

## TERRORISM IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: EFFECTS ON SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper examines the root and effects of Boko Haram terrorism to sports development in Nigeria. In the paper it was observed that sport unites friends, people communities, and countries together with common interest, it resolves conflicts, builds the mind of an individual, encourages sportsmanship, fairness, discipline and win-win ideology. Deviance and misconducts in youths can also be solved through involvement in sport. The paper pointed out that terrorism is the opposite of sports; it is the act of killing unarmed people, destroying of properties, causing fear and panic among the people and government of a nation for selfish and unaccepted reasons. Among the effects of Boko Haram insurgency are social effects, economical effect and psychological effect, all these join together is destroying Nigeria's beautiful, and peaceful cultural heritage, socio-economic, economic and sports growth recorded over the years. In solving the insurgency problems it was recommended among others that youths should be engaged in sporting activities through a well planned programme by the government, in order to keep them away from social vices and terrorist attacks.*

**Keywords:** Boko Haram, Terrorism, Sport Development and Economy

### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria being the most populous black nation in the world with cultural, language and religion diversity, besides the crises that led to the civil war between 1967 and 1970, the country has been in relatively peaceful and unity state. Terrorism is not a common thing in Nigeria; the people are not known for suicide bombing in the past. The August 2011 suicide bomb blast that rock UN (United Nation) house in Abuja Nigerian capital city which claimed over 23 lives and several others injured and the earlier independence day bomb blast in 2010 that left over 10 persons dead and several others injured, all these bomb blast gave rise to terrorist attack in Nigeria. Most of the suicide bombing in Nigeria has been attributed to a Jihadist terrorist organization based in the northeast of Nigeria with the name Boko Haram.

Bartolotta (2011) stated that Boko Haram is an Islamist group founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf, which its name translates as Western Education is forbidden or sinful in native Hausa language. He further stated that the groups were instilled with extremist ideology, extolling a version of Islam where any interaction with western society is considered a sin and taboo. David (2011) stated that the genesis and history of Boko Haram can be traced back to the pre-colonial era. He narrated "Before colonization and subsequent annexation into the British empire, the Bornu Empire ruled the territory where Boko Haram is currently active. It was a sovereign sultanate, run according to the principle of the constitution of Medina, with a majority Kanuri Muslim population. However, due to activities of early Christian missionaries who used western education as a tool for evangelism, the local population became suspicious and the increased dissatisfaction gave rise to many

fundamentalist among the Kanuri such as Mohammed Marwa also known as Maitatsine who instigated riots in the late 70's and early 80's cross northeast of the country which resulted in the death of thousands of people and it is believed that Boko Haram is an extension of maitatsine riots.

Sport in the other hand does not exist in violence rather it resolves conflicts and unites friends, communities and countries together. Sport builds the mind of an individual; it encourages sportsmanship, fairness, and discipline and win-win ideology. Deviance and misconducts in youths can be solved through involvement in sport, it is evident that most of the people been used by this terrorist groups are youth who are unemployed, untrained and unskilled. Sport recognizes no religion, race, ethnicity, culture, tribe or colour, its sole aim is to unite people, create avenue for fun and enjoyment and all round development in all individuals. The importance of sport in solving our society contemporary issues such as terrorism cannot be over emphasized.

### **Terrorism and Sport**

Terrorism is defined as the premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents (US Department of State, 2011). The federal Bureau Investigation (FBI) defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population or any segment hereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (WMD Threat and Risk Assessment manual, 2005). Ruby (2002) defined terrorism as an act that is committed in order to create a fearful state of mind in an audience different from the victims. He further stated that victims of terrorist acts are not the intended targets; they are merely sacrificed in order to instill fear in the witness and governments. In agreement to the above statement Bergesen, (2006) state that terrorist go extra mile to achieve their aims, most often they shift attention and their action where international meetings or gathering is being held in order to draw attention of the world media and press.

Terrorism is the act of killing unarmed people, destroying of properties, causing fear and panic among the people and government of a nation for selfish and unaccepted reasons. Most often their actions are been driven by greed, corruption, nepotism, tribalism and racism among others.

Taylor and Toohey (2007) stated that sport events have been disrupted by terrorism 168 times between 1972 to 2003, which is approximately five attacks every year. Sport events such as the Olympics, FIFA world cup, Rugby world cup, Africa cup of nations, champions league and Super Bowl attracts the attention of terrorists because of the high profile of media attraction they get across the world and it diversity in participation. Whatever aim or reason any terrorist group might have to unleash terror, it remains that such actions of theirs are illegal, wrong and unacceptable. Larobina and Pate (2009) state that a specific aim of terrorism is to disrupt and destroy ongoing business, adversely affect the economy of a nation.

