



Committee: African Union.

Topic: Facing the rise of Boko Haram.

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The AU (African Union) is a continental organization that is made up of members of the 55 states of the African continent. The AU officially began in July 2002, as a successor of The Organization of African Unity (OAU) which closed in 1999.

The African Union was launched to encourage the focus of African leaders towards increasing cooperation of the states to grow Africa's economic development and growth. The African Union is guided by the phrase:

“An Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by the citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena”.

The following are the aims and objectives of this committee:

- Achieve greater unity between African countries.
- Defend territorial integrity and independence of African states.
- Accelerate the political and socio-economic development of the continent.
- Promote international cooperation.
- Encourage peace, security and stability on the continent.
- Promoting research in all fields, mainly in science and technology, to advance the continent's development.
- Collaborate with important international partners to eradicate preventable diseases and boost healthcare.
- Invite the African Diaspora to participate as an important part of the continent, and in the building of the African Union.

Among others, these are the main focuses of this committee. The African Union was created to provide aid for Africa's long-term progress. The committee requests important cooperation and support from all members to achieve the well-being of African citizens.

Boko Haram.

Formed by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002, Boko Haram is a jihadist group active on the northern Nigeria area where Muslim religion predominates. Yusuf was a firm believer that Nigeria was being corrupted by western culture and fake Muslims, declaring war on them and the State of Nigeria to create an Islamic State governed only by Sharia law and eradicate foreign culture in all its forms.

In the Maiduguri region of Nigeria, Mohammed Yusuf, a popular preacher of the Islamic religion at the time, started to radicalize his dialogue and ideas, rejecting any aspects of Nigerian society that were secular. This resulted in the creation of Boko Haram.

In 2002, Yusuf opened an Islamic school, drawing students from impoverished Muslim households all around the nation. According to reports, Yusuf used the institution to convert and gather potential jihadists. In 2003, Boko Haram established a new camp in Yobe state, which it named "Afghanistan," close to the Nigeria-Niger border.

Before 2009, the group was less politically motivated and tried to peacefully distance itself from secular culture. Following harsh confrontations between Boko Haram members and the police in July 2009, open conflict broke out. Following violent riots in Bauchi, this crisis moved fast to Borno, Yobe, and Kano. Over 700 members of Boko Haram were murdered by Nigerian military forces as they tried to stop the uprisings and captured Yusuf. He was later executed by security officers, who claimed he had tried to escape.

Under Shekau, Boko Haram's attacks drastically increased in number, brutality, and sophistication, allegedly as a result of greater coordination with Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

Boko Haram became more focused on overthrowing the Nigerian government and establishing an Islamic caliphate after the death of Yusuf and the rising confrontations between them and the government of Nigeria.

The terrorist group continues its operations, frequently using suicide bombers to strike locations, primarily in Nigeria. "Women and children are especially at risk of Boko Haram's oppression as they are often linked through marriage or paternity, or were otherwise coerced into suicide bombing missions by threats of violence or promises of eternal salvation." (***From Mapping Militant Organizations. "Boko Haram". Stanford University. <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/boko-haram>***)

Some of these attacks include:

- "December 24, 2003: Boko Haram members occupied police stations in Geiam and Kanamma in Yobe State, raising the flag of the Afghanistan Taliban."

- “April 14, 2014: Boko Haram kidnapped more than 300 girls aged 16 to 18 from a secular school in Chibok. As of Jan 19, 2018, 106 girls had escaped Boko Haram, with the vast majority freed following negotiations facilitated by the International Committee of the Red Cross between Boko Haram and the Nigerian Government.”
- “February 13, 2015: Boko Haram attacked the village of Ngouboua in Chad and torched two-thirds of the homes in the village before the Chadian military intervened. ***(This was Boko Haram’s first attack in Chad, probably in revenge for Chad joining Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon in a military coalition against them)***”
- “January 17, 2018: A male and female suicide bomber attacked a market in Maiduguri, Nigeria (12 killed, 45+ wounded)”
- “February 21, 2018: Boko Haram seized of 110 schoolgirls from a school in Dapchi, Nigeria.”

(From Mapping Militant Organizations. “Boko Haram”. Stanford University. <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/boko-haram>)

Boko Haram promotes Islamic ideals that prohibit Muslims from participating in any activity that promotes occidental values, such as voting or receiving secular education. Around Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad, Boko Haram has killed close to 40,000 people and forced 2.4 million people to move out of their places since it started to act violently in 2009. These regions seem to be the most affected by Boko Haram's influence. Because of that, these states have structured different strategies and coalitions to overcome Boko Haram's threat.

Since early 2019, Katsina's, Zamfara's, Soloto's, and Kaduna's governors (States on Northeast Nigeria), alerted the main heads of state of Boko Haram's jihadist infiltration on the territory. Analyst believe the terrorist group is expanding its influence on the region and recruiting more members through all Nigeria. Boko Haram usually targets children and students with low resources and opportunities. The group will commonly promise a financial incentive as a reward to acting on terrorist strikes to the state on Boko Haram's name.

These recruitment elements can mostly be reduced by addressing the corruption and inequality in the state, ensuring that resources are inclined to people with less opportunities and holding lawbreakers in government and Boko Haram accountable.

Between 2006 and 2011, reports show that Boko Haram was able to raise 70 million dollars from different illicit sources. For example, Boko Haram's commanders often impose taxes on communities in order to raise monetary capital by regulating agricultural activities.

A recent United Nations report states that terrorist groups' main forms of funding come from taxes and sanctions on small communities, kidnapping and extortion, 'protection fees' for people and regions, robberies, donations and in some cases the government.

It is believed that many governors of northern Nigeria's states regularly pay Boko Haram for protection. This money is paid in order to keep the insurgents out of the way of the community.

We need to understand the networking, actors and incentives behind Boko Haram to fully unmask the insurgent's webwork. Law enforcement will be a key element in order to achieve this.

Although understanding where the money to finance the group's actions come from takes a big role in stopping Boko Haram's influence on the state, it's not the only step we need to take in order to fully terminate with the terrorist groups actions.

Similar social and technological efforts need to be implemented on the state's governorship to fully eradicate the influence of Boko Haram.

Achieving a positive outcome is not possible without external help from the region, as a large amount of assistance will be needed to conclude the waves of violence caused by Boko Haram. To manage the conflict, civil society and state governments require additional power and support. Nigerians and foreign sources together appear to look to the central government in particular for solutions to the situation. However, the federal government does not yet have the willingness, ability, or power to deal with the insurgency on its own. Through initiatives like the Civilian Joint Task Force, a collection of militias and community defense organizations that have collaborated with the security forces to find, combat, and drive out Boko Haram from areas it controls, it has been most successful when it has worked closely with local authorities.

Defeating Boko Haram is a long-term, tough challenge but with the assistance of the members of the African Union, we can start making our way to overcoming Boko Haram's threat. We invite the former members of this committee to ally to structure a viable response to these challenges.

Thank you for your time.

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