

## Terrorism in Nigeria: Groups, Activities, and Politics

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### ABSTRACT

While global attention is focused on embassy bombing, aircraft hijacking and 9/11 terrorists-attack kind of terrorism, equally devastating terrorist activities with equally devastating impacts are daily swept under the carpet in Africa. This paper, using representative cases from Nigeria, x-rays these 'unpopular', therefore, out-of-policy-focus terrorist activities using interviews, newspaper and police reports. The paper, while calling on the international community and development partners to review their conceptualization of terrorism, also suggests intervention methods to curb the menace.

### Introduction

While the events of 9/11 in the US serve to draw the attention of many to terrorism globally, terrorism has had a long history in Africa. From the Sherifian dynasty of the Alawites and Filali in Morocco to the Regencies of Algeria, Tunisia and Libya under the effete suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey, the Berber-Arab population of North Africa experienced one form of terrorism after another, even before colonial rule. The French invasion of Algeria in 1830, the establishment of French rule in Morocco in the 1900s and their occupation of Tunisia in 1880 were all characterized by one terrorist acts after the other. The journeys of independence in most countries of Africa were also strewn with one act of terrorism after the other. In countries of East Africa, most especially Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, international terrorism coalesced in the bombing of US embassies in 1997. In Southern Africa, notably South Africa, Botswana, Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, apartheid orchestrated terrorism as important state policy. The West and Central Africa may not have had embassy bombing or the 9/11-type terrorist attacks, they have nevertheless witnessed cases of aircraft hijacking, hostage taking and other mind-boggling terrorist actions. The 1921 Oke-Ogun Uprising involved commando-like guerrilla tactics and bush-action, which ensured the decimation of more than ten thousand souls in three weeks. Jesse and Odi events in Nigeria are two examples of state terrorism, which have placed Nigeria in the global terrorist map. Post-independence Africa today ranks seventh in global terrorists'

incidence, third in global terrorists' injuries and fourth in global fatalities recorded for between 1997 and 2007. Africa, unarguably, is no stranger to terrorism.

Despite its prevalence, terrorism has manifested in different ways in Africa. In some African countries, terrorism and its impacts and reaches are limited and contained within national territories. In some others, terrorism is boundary-blind. Transnationality and domesticity of terrorism have added important dimensions to terrorist groups, terrorist acts and the politics involved in combating it. In this paper, I used examples drawn largely from Nigeria to illustrate terrorist groups, terrorist acts and the politics involved in combating terrorism. In the first section, the paper briefly examines the trajectory of terrorism in Nigeria with special attention placed on its modern expressions and politics. In the second section, I have examined representative examples of terrorist groups; their means of expressions and the various terrorist acts perpetrated over the years. In the third section, I have examined the politics of combating terrorism since the early 1980s to the present. The fourth section attempts drawing some basic lessons for international organization, Nigeria's development partners and foreign governments who may wish to collaborate with Nigeria on how best to combat terrorism in Nigeria. The last section summarizes and harmonizes the important lessons in the study.

### **Terrorism in Nigeria**

Although activities of different groups that target civilians are definitely terrorist in nature, the attempts of the government in Nigeria to use this label may have created some confusion, especially when political opponents, civil society groups, and opponents of governments have also been branded terrorists. There have also been doubts as to whether groups agitating for purely parochial interests of ethnic, religious and social groups are terrorists groups because of how they have been classified by the UN and the US government. The UN consolidates a list, which lists individuals and entities linked to Al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, and the Taliban. Owing to the fact that none of the groups in Nigeria has featured on this list, although there were instances of linkages between groups in Northern Nigeria and the Taliban, Nigerian government has refrained itself from branding these groups as terrorist groups.

In order to draw attention to terrorism in Nigeria, it is important to conceptualize it within an African context. Although the AU need not maintain a list of terrorist organizations in Africa, its Convention on the Prevention and Combating Terrorism article 1 (3) defines terrorism as any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life,

physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to:

- (i) intimidate, put in fear, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint or to act according to certain principles; or
- (ii) disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or
- (iii) create general insurrection in a State.