Sport brings people, communities and countries together because of their common interest, it rarely discriminates and has no known boundaries, sport teaches diplomacy and it helps to connect and encourage nations to engage with each other (Goldberg, 2000). In the same line Reid (2006) states that sport removes barriers in that it does not discriminate against the old, young, rich, poor, it has the ability to force people and countries to set aside their conflicts, treat others as equals and tolerate differences. Sports such as martial art teaches and instill discipline on the participants and helps in building character, ethics and values on the general public and the entire society, sport encourages physical fitness and healthy life. People due to

their geographic location or urbanization may feel ostracized but through sport they can still feel and belong to the society.

### **Terrorism System of Attack on Sports**

Every form of terrorism has its mode of attack, some terrorist groups employ different forms and mode of attack. Sport events often attract large number of people with some security measures put in place. Among the modes of attack in sports events are Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), Assassination, direct attack, kidnapping, hostage taking and many more, but the most and widely recording used mode is suicide bombing. The simple reason why it is used is because it is very successful in crowded areas such as stadiums fields, entertainment arenas, gymnasiums, restaurants or hotels which are used for sporting activities or gathering. Tosini (2009) estimates that there have been 2,197 suicide attacks worldwide with fatalities totaling about 25,000 between 1982 and 2008. Palermo (2006) describes the method as a very successful and one that utilizes very little resources but yet capable of having a major impact.

The main resource that is required for this method of operation is human volunteers. There is no shortage of volunteers male, female, young, old, rich, poor, educated or uneducated; people are willing to sacrifice their lives for the cause of culture, and ethnicity and more especially religion. Corruption, poverty, lack of education and misinformation are among the reasons held responsible for the high rise in youth involvement in terrorist attack in northern Nigeria.

## **EFFECTS OF BOKO HARAM TERRORISM ON SPORT DEVELOPMENT**

### **Socio-Economic Effect**

Terrorist attacks do not only kill people but it also blow up buildings, damage properties and infrastructures including sport facilities and equipment, it puts fear and panic to the populace. Any where there is a bomb blast or any terrorist attack people do not feel safe thereby restrict themselves from moving or traveling to such areas. Tausif (2009) stated that in recent years, the sport of cricket has been deeply affected by brazen terrorist attacks, especially in the sub-continent region that comprises India, Pakistan Srilanka and Bangladesh. He further stated that foreign teams are reluctant to play in these countries and areas which results to cancellation of matches. These has deprived the local people of seeing their cricket stars compete against visiting teams on their home soil, he cited example where New Zealand cancelled their tour to Pakistan in May 1992 as a result of bomb blast outside the Sheraton Hotel where the cricket teams were staying. Also in November 2008 a terrible terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India led to the cancellation of England – India one day series in midways as English players returned home amid tight security. All these attack prevents the local people from seeing and meeting international players.

The Togolese national football team was attack by a terrorist group on January 8, 2010 as the team traveled through Angolan province of Cabinda to the 2010 Africa cup of Nation tournament in Angola. This attacked led to the withdrawal of the Togolese national team from the tournament thereby denying the spectators the glance of the Togolese captain Emmanuel Adebeyor (Former African football of the year) who because of the attack announced his retirement from international football.

An English top flight club in the EPL Arsenal F.C. called off their proposed 2012 pre-season tour to Nigerian citing logistically challenges; it is believed that the Boko Haram insurgence in the country led to the cancellation, the club marketing director Angus Kinnear stated that they could not get comfortable on everything needed to satisfy their requirements. This cancellation caused the club fans in the country a life time experience of seeing and coming

in contact with players they watch play week in week out on the T.V. Nigerian premier league is not left without a problem, most clubs in the southern part of the country for the fear of their life's asked the organizers of the league to reschedule matches involving teams in the north to a safer place. The organizers were forced to suspend the week 28 match involving Jigawa Golden stars and Ocean Boys Indefinitely due to Boko Haram crisis in Kaduna.

According to Ogunbumi (2012), the activities of terror group, Boko Haram in northern Nigeria is affecting Nigeria socio-economic life as the high profile friendly football match between the super eagles and the samba boys of Brazil scheduled for August 2012 has been canceled as a result of the continued insurgence in the country. Nigerian fans who had wanted to see stars like Kaka, Neymar, Marcelo, Robinho and others were denied the opportunity.

When a nation hosts major sporting event, sport loving and non sport loving citizens may feel pride and satisfaction at an individual level. Citizens generally come together and volunteer their services to be part of that event and history because it is not often countries get honour to host major sporting events. South Africa united together irrespective of their differences in race, colour and tribe and they achieve a huge success during the 2010 FIFA world cup which was the first of it kind in African soil. Nigeria had earlier hosted a success FIFA world youth (championship) in 2009 despite its diversity in culture, language, art and tribe. Sport is a collective mass activity that helps bring people either as players or spectators together.

