophy, keeping costs down and buying smaller attack planes that are more adaptable to asymmetric conflicts. And they have had some successes in bringing retired equipment back into service.

- In 2016, the Air Force reconfigured two Alpha Jets in its inventory that had been acquired without weapons capability. The two jets were among four bought from the United States in 2015. The four jets were purchased specifically to combat Boko Haram. Until the weaponry fitting, the jets had been limited to pilot training. The Air Force had been looking to get the jets reconfigured overseas, but the manufacturer had long since closed down the production line. Eventually, Nigerian engineers proposed ways to do the work in Nigeria. Bright Mountain Media says the adaptations cost about

\$13,000. Some reports listed a cost as low as \$2,000. “Given typical military equipment costs, this stands as a remarkable achievement,” Bright Mountain reported. “Foreign companies had requested up to \$30,000 just to assess the cost of doing the refit.”

- In December 2016, the Air Force began taking delivery of four Pakistan-made Kamra Super Mushshak prop planes to be used as trainers. Abubakar said the planes had been donated, according to Jane’s Information Group. Pakistani instructors and maintenance workers helped integrate the planes into the Nigerian fleet as Nigerian mechanics and maintenance personnel trained in Pakistan. Air Force personnel said they eventually hoped to have 10 of the training planes. Abubakar said that by the end of the first quarter of 2017, the NAF would have 56 new pilots trained. Nigeria said it planned to train all new pilots in the Super Mushshaks and transition them to jets or multiengine planes for advanced, specialized training. The NAF said in April 2016 that the Super Mushshaks would replace their older, Austrian-made trainers that were no longer considered suitable because of their inability to perform aerobatics.

Aging Alpha Jets Get Second Life Against Boko Haram

ADF STAFF

In the 1990s, Nigeria became the key player in a West African mission to restore order to war-torn Liberia. Two rebel factions known as the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) opposed the corrupt government of Samuel Doe, and with money from the sale of diamonds, they attacked the Liberian capital of Monrovia. Using child soldiers, they terrorized the capital in a frenzy of rape and murder.

A coalition of West African countries formed a 3,000-person peacekeeping force called the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to stop the rebels. Before ECOMOG could restore order, it first had to subdue the rebels by force. In the final months of 1990, four Nigerian Alpha Jets repeatedly hit rebel gun placements, supply convoys and headquarters.

The world took notice of Nigeria's use of the scrappy little Alpha fighter jets. *Time* magazine reported: "The firepower of Nigerian Air Force fighter aircraft has finally dealt an incalculable blow to the war effort of the NPFL leader."

In 1992, Nigeria loaned six Alpha Jets to ECOMOG to use in its airstrikes, supply line bombings and night raids. The ECOMOG operation flew a total of 3,000 combat missions. None of the six planes was lost. Nigeria continues to make good use of its aging Alpha Jets. They are hardly state-of-the-art fighters — their design dates to 1973. But they are fast and handle well,

to the point that pilots who have trained in them complain that they were unprepared for the greater difficulty of flying larger jets.

Cameroon also is using Alpha Jets in its battles with Boko Haram. In December 2014, Boko Haram fighters had taken over a military base in Assighasia, Cameroon. The Cameroon Air Force responded with Alpha Jet airstrikes that killed 14 insurgents. As of 2017, Cameroon was still using at least four Alpha Jets of the original 27 it purchased. Nigeria's Alpha Jets were largely abandoned for years, until the Air Force began returning them to service in 2013 to fight Boko Haram. Of the original 24, an estimated 13 were returned to service.

An incident in June 2016 shows how effective they can be. The Multinational Joint Task Force had recently chased Boko Haram fighters out of camps in the Sambisa Forest. Insurgents armed seven trucks — two with heavy machine guns — and waited to ambush opposing forces near Daira Noro in Borno State. As the Boko Haram fighters prepared their attack, an unarmed civilian plane flew over — and radioed the insurgents' position to a pilot in a nearby Alpha Jet. As Bright Mountain Media reported, "The Alpha Jet unleashed a barrage of rockets on the concealed ambush, followed by 250-pound bombs and strafing runs."

All of the trucks were destroyed. Nigerian troops arrived and chased off the survivors. The troops found 15 bodies and two abandoned rocket-propelled grenades.

A Cameroonian Air Force Alpha Jet parks after a surveillance flight in the fight against Boko Haram.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES





A Nigerian Airman labels a bomb next to a fighter jet. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



A security officer guards a newly acquired attack helicopter in Makurdi, Nigeria. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

- In early 2017, the Air Force began refurbishing old, broken firetrucks at its bases all over the country. As of October 2017, it had repaired and restored 17 of 24 firetrucks. Some of the trucks had been parked for more than 20 years and identified as “beyond economic repairs.” Local companies did the work using mostly locally sourced parts and materials.
- In February 2017, the Air Force announced that it was getting three Embraer Super Tucano turboprop planes from the Brazilian Air Force. The small, highly maneuverable planes are particularly suited for counterinsurgency operations and precision guided-munitions runs. In August 2017, the United States approved the \$593 million sale of 12 additional Super Tucanos to Nigeria.
- In April 2017, the Air Force commissioned two Mil Mi-35M attack helicopters to boost counterinsurgency efforts, Jane’s reported. The Air Force had ordered 12 of the Russian aircraft, which can be modified for attacks, ground assaults on armored targets, medical evacuation and transport. Abubakar said they would be used against Boko Haram. The Air Force commissioned the two helicopters during an event marking the service’s 53rd anniversary. During the observance, the Air Force also displayed its locally designed and developed Gulma drone, which has a wingspan of about 3 meters. Officials have said that the total cost of designing the drones and training 15 drone pilots was about \$3.5 million. In 2006, Nigeria purchased drones made in Israel, but those were eventually grounded because of a lack of spare parts and an inability to maintain them properly.
- In July 2017, the Air Force announced that it had reactivated two grounded unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). The drones were used

for training UAV pilots and operators. Based at the Kaduna flying school, the two craft were grounded earlier in the year because of a lack of spare parts. The NAF had attempted to get training spots for its UAV operators in other countries but decided to develop a “domestic solution,” Jane’s reported. Nine officers were trained in Nigeria in UAV operations through the Nigerian Air Force Research and Development Centre.

- In July 2017, the Air Force announced it was expanding its training to meet the demands of its expanded mission and air fleet. As reported by Jane’s, part of the expansion was the result of reactivating some of its aircraft.

STAMPING OUT BOKO HARAM

As of the end of 2017, Boko Haram was faltering and had splintered into two groups. Air Marshal Abubakar said in a college lecture in September 2017 that the Nigerian Air Force had wiped out some of Boko Haram’s top leaders and several of the terrorist group’s logistics bases.

“Nigerian Air Force airstrikes in the North East have devastated and coerced the insurgents by limiting their freedom of action to operate openly and en masse, as was the case before,” he said. “Equally, these punitive strikes have eradicated the insurgents’ ‘front-line’ leadership and logistics bases, thereby reducing their operational capability.”