The AU, in article 3(1), however notes that:

- (i) The struggle waged by peoples in accordance with the principles of international law for their liberation or self-determination, including armed struggle against colonialism, occupation, aggression and domination by foreign forces.
- (ii) Political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other motives shall not be a justifiable defence against a terrorist act.

The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime notes in Article 3(2) that an offence is transnational if it is

- (i) committed in more than one state;
- (ii) committed in one state but has a substantial part of its preparation, planning, direction or control taking place in another state;
- (iii) committed in one state but involves an organized group that engages in activities in more than one state; and
- (iv) committed in one state but has substantial effects in another state.

Conceptualized in this way, the AU is clear on

- (i) Activities that qualify one group or the other as terrorist group;
- (ii) Activities that qualify as terrorist activities.

In the same vein, the UN's convention on transnationality of terrorists' activities holds important place in any discussion of terrorism in Nigeria. In the next section, the paper examines the

activities of various groups in Nigeria to determine whether these groups are terrorists groups and their activities as terrorist activities or not.

### **Terrorist Groups, Means and Terrorists Acts in Nigeria**

Nigeria, like many nations in Africa, is not in short supply of groups and associations agitating for one thing or the other. This paper limits its focus to groups agitating for political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic and religious interests of their peoples and groups. Historically, three waves of such groups are discernible in Nigeria. The first of such groups existed even before colonial rule. They were the age-grades, guild associations and special interest groups performing one function after another in the overall engineering of their respective polities. Examples include *Ndinche*, *Modewa*, *Aguren*, *Eso*, *Akoda* and *Ilari* and so on. The second wave relates to groups, essentially based on kinship affinity, with presence in every part of Nigeria, including the northern region, Fernando Po, and the Gold Coast. As Coleman had noted, such groups were formed as people began moving from one area to the other in search of colonial jobs. As ethnic associations, they were based on strong loyalty and obligation to their kinship group, towns or villages. These associations were the 'organizational expression of strong persistent feeling of loyalty and obligation to the kinship group, the town or village where the lineage is localized'.<sup>1</sup> Examples include the Calabar Improvement League, Owerri Divisional Union, Igbira Progressive Union, Urhobo Renascent Convention, Naze Family Meeting, Ngwa Clan Union, Ijo Rivers People's League, Ijo Tribe Union, etc.

The third wave comprises of groups such as the O'Odua Peoples' Congress(OPC), Arewa Youth Consultative Forum, Movement for the Actualization for the Sovereign State of Biafra, Anambra State Vigilante Service, Abia State Vigilante Service, Imo State Vigilante Service, Niger-Delta Volunteers Force, Ogoni Youth, Ijaw Youth, Bakassi Boys, Egbesu Boys, Onitsha Traders Organization and Mambilla Militia Group. Attention shall be devoted to the third wave in this paper, as only this relates to current trends in global terrorism.

Several factors underlie the growth and development of groups of the third wave. Economic recession of the 1980s, falling commodity prices, OPEC price increases, privatization, economic liberalization, deregulation, currency devaluation, Cold War politics, trade barriers, civil conflict, etc. are some of the notable examples. These myriads of problems reduced government's

ability to fund welfare projects. The impact of these policies ranged from job cuts, high inflation rates and unemployment to a burgeoning informal sector.

Military dictatorship, especially under Generals Babangida, Abacha and Abubakar, not only stifled opposition, but also introduced favouritism in government appointments, promotion and allocation of developmental projects. These trends combined to make crime and criminal activities rampant. The inability of law enforcement agencies to curtail the spate of crime and violent conflicts in the country engendered a situation whereby non-state actors, in their bids to provide security and other necessities, contested crime control and community policing with law enforcement agents. This, undoubtedly, was a flagrant abuse of the Nigerian Criminal Procedure.

