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THE U.S. ROLE IN HELPING NIGERIA CONFRONT BOKO HARAM AND OTHER THREATS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

OF THE

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THE U.S. ROLE IN HELPING NIGERIA CONFRONT BOKO HARAM AND OTHER THREATS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2016

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH,
GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:31 p.m., in room 2255, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Christopher H. Smith (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. SMITH. The subcommittee will come to order, and welcome. A number of members are on their way, so I will just start with my opening comments and then yield to Ms. Bass and other members as they come in.

Let me just say at the outset—and I will be introducing, obviously, all of our distinguished witnesses after opening statements—but I just want to welcome back to the U.S. House of Representatives a 17-term, 34-year Member of the House, Frank Wolf, who is truly the William Wilberforce of the U.S. Congress. He continues that work now, as we all know, as the distinguished senior fellow for the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative and the Jerry and Susie Wilson chair in religious freedom at Baylor University.

Frank Wolf, as I think many of you know, is the author of the landmark law on religious freedom. It is called the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

That legislation was strongly opposed by the Clinton administration. I remember chairing hearings on it. He wrote the language and did a magnificent job shepherding it both through the House and the Senate, but it was opposed by the administration.

But at the end of the day, with a nose up, the President, in this case President Clinton, signed it, and it has made all the difference in the world. And as I think many of you know, it not only created the International Religious Freedom office and, obviously, established a number of mutually reinforcing sanctions, 18 of them that now the President has in his toolbox to promote religious freedom, but it also established an independent commission, the purpose of which is to really advise Congress, and, frankly, the President, to be a clear, nonambiguous voice about religious freedom.

And all of that, every bit of that is attributable to Frank Wolf. And I want to thank him again for that extraordinary effort.

I saw firsthand his devotion to human rights on a myriad of ways, including trips with Frank to prison camps all over the world, including in the Soviet Union. The infamous Perm Camp 35, where Natan Sharansky spent so many years of his life and other political prisoners, a godforsaken place in Perm Oblast, a place that no Americans had been to simply because it was off limits to everyone. Over the course of 2 years he negotiated his way, and I joined him, to Perm Camp, where we met with prisoners, videotaped them. And one by one they actually got out of that prison camp.

I saw it again when we were in a Gulag in China, Beijing Prison Number 1. There were at least 40 Tiananmen Square activists there who were in servitude. They were truly being exploited. And that was closed, that Beijing Prison Number 1, because Frank had the good sense to ask the warden—his name was Zhou—for a box of what they were producing there, socks and jelly shoes, which were all the rage among young girls at the time in this country and in Europe for export. He brought that over to the commissioner to the State Department, they put an import ban on it, and Beijing Prison Number 1 closed its doors because we have a law that precludes importation of slave-made goods. That was Frank Wolf.

We saw it again in Vukovar, a city that was under siege by Slobodan Milosevic. After that we met with Slobodan Milosevic—and he lied through his teeth, war criminal that he is—and made strong and persistent efforts to mitigate the effects of that war, because right after Croatia, which is where Vukovar is, they went into Bosnia and did more killing. But Frank was right at the forefront of that in Romania and so many other countries.

And Africa, the first Member of Congress to push so aggressively, and Sam Brownback was part of that effort as well, to say that in Sudan there is a genocide going on and we not only need to raise our voices, we need to put into place policies that will hopefully end that genocide.

So Frank Wolf is truly a leader. He is a man of deep Christian faith. He walks the walk in a way worthy of his calling. He also chaired, as I think many of you may know, several Appropriations subcommittees, including Commerce, Justice, and Science, his last perch, leadership post, and wrote a number of laws, including nine major appropriations bills.

So a man of great legislative accomplishment. But it is his heart for the weak and disenfranchised and his advocacy for religious freedom that has and continues to make all the difference in the world.

So, Mr. Wolf, welcome.

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, as we all know, with more than 180 million people, roughly divided between Muslims and Christians, and including numerous ethnic groups.

Nigeria's Muslim population is among the largest in the world and has likely overtaken Egypt as the largest on the continent. Lagos, its commercial center, is among the world's largest cities. Nigeria also is Africa's largest economy and largest oil producer. Nigeria has long been a top troop contributor to U.N. peacekeeping operations and is a major political force on the continent.

I would note, parenthetically, one time in Darfur I myself hooked up with a group of peacekeepers and they were from Nigeria. I was in Sarajevo during the Balkan War and there was the same man, Major Ajumbo. So they really have distinguished themselves as providers of peacekeepers who have done great work around the world.

Unfortunately, that stability that they have striven for has been under increasing threat in recent years. Disgruntled elements of mostly Muslim Kanuri ethnic group in 2003 created Boko Haram, a violent extremist group based in the northeast.

Boko Haram is considered the deadliest terrorist group in the world, responsible for 6,664 deaths last year alone. Neglect of the region has limited potential support of the Kanuris and other ethnic groups for government efforts to combat the terror threats in northern Nigeria.

Elsewhere in northern Nigeria, Fulani herdsmen have clashed with a multitude of ethnic groups of farmers, multi-ethnic farmers, leaving 3,000 people dead since 2010.

Meanwhile, the growing number of confrontational Shiites in northern Nigeria recently resulted in a December 2015 massacre in Zaria in Kaduna State in which an as yet undetermined number of civilians and military were killed. The number of dead is believed to be in the hundreds, but there are several ongoing investigations of this incident.

This subcommittee has long held hearings, many hearings on various aspects of Nigeria's situation, including specifically attacks by Boko Haram. Staff Director Greg Simpkins and I have visited Abuja and Jos several times. Jos is a city where numerous churches were fire bombed by Boko Haram and I know Mr. Wolf has just been there with his delegation.

Today's hearing will examine the ongoing fight against the terrorist group Boko Haram and other conflicts in northern Nigeria in an effort to determine the best way for the U.S. Government to help address these challenges in the context of our overall Nigeria policy.

The Nigerian Government has struggled to respond to the continuing threat posed by Boko Haram. U.S. officials have expressed continuing concern about Boko Haram's impact in Nigeria and neighboring countries and its ties with other extremist groups, notably the self-proclaimed Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, to which Boko Haram pledged allegiance in 2015.

The recruitment of Nigerians by other transnational terrorist groups also has been a concern. The State Department designated Boko Haram and a splinter faction, Ansaru, as Foreign Terrorist Organizations, or FTOs, in November 2013 following sustained efforts by this subcommittee. I would note, parenthetically, the day we were going to mark up a resolution that I had introduced to so designate, they made that proclamation. It was 2 to 3 years late in coming.

The U.S. Government has made every effort to support Nigeria's battle against Boko Haram, but our counterterrorism training was suspended by the previous Nigerian Government. It has been resumed, I am happy to say, and it is much needed. Boko Haram commenced a territorial offensive in mid-2014 that Nigerian forces

struggled to reverse until early 2015, when regional military forces, primarily from neighboring Chad, launched an offensive against the group. The Nigerian Army has since reclaimed most of the territory, although many areas remain insecure.

One of the witnesses today, Emmanuel Ogebe, recently told of his meeting with a Christian woman named Saratu in a refugee camp in northern Nigeria: "She had just returned from searching for her four children, ages 14, 11, 8, and 7, who had been abducted by Boko Haram from an attack on her town in 2014. She traveled to the front lines," he went on to say, "asking soldiers if they saw her kids. She went to IDP camps. This is the life of many today in northern Nigeria."

We recently commemorated the tragic 2-year anniversary of the kidnapping of nearly 300 schoolgirls from the town of Chibok in northeastern Nigeria. We have with us today Sa'a, one of the girls who escaped this mass kidnapping. But many of her classmates were not so fortunate. Many of these schoolgirls are believed to have been forced to convert to Islam and marry to Boko Haram fighters or prostituted by this egregious group. We now receive reports that some of them may be used as suicide bombers.

As if the menace posed by Boko Haram was not enough of a challenge for the government of President Buhari there is the growing crisis in Nigeria's Middle Belt, largely caused by clashes between Fulani herdsmen and a multi-ethic group of farmers. Some of the violence is a result of conflicts over cattle rustling on encroachment on private land. Nevertheless, according to the current Global Terrorism Index, Fulani militants operating in Nigeria and Central African Republic are considered the fourth-deadliest militant group in Africa behind Boko Haram, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and al-Shabaab.

More recently, a new threat has been added to the volatile northern region. Although the majority of Nigerian Muslims are Sunni, there are between 1 million and 3 million Shia consecrated in Kano, Nassarawa, and Kaduna States. A member of the recent staff delegations that visited Kaduna found a high level of concern by Sunni Muslim leaders about what they described as an assertive Shia presence reportedly supported by Iran.

Since the 1980s, the Shiite Islamic Movement in Nigeria, or IMN, has existed as a state within a state. Despite being a professed nonviolent movement, the IMN has made itself a public nuisance, blocking roads on the days they have processions, thus preventing citizens from accessing medical care in a timely fashion. It is for these social and religious reasons why the group is not sympathetic, even in light of what is believed to have occurred last December.

Although the details of what happened in the town of Zaria appear to be murky, the U.S. Embassy beliefs that Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Tukur Buratai was attending a graduation ceremony in Zaria during the anticipated IMN religious procession. A Nigerian security force deployed to protect Buratai's route had an altercation with IMN members. Claiming that there was an assassination attempt on Burati, the Nigerian military opened fire. Again, the exact number of people killed is not known, but this is a very serious potential escalation in that region.

I would like to now yield to my very distinguished colleague, Ms. Bass, for any opening comments she might have.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Chairman, thank you for conducting this critical and once again timely hearing.

I welcome the witnesses and look forward to your perspectives on the deterioration of peace and security, particularly in northern Nigeria.

We know that Nigeria as a whole is a vibrant, dynamic country aspiring toward democracy, as evidenced by the 2015 elections. And as one of your expert witnesses has cited in the past, the country's vibrant private sector, civil society, labor unions, and professional associations are essential ingredients for a democratic society.

Also, Nigeria, with some 250 different ethnicities, is the most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa with a population in excess of 180 million people. In the United States, Nigerian-Americans compose in part a well-educated and entrepreneurial diaspora, and Nigerians are known to be some of the most educated immigrants that come to the United States.

Nigeria has long been an important economic ally of the U.S., and Abuja is also a critically important recipient of and leading regional actor in the U.S. and regional counterterrorism initiatives.

However, over the past few years international commentary about this regional economic powerhouse has had to address increasingly the murderous attacks by Boko Haram on the impoverished communities of northeast Nigeria, the kidnapping of Chibok girls, and many others. I imagine that our colleague Frederica Wilson will probably be here with us today, and she has led the effort in the House to fight for the return of the Chibok girls.

I have been dismayed when I hear of children being used as suicide bombers. And I have to say "suicide" implies that they consented. And to me, I think "human bombs" is a more accurate description of this atrocity.

All of these crises are exacerbating ethno-religious differences in the north and pose strong challenges to the government of President Buhari. His administration must not only contend with the terrorist activity of Boko Haram, but must address thoroughly the humanitarian plight of the growing population of internally displaced individuals in Nigeria. To sidestep their plight could result in further alienating these communities and prompt them to support terrorist activities.

Again, all of these complex issues must be dealt with impartially, succinctly, and swiftly by the Government of Nigeria, mindful always of the delicate ethnic, socioeconomic, and sectarian divide in the country.

Of particular interest to me, and perhaps the witnesses can address, why these issues, notably the longstanding antagonism between the pastoralists and farmers, are coming to a head so violently and at this particular time and what role growing sectarian differences play in the situation.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses today regarding the recommended strategic next steps to be taken by the United States and the Buhari Government. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Ms. Bass.

Mr. Meadows.

Mr. MEADOWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I will be brief.

But I want to give a little bit of hope in that there are hearings that go on time and time and time again, and some would suggest that the hearings go on with very little fruit. But I also would like to note that a number of hearings at the direction of Chairman Smith have not only produced fruit, but produced lasting fruit.

And so it is your leadership, Chairman Smith, and obviously your leadership as well, Ms. Bass, that I applaud.

Mr. Wolf, I want to say it is so good to see you again. And there is no one who has fought more diligently for the rights of those who perhaps can't speak for themselves throughout his career as Frank Wolf. And so it is this body who has lost out at your new endeavor, but it is certainly the world's gain, because you continue to fight with passion for those that are suffering without regard to personal well-being. And so I just want to say thank you for being here.

But perhaps more telling than that will be the witness that has, unfortunately, got to experience a lot of this tragedy that we will be talking about here today. I think there will be no more compelling testimony than to actually hear from someone who has seen it up close and personal. And for America to act, they must first understand and feel the horror and the passion that so many in Nigeria and throughout northern Africa feel when there is persecution that goes on.

So you have my commitment that not only will this be a hearing, but it will be something that we will continue to follow up with on a bipartisan manner to try to make sure that results are significant and lasting, and ultimately that fear does not reign in the hearts of little girls and others in Nigeria.

And so I want to thank all of the witnesses for being here and express my apology, we are actually monitoring this, I have another hearing to go to in about 10 minutes. But we will be monitoring and following up.

And thank you for your leadership, both of you.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Meadows, thank you for your leadership, and hopefully you can get back after that other hearing.

I would like to recognize Mr. Donovan, the gentleman from New York.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I echo my colleague Mr. Meadows' remarks. And I am going to yield the remainder of my time so we give the witnesses more time to speak and testify. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. I would like to yield to the chairman of the Congressional International Religious Freedom Caucus, Congressman Trent Franks of Arizona.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank all of you for being here today. It is an honor for me to be here among you. And I also will point out one Frank Wolf in the audience. I think there should be a 70-foot bronze statue of him out in front of Capitol, because he has been such a warrior, as Mr. Meadows spoke so succinctly, for those who don't have a voice, for those who need to be defended but there is no one there to defend them. There is nothing more noble than that.

Mr. Chairman, I guess I'd just ask for diplomatic immunity, because Boko Haram has terrorized innocent Nigerians for over a decade and clear links were made between the group and other insidious terrorist organizations many years ago. And I was very disappointed in the administration's response to Boko Haram. Our office was engaged on this issue for a number of years, and when we approached Hillary Clinton's State Department the response was excruciatingly slow. They just simply didn't consider Boko Haram at the time a significant terrorist threat and played down our concerns.

In response to a letter from Members of Congress in 2012 the State Department said, "The religious tension, while real, should not be mistaken as the primary source of violence in Nigeria." While there are other certain factors contributing to the abhorrent violence against innocent men, women and children in Nigeria, Mr. Chairman, religious motivation should not be dismissed so callously.

Boko Haram has since publicly supported the Islamic State, which calls for the extermination of Christians and Jews and others who do not conform to their radical ideology. And the State Department also noted support provided to Nigerian's law enforcement entities to enhance counterterrorism efforts, but what do we have to show for those efforts? There has been no real follow-up in any way that I know of.

According to the 2015 Global Terrorism Index, two of the top deadliest organizations in the world operate in Nigeria. Boko Haram ranked first as the most deadly terrorist organization in 2014. The Fulani militants, who I am sure we will hear more about today, ranked fourth.

To this end, I guess I just remain, Mr. Chairman, very disappointed that the administration has failed to respond appropriately to this threat posed by Boko Haram and other terrorist organizations. Our outreach and letter of concern happened over a year before the Chibok girls were kidnapped. If the response had been timely, only God knows whether the tragedy that happened there could have been prevented. And I think it is just another disgraceful chapter in the administration's shameful response to the spread of terrorism throughout the world.

So it is my sincere hope that this country, which has long served as an impetus for freedom and justice around the world, will renew its moral conviction, and even its political will, to combat Boko Haram and other organizations who threaten the peace and security of innocent Nigerians or innocent people anywhere.

To our panelists, I again want to express my gratitude to each of you for your efforts. I look forward to hearing what you have to say, but I am in the same situation Mr. Meadows is. That is kind of reality around here. I am not going to be able to stay for the hearing.

But I thank all of you for being here. I suppose the hardest part that you face is knowing that there are some innocent people out there that help will never come for in time. That is a heartbreaker. That moves my soul very deeply. That is the hardest part.

I don't know how we really deal with that emotionally or otherwise. It should break our hearts, but it should not paralyze us and

prevent us from reaching out and helping out all that that we can. And the fact that you are doing that is, I think, a profound honor in your own right. So God bless every one of you and thank you.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Franks.

I would like to now welcome our distinguished witnesses to the panel table, beginning first with Congressman Frank Wolf. As I said a few moments ago and I will not repeat all of it, but he is a lawmaker with very few equals, in my opinion. Elected the same year as Ronald Reagan in 1980, he served 34 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. He is now the distinguished senior fellow for the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative and the Jerry and Susie Wilson chair in religious freedom at Baylor University.

As I mentioned earlier, he is the author of numerous laws, including and especially the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. He has been in refugee camps all over the world, especially in Africa, worked on human rights issues with persecuted believers in China, Tibet, Romania, Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechnya, Bosnia. How many people have gone to Chechnya? A show of hands. Frank Wolf has really been in some of the toughest places in the world, Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor, and the Middle East of course.

We will then hear from Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe, who is an international human rights lawyer specializing in Africa, and he currently serves as special counsel of the Justice for Jos Project. He earned the singular distinction of being the youngest law graduate in his home country of Nigeria.

Exiled to the United States after becoming one of Nigeria's political detainees during the brutal years of military rule, Mr. Ogebe has played a role, a key role, in shaping policy in Nigeria's quest for a stable democracy.

He has testified before this subcommittee previously, has provided great counsel and insight to me, to my staff, and others about what is truly going on in Nigeria, particularly as it relates to Boko Haram. And he has also been a guest speaker at university campuses across the U.S. and around the world. He has spoken at the Geneva Summit, the United Nations, World Bank, Canadian Parliament, and, again, before other parliaments.

Then we will hear from Sa'a, who was one of the 276 schoolgirls who was kidnapped from the government secondary school in Chibok by the terrorist group Boko Haram 2 years ago but escaped by jumping off a truck. Sa'a has twice escaped from Boko Haram attacks on her schools. When Sa'a survived the first attack at her previous government secondary school in Bama, her parents decided to move her and enroll her in the Chibok secondary school because they thought it would be a safer place to continue her education.

She currently is attending college in the United States under a project by the Education Must Continue Initiative, a charity run by victims of the insurgency for victims of the insurgency. Sa'a is a pseudonym that she uses for protection.

Thank you for being here and your willingness to testify.

We will then hear from Dr. Chris Fomunyoh, who is currently serving as the senior associate and regional director for central and west Africa at the National Democratic Institute. Dr. Fomunyoh

has organized and advised international election observation missions and designed and supervised country-specific democracy support programs with civic organizations, political parties, and legislative bodies throughout central and west Africa.

He recently designed and helped launch the African Statesmen Initiative, a program aimed at facilitating political transitions in Africa by encouraging former democratic heads of state. He is also an adjunct faculty at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies and a former adjunct professor of African politics and government at Georgetown University.

Congressman Wolf.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE FRANK R. WOLF, DISTINGUISHED SENIOR FELLOW, 21ST CENTURY WILBERFORCE INITIATIVE

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Smith, for your comments. I appreciate it.

I want to thank Chairman Smith and the members of the committee for having this hearing today, and particularly thank Mr. Smith for his leadership over the many years. I also want to begin by saying that these are my personal observations. However, a detailed trip report will be released on June 9 at an event here by the 21st Century Wilberforce Group.

I, along Randel Everett, president of 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative, Elijah Brown, executive vice president, and Lou Ann Sabatier, director of communications, traveled to Nigeria in late February this year. We arranged our own itinerary. We did not travel with the U.S. State Department. We traveled to three states with representatives from the Stefanos Foundation, a Nigerian nonprofit that has worked for 14 years in relief, restoration, and rebuilding lives and communities ravaged, ravaged by violence and persecution in northern Nigeria.

We met with representatives from nine states in the north who traveled to spend several hours with us, sharing stories and documentations of persecution. And much of the time was spent in Jos and the surrounding area, often referred to as the Middle Belt.

We listened, we listened to hundreds of individuals in small villages and remote areas miles off the main roads. We talked to tribal leaders, pastors, mothers and fathers, as well as government officials and our own Embassy personnel. We heard about the pain, suffering, and agony that the people in northern and central Nigeria have faced and continue to face. Many of the people we spoke to believe the world is not concerned with their problems, and I must say I tend to agree.

As a result, it is clear that the crisis plaguing Nigeria is multifaceted, but one that must be addressed not only by the Nigerian Government, but our Government and the international community.

Corruption. One significant issue is corruption. It is in the government at the Federal level, state level. It is in business. It is in the military. One cannot enter the country without corruption raising its insidious head.

Transparency International ranks Nigeria 136 out of 168 countries. That is the bottom 20 percent. Given their population size

and economic output, this means that a vast number of people have to suffer the costs and the injustice of corruption.

Poverty. Despite the fact that according to the latest available data from the World Bank Nigeria is the richest country in Africa, yet there is immense poverty. Unemployment is a huge issue. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, it has been increasing since 2005 and now stands at or above 20 percent.

The falling oil prices are hitting the economy broadly. The percentage of people living in poverty, at less than $1.90 a day, is 53.6 percent. That is 2009, it is probably much higher.

Terrorism. According to the 2015 Global Terrorism Index, more than half, 51 percent of all global deaths attributed to a terrorist group were committed by either Boko Haram or the Islamic State. Nigeria has experienced the largest increase in terrorist deaths, more than 300 percent from 2014 to 2015, with fatalities at least 7,512 in 2015.

Nine of the top 20 most fatal terrorist attacks occurred in Nigeria in 2014. The deadliest terrorist organization in the world, according to the number killed, are Boko Haram, the Islamic State, al-Shabaab, and the Fulani herdsmen.

Boko Haram. Terrorism and violence continue from the well-known Boko Haram terrorist group, whose name means "Western education is forbidden." According to the Global Terrorism Index 2015 for the Institute of Economics and Peace at the University Maryland, Boko Haram killed 6,664 Nigerians in 2014, more than ISIS elsewhere in the world. That makes them the single most deadly terrorist organization in the world. You would never know it listening or reading the media, but it is a fact. In a recent report by Refugees International, they indicate that reportedly 20,000 have been killed in total as a result of the insurgency.

In 2015, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to ISIS. This affiliation means that Boko Haram is now part of that organization's declaration of war against both the Nigerian Government and our own Government, the American Government.

Boko Haram attacks villages, conducts drive-by shootings, uses young girls as suicide bombers, they target politicians and clerics for assassination, focusing on the symbols of Western advancement such as schools, hospitals, churches, and mosques.

While no one has an exact number, thousands of young girls have been abducted by Boko Haram. According to the Washington Post, young girls and women who have been raped but released by Boko Haram face extreme stigmatizing from their communities where many label them "Boko Haram wives" and fear that they have been radicalized. They are the victims twice. They are victims when they are captured and they are victims many times when they are released.

Just last month we commemorated the 2-year anniversary of the kidnapping of the Chibok girls. And despite the loud protests in the West and the #BringBackOurGirls campaign championed by First Lady Michelle Obama and Prime Minister Cameron and many others, it is extremely doubtful that any of the girls have been released.

One counselor who we met with up in the Jos area spoke, told us that the girls who have been captured may never return without

a major concerted effort by the Nigerian Government and the West. And when they do return, and I am hopeful and optimistic that they will return, they will have been victims of sexual violence, and they are oftentimes pregnant and will have been forced to convert to Islam. That is what the counselor told us.

Fulani herdsmen. Unfortunately, Boko Haram is not the only violent organization that plagues Nigeria. The Fulani, who I had heard very, very little about before visiting Nigeria, the Fulani herdsmen are a large tribal grouping that stretches over many northwestern African countries and follow migratory grazing patterns. Some of these herdsmen adhere to more radicalized versions of Islam, and this is having a significant and devastating impact on the predominantly Christian farming communities in the Middle Belt.

The Global Terrorism Index has identified them as the fourth most deadly terrorist organization in the world. That means Nigeria has the first and the fourth most dangerous terrorist groups in their country.

While we were in Nigeria, Agatu village was attacked, and I know Emmanuel will talk more about that. Two hundred to 300 were killed over a sustained 2- to 3-day attack. And the attackers did not move on, but rather occupied homes within the village. And there were reports on the ground that indicated that sophisticated resupply systems were used, including, we were told, two helicopters and boats.

Attacks like this go beyond the settler-herder conflict. There has been an obvious increase in violence in 2013 and the Fulani militants killed 63; in 2014, 1,249.

The IDPs, the internally displaced people. Due to the violence from groups like Boko Haram and the Fulani militants, there are thousands of internally displaced people scattered around the country. According to recent estimates, there are 2.1 million people who are internally displaced and more have fled to neighboring countries. Unofficially, however, we were told there are about 5 million who have been displaced. We have been told that 90 percent of the IDPs are dispersed among villages and are outside of official camps and therefore they are unable to access even the limited government services.

In the Refugee International report, which I know the committee probably has, it is a very powerful report, a senior U.N. official was quoted as stating, "Nigeria is our biggest failure." This aligns with the stories we heard over and over on the ground.

Some recommendations based on the challenges. One, strategic geopolitical and national security interests are at stake. Many organizations, including local groups like the Stefanos Foundation and an international one such as MercyCorps, are doing the vital work. However, much, much, much, much more needs to be done. They are barely touching, scratching the surface of what has to be done.