He added that “equipping and sustaining a balanced air force” is one of the greatest challenges facing Nigeria. “Given the current precarious situation Nigeria operates in and the rampant cases of conflicts, the Armed Forces must prepare for the conduct of war and secure military victories until peace is restored politically,” he said. “Indeed, the warfighting mission of an armed force will determine how it is organized, equipped and trained.” □

A Brief History of the Nigerian Air Force

- 1960 • October — Nigeria becomes independent of the United Kingdom.
- 1962 • February — The country begins discussing the need for an air force. Ten cadets are dispatched to train with the Ethiopian Air Force.
- 1963 • February — Sixteen cadets are sent to train with the Royal Canadian Air Force, and six others are sent to the Indian Air Force. Germany opens a short-lived air base in 1966.
- 1964 • April — The National Assembly passes the Air Force Act, formally creating the Nigerian Air Force (NAF). It begins as a transport unit, like most African air forces.
- 1966 • January — The government is overthrown in a military coup, followed by a counter coup.
- 1967 • July — Civil war breaks out, and Nigeria needs to have true combat aircraft. The country acquires MiG-15 and MiG-17 fighter jets to help end the war in 1970.
- 1970 • After the civil war, the Air Force is restructured and modeled after the air forces of the United Kingdom and the United States.
- 1971 • July — The Institute for Strategic Studies estimates that Nigeria has 7,000 Air Force personnel and an air fleet of 66 planes and helicopters. In the ensuing decade, the Air Force acquires more aircraft, including six of the versatile C-130 cargo planes.
- 1986 • January — Nigeria begins buying 24 armed Aero L-39 armed jet trainers, the most commonly used jet trainers in the world.
- 1989 • The NAF unveils its first locally built trainer aircraft, dubbed the Air Beetle. The trainer is built from a kit. The Air Force orders 60 of the kits.
- 1999 • May — A new democratic government ends 16 years of military rule. Moving into the current era, Nigeria begins revitalizing its Air Force, reactivating some aircraft and upgrading its fleet.
- 2002 • The extremist group Boko Haram forms.
- 2009 • July — The leader of Boko Haram is killed, triggering a wave of violence that has proven to be the modern Nigerian Air Force's greatest challenge.



Nigerian fighter jets display their firepower in April 2017 during an Air Force anniversary celebration near Makurdi. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



FROM MESSAGES *to* MAYHEM

*A Study of Boko Haram's
Public Communications Can
Offer Hints About Its Strategy*

ADF STAFF

ADF ILLUSTRATION

In July 2011, the Nigerian government unveiled plans to make telecommunications companies dedicate toll-free phone lines so civilians could report Boko Haram activity. Months later, insurgent spokesman Abu Qaqa threatened to attack service providers and Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC) offices.

"We have realized that the mobile phone operators and the NCC have been assisting security agencies in tracking and arresting our members by bugging their lines and enabling the security agents to locate the position of our members," Qaqa announced, according to a 2013 article by Freedom Onuoha on the E-International Relations website.

Eight months later, Boko Haram made good on Qaqa's threat. The militant group launched a two-day attack on telecommunications towers belonging to several providers in five cities: Bauchi, Gombe, Kano, Maiduguri and Potiskum. Qaqa announced that Boko Haram launched the tower attacks "as a result of the assistance they offer security agents." Of the 530 telecommunications base stations damaged in Nigeria in 2012, Boko Haram was responsible for 150.

The attack on telecommunications providers illustrates an important aspect of Boko Haram messaging. The group often has used its public messaging as a harbinger of things to come. Although it might sound foolish to telegraph likely attack targets, Institute for Security Studies (ISS) researcher Omar S. Mahmood told *ADF* the gambit could help Boko Haram achieve two important goals. First, it can help gain a concession through intimidation, such as the release of detainees.

"The other is I think it's a pretty powerful message if Boko Haram comes out and says, 'I'm going to attack X because of this,' and then they go out and they do it," Mahmood said. "It just serves to make their next warning even more intimidating and effective."

MESSAGES PORTEND ATTACKS

Mahmood, in his March 2017 paper for the ISS titled "More than propaganda: A review of Boko Haram's public messages," showed that a significant number of Boko Haram messages between 2010 and 2016 issued warnings and threatened violence. In fact, warnings and threats constitute the second-most-common theme of the group's messaging out of the 145 messages studied.

"Given the proliferation of warnings in Boko Haram messaging, especially during [leader Abubakar] Shekau's extended rants in which he accuses essentially

all opposed to him, it can be difficult to discern between a legitimate threat and bluster," Mahmood wrote. "But a careful reading of the situation may determine what Boko Haram's next target could be, which is more likely to result in action when linked to a specific and articulated grievance."

Boko Haram demonstrated this tendency further in its threat against schools. In January 2012, Shekau complained publicly about alleged mistreatment of Islamic schools and students, and he threatened to launch attacks.



Boko Haram damaged this communication tower in Maiduguri, Nigeria, in 2012. Insurgents damaged 150 such towers that year.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Again, Boko Haram followed through. From January to early March 2012, militants destroyed at least a dozen schools in the Maiduguri region of Borno State. About February 20, 2012, the first three schools were set ablaze. Six days later, Boko Haram said the attacks were in retaliation for state raids on Islamic schools, according to Human Rights Watch. From February 26 to 29, militants burned at least four schools, and on March 1 torched another five.

Ties between messaging and attacks also can be seen in Boko Haram's assault on Nigerian media and the nation's oil industry. As Qaqa complained that the media misrepresented Boko Haram, insurgents bombed *This Day* newspaper offices in Abuja and Kaduna in April 2012. Boko Haram's anger at *This Day* stemmed from a 10-year-old column on the Miss World pageant



Boko Haram burned Maiduguri Experimental School, a private nursery, primary and secondary school, in May 2012.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

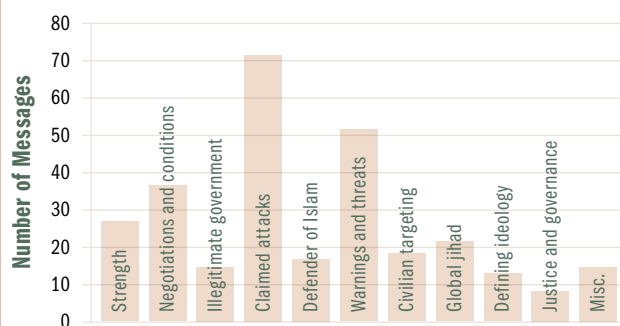
“A careful reading of the situation may determine what Boko Haram’s next target could be, which is more likely to result in action when linked to a specific and articulated grievance.”

— Omar S. Mahmood

published in the paper, which some Muslims found to be blasphemous. Peaceful protests already had taken place in the runup to the pageant, but the column sparked violent clashes between Christians and Muslims that resulted in about 250 deaths, according to Human Rights Watch.