In the remaining part of this section, the study shall examine representative cases of the activities of a few of these groups and associations. Beginning with the OPC, on 20 February 2001, two police officers and three members of the OPC were killed in clashes between the police and OPC in Ikotun Egbe in Lagos after the police tried to disperse a gathering of the OPC that was considered illegal. On 10 August 2001, one alleged robber, Saheed Akanbi, was set ablaze by the OPC in the Agege area of Lagos state.<sup>ii</sup> Akanni Arikuyeri was killed and nailed to a wooden cross on 10 August 2001 by the OPC in the Idi-Oro area of Lagos. The alleged offence of this middle-age man was that he had killed several members of the OPC and policemen who had attempted to stop his robberies. In a similar vein, between 1 and 13 January 2002, 36 people were killed in clashes between the OPC and the guards of Olowo's palace at Owo. As a result of these multiple killings, Ganiyu Adams was declared wanted by the police.<sup>iii</sup> Over the years members of the OPC and the leaders, Dr. Fasheun and Ganiyu Adams, have been arrested and detained ten times for these and many other activities. Only once were they brought to trial.

By 2001, newspaper reports were replete with stories of the inhuman treatment, extrajudicial killings and human rights violations perpetrated by the Bakassi Boys in Abia state. In fact, 25 deaths were recorded on 30 October 2001, reportedly the work of the Bakassi Boys because of late payment of rent. On 25 January 2002 at Umuleri community, 11 suspected armed robbers were summarily executed by the Bakassi Boys. As a result of its alleged nefarious activities, the

mobile police raided five operations bases of the Bakassi Boys and liberated 46 prisoners being held in different cells.<sup>iv</sup>

Irrespective of the claims of controlling crime and criminality, the activities of the Bakassi Boys (Abia) included arson, kidnapping, extra-judicial killings, looting, unlawful detention and disappearances. The police, and sometimes the communities, are in no doubt that these groups are more of a menace than a partner in curbing crime and criminality or fighting for ethnic goals. In February 2001, for example, Mr. Gilbert Okoye, the leader of the Anambra state Bakassi Boys, was arrested and questioned by the police over the murder of Ezeodumegwu Okonkwo, the chairperson of the All People's Party (APP), the main opposition party in Anambra state.<sup>v</sup> Like Ezeodumegwu Okonkwo, Odi Okaka Oquosa, an artist and a religious leader, was arrested and tortured by the Bakassi Boys in Onitsha on 19 October 2000. His offence was that he had been paying regular visits to the chairperson of the Bakassi Boys in Onitsha to persuade him to order his boys to stop the human rights violations they had allegedly committed. He was severely beaten for three days and eventually released through the intervention of his relatives.

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The Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) estimated the number of extra-judicial executions committed by the Bakassi Boys in Anambra state at over 2 000 between April 2000 and January 2002. Its report also stated that thousands who had been treated cruelly, inhumanly or in a degrading way or tortured by the Bakassi Boys of Anambra state had either lost their lives from injuries sustained or been stigmatized as criminals. Between 4 January and 15 March 2002 alone, an estimated 105 people were extra-judicially executed by the vigilante service in Onitsha and its environs.<sup>vii</sup>

In response to these widespread criminal activities, the Anambra state governor, Chinwoke Mbadinoju, imposed a code of conduct on the Anambra Vigilante Service (AVS), requiring the group to hand over suspected criminals to the police. However, this was hardly observed. After this, the AVS was alleged to have set up detention camps in Onitsha main market and other locations in the state. In these camps, different degrees of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment were meted out to suspected criminals. Frequently, gruesome decapitations, dismemberments and incinerations of victims were reported.<sup>viii</sup> Between 15 and 31 July 2000, witnesses stated that over 30 people were killed and their bodies dismembered with machetes and set ablaze in various locations in and around Onitsha. Eddy Okeke, a religious leader from

Nawgu, Anambra state, was reported to have been beaten, kicked, whipped, mutilated and decapitated in the presence of thousands of villagers on 9 November 2000. His hapless body was later doused with petrol and set ablaze. He was allegedly 'found guilty' by the vigilante group of aiding and abetting armed robbers.

