

Rubén FUSTER LEAL

Degree in Security, Defense and Geostrategy

E-mail: futerruben97@gmail.com

***Description and analysis of a terrorist group:
Boko Haram. The (inter)national risks produced by a breakable state and a terrorist threat.***

Abstract

Boko Haram has been the bloodiest terrorist group of the last decade and its actions have triggered a great global media impact, even though they take place in Nigeria. Included on the salafi jihadist terrorism, this group is an important franchise to global jihadism. Furthermore, the current Boko Haram's dissemination could cause further destabilisation of the fragile Occidental Sahel region. Even so, Boko Haram's speech, social support and strategy are closely linked to the internal situation of Nigeria. For this reason, it is necessary to analyse Boko Haram's context.

In this article we are going to describe Boko Haram's beginning, ideology and objectives, strategy, leadership, structure and composition, as well as the committed attacks and victims. Next, we will do an analysis of this terrorist group, focusing on its context and as factor of destabilization of Nigeria and Sahel Occidental region. In addition, we will speak about the current state of the international fight against Boko Haram. Finally, we will suggest some conclusions and suggestions.

Keywords

Africa, Sahel, Nigeria, terrorism, Boko Haram.

Cite this article:

Fuster Leal, R. (2021). Description and analysis of a terrorist group: Boko Haram. The (inter)national produced by a breakable state and a terrorist threat. *Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies Journal*, issue 18, pp. 569-598.

Profile of the terrorist group Boko Haram

What is Boko Haram? Origins of the group

Boko Haram is a terrorist group of Nigerian origin which, by its actions and objectives, can be considered a home-grown terrorist group. However, since this group has pledged allegiance to DAESH and then split off and spread throughout the Western Sahel region, it can be categorised as international terrorism or, as the case may be, as transnational¹. Be that as it may, due to the scale of its actions and number of victims, or because of its interrelations with other local groups or with the global jihadist movement, it is an important destabilising factor for the entire Western Sahel region, and therefore its relevance is and must be international².

It is indeed a highly lethal terrorist group. Responsible for the deaths of 6,644 people, it was, according to the *Institute for Economics and Peace*, the most lethal terrorist group in 2014, the time of its peak³. Its activity has been declining considerably, but it was still the fourth deadliest terrorist organisation of 2018, and remains the deadliest in Sub-Saharan Africa⁴. As a result of this group's activity, the *Global Peace Index 2020* continues to rank Nigeria 147th on the global peace index⁵. In this sense, Nigeria remains one of the least peaceful countries in the world, with neighbouring countries such as Niger and Chad ranking close to Nigeria.

¹ Although both concepts denote activity beyond a territory considered as a nation, the two terms should not be confused. Transnational terrorism is terrorism that crosses borders because the perpetrator has the infrastructure or means to operate in more than one country. All international terrorism is, by definition, transnational, but local terrorism can also be transnational. Local if its target is focused on a specific country, and transnational if it has the capacity to carry out its violent activity outside the boundaries of the country in which its target is based. García Reguera, J.M. (2017). *Amenaza y reacción contra el terrorismo global y el crimen organizado*. Madrid, Centro de Estudios Financieros. P. 77.

The key to the difference is in the objectives and intentions. Terrorism «which is carried out with the deliberate intention of altering the structure and distribution of power in entire regions or even on the scale of global society itself» is therefore international. Moreover, it is one whose actors have carried out attacks across a large number of countries or geopolitical areas, in line with stated global purposes. Reinares, 2006, quoted by García Reguera, J.M. *Op. cit.*, p. 77.

² Echeverría Jesús, C. (2014). El desafío terrorista de Boko Haram en Nigeria. *Documento de Investigación del Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos* (02/2014), pp. 3-4. Available at: http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_investig/2014/DIEEEINV02-2014_Region_Africa_subsaariana_C.Echeverria.pdf

³ Institute for Economics and Peace (2015). *Los cinco grupos terroristas más letales*. Madrid, esglobal. Available at: <https://www.esglobal.org/los-cinco-grupos-terroristas-mas-letales/>

⁴ Institute for Economics and Peace (2019). *Los grupos terroristas que más matan*. Madrid: esglobal. Available at: <https://www.esglobal.org/los-grupos-terroristas-que-mas-matan/>

⁵ *Global Peace Index 2020*. New York, Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP Report 72). P. 9. Available at: https://visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/GPI_2020_web.pdf

For its part, with almost two decades of history, Boko Haram, depending on the perpetrator⁶, can be considered fourth or fifth wave terrorism. In any case, it is a terrorism that fits in with the current global terrorist trend, which is religious in nature and centred on the Islamic world, and which has recently been characterised by extreme violence, a violence inspired by an ideal of the search for purity and which even overshadows the message content behind the terrorist activity⁷.

As for the origin of Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation, its date of birth is not entirely clear, there is no consensus⁸. However, two dates stand out: 2002 and 2009. The period 2002-2009 corresponds to its starting date, when the identity of this group began to take shape, although during this time its violent activity was scarce. This period was dominated by one man: Mohammed Yusuf. However, from 2009 onwards, this group consolidated and began its terrorist activity openly under the command of Abubakar Shekau. However, if we want to look for its deep roots, we must dig deeper into Nigeria's history and its political, social, cultural and economic situation. The latter will be dealt with in the *Analysis* section, but it is worth noting now that the country is deeply divided along religious lines, and an artificial border can be drawn between a Muslim north and a Christian and animist south.

In 2002, the person known as Mohammed Yusuf came to prominence on the Nigerian stage. Yusuf would go on to found the sect that would later become known as Boko Haram from a split in the non-violent Muslim Brotherhood or *Shabala*, which was led by Abubakar Lawan, who was succeeded by Yusuf in 2002⁹. Previously, it should be noted that a few years ago –in the heat of the central government's offer to apply *Sharia law* in some Muslim-majority states– several Koranic schools (*madrassas*) had spread in the north of the country, controlled by preachers coming from or encouraged and financed by some Gulf countries or even by Pakistan or Iran. From them, a rigorist, conservative, if not combative, interpretation of Islam was inoculated

6 Rapoport, the leading theorist of the waves of modern terrorism, established four waves. Later, other authors such as Kaplan have updated them and added a fifth, in which Boko Haram would be the paradigmatic reference. The main works of the two authors are, respectively: Rapoport, C. (2004). *The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism*. In CRONIN, A. and LUDES, J. *Attaching terrorism: Elements of a grand strategy*. Washington DC, Georgetown University Press. Pp. 46-73; y Kaplan, J. (2008). *Terrorism's Fifth Wave: A Theory, a Conundrum and a Dilemma*. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, vol. 2, issue 2.

7 García Reguera, J.M. *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

8 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. (2020). Boko Haram and ISWAP: dos caras de la misma moneda. *Documento del Observatorio Internacional de Estudios sobre Terrorismo* (13/2020). P. 8. Available at: <https://observatorioterrorismo.com/eedyckaz/2020/08/Documento-OIET-13-20201.pdf>

9 Adewunmi Falode, J. (2016). The Nature of Nigeria's Boko Haram War, 2010-2015: A Strategic Analysis *Perspectives On Terrorism*, February, vol. 10, issue 1, p. 43. Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). Boko Haram: movimiento ideológico, guerrilla insurgente y grupo terrorista, also supports the same information. *Opinion Paper, Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies* (49/2018). P. 5. Available at: http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2018/DIEEEO49-2018_Boko_Haram_JMSA.pdf.

among the Muslim population of the North¹⁰. One of these preachers was therefore Yusuf, who spread a rigorist and intolerant ideology that he had adopted from Saudi Arabia¹¹. Their postulates, well known among the Nigerian Muslim scholarly community and not without a few detractors, were mainly based on their outright rejection of Western education and culture¹², and their opposition to any form of *bid'ah* –innovation– including governments that were not inspired by *Sharia*¹³.

Interspersing his prayers with political arguments, such as state oppression, malnutrition or lack of schooling among children, to push the religious discourse based on the need to impose Islamic law –at least in the Muslim northern states– as a solution to the impoverishment of the people and to curb rampant corruption, Yusuf went on to become a charismatic and quite successful figure, managing to adopt a large number of followers¹⁴. The latter established in Maiduguri, capital of Borno State (the most northeastern state in the country), a religious complex consisting of a mosque and a school where young Muslim students from Borno and other northern states, as well as from neighbouring countries such as Niger, Chad and Cameroon, attended¹⁵. Among Yusuf's sympathisers were also Nigerian politicians who, on the basis of Islamic values, sought to rally young Muslim militiamen to their cause through whom to retain or conquer power¹⁶. One of these was the country's last dictator, Mohammed Abacha (1993-1998), who may have been responsible for the early origins of Boko Haram and the rise of Yusuf¹⁷.