The 2002 pageant, originally scheduled to be held in Nigeria, eventually was moved to London, but Boko Haram’s anger culminated in the attack years later. A month after the *This Day* attack, Boko Haram issued an 18-minute video that sorted Nigerian media into three groups based on its perception of their transgressions. *This Day* stood alone in the first tier because of the Miss World incident and other perceived offenses. The second tier included several newspapers and a radio station. These outlets would be attacked soon, the narrator stated. The third category included media organizations that faced attack if they were not careful, listing more newspapers, an international radio service and a website.

Major themes in Boko Haram messaging



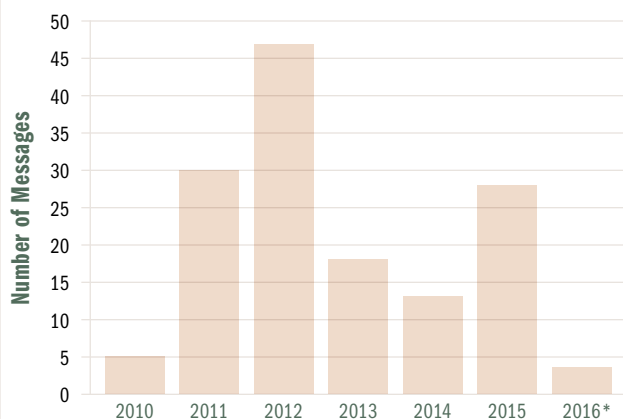
Source: “More than propaganda: A review of Boko Haram’s public messages”

In June 2014, a suicide bomber detonated a bomb outside a Lagos oil refinery. Mahmood wrote that the decision to attack the refinery so far from Boko Haram’s home base likely was an assault on government wealth sources rather than evidence of a grievance with the oil industry. Similar attacks did not follow, and oil interest messaging rarely has been repeated. “Rather than emerging out of nowhere, the assault was foreshadowed in Boko Haram messages in February, March and May that year [2014], indicating its commitment and ability to follow through even on pledges considered to be unrealistic at the time,” Mahmood wrote.

HOSTAGES AND PRISONERS

Boko Haram’s highest-profile action is the kidnapping of 276 Chibok schoolgirls in 2014. On April 14, militants attacked a boarding school in Chibok, Borno State, in the middle of the night. Insurgents raided

Boko Haram messaging, by year



Source: "More than propaganda: A review of Boko Haram's public messages"

* through August

dormitories, loaded girls into trucks and drove away. Some girls jumped into bushes as trucks rushed away, leaving 219 children held captive. The atrocity drew worldwide condemnation and parallels a long-standing grievance of Boko Haram: the desire for the release of incarcerated members.

Negotiations and conditions comprise the third-most-frequent theme appearing in messages Mahmood studied. "Specifically, the demand for all incarcerated Boko Haram members to be set free has been a recurrent refrain in messaging," he wrote.

In the rampup to the Chibok abductions, Shekau referenced the wives and children of insurgent detainees no less than seven times in 2012 and 2013, and accused federal officials of kidnapping insurgents' family members. In 2012, spokesman Qaqa stated: "We would soon start kidnapping the wives and children of all the people that have had hands in the arrest of our wives and children."

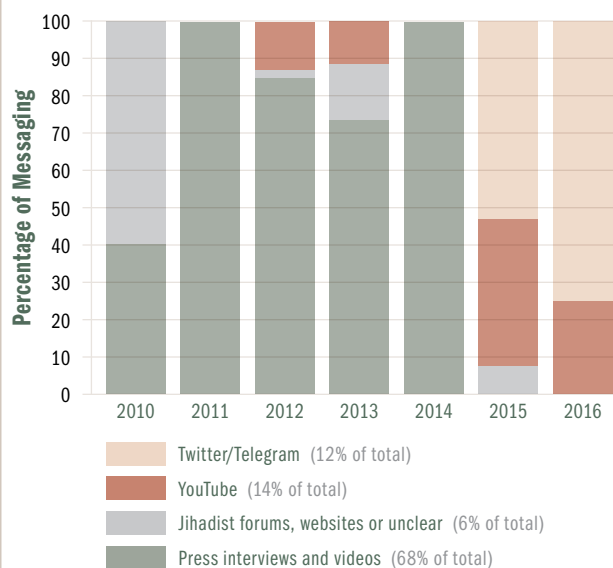
In October 2016, after months of negotiations, Boko Haram released 21 of the Chibok girls in exchange for a monetary ransom, *Daily Trust* reported. In May 2017, insurgents swapped another 82 of the girls for five militant leaders.

EXPANDING VIOLENCE, JOINING ISIS

Boko Haram grew as a local insurgency from 2009 to 2012. In 2013, a willingness to expand into regional operations emerged with the kidnapping of a French family in Cameroon, the insurgent group's first foray across the border of Nigeria's neighbor. The kidnapping, the group said, was a response to the arrest of Boko Haram members in Cameroon. From there, operations increased in Cameroon in 2014, and by early 2015, Shekau was openly taunting the presidents of Chad and Niger as well.

"This coincided with the first violent Boko Haram operations in both countries in February 2015, again demonstrating the close convergence between

Boko Haram messaging, by dissemination and year



Source: "More than propaganda: A review of Boko Haram's public messages"

messaging and group action, and confirming the extension of its struggle to the Lake Chad region," Mahmood wrote.

It was about this time that the insurgent group pledged its allegiance to ISIS. A new Arabic-language Twitter account claiming to be the official outlet for a new Boko Haram media group launched, called Al-Urwah al-Wuthqa, the BBC reported.

The ISIS alignment was the beginning of big changes in messaging for Boko Haram. Until then, messaging was closely associated with what the group was going through or accomplishing. Ernest Ogbzor, a Nigerian doctoral student at George Mason University in the United States, said his research points to three distinct phases of Boko Haram messaging, culminating with the ISIS alignment.

The first phase, roughly from 2009 to 2012, focused on grievances, recruitment and revenge. In 2009, Nigerian forces killed founder Mohammed Yusuf, destroyed mosques and disrupted a micro-credit lending scheme. "Now the group was left with nothing," Ogbzor said, adding that messaging sought to parlay these grievances into popular support.

Boko Haram's most powerful period was from 2013 to 2015, when it was capturing and holding territory, and dealing setbacks to military forces. Messages at this time focused on praise for territorial and military achievements.

By late 2015 and through 2017, Nigerian and regional military assaults began to take their toll on Boko Haram. "So instead of praising itself, the message changed to seeking relevance," Ogbzor said. "This is when Boko Haram pledged allegiance to Islamic State."



GROUP, MESSAGING SPLIT

In August 2016, Boko Haram split into two factions: One is led by pugnacious spokesman Shekau; the other by Abu Musab al-Barnawi, ISIS' choice for leader. Although Shekau pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2015, the group soon grew tired of his management of the war against regional forces and his propensity for targeting civilians, Mahmood said. The al-Barnawi faction broke off, and with this change came differences in messaging.

Shekau had been featured prominently in Boko Haram messages. Soon after pledging allegiance to ISIS, that ended. Al-Barnawi's faction started releasing themed batches of photos through social media that highlight nonmilitary aspects of the group's struggle, such as governance, justice and services that Boko Haram can provide as part of ISIS.