On 9 May 2001, the Bakassi Boys announced the execution of 36 alleged robbers in Onitsha after having detained and tortured them for weeks in 'Chukin Mansion', the headquarters of the group in Onitsha market.<sup>ix</sup> On 9 July 2001, the Bakassi Boys, ignoring the police request that the suspect be handed over, drove Okwudili Ndiwe, aka Derico, a notorious alleged criminal, to a popular market in Onitsha where his head was severed. On 11 August, eyewitnesses stated that eight people were dismembered and set ablaze in public at Lagos Motor Park, Sokoto Road, Upper Iweka, and other locations near Onitsha. Another 20 people were killed in similar circumstances in Nnewi and Okija between 25 and 30 November 2001.

As noted by the CLO, most of these killings were done with active connivance or collaboration of the federal police and the Anambra State Vigilante Service. In fact, more than 40 bodies were said to have been dumped in the Niger River in the presence of the police.<sup>x</sup> In Imo, one of the states that 'invited' the Bakassi Boys, the CLO reported that on 3 January 2001, the Bakassi Boys publicly executed an alleged criminal in front of the St. Paul's Catholic Church, near Owerri main market. The victim was killed with machetes and the body was set ablaze. On the same day, another person was executed and incinerated in Oshishi (wood market) by the Bakassi Boys in Owerri.

Also in January 2001, over a dozen suspected criminals met a similar fate at the hands of the Bakassi Boys in Owerri. By February, when the Nigerian police raided the bases of the Bakassi Boys, 46 members of the group and some suspected criminals held in illegal detention centres were arrested. As noted by the police commissioner, the Bakassi Boys created illegal detention camps and were killing innocent people on the streets without proper investigation and were carrying unregistered arms. The arrested members were said to have since been released on bail. On 29 July 2002, *Agence France Press* reported that the Bakassi Boys took machetes to four suspected armed robbers along the Owerri-Port Harcourt road. Their bodies were said to have been set ablaze.<sup>xi</sup> In another development, on 10 April 2000, V.O. (m), 20 years old, O. Ok. (m), 13 years old, O.O. (m), 32 years old, Ch.b. (m), 19 years old, Ch.Ch (m), 24 years old

and Ch.O. (m), 22 years old were reported by Civil Liberty Organization to have been killed in Inland Town, near Onitsha by a combined group of members of the federal police and Anambra State vigilantes; their bodies were later dumped in the River Niger. The real names of the victims are deliberately suppressed for security of their families. The same story was happened in all the states in which the Bakassi Boys operated.

Organizations such as Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), MASSOB and many other groups in the Niger-Delta are famous for hostage taking, kidnapping for ransom, pipeline vandalization, oil-theft, arson and ambush. Till date, more than five hundred oil workers, politicians, actors, children, and other important personalities have either been kidnapped or taken hostage. Initially, the groups and associations argued that kidnapping and hostage taking were introduced to force experts involved in crude oil exploration in the Niger-Delta areas to pressure Nigerian government to take decisive steps towards ameliorating the environmental, social and political problems bedeviling the area. More recently, the trends and patterns of hostage taking and kidnapping differ markedly from using it as proxies to get government attentions, as the groups focus more on the ransom paid to ensure release of the oil industry workers. Today, groups target foreign nationals irrespective of whether they work in the oil industry or anywhere near the oil-producing areas or not. The primary intention is that when such people are captured or kidnapped; their relatives and embassies would pay whatever amount to ensure their release.