Thus, Boko Haram was born at the hands of Yusuf. However, in these early years violence did not dominate the group, and it is difficult to consider it as a terrorist organisation, even if it was a sect of Muslim radicals. Some authors, such as Summers and Yagüe¹⁸, consider this period of «quietist Salafism», i.e. mainly devoted to preaching. Thus, «Mohammed Yusuf maintained a fierce dialectic against the Nigerian state

10 Echeverría Jesús, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

11 Mesa García, B. (2016). Boko Haram, de milicia a grupo terrorista. *Opinion Paper, Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies* (33/2016). P. 6. Available at: http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2016/DIEEO33_2016_BokoHaram_DeMilicia_GrupoTerrorista_BeatrizMesa.pdf

12 Torregrosa López, F.J., *et al.* (2016). Boko Haram: análisis del fenómeno terrorista en Nigeria. *Revista Criminalidad*, vol. 58, issue 1, p. 71.

13 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

14 Mesa García, B. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

15 Adewunmi Falode, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

16 Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

17 Mesa García, B. *Op. cit.*, pp. 4-5. It also reaffirms this idea: Santé Abal, J.M. (2017). Nigeria, elenco de conflictos. *Analysis Paper 26/2021, Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies* (03/2017). P. 109. Available at: <file:///C:/Users/fuste/Downloads/Dialnet-NigeriaElencoDeConflictosJoseMariaSanteAbal-6057670.pdf>

18 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

in his years at the head of the sect, but he had never indulged in violence»¹⁹. With the exception of the so-called Nigerian Taliban –of which it is disputed whether they were a splinter group of Yusuf’s or not²⁰– the rest of the violent actions that were carried out were punctual and used rudimentary methods, mainly attacks with bladed weapons – a fact that most experts agree on.

However, the turning point came in 2009. From 2008 onwards, there was a shift in Yusuf’s speeches, which almost exclusively dealt with issues such as *Jihad* and violence as a method of action²¹. This advocacy of violence may have led to clashes with other Muslims in the northern states²², and the resulting disorder led to the intervention of the Nigerian Armed Forces and Police, who, under *Operation Flush*, entered these territories, ostensibly to put an end to the theft²³. It made the atmosphere more tense, and it all seemed like a government offensive. Several clashes ensued, which were followed by successive declarations of revenge by leader Yusuf and the authorities²⁴.

But the final trigger was undoubtedly the altercation on 11 June 2009, when some young people were arrested for not wearing helmets on their motorbikes. They refused to be arrested and a shoot-out ensued. The next day Yusuf openly declared *jihad*²⁵. This led to the so-called *Maiduguri Mutiny*, which spread to four other northern states at the end of June and involved systematic robberies and extortion of banks and police stations²⁶. The police and army retaliation was brutal, leaving a total of 1,000 dead in Boko Haram’s ranks²⁷. In addition, Nigerian authorities captured the leader Yusuf and extra-judicially executed him²⁸, slit his throat and videotaped him for the rest of his followers to watch and crumble²⁹. However, the effect they achieved was adverse: this disproportionate and indiscriminate persecution further encouraged the population and the whole episode was seen as a mass martyrdom³⁰.

19 Santé Abal, J.M. (201. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

20 Santé (2018) considers that the Nigerian Taliban was indeed a splinter group of Yusuf’s Boko Haram. In contrast, other authors such as Torregrosa, *et al.* (2016) postulate that it was a separate group with no connection to the preacher.

21 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.* support this information through the collection of videos and broadcasts of leader Yusuf dating from 2008-2009.

22 Mesa García, B. *Op. cit.*, p. 6, and Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

23 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

24 Mesa García, B. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

25 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

26 Mesa García, B. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

27 Endorse these figures: Torregrosa, *et al.* *Op. cit.*, p. 71, and SUMMERS, M. and YAGÜE, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

28 Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

29 Mesa García, B. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

30 Echeverría Jesús, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

At the same time, President Umaru Yar' Adua, a Muslim, fell seriously ill that year and was replaced by his vice-president Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian. The following year he dies, and Goodluck definitely becomes the new president. In Nigeria there was an unwritten rule that each presidency must rotate between a Christian and a Muslim³¹. As the Muslim president in office had not completed his term in office, it was felt that the rule had been broken, and this unexpected turn of events further inflamed the atmosphere and served as an excuse for Boko Haram's violence³². However, it was only a stimulus to the pre-existing climate. It was by no means the origin of Boko Haram as originally estimated³³.

Yusuf's death also brought about a change in leadership, which was accompanied by a paradigm/strategy shift. One of his lieutenants, Abubakar Shekau, took Yusuf's place, and he, unlike the other, was a military genius and not an intellectual, as well as the most radical of his followers³⁴. Since the summer of 2009 there has been no further news of Boko Haram, it seemed that the gang was disbanded³⁵. But in September 2010, Shekau, appointed as the new emir, made a spectacular comeback with the release of 700 prisoners from Bauchi prison using military tactics that overwhelmed the existing security forces in the area³⁶. The sophistication of their attacks increased qualitatively over the course of the same year, now with bomb attacks and not only on Christian or governmental targets. This, together with the start of a real guerrilla war, marks the beginning of Boko Haram as a terrorist group.

Ideology and objectives of the organisation

Ideologically, Boko Haram can be considered a Salafist Islamist jihadist movement³⁷. This group is therefore related to the Islamic religion³⁸.

31 Kabunda, M. (2011). Nigeria: oil, religion and ethnic divisions. *Política Exterior*, March/April, vol. 25, issue 140, p. 41.

32 Echeverría Jesús, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

33 Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

34 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

35 Pérez Ventura, Ó. (2014). *Boko Haram, el terror 'yihadista' en Nigeria*. Madrid, esglobal. Available at: <https://www.esglobal.org/boko-haram-el-terror-yihadista-en-nigeria/>

36 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

37 Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

38 Two points should be made here. On the one hand, Islam should not be confused with Islamism. Islam belongs to the *-isms*. It is thus an ideology in which a series of political ideas based on the Muslim religion are accepted. Islam, on the other hand, is the religion, which is fourteen centuries old and stands between other religions such as Judaism and Christianity. Del Prado Higuera, C. and Sánchez de Rojas Díaz, E. (2018). *Terrorismo islamista: el caso de Al Gama 'a al Islamiyya*. Valencia, Tirant lo Blanch. P. 85. ISBN 978-84-9190-145-7.

In short, Islamism is «the affirmation of a set of political beliefs of an Islamic character»³⁹. Islamism is not so much a type of fundamentalism, but rather a political option within modern Muslim states that advocates the Islamisation of their institutions and a preference for the application of *Sharia* law. Nor is Islamism synonymous with violence. Many Islamists have accepted the current state of affairs and admitted democratic competitiveness, for Islamism is also a reform of Islam, a way of modernising and adapting it to the times to come.

Salafism, on the other hand, is an attitude towards Islam –a doctrinal current, if you will– while Islamism is strictly a political current. Traditional Salafism preaches doctrinal purity, the cohesion of the religious community and the preservation of the moral order of Islam from a vision of breaking society from tradition, thereby promoting orthopraxy and re-Islamisation⁴⁰. Salafist Islamism therefore implies accepting a series of political ideas of an Islamic nature, but under the doctrinal point of view of Salafism. In this way, Salafist Islamists are configured as a type of radical Islamist-integrist, intolerant, declared enemy of the «modern» and the «Western», who only conceives as a valid form of government that which is governed by the *Sharia*. Moreover, as a political attitude it implies a shift to political activism away from preaching (*dawa*) and education, the original ways of spreading Salafism and promoting a reform of Islam from below rather than from above.

Finally, jihadist Salafism or simply jihadism would be «a perverse and minority derivation of a large current known as Salafism, characterised by the desire to return to the doctrinal origins of the religion and the way of life of the first Muslims [...] through the promulgation of holy war and, therefore, instrumentalising violence in the name of Islam»⁴¹. In short, it is the Islamist component that seeks to achieve the objectives of Salafism by means of political violence, making use of the honourable concept of *Jihad*.

Although officially named *Jama'at Ahl as Sunnah lid Da'wah wa'l-Jihad* (i.e. People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad), this group is

On the other hand, Islam is characterised as a religion with great interpretative freedom. There is no overriding dogma and no ruling class, no ecclesiastical hierarchy, which, with the exception of the caliph –who is no longer there– can decree what is or is not in accordance with Islam. Thus, «There is no clear and precisely defined orthodoxy, but a tradition or, more precisely, several equally valid traditions; we are dealing with a community of the faithful, in its most gregarious sense, rather than with a dogmatic group». Aznar Fernández-Montesinos, F. (2014). *Doctrina y acción política. Pugnas sobre el islam verdadero. El salafismo*. In the School of Advanced Defence Studies. *Safety and Defence Documents*, 62. Madrid, Ministry of Defence. P. 19. There is a multiplicity of religious schools and different streams of Islamic thought. However, this contains a certain risk component since it allows radicals to speak out and be followed by the community without a religious authority being able to excommunicate them and stop them in their tracks.