The split also has left al-Barnawi's ISIS-aligned faction the clear winner in terms of potential longevity and lethality, Mahmood said. Shekau's wing is just trying to survive, but it still uses ISIS logos in messages.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Mahmood said more research is needed to see how Boko Haram messaging resonates with local populations. It's possible, he said, that Boko Haram messaging might not be particularly effective locally. If so, then countermessaging efforts may not work either. However, he writes: "Boko Haram messaging provides a window into a group that otherwise remains largely enigmatic and obscure. ... Messaging can thus expose

important insights beyond simply serving as a propaganda tool, and thus should be closely monitored." He suggests that observers:

- Continue researching the effects of Boko Haram messaging on local populations, focusing on recruitment. Doing so will lead to more effective programs to reduce this influence.
- Analyze Boko Haram messages to see changes in group divisions or the identification of new targets.
- Continue frustrating Boko Haram messaging by detaining media operatives or removing social media posts. Such tactics can reduce messaging or discontinue certain practices, such as social media use.
- Reduce penalties and stigmatization for those who watch Boko Haram messages to keep from enhancing its appeal. Long-winded rants may actually present the group as negative and volatile.
- Balance factual press coverage of Boko Haram messages with the need to limit its outreach. Careful reporting guidelines can keep the media from becoming a propaganda tool.

"The messaging says a lot about their strategy," Mahmood said. "It goes hand in hand, so it's important to really look at these aspects because they can tell you a lot about the movement." □



Somalia's Lost Tapes Revive Musical Memories

BBC NEWS AT [BBC.CO.UK/NEWS](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news)

Somalia of the early 1970s was a country with style. In Mogadishu, men wore afros and flared pants, while women sported stylish dresses with their heads uncovered. The city's architecture was proof of its centuries of cross-cultural trade.

Now Somalis around the world can relive these rich memories of Mogadishu through an archive of more than 10,000 tapes uncovered in 2016 by Vik Sohonie in Hargeisa, capital of the self-declared republic of Somaliland. The rich and varied recordings feature funk, rock, jazz and Bollywood influences.

The tapes harken back to a time of relative economic and political stability in Somalia.

Although the country was under military rule, the arts, particularly music, flourished and the period became known as the Golden Age. Mogadishu was home to popular hotels Al-Uruba and Jazeera, where young fans would flock to the dance floor to hear groups such as Iftiin and Dur Dur perform.

Somalia's music industry was effectively nationalized under authoritarian leader Gen. Siad Barre, who brought most industries under state control in hopes of ridding the country of clan-based politics. During this period, record companies could not release music to the market.

The National Theatre was a revered forum where music groups produced remarkable music, but the performers became attractive propaganda tools for Barre's message.

Theater companies, known as "bands," expressed nationalism in their lyrics and style.

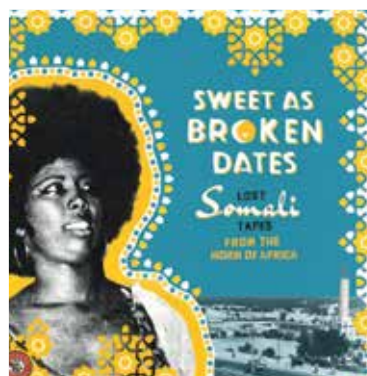
"When I look back, I sometimes break into tears," said celebrated singer Maryan Mursal. "I'm welling up right now as I picture what Mogadishu was like in the '70s."

Mursal, like many other performers in bands such as Waaberi, Shareero and Dur Dur, fled Somalia after decades of war and now lives in the diaspora.

In Mogadishu's prominent nightclubs, female artists attracted more followers and drew more crowds than their male counterparts. Khadra Daahir, a star singer in the 1970s, said that audiences initially resisted female singers, calling them a "disgrace." But, she said, society's perception of women transformed within a decade.

"It was a miraculous era," she said. "During the '70s, people became open-minded; they got used to women singing, dancing and performing. They realized it's part of Somali culture, and people started to admire us."

Somali singers perform at the National Theatre in the capital, Mogadishu. REUTERS



OSTINATO RECORDS

Africa to Bid for 2025 World Championships

BBC NEWS AT BBC.CO.UK/NEWS

The president of African athletics says the continent will bid to host the 2025 World Championships. Africa has never staged the biennial track and field event, which started in 1983, despite being home to many world champions.

Confederation of African Athletics President Hamad Kalkaba Malboun said he believes a bid is set to come from one of six African nations. “We are talking with Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco — those countries have the facilities,” said Malboun of Cameroon. “People said that Africa could not host the World Cup in football, but we did it very successfully.”

Morocco is the only African country to have staged a leg of the Diamond League, the annual athletics series that runs from May to September around the world. The Moroccan city of Casablanca also was the last in Africa to try to stage the World Championships, having bid unsuccessfully for the 2011 event.

Malboun pointed to the March 2017 World Cross Country Championships in Uganda and the July 2017 track and field World U18 Championships in Kenya as reasons to be hopeful.

With the 2019 and 2021 events having been awarded to Qatar and the United States, respectively, the next available championship to bid for is 2023. Malboun, who has been in talks with political leaders, including Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, believes the date is too early for the continent.

He said Africa has never previously held the competition because the track and field events were less popular than football and also “because we are facing many other social problems — health, education, building roads or railways — political leaders are sometimes afraid of spending a lot of money on hosting an event.”

“But I think many now realize that [staging the championships] could put the nation on the world map in terms of publicity and promote tourism, so there is a benefit from hosting the event,” Malboun added. “This was not the case in the past.”

A decision on who will host the 2025 finals will be made in 2020.



Kenyan runners lead the pack in the men's 1500-meter final in the 2017 World Championships in Athletics in London. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Nigerian Artist Wins

PRESTIGIOUS PRIZE

BRAND SOUTH AFRICA

Nigerian artist Peju Alatise won the South African 2017 FNB Art Prize, one of the most coveted art awards on the continent.

Artist Peju Alatise with one of her sculptures titled *Flying Girls*

PEJU ALATISE

Her work focuses on the experiences of contemporary African women. Alatise's early paintings, later sculptures and current installations were showcased in September 2017 at the annual First National Bank Joburg Art Fair.

The fair, one of South Africa's leading art events, featured more than 60 exhibitions across five categories, including traditional and modern art. Artists and cultural organizations from 11 countries participated.

Born in 1975 in Lagos, Nigeria, Alatise studied architecture before being inspired by the jarring visual art of fellow Nigerian artist David Dale. She later trained with Dale and worked with traditional artisans around Africa, learning to incorporate materials such as beads, cloth and natural resins into her ambitious works.

Alatise has exhibited around the world, including at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art in the United States and the Venice Biennale in Italy, one of the world's longest-running and most respected art events. Her earlier paintings and more recent multimedia pieces also are in a number of private collections and permanent exhibits around the world.