In January 2007, four foreign oil workers were abducted at a Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) location in Bayelsa State. In the early hours of Saturday February 18, Ijaw youth launched series of coordinated and devastating commando-like attacks on specifically selected and strategically located oil facilities and installations in western Niger Delta. In March of the same year, Ijaw youths took hostage another nine expatriate oil workers, while by April; thirteen expatriates were abducted in Port Harcourt alone. Altogether, more than five thousand foreigners, most of whom are from America, Britain, Thailand, Egypt, and the Philippines have been kidnapped and taken hostage by Niger-Delta groups. These actions of the youths signaled a new dimension in what is happening in the Niger-Delta, as the youths were ready to tell the world that the Nigerian Government has lost control over what is happening within its borders, most especially in the oil rich Niger Delta.

Before 2008, no group or organization ever dared the Nigerian Army. For instance, in December 1999 when 12 policemen were brutally murdered by suspected Ijaw youths at Odi in Bayelsa State, the Nigerian Military sacked the entire town of Odi. Similar actions have occurred in Jesse, Jos, and one other place in northern Nigeria. Now, the youths are confronting the Federal Government and striking where it matters most: oil, the economic nerve center of Nigeria. As leader of MEND and most wanted militant in the Niger Delta, Ekpemupolo, aka Tompolo said that these coordinated attacks are because they are ready to “take their future in their own hands”, actions, which have since forced Nigerian government to set in motion processes of negotiation that ultimately resulted in the on-going Amnesty Programme.

Since the beginning of 2008, kidnapping and hostage taking have ascended new heights. Many Nigerian politicians, university lectures, kings and their chiefs, musicians and movie industry workers have featured among the kidnapped. Anybody can be kidnapped. More often than not, kidnappers and hostage-takers hardly kill victims, although a number of deaths have been recorded. Whenever a person is kidnapped, the family, company or embassy of the country of the victim is notified and a price is placed on his or her head. Prices are quoted based on the worth of the victim. If a renowned personality with clouts in government or oil magnate or, better still children of any of these is kidnapped, the price is usually high. The former governor of the Central Bank, Prof. Charles C. Soludo’s father was released after a whopping 200 million naira was paid to kidnappers. Peter Edochie and Nkem Owoh, two of Nigeria’s famous movie stars, were only released after 20 million and 1.4 million naira were paid.

The geography of kidnapping-for-ransom has also changed. From Niger-Delta to Lagos, Ibadan to Kadunna, Adamawa to Ekiti, different people – male and female, old and young, have been kidnapped in all these places. In all these places, allowances are usually made for bargaining. Once agreement is reached and ransom is paid, the victim is released. Deaths have occurred, but where deaths have occurred, as in the case of Chief Irabor in Edo State, it was usually the case that injuries were sustained in the process of capture or when victims attempted to escape. On some occasions, victims have been killed when ransom was not paid or partly paid or to shield kidnappers from being revealed.

These groups and association, in carrying out their activities, have used the following means and methods:

- (i) Chopping off hands and other body parts;
- (ii) Burning victims to death, clubbing and matchetting victims to death;
- (iii) Beheading and chopping body parts into pieces;
- (iv) Burning homes, motor vehicle;
- (v) Beating to death
- (vi) Hostage taking, kidnapping, arrest and illegal detention; etc.
- (vii) Ransom collection;

### **Politics of Combating Terrorism in Nigeria**

Evidence abounds to demonstrate that the activities of these groups enjoy tacit or actual endorsement of the state. In fact, some states have increased the profile of these groups by openly endorsing armed vigilante groups, either as the most reliable force in the fight against crime and criminality, or as a critical part in the campaign. Such actions have proven popular among a population often dismayed by the poor police record in curbing crime and criminality. It must be noted that national and international human rights organizations, the Nigerian press, the Nigerian Bar Association and individuals have alleged that these groups carry out extra judicial executions, illegal detention and other acts of terrorism for and with the direct support of politicians or political office holders.