Congress and the U.N. should do everything it can to aid IDP camps and support efforts at distribution in novel ways for those IDPs who are not, for various reasons, in camps. The types of aid should not only include food and medicine, but psychosocial services for the rehabilitation of victims as well as for former members

of Boko Haram who are attempting to reintegrate into the communities.

We visited prison two different times. They said they would let us talk to Boko Haram. Each time we got there we were ready, and then they pulled them back.

Groups like International Justice Mission or Shared Hope, which have done an excellent job with regard to counseling and rehabilitation of women and girls, could provide valuable training to groups and individuals. I would hope the State Department would send IJM and Shared Hope and groups like that over to work with the Nigerian Government to help them set it up. We can't just talk about this. The people who are released, they need counseling, and I think IJM and Shared Hope could do that.

Congress should also investigate the connection between ISIS and Boko Haram and integrate strategies as appropriate to deal with them. It is my understanding that the NSC has internally designated Boko Haram as part of ISIS. If this is indeed the case, there should be increased funding available for security purposes.

While I generally support the Leahy amendment, and Senator Leahy has been a great person on these issues and I do support it, the Nigerian military has serious problems with corruption and human rights abuses. I believe that it would be beneficial to find every way possible in which the U.S. could provide vital human rights training to the Nigerian military and security forces.

There were constant stories we heard that the military came in, the police came in, the people had uniforms. Were they really the police? Were they really the military? Did they steal the uniforms? But over and over and over and over.

So human rights training should be included in basic training for new recruits and promotional courses for existing soldiers. This is critical.

Special envoy. I believe that a special envoy for Nigeria and the Lake Chad district, not just Nigeria, but for the Lake Chad region, could be a strategic benefit because many of the problems involve Nigeria and the surrounding countries. Such a position could be modeled after Senator Danforth, formerly the Special Envoy to Sudan, or Knox Thames, who is the Special Advisor for Religion Minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia.

I understand there is a coordinator on Boko Haram within the State Department, and he is a good person. Perhaps this position could be elevated to that of a special envoy and expanded to include all terrorism, including the Fulani militants, human rights, refugee assistance, counseling, a one-stop, one-place coordinator.

There are a lot of good people working on these issues within our own Government. However, I believe a special envoy would provide those seeking assistance a one-stop. We talk to Nigerians, they say they come to America, they don't know where to go. Do they go to the State Department? Do they go to USAID? Do they go to DOD? Who do they talk to? So I think it would be a one-stop for those seeking assistance while also coordinating with the Embassies in Nigeria, in Chad, in Cameroon, and Niger on various issues.

The issue of Boko Haram and the Fulani herdsmen are not localized to Nigeria but transcend the bordering countries. A special envoy could help coordinate necessary assistance throughout the

region. There was an April 23 New York Times article where it said Boko Haram moves easily across the border. So it is not just in one location.

Military assistance, and I know we are doing much. The U.S. Military and other Western nations should use all possible assistance to help the Nigerian Government. We also should have churches in the West to be engaged with Nigerian churches, Catholic to Catholic, Baptist to Baptist, Anglican to Anglican, in order to help the local congregations.

Also, the Multinational Joint Task Force consisting of security forces from Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin, they also have to have human rights training.

Lastly, the challenges that face Nigeria are great. However, I believe that the United States and other Western nations have a vested interest in confronting one of the worst crises of the current day. One of the members on our delegation said Nigeria—and it sort of caught—he said Nigeria has been fractured and forgotten.

And it is my hope—and, Mr. Smith, you have done a great, and Ms. Bass, on these issues before—that this hearing will light the spark that is needed to elevate this crisis to the place that it deserves.

And, lastly, I heard the musician, an Irish singer, Bono, the other day on television. There are 180 million people in Nigeria. He said if Nigeria unravels, or if part of it unravels, he said it is an existential threat to Europe. You saw the number in Nigeria? What will happen will be. So I think everything that can be done should be done.

Again, thank you, Mr. Smith and Ms. Bass, for this hearing and to really kind of shine the light on it. I think it can make a big difference.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wolf follows:]

Nigeria Testimony: Subcommittee on Africa and Global Affairs
Hon. Frank R. Wolf
Distinguished Senior Fellow, 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative
Wilson Chair in Religious Freedom, Baylor University
May 11th, 2016

I would like to thank Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Karen Bass, and the Members of the Subcommittee for having this hearing today. I would also like to begin by saying that these are my personal observations- however, a detailed trip report will be released by the 21st Century Wilberforce next month.

I, along with Randel Everett (President of 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative), Elijah Brown (Executive Vice President), and Lou Ann Sabatier (Director of Communications), travelled to Nigeria in late February of this year. We arranged our itinerary and did not travel with the US State Department. We travelled to three states with representatives from the Stefanos Foundation, a Nigerian non-profit that has worked for 14 years in relief, restoration and rebuilding lives and communities ravaged by violence and persecution in northern Nigeria.

We met with representatives from nine states in the north who traveled to spend several hours with us, sharing stories and documentation of persecution. Much of our time was spent in Jos and the surrounding area, often referred to as the Middle-Belt. We listened to hundreds of individuals in small villages, and remote areas miles off the main roads. We talked to tribal leaders, pastors, mothers and fathers as well as government officials and our own Embassy personnel. We heard about the pain, suffering, and agony that the people in Northern and Central Nigeria have faced, and continue to face. Many believe the world is not concerned with their problems and I agree. As a result, it is clear that the crisis plaguing Nigeria is multi-faceted, but one that must be addressed by the Nigerian government, our government, and the international community.

CORRUPTION:

One significant issue is corruption. It is in the government at the federal and state level. It is in businesses. It is in the military. One cannot enter the country without corruption raising its insidious head. Transparency International ranks Nigeria 136th out of 168 countries. That is in the bottom 20% of all nations. Given their population size and economic output, this means that a vast number of people have to suffer the costs and injustice of corruption.

POVERTY:

Despite the fact that according to the latest available data from the World Bank, Nigeria is the richest country in Africa yet there is immense poverty. Unemployment is a huge issue.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics it has been increasing since 2005 and now stands at above 20%. The falling oil prices are hitting the economy broadly. The percentage of people living in poverty at less than $1.90 a day is 53.6% as of 2009 when the latest data is available.

TERRORISM:

According to the 2015 Global Terrorism Index:

- More than half (51 percent) of all global deaths attributed to a terrorist group were committed by either Boko Haram or the Islamic State.
- Nigeria has experienced the largest increase in terrorist deaths (more than 300 percent) from 2014-2015, with 7,512 fatalities in 2015.
- Nine of the top 20 most fatal terrorist attacks in 2014 occurred in Nigeria.
- The deadliest terrorist organizations in the world according to number killed:
    - Boko Haram (northeastern Nigeria),
    - Islamic State (Iraq/Syria),
    - Al-Shabab (Somalia) and
    - The Fulani herdsmen (central Nigeria).

BOKO HARAM:

Terrorism and violence continues from the well-known Boko Haram terrorist group whose name means "Western education is forbidden." According to the Global Terrorism Index 2015 from the Institute of Economics and Peace at the University of Maryland, Boko Haram killed 6,664 Nigerians in 2014- more than ISIS elsewhere in the world. That makes them the single most deadly terror organization in the world. In a recent report by Refugees International, they indicate that reportedly 20,000 have been killed in total as a result of the insurgency. In 2015 Boko Haram has pledged allegiance to ISIS. This affiliation means that Boko Haram is now part of that organization's declaration of war against both the Nigerian Government AND the American Government.

Boko Haram attacks villages, conducts drive by shootings, and uses young girls as suicide bombers. They target politicians and clerics for assassination, focusing on the symbols of Western advancement such as schools, hospitals, and churches, but also Mosques. While no one has an exact number, thousands of young girls have been abducted by Boko Haram. According to the *Washington Post*, young girls and women who have been raped, but released, by Boko Haram face extreme stigmatization from their communities where many label them as "Boko Haram wives" and fear that they have been radicalized and will be potential attackers.

Just last month, we commemorated the two-year anniversary of the kidnapping of the Chibok Girls, and despite the loud protests in the West and the #BringBackOurGirls campaign championed by First Lady, Michelle Obama, it is extremely doubtful that any of the girls have been released. One counselor with whom we spoke on the ground told us that the girls who have been captured may never return without a major concerted effort by the Nigerian government and the West, and if they do they will have been the victims of sexual violence, and are often times pregnant and will have been forced to convert to Islam.

FULANI HERDSMEN:

Unfortunately, Boko Haram is not the only violent organization that plagues Nigeria- who I had heard very little about before visiting Nigeria. The Fulani Herdsmen are a large tribal grouping that stretch over many northwestern African countries and follow migratory grazing patterns. Some of these herdsmen adhere to more radicalized versions of Islam and this is having a significant and devastating impact on the predominantly Christian farming communities in the Middle Belt. The Global Terrorism Index has identified them as the fourth most deadly terror organization in the world. (That means that Nigeria has the first and fourth most dangerous terror groups is in Africa.)

While we were in Nigeria, the Agatu village was attacked. 200-300 were killed over a sustained 2-3 day attack and the attackers did not move on, but rather occupied homes within the village. And the reports from on the ground indicate that sophisticated re-supply systems were used- including helicopters and boats. Attacks like this go beyond "settler-herder" conflict.
There has been an obvious increase in violence- in 2013, the Fulani militants killed 63; in 2014, they killed 1,229.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE: (IDP's)

Due to the violence from groups like Boko Haram and the Fulani Militants, there are thousands of Internally Displaced People scattered around the country. According to recent estimates there are 2.1 million people who are internally displaced and more have fled to neighboring countries. Unofficially, however, there are about 5 million who have been displaced. We have been told that 90% of IDP's are dispersed among villages and are outside of official camps, therefore they are unable to access even limited government services. In the Refugee International report, a senior UN official was quoted as stating, "Nigeria is our biggest failure." This aligns with the stories we heard on the ground.

Given all of the challenges, Recommendations:

Strategic, geopolitical, and national security interests are at stake. Many organizations, including local groups like the Stefanos Foundation, and international ones, such as MercyCorps are doing vital work. However, much more is needed.

- Congress should encourage aid to IDP camps, and support efforts at distribution in novel ways for those IDPs who are not, for various reasons, in camps. The types of aid should not only include food, and medicine, but also psycho-social services for the rehabilitation of victims as well as for former members of Boko Haram who are attempting to reintegrate into their communities.

- Groups like International Justice Mission or Shared Hope, which have done an excellent job with regard to counseling/rehabilitation of women and girls, could provide invaluable training to groups and individuals on the ground.

- Congress should also investigate the connection between ISIS and Boko Haram and integrate strategies as appropriate to deal with them.
  It is my understanding that the NSC has internally designated Boko Haram as a part of ISIS, if this is indeed the case there should be increased funding available for security purposes.

- While I generally support the Leahy law, and I realize that the Nigerian military has some serious problems with corruption and human rights abuses, I do believe that it would be beneficial to find a way in which the US could provide vital human rights training to the Nigerian military and security forces.

- We need the Church in the West to be engaged with the Nigerian Church- Catholic to Catholic, Baptist to Baptist, Anglican to Anglican- in order to help the local congregation.

SPECIAL ENVOY:

I believe that a Special Envoy for Nigeria and the Lake Chad region could be of strategic benefit since many of the problems involve Nigeria as well as the surrounding countries. Such a position could be modeled after the one held by Sen. Danforth, formerly the Special Envoy to Sudan, or Knox Thames who is the special advisor on Religious Minorities in the Middle East and South Central Asia. I understand that there is a coordinator on Boko Haram within State Department- perhaps this position could be elevated to that of a Special Envoy and expanded to include all terrorism (including the Fulani militants), human rights, refugee assistance, etc.

There are a lot of good people working on these issues within our own government, however, a special envoy would provide those seeking assistance with one stop, while also coordinating with the Embassies in Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Benin and Niger on the various issues facing the region. The issue of Boko Haram and the Fulani Herdsmen are not localized to Nigeria, but transcend the bordering countries. A Special Envoy could help coordinate necessary assistance throughout the region.

CONCLUSION:

The challenges that face Nigeria are great. However, it is my firm belief that the United States and other Western nations have a vested interest in confronting one of the worst crises of our current day. Nigeria has been fractured and forgotten and it is my hope that this hearing may light the spark that is needed to elevate this crisis to the place it deserves.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Wolf, thank you so very much for your testimony. Mr. Ogebe.

STATEMENT OF MR. EMMANUEL OGEBE, SPECIAL COUNSEL, JUSTICE FOR JOS PROJECT

Mr. OGEBE. I would like to thank you very much, Chairman Smith, for your consistency and leadership on this issue, for traveling to Nigeria to further assess the situation.

I also want to thank you, Ranking Member Bass, for the breakfast you held recently on this issue, keeping the issue alive.

I also want to especially thank the honorable Congressman, retired, who has crossed over to our side of the aisle. I have to say that it is a great honor to have an old champion on my right and also a young champion on my left, Ms. Sa'a, who will be speaking here shortly.

Let me start by saying that last year when I testified before this subcommittee last we were discussing what then was the big threat in Nigeria. Fortunately, we dodged a missile and peaceful elections and a successful transition occurred. That was the good news.

Today there is a continuing sense of insecurity from three factors and actors, and I will start with an update on Boko Haram, which is the elephant in the room.

Mr. Chairman, exactly 6 months after the administration announced the FTO designation of Boko Haram before this subcommittee, Boko Haram abducted 276 girls from a school in Chibok. The world took notice, but so also did al-Qaeda, who condemned it. And so also did ISIS, who emulated it and started abducting Yazidi and Christian women in Iraq. Eleven months after that, ISIS and Boko Haram established an alliance.

Mr. Chairman, in June 2014 you visited Nigeria and at that time were informed of over 1,000 Christians stranded on Gwoza Mountain, facing starvation and snakebites. By July, we saw on the news in the U.S. helicopters dropping supplies to the starving Iraqis besieged on the mountaintops, but we never saw the same for those in Nigeria.

Mr. Chairman, a few weeks ago I met a survivor from that mountain who just came down in April when Boko Haram attacked them there on the mountaintop. Only about 300 of them are left. Like the Chibok girls, these people were cut off from our civilization by the terrorists for 2 whole years while the world debated what to do. This was the situation before the ISIS alliance and the spread of attacks to Niger, Cameroon, and Chad.

Now, global perception of Boko Haram is determined by the watershed date of April 14, 2014. I call it BC, before Chibok, and AC, after Chibok, for illustrative purposes. The worst attack on the United Nations are caught in Abuja in the year 2011 BC, before Chibok, but the U.N. did not impose sanctions on Boko Haram until 2014 AC. So it was the Chibok abductions that actually forced them to impose sanctions on Boko Haram, not the fact that Boko Haram had bombed the United Nations building several years earlier. This is how significant Chibok is in the annals of Boko Haram.

With that said, I want to use that as a small case study to show how U.S. cooperation, or lack thereof, is happening.

Mr. Chairman, you will recall that at a hearing of this subcommittee in June 2014 you expressed shock that you were the first to interview an escaped Chibok schoolgirl 2 months after the abduction in spite of the reports of global partners searching for the girls.

Well, 4 months after your statements, in other words 6 months A.C., after Chibok, U.S. operatives reached out to interview the girls, 6 whole months later, 4 months after you mentioned it in the subcommittee hearing. They claim they did not have access to the girls in Nigeria.

In 2015, 1 year later, again 1.6 years after Chibok, Nigerian operatives requested the names of the escaped Chibok girls in the U.S. From this experience, one is not enthused by the level of cooperation between the U.S. and Nigeria in searching for the missing girls. Rather than intelligence fusion, this seems to me like intelligence confusion.

Now, the one quick update I would give with regard to what Boko Haram is doing is what was mentioned earlier by Ranking Member Bass, that these young girls are now being used as human bombs, not suicide bombers, and this is considerably the worst thing that is happening on the planet—the very notion that someone would abduct your daughter, strap her with bombs, and use her to blow up other people's daughters. Boko Haram has deployed over 100 girls since June 2014.

The second threat, which I call the new elephant in the room, is the Fulani herdsmen who perpetrated a massacre in Agatu, Benue State, killing hundreds in February and March, and also massacred a community in Enugu State this month.

Fulani herdsmen have accounted for over 6,000 deaths in 5 years, equivalent to those killed by Boko Haram last year. They have been described as the fourth-deadliest terrorist group in the world. But I do not think they are terrorists in the traditional sense. They are historically jihadists. Their modus is more local jihad than global jihad, unlike Boko Haram, but they are more brutal and have attacked more states in Nigeria than Boko Haram.

An alliance between them is suspected because in 2012 Boko Haram actually claimed responsibility for a herdsmen attack in which a Nigerian senator was skilled. This is public information, Boko Haram issued a statement claiming. So there is a strong likelihood that there is a linkage. An alliance between them could be most deadly because of their ability to operate freely across west Africa.

Nigerians are gravely alarmed at these recent attacks, especially as Fulani spokesmen have claimed they have special protection under the incumbent President, who is also Fulani.

In southeast Nigeria, many Igbos who have fled the north because of Boko Haram's targeted attacks are upset that the Fulani herdsmen are attacking them on their own soil, especially after the south conceded the Presidency to the north in the last election.

The Fulani herdsmen are more medieval than Boko Haram and there is a pervasive sense in Nigeria that they are now a serious national security concern. The U.S. continues to view the herdsmen attacks as simply a product of climate change and farmer-herder competition for land, notwithstanding that people are killed in

their homes by intruders. The U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom has consistently raised an alarm on this for several years.

The third threat is the Iranian-backed Shiites led by Sheikh al-Zakzaky and they have been a dreadful nuisance to communities in northwest Nigeria. But they are not terrorists. The reported massacre of over 300 Shiites by the Nigerian Army 6 months ago is unfortunate as it has the potential to create yet another insurgent group in the country, but this time one with greater capacity and with full support of a known state-sponsor of terror. A Boko Haram alliance would be catastrophic, but it is intriguing that Boko Haram allied with an Iraqi group first before another Nigerian group.

I should point out that Nigeria confiscated 13 container loads of arms sent from Iran to Nigeria. It is debatable whether the arms were meant for Boko Haram or for the Shiites.

Nigeria has detained Sheikh al-Zakzaky for months. The U.S. has not pressed these human rights violations as strongly as it did the deaths of Boko Haram suspects killed during a jailbreak attack on a military barracks under the former President even though this is how Boko Haram mutated from an extremist sect to a terrorist group.

I will round up with recommendations. I believe U.S. policy formulation on northern Nigeria should be informed by the terrorist, jihadi universe. As Bishop Matthew Kukah stated recently, the Government of America must "take full responsibility for how it shapes leadership around the world," arguing that policies and conflicts around the world bear consequences for the people of northern Nigeria. We are suffering the "collateral damage," he lamented.

There have been more protests in northern Nigeria against the U.S. and Israel than there have been against the Nigerian Government over the years.

That the world today is facing a clash of civilizations is undebatable. Standing by Nigeria as a worthy ally to end the insurgency is critical to regional security. Nigeria has historically been a receiver, not an exporter of refugees, and this crisis has reduced its capacity as a regional power and a global player in international peacekeeping, as you referenced earlier.

Secondly, this Congress has a key to address the humanitarian crisis before it deteriorates further by passing a bill to utilize assets forfeited from Nigeria in a victim compensation fund. Funds looted abroad by a former NSA were repatriated to Nigeria only to be relooted again, allegedly, by the last NSA.

H.R. 528 would help victims like Habila Adamu, who testified before this subcommittee but remains unemployed and has lost family members since he survived kill shots to his head. The entire assault on Borno, which has been mostly neglected in relief efforts, could also benefit from that kind of fund.

It appears that repentant terrorists appear to be getting more personal attention than the victims, and this in itself is a travesty. The U.S. Government should press Nigeria to stave the relentless bloodshed occasioned by the Fulani herdsmen. The U.N. should categorize Nigeria as a level three humanitarian crisis and the U.S.

and this Congress should recognize Boko Haram's atrocities as genocide.

I have several other recommendations which you can see on page 16 of my written testimony, as well as page 18 of my written testimony, and I ask that you kindly enter this in the record.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ogebe follows:]

Testimony of Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe, Esq.

Special Counsel, Justice for Jos Project

On

The U.S. Role in Helping Nigeria Confront Boko Haram and Other Threats in Northern Nigeria

Before the

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations

Rep. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman

May 11, 2016

Foreign Affairs Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on addressing the critical humanitarian crisis caused by the deadliest terror group in the world.

I especially want to thank you, Chairman Smith, for your consistent leadership on this issue and your travels to Nigeria to further assess the situation. Today, I would like to share some crucial points concerning the current security situation in Nigeria in the light of renewed international interest to address a terrorist insurgency that has not only metastasized but has evolved into a sub-regional challenge.

A. UPDATE ON PROFILES OF TERROR

The threat matrix in Nigeria has been complicated by an admixture of diverse factors and actors which include sects, foreign, federal and state governments amongst others.

1. The State of the Boko Haram Insurgency

"The People for the Propagation of the Prophet's teaching and Jihad", also known as Boko Haram was once described as "one of the most vicious terrorist organizations in the world" by President Obama. The President's words proved prophetic. The Nigerian Jihadist group ranked the deadliest terrorist group worldwide two years in a row, even exceeding ISIS' murders according to multiple groups tracking terrorism.

In April 2014, Boko Haram perpetrated an atrocity that shocked the world beyond even its heinous bloodbaths when it abducted 276 schoolgirls from their campus in Chibok, northern Nigeria; 219 of whom are still unaccounted for presently. It was a watershed moment in global perception and awareness of Boko Haram.

Horrified, even terror group Al Qaeda to whom Boko Haram was then affiliated, denounced the abductions of the mostly Christian girls captured as "slave brides." While this served as a surprising ideological shift from the least expected source, it was to be the beginning of an unusual alignment with another.

Inspired by Boko Haram's actions, ISIS abducted scores of Christian and Yazidi women in Iraq the following month thus also subscribing to Boko Haram's theology of weaponized rape, abduction, forced conversions and marriage.

Eleven months after the Chibok abductions, ISIS and Boko Haram pledged loyalty to each other with the latter assuming the name "Islamic State of West Africa Province." One year later, this new moniker has been true to its name as Boko Haram aka ISWAP which had a limited operational history in Mali, now has unleashed significant attacks in the West African countries of Niger, Chad and Cameroon. (See Appendix 1 Timeline of ISWAP Attacks.)

Approximately 1200 Cameroonians have lost their lives and many more thousands have been displaced from their homes. In addition, Cameroon is host country to refugee inflows from CAR and northern Nigeria. The UNHCR camp in Minawao has 60,000 refugees up exponentially from

the 2,000 it held when I visited two years ago in May 2014 – increasing by an average of 500 refugees each week.

The United States recently deployed about 300 special troops to Cameroon to provide intelligence and surveillance to an existing anti-Boko Haram task force created by Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Benin. Specifically, the force will conduct airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations in the region (*BBC News*, 2015).

According to news reports, intelligence sharing has been a major problem within the international partners. One recent clear example was the reported capture of an alleged Chibok schoolgirl on a suicide bombing mission in Cameroon. Nigerian officials proposed an unwieldy plan to send family representatives all the way from Nigeria to Cameroon to verify her claim by physical identification – something that could have been done in hours if the necessary databases were in place and properly coordinating.

The US also commendably designated Boko Haram an FTO after initial steep resistance by the Administration. **Although the US has recognized ISIS atrocities as "genocide," there has been no similar recognition for Boko Haram or ISWA even though it is now the same organization and has killed more people. It is hoped that there will not be a protracted battle again to achieve what should clearly at this point be a logical conclusion. The evidence is glaring**.

Since Boko Haram emerged around 2002 as a self-styled "Nigerian Taliban" in direct response to the US invasion of Afghanistan and the dislodgment of the Taliban, Boko Haram has evolved into a lethal terror group after its role model in just a decade.

From the time it issued an ultimatum, shortly after blowing up churches on Christmas day, asking Christians and southerners to leave Northern Nigeria in January 2012 or die, Boko Haram has prosecuted a pernicious and systematic campaign of extermination. Funerals for randomly killed non-Muslim "others" have been attacked, companies have been raided, and non-Muslims summarily executed by shots to the head. Buses have been stopped with the occupants separated and systematically slaughtered. **More Christians were killed in northern Nigeria in 2012 than throughout the rest of the world**[1]. Despite a military offensive to rout out the insurgents from swathes of territory in Nigeria's northeast, a government source says they have only liberated about 75% of territory previously lost to Boko Haram. In my recent trip to the northeast, it was clear that Boko Haram is still operating in the mountain ranges of Gwoza for four years straight based on interviews with a recent escapee who had been besieged on a mountain since 2014. These types of incidents scarcely make it into the local news.