The Biennale, Alatise said, is “the highest level of exhibiting an artist can be honored with.” She told CNN, “It is the Olympics of the arts.” The particular work exhibited in Venice, titled *Flying Girls*, is an eight-sculpture installation of winged girls, representing “a strong societal narrative on the realities faced by women in Africa.”



U.N. MOVES TO REFORM PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A Cameroonian peacekeeper guards women fleeing the village of Zike as they arrive at the village of Bambara, Central African Republic.

REUTERS

The United Nations Security Council has backed reforms to reduce inefficiencies, corruption and abuse in far-flung peacekeeping operations. Although many peacekeeping missions have been hailed as successful — Sierra Leone most recently — others have been criticized for sexual abuse violations and corruption, especially in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

There are 16 U.N. peacekeeping operations underway, with more than 100,000 personnel, at an annual cost of nearly \$8 billion. The U.N. has said that, adjusted for inflation, the cost to member states has decreased by 17 percent in the past decade. “Peacekeeping remains a highly cost-effective instrument,” U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the council. Still, he outlined reform plans with four goals in mind.

The first, he said, is ensuring that “peace operations are deployed in support of active diplomatic efforts, not as a substitute.” To that end, Guterres has changed the structure of the U.N. Secretariat to consolidate the management of peacekeeping operations and large political missions.

The second challenge is ensuring that peacekeepers are properly equipped. Guterres said there are critical gaps in technology, transportation, intelligence and other capabilities. The Security Council resolution called on member states to fulfill pledges to provide those capabilities and asked Guterres to provide a report within 90 days on a mechanism to fill the gaps.

The third goal is to stamp out corruption and abuses, particularly sex abuse scandals, that have tarnished the reputation of U.N. peacekeeping.

Guterres said he has taken “strong steps” to fight the problem, which he says has haunted him. He pointed to the appointment of a victims’ rights advocate and a requirement that member states certify before deployment that none of their personnel has a history of misconduct.

The Security Council was divided over a fourth goal, that of strengthening partnerships with regional entities, especially the African Union, which has taken the helm of various peacekeeping operations. Council members disagreed on whether to help finance AU operations on a case-by-case basis with U.N. contributions. In the end, the Security Council resolved to consider steps toward establishing a mechanism through which AU operations could be partly financed by the U.N.



French-Led Exercise Seeks Security in GULF of GUINEA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

The French Navy conducted a series of 10-day regional exercises named African NEMO (Navy's Exercise for Maritime Operations) from the Dixmude aircraft carrier.

The goal is to prepare more than 20 West African countries to step up their battle against maritime crime.

"We went from tactical training of teams boarding the boats to lifesaving at sea, to how to make the centers put into place by the Yaounde process work," said Dixmude Capt. Jean Porcher.

The Yaounde process was adopted in 2013 as a code of conduct by West and Central African nations to share intelligence and coordinate intervention against illegal fishing, drug trafficking and piracy on Africa's west coast, but progress has been slow.

Embarking from Togo on September 10, 2017, the Dixmude, a 199-meter warship, has carried out six exercises with the navies of Gulf of Guinea nations, aimed at

reinforcing the sovereignty of national waters and protecting a vital food source.

African coastal states lose about \$1.3 billion per year to illegal and unreported fishing, according to the European Union.

"Fish don't know how to read maps, they don't recognize borders, and neither do pirates," Adm. Christophe Prazuck, chief of the French Navy, said at the opening of a conference in Dakar, Senegal.

"Around 90 percent of world trade is done by sea," Prazuck said. "In the Gulf of Guinea, there are 2,000 boats, and their security is fundamental for prosperity."

Since 2013, maritime cooperation has been a mixed picture, said Senegalese Rear Adm. Momar Diagne. Although one regional center agreed upon in the Yaounde process is operational in Pointe-Noire, Republic of the Congo, another in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, has yet to open.

The Ghanaian Naval Ship Blika, foreground, and the French Navy's Dixmude aircraft carrier maneuver in the Gulf of Guinea during the French-led exercise African NEMO.

FRENCH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

NIGERIAN LAWYER HONORED *for* Mediation

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Nigerian lawyer who helped secure the release of more than 100 schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram in Chibok was awarded one of the United Nations' top prizes.

Zannah Mustapha was given the annual Nansen Refugee Award for his "crucial mediating" role and his work helping children affected by the long-running conflict. Mustapha,

58, said the award was unexpected but he was "exceedingly happy" to have been chosen. "I look forward to being a worthy ambassador for such a noble award," he said in an interview in the capital, Abuja.

Mustapha set up the Future Prowess Islamic Foundation School in 2007, which has since proved to be a lifeline for children in conflict-riven and impoverished northeast Nigeria. The primary school has grown from having just 36 children and a single classroom to 540 pupils — more than half of them girls — with four times as many on the waiting list. In 2016, a second school was opened near the first in the Borno State capital, Maiduguri, providing free education to 88 students displaced from their homes by violence.

Students include the children of Boko Haram fighters and Nigerian Soldiers. "This is the place where every child matters, no matter what their religion, background or culture. Our aim is to make positive changes in their lives," he told UNHCR, the U.N. refugee agency.

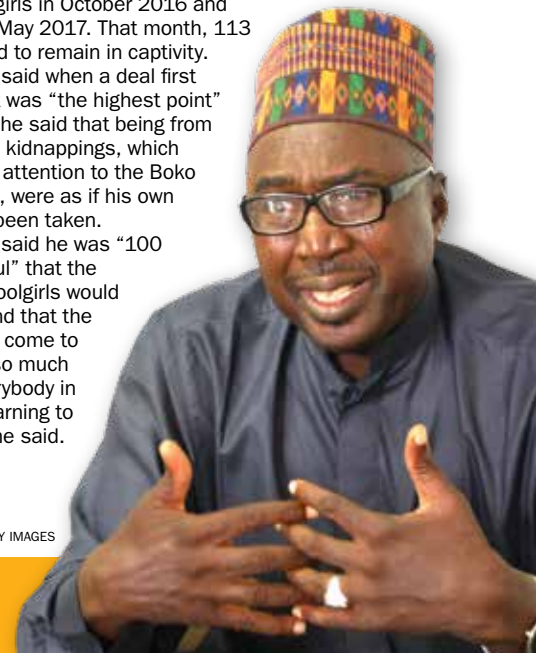
Mustapha is a well-known figure in northeast Nigeria, having previously represented the family of Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of Boko Haram who died in police custody in 2009. The lawyer has been involved in peace talks with the group, whose insurgency has left at least 20,000 dead and displaced more than 2.6 million in the past eight years.

It was in April 2014 that Boko Haram abducted 276 girls from their boarding school in Chibok. Several escaped or were rescued, and negotiations later led to the release of 21 girls in October 2016 and another 82 in May 2017. That month, 113 were estimated to remain in captivity.

Mustapha said when a deal first was reached it was "the highest point" in his life, and he said that being from the region, the kidnappings, which brought global attention to the Boko Haram conflict, were as if his own daughter had been taken.