The nation's constitution empowers only the Nigeria Police Force to perform policing functions; the usurpation of police functions by vigilante groups is an aberration that must not be allowed, regardless of the circumstances. In Anambra, Imo, Abia, Ebonyi, Edo and Enugu states, Bills were initiated and passed by state assemblies establishing vigilante services in these states. Consequently, governors in these states have openly supported the establishment, activities and modus operandi of these 'illegal' associations or groups. In August 2001, Governor Lucky Igbinedion of Edo State publicly announced a Bill establishing a vigilante group in the state. On 10 June 2002, the Ebonyi State governor also publicly announced that he would soon sign into law a Bill establishing the Bakassi Boys. The State Assembly has already passed the Bill. On 25 June 2001, Governor Tinubu of Lagos State announced plans to turn the OPC into the state security service in a ceremony at the commissioning of the statue of Mrs. Kudirat Abiola, the slain wife of M K O Abiola. 26 July 2001 witnessed a situation whereby the state released and discharged unconditionally more than 100 OPC members the Nigerian police had accused of criminal activities ranging from armed robbery to arson.

In this atmosphere of tacit and/or explicit official approval of vigilante and ethnic militarism, it is puzzling to note that the federal government still acknowledges the rights of individuals to fair hearing, fair trial and rights to life. The laws in Nigeria recognize the fact that anyone who is deprived of his rights shall have the right to take proceedings before a court, in order that the court may decide without any delay whether such deprivation is lawful or not. As enshrined in all international conventions entered into by the nation, everyone charged with a criminal offence shall have the right to be regarded as innocent until proven guilty by a court of competent jurisdiction. Therefore, it is unlawful for any state governor to set in motion machineries for setting up and passing into law a Bill, which creates bodies and sponsors groups whose activities are in clear violation of peoples' fundamental rights and the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Piqued by the activities of these associations and groups, President Obasanjo sought parliamentary approval on 10 April 2002 to outlaw certain armed groups and associations in Nigeria. Among other things, the Bill seeks to prohibits any *group of persons, association of individuals or quasi-military group to retain, organize, train, or equip any person or group of persons for the purpose of enabling the group of persons or association of individuals to use or display physical force or coercion in order to promote any political objective or interest; ethnic or cultural interest; social, occupational or religious interest.*

A major criticism against the Bill deals with its ambiguous and unclear stance on parallel organizations usurping police functions or any armed organizations allegedly created to curb crime and criminality. The Bill is a good start to controlling and curbing ethnic and vigilante militarism in Nigeria, but it is, nevertheless, silent on which groups or associations qualify for proscription and which do not. The establishment and endorsement of vigilante groups by legal statutes on the one hand, and on the other a (federal) law calling for the proscription of these associations and groups create conflict for law enforcement and foster an environment where crime and terrorism can thrive.

The government in Nigeria has, at different times, adopted different approaches to combat terrorism. In the first instance, government has evaded the tendencies to dub what is going on in the Niger-Delta area as terrorism, especially in order not to complicate the situation,

especially since the 9/11 events in the USA. In addition, counter-terrorism has been employed. Odi and Jesse are two classic examples. In both cases, government has responded by deploying terrorism against not only the terrorists but the entire communities of Odi and Jesse. This action has complicated rather than ameliorated the problem.

In the specific case of the Niger-Delta, government has also used dialogue and negotiation. For instance, at every turn when militants abduct foreign nationals, negotiating teams to negotiate release of victims are raised by government. When nine Shell workers, earlier mentioned, were kidnapped, the Federal Government raised a negotiating team to negotiate with the Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC) who coordinated their abduction. Chief James Ibori, the Governor of Delta State, went the extra mile to talk to militant groups in Okerenkoko and Gbaramatu as well as the FNDIC.