Mr. Chairman, you will recall that during your visit to Nigeria in June 2014 after the Chibok abductions, we were shown a distress text message of 1000 people stranded on the Mountains of

[1]World Watch Monitor, *Widest Church Groupings Raises Funds for Boko Haram's almost 800 Victims in 2012,* March 8, 2013, http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2013/03-March/2331194/

Gwoza under siege by Boko Haram suffering starvation and snake bites. Mr. Chairman recommended a humanitarian corridor to allow food aid in but Boko Haram isn't amenable to such norms of civilized conduct. Upon returning to the US, I reached out to relief organizations who were involved in airlifting aid to the stranded Yazidis and Christians on Iraqi mountains after ISIS replicated Chibok style mass abductions of women. US groups declined to help because Nigeria was "too dangerous." Subsequently, I monitored reports that food aid sent by the Nigerian government was ambushed by the terrorists. Some people who came down from the hill to phone for help were killed by the terrorists.
Last year we learned about the sighting of bodies strewn on the mountain. Finally, two weeks ago, I met a man who had survived on the mountain from 2014 till 2016. His account is riveting:

About 304 of them were still alive and living in hiding atop the Gwoza Mountain until they were attacked by Boko Haram on April 14 of this year. In that ambush, he believes at least 15 of his fellow survivors were killed. The ambush led many to flee from the mountain downhill to the valley villages where he ultimately found the Nigerian army. He does not know who is left on the mountain.

They survived by eating grass, shrubs, roots and whatever vegetation they could find regardless of whether it was poisonous. For water, they drank mud, rain water and even urine to survive. His young son whom he reunited with in an IDP camp hours before, was struggling to recognize his dad who had shrunk in size from years of living in the wild. Peter showed me his calloused hands from striking rocks to make fire. Boko Haram had indeed shoved the people of Gwoza into the stone age and for the past two years, these Internally Besieged Persons (IBPs) were simply cut off from our civilization and not impacted by our debates on the causes and cures of Boko Haram.

Last year, there were sustained levels of targeted attacks in spite of the increased counterinsurgency offensive. In 2015, there were 4,028 killings of Christians and 198 church attacks that Open Doors was able to record. The figures recorded for the previous year were 2,484 killings and 108 church attacks. One American-affiliated church denomination, EYN alone has lost over 10,000 members, with over ¾ of a million displaced and over 1,200 church buildings destroyed in half a dozen years – apocalyptic figures quite comparable to the erosion of Christians in Iraq. EYN incidentally was the original owner of the Chibok school built by American missionaries. The daughter of one of the Americans who built the school was herself serving in northern Nigeria until she had to be evacuated because of the Boko Haram onslaught. Over 170 of the abducted schoolgirls are members of EYN.

Far from being technically defeated, Boko Haram is alive even if ailing, and has a larger operational theater than previously. The good news is that there is a concerted Multi-National Joint Taskforce taking the battle to the insurgents.

2. An Emergent Threat - Fulani Herdsmen

While there is some comfort in the successes of the comprehensive counteroffensive against Boko Haram, what many in Nigeria consider a clear and present danger to national peace and security is the atrocities perpetrated by Muslim herdsmen of the Fulani tribe.

The Agatu Massacre: Journey to the Land Inhabited By Cows

Days after bands of Fulani nomads launched systematic attacks on villages in the overwhelmingly Christian Benue state in north central Nigeria, we conducted a fact-finding mission. Victim after victim displaced by the herdsmen, part of the estimated 20,000 IDPs, recounted how the attacks began on the night of February 21 in Okokolo village in Agatu local government area and then continued daily in neighboring villages leaving them nowhere to run. 11 days later, the first civilian fact-finding mission, comprised of relief workers and media, ventured under heavy security escort into the zone of what has locally been termed the "Agatu massacre." The sight was unnerving. The tales of victims could not possibly capture the extent of the devastation. Traveling on end, mile after mile on bumpy dirt roads, there were no humans to be seen in village after burnt down village - actually just dead ones. In Adagbo, what turned out to be the charred corpse of a man on the floor of his living room hinted at his own story. He was probably undressed and asleep in bed when his house was set ablaze. When he came to his living room, he was probably shot and fell there, slowly eaten alive by the flames. With but half a torso, and one arm stretched out toward the door, that's all there was to make of this mystery.

In Okokolo, a full decomposing body lay spread-eagle on the school lawn. Not far away was the lawnmower. Possibly he had been mowing in the night, escaping the scorching African heat, when he was hacked to death with machetes as gashes in his legs, bare back and hands showed. A textbook of a high school student lay on the lawn.

Local officials told me that inadequate security kept them from coming to bury the bodies still littered in the villages. It was easy to see why. In a couple of the villages that I had visited earlier, cattle roamed free - the only living things in sight, except for a couple of lurking herdsmen who had taken off at our approach heralded by plumes of convoy dust. As we drove further into the held territory, swarms, droves and then herds of thousands of cows, flanked by the killer herdsmen, came into plain view. They were still on the scene of the crime - this was still an active and ongoing flammable situation. The two prior official trips by the army and police had ended with nothing being done, except the firing of warning shots, we were told.

The narrative of the herder/farmer conflict is common but underneath it is the subterranean stream of a bitter religious battle for domination that takes no prisoners. The Fulani herdsmen are Muslim and the Agatu farmers are mostly Christian. In a startling conversation with the attackers, Ibrahim a minority Muslim from Agatu, revealed what appears to be a clear religious angle for the attacks. Ibrahim testified that the Fulani herdsmen in the Agatu massacre spared him after he recited a Qur'anic verse. They claimed they were told in neighboring Nassarawa state that Agatu people did not support Islamic worship. He denied this and showed them his mosque, his mum and brother who, like him, were Muslims. The mosque was spared but village churches were burnt. As we drove through, we saw a huge building untouched by the mayhem. It was indeed a mosque. Ibrahim could well be the most powerful witness yet, who saw the herdsmen and was spared and talked with them to understand their rationale. Although personally spared, he and his family still fled, unable to fathom deadly attacks on his friends, family and community in the name of his religion.

The day after our tour, the Inspector General of Police visited the state but did not reach Agatu. Soldiers were deployed in there just in time to forestall another attack on March 5 where herdsmen set fires to yet another village.

According to local media reports, spokespersons for the herdsmen's association told the police chief that their action was provoked by the Agatu people killing "10,000 cows" although we saw no signs of dead cows (only dead people) during our tour. The claim is highly improbable. Indeed, we saw as many as 10,000 live cows.

This sort of impunity flummoxes Akpa Idu, a community leader and chair of the Peace and Reconciliation Committee set up by Benue State to, alongside Fulani community leaders, stem the attacks. "Why is the government not doing anything about it? Are they above the law or do they allow them continue jihad? The herdsmen were told to move their cows out of the state to pave way for peace talks. Instead more are coming. They move at will with sophisticated weapons."

Akpa Idu recalled the last major attack on March 15, 2015 when 80 of his people were killed during a 5 a.m. attack as they celebrated early morning mass at the local Catholic Church. Incidentally, the worst Fulani massacre was about this time 6 years ago when an estimated 500 Christian villagers were slaughtered in Dogo Na Hawa, Plateau State on March 6, 2010. It was the worst single mass murder globally that year.

The current Agatu massacre is likely the worst since Dogo Nahawa, but Idu said it will take a while to ascertain the real casualties. In Odugbeho, the most recently attacked village we visited, local watchmen told how a police inspector who came to check on his community was killed along with 12 others.

Idu said that, privately, Fulani leaders on his peace panel complain about unknown herdsmen amongst them who are not amenable to suasion but he remains unconvinced. Other leaders have told him that contributions were taken and cows sold to raise an offering to fund the attacks on Agatu. "This is not about grazing. This is about a takeover for their empire. They will plant their flag like Boko Haram," he cautioned. At another peace meeting with the Fulani leaders, they returned two children who had been abducted weeks earlier during the massacre as a "good faith" gesture. (See Appendix 3: The Month-Long Occupation of Agatu.)

Historical Jihadi Antecedents

The history of Fulani jihad in Nigeria adds fodder to conspiracy theories and in some cases legitimate concern. The story is told of how King Yunfa, the Hausa Chief in Gobir (now called Sokoto) hosted a Fulani immigrant called Usman Dan Fodiyo and his group in February 1804. Following a successful jihad against his Muslim hosts for a "purer" version of Islam, since 1808 the whole of the northern region lost its kingdoms, which were replaced by Fulani emirates. King Yunfa is said to have been killed in 1808 and the Fulani warrior (Usman Dan Fodiyo) established Sokoto caliphate, making himself Sultan. Gradually, other Hausa kingdoms were pillaged and taken over by the Fulani emirs. The ethnic groups in the core north were the first

victims of Fulani imperialism, a venture that occurred because the people were given access to grazing land as a result of the hospitality of the hosts.

However, they failed to overrun the Bornu kingdom, so the Shehu of Bornu remains paramount until today. It should be noted that the Kanuris of Borno are the ethnic driving force behind Boko Haram. Therefore the Kanuri and the Fulani are two different Ethnic groups with separate spheres of Islamic influence.

The Afonja dynasty in the Yoruba Oyo Empire allowed a Fulani warrior known as Janta Alimi to settle in Ilorin. The Fulani killed Afonja in 1824 and Ilorin, a Yoruba town under the Oyo Empire, fell into Fulani hands, becoming an emirate under Sokoto caliphate till today. Attempts of the O'odua People's Congress (OPC), a Youruba rights group, to revert to status quo ante and crown an Oni (Yoruba chief) of Ilorin failed and the Yorubas in Ilorin remain in north central Nigeria under Fulani emirs. The Yoruba warriors defeated the Fulani jihadists in Osogbo in 1840 otherwise there would most likely have been Fulani "emirs" as rulers in Oyo Alaafin, Ibadan, Owo, Osogbo, Ede, Ado, and Igede Ekiti in southwest Nigeria today. If the Bini Kingdom in Nigeria's Midwest did not fight and repel the jihadists, they would likely have penetrated the Niger Delta region beyond the present day Edo North which gave in and allowed the jihadists to overrun and Islamize them.

If the early jihadists were able to make major incursions into the south of Nigeria, the question arises as to why they didn't succeed in conquering the non-Muslim minorities of the north.

Apart from resistance by the northern tribes, Dr. Bala Takaya, a knowledgeable expert on Islam in northern Nigeria shares a revealing historical perspective on another reason the non-Muslim tribes escaped Islamization. According to him, a Muslim researcher stumbled upon a fatwah or religious advisory that cautioned the jihadists from conquering the pagan tribes of the north. The rationale was that, if they were Islamized then the Muslims could not raid their villages to loot them and capture their women as slave brides.

This insight is particularly telling as it provides a contextual framework for understanding much of what is happening in northern Nigeria today. The Chibok schoolgirl abductions are entirely consistent with this doctrine of dhimmitude – tolerate the infidels for so long as you have use for them and they pay tributes as vassals. **Aside from Boko Haram's mass abductions of thousands of girls, this year, news broke of a Christian girl who had been abducted from as far south as Bayelsa state and trafficked up north for forced conversion and marriage with the full knowledge of the police and the Emir of Kano since 2015.**

The #FreeEse campaign championed by civil society, social media and Nigeria's *Punch* newspaper finally resulted in the release of 15-year-old Ese to her family. It was a warning shot that power-sanctioned abduction, trafficking, pedophilia, slavery and forced conversion cannot continue with impunity in today's Nigeria.
This happens frequently in northern Nigeria but rarely receives media, which is why millions of young Nigerians were outraged by the case of Ese.

Ironically, one of the earliest such cases, the abduction and conversion of Jummai Abashiya, a Nigerian American teenager in the '80s was boldly celebrated on the front page of the government-owned *New Nigeria* newspaper to humiliate her father who was a prominent Fulani Christian professor. Today, at least three girls have now been rescued. This doctrine of pillaging the infidels is also believed to be the theological underpinning for attacks by Muslim Fulani herdsmen on the communities and farms of overwhelmingly non-Muslim communities.

A Fulani and Boko Haram Collaboration?

In the rural village of Agatu, someone had successfully installed a solar panel in his home before suspected Muslim Fulani herdsmen razed scores of villages in northern Nigeria's most Christian state. The contrast between one community modestly reaching, literally, for the stars and modern advancement, and another bogged down in medieval practices could not be sharper.

The northern Fulani tribe herds their cattle traversing the length of a country the size of Texas, as their fathers have done for centuries - on foot. The only discernible change in this age-long practice is that many have traded the iconic nomadic staff for AK47s. As vectors of a jihad, two centuries ago that shaped contemporary Islam in Nigeria, it is uncertain if the automatic rifles are for tending cows or a necessary jihadi upgrade.

The Idoma people of Agatu till the land, as did their forbears for eons. But schools have dotted the landscape, clinics and churches too as they have embraced Christianity and western education, turning away centuries before from Fulani Islamic jihad. Huts have turned to houses, and far more young people drift to cities to live and work than remain home to farm.

Fulani attacks worse than Boko Haram

Yet Benue state in Nigeria's middle belt, where Agatu is located, is the nation's undisputed "Food Basket." It provides food to both the north and the educationally advanced south. But now it is the latest battleground in what former US Ambassador John Campbell termed a looming "religious war" and a situation the US Commission for Iinternational Religious Freedom warned had claimed as many lives as Boko Haram terrorists had killed in one period under review. "Religiously-related violence has led to more deaths in northern Nigeria than have Boko Haram attacks," said U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) Chair Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett in an April 2013 press statement, following attacks by Fulani herdsmen.

The parallels with Boko Haram – the world's deadliest terror group - go further. Like Boko Haram, the Fulani are Muslim. Similarly, their victims are overwhelmingly Christians and non-Muslims. They cry "Allahu Akbar" (God is great) during their attacks, and they leave horrendous atrocities in their wake.

Benue State Governor Samuel Ortom said the impact of the herdsmen's attack was probably "worse than Boko Haram" in the northeast. "When Boko Haram captures a town, they kill some people, recruit some people and occupy the town. But the herdsmen spare no one. My own house was burnt. Kids haven't been to school in two years."

A tour of the capital city of Makurdi showed exactly that – churches, homes, clinics destroyed from prior Fulani attacks in 2014. The Makurdi local government chairman told me how a few brave students still congregate in a burnt-out school building, but most moved away to a neighboring hamlet that doesn't have a school.

It was the same for Guma local-government chairman. During a damage assessment, he was shocked to learn from religious leaders that they had lost 70 churches as the Catholic Church reported in the news in 2014. The Secretary to the Catholic Bishop of Makurdi Diocese, Moses Mbachie, was quoted as saying then that "more than 70 Churches" had been destroyed and described the situation as "very sad."

Researchers at the Self-worth Development Initiative, a local Non-governmental organization in Benue state are all too aware and believe the public doesn't realize how bad the devastation has been. Their in-depth research revealed that nine Local Government Areas in the state had been impacted in the 2014 attacks – 80 percent of the Agatu Local Government Area, and for the Guma Local Government Area, 10 out of 10 wards. More than 50,000 people were displaced from Agatu, which represented about 10 percent of the 430,000 people affected by attacks between 2011 and 2014 in Benue State. **These startling figures show a humanitarian crisis akin to Boko Haram's insurgency in the northeast. The striking animus of the attackers toward churches, schools, homes and farms is another indication that the terror group and the nomads share similar methods and even a common ideology – except that the Fulani take no prisoners.** But here is how the nomads are different, and possibly more problematic. They are a tribe and not a terror group. This means they can't simply be outlawed and treated as a terrorist organization. This also means that the government response has been muted compared to the declared war on Boko Haram.

Secondly, the Fulani attacks are more brutal. Where Boko Haram would sort through victims to separate Muslims from Christians, women from men and children from adults, most often killing the latter and sparing the former, the nomads hack and burn babies, slash the belies of pregnant women and generally leave a less methodical and more gruesome aftermath. Boko Haram seizes and occupies towns to administer them. The Fulani destroy communities and their cattle graze on the farms of those displaced or killed.

Similarly, the Fulani operate in plain sight. They have a public organization, the Miyette Allah Cattle Breeders Association, that routinely issues press statements rationalizing their attacks and even filing lawsuits in court. Generally, the theme of their defense is that their cattle were rustled. Justifying the present Agatu massacre, they claim 10,000 cows were killed by the locals. Yet, members of the first assessment mission said they saw no dead cows at all, and no one has been arrested. Boko Haram remains a non-juridical entity, does not have a public presence, and does not participate in litigation.

Most troubling of all, the Fulani have free rein to travel all over Nigeria, actually West Africa. They are found in several African countries including some of those to which the Boko Haram insurgency has spread, and are able to move freely across national borders with their cattle and arms.

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A week after the attacks began, President Muhammadu Buhari ordered an investigation. On 19 March, Members of the Benue parliamentary caucus in the House of Representatives issued a blunt statement: "We decry the lukewarm attitude of the Federal government towards this 'jihad' being waged against our people by the herdsmen." The 11 lawmakers accused President Buhari of downplaying what they characterized as "a genocide that, typical of the Nigerian state, has been downplayed or ignored until it spirals out of control. After the Agatu mass massacre, a few headlines were recorded, a few sympathetic comments in high places but concrete moves to stop the killings have not been made."

Available data show there have been 10 Fulani herdsmen attacks in Benue state alone, an average of one a month since President Buhari took office last year. In a July 2015 statement, USCIRF said, "hundreds more have been killed since President Buhari's election this past April in violence by predominately Muslim herders against predominately Christian farmers throughout the Middle Belt." This is a consistent average for the last three years, including during the previous administration. There were about 40 documented attacks in 35 months in Benue state. Ironically, members of Nigeria's Senate blamed the attacks on Boko Haram and not the herdsmen in a move seen as an effort to exculpate the Fulanis but also an implicit admission that their atrocities are now at par with those of the more infamous terror group. According to media reports, the Nigerian Senate, said crimes of mass murder across Nigerian communities were committed by "overpowered" Boko Haram insurgents, not Fulani herdsmen.
"There is a change of tactics by insurgents who now parade as herdsmen to make it difficult for the public to identify them," Senator Emmanuel Bwacha said. Even if this were true, it does not account for the history of Fulani attacks. (See **Appendix 2:** *Timeline of Fulani Herdsmen Attacks in Benue*.)

While individual Fulani herdsmen captured by the authorities have claimed membership of Boko Haram, a most intriguing connection occurred in July 2012 when a massacre that led to the deaths of a Senator and a Representative was claimed by Boko Haram but disputed by Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), the Fulani herdsmen's organization.

The Islamic sect in a statement purportedly issued by its spokesman, Abu Qaqa claiming responsibility for the killings said: "Jama'atu Ahlissunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad wants to inform the world of its delight over the success of the attacks we launched on Barkin Ladi and Riyom in Plateau State on Christians and security operatives, including members of the National Assembly. We will continue to hunt government officials wherever they are; they will have no peace again." http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/07/plateau-massacre-we-did-it-boko-haram/

According to the chief of Agatu, Fulani herdsmen attacks have occurred in about 23 of Nigeria's states. Compared to Boko Haram's attacks, which have reached less than half this number of states, if indeed the Fulani herdsmen are Boko Haram's cavalry charged with the southern flank of their offensive, **this could be an infinitely more deadly and insidious terror alliance with a network that traverses all of Nigeria and several West African countries**.

3. A Latent Threat – The Shiite Massacre

On another front, there was an altercation in December 2015 between the Nigerian army and Iranian-backed Shias in northwest Nigeria. Hundreds of Shiites were reported dead making it the first official massacre under the new president.

The Iranian government summoned Nigeria's ambassador over this incident as well as issued statements condemning the attack. The Shiites are a very well-armed sleeper group that have intimidated but not terrorized Kaduna state for years, but not by mass violence. In 2014, they also clashed with the army during a pro-Hamas protest that resulted in the death of a Lebanese-trained Shiite.

In Nigeria, there is widespread alarm that the heavy-handed Nigerian army response could lead to a wider Shiite revolt akin to the Boko haram insurgency. What is intriguing is that the government has not publicly produced the captive Shiite leader.

President Buhari, himself a Muslim, had nominated a Muslim into his cabinet and after it turned out that he had written texts in support of Shia doctrine, dropped the nominee. This was the first overt act of Muslim vs. Muslim religious discrimination by the new administration. The massacre of the Shiites is even worse. It is to be noted that Sunni/Shia conflict is not something that the Nigerian public is familiar with. This is a new dimension for many as only astute observers of the situation in the north are even aware of this.

The Shiites are heavily funded and armed by Iran, but generally non-violent though confrontational. There are reports that in the past, Shiite elements who were dissatisfied with the non-violence defected to Boko Haram.

If Boko Haram and the Shiites converge, it will create a major terrorist hub in the northwest close enough to the capital of Abuja that will completely dwarf anything Boko Haram has done in the past dozen years. Indeed, if the Shiites go violent on their own, they have far greater potential capacity than Boko Haram. It is unclear if the 13 container loads of arms from Iran which Nigeria confiscated where meant for the Shiites or Boko Haram.

4. Looming Threat – Religious Restriction Laws

Kaduna state has generated tension with an unconstitutional law regulating preaching illustrating how states can instigate religious crisis such as the sharia violence which engulfed northern Nigeri in 2000. According to Bishop Matthew Kukah,"if you look at Boko Haram, it is also based on the fact that the way the state has treated Christianity predisposed Boko Haram to exploit that narrative.If you are refusing to give Christians land to build churches; if you are refusing to give Christians land to build schools; if you are refusing to allow Christian religious education to be taught in schools…what you're really saying is that these people are second-class citizens and that their religion is merely being tolerated."

B. PARTIAL COURSE CORRECTION: HOW THE U.S. HAS REFRAMED THE ISSUE

Prior to the Chibok abductions which is now a bellwether on international perceptions of Boko Haram, the State Department's response had been to deny the religious motivation of a rabid jihadist group that had repeatedly declared its goal of overthrowing the state and establishing a extremist Muslim theocracy; to downplay the repeated threats to America going back several years by claiming this is all "local"; presenting arguments rationalizing terrorism by citing emotional disconnect between the central government and northern Muslims; pressing the government to throw money at the problem with no emphasis on victim compensation, and being more critical of the military counteroffensive than of the terrorists' atrocities.

The US now is actively advocating for victims and more has been spent on humanitarian efforts now which is to be commended. The US has finally conceded that enough has not been done about Boko Haram and actually urged Nigeria to do more after years of messaging not to "over react."

However, the US is still reluctant to see the insurgency as religious and as part of a global jihad. The poverty argument remains a prominent driver in the US narrative on northern Nigeria. Here is why it is faulty.

Local versus Global

Four key international incidents played significant roles in the spread and potency of Boko Haram's jihad.

First, according to an analyst at CSW, many Nigerians were lured to Sudan while Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden was resident there with a promise of scholarships. Whilst there, some were recruited into terrorism and jihadi schools. When the US launched strikes against Sudan forcing Bin Laden to flee, some returned to Nigeria while others went with him as part of his foreigner fighters to Afghanistan.

Secondly, the US invasion which toppled the Taliban led to a further displacement of these Nigerian-born foreign fighters who are believed to have returned to Nigeria thus bringing with them sobriquets such as "Nigerian Taliban" and "Kandahar" which was Boko Haram's original name and the name of one of their mountainous operational bases respectively.

The US NATO action in Libya led to arms proliferation into Nigeria as well as the return of Nigerians who had military and terror training in Libya. Finally, the US-French roll-back of the MUJAO jihadists in northern Mali led to similar influx of arms and foreign fighters to swell Boko Haram's Nigeria ranks. (Escapees have told of light-skinned men with long flowing hair in the camps where Boko Haram kept people captive.)

Boko Haram itself has admitted to training in Somalia alongside Alshabab and there are documented reports of Egyptians, Pakistanis and Frenchmen providing assistance way before ISIS urged sympathizers to go to Nigeria to join the fighters. Indeed, a prominent ISIS fugitive in

Syria was captured on his way to Nigeria on a fake passport while the son of a prominent Nigerian jurist was reported to have successfully left Nigeria to join ISIS.

Boko Haram leaders have been on exile in Mecca and also reportedly used the massive annual pilgrimage airlifts to mask movements of personnel and arms.

In addition, Boko Haram's funding has been traced to other Al-Qaeda linked organizations in the Middle East[2] including the Islamic World Society (with headquarters in Saudi Arabia), and the Al-Muntada Trust Fund (a Britain based organization).[3] Boko Haram's worldwide sources of funding demonstrate that the group is more than a ragtag bunch of Nigerians.

As Nigerian Catholic Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah said this month, the U.S. government should "take full responsibility for how it shapes leadership around the world," adding that international issues affect Nigeria and leave the country to suffer as "collateral damage."

Poverty and Marginalization

According to the World Bank, the poorest parts of Nigeria are in the northwest and not the northeast, which has better socio-economic indices. Yet the northwest is not the hub of the insurgency, as the northeast is, so domestically, this argument is not tenable. Internationally, Iraq, Syria and Nigeria – hot-beds of terrorism – are all oil-producing countries.

Regionally, poor people come from Niger and Chad to live in Northern Nigeria in search of better conditions. Indeed, governments of Kano and Katsina states are amongst states that have built schools and even government houses to help the poor country of Niger. Yet that country is not a hot-bed of extremism and terrorism even though they are poorer than northern Nigeria. Indeed, some of Boko Haram's first leader's (Muhammed Yusuf's) followers were foreigners who lived on his campus and foraged during the day for money in the community. At the time, they paid tributes to him for shelter from their takings. It is the current crop of mercenary terrorists from Niger who are reportedly hired by Boko to come in for occasional attacks and return home.

Locally, the same conditions of poverty apply to indigenes of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states. In fact, Christians in those states are particularly hard-hit because they are denied recruitment, and those in employment denied promotion on the basis of their faith in addition to numerous forms of discrimination, persecution and deprivation. Yet, they have not taken to violence or terrorism.