39 Aznar Fernández-Montesinos, F. *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

40 *Ibid*, pp. 24-26.

41 Jordán (2005), quoted in Del Prado Higuera, C. and Sánchez de Rojas Díaz, E. *Op. cit.*, p. 95.

better known by the name Boko Haram, which can be translated as «Western education is sin» or «Western education is forbidden»⁴². This last name gives us several clues about the idiosyncrasies of this group. Central to the ideology spread by Yusuf is the doctrine of *bid'ah* –innovation– originally attributed to the Egyptian intellectual Qutb⁴³. The condemnation of any kind of innovation that departs from the original path set by the Qur'an and the Prophet was adapted to Nigeria's post-colonial reality to dictate that the country was tainted by the post-colonial heritage. According to Yusuf, this was the cause of the break with tradition and the waywardness of good Muslims, thus serving to outlaw any kind of Western influence – education.

In this indigenist Salafist discourse, Yusuf opted for the political option of Salafist Islam and thus for the implementation of *Sharia* as a way to purify the Muslim community of «Western education». Indeed, Nigerian politicians were the target of much of his criticism – all the more so because they were an oppressive elite mostly educated and trained in the West or by Westerners⁴⁴. However, their action was more proselytising and aimed at raising awareness in the minds of believers. Therefore, the Nigerian government and the country's Christianity were not part of their plans. Thus, the political objectives of the sect led by Yusuf were the establishment of *Sharia* law in Borno - Boko Haram's initial headquarters – and in those other Muslim communities in the north of the country.

However, after proclaiming *Jihad* in June 2009 and, above all, from 2010 onwards, the organisation's objectives changed and became more ambitious. Since then, they have sought to establish *Sharia* law throughout the country, pursuing the Islamisation of Nigeria even though half of its population are non-believers⁴⁵. This is partly explained by the teachings of what is considered to be the first amir –Yusuf– according to whom Islam in Africa had historically been promoted through *jihad*. He also considered that the current bad situation of the population is a direct consequence of the abandonment of *Jihad*, and the government, contrary to Islam and tradition, is the main beneficiary of this⁴⁶. The central government became their direct enemy, especially the executive led by Goodluck Jonathan. But on the other hand, by designating moderate Muslim targets or allies of Christians, it is intended to bring about a takfirist revolutionary movement⁴⁷ through which to generate an exceptional community of believers⁴⁸.

42 Institute for Economics and Peace (2015). *Op. cit.*

43 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

44 Mesa García, B. *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

45 Adewunmi Falode, J. *Op. cit.* p. 43.

46 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

47 'Takfir is the doctrine by which radicals exclude from Islam Muslims who do not follow their views' *Takfirista*. España, Observatorio de la islamofobia en los medios, 2020. Available at: <http://www.observatorioislamofobia.org/glossary/takfirista/>

48 Mesa García, B. *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

Organisational strategy

From 2009 onwards, and culminating with the transfer of power to Shekau in 2010, the change of strategy within the group became evident. With the proclamation of *Jihad*, the insurgency in the northern states began, which materialised in the *Maiduguri Mutiny* of June 2009, which lasted for several days and ended badly for the insurgents. After the murder of 1,000 members and the public death of its leader and emir Yusuf, Boko Haram consolidated violence as a pattern of action, using the 2009 massacre as an element of justification for revenge and violent action, as well as an inspiration for contemplating it as collective martyrdom⁴⁹. Likewise, at Shekau's hands, there is a change in the targets attacked and a qualitative leap in the sophistication of his methods and tactics.

First, Shekau's Boko Haram expanded the number of targets it could attack. On the one hand, although the government and Christians are their main enemies, moderate Muslims who do not support Boko Haram also become prey to their attacks. It should not be forgotten that most of Boko Haram's victims are Muslims and not Christians⁵⁰. On the other hand, Boko Haram attacks both «hard targets» –such as military barracks, police stations, self-defence militias, penitentiary institutions or the headquarters of the Federal Police Headquarters– and «soft targets». In the latter, apart from attacks on marginal police posts or checkpoints, he also attacks civilians⁵¹.

Through the *Global Terrorism Database*⁵², we can see that many of his victims are banks and credit centres, civilians and private property, places of worship and religious leaders, as well as schools and teachers, thus living up to its name – «Western education is sin». The latter targets account for 1,893 of the 3,039 Boko Haram incidents recorded by the database, more than half of them. In this way, he employs indiscriminate, severe violence, especially against Muslims who are educated in Western culture or who do not follow the organisation's radical postulates.

Secondly, Shekau improved the *modus operandi* of the organisation, making it much more effective and lethal. The violent acts carried out by Boko Haram until 2010 were based on sporadic clashes or lynchings carried out by individuals equipped with rudimentary weapons such as machetes, knives, clubs, or Molotov cocktails⁵³. On occasion there was the occasional altercation with firearms⁵⁴, and even some skirmish-

49 Echeverría Jesús, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

50 *Ibid*, p. 11.

51 *Ibid*, p. 10-11.

52 *Global Terrorism Database*. University of Maryland: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Available at: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?search=boko+haram&sa.x=38&sa.y=13>

53 Adewunmi Falode, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

54 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

ing such as shooting from *okada* –in local slang, motorbikes– at their targets⁵⁵. However, December 2010 saw a new development reflecting greater sophistication: the use of improvised explosive devices in strategic locations. The following year, moreover, the first suicide bombing took place⁵⁶, this one against a police station in Abuja, the country's capital, which is undoubtedly a clear sign of the radicalisation and predisposition of its members⁵⁷.

But not only that. Since 2010, in its attacks on «hard targets» it has tended to use large, heavily armed groups of at least thirty men, sometimes more than a hundred and sometimes even 200-300⁵⁸. In these cases, it employs military tactics⁵⁹, which are largely based on guerrilla methods⁶⁰, especially the so-called coup hand. Boko Haram's arsenal then became composed of explosives such as Semtex, AK-47 automatic rifles, vehicles with machine guns, grenade launchers and hand grenades, surface-to-air missiles, and even T-55 tanks⁶¹.

These circumstances denote that Boko Haram's strategy has gone beyond simple terrorism, and positions it as a guerrilla insurgency that does not renounce terrorism –but rather exploits it– to inflict as much damage as possible on the enemy. This places Boko Haram on the fine line between insurgent and terrorist activities⁶². In this sense, similar to groups such as the Taliban, Boko Haram is a truly asymmetric enemy that poses an unrestricted fight, completely outside the usages and rules of war, seeking to exploit the vulnerabilities of the conventional adversary, undermining, above all, his will and resistance. In fact, Adewunmi⁶³ argues that the conflict in Nigeria is based on the pillars of hybrid warfare⁶⁴, and all this makes us realise that what has happened with Boko Haram in the country is not only terrorism, but could be approached as a civil war⁶⁵.

55 Adewunmi Falode, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

56 Suicide bombings have become a hallmark of Boko Haram. Along with high-explosive bombings, they are the group's preferred tactic, and this, in turn, is relatively rarely used in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Institute For Economics and Peace (2019). *Op. cit.*

57 Pérez Ventura, Ó. *Op. cit.*

58 Echeverría Jesús, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

59 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

60 Torregrosa López, F.J., *et al.* *Op. cit.*, p. 71.

61 Adewunmi Falode, J. *Op. cit.* p. 44.

62 Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

63 Adewunmi Falode, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 47.

64 *Hybrid warfare* is characterised by «the integration in time and space of conventional procedures with tactics of irregular warfare». Martí Sempere, C. (2020). *Naturaleza, causas y evolución de los conflictos armados*. Madrid, Centro de Estudios Financieros, p. 111.

65 Torregrosa López, F.J., *et al.* *Op. cit.*, p. 72.

The use of sequestration is also noteworthy. At the time of Echevarría's writing, kidnapping was a one-off practice, unlike other groups in the Sahel, such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) – a group that has been noted for its recurrence to this practice⁶⁶. At the time, their funding was mainly covered by theft, donations from sympathisers –not only from the global jihadist sphere, but also presumably from Nigerian authorities, who have also provided them with weapons⁶⁷– and various illicit activities – notably drugs⁶⁸. However, since 2013, the number of people abducted by Boko Haram has been increasing⁶⁹.

Today, kidnapping has become one of the group's hallmarks. Kidnapping has not only been used to obtain ransom payments, although abductees have often been used as bargaining chips for the release of ex-combatants. In addition to the psychological dimension –anyone can be kidnapped, spreading fear among the population– kidnapping has also been another recruitment tool in the organisation⁷⁰. The most affected have been women and children, with Boko Haram having adopted a conscious strategy of forced recruitment of these demographics⁷¹. The training of future child-soldiers is sought, as well as the employment of children and female suicide bombers, although at other times women and girls are sold as sex slaves or young wives to encourage morale in the troop⁷².