The most comprehensive action taken so far in curbing terrorism in Nigeria is the on-going Amnesty Programme. The programme aims mainly at ensuring unconditional pardon and cash payments to rebels who agree to lay down their arms within a sixty-day period. The third component of the programme is the rehabilitation of the militants. Government officials say that any militant who surrenders his or her arms would be given about £255 a month in cash and food allowances during the rehabilitation period. A major demand by the militants in the Niger-Delta, which was also supported by a government appointed committee last year, was that Niger-Delta states should receive 25% of the country's oil revenue, as against the current 13%. So far, this critical component of the yearnings of the people, which addresses the underlying problems in the Niger-Delta region, remains to be addressed. Mr. Richard Moncrieff, West Africa Project Director for the International Crisis Group notes that "*The amnesty idea is a step in the right direction, but there does not appear to be a substantial amount of planning and political engagement behind it. Unless this happens, it would appear to be a half-hearted measure.*"

In all, 7000 men and women from different terrorist groups all over Ondo, Delta, Edo, Cross-River, Rivers, Bayelsa, and the entire Niger-Delta region accepted the Amnesty and laid-down their arms. However, the first drawback in the Amnesty Programme is the fact that constitutionally, the President lacks the power to grant Amnesty to un-charged, un-tried and un-convicted persons. Another drawback is the fact that government has no comprehensive plan to

rehabilitate these terrorists. This problem reared its head almost immediately after the deadline for renouncing terrorism, when ex-terrorists discovered that the much-talked-about training and empowerment programme of government was not actually in place. Many of these men and women have openly expressed regrets laying down their arms. It goes beyond saying that Nigerian government lacks the capacity to rein in terrorists and, as such, faces the danger associated with these men and women returning to their old ways.

### **Conclusion: Factors to Consider for Improved Cooperation With Nigeria in Fighting Terrorism**

From the above cases and examples, it goes without saying that while global attention is focused on embassy-bombing, aircraft-hijack and 9/11 terrorists-attack kind of terrorism, equally devastating terrorist activities are going on in Nigeria vis-à-vis Africa without as much publicity and policy attention as embassy-bombing, aircraft-hijack and 9/11 terrorists-attack kind of terrorism are attracting. As noted by the UN, a terrorist act is considered transnational if more than one territory can be identified with the planning, preparation, targeting, execution and effects of that act. Invariably, what is going on in Nigeria is terrorism, although government in Nigeria has shied away from calling groups deploying terror activities in Nigeria as terrorist groups. Nevertheless, the preparation, training, resources and effects of their activities affected nationals of different countries. In addition, the transnationality of the effects of their activities is not in doubt. For instance, their terrorists' activities affected oil and gas production in both Nigeria and globally. One hard fact the government in Nigeria cannot contest is the fact the targets, whether Nigerians or nationals of other countries, are used as proxies to get government in Nigeria to arrest environmental, economic and marginalization problems in the Niger-Delta area. The same is true of the activities of the various vigilante and ethnic-defender groups in other parts of Nigeria.

For development to be meaningful, it must be systematic, holistic and responsible. To be meaningful and sustainable; development must not only be co-operative, but also responsive and co-responsible. With plethora of evidence staring us in the face, we now know that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is different from other centuries before it. It is unlike the 19th Century, which, for Africa, marks its forceful and unprepared incorporation into the vortex of international political economy. It is unlike the 20th Century and its Cold War geo-politics. It is a century with its own rules. It has shrunk the divide between the North and South, between the developed nations of

the West and the developing nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It globalizes not only products but also thoughts. Its anti-gap capacity has made it possible for people, even in Lagos, to be aware of events as they unfold in Laos. Nowhere is too remote and no news is too unimportant. Our worlds have been wired and connected like never before. Consequently, development in Africa or anywhere for that matter must be co-responsible.

Globally, we have reached a point where the cost of remedial action pale into insignificance against the cost of continued inaction. Therefore the task of combating domestic and transnational terrorism in Nigeria should not be left to Nigeria alone. It must be a collective responsibility of all. To this end, the following intervention opportunities are suggested for Nigeria's friends and partners.