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[2]http://allafrica.com/stories/201202141514.html

[3]Id. and http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2012/02/13/Investigators-track-Boko-Haram-funding/UPI-25221329148725/

On a national scale, the Igbos of Southern eastern Nigeria suffered a grievous blockade and starvation which led to hundreds of thousands killed during the Biafran war. Today they have bounced back without any significant influence in subsequent governments since. Their cries of marginalization would appear more credible to Nigerian observers than cries from the north, which has held political sway for eons.

Under former president Goodluck Jonathan, the north occupied the majority of top government positions including 80% of the most senior positions – Senate President, House Speaker, Chief Justice and Vice President. Only the President was not from the north. Today, with a new elected government, little has changed. The President, Senate President, Speaker, Chief Justice are all from the north. Only the Vice president is from the south.

The fact remains that the backwardness of the north is a reality that dates back to British colonial rule and not any design or action of any of Nigeria's other federating units. Indeed, according to researcher Andrew Ajiji,, the core north received education much earlier than the northcentral and other sub regions. It was apparently reserved for children of the elite and not mainstreamed until much later. At a time, 14 out of 15 kids in school were princes while the colonial government restricted missionaries from providing education to the masses.

If anything, the continued backwardness of the north and its deindustrialization amongst others have occurred under the rulership of the north. Similarly, traditional practices such as the "Almajiri" culture (pan-handling internships) have put millions of able-bodied Muslim youths on the streets and not in homes or schools rendering them unemployed and unemployable. This practice which is of doubtful Islamic pedigree, and is neither practiced amongst southern Muslims or even most of the Mideast, potentially breeds social misfits and misanthropes in spite of the best efforts of all to educate northern children.

Indeed, northern states like Katsina built 34 mosques throughout the state with money allocated to it by the Federal Government, while one southern state was providing free feeding for school children with its own allocation.

The State Department's proposed solution for Nigeria to give more money and positions to the Muslim north which it specifically distinguished from central Nigeria and described as "Hausa Fulani" leaders is gradually taking shape. But this tribal-based assessment of the situation in Northern Nigeria, singled out the Hausa Fulani for rapprochement whereas the hub of the insurgency is the Kanuri tribe in the northeast. In fact, the Hausa Fulani are not only generally considered to have dominated minorities in the north but also the rest of the country as well!

America's missed opportunity in properly understanding and promptly responding to the Boko Haram threat misled the Government of Nigeria, weakened its response and resulted in numerous lives lost plus a highly evolved threat to the US and global community. Although, incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari overstated it during his first US visit in 2015 as "aiding and abetting" Boko Haram, I believe it was more a sin of omission and less of commission. As is often said in Washington, sometimes incompetence simply masquerades as a conspiracy and a pervasive perception in Nigeria that prior US policy was to fulfil a 2015 doomsday prediction on Nigeria is unfounded. **This time, I am of the view that State is on the path to redemption or**

at least course correction and welcome the breath of fresh air breathed into its Nigeria policy under the helm of Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Ambassador Linda Thomas Greenfield who has a palpable concern for a country in which she attended school and Secretary Kerry respectively.

Time for US Transparency

Regardless of what may have occurred by reason of negligence or bureaucracy, there remain some troubling incidents that cannot as easily be glossed over. In a letter, Senator Vitter has pointed out what he considers a watering down of intelligence reports and security analyses on Nigeria: "Inaccuracies within official documents make it clear that the State Department misled Congress and the American people. Evidence suggests that there was an internal decision by the Office of Coordinator for Counterterrorism to downplay official, legally required, intelligence data in order to purposefully avoid making the determination," the Senator stated.

On my part, I remain concerned about my direct experience relating to American citizens attacked by Boko Haram. From my knowledge there have been at least half a dozen such Americans.

These include an American working as a diplomat at the United Nations building which was bombed in the worst attack on the UN ever. It includes an American law enforcement agent working as a diplomat at the US embassy. It includes American missionaries working with a charity in the core north as well as Americans in north central Nigeria. Yet, until this day, diplomats of the State Department have denied before this Congress that any Americans have been attacked by Boko Haram and there is no public record that the US government has acknowledged any of its citizens as mentioned in the instances above. In all cases, the Embassy was notified and aware, especially when their own personnel were involved. This borders on concealment more than negligence. It is time for the US government to be candid about the extent of Boko Haram's impact on US citizens and officials.

C. HUMANITARIAN, GENERATIONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC IMPACT

Not unlike Rwanda with a largely female population due to the deaths of many men during the genocide, northeast Nigeria faces a significant gender imbalance as Boko Haram systematically implemented the killing of males as standard execution procedure. But unlike Rwanda, this will not necessarily lead to greater female representation in politics or leadership (Rwanda has the largest female dominated parliament in the world) as religious barriers will almost certainly guarantee that majority women will be represented by minority men.

Then there are the children born of Boko Haram's systematic deployment of sexual abuse as a theological weapon of war. The war in Liberia led to over a quarter of a million children born to Nigerian soldiers in the ECOMOG peacekeeping forces. However, these children were seen as anchor babies to the military leading to security, access to food and even potentially Nigerian citizenship and expropriation. The children borne of Boko Haram's war crimes are not only not a scarlet letter, but they are a divisive phenomenon as communities

struggle to determine what to do with these "terrorist spawn" and the "tainted" women who bore them. Worse still, there is an even more immediate and insidious threat – in the northeast states, that a controversial sharia law system is operated. It prescribes death by stoning for pregnancy out of wedlock. Local community leaders have admitted that they struggle on whether to stone to death these rescued women and girls who return to their communities impregnated by the terrorists.

The ostracism is interfaith. One young man whose fiancée was abducted shortly after he had paid off her dowry in full told how he is no longer interested in her after her rescue. His problem is not the "taint". He said, "What if they taught her how to kill and she kills me one day?" The poor car washer is giving up a $1000 dowry for the fear of the unknown. Asked what the girl should do, he said, "If she wants, she can go back."

Nigeria lacks any basic social protections for anyone – except the elite who earn multiple salaries, pensions, cars etc. Indeed, many in Nigeria live with social disabilities from religious and cultural practices that discriminate on the basis of gender and religion, especially in the north. The Boko Haram insurgency has made life inconceivably worse for people who were already the lowest rung of the social strata. The human response to the humanitarian crisis via adequate psycho-social support could be key to winning the war against the future way – the generational impact on survivors and their offspring and the innate propensity for bitterness, vengeance and repeat abuse.

In this regard, much needs to be done. A few days ago, in Nigeria, I met with a focus group of victims, most of whom we have worked with in the past (See Appendix 4: Stories of Victims.)

II. The Chibok Girls

The somber two-year anniversary of the Chibok abductions is a time to wonder where the missing 219 schoolgirls are. However, it is also time to find out where some of the frequently forgotten 57 escaped Chibok schoolgirls are.

On my current fact-finding trip to Nigeria over the past month, we have determined that these young heroines are dispersed in northwest Nigeria and north central Nigeria courtesy of a scholarship from Borno state government. Some are in northeast Nigeria per kindness of the AUN and others are in the USA sponsored by Education Must Continue Initiative, a Nigerian charity of victims helping victims, with which I am personally involved on a pro bono basis.

Apart from these, there does not seem to be any systematic program of tracking and helping other escaped girls.

<u>Specific Findings Include the Following:</u>

1. At least two heroic escaped schoolgirls are now mothers after having had a child last year from unclear circumstances

2. Two schoolgirls withdrew from school in the northeast of Nigeria to get married recently
3. Some girls in the north central are struggling to stay in school given inadequate provision for their care
4. At least one Chibok girl who has not been in school for 2 years is returning to school in partnership with Education Must Continue Initiative
5. In spite of millions of dollars provided by donors to the Nigerian government for Safe Schools Initiatives, not one single escaped Chibok girl is known to have been sponsored back to school by the Government of Nigeria
6. Parents of abducted and now escaped Chibok schoolgirls are struggling to pay private school fees for their remaining children
7. In spite of a 2 million dollar commitment to rebuild the destroyed Chibok school from which the girls were abducted, the school remains uncompleted.
8. About 22 parents of Chibok schoolgirls have died - 18 of missing girls and 4 of escaped schoolgirls - many as indirect casualties of the insecurity.
9. 176 abducted girls are from the same church denomination
10. 31 of the schoolgirls are from one community.

Specific Recommendations:

More definitely needs to be done for the courageous young women who escaped and for the 1 million IDP kids in Nigeria. Only then will our tears for the missing mean something beyond mere sentiment. The US embassy continues to deny US visas to a bona fide Chibok schoolgirl who was the leader of the Chibok girls' escape plan, to go to school in the US or to speak at a United Nations event in New York. The wife of Nigeria's president launched a book on beauty tips on the 2nd anniversary of the abductions in an almost Marie Antoinesque fashion, sparking much criticism in Nigeria, but aides say she aims to utilize the funds raised for the benefit of the Chibok girls.

Specific recommendations follow:

1. The Nigerian government should release the report of the presidential panel that investigated the abductions in 2014 and provide a progress report on the quest for the girls in light of the proof of life video
2. The US government should give a progress report on the search by the US multidisciplinary team dispatched by President Obama to help find the girls in 2014
3. President Buhari should immediately announce his promised investigation panel and include stakeholders with genuine knowledge about the situation
4. The US should explain if and how any escaped Chibok girls are being supported by US AID
5. The Nigerian government should provide assistance to the escaped girls and scholarships for the siblings of the abducted girls
6. The French government should facilitate negotiations and action for the still kidnapped girls' release using its channels for securing freedom of French citizens kidnapped by Boko Haram
7. The US Embassy should issue visas to bona fide Chibok girls applying for student visas

8. The Nigerian government should have the culpable people held accountable for negligence in the abduction of the girls from their charge in a government boarding school.

III. Southern Borno

Much of southern Borno state is deeply neglected by the current relief, resettlement and reconstruction efforts. Indeed, only a couple of official IDP camps are reported to be in the south of Borno state and this is only due to a top army officer from the area. By contrast, the capital city Maiduguri has at least 28 camps. This is consistent with complaints of marginalization even in relief distribution by IDPs going back to 2013. Indeed, a top Borno official claimed there was no destruction in the south.

Education Must Continue Initiative, a local Nigerian charity of victims helping victims, started one of the only schools in that entire section of the state and in less than 6 months:
1. Provides education to over 2,000 children from KG to the middle school level. These are mostly children of families living at the frontline communities of the infamous Sambisa forest where the Boko Haram had established its major operational base. There have been no schools in the region for upward of 4 years.
2. School serves as a point of contact to share out some humanitarian assistance provided by some compassionate individuals and organizations. To date, not a single grain has been brought to this region by any of the numerous governmental agencies responsible for such relief services.
3. The children are receiving trauma therapy through counseling and activities provided by the school.
4. The school serves as a unifying base where some governance of the communities take place and the main symbol of authority and administration since essentially all other organs of government have been destroyed by the Boko Haram. The watchmen administer justice and peace to the people through adjudication over conflicts and build peace among aggrieved individuals in what is essentially an ungoverned territory.

D. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The recent trip of America's UN ambassador Samantha Powell to the conflict zone is commendable. During her time as head of the White House Atrocities Prevention Board, I had the opportunity to share with the APB an early warning report on Boko Haram's pre-genocide – a situation she has now seen first-hand probably as the most senior US official to visit the northeast.

As Secretary Kerry himself heads out to a long overdue Security Summit in Nigeria this week, it is imperative that the US engages on the following:

i.Urge the Nigerian Government to provide adequate medical doctors in Chibok and other Terrorism-Prone Zones (TPZs) of the northeast to minimize transit deaths

ii. Urge the Nigerian Government not to close down IDP camps as planned, but rather improve security, safety and safeguards against abuse and trafficking

iii. Urge the Nigerian Government and Aid groups to urgently facilitate victim resettlement in safe locations and to especially address the worrisome neglect of massively devastated communities in Southern Borno

iv. Urge the international community to raise the $500 million in resources the UN estimates is required to meet the needs of the approximately 3 million displaced

v. Urge the international community to work concertedly to stamp out Boko Haram which has spread to Chad, Niger and Cameroon with global linkages to ISIS

vi. Urge the USA to approve US resettlement for refugees of the insurgency

vii. Urge the WHO to pay for their own staff furniture in Nigeria so that the government of Nigeria can redirect its funds to victim care for citizens.

viii. Urge the UN to reimburse Nigeria for the $30 million spent on repairing its offices bombed by Boko Haram.

ix. Urge the international community to provide urgent assistance to enable the 20,000 UN estimated lost but found kids to trace and be reunified with their families.

x. Urge the Nigerian government to prioritize the safety and security of all communities and the freedom of the abducted 219 Chibok schoolgirls and other captives.

xi. Urge the international community, the UN, ICC, EU and US to recognize Boko Haram's actions as genocide and to declare it a level three humanitarian crisis.

xii. Urge the countries of Chad, Cameroon and Niger to stop forced repatriation of refugees

xiii. Urge Nigeria to respect the rule of law in dealing with the Shiite incident, the Biafra movement and the renewed Niger Delta militancy

xiv. Urge Nigeria to stem the spreading attacks of armed Fulani herdsmen across the country and ensure justice and compensation for affected communities

xv. Urge Nigeria to ensure food security by working urgently with farming communities affected by the terrorism and herdsmen attacks.

E. Conclusion

Clearly the Boko Haram has grown in capacity and lethality since we first advocated for its designation as a Foreign Terrorist organization. Global awareness of Boko Haram has also grown since the designation. The question is whether global action is commensurate with the heightened international profile of an ISIS-ISWAP alliance.

Congress has had multiple bills to address this issue. These include Rep. Wilson's H.R. 3833, companion legislation to S. 1632. And Rep. Jackson Lee's H.R. 528 to create a fund for victims of terrorism. This effort would create a Victims' Fund from forfeited Nigerian assets linked to the US. I support this move. Prior funds repatriated to Nigeria have been reported to have been re-looted. Current humanitarian efforts appear not to be impacting the neediest, and vast segments of IDPs are untouched by relief efforts while elites and diplomats are catered to.

A Victim Fund comprised of millions stolen from Nigeria's citizens would be both poetic justice and a shot in the arm for resettlement, as well as healing for numerous victims. Timely humanitarian assistance now will help stave a multi-generational conflict.

On behalf of victims I met last week and those who have preceded us to eternity, I thank you for your kind attention.

APPENDIX 1

TERRORISM TIMELINE: Lead Global terror group, Boko Haram

Although Boko Haram's first terror attack was on Christmas Eve, 2003, January 2012 marked the official launch of Boko Haram's final solution putsch on infidels in Nigeria. This was the formal announcement but not the commencement of the jihadi genocide.

January 2012, Boko Haram issued an ultimatum by leaflets asking all Christians and southerners to leave northern Nigeria in 72 hours. At the expiration of the 3-day deadline, Boko Haram struck a hotel in the northeast and killed Christian southerners. The following day, they struck again at the home where mourners gathered to console the bereaved with point blank kill shots to the head.

End of 2012, more Christians had been killed in northern Nigeria than the rest of the world combined. This was a record in the history of terrorism data collation.

2014: Boko Haram attacks in 2014 resulted in a 300% increase in terrorism in Nigeria. This was again a record in the history of terrorism data collation. The Baga Massacre which claimed 2000 lives in one incident (exceeding Boko Haram's total kills for the entire year of 2012) puts Boko Haram in line to again set a record for exponentially increased kills in 2015.

April 14, 2014: Kidnapping of 276 Chibok Schoolgirls brought international attention to the increasing Boko Haram Genocide.

2015

January 2015: Boko Haram perpetrated another extinction level attack on the town of Baga leaving an estimated 2000 residents dead. The Baga massacre is the worst terror attack after the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York which also recorded quadruple digit casualties.

MARCH 2015: **BH-ISIS Alliance:** Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau, announced in an audio message that the Islamist terror group was going to ally with ISIS. The offer was accepted by ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

June 15: **Suicide bombings in Chad:** Two suicide bombings of police sites in N'Djamena, the capital and largest city of Chad, killed 38 people. Boko Haram later claimed responsibility for these attacks.[177] On 11 July, a male suicide bomber disguised in a woman's Burqa detonated his explosives belt in the main market of N'Djamena, next to the main mosque, killing 15 people and injuring 80.[178] Several days after the bombing, Boko Haram claimed responsibility via Twitter, signing as "Islamic State, West Africa province."[179]

July 1-2: **Mosques massacres (M***ain article: July 2015 Kukawa, Nigeria Massacre):* Boko Haram militants attacked multiple mosques between 1 and 2 July. Forty-eight men and boys were killed on the 1st at one mosque in Kukawa. Seventeen were wounded in the attack. Ninety-seven others, mostly men, were killed in numerous mosques on the 2nd with a number of women and young girls killed in their homes. An unknown number were wounded.[176]

September 9: Director of Information at the Defence Headquarters, Colonel Rabe Abubakar announced that all known Boko *Haram camps and cells had been destroyed, and that the group was so weakened that they could no longer hold any territory.*

September 20: (Borno): A series of bombings occurred in Maiduguri and Monguno. *Further information: September 2015 Borno State bombings.* The attacks followed an announcement by Shekau refuting the army's claims of defeat.

September 25: (Niger) at least 15 civilians were massacred and stores were looted in a cross-border raid on a Niger village, according to anonymous military sources.[225]

October 1: (Adamawa) villagers in Kirchinga, Adamawa complained of a lack of security personnel after 5 residents had their throats slit during an unchallenged early morning attack. The village borders Cameroon and the Sambisa forest.[196]

On 18 October the village of Dar, Adamawe was attacked, killing 12 persons."[197] On **20 October** there were reports of a military ambush in Madagali, assisted by vigilantes, in which over 30 militants were killed.[198] On 21 October, according to vigilante reports, a joint operation in Madagali and Gwoza killed 150 militants and rescued 36 captives.[199] On **23 October** a suicide bomb at a crowded mosque killed 27 in Yola, Adamawa's capital.[200] On 17 November an explosion at a food market in Yola killed 32,[201] in the first Nigerian bombing since the 23 October attacks in Maiduguri and Yola.[202] On the morning of **28 December** two female suicide bombers detonated their explosives at a crowded market in Madagali. According to a local resident at least 28 were killed.[194]

October 2: Federal Capital Territory / Nasarawa: Two bombings on 2 October that killed 18 and wounded 41, one in Nyanya in Nasarawa and the other in Kuje, FCT, were also claimed by Boko Haram.[195]

October 2 (Niger) two soldiers died and four were wounded in a Boko Haram attack on a village near the Nigerian border in Niger's Diffa province. The militants also looted stores, according to Niger army officers.

October 4 (Niger) according to an aid worker, a policeman and five civilians were killed by 4 suicide bombers near the Nigerian border.

October 6 (Niger) three suspected Boko Haram militants accidentally blew themselves up while transporting explosives to Bosso town in Diffa.

October 6: (CHAD): Chadian army reported an attack in the border region of Lake Chad. 11 soldiers were killed and 14 wounded in the pre dawn cross-border infiltration, and 17 militants were also killed, according to an army spokesman.[219] On 10 October 5 suicide bombers killed 33 in the market in Baga Sola, a camp for Nigerian refugees.[220] On 1 November two dawn attacks on army posts occurred. Eleven militants and two soldiers were killed at Kaika, and in an attempted suicide bombing at Bougouma, "Two members of Boko Haram were neutralised and a third blew himself up, wounding 11 civilians", according to a government statement.[221][222] A

state of emergency was imposed in the western Lake Chad region on 9 November, initially for 12 days, and extended by Chad's national assembly on 18 November to four months.[223]

October 7: **(Yobe)**: in Damaturu, Yobe at least 15 people were killed by 3 suicide bombers.[203] In Goniri, Yobe 7 soldiers and over 100 militants were killed, and a large arms cache was found, according to an army spokesman, who said that the recent apparent rise in suicide bombings was an indication of the success of military operations.[204][205]

October 11 **(Cameroon)** in the far north region of Cameroon two female suicide bombers killed nine people in the town of Mora. On 18 October 10 militants were killed when they attacked a Cameroon military anti-terrorist division convoy close to the border, after a military vehicle became stuck in mud. One army commander later died of his wounds.[207] On 12 October the first 90 of a proposed deployment of 300 US troops arrived in the region to assist with training, reconnaissance and airborne intelligence using Predator drones.[208] On 16 October more than six security vehicles were transferred to the Cameroon military. An AFRICOM spokesman said that increased cooperation had led them "to study the viability of ISR flights from a temporary location in Cameroon." The deployment is "totally separate and distinct" from operations in Chad and Niger, where 250 and 85 personnel, respectively, are conducting missions including ISR and training.[209]

October 21 **(Niger)** near Diffa town two soldiers were killed by explosives while intercepting an attack. Diffa region hosts over 150,000 Nigerian refugees. It is under a state of emergency. On 14 October a curfew and movement restrictions were imposed.[226] *At least 57 attacks occurred there from February to October 2015. More than 1,100 Boko Haram suspects have been arrested in Niger during 2015.*[227][228][229]

October 21: Nganzai, **(Borno)**: , According to a civilian vigilante, fleeing militants shot at four cars, killing the passengers, and burnt and looted the nearby village.[184] On 23 October a suicide bombing occurred in a pre dawn attack at a mosque in Maiduguri. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) put the death toll at 6, while hospital sources reported 19 deaths, and a vigilante claimed to have counted 28 corpses and two suicide bombers.[185] On the following day four female suicide bombers claimed one victim after they were intercepted by the JTF in Maiduguri, according to a NEMA spokesman.[186]

October 23 **(Cameroon)** Boko Haram fighters were driven out of Kerawa, a village of 50,000 in Kolofata, a commune in the far north region. They had briefly occupied the village until the arrival of security forces. Reports of civilian casualties ranged from eight to eleven. An army spokesman claimed the militants suffered heavy casualties. The village's military base had previously been targeted by suicide bombers on 3 September, when 30 were killed.[210][211][212][213]

October 27: **(Borno)** a military operation freed 192 children and 138 women being held captive in two camps in the Sambisa forest, and 30 militants were killed, according to a social media statement from the Defense HQ.[187][188] None of the captives were those taken in Chibok in April 2014.[189]

November 9 **(Cameroon)** two female suicide bombers killed three Nigerians during a security check in a truck full of Nigerian refugees.[214] On 21 November a suicide attack in a suburb of Fotokol town killed four. An anonymous military official said: "The first kamikaze detonated his bomb in the house of the traditional chief of Leymarie. Five people died including the bomber. Several minutes later, three female bombers exploded their bombs close to the initial site but they didn't kill anyone else because they acted too quickly."[215]

November 11: **(Niger)** Two Niger military officials described an attack on a village in Bosso district in which five civilians and 20 militants were killed. A senior government official later denied that the attack had occurred, according to *Reuters*.[230][231] On 26 November Boko Haram launched a cross-border night raid on Wogom village in Diffa province. A government spokesman, Justice Minister Marou Amadou stated: "Eighteen villagers were killed, including the chief imam for the village whose throat was slit by his own nephew."[232][233]

November 28: **(Cameroon)** two suicide bombers killed six near the military base in Dabanga, and in an attack in Gouzoudou five people were killed, according to a military spokesman.[216] On 1 December two suicide bombers killed three, and a third bomber was killed before detonating explosives. On 2 December Cameroon's Defense Minister claimed that, at the end of November, 100 Boko Haram members had been killed and 900 hostages freed, and that a large stockpile of arms and munitions, and black-and-white ISIL flags had been seized.[217] Information Minister Issa Tchiroma Bakari said that "The people that were freed are just villagers. The [Chibok] schoolgirls who are missing are not amongst the group."[218]

November 30: **(Kano)** Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on a procession of Shi'ite Muslims killing at least 21, on 30 November near the village of Dakozoye. A week earlier two bombers had killed at least 14 in Kano city.[206]

December 5: **(CHAD):** Three female suicide bombers killed about 30 at a crowded market on the island of Koulfoua in Lake Chad.[224]

December 25: **(Borno)** gunmen set fire to the village of Kimba, killing at least 14, according to vigilantes.[190] On 27 December gunmen armed with RPGs battled with troops for two hours in Aldawari village in the outskirts of Maiduguri, according to NEMA. On the following morning a bombing at a nearby mosque killed around 20, according to NEMA.[191][192][193][194]

December 31, 2015: Date that President Buhari had promised that the insurgency would end.

December 2015: Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, the President of Nigeria, **claimed that Boko Haram was "technically defeated."**[181]

2015 FACTS: ***Killings increased 62% in 1 Year: 2016 World Watch List https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/nigeria/***

2.6 million internally displaced people, or IDPs, in northeastern Nigeria, according to the International Organization for Migration. In 2015, there were 4,028 killings and 198

church attacks that Open Doors was able to record. The figures recorded for the previous year were 2,484 killings and 108 church attacks. ***(Reported: March 2016)***

2016

January 30, 2016 attack on Dalori bears hallmarks of BH's start of year extinction-level type attacks over the years. The massacre also targeted camps for Internally Displaced Persons who had fled areas overrun by Boko Haram. Previously, Boko Haram had on September 11, 2015 bombed an IDP camp for refugees recently returned from neighboring Cameroon. That camp had previously provided refuge for ~~held~~ hundreds of women and children rescued by the Nigerian army from terrorist captivity. The recent attack is a continuation of a new tactic of striking already vulnerable populations in their places of refuge.