Mustapha said he was "100 percent hopeful" that the remaining schoolgirls would be released and that the insurgency will come to an end. After so much violence, "everybody in my state is yearning to have peace," he said.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES





Sahel Countries Unite AGAINST TERROR

REUTERS

Five countries in the Sahel

are setting up a security bloc to crack down on trafficking, terror and other cross-border crimes. The force assembled by the G5 Sahel bloc — Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger — is expected to comprise about 5,000 troops. “We bring this combat against terrorism not only to protect our own people and countries but for the whole world,” Niger’s President Mahamadou

Issoufou said at a news conference in the capital, Niamey.

The idea of the G5 force was conceived in 2015 and was expected to be operational by the end of 2017.

Above: A Malian Armed Forces Soldier patrols near Tin Hama. REUTERS

In October, the U.S. pledged to contribute \$60 million to support the G5 effort.

Islamist groups, some with links to al-Qaida, seized Mali’s northern desert in 2012. French and African forces scattered them the next year, but they still carry out attacks on peacekeepers, Soldiers and civilians.

Issoufou said a multinational force in the Lake Chad region, including Soldiers from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, had some success against Boko Haram militants, but that this was largely financed by Africa’s biggest economy, Nigeria. No country in the G5 had sufficient resources.

“It is important that the international community takes note of this and gets together to give us resources to ensure our mission can be accomplished,” he said.

Issoufou and Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita appealed for financial, logistical and training support from Western partners.

“For terrorism knows no border,” Issoufou said. “It will go to Europe, it will go to the United States. The world has to be mobilized.”

Analysts see the G5 force as the basis of an eventual exit strategy for about 4,000 French troops deployed to the region on counterinsurgency missions, mostly in Mali.

Issoufou said the force would be divided into three deployments across the Sahel region: an eastern one consisting of Chadian and Nigerien forces; a central one with forces from Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso; and a Western one with troops from Mali and Mauritania.



From left: Presidents Roch Marc Christian Kabore, Burkina Faso; Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, Mauritania; Emmanuel Macron, France; Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Mali; Idriss Deby, Chad; and Mahamadou Issoufou, Niger; meet at the G5 Sahel Summit in Bamako, Mali, in July 2017. REUTERS



ALGERIA *Declares Itself* MINE-FREE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Algeria announced that it has destroyed the last of its stock of anti-personnel mines, 10 months after fully demining the entire country.

A total of 5,970 mines were destroyed at a ceremony in Djelfa in southeast Algeria.

Algeria ratified the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel mines in 2000 and said it completed the demining of its territory in December 2016, clearing 9 million land mines.

The scourge claimed 7,300 civilian lives in the North African country, mostly during the 1954-1962 war of independence, according to Deputy Defense Minister Ahmed Gaid Salah.

Algerian demining specialists cleared mines from 1963 to 1988 and restarted the land mine clearance program in 2004 to finish the job.

"Over 120 million square meters of land were cleared and released for normal use," said Col. Ahcène Gherabi, director of Algeria's National Demining Programme. "Thanks to humanitarian demining activities carried out entirely with Algeria's own resources, Algerians can once again feel safe when moving in such areas and using their land."



PUNTLAND FORCES INTERCEPT WEAPONS

REUTERS

Maritime police from Somalia's semiautonomous region of Puntland seized a boat loaded with weapons from Yemen.

Puntland authorities displayed dozens of anti-aircraft guns, machine guns, AK-47 rifles and boxes of ammunition from the boat apprehended off the Horn of Africa.

European maritime forces patrolling sea lanes off Somalia tracked the small vessel, known as Al Faruq, from Yemen, said Abdirahman Mohamud Hassan, director general of Puntland maritime police force.

He said they had seized other boatloads of weapons destined for Islamic State and al-Shabaab militants active in Somalia. However, on this occasion the cargo was believed to be owned by arms smugglers who would have sold it at local retail outlets.



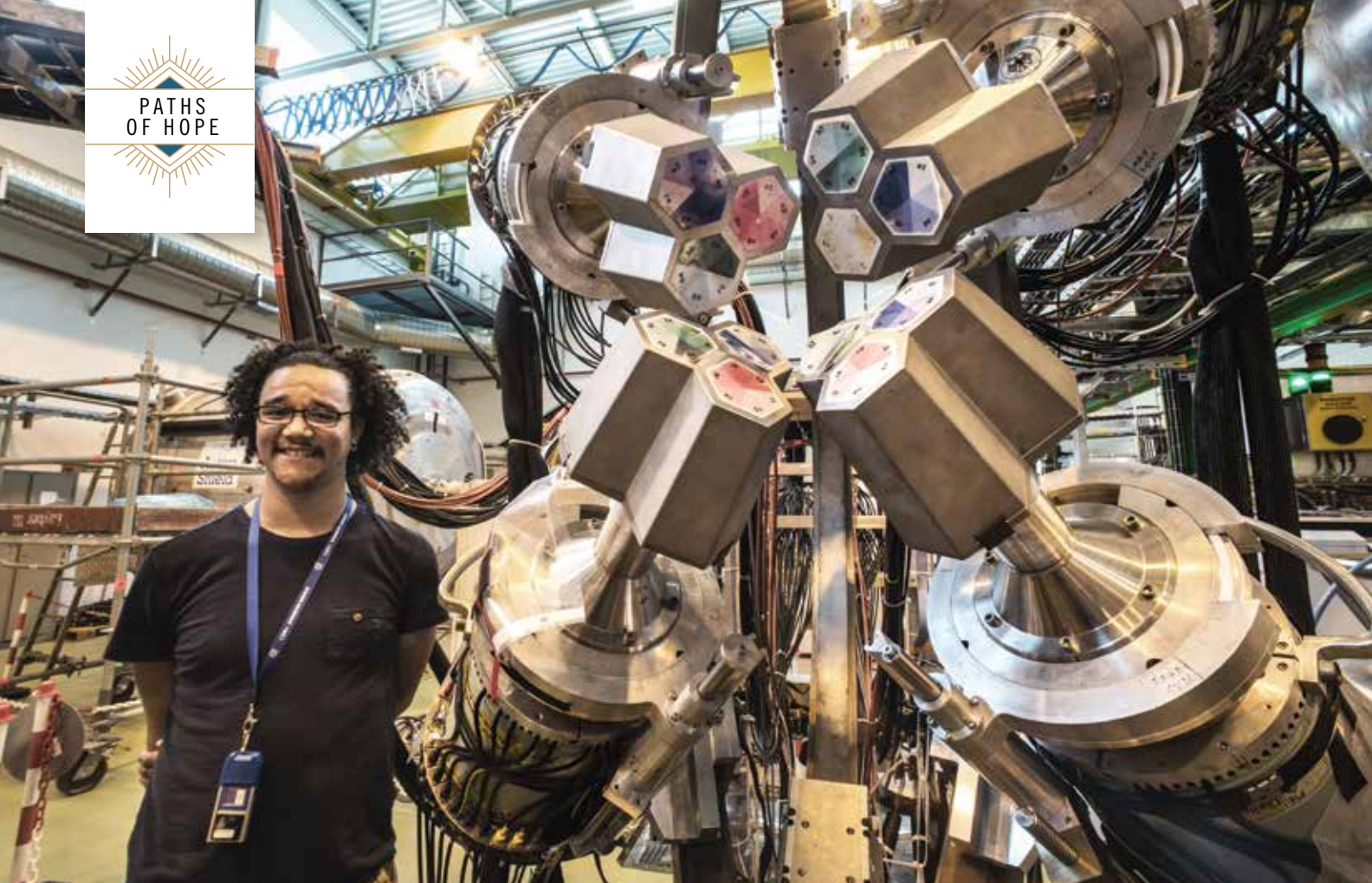
Puntland forces receive weapons seized from a boat near Bosaso, Somalia, in September 2017. REUTERS

"Today, we suspect traders own these weapons, but we shall investigate further," he said.