### **Economic Effect**

A successful terrorist attack on a stadium can potentially cause massive casualties and high-impact imagery, and hence gain terrorists high-profile publicity (Australian Government Attorney Generals Department, 2006). The activities of the Boko Haram sect are gradually taking its toll on the economy of the north and Nigeria in general. Most match venues in the north that used to host premier league matches every weekend are now like cemeteries, gate fees and ticket, buying of club shirts and other items, T.V. rights, sponsorship deals and other financial benefits derived from these matches are jeopardize as a result of the insurgence. Pizam (2002) explains that tourism which sport events represents has a multiplier effect which will be lost if terrorists are successful in disrupting tourism and sport events. The multiplier effect refers to the monetary relationship between tourist spending and the economy, a tourists or sport fan spends money on hotels, restaurants, entertainment, shopping during their stay. Hence the money they have introduced into the economy flows into various sectors thereby developing the nation's economy, sport can stimulate growth in the economy and attract much needed revenue such as media right, hospitality industry (Preuss, 2006).

Sport is a multibillion dollar industry across the globe and large sporting events like the Olympic Games, FIFA World cup, Super Bowl, European champion's league, and Championship, Africa cup of nation, Grand slam and ATP Tours provides an attractive stage to terrorist to launch their attack of evil to people and nations they perceived as enemy. Nigerian government would have generated up to 10 million dollars and above from gate fee and T.V right and other commercial benefit if the proposed match with Brazil had not been canceled.

### **Psychological Effect**

After every terrorist attack at a particular place or venue, people are always reluctant to go to such areas for the fear of appraisal or repeated attack, even when security measures are put in place. The terrorist attack at Bali night club in Indonesia by extremist Islamist group which killed 202 tourists and injured 209 made tourist not to visit the area, it took approximately one and half years for tourist visits to Bali to recover to the previous levels (Lee, Gordon Moore & Richardson, 2008).

Because most of the terrorist attacks on sport stadium are deliberate, extremely violent and it also involves a greater number of casualties, there is potential for many of the victims to suffer casting psychological effects. Common initial reactions of terrorist attack include fear, disbelief, and helplessness, while the over time symptoms may include feelings of horror, anxiety, depression, and even emotional numbness or lack of feelings. Images of the deadly events may keep be reliving in the form of nightmares and flashbacks thereby causing difficulty in concentrating, not feel close to loved ones, and experience heightened physical tensions or health problems. Individuals may feel irritable and some may try to calm themselves down by using alcohol or other hard substances which may lead them to social vices.

According to Gorski (2002) in the aftermath of terrorist attacks and in the presence of the ongoing threat of new attacks many experts expect a radical increase in the number of people experiencing serious problems with alcohol, prescription, reactional drugs, mental health problems, and stress-related medical problems. This could result in higher than expected costs for addiction, mental health, and health care services that can further strain an already ailing economy.

It is very evident that players, athletes and even spectators are psychological affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, no one want to take chances by risking his/her life in the name of either taking part in sports, watching or supporting teams. It is easy to cause havoc but very difficult to repair, people live with the trauma caused by terrorist groups for a long time if not throughout their life time. Beside the above mentioned effect of the ill Boko Haram sect. Displacement caused by their attacks can cause unemployment, homeless, deviance; crime, social vices, as well as economy melt down among others.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sport is a social factor that brings people, communities and countries together for a common interest, it has no boundaries and it does not discriminate, it recognizes no race, religion, culture, colour rather it sees every one as unique and important. The just concluded Olympic game in London is a clear example where 205 nations participated in different sporting activities. Terrorism is direct opposite of sport, where people are been killed, injured and displaced for reasons not justified; it divides the people and brings mistrust. Book Haram insurgency is destroying Nigerian beautiful and peaceful cultural heritage, social-economic, economic and security status, they go beyond that by killing innocent citizens. Sport loving Nigerians mostly in the north no longer go to stadium to watch football matches or other sports activities simply because matches are played under closed doors or moved to other venues as a result of the Boko Haram violence.

In order to overcome the negative effects of Boko Haram to the development and growth of sport in Nigeria, the following recommendations may be useful.

1. Equal rights and justices should be insured to all citizens irrespective of their religion, region, culture and tribe. These will address the problem of tribalism, nepotism and sentiment
2. Political office holders should include sport in their developmental programmes.
3. Youths should be engaged in sporting activities through a well planned programme by the government, these will discourage them from social vices and terrorists attack.
4. Sports stadiums and other venues hosting any sporting activities should be provided with adequate security measures and personnel.

5. Most of the perpetrators of terrorist attack are youth simply because they are unemployed, unskilled and uneducated, having these in mind, government should ensure that its citizens are provided with adequate education, entrepreneurship and skill acquisition centers should be provided to train youths in vocational professions and employment opportunities should be created for qualified individuals.
6. Sensitization programmes should be carried out across the country for youths to shun hooliganism, terrorism and other social vices.
7. Periodic sporting activities with adequate reward system should be organized in communities especially in the north east to keep the youth busy.
8. Sports and recreational clubs should be built in communities, states and regions where youths will be engaged in different form of sports for fun, career and improvement of health.
9. Sports academies should be built across the country where youths from their youthful age can be discounted and trained in both sports and education.
10. The elite's should always try as much as possible to inform the general masses with right and appropriate information and they should be held responsible for the misinformation given to the youth for selfish reasons.

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