Finally, in terms of radius of action, this was originally limited mainly to the Nigerian state. However, although initially considered a Nigerian problem, Boko Haram, prior to its split and spread, had cross-border ties with neighbouring Chad⁷³, taking advantage of the cross-border economy, smuggling routes and existing criminal gangs, as well as the prevailing family, ethnic and, above all, religious ties in the region, to obtain weapons, supplies and recruits, and to carry out the occasional kidnapping and looting⁷⁴. In that sense, before it began attacks in Cameroon, Chad and Niger, Boko Haram already possessed enormous potential to function as a transnational terrorist network.

66 Echeverría Jesús, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

67 Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

68 Echeverría Jesús, C. *Op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

69 Torregrosa López, F.J., *et al.* *Op. cit.*, p. 73.

70 SUMMERS, M. and YAGÜE, J. *Op. cit.*, pp. 16.

71 Institute for Economics and Peace (2019). *Op. cit.*

72 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

73 MAHMOOD, O.S. and CHRISTIAN ANI, S. (2018). *Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, Cooperation and Livelihoods*. Pretoria, Institute for Security Studies. P. 10. Available at: <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/2018-07-06-research-report-1.pdf>

74 *What Role for the Multinational Joint Task Force in Fighting Boko Haram?* Brussels, International Crisis Group, 2020 (Crisis Group Africa Report No. 291). P. 5. Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/291-what-role-multinational-joint-task-force-fighting-boko-haram>

Leadership, organisational structure and composition

The leadership of Boko Haram was in the hands of Yusuf until his death in 2009, and later, in 2010, it passed to Shekau, who also proclaimed himself emir. Shekau was one of Yusuf's two top lieutenants and, unlike his former leader, he is primarily a military genius rather than an intellectual. He is also much more radical and bloodthirsty than the former. An ethnic Kurani Muslim from Yobe State, he joined the organisation in the late 1990s⁷⁵.

Although relevant, Shekau never gained much recognition both domestically and on the global jihadist stage. However, as a result of his leadership, he became recognised throughout the world. Shekau led the organisation to its peak around 2014. Indeed, in addition to being the year in which Boko Haram claimed the most victims –making it the most lethal terrorist group on the planet– 2014 was the year in which Shekau effectively controlled part of the territory of Nigeria's northern federated states, an area roughly the size of Belgium⁷⁶. Emboldened by his power, and given the inefficiency of the authorities to counteract the group's growth and territorial dominance, Shekau, on 23 August 2014, declared that the areas of Nigeria under his control constitute an Islamic caliphate.

According to Summers and Yagüe, «facts like these, added to the increasing presence in the media and international forums due to the noise and impact of their actions, make Boko Haram an object of desire of the large jihadist groups [...]»⁷⁷. Boko Haram had previously had relations with Al Qaeda⁷⁸, mediated by its affiliate AQIM⁷⁹, in neighbouring Mali, although it should be noted that the organisation had also interacted with other local groups active in the Western Sahel, such as Ansaru or MUYAO⁸⁰. However, Boko Haram took an unexpected turn and positioned itself in favour of DAESH, the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. Thus, on 7 March 2015, Shekau decided to swear an oath of allegiance (*bay'ah*) to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of DAESH, and Boko Haram became the Islamic State of

75 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

76 Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

77 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

78 *Global Terrorism Index 2017: Measuring the and Understanding the Impact of the Terrorism*. New York, Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP Report 55). P. 74. Available at. <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2017-11/apo-nid208941.pdf>

79 It is now known that Boko Haram and Al Qaeda had a mutually supportive relationship, knowing that AQIM may have been behind the sophistication of their methods, offering military training and instruction in explosive devices. Torregrosa López, F.J., *et al. Op. cit.*, p. 71.

80 Echeverría Jesús, C. *Op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

West Africa (ISWAP), which, in turn, is registered as another province of the great Caliphate of DAESH⁸¹.

This has been of real significance in terms of leadership. Soon Shekau would clash with the directives imposed by DAESH's parent organisation. This coincided with the fact that by the end of 2015 the group had lost much of its social support base and was also in retreat, losing some of the territory it controlled. Indeed, compared to the forcefulness in combat in 2014 and 2015, by the end of 2015 it was being defeated thanks to two elements: firstly, government military forces had embarked on an ambitious campaign of conquest, improving and adapting their techniques to the guerrilla and anti-terrorist struggle with the support of white South African mercenaries; secondly, there had been the intervention of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), a combined military force composed of the four countries of Lake Chad –Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon– plus a modest contribution from Benin, which came to the aid of the overwhelmed Nigerian army⁸². Internal divergences then began to emerge, criticisms which, above all, were directed against takfirism and the indiscriminate and unnecessary use of violence against Muslim civilians⁸³. The DAESH leadership decided to mediate in the matter and promoted Abu Musab al-Barnawi, son of Mohammed Yusuf, making him the new leader and sidelining Shekau. However, Shekau did not support this decision and, together with some others loyal to his leadership, decided to split his own faction, which went under the old name of Boko Haram⁸⁴.

As it is, what was once Boko Haram has split into two major splinter groups, although there is thought to be a further independent group⁸⁵. On the one hand, we have ISWAP, aligned with Daesh and led by al-Barnawi, which would therefore be the remnants of the original organisation. The latter is now based in the area around Lake Chad, and concentrates on targeting mainly Nigerian military and government agents, trying to renounce violence against civilians. On the other hand, there is Shekau's Boko Haram, which remains holed up in the Sambisa jungle –close to the Cameroon border– and continues with the same *modus operandi* as in the past⁸⁶.

It is worth noting that factions that have pledged allegiance to the major leaders of global jihadism are now acting as their franchisees. In this sense, in addition to adopting their brand, and while retaining their own local –and therefore less global

81 Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

82 Adewunmi Falode, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 46.

83 Opinion shared by studies such as Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, p. 13, or Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

84 This is also reflected by the previous authors.

85 The 2017 Global Terrorism Index tells us of up to three splinter factions after the group's collapse in 2015: one violent, one aligned with ISIS and one with Al Qaeda.

86 Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, pp. 14-15; Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, pp. 19-20; and Institute for Economics and Peace (2019). *Op. cit.*

than the parent company's— agenda, they combine their interests with those of the central core⁸⁷. This forms a network of networks⁸⁸, so ISWAP is a network organisation within a network. The franchised groups therefore still retain a good deal of independence both operationally and in terms of objectives. In fact, Boko Haram has on more than one occasion been reluctant to participate in the global *jihād*⁸⁹. In addition to the evidence of having carried out minimal actions against international targets⁹⁰, there is the fact that, despite the fact that its ideology orbits Salafist jihadism, its social message is still intoxicated by a strong ethnicity based on the North-South difference—which is ultimately strengthened by religious divergences—and this is what really attracts its followers. Santé concludes that Boko Haram's rapprochement with DAESH has been driven more by survival and necessity than by conviction⁹¹.

Regarding its composition, some authors claim that the number of Boko Haram members and troops is unknown⁹². However, it is clear to them that, given the type of massive attacks they carry out and the many casualties they have suffered in recent years at the hands of the Nigerian Armed and Security Forces, there is no shortage of candidates to swell their ranks. The majority of its members are young people with economic aspirations, with political or religious issues taking second place⁹³. However, there are also many cases where there is a severe lack of identity and personal fulfilment, finding an attractive message in the discourse of such organisations⁹⁴. For their part, the majority are Nigerian nationals—mainly ethnic groups from the north—but there are also Muslims from neighbouring countries such as Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Nor should we forget the unusually high proportion of women and children within the organisation—something that contrasts with other terrorist groups⁹⁵— which, as mentioned above, are mainly used for suicide terrorist actions and, to a large extent, these troops come from abduction.

87 García Reguera, J.M. *Op. cit.* p. 22.

88 Del Prado Higuera, C. and Sánchez de Rojas Díaz, E. *Op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.

89 This is the view of Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

90 With the exception of the attack on the UN headquarters in Abuja in August 2011, which killed 26 people, Boko Haram has not perpetrated any other major international attacks. Thus, unlike other groups, Boko Haram has not attacked other Western countries. Rather, it is the brutality of its actions—such as the abduction of 276 girls from the Chibok orphanage (2014)— that has earned it international condemnation and inclusion on the respective lists of terrorist organisations. Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

91 Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

92 As Echeverría Jesús, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 7, or Torregrosa López, F.J., *et al. Op. cit.*, p. 72.