Puntland has been hit by heavy fighting as al-Shabaab and a splinter group linked to ISIS attacked government troops around the Galagala hills, 30 kilometers southeast of the regional capital, Bosaso.

In June 2017, al-Shabaab overran a military base in the town of Af Urur in the hills area, killing 38 people, mainly Soldiers.

Unlike the rest of Somalia, Puntland rarely suffered militant attacks before the 2017 surge in violence, mainly because its security forces are regularly paid and receive substantial U.S. assistance.



UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

South African Students Use Collider

BRAND SOUTH AFRICA

A group of students from South Africa's University of the Western Cape (UWC) is the first African research team to lead an experiment at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Switzerland.

Better known as the home of the Large Hadron Collider, CERN is one of the most prestigious science research facilities in the world. Colliders are used in particle physics research, in which particles are accelerated and hit other particles. CERN has the largest collider in the world, and it also is described as the largest machine in the world.

The team of postgraduate students fired a selenium beam into a platinum target. Selenium 70 lives for about 42 minutes and is produced during X-ray bursts, most commonly found in the explosions of neutron stars. The new research facility at CERN, the Isotope Separator On-Line facility, has an unstable selenium beam that was necessary for the experiment.

In 2017, South Africa joined the Isolde Collaboration, an agreement between nations

and CERN to conduct experiments in the fields of nuclear and atomic physics, solid-state physics, materials science and life sciences.

At the university's facility in South Africa, scientists in the physical, medical and biological sciences conduct research for advanced education, the treatment of cancers and the production of unique radioisotopes.

The goal of the UWC experiment was to discover how unstable exotic elements were created. "Above iron ore, we do not know how elements are produced," said UWC Professor Nico Orce, who guided the team.

The team's experiments did not produce the desired results with selenium 70. However, team members were able to measure the creation of a different exotic particle, germanium 66.

"We can still say we were successful," Orce said. "It's the first time that germanium 66 was produced on Earth. We were able to study the decay of germanium 66 until we find a stable isotope."

Science, Orce said, is like boxing. "You jab and jab until you can land a clean shot."

South Sudan FIGHTS ARMYWORM Naturally

VOICE OF AMERICA

A farmers' group in South Sudan's Imotong State says it has found a way to combat the dreaded fall armyworm, which has devastated crops across the continent.

Robert Lokang, leader of the Bidaya Farm Association, regularly sprays his crops with a concoction of neem tree leaves, ash, powdered soap and water. The all-natural formula is designed to kill the armyworms while not harming the plants.

It's not a new invention. Lokang said he learned it decades ago as a child, when his father used the same concoction to ward off pests. He said that in 2016 the nongovernmental organization Care International showed local farmers how to use the mixture as a replacement for pesticides. He says his group decided to try it on the fall armyworm, and it worked.

Fall armyworms, which are native to the Americas, have spread across Africa since 2015, raising alarm among farmers and agriculture officials. The pests thrive in warm and humid climates, travel great distances quickly, and devour maize, cotton, sorghum and vegetable crops.

Lokang says he suffered severe financial losses last season after fall armyworms tore into his eggplants, tomatoes, onions and cabbages.

"They are eating the leaves and other insects," he said. "They also destroy the roots, and the ones we transplant when the fruit is ready, they also get rotten."

United Nations and government officials say regular insecticides do not work on the fall armyworm.

Awello Obale, an official at the state Agriculture Ministry, said Lokang's method is cost-effective because there is no other immediate solution to the fall armyworm infestation.

"We encourage farmers ... to use the cultural practices to control not only armyworm but other insects also," Obale said.

Fortunately, neem trees are plentiful in the area. Obale says farmers should take advantage of Lokang's simple method.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



ISTOCK

Zimbabwean Tribe *Embraces* *HIV Treatment*

JEFFREY MOYO/INTER PRESS SERVICE

Sixty-seven-year-old Hloniphani Sidingo smiles broadly while popping out through the gate of a clinic in her village, as she heads home clutching containers of anti-retroviral (ARV) pills.

The first Bantu people to dwell in present-day Zimbabwe, the Khoisan, also known as the Bushmen or Basagwa, populate remote areas of southern Africa, particularly Angola, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Here, the Khoisan community is found in Matabeleland North's Tsholotsho district, where many like Sidingo live.

An estimated 1.2 million people in Zimbabwe are living with HIV/AIDS. This includes nearly one in three Khoisan people. Now, with the word spreading far and wide about AIDS awareness, many Khoisan like Sidingo have joined the fight against the disease. Thanks to the Zimbabwean government's anti-retroviral initiative, she is still alive more than 16 years after she tested positive for HIV.

"AIDS killed my husband and my children — five of them," Sidingo said. "I'm not taking chances because I want to survive. My husband back in the days didn't trust community health

workers when they approached us urging us to embrace HIV/AIDS tests and get treatment if we have the disease. Ntungwa, my husband, actually thought health workers were up to no good and avoided them, resulting even in our children, who also later died of AIDS, doing like their father."

Meanwhile, organizations catering to the welfare of the Khoisan here say the dread and shame surrounding HIV/AIDS is fading among tribe members.

"The Khoisan now understand the existence of the virus, and almost all who are infected are on ARVs," said Davy Ndlovu of Tsoro-O-Tso San, a development trust that aids Khoisan people in Zimbabwe. "The other issue has to do with reviews where people are expected to travel to the nearest hospital, which is about 15 to 20 kilometers away. When they fail to raise transport money, they just stay and miss the review."

Despite such hurdles, for Khoisan living with HIV like Sidingo, fighting the disease has become a top priority.

"I have learned to adhere to taking my medication consistently," Sidingo said. "Many people in my community now understand the importance of getting tested for HIV."

Zambian Farmers Trying Weather-Based Insurance

FRIDAY PHIRI/INTER PRESS SERVICE

Frequent extreme weather and climate shifts challenge already vulnerable groups such as smallholder farmers. Between 2004 and 2014, farmers are said to have endured the brunt of the \$100 billion cost of extreme weather.

With traditional insurance proving costly, the alternative approach — weather index-based insurance, which links payouts to events triggered by extreme weather — is becoming popular.

In Zambia, the World Food Programme has been testing such an intervention since 2015 in the Pemba district of Southern province. The insurance product targets farmers who have engaged in climate-smart agricultural practices, also known as conservation agriculture.