Three days before the Dalori Massacre, Boko Haram bombed the beleaguered town of Chibok using multiple suicide bombers. Chibok, made famous by the notorious abduction of almost 300 schoolgirls in 2014, has now been attacked multiple times since then. The combined three day total between the recent Chibok and Dalori attacks exceeds 100 lives lost.

February 1, 2016 – Boko Haram perpetrated a massacre in northeastern Nigeria that pushed its year-to-date kills into triple digits by January 31, just a month into the New Year.

Overview of Boko Haram Insurgency in Cameroon

While the ground zero for the Boko Haram insurgency has been in the Northeastern region of Nigeria in particular, Cameroon, Niger Republic, and Chad have seen significant incursions and attacks from this terrorist organization. As of January 2016, official records from the Cameroonian government indicate that nearly 1,200 people have been killed since 2013 when Boko Haram began attacking Cameroon's Far North region, an area that borders the Islamist group's stronghold in northeastern Nigeria. According to Cameroon's Communications Minister Issa Chiroma, a total of 1,098 civilians, 67 soldiers and 3 police officials have been killed in attacks by the Boko Haram terrorist group (Agence France Presse, 2016).

Children as Targets

What is disturbing and uniquely characteristic of the majority of the Boko Haram attacks in Cameroon is the involvement of children in the attacks. According to the Daily Beast (2016), Boko Haram uses the tactics of abducting, recruiting, and then deploying children to detonate suicide bombs in Cameroonian villages and towns bordering the states of the Boko haram stronghold in Nigeria. Just last January 2016, 32 people were killed when at least three suicide bombers blew themselves up at a local market in Bodo village in northern Cameroon, near the frontier with Nigeria, in one of the deadliest attacks in the Far North region since 2013. Cameroonian officials say there have been more than 30 suicide attacks blamed on Boko Haram, many of which are carried out by young girls and boys. Agence France Press reports that in July, 2015, a 12-year-old girl blew herself up in a bar, killing 20 people and injuring at least 79 in the regional capital city of Maroua. Four days before that, two girls detonated their suicide belts, killing 11 people and injuring 32 in twin attacks in the same city (The Daily Beast,2016).

Cameroon reports over 22 suicide bombing attempts this year already. Since June 2014, Boko Haram has deployed over 100 female suicide bombers, mostly girls, across several countries – a record for any contemporary group.

According to the Daily Beast, boys and girls recruited into Boko Haram's fold are initially forced and then indoctrinated. The Sect is using economic incentives as well, to persuade unemployed young people and former students to join its ranks.

APPENDIX 2:

TIMELINE OF FULANI ATTACKS ON BENUE STATE FROM 2013 – 2016

There have been at least 40 Fulani attacks in Benue state in 35 months. It's an average of one a month for the last three years straight.

Note: "LGA" is the acronym for Local Government Area, a subdivision of Nigerian government.

2013

1. April 23, 2013: 10 farmers killed, Mbasenge community in Guma LGA by suspected herdsmen.
2. May 7, 2013: 47 mourners gunned down in Agatu while burying two policemen killed the Tuesday before in Nassarawa.
3. May 14, 2013: 40 locals killed when over 200 herdsmen surround Ekwo-Okpanchenyi, Agatu LGA .
4. July 5, 2013: 20 killed in "conflict" between Tiv farmers & herdsmen at Nzorov, Guma LGA.
5. July 28, 2013: 8 killed when herdsmen invade 2 villages, Agatu LGA allegedly in retaliation for the killing of 112 cows
6. November 7, 2013: 7 killed, 6000+ displaced when attackers strike at Ikpele & Okpopolo communities.
7. Nov 9, 2013: 36 locals killed and 7 villages overrun in an attack by herdsmen on locals in Agatu LGA.
8. Nov 20, 2013: Attack on communities in Guma LGA, killing 22 locals and destroying properties worth millions of naira.

2014

9. Jan 20: Gunmen attack Agatu LGA, killing 5 soldiers and 7 civilians.
10. Jan 20: Attack on Adeke village, 3 dead.
11. 20-21 Feb 2014: Herdsmen attack Gwer West LGA. 35 killed. 80,000 displaced. 6 Council Wards Sacked.
12. Feb 24, 2014: Attack on a Tiv community along Naka road, Makurdi, killing 8 people.
13. March 6, 2014: 30 killed in Kwande, Katsina/Ala and Logo LGAs by attackers dressed in military uniforms. 6 villages sacked.
14. March 12, 2014: Raid on Ukpam village of Mbabaai in Guma LGA. 28 persons killed. Yam barns and farms burnt.
15. March 10, 2014: Former Governor Suswam's convoy attacked by herdsmen at Umenger. He and convoy manage an escape.
16. March 12, 2014: Herdsmen attack Suswam's village in Logo LGA. 22 slaughtered. Entire village sacked.
17. March 23, 2014: 25 killed and over 50 injured by herdsmen said to be bearing sophisticated weapons in Gbajimba, Guma LGA.
18. March 25, 2014: Police recover 7 corpses following an attack on Agena village by Herdsmen.
19. March 29, 2014: Herdsmen attack 4 villages in Agatu LGA. 19 people killed, 15 others abducted.
20. March 29, 2014: Suspected use of chemical weapons on Shengev community in Gwer West LGA leaving 15 people dead.
21. March 30, 2014: 19 locals killed and 15 abducted in Agatu LGA.

22. April 10, 2014: Over 100 herdsmen attacked 4 villages in Ukemberaga/Tswarev ward of Logo LG, 6 killed, properties lost.
23. April 15, 2014: Attack on Obagaji, Headquarters of Agatu LGA, 12 youths killed.
24. September 10, 2014: Herdsmen attacked five villages in Ogbadibo LGA leaving scores dead.
25. January 27, 2015: 17 persons killed in attacks on Abugbe, Okoklo, and Ogwule & Ocholoyan in Agatu LGA by herdsmen.
26. January 30, 2015: Over 100 attackers stormed 5 villages in Logo LGA, killing 9 persons in the attack.
27. March 15, 2015: Egba village in Agatu LGA sacked by herdsmen, over 90 locals, including women and children killed.
28. April 27, 2015: 28 persons killed by herdsmen in attack on 3 villages at Mbadwem, Guma LGA; houses and farmlands razed.
29. May 11, 2015: Ikyoawen community in Turan Kwande LGA invaded by herdsmen. 5 persons killed & 8 others wounded.
30. May 24, 2015: 100 killed in an attack by herdsmen in villages &refugee camps at Ukura, Gafa, Per and Tse-Gusa, Logo LGA.
31. July 7, 2015: 1 local killed and several others injured following an attack on mourners in Imande Bebeshi in Kwande LGA.
32. November 5, 2015: 12 persons killed, 25 others injured in Buruku LGA following an attack by suspected herdsmen.
33. Feb 8, 2016: 10 killed and over 300 displaced in clash between herdsmen and farmers at Tor-Anyiin and Tor-Ataan in Buruku LGA.
34. Feb 21-24, 2016: Over 500 locals killed and 7000 displaced in an attack on Agatu LGA by Fulani herdsmen. Over 7 villages razed.
35. March 9, 2016: 8 residents killed by herdsmen in attacks on Ngorukgan, Tse Chia, Deghkia and Nhumbe in Logo LGA.
36. March 11, 2016: Attack on Convoy of Senator David Mark by suspected herdsmen in Agatu LGA. No casualty recorded.
37. March 13, 2016: 6 people including an APC youth leader killed by herdsmen in an attack on Tarkaa LGA.
38. February 29, 2016: 11 killed in Edugbeho Agatu LG including a police inspector.
39. March 10, 2016: Two killed in attack on Obagaji Agatu.
40. March 5, 2016: Houses burnt in Agatu. Security forces prevented killings.
Adapted and updated from Benue Info

APPENDIX 3:

Agatu Month-long Fulani Occupation

At a town hall meeting in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, a charged crowd of several hundred comprised mostly of young people, gathered in an air conditioned tent to discuss the continuing occupation of their hometowns by Muslim Herdsmen.

They watched videos of deplorable conditions of tens of thousands of their displaced Idoma kinsfolk resulting from the Agatu massacre.
Someone in the crowd got up, agitated, when he saw a video of the burnt out villages. "See my hometown. That's my home," he lamented as people around calmed him down.

It was almost the tipping point of an emotional day when they heard from five victims who traveled to share their tales of horror and escape. A man saw their local Methodist church go up in flames. A lady lost five family members including her son - hacked by the Fulani herdsmen.

The meeting was meant to find a resolution to the occupation and to the ensuing humanitarian emergency. But matters where not helped when the member of parliament representing the Agatu area, Adamu Entonu, reported a fresh attack hours earlier on the capital of the county which had been considered a bastion from attack. A least two more people were reported killed.

"A small security presence has been deployed but they patrol and return to the main city instead of staying in the affected areas. They have not engaged and pushed out the herdsmen and their cattle from our villages. The killings continue even up to yesterday in Obagaji," he informed the crowd. "If the federal government cannot protect us, they should inform us what we need to do to defend ourselves."
It was a theme from their elected representative that resonated with the audience but had to be tempered by a member of president Buhari's cabinet who came and addressed them as well.
Agriculture minister Audu Ogbe, who represents Benue in the federal government, promised that no one would drive them from their land.
However he lamented that only in Nigeria and East Africa (the Masai) was grazing still the norm. It was time for paddocks and he would impress the urgency of the situation on key officials.

Ogbe insisted that the attacks were neither ethnic nor religious but "economic."
"They like our Fadama grass for their cattle", he said, referring to all season farming which the people of Agatu actively engage in.
Akpa Idu, chair of the peace committee, said this is the same sentiment expressed by the Fulanis during their dialogue.
As a precondition for peace talks, the Benue state government had ordered the herdsmen to move out of the occupied communities to the state across the river.
"However, they say the grass is better on our side so they don't want to move," Idu said of their latest peace talks although the Fulanis said in a prior meeting, they'd pull out two weeks prior.

"Our people won't go back with them still there. And they can't farm even though the first rains of the season have begun. This is a serious concern for their livelihood."

In Rop, Plateau State, a former member of parliament who doesn't want to be identified because of her ongoing work to resolve the situation, says her people have expressed similar concerns. Following several attacks, they fled their communities last year and in an unusual move the Fulanis moved in and stayed put.
Plateau state has borne the brunt of the Fulani attacks. In a five year period from 2010-2015, the middlebelt area including Benue and Plateau estimate over 6500 killed.
The most heinous attack, the Dogo Nahawa massacre of three hilly communities in Jos, Plateau State on March, 7, 2010 claimed over 500 lives garnering international attention and sparking the launch of the Justice for Jos Project which I founded.
The Fulani men who penetrated the mass murder of that year, confessed in media interviews with the New York Times that they had planned the attacks in a meeting they held in the neighboring state.

So committed were they to a suicide mission that they were caught wandering around with bloodstained clothes and machetes. There was never any issue of them bringing in cows and taking over the community. It was simply premeditated massacre.
"They seem more emboldened now. I wonder why", mused a respondent from Agatu.

In December 2010, 15 people were prosecuted, in court trials which the Justice for Jos Project monitored, and sentenced to 10 years for the DNH massacre - the first ever such convictions for Fulani attacks. Under sentencing guidelines, they will be out within a year.

The attacks continue, regardless, now with occupation. No arrests, no prosecutions while hapless farmers wonder what their response should be in the face of successive governments unwilling or unable to protect them.

One reason is that the newest narrative explaining away the herdsmen's attacks is "climate change." A new film funded by the European Union claims the shrinkage of Lake Chad due to desert encroachment has fueled both the Fulani and Boko Haram violence.

While this makes an interesting argument, a researcher who has studied the problem for years, says it is not the whole truth. "A northern governor boasted that he had more water reservoirs than his southern counterparts. You need lots of water to grow rice and sugarcane and that is precisely what is being farmed up north right now. The argument that the violence is due to drying up lakes just doesn't hold water."

The truth appears to lie elsewhere. After a gruesome attack in Agatu last year, Audu Ogbe gave deep insight into the sinister motives of the attackers.
According to media reports in March 2015, He said some of the herdsmen attackers who were apprehended do not seem to be Nigerians as they do not speak any of the Nigerian languages, adding that when interrogated, they confessed that they were mercenaries recruited to come and kill in name of Jihad.

"People have tried to resist them on their own but they always come with very heavy weapons, AK -47 and nobody really knows the source. Once many of them were caught and some of them are Mauritanians and others who came into Nigeria speaking languages other than Nigerian. They speak neither Fufuldei nor Hausa but they were among the attackers. One of them said they were told that there was a Jihad and that they should come in and kill," he said.

It is this history of unaddressed attacks in the case of public admissions of guilt or jihad that has pushed people in the middle belt to the protests and town hall meetings that have been holding in Nigeria, including even neighboring Ghana, US and UK. A mass movement called Movement Against Fulani Occupation has called for a beef boycott in Nigeria as tensions continue to build across the south.

The Inspector General of Police, Solomon Arase, in a highly criticized statement said, "Most of these herdsmen are not Nigerians. They are people from Mali, Chad, who came into our system. So, that is why we have to be very careful. Our borders are very porous. Predominantly our own herdsmen are law abiding people.
"But when people come from outside with their cattle, we should not deny them entry because of ECOWAS protocols, good neighborliness but, at the same time, we should not allow them to embark on criminal activities.

"I have taken suggestions about how we can develop big ranches so that they can stop grazing on farmlands."

The police chief's inconsistent remarks claiming the herdsmen have been infiltrated by non-Nigerians comes after Nigerian herdsmen had already admitted in meetings with him that they perpetrated the attacks.
Worse still, even if it were true that foreign Herdsmen committed the attacks, it is noteworthy that they allegedly come from the same countries where Boko Haram has an operational footprint in the region and an embarrassing admission of failure to secure national borders or arrest foreign criminals.

Clearly Nigeria has as big a problem as Boko Haram on its hands and there appears to be no solution or strategy in place much less acknowledgement as the occupation continued for over a month before the herdsmen moved out of Benue state scot-free.

APPENDIX 4:

STORIES OF VICTIMS

Lisa we met during a CODEL in June 2014. Her case bears special mention. The sound of gunfire and explosions woke her up. In the corner she saw her husband pacing "before they kill me, I'll take as many of them as I can," said he. "What if it's just your fellow police officers shooting?" Lisa asked. The gunfire was right in the police barracks and Lisa still couldn't believe the Boko Haram terrorists had the nerve to attack here too. She was heavily pregnant (6 months

along) and could barely get up to rouse their kids while Peter cocked his rifle. He had 36 bullets. That would have to do even though Peter had been instructed not to engage the terrorists unless he received orders to fire by his commanding officer...The terrorists came to their door and ordered him to come out. When Peter didn't respond, they barged in. Pop! Pop! Pop! He squeezed the trigger as they streamed in. "How many did he hit?" I asked Lisa. "I saw several flee with injuries. The number I saw keel over dead were 8. Then he ran out of bullets." Boko Haram captured Peter and slit his throat till they completely severed his head.

They flung his decapitated head on the floor and asked her to lie on the ground beside it. She stooped as if complying then bolted for the door. She ran as fast as one could running for two. Three of the terrorists gave chase. One lashed out with a sword and slashed her arm. She pulled of her buttoned blouse and wrapped her arm to stem the blood flow while running. Another terrorist pushed her and she fell to the ground. They pulled knives from their legs and held her down. "Say "Allah Akbar"" they ordered. "Jesus, Jesus" were the last words she said before they slit her throat and left her body spread out on the ground. It began to rain and the wind swept dust and leaves on her. Mosquitoes swarmed her, drawn by the abundant cascading blood.

Two days later, officials came to pick the bodies for burial. Lisa lifted a feeble hand. This one is alive...She spent three months in the emergency room and over a year in the first of several hospitals. Her two kids' died - slit throats like their dad. She lost the pregnancy but Lisa is alive. As a widow of a valiant police inspector who put up a heroic fight to defend his barracks and was slain by the terrorists, Lisa was entitled to some social protection - on the books. Yet her in-laws stripped their home of all possessions including her only surviving child who was out of town during the attack. She never saw a dime of her husband's death benefit even though she was with him till death brutally did them part.

She was given an ultimatum to marry one of his brothers and be given her property back. She declined and returned destitute to live with her parents in her home state. Then Boko Haram captured their town and she and the parents who cared for her in hospital all became IDPs again. Congresswomen moved by her situation referred us to USAID. Nothing came out of our meeting. We provided Lisa $250 seed money to raise chickens to support her son who has rejoined her but it is inadequate for rent, school fees and subsistence much less to visit her parents.

2.Timothy is in a special category. He was held captive by Boko Haram for 10 months before he escaped in 2014. It is exceedingly rare to see male Christian escapees who survived after so long as BH normally kills them off or converts and conscripts them as fighters. Timothy was previously handicapped from a car crash so the terrorist did not summarily execute him although he was a Christian. His experience was telling: "I was returning from Christmas holiday when our taxi was ambushed. Everyone else was able to flee except myself and a pastor. Another taxi ran into the ambush but since they were all Muslims, Boko Haram collected money from them as contributions to the jihad and let them go."

"They took me and a pastor to a neighboring village where a celebration broke out when they announced to the villagers that they had captured two kaffirs (infidels.)"

"One terrorist told me to follow him to the road. I knew instinctively I was going to be killed. BH has a strategy of killing people right by the roadside to inflict terror in road travelers who came by.
"I began to say my last prayers under my breath but he saw my lips moving.
"Infidel, why are you praying? Do you know God?"
"Yes," I replied. "He created you and me.""
He laughed derisively and abruptly changed his mind.

When the terrorists sorted through the wallets of the Muslim passengers they had extorted them from, they were angry to see that their ID cards identified some as school teachers. "We should have killed them instead of letting them go," they lamented.

Timothy has been free for over a year now. In spite of his invaluable insights as someone who was held captive for 10 months, he has not been offered a job. He is unemployed and recently returned to school where he is struggling to pay fees. He has not set his eyes on his mother who is a refugee in Cameroon. He can't afford to travel. He sleeps on the floor of someone's kitchen - a kind but also poor stranger whom he met while in hospital.

Apart from immediate accommodation and feeding when he was taken in by the army after a wild 5-day escape through the forest, Timothy has not benefited from any government assistance.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection, so ordered.

And any extraneous material any of you would like will be made a part of the record.

Mr. OGEBE. I thank you, sir.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Sa'a. The floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF "SA'A", CHIBOK SCHOOLGIRL, EDUCATION MUST CONTINUE INITIATIVE

SA'A. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Two years ago the terrorist group Boko Haram attacked my school at Chibok when we were all sleeping at night. They were shooting guns and yelling "Allahu Akbar." They asked, where are the boys? They also asked where the food is. They made us move from where we were staying to the class area. They started burning everything, our clothes, our books, our classrooms, and everything in our school. Then they made us walk far away from the school and forced us to enter a truck. If we did not they are going to shoot all of us.

We were all scared so we entered the truck. When we were all riding through the forest, I had this feeling that I should try and escape because I don't know where I am going and neither do my parents. We didn't know. I said to one of my friends that I am going to jump out of the truck and escape. She said, "Okay," she is going to jump out with me.

I jumped out first and she jumped out after me. We hid in the forest while they passed. It was very dark. We didn't know where we are. My friend hurt both of her legs from jumping out of the truck. She couldn't walk. She cried. She said to me that I should go home and let her die in the forest. I said, "No, if we are going to die, we are going to die together. I am not going to leave you here."

I decided to go and look for help. I was going not far from where we slept. I found a Fulani man, a shepherd. I asked him for help but, he said, "No." So I tried and convince him. Then he did help us. He put my friend on his bicycle and took us to Chibok, and that is how we got home.

After we escaped, Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe with the Justice for Jos Project, with Congressman Chairman Chris Smith, came to Nigeria to find out what happened. They met my friend who escaped with me and heard our story.

Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe found a school for her to study in the U.S. She told them if they giving her a scholarship to come to study, she would like me to come too because I was the one who helped her. My friend told me about the opportunity, but I told her that I am not coming to school because of what happened.

That was the second attack that both of us had been through. When Boko Haram kidnapped us they asked, "Why are you at school?" They said, we should all be married. They said that we should not go to school again or they will find us. I felt like if I go to school again they will kidnap us wherever we are.

My brothers and friends encouraged me that I should not let Boko Haram stop me from getting an education, I should come and study. I am glad I listened to them and I'm here today. I started college in January under a project by the Education Must Continue

Initiative, www.emcinitiative.org. It is run by the victims of the insurgency for victims of the insurgency which has helped me and about 3,000 other IDP kids to go to school.

I have learned a lot since I came to the U.S. I went to the National Archives and I saw the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. I even saw a version of the Magna Carta. I learned that the people who wrote those documents have faced hard times through the years, but they didn't give up, and hope and freedom won.

When I heard Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty or give me death," I realized that was exactly how I felt when I had to decide about jumping out of the truck to escape from Boko Haram.

Here in the U.S., I stood under the Capitol dome and looked up at the statute on the top called Armed Freedom and realized that freedom has to have strength protecting it.

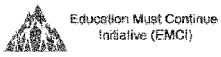
I want to study medicine. I want to help Nigeria, but will it be safe? I have twice escaped Boko Haram attacks on my schools, but many have not. Many live in fear every day. Thanks to God, I am safely here in the U.S. and doing well in my studies, but I am worried about my family in Nigeria. People ask me if it will be safe for me to return to Nigeria. I ask: Is it safe for everyone in the northern Nigeria? I lost my dad months ago. It wasn't the terrorism but the effects of the terrorism.

I urge everyone who hears or reads this statement who has any power to help Nigeria to please help and also help some of my Chibok classmates who didn't get the opportunity that I have today to be in school safely. I want them to be able to go to school too, especially my Chibok classmates and my friend Hauwa John, who has been denied a visa at the American Embassy in Nigeria three times.

When I saw the video of some of my missing classmates and recognized some of their faces, I cried with tears of joy, thanking God for their lives. Seeing them has given me courage to tell the world that we should not lose hope.

I have had dreams. Some of the dreams were scary, but now my dreams are good. I have a dream of a safe Nigeria, a Nigeria where girls can go to school without fear of being kidnapped; a Nigeria where girls like me are not made into suicide bombers and little boys are not routinely stolen and turned into terrorists; a Nigeria where, if even the worst happens and children were stolen, every effort is made for their swift rescue, and those who can help will help, and those who can help will speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. I dream and pray for freedom, safety, and peace to win in Nigeria. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Sa'a follows:]



Written statement of Escaped Chibok Schoolgirl "Sa'a"
On the U.S. Role in Helping Nigeria Confront Boko Haram
and Other Threats in Northern Nigeria

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights
and International Organizations
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives

May 11, 2016
2255 Rayburn House Office Building

Education Must Continue Initiative (EMCI)

Written statement of Escaped Chibok Schoolgirl "Sa'a"

I am one of the 276 Schoolgirls who was kidnapped from the Government Secondary School in Chibok by the terror group Boko Haram. Sa'a is not my real name. It is a name that I use for my protection.

Before attending the Chibok Secondary school, I also survived an earlier Boko Haram attack at my former high school. After I escaped from that school invasion, my parents decided to move me to the Chibok Secondary School because they thought that it would be a safer place nearer home for me to continue my education.

However, on the 14th of April 2014, the Boko Haram came to my school at Chibok when we were all sleeping at night. They were shooting guns and yelling. They were yelling, "Allahu Akbar." Everyone woke up, and came out of their rooms. We were wearing our pajamas when they came in. They asked us, "Where are the boys?" The boys are day students. The boys usually came to school in the morning but went home after school. They also asked us where the food was kept. They pointed out two girls to show them where the food store was and took it in a truck. Then they made us move from where we were staying to the class area. Next, they started burning everything – our clothes, our books, our classrooms – everything in our school.

They marched us out of the school for miles to where their trucks were. Then they asked us to enter the trucks and said that if we did not, they were going to shoot all of us. We were all scared, so we entered the trucks. They started driving us through the forest. When we were all riding in the trucks through the forest, I just had this feeling I should try to escape because I don't know where I'm going and neither do my parents. I said to one of my friends that "I'm going to jump out of the truck. I would rather die so my parents will see my body and bury it than to go with the Boko Haram."

So my friend said, "OK." She would jump out with me. I jumped out first, and she jumped after me. We hid in the forest while the cars passed. We were in the forest that night without knowing what to do. It was very dark. We didn't know where we were. My friend injured both of her legs from jumping. She couldn't walk. We just sat under a tree until morning. She cried. She said that I should go home and let her die in the forest. I said, "No. If we are going to die, we are going to die together. I won't leave you here."

I decided to go and look for help in forest. I was going around not far from where we slept, and I found a Fulani man – a shepherd. I asked him for help, but he said, "No, I can't help you." So I tried to convince him. Then he did help us. He put my friend on his bicycle and took us to Chibok, and that's how we got home.

Before I got home in the morning, my parents heard what happened in my school and one of my brothers and his friend went back to Chibok to find out what happened. When I got home, my mom, my dad, and my family, everyone was crying. Our neighbors came to the house. They were all happy and crying because I'm home, but they were asking about the other girls. There was a man who came to my home. He was asking about his daughters. I told him we managed to escape, but I didn't know if his daughters would manage to escape the way we did. I didn't know what happened next after we jumped out of the truck.