93 Mesa García, B. *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

94 Torregrosa López, F.J., *et al. Op. cit.*, p. 72.

95 Institute for Economics and Peace (2019). *Op. cit.*

Attacks perpetrated by the group

According to the recently published Global Terrorism Index, the number of terrorist attacks in Nigeria from 2007 to 2019 was 4,383, resulting in a total number of 23,354 deaths⁹⁶. Furthermore, the economic impact of terrorism in Nigeria is estimated at \$141,889.4 million, making Nigeria the largest victim of terrorism in Africa⁹⁷. For its part, UNHCR⁹⁸ offers figures that are close to those given –it states that there have been 28,000 deaths in total at the hands of Boko Haram– and also provides the figure of more than 2,000 women and girls kidnapped, as well as mentioning the humanitarian crisis that the country is experiencing. It notes that some 7.1 million people have been affected by the conflict, 276,850 are refugees and 2.5 million are displaced in regions of Nigeria far from the conflict.

Analysis of the terrorist group Boko Haram

Context in which the group originates: Nigeria's fragility

In 2004, Bin Laden himself declared that Nigeria was «one of the most prepared countries for Jihad»⁹⁹. Certainly, a number of conditions exist in this country that make it a real breeding ground for insurgency and terrorist movements of the calibre of Boko Haram.

On the one hand, Nigeria is an artificial country within sub-Saharan Africa, whose current borders are inherited from the colonial era¹⁰⁰. Nigeria was a British colony until 1960, when it became an independent, presidential federal republic¹⁰¹. In this sense, Nigeria is not a state that has formed around a particular nation or a more or less homogenous social group, but one that, replicating British rule, brings together a range of ethnicities - some with historical tribal and state entities – around the lower reaches and delta of the Niger River.

Within the existing cultural diversity –some 250 ethnic groups– the majority ethnic groups are the Hausa and Fulani in the north (33% of the total population), Igbo in the

96 To these must be added combat deaths, around 35,000, according to the Institute For Economics And Peace (2019). *Op. cit.*

97 *Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the Impact of the Terrorism*. New York, Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP Report 75). P. 36. Available at: <https://visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2020-web-1.pdf>

98 *El Terror de Boko Haram en Nigeria*. Geneva, La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados. Available at: <https://eacnur.org/es/labor/emergencias/el-terror-de-boko-haram-en-nigeria>

99 Quoted by Echeverría Jesús, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

100 Martínez Peñas, L. (2009). Amenazas a la estabilidad en la Nigeria actual. *Athena Intelligence Journal*, vol. 3, issue 1, p. 71.

101 Torregrosa López, F.J., *et al. Op. cit.*, p. 70.

southeast (12%) and Yoruba in the southwest (31%), each with their own language¹⁰². It is precisely because of this diversity that it is a federal republic. Moreover, the north and south of the country are quite different in terms of ecosystems – savannah in the north, in the Sahel, and jungle in the south, in the Gulf of Guinea. In addition to this natural border, there is another cultural border that has been of real importance for the future of the Nigerian people and for the emergence of Boko Haram, i.e. the religious differences between north and south. The north, with a closer link to the empires in Mali, has traditionally been Muslim, while the south, with more foreign influence in the past –predominantly British– is mostly Christian –from different churches– and animist¹⁰³. Likewise, north and south have also been differentiated by the practice of two different socio-economic activities: north, transhumant livestock farming, and south, agriculture. Historically in the Sahel, both activities have generated great social conflict –as the practice of one is detrimental to the practice of the other– and climate change is exacerbating this as the progressive desertification of the savannah pushes pastoralist communities to the more fertile south¹⁰⁴.

On the other hand, Nigeria is a powerful country, but only in appearance. In reality it is a «giant with feet of clay»¹⁰⁵. It is one of the largest in Africa and also the most populous on the continent, with more than 200 million inhabitants. Economically, Nigeria is the highest GDP state in Africa, ahead of such prosperous economies as Egypt and South Africa¹⁰⁶, and has recorded an average annual growth rate of around 5.7% over the last two decades¹⁰⁷. It is also Africa's largest oil producer and the world's sixth largest exporter. It has one of the largest oil reserves in the world¹⁰⁸, and in addition to this natural wealth there are large deposits of natural gas, coal, timber and gold. Yet, despite all this, Nigeria is home to the world's largest population in extreme poverty, at 87 million and growing, with half of the population subsisting on less than two dollars a day¹⁰⁹.

102 Kabunda, M. *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

103 Torregrosa López, F.J., *et al. Op. cit.*, p. 70.

104 Santé Abal, J.M. (2017). *Op. cit.*, p. 115.

105 Kabunda, M. *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

106 Datos comparativos de PIB bruto extraídos de *Economía y datos de países: UA – Unión Africana*. Datosmacro. Available at: <https://datosmacro.expansion.com/paises/grupos/union-africana>

107 Average annual economic growth calculation obtained from *GDP growth (% p.a.) - Nigeria*. Washington D.C., World Bank. Available at: <https://datos.bancomundial.org/indicador/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2020&locations=NG&start=2000>

108 Rodríguez, N. (2015). *Boko Haram: crecimiento, desarrollo y conflicto en Nigeria*. New York, Researchgate. P. 3. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275959422_Boko_Haram_Crecimiento_Desarrollo_y_Conflicto_en_Nigeria

109 *Economic and commercial information. Nigeria. Structure of the offer*. Madrid, ICEX. Available at: <https://www.icex.es/icex/es/navegacion-principal/todos-nuestros-servicios/informacion-de-mercados/paises/navegacion-principal/el-pais/informacion-economica-y-comercial/estructura-de-la-oferta/index.html?idPais=NG#4>

The large revenues derived from the production and export of natural resources, especially crude oil, although they have been the engine of Nigerian economic growth, have certainly not led to the country's development, but rather have generated a flawed economy, increasingly dependent on this sector and, therefore, scarcely diversified¹¹⁰. The primary sector continues to account for the majority of the labour force –approximately 70% of the workforce– which is a clear indication of a low level of development¹¹¹. In addition, the poor state of the country's infrastructure, the lack of electricity supply due to the problems of generating energy on their own –despite the country's vast natural resources– the low literacy rate, the lack of food and the need to import it, and the lack of quality of its industry should also be highlighted. However, the 2019 Human Development Report ranks Nigeria among the countries with the lowest development index in the world, at 158 out of 189, with a development index of 0.534¹¹².

Economic inequality is another endemic problem in Nigeria. Thus, for example, it is estimated that the richest 20% of the population accumulates 42.4% of the country's income, while the poorest 20% accumulates only 7.1%¹¹³. The World Bank estimates that 40.1% of the population lives below the poverty line, i.e. below the median income. Similarly, inequality is also reproduced at the regional level, with the poverty rate being higher in the northern states than in the south¹¹⁴.

It is in this context of impoverishment and great socio-economic inequalities, as well as strong cultural contradictions, that the political crisis in which this country has been mired practically since its birth must be understood. In Africa, a patrimonialist conception of power has normally prevailed, and the Nigerian authorities –Nigeria is ranked as the 25th most corrupt state in the world¹¹⁵– have, of course, displayed it. Seen in this light, struggles for control of resources in favour of a particular ethnic group, via secession –for example, that of Biafra between 1967 and 1970– or by means of a coup d'état, have been a constant feature of its history. However, the country has known democratic normality only since 1999, when Abasanjo became the first democratically elected president. However, even in the 21st century, Abuja has continued to

110 As a result of this lack of diversification, the Nigerian economy is very sensitive to oil price fluctuations, which explains the recession the country went through in 2016 and 2020 when oil prices plummeted. Diplomatic Information Office (2021). *Country profile - Nigeria - Federal Republic of Nigeria*. Madrid, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation. P. 2. Available at: http://www.exteriores.gob.es/documents/fichaspais/nigeria_ficha%20pais.pdf

111 Santé Abal, J.M. (2017). *Op. cit.*, p. 106.

112 *Human Development Report 2019*. New York, United Nations Development Programme. P. 27. Available at: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2019_overview_-_spanish.pdf

113 Income distribution data extracted from *Nigeria - GINI index*. Knoema. Available at: <https://knoema.es/atlas/Nigeria/topics/Pobreza/Desigualdad-del-ingreso/%C3%8Dndice-GINI>

114 ICEX. *Op. cit.*

115 Corruption data offered by Echeverría Jesús, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

face insurgent movements in the south of the country, especially over the control of oil, such as the secessionist reminiscences of Biafra or the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), a struggle which, of course, adds to the growing Islamic radicalism in the north of Nigeria¹¹⁶.

Immersed in power struggles, the Nigerian state has barely developed its public sector¹¹⁷, so that the federal administration is unable to provide basic public services (health, education, clean water, electricity, etc.) to its citizens. This is especially evident in areas far from the political and economic centre of the country (northern Nigeria and areas around Lake Chad), where state presence is practically non-existent. It is in these marginalised areas where feelings of neglect by public administrations have surfaced the most, which, together with the high perception of corruption in the institutions, has favoured distrust and disconnection from the state¹¹⁸. As in other cases –for example, Hezbollah in Lebanon– non-state actors fill this vacuum by acting as a social network of containment and mutual aid, recruiting supporters for their cause¹¹⁹.