Dubbed “R4,” the project takes a holistic approach to managing risk by integrating improved natural resource management, credit, insurance and savings.

Abshy Nchimunya of Kayokela Farmers Club

believes the mere fact of having insurance will improve farmers’ resilience to climate shocks. Over the years, many of the farmers in the region had grown maize as a major crop. But with the insurance coverage as a reward for conservation farming practices, farmers have diversified into other crops, including cowpeas and beans.

By providing key services that are generally hard to access — financing for inputs, reliable weather information, a profitable market and simple saving schemes — R4’s integrated approach to risk reduction has changed the mindset of more than 2,000 farmers.

“So far, the project has shown a lot of impact,” said Nervous Nsansaola of one of the agencies implementing R4. “At least 60 to 70 percent of farmers are practicing conservation agriculture; all these farmers are accessing insurance, micro-credit, and we have taken it as a matter of principle to ensure that they all belong to small village saving groups.”



REUTERS

STUDENTS LEARN FASTER *in Their Native Languages*

WORLD BANK

On a typical morning in elementary schools across Uganda, children can be heard chanting letters of the English alphabet, each letter assigned to a common item found around the home, followed by its vernacular word to help with association and memory. "Axe, banana, cup, drum," they sing, working their way down the chart.

This is the way generations of Ugandans have learned.

"That is learning English as a language," says Caroline Kavuma, an early-grade reading specialist with Uganda's Ministry of Education. Although it may be easy for children to learn English, she adds, it is more difficult for them to use it to learn other academic subjects, especially when they use a different language at home.

When Uganda rolled out free universal primary education in 1997, and later universal secondary education, it sent enrollment through the roof. Unfortunately, while universal access to education has improved, quality has declined. A 2016 learning assessment survey found that only three in 20 students in Grade 3 could read and comprehend a story. The report added it was only by Grade 5 that about half the children could read and understand a

basic short story in English.

Meanwhile, a pilot project, the School Health and Reading Program, found that children could read and comprehend better if taught in their first languages. This is now part of the primary education school curriculum. Children are taught in a local language during the first three years of primary education before transitioning to English in the fourth grade.

"Children need to be taught in the natural way they learn," Kavuma explained. "They learn concepts faster, and have accumulated enough vocabulary in their home language to learn in a sophisticated way."

It hasn't been all plain sailing. For a start, there are many vernaculars spoken within the same region. For example, in Busoga, east of Kampala, it is not uncommon for children to speak different dialects or languages altogether.

Converting parents also takes time. "It is difficult to convince a parent that learning [other subjects] in English is not the most efficient way for the children in P1," said Moses Wambi, deputy principal of Bishop Willis Core Primary Teacher College in Iganga. "But we will be able to see the results in good time."

NIGERIA

Invests in

SUGAR INDUSTRY

NEWS AGENCY OF NIGERIA

The largest manufacturing conglomerate in West Africa wants to create 15,000 jobs by launching a sugar industry in Nigeria's Niger State.

The Dangote Group, headed by billionaire Alhaji Aliko Dangote, has signed a \$450 million memorandum of understanding to develop an integrated sugar industry in the central Nigerian town of Lavun. The 16,000-hectare plantation would produce 12,000 tons of sugar cane per day.

"Dangote Group is a firm believer in the vast economic potential of Nigeria," Dangote said. "We have decided to invest in local sugar production in Niger because of the vast arable land available in the state." He said that the memorandum also involved establishing a large-scale rice milling factory.

The business group also is busy in other parts of the country. It is constructing a multibillion-dollar petroleum refinery in Lekki, Lagos State, with a capacity for 650,000 barrels per day. Dangote said the petroleum project would rank as the world's largest single-line refinery, adding that it would make Nigeria an exporter of petroleum products.

Niger State Gov. Abubakar Bello said the project would diversify the area's income sources. He also promised the state would work diligently with the Dangote Group to acquire land to speed up the start of the project.



REUTERS

THE DARK STAR

OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

ADF STAFF

In 1827, Russia's greatest poet, Alexander Pushkin, began his first work of prose, a historical novel titled *The Moor of Peter the Great*. It was based on the life of his African-born great-grandfather, Abram Petrovich Gannibal, who went from being a slave to becoming a Soldier, engineer and scholar.

Pushkin never finished the book — and perhaps that was for the best. The life of his great-grandfather was so remarkable, a single book could not have done it justice.

Gannibal was born in what is now Cameroon in 1696. His birth name was Abram, and he was the son of a minor prince of the region. When he was 7, he was kidnapped by a rival tribe and enslaved. He was presented as a gift to the sultan in Constantinople and later acquired by a Russian ambassador, who gave the small black boy to Russian Czar Peter I as a novelty for his court.

The czar saw something he liked in the boy and became his mentor. As Abram grew, Peter decided the boy's future would be as a Soldier.

When Abram was 20, he began his training in Paris, studying military science, mathematics and engineering. Four years later, he enrolled in France's new artillery academy. To get the best possible engineering experience, he fought for France and its allies against Spain in the War of the Quadruple Alliance. During the war, he was captured by Spain and released in 1722, two years after the war ended.

During his time in France, he took the name Gannibal, after Hannibal the Conqueror. With his impressive education, he made friends with the French intellectuals of the day, including the philosopher Voltaire, who is said

to have referred to his friend as "the dark star of the Enlightenment."

Gannibal returned to Russia in 1723 as a military professional and an expert in fortifications. He took military posts as an engineer and later as a mathematics tutor.

Peter died in 1725, and his successor did not trust the highly educated foreigner in his court. He exiled Gannibal 4,000 miles away to Siberia in 1727. Three years later, he was pardoned because of his engineering skills, which he had demonstrated while in exile.

In 1741, Peter's daughter Elizabeth became the new ruler of Russia, and Gannibal became a member in

good standing in her court. He and his wife, a woman of Scandinavian and German nobility, had 10 children.

He was eventually given the rank of major general and served for 10 years as the superintendent of what is now part of Estonia. Empress Elizabeth also gave him an estate in a nearby region, complete with

hundreds of serfs — peasants who were little more than slaves, as he had once been. He retired to his estate in 1762. The much-admired general known as "the black lord" died in 1781 at age 85.

Gannibal never forgot his African ancestry. When he petitioned Empress Elizabeth for the rank of nobility, he submitted a coat of arms he designed himself. The center of the design is an elephant. Beneath the elephant are the letters FVMMO. Scholars now believe the letters stand for the Latin phrase "Fortuna vitam meam mutavit oppido," which means "Fortune has changed my life entirely."





ANSWER: The Unfinished
Obelisk at Aswan, Egypt

1. If erected as intended, this structure would have stood 137 feet tall and weighed 1,168 tons.
2. Quarrymen are thought to have abandoned this project 3,500 years ago when cracks were found in its sides.
3. The granite quarry has a canal that may have connected to the Nile and allowed the structure to float to its final destination.
4. The object offers clues about the stoneworking techniques of ancient people.

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