After we escaped, Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe with the Justice for Jos Project together with Congressman Chris Smith came to Nigeria to find out what happened. They first met my friend who escaped with me, and she told them her story of how we escaped. Mr. Emmanuel later found a school for her to study in safety in the US. She told them if they are giving her a scholarship to come and study, she'd like me to come too because I was the one that helped her escape.

My friend told me about the opportunity, but I told her that "I'm not coming to school because I am so scared because of what happened." That was the second attack that both of us had been through before we relocated to Chibok. When Boko Haram kidnapped us they asked us, "Why are you at school?" They said that we should all be married. They said that we should not go to school again or they will find us. I felt like if we go to school again they are going to kidnap us wherever we are. My brothers and friends encouraged me that I should not let Boko Haram stop me from getting an education. I should be strong and come. I am so glad that I listened to them, and I'm here today. I started college in January under a project by the Education Must Continue Initiative (www.emcinitiative.org). It is a charity run **by victims** of the insurgency **for victims** of the insurgency which has helped me and about 3000 other IDP kids go to school.

I have learned a lot since I came to the US. I went to the National Archives and I saw the US Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. I even saw a version of the Magna Carta. I learned that the people who wrote those documents have faced hard times through the years, but they didn't give up and hope and freedom won. When I heard what Patrick Henry said, about "Give me liberty or give me death," I realized that was exactly how I felt when I had to decide about jumping out of the truck to escape from Boko Haram. Here in the US, I stood under the US Capitol Dome and looked up at the statue on top called, "Armed Freedom," and realized that freedom has to have strength protecting it. I stood in the Smithsonian at your National Rock collection and was inspired to study science. I want to study medicine. I want to help Nigeria, but will it be safe?

I have twice escaped from Boko Haram attacks on my schools, but many have not. Many live in fear every day. Their homes were burnt, so many people didn't have a place to sleep, food to eat or clothes to wear. They are now IDPs in other places. My family was affected. My mum hid in the forest for months with my siblings before finally fleeing to rejoin my dad in the northwest. The Nigerian government promised to rebuild the Chibok school, but it is still burnt two years later.

Thanks to God, I am safely here in the US and doing well with my studies, but I worry about my family in Nigeria. People ask me if it will be safe for me to return to Nigeria. I ask, is it safe for anyone in Northern Nigeria? I lost my dad months ago. It wasn't the terrorism but the effects of the terrorism.

I urge everyone who hears or reads this statement who has any power to help Nigeria to please help, and also to help some of my Chibok classmates who didn't get the opportunity that I have today to be in school in a safe place. I want them to be able to go to school too, especially, my Chibok classmate and friend, Hauwa John, who has been denied a visa at the American Embassy in Nigeria three times.

Recently I saw the video of some of my classmates that were missing for two years now. I am glad to see that some of them are alive. The moment I saw them and recognized their faces, I started crying, with tears of joy coming rolling down from my eyes, thanking God for their lives. Seeing them has given me more courage not to give up. Seeing them gives me the courage to tell the world today that we should not lose hope.

I have had dreams. With what I have been through, some of the dreams are scary. But now my dreams are good. I have a dream of a safe Nigeria; a Nigeria where girls can go to school without fear of being kidnapped; a Nigeria where girls like me are not made into suicide bombers and little boys are not routinely stolen and turned into terrorists; a Nigeria, where even if the worst happens and children are stolen, that every effort is made for their swift rescue; that those who can help will help; and that those who can speak will speak out for those who can't speak for themselves. I dream and I pray for freedom, safety, and peace to win in Nigeria.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so very much for your powerful words and powerful inspiration and your powerful witness to faith, character, and courage. It truly astonishing. Thank you so much.

Dr. Fomunyoh.

STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER FOMUNYOH, PH.D., SENIOR ASSOCIATE AND REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA, NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE

Mr. FOMUNYOH. Thank you, Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Ms. Bass. Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, on behalf of the National Democratic Institute, NDI, I appreciate this opportunity to discuss current security challenges and threats in northern Nigeria. This is a summary of my written testimony, and I request that it be made part of the record.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. FOMUNYOH. Since Nigeria's 1999 transition from military to civilian rule, NDI has worked closely with Nigerian legislators, political party leaders, and civil society activists to support democratic institutions and practices in the country. With funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Department of State, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the Ford Foundation, and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), NDI's work has helped to support Nigerian efforts to advance democratic governance and electoral processes that reflect the will of the people.

In May 2015, Nigeria's newly elected President, President Muhammadu Buhari took office following the elections that saw the country's first peaceful transfer of power from one political party to another. President Buhari and his government inherited several major economic and security challenges, particularly in the country's northern states, where approximately 40,000 people have been killed by violence between 2011 and 2015. The region has experienced political and economic marginalization, unbalanced development, corruption, and poor delivery of public services. Northeast Nigeria has also borne the brunt of the ongoing surge of violent extremism.

Boko Haram, a group that promotes a fundamentalist religious ideology, has cost nearly 15,000 deaths since 2009. Moreover, more than 2.2 million Nigerians are internally displaced with approximately 200,000 others now refugees in neighboring countries.

Also, the vast majority of approximately 5.4 million people that need emergency food assistance across the Lake Chad Basin region are Nigerian, as Boko Haram-related violence has divested infrastructure and disrupted economic activity. Human Rights Watch estimates that over 2,000 schools in northern Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin countries of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger have closed or been destroyed by the Boko Haram insurgency.

In March 2015, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS, declaring itself the Islamic State's West Africa Province. Besides the Boko Haram crisis in the northeast, intercommunal conflicts between agrarian and pastoralist communities have cost 6,000 deaths since 2011, about 600 of which have occurred since the beginning of this year. A 2015 report by Mercy Corps, a U.S.-based organization, found that violence has

contributed to negative economic growth and that Nigeria could gain approximately $13.7 billion a year in macroeconomic activity in the four most affected states because of the agrarian-pastoralist conflict. The communities most affected are northern and central Nigeria and the Middle Belt, stretching from Kwara and Niger States in the west to Adamawa State in the east. Recently, intercommunal skirmishes have occurred in the country's southeast zone, underscoring the national ramifications of simmering tensions and violence.

In my full statement, I trace the origins and consequences of the conflicts and offer a series of recommendations for consideration by both Nigeria and the international community, among which they need to expedite the creation of a comprehensive development agency for northeast Nigeria that could prioritize long-term economic development, review the legal framework on indigenization and access to land, introduce stronger citizen-centered approaches to state and local governments, invest in further professionalization of security services, support rehabilitation and resiliency of impacted communities and individuals, promote women and youth as agents of peace, and enhance educational opportunities, particularly for girls.

Despite its challenges, Nigeria has in the past proven its resilience. By using its public resources wisely and improving governance at the local, state, and Federal levels, the leaders of Africa's largest economy and most populous country can still deliver on the promise of democracy and the dividends that many Nigerians expect of their government, especially in the northern regions of the country. More inclusive and responsive governance, especially at the local level, would help sustain for the long-term the military gains against Boko Haram and ongoing efforts to tackle terrorism and skirmishes that impact negatively on citizens' well-being and undermine national cohesion.

Since the peaceful and credible Nigerian elections of March 2015, the international community has more forcefully expressed its opposition of Nigerian efforts to tackle forthrightly corruption, insecurity, and economic development. The international community should redouble its support through greater and more robust partnerships with Nigerians at the subnational levels, directly in the northern states and local government areas most impacted by terrorist-related and/or criminal violence. Direct assistance to locally based institutions and social citizen-led initiatives would have greater impact and likelihood to be sustainable over the long term. In addition to security and other forms of material assistance, the international community should prioritize human development expertise that can address the trauma that the violence of the last few years has inflicted on youth, women, girls, and other underprivileged segments of society in northern Nigeria.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fomunyoh follows:]

Statement of Christopher Fomunyoh, Ph.D.
Senior Associate and Regional Director for Central and West Africa
National Democratic Institute

U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations

"The U.S. Role in Helping Nigeria Confront Boko Haram and Other Threats in Northern Nigeria"

May 11, 2016

Mr. Chairman, ranking member Ms. Bass, and members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the National Democratic Institute (NDI), I appreciate the opportunity to discuss current security challenges and threats in Northern Nigeria.

Since Nigeria's 1999 transition from military to civilian rule, NDI has worked closely with Nigerian legislators, political party leaders and civil society activists to support democratic institutions and practices in the country. With funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development USAID), the U.S. Department of State, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the Ford Foundation and U.K.'s Department for International Development (DFID), NDI's work has helped support Nigerian efforts to advance democratic governance and electoral processes that reflect the will of the people.

I. Current Challenges Facing Northern Nigeria

In May 2015, Nigeria's newly elected President, Muhammadu Buhari, took office following elections that saw the country's first peaceful transfer of power from one political party to another. President Buhari and his government inherited several major economic and security challenges, particularly in the country's northern states, where approximately 40,000 people had been killed by violence between 2011 and 2015.[1] The region has experienced political and economic marginalization, unbalanced development, corruption, and poor delivery of public services.

North East Nigeria has also borne the brunt of the ongoing surge of violent extremism. Boko Haram, a group that promotes a fundamentalist religious ideology, has caused nearly 15,000

[1] Council on Foreign Relations, *Nigeria Security Tracker*.

deaths since 2009. Moreover, more than 2.2 million Nigerians are internally displaced, with approximately 200,000 others now refugees in neighboring countries.[2] Also, the vast majority of approximately 5.4 million people in need emergency food assistance across the Lake Chad basin region are Nigerian, as Boko Haram related violence has devastated infrastructure and disrupted economic activity.[3] Human Rights Watch estimates that over 2,000 schools in northern Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin countries of Cameroon, Chad and Niger have closed or been destroyed by the Boko Haram insurgency.[4] In March 2015, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), declaring itself the Islamic State's West Africa Province.

Since May 2015, the Nigerian military, in tandem with a multinational military task force comprising troops from Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Benin, has scored military successes against Boko Haram, reclaiming much of the group's self-described "Islamic Caliphate" that, at one time, spanned roughly 20,000 square miles (twice the size of the state of Maryland). Despite losses on the battlefield, Boko Haram remains a potent force and continues to stage attacks against "soft" targets such as markets and refugee camps. Approximately 3,350 people have been killed by Boko Haram since May 2015.[5]

Besides the Boko Haram crisis in the North East, intercommunal conflicts between agrarian and pastoralist communities have caused 6,000 deaths since 2011, about 600 of which have occurred since the beginning of this year.[6] A 2015 report by Mercy Corps, a U.S. based organization, found that violence has contributed to negative economic growth and that Nigeria could gain approximately $13.7 billion dollars a year in macroeconomic activity in the four most affected states were it not for the agrarian-pastoralist conflict.[7] The communities most affected are in northern and central Nigeria and the Middle Belt (stretching from Kwara and Niger states in the west to Adamawa state in the east). Recently, intercommunal skirmishes have occurred in the country's South East zone, underscoring the national ramifications of simmering tensions and violence.[8]

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[2] UNHCR, *Operation Sahel: Nigeria Situation*.

[3] USAID, *Lake Chad Basin - Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #7, FY2016,* April 27, 2016.

[4] Human Rights Watch, *They Set the Classrooms on Fire*, April 11, 2016.

[5] Council on Foreign Relations, *Nigeria Security Tracker*.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Mercy Corps International, *The Economic Costs of Conflict and the Benefits of Peace: Effects of Farmer-Pastoralist Conflict in Nigeria's Middle Belt on State, Sector, and National Economies*, July 2015.

[8] For example, recent attacks in Benue state in February resulted in the decimation of entire villages across 13 local government areas (LGAs) and displaced as many as 20,000 people. Of Nigeria's estimated 2.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), about 12.5 percent (269,000 people) are believed to be uprooted as a result of intercommunal clashes (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Nigeria IDP Figures Analysis*, December 31, 2015).

II. Conflicts Underpinned by Governance Gaps in Northern Nigeria

The enduring catalyst of violent intercommunal conflicts can be attributable in large part to challenges in governance and extremely poor delivery of public services.

- **The North-South divide in development**

According to Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics, as of 2010 (prior to the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency), approximately 69 percent of Nigerians in the North East lived on less than a dollar per day.[9] The violence of these past years has exacerbated the situation, as infrastructure has been dilapidated, investment has dried up, and local economic activity has been undermined. Poverty levels in Nigeria's North East and North West zones are estimated to be 40 percent higher than in the country's South West zone, and unemployment levels three times higher.[10] In April 2014, a cabinet Minister described the North East's troubles as "an inclusion problem," acknowledging that "the human development indicators in that part of the country are among the lowest."[11]

- **Access to land and water resources**

At the heart of the conflict between Nigeria's agrarian and pastoralist communities is a competition for increasingly scarce land and water resources. As a result of the surge in demographics and urbanization, land use now encroaches on traditional grazing routes and water sources previously used exclusively by pastoralists, thereby bringing pastoralists and agrarian communities into closer contact within a more competitive environment. Climate change is also expanding desertification across the Sahel region, and is pushing herdsmen and their cattle further south, putting greater strain on land and water resources in those parts of the country too.

- **Convergence of criminal activity and proliferation of small arms and light weapons**

Attacks on agrarian communities by pastoral-affiliated groups across the Middle Belt and incidences of cattle rustling have led to a vicious cycle of revenge attacks on neighboring communities. At the same time, the rising price of beef in West Africa has made cattle theft a lucrative enterprise for criminal gangs that steal and transport cattle to markets, sometimes across national borders. It is alleged that Boko Haram elements have also participated and benefited

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[9] National Bureau of Statistics, *Nigeria Poverty Profile 2010*, January 2012.

[10] Kate Meagher, "Beyond terror: addressing the Boko Haram challenge in Nigeria," *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center*, November 2014.

[11] Reuters, "Nigeria can handle Boko Haram, part of 'raw democracy', says minister," April 28, 2014.

from some of the illicit trade in cattle. Recently, the Borno state government shut down four major cattle markets in an attempt to choke cash flow to the group.[12]

The Boko Haram insurgency and violence from intercommunal rivalries between pastoralists and the agrarian community have been fueled in part by the proliferation of small arms coming across Nigeria's porous borders, particularly since the fall of Muammar Khaddafi and his regime in Libya in 2011. According to the New York Times,[13] last month the U.S. military intercepted a weapons convoy from Libya that was bound for the Lake Chad region and seized small caliber weapons, rifles and machine guns. As Boko Haram loses the military battle and splinters into small cells, many Nigerians are fearful that some of its fighters will create criminal networks within the pastoralist communities that could potentially continue to carry out intermittent attacks on agrarian communities.

- **Non-inclusive governance**

Nigeria is a Federation of over 500 ethnic groups and local languages; however, there is a perception that the country's governance, especially at the local and state levels, lags behind in responding to the needs and grievances of ethnic minorities in the different localities. Moreover, it is notable that in Nigeria, political power provides privileged access to state resources and other economic advantages. In the north, the very visible disparity in wealth and wellbeing between the haves and the have nots has created extreme frustrations and a cycle of resentment.

By some accounts, attempts to adopt Sharia law in parts of Nigeria in 1999 stemmed, in part, from the belief among sizable segments of the population in northern states of Nigeria that strict adherence to Islamic law could help 'cleanse the corrupt political system.' Although 12 Northern states adopted a dual system of Sharia and common law, living conditions in the states did not change as corruption and neglect persisted. One of the battle cries of Boko Haram's founder, Mohammed Yusuf, around 2009 was that Northern elites had co-opted Sharia law. In recent interviews with Mercy Corps, former Boko Haram members asserted that widespread frustration with the government led to their initial embrace of the insurgency. Close to 50 percent of respondents also claimed that their communities supported Boko Haram at some point in hopes that the insurrection would bring about a change in governance within their communities. As one former youth member explained, "we have lost faith in any government assistance."[14]

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[12] Morgan Winsor, "*Nigeria Shuts Down Cattle Markets Allegedly Financing Boko Haram*," International Business Times. March 14, 2016; see also Business Day, "*Boko Haram cattle rustling prompts market shut-down in Nigeria*," March 6, 2016.

[13] Helene Cooper, "Boko Haram and ISIS Are Collaborating More, U.S. Military Says," *New York Times*, April 20, 2016.

[14] Mercy Corps, *Motivations and Empty Promises: Voices of Former Boko Haram Combatants and Nigerian Youth*, April 2016.

- **Weak representation**

In the Middle Belt, minority communities that migrated into the area centuries ago in search of economic opportunities now are discriminated against and face enormous challenges accessing resources and influencing decision-making. The principle of "indigenization" -- the idea derived from an interpretation of the 1999 constitution that certain economic and political rights belong solely to the original inhabitants of an area -- has created yet another barrier to the rights of certain communities to own property in the communities in which they live or access public universities at low costs or run for public office. This has exacerbated intercommunal competition and conflicts in a number of Nigerian states.

- **Marginalization of women and youth**

Women and youth constitute the highest demographic blocks in Northern Nigeria, yet they are also the most marginalized. For example, in the North East geopolitical zone, 61 percent of all women and girls are illiterate -- the highest rate in the country.[15] Women in Northern Nigeria are also disproportionately disengaged from the political process. Northern Nigeria only allowed full women's suffrage in 1979 -- 19 years after Nigeria gained independence and granted women the right to vote.[16]

Youth have limited access to education and economic opportunities. At 48.9 percent, Northern Nigeria has the lowest youth literacy rates in the country, far below the national average of 80 percent.[17] Also, of Nigeria's 10.5 million children of primary school-age that are out of school, 60 percent live in northern states.[18] Some of these children attend Quranic schools that do not necessarily meet the standards of Nigeria's national education curriculum.[19] These youth will have even fewer opportunities for higher education and gainful employment, and thus, could be more vulnerable to recruitment into extremist movements.

Boko Haram has recruited women and youth, sometimes forcibly through kidnappings and coercion. In the Mercy Corp study referenced above, many former combatants stated that a leading motivation for joining the group was the belief that Boko Haram would provide loans to start or expand business opportunities.[20]

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[15] Human Rights Watch, *They Set the Classrooms On Fire,* April 11, 2016.

[16] Mohamed M. Wader, Tanko Yusuf Dahiru and Mukhtar Imam, "The Myth and Reality of Women's Political Marginalization In Nigeria," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention,* December 2015.

[17] International Growth Center, "Investing in Nigeria's Youth Bulge," October 22, 2014.

[18] Human Rights Watch, *They Set the Classrooms on Fire,* April 11, 2016.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Mercy Corps, *Motivations and Empty Promises: Voices of Former Boko Haram Combatants and Nigerian Youth,* April 2016.

III. The Way Forward

To its credit, the Buhari government has made a commitment to tackle these challenges. In his inaugural address, President Buhari clearly identified the fight against corruption and insecurity, and the reviving of the Nigerian economy as the main priorities for his administration. On the security front, he reassigned the Military Command and Control Centre base to Maiduguri in Borno state, the epicenter of the Boko Haram crisis. He also replaced the military's top leadership or service chiefs and has strengthened intelligence-sharing and coordination with the neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad and Niger. This strategic shift has facilitated the creation of the Multinational Joint Task Force.

On the other hand, the government has been slower in responding to the increasing violence in the Middle Belt, fueled by the crisis between agrarian and pastoralist communities, even as situation has escalated in recent months. Only in April did President Buhari finally state that stopping the violence is a priority and ordered the police and military to "take all necessary action to stop the carnage."[21]

The Buhari government has also implemented several humanitarian interventions to provide immediate assistance to communities in Northern Nigeria. The National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA) is providing food and other basic assistance to IDPs in camps, although less than 10 percent of IDPs live in camps.[22]

In January 2016, President Buhari created a Presidential Committee on North East Initiatives tasked with overseeing humanitarian responses and long-term development planning and coordinating initiatives such as the Safe Schools Initiative and the Victims Support Fund. The Presidential Committee has received support, grants and donations from governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations and philanthropists.

Earlier this year, some members of the Nigerian National Assembly introduced a bill to create the North East Development Commission (NEDC), similar to the body instituted almost two decades ago to address underdevelopment and conflict in the Niger Delta region. It is projected that should the bill become law, the NEDC would develop policies and guidelines for the development of the North East, and implement sustainable development programs across all sectors in the region.

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[21] Premium Times, "Buhari Breaks Silence, Orders 'Herdsmen" Brought to Justice," April 27, 2016.

[22] Refugees International, *Nigeria's Displaced Women and Girls: Humanitarian Community at Odds, Boko Haram Survivors Forsaken,* April 21, 2016.

With Boko Haram possibly in its last throes after recent battlefield successes by the Nigerian and regional militaries and as Nigeria and its development partners reflect on concrete measures to revive and rehabilitate the North East zone, urgent steps should be taken to address the underlying grievances and deprivations that triggered or fueled the above-referenced crises.

- **Expedite the creation of a comprehensive development agency for North East Nigeria** - The government of Nigeria should expedite the creation of the NEDC in order to better coordinate the mobilization and allocation of resources to rebuilding and rehabilitating broken and desperate homes in the North East.

- **Prioritize long-term economic development** - Nigeria should prioritize economic recovery programs that can improve livelihoods and facilitate investments in sectors such as agriculture, mining and infrastructural development that can lay the foundations for sustainable long-term economic growth and development.

- **Review the legal framework on indigenization and land access** - The Nigerian Federal government and lawmakers should consider amendments to the Grazing Reserve Law of 1965 that would establish formal grazing routes. Representatives of agrarian and pastoralist communities should be included in conversations on new approaches to land use planning. Similarly, Nigeria would need to review its indigenization policy in order to foster harmonious co-existence among communities and avenues for equal access to effective participation in politics, governance and economic opportunity for all its citizens irrespective of their state or local government area (LGA) of birth and/or residence.

- **Introduce stronger, citizen-centered approaches to state and local governance** - State and local government institutions should be strengthened and should be adequately resourced to better respond to the needs of citizens and deliver critical public services such as healthcare and education at the grassroots level in the communities that need them the most.

- **Further professionalization of security services** - Nigeria should design and implement holistic counterinsurgency strategies that include components of community policing and demobilization and rehabilitation of former combatants in the North East. Similarly, in the Middle Belt, security responses should focus on policing and dismantling of criminal networks, and creating mediation and conflict prevention committees at the state and LGA levels. Nigeria's security forces must ensure their actions do not come at the expense of human rights and the rule of law.

- **Strengthen and diversify regional cooperation into the economic and development sphere** - Although Boko Haram was a Nigerian problem at inception, it has morphed into a sub-regional security threat for countries in the Lake Chad basin, taking advantage of

porous borders and fluid migration patterns of population groups along national borders. As combating Boko Haram has required a coordinated multi-national approach involving intelligence sharing, joint cross-border operations and continued capacity support to security services from Cameroon, Chad and Niger through the Multinational Joint Task Force, so should addressing the humanitarian crisis require economic and infrastructural development that integrates the socio-economic interests of these neighboring countries.

- **Support rehabilitation and resiliency of impacted communities and individuals** - Resources should be allocated for the rehabilitation of former combatants and victims of Boko Haram or other forms of violence as well as communities impacted by these heinous attacks. These efforts should also include sustained mental health programs to address the long lasting effects of trauma and youth radicalization by extremist groups and other negative forces.

- **Promote women and youth as agents of peace** - More women and youth should be included in rehabilitation and peacebuilding and recovery processes to render these processes more inclusive, effective and sustainable. Specific funding mechanisms should be dedicated to supporting young and female entrepreneurs so as to boost employment and livelihoods and also elevate the roles of youth and women in society, thereby empowering them with greater access to decision-making.

- **Enhance educational opportunities, particularly for girls** - A recent New York Times column noted, "The greatest threat to extremism isn't drones firing missiles, but girls reading books."[23] Closing the education gap in Northern Nigeria, particularly for girls, will improve the region's long-term development and also reduce the foothold of future extremist groups like Boko Haram.

- **Promote dialogue between agrarian and pastoralist communities** - Formalize regular and inclusive dialogue among contiguous communities in order to build mutual understanding and facilitate early detection and prevention or resolution of conflicts. Create new or strengthen existing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to handle conflicts as they emerge and before they devolve into violence. Such intercommunal dialogue at the LGA and state levels could identify areas of common interest and opportunities for potential mutual economic benefit.

Despite these challenges, the country of Nigeria has, in the past, proven its resilience. By using its public resources wisely and improving governance at the local, state and federal levels, the leaders of Africa's largest economy and most populous country can still deliver on the promises

[23] Nicholas Kristof, "What's So Scary About Smart Girls?." *New York Times*, May 10, 2014.

of democracy and the dividends that many Nigerians expect of their government, especially in the northern regions of the country. More inclusive and responsive governance, especially at the local level, would help sustain for the long term the military gains against Boko Haram and ongoing efforts to tackle terrorism and skirmishes that impact negatively on citizens' wellbeing and undermine national cohesion.

Since the peaceful and credible elections of state and national leaders in Nigeria in March 2015, the international community has more forcefully expressed its appreciation of Nigerian efforts to tackle forthrightly corruption, insecurity and economic development. The international community should redouble its support through greater and more robust partnerships with Nigerians at the sub-national levels, directly in the northern states and Local Government Areas most impacted by terrorist-related and/or intercommunal violence. Direct assistance to locally-based institutions and social, citizen-led initiatives would likely have greater impact and prospect to be sustainable over the long term. In addition to security and other forms of material assistance, the international community should prioritize human development expertise that can address the trauma that the violence of the last few years has inflicted on youth, women, girls and other underprivileged segments of society.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee.