Nor should we ignore the deterioration of human rights and the rule of law in Nigeria¹²⁰, a country that has been characterised by the use of force not monopolised by the state and the abusive practices of the Armed and Security Forces¹²¹.

Overall, we can conclude that Nigeria is a fragile state¹²², with an economic engine –natural resources– that, as it has been managed, does not allow for the equitable distribution of income or the generation of national wealth, and where poverty and inequality have come together with cultural differences to generate a highly conflictive context that has prevented the adequate development of the public sector and the guarantee of human and civil rights. In this scenario, there has been a proliferation of psychocultural dispositions unfavourable to the rejection of violence, little legitimacy of official institutions, and a social discourse based on difference and oriented towards

116 Boko Haram was neither the first –they have the precedent of the *Yan Tatsinesect*– nor the only Muslim religious terrorist group that has prevailed during this time – there are the so-called Nigerian Taliban or the first split of Boko Haram materialised in Ansaru. Torregrosa López, F.J., *et al. Op. cit.*, p. 70.

117 Nigeria's public services score poorly (8.9) in the *Fragile States Index*. Washington D.C., Fund For Peace (Annual Report 2019). P. 43. Available at: <https://fundforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/9511904-fragilestatesindex.pdf>

118 Mahmood, O.S. and Christian Ani, S. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

119 Rodríguez, N. *Op. cit.*, p. 3-4.

120 Respect for human rights and the rule of law in Nigeria also receives a poor score (8.3) in the cited *Fragile States Index* from 2019.

121 Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

122 Version corroborated by the 2019 *Fragile States Index*, which rates Nigeria as a state on alert (red), with a fragility score of 98.5 according to its state fragility index.

the reinforcement of one's own group, generating an «us» and a «them»¹²³. It now seems that this discourse is articulated more along religious rather than traditional ethnic lines.

Boko Haram as a further destabilising factor

Given the north-south differences, where ethnic distinctions are reinforced by religious differences, Boko Haram's rhetoric has further energised traditional inter-communal clashes in Nigeria¹²⁴. Thus, it is worth noting that, in addition to power struggles, at a more micro level infighting between communities has been another constant in their history¹²⁵. Boko Haram has thus further eroded this already steep landscape.

It has been unusually successful in exploiting the religious cause, but its mobilisation has really been achieved because of the lack of legitimacy of institutions and because of political, social and economic inequality between north and south¹²⁶. Arguments such as the imposition of *Sharia* and the path of *Jihad* as a solution to the problems affecting these peoples, or the search for purity of identity, arguing that they were contaminated by the malicious «Western education», reveal a rather ethnicist message that is perfectly intertwined with the religious-political. As a result, it has fuelled not only inter-communal conflict between different confessionals –Christians and Muslims– and with Islam's own adherents, but also the country's traditional entrenched ethnic conflict.

Yet Boko Haram has further fractured and polarised the Nigerian population. But not only that. The scale of its casualties, as well as the humanitarian crisis that has resulted from its activity –with thousands of refugees and millions of internally displaced persons causing further regional imbalance and destabilisation– have reached the dimensions of a full-blown civil war. Nigerian northerners have thus lived in a state of constant fear and exception in recent years.

For their part, the Nigerian armed forces and police have seen their legitimacy further eroded. Its arbitrary and indiscriminate pattern of action partly explains the climate of violence¹²⁷. We have already seen how the authorities' wrongdoing in 2009 spurred the group to engage in violence under the banner of *jihad* in order to

123 Santé Abal, J.M. (2018). *Op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

124 Echeverría Jesús, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

125 Outside the political orbit, various Nigerian ethnic communities have clashed over control of the –legal and illegal– oil business in the Niger Delta. On the other hand, in Plateau State, the «middle belt» of the religious frontier, violent confrontations between Muslim herdsmen and Christian farmers have intensified since the 21st century. Martínez Peñas, L. *Op. cit.*, pp. 78 and 80.

126 Santé Abal, J.M. 2018. *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

127 *Ibid*, pp. 15-16.

achieve its aims. On another occasion, in 2013, the declaration of a state of emergency in the north of the country brought further arbitrariness by giving the green light to search or raid suspects and commit all kinds of human rights violations against alleged criminals or sympathisers of the group¹²⁸. In turn, the militarisation of northern states has exacerbated problems such as delayed return home, more displaced people, or difficulties in developing cross-border trade due to established border control, all of which increase general resentment against the authorities and increase the number of targets susceptible to recruitment by Boko Haram or other violent groups¹²⁹.

Both the national and local economies have been affected by this conflict. On a general level, the instability of the country discourages potential international investors, and violence and the risk of kidnapping lead to the country being labelled as dangerous, thus minimising the arrival of Western foreigners as tourists or skilled labour¹³⁰. This prevents the arrival of foreign capital and reduces the country's chances of modernisation. To these opportunity costs must logically be added the direct costs arising from the destruction of infrastructure and private property, as well as the indirect costs arising from the cost of military operations.

Regarding the local economy, border restrictions following the declaration of the state of emergency have hampered the traditional trade in fish and peppers that locals carry out with neighbouring countries, restrictions that are additional to the fees that terrorists unilaterally impose on traders to allow them to pass¹³¹. Other bans, such as cycling and night-time mobility restrictions, have further contributed to local suffocation. Equally, the economic potential of northern Nigeria will be limited by the number of deaths, migration, subsequent insecurity and loss of property in the region. Thus, for example, the impossibility of returning home will result in the loss of a new harvest, with all that this entails for a farmer¹³². In addition, the existence of Boko Haram and other terrorist actors is fuelling the growth of illicit activities, including the worrying drug trade¹³³.

However, it can turn the situation around thanks to the weakness of the group. Thus, «it has recently become accepted that Boko Haram is decimated, short of territory, broken into groups that go beyond a simple split into two major factions and that it only seeks soft targets, as opposed to its strength on the battlefield in particularly

128 Mesa García, B. *Op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

129 *Watch List 2017*. Brussels: International Crisis Group (Special Report No. 3). P.12). Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/3-watch-list-2017>

130 Torregrosa López, F.J., *et al. Op. cit.*, p. 73.

131 Mesa García, B. *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

132 International Crisis Group (2017). *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

133 Echeverría Jesús, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

tough years such as 2014 and 2015»¹³⁴. This is partly true. In recent years, the *Institute for Economics and Peace* has recorded a drop in the number of terrorist attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram, as well as a decrease in their effectiveness, which it attributes to the dismemberment of the group and the greater effectiveness of the authorities in their fight against the terrorist phenomenon¹³⁵. Some groups are also in negotiation with the government, and the amnesty campaign is helping the progressive redemption of combatants into the Armed Forces¹³⁶.

However, it should also be added that Shekau's splintering remains particularly lethal and active, even if it now tends to concentrate on easier targets¹³⁷. All this while the loss of territory has favoured the spread of the group and its splits, multiplying its bases and presence in neighbouring countries such as Cameroon and Niger and, to a lesser extent, also Chad¹³⁸. This drags destabilisation into those other countries –already unstable enough as it is– that are currently most affected by their terrorist attacks, and turns what was Boko Haram into a transnational terrorist phenomenon. Equally, the organisation's greater weakness is pushing it to become more dependent on the global jihadist cause, and groups such as Al Qaeda are already hoping to increase their influence in the area¹³⁹.

The current state of the international fight against Boko Haram

To provide some background, the international fight against Boko Haram is mainly led by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), a combined military force composed of the Lake Chad countries (Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and the Republic of Chad) plus a modest contribution from Benin. This force was officially born in 2014¹⁴⁰. However, it became operational throughout 2015, coinciding with the peak of Boko Haram and its oath of allegiance to DAESH. In that year, the MNJTF was finally authorised by the African Union, given a concept of operations, and the new executive of Muhammadu Bukhari gave it a definitive boost in Nigeria. It has since been endorsed by the United Nations, supported both politically and financially by

134 García Reguera, J.M. *Op. cit.*, pp. 88.

135 Institute for Economics and Peace (2015). *Op. cit.*, and Institute for Economics and Peace (2019). *Op. cit.*

136 Mesa García, B. *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

137 International Crisis Group (2017). *Op. cit.*, p. II.

138 García Reguera, J.M. *Op. cit.*, p. 88.

139 International Crisis Group (2017). *Op. cit.*, p. II.

140 The MNJTF was created at the behest of its member states, which had previously modified the mandate of an existing multinational structure –the Multinational Joint Security Force– dedicated to fighting cross-border crime in Chad, so that it could take on the fight against Boko Haram. Mahmood, O.S. and Christian Ani, S. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

the European Union, and with the approval and technical support of the African Union Peace and Security Council¹⁴¹.