*Intervention for Development:* While not discounting the fact that Nigeria must solve its own problems, it is essential to note that Nigeria has demonstrated little or no control over the problems of underdevelopment and the unwholesome practices of the multinational corporations involved in exploration of oil and gas in the Niger-Delta. In their intercultural communications and multilateral cooperation with Nigeria, international organizations and development partners must insist on minimum benchmarks, especially from multinational corporations involved in mineral resources extraction not only in Nigeria but also in other nations of Africa. This is fundamental in two ways: (i) the global fight for a better environment and (ii) peace between mineral extracting corporations and their host communities. Three interrelated factors are critical to explain the importance of this suggestion. (a) Scarcity, which is understood as the ratio of the human demand to nature's ability to supply it; (b) politics of ownership, management and control; and (c) the mineral resources extracting processes. Where scarcity is underwritten by nature's inability to meet demands, conflicts and wars in these areas would require sustainable management efforts to save the areas. Where scarcity is underwritten by uneven distribution of wealth, as we have in present day Nigeria, conflicts easily slip into terrorism, as groups seek better bargaining opportunities with government and government, on its own part, seeks to protect itself at all costs.

The politics associated with ownership, control and distribution of resources deals with not only on how resources are managed by the state but also with what laws ownership and control are guided. In Nigeria, like in most of Africa, three different and antagonizing ownership and control structures exist. Pre-colonial ownership structure, which placed ownership of resources on the

people, the community and generations unborn; and the colonial ownership structure, which vested ownership on government and the community; exist side-by-side with a more modern ownership structure, which removed the people and reposes ownership and control on the whims and caprices of the elected officials. Poverty and underdevelopment have brought out the resiliency of the pre-colonial ownership system. Given these antagonizing ownership systems, the complexities associated with mineral resources extraction have become nuanced. All these are compounded by multinational corporations' use of obsolete equipment, which leaves behind a depleted environment. The victims of terrorist activities in the Niger-Delta and their families have since known how important is the need to do something about all these.

Also in their intercultural communications and multilateral cooperation with the government in Nigeria, international organizations and development partners should remind the government in Nigeria of the need for justice in its enterprise with the terrorists. Sacrificing justice on the altar of the need for peace is not a way out of any problem. The factor of agency is crucial to development and the current amnesty deal must reflect just that. As things are, the deal, without justice, would embolden recalcitrant groups. We cannot continue to act irresponsibly and hope to attract investors to the nation.

While measures geared at engaging the terrorists in Nigeria must have local-contents that reflect Nigeria's national peculiarities, other nations with experiences and proven local best practices in this area should also share such practices with Nigeria, as peace in Lagos is peace in Washington and Copenhagen.

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<sup>vi</sup> Ibid, (New York, USA: Amnesty International), 2001.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid., (New York, USA: Amnesty International), 2001

<sup>viii</sup> Ibid. (New York, USA: Amnesty International), 2001

<sup>ix</sup> Agence France Presse, Des miliciens volontaires Nigériens exécutent 36 voleurs présumés, 30 May 2001.

<sup>x</sup> On 10 April 2002, an Amnesty International delegation witnessed members of the Anambra State Vigilante Service (AVS) trying to set alight a man inside the compound of the Government House of Anambra state, some 100 metres away from the state governor's own office. The armed men were surrounding a man, apparently some 50 years of age. The man was on his knees, his arms tied behind his back and his face disfigured by recent beatings. He was bleeding profusely. Members of the vigilante service were shouting at the man, apparently insulting him. Then one of them poured petrol over the man's body with the clear intention of setting him on fire. When they realised that strangers were watching the scene, they bundled their victim into a van, loaded the vehicle with machetes and guns, and drove away. The government of Anambra state refused to give an explanation for the incident and inform Amnesty International about the identity of the suspect and the treatment he received from the vigilante group after this incident.

<sup>xi</sup> Agence France Press, Vigilantes kill four suspected robbers in Nigeria, 31 July 2002.