Mr. SMITH. Doctor, thank you so very much for your testimony and your insights and recommendations.

We expect a series of votes at 3:45, so what I thought is that each of us who have questions, that we ask our questions, and if there is more time and if some can stay after the votes, we could reconvene the hearing if that would be acceptable to you. But I have got to be aware of your time as well.

So I will just throw out a few couple of questions and yield to my good friend Ms. Bass. And take the questions you would like, and as best you can, please answer them.

On the IDPs, doctor, you mentioned 2.2 million IDPs, 200,000 refugees. Every trip I make there, every conversation with the administration is, are we doing enough to help them? When Mr. Ogebe, took us to an IDP camp—it was really a motel—in Jos, where we met this unbelievably tremendous man who had been shot by Boko Haram, would not renounce his faith in Christ, and then survived. He was in the IDP camp and told his story. And then we brought him over here for testimony. The question is, are we doing enough for this group of people?

Secondly, on the military, when we kept hearing how the Leahy law was the obstacle, we convened a hearing of this subcommittee, and the administration said that at least half or more of all of the military in Nigeria could be properly vetted pursuant to the Leahy amendment and get the specialized training that they need. Are you agreeable? Do you believe we are doing enough to train vetted, non-human-rights-abusers in the best military tactics, as well as with the kind of weaponry and capabilities, like night-vision goggles, that they would need?

And, finally, the special envoy idea of Mr. Wolf, you championed that for the Middle East, which is now up and running. You did it for Darfur, and that took years, as we all recall, but it made a difference. I am wondering, that is something we might look to do a bill on, or maybe we could just admonish the administration to create it administratively, which they certainly have the ability to do.

And, Mr. Ogebe, you mentioned the Chibok schoolgirl, as did Sa'a, who can't get a visa. That is outrageous. We need to follow up on that and perhaps others who are also being disallowed entry into the United States.

Ms. Bass.

Ms. BASS. Well, first of all, thank you all for your testimony.

And I agree with my colleague here: We would like to do everything that we can in terms of a visa for this one person but also any other individuals.

And I just wonder, Sa'a, to the extent that you are in contact, one, how is your family doing there? Are you in contact with any of the other girls who escaped? And maybe you can answer that.

Mr. SMITH. Any other questions that you have?

Ms. BASS. No, and I will yield to my colleague here, Ms. Wilson.

Ms. WILSON. Yes, that is a good question. That is a question that I would like to hear the answer also.

Also, about the people who are displaced from their homes, is anything being done to find housing for them? Also, I don't know if anyone can answer the question, maybe the chairman of the sub-

committee, about the funds, the confiscated funds from Nigeria, that can be used to help some of these internally displaced persons. Maybe Chairman Smith would want to give us some insight on what we are doing moving toward that.

Mr. SMITH. I don't think we are doing enough, number one.

Ms. WILSON. We are not doing enough.

Mr. SMITH. At previous hearings, I asked that there be established a victims' compensation fund.

Ms. WILSON. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. And that could be done by the government, their government as well as ours working in tandem, and the prototype for it would be what we did for the 9/11 victims. And that victims' compensation fund so positively impacted many of my own constituents who lost loved ones and jobs, obviously, through 9/11. But not enough is being done.

Ms. WILSON. Not enough. And it appears as if some genocide has taken place. And it seems like there is going to be a whole generation of children who are not being educated because the schools are being destroyed. There are 3,000 schools that Boko Haram has destroyed. And I am just concerned about, it is almost as if there is a fence of apartheid that has been put around, erected around Nigeria and the other neighboring countries, and it is almost as if the world is saying: Leave them there. It is Africans killing Africans, so why should we bother?

And then when the New York Times and the Washington Post puts in the headline that Boko Haram is the most deadly terrorist organization in the world and they have killed more people than ISIS or any other terrorist organization, and then it just fades away. This is mind-boggling to me. And I wonder in my heart and soul what, Chairman Smith and the subcommittee, what should we be doing? What can we do as a country? We can't just pretend that it is not happening and that this fence of apartheid is there. It takes us back many years when we had to go through this with South Africa. So I am just wondering: Do we need to start a revolution? Do we need to march to the White House? Do we need to march to Nigeria? What is it do you think we can do, Sheila, all of us, as a Congress? Because everyone is concerned. It is not just us. It is so many people. And we realize that when we do the red Wednesdays, and when we have the press conference and we have the hearings, Mr. Wolf, and all of you should see us. So it is still the same. So that is why I came today and that is my question.

Mr. SMITH. Well, I will yield to my good friend and colleague, Mr. Donovan, in a second, but it has been my observation over 36 years as a Member of Congress that this is what we do everywhere. When the Balkans were under siege by Serbia, we fiddled. We said: It is not our problem; it is Europe's problem. They said: It is not our problem. And hundreds of thousands of people died.

On the Armenians, obviously, they said that 100 years ago, almost to the year, during the Armenian genocide when everybody looked askance and they still don't recognize it in many parts of the world, including in the United States Government.

I think it is gross indifference. There might be a tinge of racism in there. I don't know that, but it seems every continent has it, and

we look the other way. That doesn't mean that we need military intervention 24/7——

Ms. WILSON. Right.

Mr. SMITH [continuing]. But the Nigerians have a very capable military. Their soldiers are outstanding. I mentioned that in my opening that they are peacekeepers. They just need a special skill set that we learned over time that needs to be imparted to them. And we have been reluctant, citing the Leahy amendment, falsely, I believe, as the impediment.

So but I think what you have done, what Karen Bass and all of us have tried to do is just keep it front and center.

We had a hearing yesterday on the crackdown in Vietnam, which is profound. And I had the wife of a dissident that I met in 2005 who got arrested again and is probably being tortured. The President is going there. We begged the President to ask that Nguyen Van Dai be released and the other 180 or so political prisoners in Vietnam. We just need to make these priorities. And so I take your point and thank you for keeping——

Ms. WILSON. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH [continuing]. The girls front and center 24/7.

Mr. Donovan.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Chairman.

I just wanted to know if anyone knew an update on our efforts to find the remaining girls and if you could tell us what we are doing in those efforts.

And, also, I am on the Committee on Homeland Security, so one of the things that we do when we talk about terrorist groups is try to measure the number of members of the group. Do we have any idea of the size of Boko Haram, their leadership, and the territories in which their strongholds are, where their leadership works out of?

So those are most of my questions, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I am going to thank, Mr. Chairman, you and your ranking member for the courtesies of extending to those of us who have joined and have been joined at the hip on this issue of Boko Haram. And I think it has been 2 years that Congresswoman Wilson and I have been joined at the hip going from one ocean to the next on this issue. And I thank you so very much for what you are doing.

Mr. Chairman, if I might, I have H.R. 528, which I would like to bring to the committee's attention, and whether we could have a hearing. It is Victims of Terror Protection Act, and it deals with the Abacha loot, which the DOJ has, and I, frankly, believe they can begin to utilize that money ASAP. Maybe a hearing would be appropriate, and I would like to share that with you. I think you reviewed it and supported it, and so I would like to do that.

And one of my questions is going to be, how desperately this relief is needed to have—and I am sure with the wonderful witnesses that we have had from our Chibok girl, how should I say it, leader, champion for the other girls, I know she has told the story, but I would like to hear that again or hear it maybe for the first time, because when we were in Nigeria 2 years ago and when I heard you being there recently, families were still in pain. They are still

in limbo. Some are just surviving with their young girls missing, and maybe they have lost. Certainly, Boko Haram have killed—and I want to make this point, and maybe it was already made—Muslims, Christians, and others. They have killed and burned mosques and churches and homes and schools, and they also have recruited. So if I could, under this relief fund, find out how desperately it is in need.

And then a second question, if I could hear about the recruitment. What could we do to stem the tide of recruitment of young boys alongside—the overall question is what we can do to bring the girls back, but I know there are broken families that are there. If we could do that.

And then to Congressman Wolf, thank you so very much. I would like to join on the question of legislation dealing with the special envoy. We have dealt with envoys in South Sudan, but we have had them in other areas as well as in the Lake Chad area. You, Mr.—I want to still call you Mr. Chairman—Mr. Wolf, knew when the Africa Command was done and the appropriations that were done in the Africa Command may be in combination of a discussion that you had that I would like to ask about how much value you think an envoy would bring, but besides the Leahy amendment, just what we might do. We have an African Command. When I was there, they were eager. They were doing technical assistance. Maybe you saw them doing the same thing. And that was technical assistance because they were eager to help bring the girls back, and this was in the early weeks and days that Congresswoman Wilson and Congresswoman Frankel and I were there and Congressman Chabot, I believe, was there. They were eager. They were in meetings. They were saying: We are almost there.

And so maybe you can help us understand that. This is not the Committee on Armed Services, but you can have us understand what that might do if we could ramp that team up beyond where they are today. I understand they are advising, but the growth around Chad, Niger, and other areas, I would be interested in hearing back.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Mr. WOLF. I will be really brief. One, the IDPs are not getting assistance, and the camps are some of the worst camps that I have seen.

Secondly, on the training of the military and police, it is training both there is an awareness of it but not the compliance, and so there needs to be in-depth. We were in villages. They said the military came in and fired; the police came in and fired. Did they capture the uniforms? I don't know. But awareness, but also compliance.

Thirdly, on the special envoy, when Danforth spoke, it was all together. In those days, you had Kenya involved. You had Uganda involved. You had Eritrea briefly involved, aiding John Garang, and you had Ethiopia involved. One person, and it was a one-stop office, and Andrew Natsios, so you had a place to go. The President had one person to talk to. This is not meant as criticism of the people that are working on this. But that process, so to have a special envoy, one stop. Also, for counseling of the girls, to say we are concerned about them, but are you giving counseling when these peo-

ple—they are victims twice: When they are captured and when they are released. Yeah, so there needs to be a one stop, and then everyone knows. The press knows that in one office, that one person speaks. So I think a special envoy, the right person, but again, no criticism, this is not meant to say that is wrong. It could really be to elevate that, could really be—otherwise, what are you going to do? What?

And then you have a military person, and they can speak to the military. Our military are good. I believe, how did the helicopters come in without our people not seeing it? How did boats come across the river without our people not seeing it?

So, yes, there is more, but you have to—it is not covered by the media the way it should. And yes, this is a very important issue, but more for the IDPs, more training and a special envoy, I think the right person could make all of the difference.

And, lastly, the families, the families, we did not talk to. We talked to the counselors who counselled the families. I think she can better say. But the counselors said the families were hopeful. They saw all of this hashtag. Now, they are disappointed.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Despair is settling in.

Mr. OGEBE. Yes, sir. With regard to the refugees, in Cameroon, the camp that had 2,000 people now has 60,000 people. And so 500 a week have been coming in, and there are still people outside waiting to get in. But for my current report, what I learned is they now have food. When there were 2,000, there was no food in the camp, but now, the U.N. is able to provide them. We understand some of that is through U.S. assistance.

Now, that said, the IDP situation in Nigeria is very bad. We have the whole southern border. There are not more than two IDP counselors in the entire half of the state. So when we had the start of the school for IDP kids, 2,000 kids enrolled in 1 week. That is how bad the situation is. The kids have been there 4 years; no school. They trek miles just to come to that one school. So there is much to be done.

Mr. SMITH. Is it the money?

Mr. OGEBE. Well, sir, we have been trying to find out why the southern half of that state is not being taken care of. And it is part of, we suspect, the religious discrimination that systematically occurs in that state, because that half is not from the right religion. So we have related this issue with the Government of Nigeria, and we don't know what the response will be.

I thought you had a question.

SA'A. You asked if I am in touch with my family. I am always in touch with my family and some of my classmates that escaped too. Some of them are in school in Nigeria, while some of them got married. Some of them got pregnant, which I think because they were scared to go to school because it is not safe there in Nigeria. So they don't want to go to school. And so some of them who think like they want to go to school, they were in school in Nigeria, while some of them got married. Thank you.

Ms. BASS. Thank you.

Mr. FOMUNYOH. Mr. Chairman, on your question on the IDPs, I will agree this is a very serious issue. Because of the 2.2 million internally displaced persons, only 8 percent are in camps and

under conditions that could use a lot of help. And so we have the other 92 percent of internally displaced persons that are spread in communities, in families, and nobody seems to be tracking them. And so that is the first issue with regard to IDPs. There is also a question of identifying who is in those camps and the concerns that some of the former elements of Boko Haram, especially now that they are on the run, could infiltrate the camps and use the camps as staging ground for other atrocities. There have been reports of people arrested in the refugee camp that a number of them fled to in Cameroon who were identified with Boko Haram.

On the question of the military, of course, I couldn't be competent to talk about that, but my understanding is that there are currently two battalions that are being trained with technical assistance from the U.S. and that human rights has been incorporated into the curriculum. But, of course, I am sure other people are more qualified to discuss that issue with you, Mr. Chairman.

The question about the generational handicap. That is really the concern that many of us have with regards to Nigeria, because we now are coming up to a decade since Boko Haram began these atrocities. And so we have a decade of young people who have not been able to go to school. I did mention the fact that 2,000 schools have been closed or destroyed in the course of this conflict. And so you have a whole generation that is coming of age that has not had basic secondary education. And without that, that is going to short access for them in terms of higher education. If you haven't had secondary education, you can't go to the university, which therefore means that they are not going to be able to have gainful employment. They are not going to be able to have good jobs. And so if you fast forward in the next 10 years, this vast majority of the segment of young people would be without access to gainful employment. And so, in some ways, you almost would think that, even if Boko Haram is defeated militarily, if all the concrete steps are not taken to provide avenues and opportunities for this generation of young people who have been starved of the possibility of gaining education, then we are probably just resolving one issue today and the problem will resurface in another 5 or 10 years.

The last thing I would want to talk about is the idea of a special envoy. Before coming to the hearings, I hadn't really thought through the issue. But I want to draw some inspiration in terms of the military gains that have been made against Boko Haram in recent months. The fact that the multinational force being stood up, has helped tackle this issue with the involvement of other countries in the subregion. And if that has worked from a military perspective, I think the rehabilitation and reconstruction of northeastern Nigeria would require a multinational approach and sometimes having a one-stop shop and someone who can centralize all of these issues, because there will be people coming from Chad, from Cameroon, from Niger with similar issues, would facilitate the U.S.'s ability to be able to lend some weight in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of northeastern Nigeria.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

We are almost out of time, but, Congressman Wolf and both of you, thank you for the encouragement. We will put together a draft bill on a special envoy and begin the process. And, again, the ad-

ministration can do this without any bill whatsoever. But there might be pushback. Sometimes there is on something like this. So thank you for the idea. And I think it will help provide a focus that may be lacking to some degree, particularly on the humanitarian side with IDPs. And as both of you have said, the services and help just simply are not there.

You know, Buhari, when he got elected, there were high expectations that things would change. There is a multinational force. There is a taking-it-to-them mentality that did not exist previously. And I am wondering if those expectations are ebbing, waning, or is there still a significant hope that Boko Haram can be defeated and, hopefully, God willing, the Chibok girls and other girls that have been abducted so cruelly, return to their families?

And can I just add, because we only have—and anything else my distinguished colleagues might want to say—the use of the churches and mosques in bringing the women back, are they being employed in a way that is effective? Because there was a great deal of love in those churches and what I took away from our trip to Jos is how well the imam and Archbishop Kaigama worked together, Muslims, Catholics, other Christians working across those lines. It was extraordinary.

Mr. OGEBE. Yes, sir. Well, I think my response to that is that we certainly need to see more humanitarian responses that will stave off a generational conflict because that is what we see brewing, as the gentleman alluded to.

But let me just say for the record that Boko Haram has attacked citizens of different countries. They have killed citizens of over 15 countries, and they have attacked citizens of the U.S. as well. But to this date, the State Department has not admitted that Boko Haram has done so. And that is part of why we feel there isn't sufficient transparency and political will to push this issue as far as it needs to go.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so much.

We will act on your recommendations. They have been excellent and incisive.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Just very quickly, for another time, the recruitment issue is very important. Mr. Chairman, I would like to—I am not on the subcommittee, but I would like to work with you on the envoy, if I may. My staff will be in touch. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:05 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Record

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations
Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), Chairman

May 11, 2016

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held by the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations in Room 2255 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Wednesday, May 11, 2016

TIME: 2:30 p.m.

SUBJECT: The U.S. Role in Helping Nigeria Confront Boko Haram and Other Threats in Northern Nigeria

WITNESSES: The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
Distinguished Senior Fellow
21st Century Wilberforce Initiative

Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe
Special Counsel
Justice for Jos Project

"Sa'a"
Chibok Schoolgirl
Education Must Continue Initiative

Christopher Fomunyoh, Ph.D.
Senior Associate and Regional Director for Central and West Africa
National Democratic Institute

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON *Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations* HEARING

Day *Wednesday* **Date** *May 11, 2016* **Room** *2172 Rayburn HOB*

Starting Time *2:31 p.m.* **Ending Time** *4:05 p.m.*

Recesses [*0*] (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Rep. Chris Smith

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]
Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING:

The U.S. Role in Helping Nigeria Confront Boko Haram and Other Threats in Northern Nigeria

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Mark Meadows, Rep. Karen Bass, Rep. Dan Donovan

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)*

Rep. Trent Franks*, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee*, Rep. Frederica Wilson*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] **No** [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

Statement from Refugees International, submitted by Rep. Chris Smith

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *4:05 p.m.*

Gregory B. Simpkins
Subcommittee Staff Director

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Nigeria's Displaced Women & Girls: Humanitarian Community at Odds, Boko Haram's Survivors Forsaken

INTRODUCTION

It has been two years since the world's deadliest terrorist organization – Boko Haram – abducted 271 girls from their high school in the town of Chibok – a tragedy that would shine much needed international attention on conflict in northeastern Nigeria. Sadly, the Chibok girls are only one part of a much larger story of violence against women and girls in the northeast. But the attention on this remote corner of the Sahel has not translated into sustained humanitarian assistance for all those that have been affected. Humanitarian stakeholders are under tremendous strain due to the enormity of the emergency, conflicts between aid agencies, limited resources, and an ineffective partner in the Nigerian state. As a result, the needs of all those whom the Chibok girls symbolize – thousands upon thousands who have suffered gender-based violence at Boko Haram's hands – are being unaddressed. Moreover, the lackluster humanitarian response is placing women and girls affected by Boko Haram at further risk of gender-based violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Nigerian government and the Nigerian Red Cross should work with international organizations to carry out a missing persons registration exercise and facilitate family tracing and reunification for those fleeing or rescued from Boko Haram.
- With the support of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), the Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) sub-working group must prioritize the establishment of a formal referral mechanism between Nigerian authorities and humanitarian organizations so that displaced women and girls can access GBV screening and services.
- Donors and humanitarians must significantly increase investments in GBV-specific prevention and response programs.
- The GBV Area of Responsibility should deploy personnel to train all sector working groups on the new Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action and assist in developing an action plan to integrate gender considerations into their work.
- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) must appoint a full-time coordinator to the GBV working group in Maiduguri.
- The PSWG should establish a Mental Health and Psychosocial sub-working group, and hold all organizations implementing psychosocial programming accountable to the IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings.
- The Nigerian government and international donors should dramatically increase its food security assistance portfolio for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the northeast.
- The Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM) should deploy technical assistance to work with the National and State Emergency Management Agencies (NEMA and SEMA, respectively) on developing camp management standards and procedures that ensure timely and equitable delivery of food and non-food items.
- The Food Security Sector Working Group (FSWG) and the PSWG should work jointly to integrate protection into food security assessments and program planning.
- Donors should hold humanitarian agencies accountable for integrating protection into all food security programming.
- The UN Office for the Coordination Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) secretariat should deploy a team to facilitate a retreat for the HCT to formulate joint strategies around advocacy and government engagement, fundraising, and information management and analysis.
- With support from the Inter-Sector Working Group, the HCT must develop a clear and robust stand-alone advocacy strategy targeting Nigerian authorities.
- Humanitarian organizations should engage with the diplomatic/donor community as an ally, and the diplomatic/donor community must continue to use its leverage to assist the humanitarian community in fulfilling its protection and assistance mandate, with the full cooperation of the Nigerian authorities.
- The IASC Principals must hold the HCT and sector working group leads accountable to the standards set forth in the IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level for the sector working groups.

BACKGROUND

Northeast Nigeria has been the primary theater for the militant group Boko Haram's insurgency since 2009.[1] Violence has ebbed and flowed over the years as the insurgents evolved from a homegrown uprising against the police in three states to a more sophisticated and ruthless extremist Islamist group, which pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2015. The sheer brutality of Boko Haram, marked by mass abductions, indiscriminate killings, suicide bombings, sexual violence, and slavery, has earned it the unsavory designation as the world's deadliest terrorist group.[2] The toll is not certain, but reportedly 20,000 have been killed as a result of the insurgency.[3] In 2014, Boko Haram intensified its attacks, resulting in a sudden growth in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) arriving in Maiduguri, the capital city of the northeastern state of Borno.

Much criticism, both domestic and international, has been leveled at the Nigerian government for its perceived failure to deploy a more robust strategy to eliminate the scourge of Boko Haram. Muhammadu Buhari made the defeat of Boko Haram a central pillar of his successful campaign for the 2015 presidential elections. He assumed power in May 2015, and in December announced that Nigeria

had technically defeated Boko Haram – a declaration found to be outlandish by many Nigeria watchers, as violence continues.[4] Although the validity of this statement is arguable, the Nigerian Army (NA) did intensify its campaign against Boko Haram in 2015, "liberating" – in their words – areas that were under the militants' control. This campaign resulted in further displacement in Borno, including into Maiduguri.

Multiple reports document the horrors that women and girls have experienced under Boko Haram.[5] Further, a recent report documents the difficulties that abducted women and girls have reintegrating back into their families and communities, particularly for those labeled as "Boko Haram wives."[6] Yet there is a dearth of information on what and how humanitarian assistance is serving the very specific needs of these women and girls.

In February 2016, Refugees International (RI) conducted a mission to Nigeria to assess the needs of those displaced in Borno State, and how the humanitarian community can best serve women and girls. The RI team met with federal and state authorities, the UN, international non-governmental organizations (INGO) and community-based organizations, human rights defenders, local volunteers, members of the donor and diplomatic communities in Abuja and Maiduguri, and IDPs and host community members in Maiduguri.

THE HUMANITARIAN PANORAMA

The humanitarian crisis facing the aid community in the northeast is nothing short of daunting. According to the 2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), 14.8 million people are affected in four states of the northeast.[7] The UN estimates that of this number, seven million are in need, three million of whom are estimated to be entirely inaccessible. It is worthwhile to note, however, that precise numbers are difficult to attain due to the humanitarian access constraints. This is especially the case for Borno, where nearly 70 percent of the territory was inaccessible at the time of the HNO.[8] Consequently, most humanitarians believe that the numbers of people in need are much higher.

Overall, there are an estimated 2.2 million displaced in the northeast, according to the International Organization for Migration's most recent displacement tracking exercise.[9] This is a sharp increase from the much more modest figure of 261,000 in December 2014, as per the HNO.[10] The vast majority of the displaced – 1.3 million – are in Maiduguri and its environs. Their arrival more than doubled the population of the city in a single year.[11] Only approximately eight percent of the IDPs are in government-run IDP camps or settlements. The Nigerian authorities only deliver humanitarian assistance to those in camps, which are managed by the National and State Emergency Management Agencies (NEMA and SEMA, respectively). The remainder must fend for themselves, depending on the kindness of relatives and hosts among the local population – hosts that are increasingly exhausting their limited resources – as well as local faith-based institutions that have neither the resources nor the expertise to deliver humanitarian aid. A very small percentage of IDPs are being served by the small INGO community.

Access to food – both in and out of the camps – was the primary concern cited by IDPs with whom RI spoke. According to figures released in March 2016 by the UN Office for the Coordination Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), an estimated 2.5 million children are malnourished. Within the government-run camps, the number of displaced far outstrips the number of water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities that international standards call for in camp settings, forcing women and girls to wait for hours in lines, with many ultimately opting for open urination and defecation. One INGO working in the host communities in Maiduguri asserts that nearly every household is housing IDPs, in some cases multiple families, and host families are now selling their assets to be able to feed displaced people under their care. Livelihood opportunities are grossly limited for those living both inside and outside of camps. Finally, several displacement sites have been targeted by Boko Haram suicide bombers, leading to restrictive policies involving basic human rights such as freedom of movement, which impact both IDPs' protection and their ability to participate in income-generating activities.