The military component of the MNJTF is headed by a Force Commander, always of Nigerian origin, accompanied by a Headquarters in N'djamena (Chad) for the command and control of the force. The latter, under the political supervision of the Lake Chad Basin Commission¹⁴², coordinates the operations of the troops provided by the Member States. For its part, the deployment pattern is divided into four sectors, each corresponding to the border portion of each State on Lake Chad, with each national contingent being positioned within its own border limits, where they have priority of action without prejudice to their possible deployment in another country. As for the size of the force, it reached 11,150 troops by the end of 2015, with Nigeria contributing 3,500 soldiers, Chad 3,000, Cameroon 2,650, Niger 1,000 and Benin 750¹⁴³. It also had an initial budget of \$700 million, which has been provided mainly by the Nigerian government, the European Union and unilaterally by other Western nations such as the United Kingdom¹⁴⁴.

The first military operations that the MNJTF was able to coordinate in 2015 and 2016 were successful to the extent that they prevented the spread of Boko Haram and favoured its atomisation, marking a turning point in the fight against the group. In contrast, the following international interventions of the MNJTF have not been successful. The reason lies in the terrorists' acquired ability to escape and retreat to more remote wilderness areas, and also, in part, in the inability of the Chadian states—especially Nigeria—to push for the reconstruction and return to normality of the recaptured territories, which hinders their full consolidation¹⁴⁵. As a result, the territory that Boko Haram initially effectively controlled has been reclaimed and abductees have been released, but the MNJTF's efforts against Boko Haram factions have stalled and the situation remains *status quo*¹⁴⁶.

141 Guerrero, A. (2019). *The regional military response against Boko Haram*. Granada, Global Strategy. P. 5. Available at: <https://global-strategy.org/la-respuesta-regional-militar-contra-boko-haram/>

142 The Lake Chad Basin Commission is the regional organisation for the Lake Chad Basin. It was created in 1964 by Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger and the Republic of Chad, and later expanded to include the Central African Republic and Libya. However, Benin, although a member of the MNJTF, is not part of the Commission. Its main mission is the joint management of Lake Chad and its water resources, the preservation and protection of its ecosystem, and the promotion of regional integration. For more information *Home page - About us*. N'djamena: Lake Chad Basin Commission. Available at: <https://cblt.org/about-us/>

143 Morales González, A. (2017). Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram. *Opinion Paper, Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies* (130/2017). Pp. 10-11. Available at: http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2017/DIEEEE0130-2017_MNJFT_contra_Boko_Haram_AlbertoMorales.pdf

144 *Ibid*, p. 12.

145 International Crisis Group (2020). *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

146 Mahmood, O.S. and Christian Ani, S. *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

Thus, the multiple factions into which Boko Haram has disintegrated are not yet fully defeated and may continue to generate problems and instability, now also in a wider radius than northern Nigeria after having consolidated as a transnational terrorist phenomenon. In fact, Operation *Yancin Tafki* («Enduring Freedom» in Hausa), the longest operation undertaken against ISWAP in the framework of the MNJTF and the longest operation ever carried out –lasting almost the whole of 2019– failed to produce lasting results. ISWAP was able to easily regroup and then attack Nigeria following the withdrawal of Chadian troops in Borno State. For its part, the army of the Republic of Chad received one of the bloodiest attacks of the conflict in March 2020 –with more than 90 casualties– when Shekau’s faction stormed the Chadian base of Bohama¹⁴⁷. The President of the Republic of Chad, Idriss Déby, then announced the launch of a new military operation –Wrath of Bohoma– this time alone, reflecting internal divergences within the MNJTF¹⁴⁸.

Against this backdrop, some analysts, such as experts from the International Crisis Group, advocate a paradigm shift in the international fight against the Boko Haram phenomenon in order to gain the trust and support of the population in the affected areas¹⁴⁹. Until now, international efforts have focused solely on the spectrum of counter-terrorism prosecution, with limited cooperation in all non-military responses¹⁵⁰. But the MNJTF’s mandate already envisages broader operations than military action, assigning the force to stabilise areas affected by the conflict with Boko Haram¹⁵¹. At this level, it should be noted that the MNJTF is actually structured into three main components (military, police and civilian), each with its own roles and responsibilities. In practice, however, the military is the only one that has been fully activated¹⁵². On the other hand, the military component of the MNJTF also faces other problems, which also detracts from the effectiveness of the international fight against Boko Haram factions¹⁵³.

Overall, the MNJTF is on a solid legal basis, has the potential to expand its role and become a genuine stabilisation force, is supported by the international community, and its military component has been successful in coordinating military efforts in Chad’s border areas and, on occasion –when combined military operations have been conducted– in fostering tactical cooperation between armies. However, as already mentioned, the MNJTF has been relegated to armed struggle only, and its military component suffers from other structural limitations. One of these limitations has

147 International Crisis Group (2020). *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

148 *Ibid*, p. 11.

149 *Ibid*, pp. 2 and 22.

150 Mahmood, O.S. and Christian Ani, S. *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

151 Morales González, A. *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

152 Guerrero, A. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

153 International Crisis Group (2020). *Op. cit.*, p. 2.

been the permanent lack of funds and delays in financing, which has fuelled recriminations between actors involved and has generated difficulties in the acquisition of material. Another problem, no less relevant, is the weakness of the chain of command. The force's units fight primarily in their own countries, and national commanders still hold considerable command, in many cases deciding when their units enter or leave international operations. This leads to other problems such as the brevity of operations, which prevents the consolidation of victories. Similarly, civilian control over the military component is weak. The Lake Chad Basin Commission has struggled to exert authority over force or curb abuses by soldiers who are still accountable to national hierarchies¹⁵⁴.

In short, although Boko Haram entered a phase of weakness, withdrawal and atomisation at the end of 2015, it continues to be a destabilising factor for Nigeria and neighbouring countries and, in general, for the entire Western Sahel region. The fight against this scourge is not over and needs a new impetus, for example by taking a more holistic approach and addressing structural problems with the multinational military force.

Conclusions

Contextual analysis of Nigeria shows the fragility of this state. Problems such as inequality in income distribution, poverty, the lack of legitimacy of public institutions, the lack of basic services and the erosion of the rule of law exacerbate the ethnic and religious contrast of a state that does not reflect the multinational reality on which it is based. In this abrupt panorama, in which violence has already become a way of life and hatred of others is already consolidated, the radical Islamist message of its first preacher, Mohammed Yusuf, struck a chord with a youth that is unemployed, impoverished, lacking in personal fulfilment and satisfaction, and disaffected from the public authorities.

Boko Haram took shape from 2002 onwards, initially as a sect of Muslim radicals, but without a violent projection. However, the poor performance of the Armed Forces and the federal police in 2009 unleashed the latent desire for violence embedded in the group. Such violence erupted in the form of *jihad*, and was a year later seconded by its second leader, Abubakar Shekau, who transformed Boko Haram into a truly lethal machine, acting on the principles of asymmetric warfare. Given the forcefulness shown in combat, the scale of the numbers killed and affected, and the number of combatants, we must affirm that we are faced with an insurgency in the north of the country that is highly organised and based on the use of terrorism. In that sense, what happened with Boko Haram could rise to the level of a civil war. Moreover, the

¹⁵⁴ International Crisis Group (2020). *Op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

group has shown no objection to engaging in a wide range of criminal activities, such as abducting women and children and using them as suicide bombers.

Thanks to the strength of its attacks, Boko Haram was able to control part of northern Nigeria by 2014, also drawing on transnational ties across Chad's porous borders. Under its takfirist ideal of purity, it also targeted the local Muslim population itself that did not follow its dictates, thus inserting a whole state of terror. At this point, in order to consolidate its territories, it resorted to the help of DAESH, pledging allegiance to this matrix of international terrorism. Given the turn of events, the international community mobilised to support Nigeria, resulting in the formation of a multinational counter-terrorism force with its neighbours, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). The combined military operations carried out by the MNJTF between 2015 and 2016 were able to contain Boko Haram and turn the situation around, coinciding with a time of weakness and internal dissidence within the terrorist organisation. This was the turning point in the fight against Boko Haram, marked by the group's atomisation, withdrawal and weakness.

While it is true that Boko Haram is at its lowest ebb, we cannot accept President Buhari's triumphalist discourse that the organisation is already defeated¹⁵⁵. Its various splits are still active and causing high numbers of casualties, and more worryingly, they have spread to adjacent countries. Boko Haram's interests are clearly localist and its discourse is religious as well as ethnicist, but it is developing a greater capacity for transnational action and there is a risk that its international projection will increase as a result of its greater dependence on global jihadism. Yet Boko Haram was born and nurtured by Nigeria's instability, but has in turn become a further destabilising factor in both the country and the Western Sahel region. In this sense, its significance is not only at the national level, but also at the international level.

Given the MNJTF's combat superiority, Boko Haram factions have decided to escape, increase their mobility and improve their ability to operate from other geographical locations. Thus, the military advance of Nigeria and the other Chadian states is intimately linked to the group's recent transnational character. They have proven to be far more resilient than the multinational force, knowing how to adapt their strategy to the circumstances. Thus, post-2016 military interventions have reduced their effectiveness, and the fight remains stagnant. Hence the need for a paradigm shift in the international fight against the Boko Haram phenomenon. However, we must not let our guard down. The fact that the various factions of Boko Haram remain in a corner is not synonymous with premature victory. Rather, as the experience of the Taliban in Afghanistan has shown, insurgent terrorist groups have the capacity to hold out in hiding and regain power when circumstances are more propitious.

Combating this threat will require a greater international effort, as well as much more comprehensive action that goes beyond combating the remnants of Boko Har-

155 Mesa García, B. *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

am. Although successful, the MNJTF's armed action risks generating a vicious circle that will again encourage the population to join the jihadist cause¹⁵⁶.

National reconstruction and stabilisation capacities need to be improved, and these missions need to be incorporated into the international cooperation agenda. Specifically, it requires: an effective demobilisation and reintegration programme for ex-combatants that goes hand in hand with restorative justice, assistance to the displaced and refugee population, patrolling and surveillance of the retaken areas, increased intelligence operations, implementation and expansion of public services, and reinforcement of the state presence in collusion with local authorities. More broadly, Nigeria and other affected governments will need to implement a prevention programme to help reduce levels of radicalisation, fight institutional corruption and organised crime, and even provide more democracy, rule of law and equity in their respective states to avoid the breeding ground of their fragility. For its part, the rest of the international community will have to ensure that these tasks are carried out, and will have to ensure that the necessary resources and funds are available to do so. Similarly, Chadian states should return to previous levels of military cooperation, and seek to address the structural problems afflicting the military component of the MNJTF.

Bibliographic references

Bibliography

Adewunmi Falode, J. (2016). The Nature of Nigeria's Boko Haram War, 2010-2015: A Strategic Analysis. *Perspectives On Terrorism*. February, vol. 10, issue 1, pp. 41-52.

Aznar Fernández-Montesinos, F. (2014). Doctrina y acción política. Pugnas sobre el islam verdadero. El salafismo. In the School of Advanced Defence Studies. *Safety and Defence Documents*, 62. Madrid, Ministry of Defence. Pp. 17-41.

Del Prado Higuera, C. and Sánchez de Rojas Díaz, E. (2018). *Terrorismo islamista: el caso de Al Gama 'a al Islamiyya*. Valencia, Tirant lo Blanch. ISBN 978-84-9190-145-7.

Echeverría Jesús, C. (2014). El desafío terrorista de Boko Haram en Nigeria. *Documento de Investigación del Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos* (02/2014). Available at: http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_investig/2014/DIEEEINV02-2014_Region_Africa_subsaariana_C.Echeverria.pdf

García Reguera, J.M. (2017). *Amenaza y reacción contra el terrorismo global y el crimen organizado*. Madrid, Centro de Estudios Financieros.

Guerrero, A. (2019). *La respuesta regional militar contra Boko Haram*. Granada, Global Strategy. Available at: <https://global-strategy.org/la-respuesta-regional-militar-contra-boko-haram/>

¹⁵⁶ International Crisis Group (2017). *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

Institute for Economics and Peace (2015). *Los cinco grupos terroristas más letales*. Madrid, esglobal. Available at: <https://www.esglobal.org/los-cinco-grupos-terroristas-mas-letales/>

— (2019). *Los grupos terroristas que más matan*. Madrid, esglobal. Available at: <https://www.esglobal.org/los-grupos-terroristas-que-mas-matan/>

Kabunda, M. (2011). Nigeria: petróleo, religión y divisiones étnicas. *Política Exterior*, March/April, vol. 25, issue 140, pp. 38-42.

Mahmood, O.S. and Christian Ani, S. (2018). *Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, Cooperation and Livelihoods*. Pretoria, Institute for Security Studies. Available at: <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/2018-07-06-research-report-1.pdf>

Martí Sempere, C. (2020). *Naturaleza, causas y evolución de los conflictos armados*. Madrid, Centro de Estudios Financieros.

Martínez Peñas, L. (2009). Threats to stability in today's Nigeria. *Athena Intelligence Journal*, vol. 3, issue 1, pp. 69-87.

Mesa García, B. (2016). Boko Haram, de milicia a grupo terrorista. *Opinion Paper, Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies* (33/2016). Available at: http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2016/DIEEEO33_2016_BokoHaram_DeMilicia_GrupoTerrorista_BeatrizMesa.pdf

Morales González, A. Fuerza Multinacional Conjunta (MNJTF) contra Boko Haram. *Opinion Paper, Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies* (130/2017). Available at: http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2017/DIEEEO130-2017_MNJTF_contra_Boko_Haram_AlbertoMorales.pdf

Pérez Ventura, Ó. (2014). *Boko Haram, el terror 'yihadista' en Nigeria*. Madrid, esglobal. Available at: <https://www.esglobal.org/boko-haram-el-terror-yihadista-en-nigeria/>

Rodríguez, N. (2015). *Boko Haram: crecimiento, desarrollo y conflicto en Nigeria*. New York, Researchgate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275959422_Boko_Haram_Crecimiento_Desarrollo_y_Conflicto_en_Nigeria

Santé Abal, J.M. (2017). Nigeria, elenco de conflictos. *Analysis Paper 26/2021, Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies* (03/2017). Available at: <file:///C:/Users/fuste/Downloads/Dialnet-NigeriaElencoDeConflictosJoseMariaSanteAbal-6057670.pdf>

— (2018). Boko Haram: movimiento ideológico, guerrilla insurgente y grupo terrorista. *Opinion Paper, Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies* (49/2018). Available at: http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2018/DIEEEO49-2018_Boko_Haram_JMSA.pdf

Summers, M. and Yagüe, J. (2020). Boko Haram and ISWAP: dos caras de la misma moneda. *Documento del Observatorio Internacional de Estudios sobre Terrorismo*

(13/2020). Available at: <https://observatorioterrorismo.com/eedyckaz/2020/08/Documento-OIET-13-20201.pdf>

Torregrosa López, F.J., *et al.* (2016). Boko Haram: análisis del fenómeno terrorista en Nigeria. *Revista Criminalidad*, vol. 58, issue 1, pp. 67-79.

Websites

GDP growth (% p.a.) - Nigeria. Washington D.C., World Bank. Available at: <https://datos.bancomundial.org/indicador/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2020&locations=NG&start=2000>

Economía y datos de países: UA – Unión Africana. Datosmacro. Available at: <https://datosmacro.expansion.com/paises/grupos/union-africana>

El Terror de Boko Haram en Nigeria. Geneva, La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados. Available at: <https://eacnur.org/es/labor/emergencias/el-terror-de-boko-haram-en-nigeria>

Global Terrorism Database. University of Maryland, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Available at: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?search=boko+haram&sa.x=38&sa.y=13>

Home page – About us. N'djamena, Lake Chad Basin Commission. Available at: <https://cbllt.org/about-us/>

Economic and commercial information. Nigeria. Structure of the offer. Madrid, ICEX. Available at: <https://www.icex.es/icex/es/navegacion-principal/todos-nuestros-servicios/informacion-de-mercados/paises/navegacion-principal/el-pais/informacion-economica-y-comercial/estructura-de-la-oferta/index.html?idPais=NG#4>

Nigeria - Índice GINI. Knoema. Available at: <https://knoema.es/atlas/Nigeria/topics/Pobreza/Desigualdad-del-ingreso/%C3%8Dndice-GINI>

Takfirista. España, Observatorio de la Islmalofobia en los Medios, 2020. Available at: <http://www.observatorioislamofobia.org/glossary/takfirista/>

Official reports

Country profile - Nigeria - Federal Republic of Nigeria. Madrid, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, 2021. Available at: http://www.exteriores.gob.es/documents/fichaspais/nigeria_ficha%20pais.pdf

Fragile States Index. Washington D.C., Fund For Peace (Annual Report 2019). Available at: <https://fundforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/9511904-fragile-statesindex.pdf>

Global Peace Index 2020. New York, Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP Report 72). Available at: https://visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/GPI_2020_web.pdf

Global Terrorism Index 2017: Measuring the and Understanding the Impact of the Terrorism. New York, Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP Report 55). Available at: <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2017-11/apo-nid208941.pdf>

Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the Impact of the Terrorism. New York, Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP Report 75). Available at: <https://visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2020-web-1.pdf>

Human Development Report 2019. New York, United Nations Development Programme. Available at: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2019_overview_-_spanish.pdf

Watch List 2017. Brussels, International Crisis Group (Special Report No. 3). Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/3-watch-list-2017>

What Role for the Multinational Joint Task Force in Fighting Boko Haram? Brussels, International Crisis Group, 2020 (Crisis Group Africa Report No. 291). Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/291-what-role-multinational-joint-task-force-fighting-boko-haram>

Article received: 2 August 2021.

Article accepted: 5 October 2021.