Against this backdrop, at the time of RI's visit, there were only a handful of UN agencies, with very limited personnel, and less than ten international organizations operating in Maiduguri. At time of writing, the 2016 UN humanitarian appeal for Nigeria is dangerously underfunded. As of April, only $33.7 million of the $248 million proposed for the UN humanitarian response plan—just 14 percent—has been met.[12]

PROTECTION: DISPLACED WOMEN & GIRLS

Boko Haram's survivors, in the shadow of humanitarian action

The humanitarian crisis in Borno State has led to infinite protection risks for women and girls. Boko Haram has abducted countless women and girls throughout its campaign in the northeast. No one is entirely certain how many women and girls have been abducted to date, in part because the Nigerian authorities have yet to respond to civil society's desperate calls for a survey in the northeast, by which families could register the data of their missing. Whatever the figure, it is surely dwarfed by the number that have been exposed to Boko Haram's brutality during its campaign to overrun and control territory, of which gender-based violence (GBV) has been a feature. Definitive counts of those who have been subjected to Boko Haram's rule in this manner are difficult to come by, but it is

reasonable to believe that it figures in the thousands. As IDP numbers swell in Maiduguri, so do the number of women and girl survivors of Boko Haram's horrifying gender-based violence tactics. As the NA clears Boko Haram from territory, it rescues people who had been trapped, the majority of them women and girls, and takes many of them to displacement sites. In the month of March 2016 alone, troops had rescued 11,595 hostages from Boko Haram, according to NA Spokesman, Colonel Sani Usman.[13]

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, International Alert, UNICEF, and several journalists have all reported on the horrors of life under Boko Haram and the very specific needs of women they have interviewed– medical, psychological, livelihood, and community reconciliation opportunities. Yet it is RI's assessment that there has been minimal effort to identify and/or address these women and girls' needs, much less target them as priority beneficiaries for any programming.

According to humanitarians with whom RI spoke, Nigerian authorities share little to no information on its process for vetting women and girls and releasing them. Some humanitarians, however, believe that it is quite simply because there is no formal process. Further, there is no process for identifying women and girls that have escaped and fled to Maiduguri without the assistance of the military. And there is no mechanism by which the military and humanitarians can coordinate to identify women and girls so they can benefit from much-needed services.

RI interviewed one 14-year-old[14] who exemplified the protection risks this situation creates. She was abducted during an attack on her village of Baga and taken as a wife by a Boko Haram fighter. After one year in captivity, she and two other girls seized an opportunity to escape. They walked to Maiduguri over the course of a week and made their way to a government-run camp. She explained to the camp guards that she had just escaped captivity, and after being screened with a metal detector, she was allowed in. During her short-lived time in the camp – three days – she did not benefit from any services. Three days later, she was taken to Giwa Military barracks on suspicion that she might be a Boko Haram sympathizer. During her time in prison, she received no medical assistance of any kind. She was never tested for pregnancy or sexually-transmitted infections (STIs), despite having been a "Boko Haram wife." During the course of RI's mission to Maiduguri, the governor 'pardoned' her alongside 274 other detainees. RI met with her four days after her release. She was now living in a government-run camp. Upon questioning, it became clear that no information was made available to her, and neither an authority nor a humanitarian actor had attempted to facilitate access to care of any sort. There was no formal system for referring women and girls in need to get the life-saving treatment they need.

In another case from a separate camp, one minor confided to another IDP that when she was in captivity, she had been taught to build explosives under duress. She expressed her anguish over the fact that she believed she was directly responsible for the death of fellow Nigerians. This was brought to the attention of a psychosocial volunteer, who in turn relayed it to her supervisor at an international aid organization. The head of that office told RI that they decided to inform the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) officer, who promptly relayed it to his Nigerian Department of Safety and Security (DSS) peer. The former captive was promptly arrested. This not only demonstrates the absence of an appropriate referral mechanism for such cases, but also the urgent need for training for both international and national staff on how to protect the best interests of the survivor and liaise with authorities.

During RI's mission, only one humanitarian agency told the RI team that procedures were in place to identify and provide services to women and girls associated with Boko Haram, or for the women and girls that are brought to Maiduguri on a near-daily basis by the military. The one organization that did, affirmed that a select few do benefit from medical services, including pregnancy testing and testing and treatment for STIs.

In its 2015 annual report, the United Nations Refugee Agency states that the military referred to them IDPs released from Boko Haram strongholds. However, no authority or aid agency in Maiduguri with whom RI met could speak to a process of screening and referrals for women and girls to access life-saving services – an assessment which is seemingly shared by the three UN Special Rapporteurs who visited Maiduguri on behalf of the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights in January 2016. During their press conference in Abuja at the conclusion of their mission, they remarked, "a protection gap is evident, especially in service delivery and access to justice for women and girls victims of Boko Haram."[15]

There is no meaningful integrated GBV-prevention and response programming in Maiduguri. The Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG) 2015 Protection Sector Achievements Factsheet lists the establishment of a working group and safe spaces, distribution of dignity kits, provision of psychosocial support, and various GBV trainings.[16] To RI's knowledge, at the time of RI's visit, only one INGO – International Medical Corps (IMC) – had a holistic GBV prevention and response program that included sensitization, referrals for medical care, and psychosocial counseling, but the reach was limited to only seven host communities and three IDP camps. However, this short-term U.S. government-funded program is coming to a close, pending the acquisition of alternative funding sources. Several other organizations were doing psychosocial counseling for women and children, but they did not specifically fall under the rubric of GBV.[17] According to the PSWG January – February 2016 Snapshot, only five percent of an estimated 1.5 million people in need of GBV programming were reached. Of this five percent, the vast majority received psychosocial support and community sensitization. The snapshot also reveals that zero percent of GBV survivors received specialized care or integrated services.

Gender-Based Violence, Continued

In all interviews and focus group discussions RI held with displaced women, GBV was raised as a feature of displacement. Women in the camps remarked that sexual violence is not uncommon, while community-based organizations remarked that it is "an open secret." In fact, the risk of sexual violence was cited by four different interviewees as a reason why they feared life in a government-run camp or decided to abandon the camp to live in a host community.

However, life for a woman or girl in the host communities is not necessarily more secure. All of the displaced women living in host communities whom RI interviewed spoke of the risks of violence. IMC carried out a safety audit in the seven host communities where they implement programs, and the three top concerns women expressed, in order of priority, were domestic violence, rape, and denial of resources. According to the women IMC serves, domestic violence has become a serious issue due to food insecurity. Women suffer beatings when they cannot provide food or when they ask for money to buy food. On the third month of IMC programming, volunteers were recording as many as twenty rapes per week in the seven communities. Women are also reporting that they are often denied resources to purchase medicines or food.

Further, medical interventions designed specifically for survivors of sexual violence across the board are limited due to an unanticipated reason: the global displacement crisis. The pressures on the global humanitarian system are reverberating in northeast Nigeria: the agency mandated with procuring Inter-Agency Reproductive Health kits, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), has been unable to secure a shipment of Kit 5, the medical kit designed to treat STIs. UNFPA's suppliers in Denmark, China, and the Netherlands informed the country office that they were unable to fulfill the purchase order due to the overwhelming global demand; their supplies are exhausted. Kits are currently under production and should be made available to UNFPA Nigeria at the end of April 2016.

RI is also concerned that traditional humanitarian psychosocial support programming may not be of the caliber that the context warrants. The trauma endured by the Boko Haram-affected populations cannot be underestimated. Community based organizations told RI that apart from the suffering resulting from abduction, sexual violence, the loss of partners and children, the violence of war, and loss of all assets, Nigerian women in the northeast are also facing a profound gender identity crisis. It is not the woman's traditional role to "bury one's husband" or to be the head of a household, and the rapidly shifting role is compounding the trauma they have endured and imperiling their resilience capabilities.

According to service providers and some IDP women who chose to speak about their mental health, women feel helpless, fear men, feel they have lost all self-worth, and are hopeless when facing the uncertainty of the future. When asking a group of women in a focus group what self-care they practice to alleviate their trauma, RI learned that women and girls are reportedly purchasing and drinking bottles of cough syrup to "go to sleep and forget." Upon further investigation, RI learned that this is not a pre-existing coping mechanism amongst women and girls. In fact, demand for cough syrup in camps has increased such that supplies have become scarcer, driving the price up from 60 Naira per bottle to 150-200 Naira. Meanwhile, multiple international and local aid workers expressed concern that some current UN and INGO psychosocial support interventions may not be staffed adequately, contrary to what their own literature might otherwise indicate. Aid workers highlighted that several women's safe spaces – tents – erected by one UN agency are often empty. IDP women from several sites confirmed to RI that they are unaware of trauma support programming and that the tents are going unused.

The fact that GBV programming does not figure among core humanitarian programming is a failure to global commitments to both prioritize women and girls, and place GBV prevention and response programming in its much-deserved category of a "lifesaving" activity. On the contrary, one senior UNFPA staff member told RI that a request to access UN Central Emergency Response Funds (CERF) to hold a GBV referrals pathway workshop was denied on the basis that "CERF funds can only be used for life-saving activities."

However, there is some small progress. At the time of writing, RI learned that the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DfID) has granted £9 million to an INGO consortium for protection interventions, including holistic GBV prevention and response programming in three northeastern states. Further, a GBV Area of Responsibility (AoR) Regional Emergency GBV Advisor (REGA) has been deployed to support the process of establishing a referral pathway for women to access services. However, RI believes that for meaningful progress to be achieved, the following must still be done:

- The Nigerian government and the Nigerian Red Cross should work with international organizations to carry out a missing persons registration exercise and facilitate family tracing and reunification for those fleeing or rescued from Boko Haram.
- With the support of the HCT, the PSWG and GBV sub- working group must prioritize the establishment of a formal referral mechanism between Nigerian authorities and humanitarian organizations so that displaced women and girls can access GBV screening and services.
- Donors and humanitarians must significantly increase investments in GBV-specific prevention and response programs.

- The GBV Area of Responsibility should deploy personnel to train all sector working groups on the new IASC[18] Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action and assist in developing an action plan to integrate gender considerations into their work.
- UNFPA must appoint a full-time coordinator to the GBV working group in Maiduguri.
- The PSWG should establish a Mental Health and Psychosocial sub- working group, and hold all organizations implementing psychosocial programming accountable to the IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support[19] in Emergency Settings.

Survival Sex

The RI team found survival sex to be prevalent amongst IDPs in Maiduguri. Displaced women interviewed by RI felt that some had no choice but to turn to this negative coping strategy, fueled by their and their children's food insecurity.

The number one priority displaced women communicated to the RI team, time and again, was food security – both inside and outside the camps. In each and every interview with IDPs, the interviewee, on average, had eaten only once a day. Some had gone a full twenty-four hours or more with no food. On at least one occasion, RI deemed it best to interrupt an interview because the IDPs were visibly weak and disoriented.

In contrast to most displacement contexts, food is not distributed on a monthly basis and prepared by the displaced in the government-run camps. Rather, locals are hired to cook communal meals in colossal cauldrons that serve hundreds, or even thousands, of IDPs at a time. In one camp, there were only three cooking points for a camp population of roughly 6000 IDPs. This inevitably leads to a system where IDPs must wait hours to be served, and food often runs out. RI learned that on at least one occasion, food went uncooked for a number of days, due to an absence of firewood; reportedly, the association responsible for delivering firewood to the camps went on strike to protest that they had not been paid. Finally, timely and uninterrupted food aid to the camps has also fallen victim to both atrociously poor camp management and squabbling between NEMA and SEMA over their respective responsibilities. If, for example, food provided by NEMA does not arrive to the IDPs, NEMA abdicates responsibility, stating that distribution is ultimately SEMA's responsibility. While true, both agencies co-manage the displacement camps. The failure to meet eye-to-eye on respective responsibilities led to a significant delay in the renewal of their Memorandum of Understanding at the beginning of 2016, which led to significantly reduced food assistance to the camps at one point. Further, food aid has not been spared of corruption, which is endemic to Nigeria.[20] Repeated allegations of graft prompted Borno state's governor to establish a committee to investigate the diversion of food assistance, and in September 2015, he ordered state security, police, and military intelligence personnel to monitor the distribution of these food stuffs and report back to him.[21]

RI spoke to some IDPs who had left government-run camps who cited the lack of access to regular food as one reason for their decision. Meanwhile, those IDPs living in informal faith-based camps have no regular access to food either. They largely depend on the benevolence of individual congregation members. Local authorities have just now reported for the first time that IDPs have been arrested for breaking into homes to steal food, remarking with interest that only food is stolen.[22] Meanwhile, IDPs' possibilities of benefiting from international food aid are minimal. While there are a few international food insecurity interventions in the northeast, their reach is still minimal. In February 2016 alone, food aid reached a total of 82,977 individuals – only 6.3 percent of the total reported IDP population in Maiduguri.[23]

RI found that the nexus between food insecurity and sexual exploitation in this setting is irrefutable. Both IDPs and civil society organizations told RI that the situation is so dire that some female IDPs jump camp barriers at night to prostitute themselves for food, or money for food. Among those not residing in camps, some find themselves forced to go into prostitution, as their searches for other livelihood opportunities have not proved fruitful. The search for day labor carries GBV risks in itself; RI learned of one girl whom a man approached, offering housework. She accompanied him to his home where ostensibly she was to meet his wife and start helping. Upon arrival, there was no one in the home and the man raped her. Local women's organizations told RI that women have little choice, faced with their children's hunger. To begin to address the issue of food insecurity, the following steps should be taken:

- The Nigerian government and international donors should dramatically increase its food security assistance portfolio for IDPs in the northeast.
- The Global CCCM should deploy technical assistance to work with NEMA and SEMA on developing camp management standards and procedures that ensure timely and equitable delivery of food and non-food items.
- The FSWG and the PSWG should work jointly to integrate protection into food security assessments and program planning.
- Donors should hold humanitarian agencies accountable for integrating protection into all food security programming.

Humanitarian Politics Hinder the Response

The scale of the crisis cannot be overstated. It is partly understandable that the humanitarian community has not been able to provide coverage to people in need, particularly given the low funding made available for Nigeria.

However, the lack of funding isn't the sole reason for the inadequate response. It is also the result of deep struggles amongst Nigeria's humanitarian stakeholders. Historically, the donor, UN, and INGO presence in Nigeria has been made up of development actors with large portfolios. They have traditionally worked in close collaboration with the government's relevant line ministries. When the crisis escalated, these actors did not have skilled emergency response personnel on the ground. As the crisis grew, the UN Development Programme Resident Coordinator (RC) was appointed Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), and a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) was established in February 2015. OCHA and humanitarian INGOs deployed staff experienced in complex emergencies and the centrality of protection in humanitarian action. Some UN agencies also deployed additional staff to assist with the response. However, all of those whom RI spoke to believed that there were not enough experienced and permanent humanitarian actors on the ground to deal with the severity of the crisis.

Many of these humanitarians soon became frustrated with what they perceived to be the reluctance of the HCT members to prioritize protection issues in their discussions with Nigerian authorities. Some protection issues were considered politically sensitive by some HCT members, including issues of humanitarian access, militarization of camps, forced returns, sexual violence, freedom of movement for the displaced, reintegration of abductees, and the efficiency and efficacy of those Nigerian authorities mandated with the response. The vast majority of humanitarian actors with whom RI spoke expressed sheer exasperation with the HCT and its leadership for failing to adopt a formal position on these matters and communicate them to Nigerian authorities. In their opinion, certain members of the HCT feared challenging the Nigerian authorities and therefore possibly endangering their development programming. In the view of some of the humanitarians to whom RI spoke, the HCT failed to exercise its role as custodian of principled humanitarian action in Nigeria.

On the other hand, some members of the HCT, mostly UN agencies, suggested that operating in Nigeria is a formidable challenge that must be approached with caution. Some members of the international community feared that if they said something that could be perceived by the Nigerian government as criticism or an insinuation that Nigeria could not handle the humanitarian crisis, then they risked being alienated by the government. As a result, they are neither forceful nor vocal in pushing forward a protection agenda. Some humanitarians whom RI spoke to reproached what they perceived to be the naiveté of aid workers who clamor for the humanitarian community to demand protection outcomes from Nigerian authorities in its management of the conflict and its humanitarian consequences in the northeast. They believed that the crisis is politicized and an approach that is anything but extremely diplomatic would provoke more losses than gains.

Relations amongst members of the humanitarian community have degenerated such that each levels accusations at the other, and this continues to fragment the community's common mission. Several INGOs accused one high-profile UN agency, for example, of keeping a close hold on all its information and not sharing what precisely it was doing, while some UN agencies accused the INGOs of refusing to participate in sector working group meetings, resulting in a lack of coordination. At the same time, some INGOs communicated to RI that they no longer saw any point in engaging in working group meetings, as nothing was resolved and the work of the groups was increasingly conflated with the institutional agenda of the UN agency leading the respective groups.

Both positions have their merit when viewed through the complex lens of operating in Nigeria. First, the federal government has placed its focus almost squarely on the security dimension of the crisis, and some authorities at the national level consistently underplay the humanitarian dimension. Some authorities clearly feel a sense of responsibility for the IDPs in the official camps, but seemingly discount the needs of the other 92 percent of the displaced in Maiduguri. With no official interventions outside of the government camps, humanitarians are unclear as to whether they have authorization to program there and who, if any, should be their governmental counterparts.

Second, some Nigerian authorities have been obstructionist to the humanitarian agenda. NEMA for example, boycotted the workshop at which the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) was being developed in late 2015, stating that the humanitarian community was undermining the Nigerian government's attempt to provide sustainable solutions. OCHA's reply that humanitarian assistance was a priority for the moment did not sway them. Further, Nigerian authorities have criticized OCHA bulletins for listing humanitarian needs, on one occasion demanding that a monthly bulletin be retracted. Yet, as the NA and authorities move newly-displaced into Maiduguri and relocate IDPs from one camp to another, different humanitarian actors are called upon without prior warning with requests for immediate food assistance to supplement a shortage, which creates tremendous frustrations for international humanitarian interlocutors. One agency told RI "the absence of planning and last-minute requests [from Nigerian authorities] have now become abusive."

Third, in an attempt to get a handle on the humanitarian situation, the federal and state governments are frequently establishing new "high-powered committees," offices and desks, or developing new strategies. A humanitarian agency trying to navigate the power

structure is left confused as to what office serves as its interlocutor for any given issue. This becomes even more complicated when one also considers the need to deal with the local authority level, the Local Government Administrations, whose chiefs are often displaced themselves and play a leadership role over their constituencies in both the camps and the host communities.

Finally, the humanitarian community's frontline responders – INGOs – are not seen as legitimate partners by some state authorities in Borno. Both UN and INGO actors noted that the government sees INGOs as irrelevant, likely because they don't bring the financial might of the UN agencies to the country. This prejudice against INGOs was confirmed when a senior elected state official told the RI team that the state's legitimate partners are the UN agencies, not the INGOs, who – in his words – "extract information and disappear," and only come to profiteer.

The reverberations of these battles are felt deeply in the field amongst humanitarians and the IDPs. For example, during the period of RI's visit, humanitarian actors awoke one morning to text messages from a state official, informing them that IDPs had been transferred from a Maiduguri to a new camp – Dalori Camp II – a surprise given that humanitarians were negotiating with authorities to be allowed to first set up tents and water and sanitation facilities in that camp. IDPs were transferred to a new site with no water provision, next to the very village that had suffered Boko Haram attacks earlier in the month, killing at least eighty.[24]

Despite the complicated context that is Nigeria, the diplomatic community can exercise leverage with the government. The RI team was impressed with the engagement of the diplomatic community in its attempts to help the humanitarian community resolve problems with Nigerian authorities. In fact, a northeast ambassadors group made up of diplomats was established to discuss problems and solutions, and is largely attributed with exercising leverage to bring NEMA back to the HRP process. The diplomatic and donor community, however, did lament that the humanitarian community did not take advantage of its good offices more often. In fact, RI was provided with multiple examples of how humanitarian agencies did not provide timely information requested by donors that they believed would aid their diplomatic efforts.

This situation could partially explain why IDPs are so underserved, and humanitarian actors in such disarray. INGOs feel abandoned by the HCT in their quest to provide meaningful, life-saving assistance and protection, while the HCT is confounded as to how and with whom to negotiate. Such was the frustration of the INGOs that they refused to participate in a UN-led needs assessment, and conducted their own assessment in parallel. Last, but not least, at the time of RI's mission, humanitarian actors had all but given up on information sharing and were having to decide where to implement programs with little or no guidance.

The struggles amongst all humanitarian stakeholders have led the million plus IDPs in Maiduguri, as well as IDPs elsewhere in the northeast, to fend for themselves, with women and children the most-affected. Abysmal funding levels, the politicization of protection issues, and Nigeria's lukewarm response to assuming its responsibilities are some legitimate factors for this travesty. However, this does not exonerate the international community for a woefully inadequate coordination system, not staffing and resourcing the emergency appropriately – particularly GBV expertise, and not pressuring the Nigerian authorities into honest negotiations on how to tackle humanitarian needs. The rest of 2016 provides an opportunity to reverse course. A new RC/HC has been deployed, coordination is reportedly being moved to Maiduguri, donors have committed to increased funding, the Office of Nigeria's Vice-President has recently requested support from the EU and the U.S. to review NEMA's institutional capacity and support enhancing its capacity, and the IASC Emergency Directors Group is deploying yet again. It is the moment to place protection – with both programming and advocacy – front and center. To further improve the coordination of the humanitarian response, the following steps must be taken.

- The OCHA secretariat should deploy a team to facilitate a retreat for the HCT to formulate joint strategies around advocacy and government engagement, fundraising, and information management and analysis.
- With support from the Inter-Sector Working Group, the HCT must develop a clear and robust stand-alone advocacy strategy targeting Nigerian authorities.
- Humanitarian organizations should engage with the diplomatic/donor community as an ally, and the diplomatic/donor community must continue to use its good offices to assist the humanitarian community in fulfilling its protection and assistance mandate, with the full cooperation of the Nigerian authorities.
- The UN secretariats must hold the HCT accountable to the standards set forth in the IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level for the sector working groups.

ENDNOTES

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[1] The official name for this militant group was initially Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-da'wa wal-Jihād (JAS.) Since pledging allegiance to ISIS, they changed their name to Islamic State's West Africa Province. However, they are commonly known as Boko Haram, which is often translated as 'western education is a sin.'

[2] "Global Terrorism Index 2015: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism," *Institute for Economics and Peace*, November 17, 2015, http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf.

[3] "Boko Haram: children among villagers burned to death in Nigeria attack," The Guardian, February 1, 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/01/boko-haram-attack-children-among-villagers-burned-to-death-in-nigeria.
[4] Julia Zorthian, "President Buhari Says Nigeria Has 'Technically' Beaten Boko Haram," *TIME*, December 24, 2015, http://time.com/4161175/buhari-nigeria-technically-won-war-boko-haram/.
[5] For additional resources on Boko Haram's abuses of women and girls, see https://bokoharamvawg.wordpress.com/
[6] "Bad Blood: Perceptions of children born of conflict-related sexual violence and women and girls associated with Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria," *International Alert/UNICEF Nigeria*, February 2016, http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Nigeria_BadBlood_EN_2016.pdf.
[7] "2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview," *United Nations Office on the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Nigeria Humanitarian Country Team*, November 2016, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/nigeria_hno_2016_23122015.pdf.
[8] "Nigeria Humanitarian Situation Report," *United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)*, October 1, 2015, http://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF_Nigeria_Humanitarian_Report_1_Oct_2015.pdf.
[9] "Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Round VIII Report," *International Organization for Migration (IOM) Nigeria*, February 2016, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/01_IOMDTMNigeria_RoundVIIIReport_20160229.pdf.
[10] OCHA 2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview.
[11] According to the DTM Round VIII February 2016 report, there are 825,000 IDPs in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, and Jere Local Government Authority in which Maiduguri sits, has 489,000, making for a total of 1.3 million. However, many warn that the IDP population could be much higher.
[12] "Nigeria 2016," *Financial Tracking Service*, https://fts.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=emerg-emergencyDetails&appealID=1113.
[13] Wale Odunsi, "Boko Haram: Troops rescue 11, 595 hostages in one month," *Daily Post*, April 6, 2016, http://dailypost.ng/2016/04/06/boko-haram-troops-rescue-11-595-hostages-in-one-month/?utm_source=md&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=md.
[14] In line with the WHO Ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting, and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies, informed parental consent was secured, and the interview was done in the company of a parent.
[15] "UN Special Rapporteurs on sale of children, child pornography and child prostitution; contemporary forms of slavery; and the right to the highest attainable standard of health - Visit to Nigeria, 18 to 22 January 2016," *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)*, January 22, 2016, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16983&LangID=E#sthash.52TZ5Fdd.dpuf.
[16] On file.
[17] The full set of protection actors and interventions at the time of RI's mission can be found here: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PSWG%20Actors.pdf. Note that the accuracy of this information is subject to the reporting of protection actors who have registered projects in the online OCHA Projects System.
[18] The Inter-Agency Standing Committee is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance. For more information, see https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/
[19] "IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings," *Inter-Agency Standing Committee* , 2007, http://www.who.int/mental_health/emergencies/guidelines_iasc_mental_health_psychosocial_june_2007.pdf.
[20] For detailed allegations of corruption in food aid for the displaced in Maiduguri, see Samuel Malik, Displaced Persons Face Hunger as Relief Materials Disappear in IDP Camps. International Centre for Investigative Reporting. http://icirnigeria.org/displaced-persons-face-hunger-as-relief-materials-disappear-in-idp-camps/
[21] Ibrahim-Gwamna Mshelizza, "Shettima Warns Commissioners, Caretaker Chairmen Against Diversion," *The Nigerian Voice*, September 18, 2015, http://www.thenigeriannvoice.com/news/190930/shettima-warns-commissioners-caretaker-chairmen-against-diversion.html.
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[24] "Boko Haram: children among villagers burned to death in Nigeria attack," *The Guardian*, February 1, 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/01/boko-haram-attack-children-among-villagers-burned-to-death-in-nigeria.