INTRODUCTION

Since 2009, the Nigerian state has witnessed unprecedented waves of violence perpetrated by an Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram. Such devastating terror include bombings, abductions and rapes, arsons, wanton destruction of environment and assorted forms of assassination. The most spectacular among these were the massive killings at the police headquarters Abuja, the various motor park bombings in Jos, Kaduna, Abuja and the razing off of several villages in north-eastern Nigeria after brutally murdering their indigenes and raping and abducting their wives and daughters.

From the fore-going, it should become obvious that Boko Haram is a very recent phenomenon. Consequently, there are no historically documented records in form of books, journals or even magazines about its ideologies, tenets, doctrines and activities. Contrary to what it initially made people believe, Boko Haram is really-speaking not a religious sect. It is only Islamic in name and as such can lay no claims to the Koran in support of its atrocities. In fact, it has no holy scriptures and as such points of reference about them are hard to come by; and at times non-existent. No books are yet available in its regards.

The absence of all these documented materials has not facilitated in any way the research and the presentation of this paper. Hence, the issue of the methodology of this paper is difficult to pinpoint. On the same note, classifying the paper in terms of type may equally not prove an easy venture and I would want my readers to appreciate that fact. I was therefore compelled to make use of whatever bits of information I could lay hands on in order that this research paper would see the light of day. Once such bits of information appeared to me more or less authentic, I would certainly use them - unbiased about their origin.

Most of the reports referenced in this work emanated from various media houses, individual journalist’s reports whose e-mails are sometimes cited, narrations from escapees and eye-witnesses’ accounts to the atrocities committed by Boko Haram. Such is the much cited report of the journalist Raphael Obotamah <rabotam@hotmail.com>. Moreover, being a philosopher, who should be interested in the truth about everything, the author could not hold himself back in the face of such enormous wanton destruction of human lives and property for the sole reason that there are no books.
on the matter. After all, scholars of primitive history had no sources to refer to. African scholars are very much at home working with issues without documented corpus due to our oral traditional background. That was the case with African philosophy and religion in the past. Authors like John Mbiti and the rest are heroes in this regard. Very often they started from the scratch, with nothing written to refer to, and adopting a phenomenological approach thereby allowing the phenomenon in question to lay itself bare before those who are passionately interested in it. But very unfortunately, such a methodology of research would not work with Boko Haram, for who would dare argue with a mad man carrying a loaded gun about the legitimacy of weaponry. The reality on the ground in Northern Nigeria defies all these protocols of methodological exigencies. Yet, for a typical philosopher, such a fatal phenomenon that is attempting by all means to annihilate the world must be brought to the judgment tribunal of the global community. Readers of this little write-up should therefore please appreciate the author's bold attempt to bring together in a comprehensible manner, bits of information about this chameleon-like, ever-dribbling, dangerous terrorist group. It may interest my readers to note that very recently the group has dropped its original name Boko Haram and has adopted ISIS GROUP OF WEST AFRICA as its new name.

Initially police posts, military barracks, public utility buildings and government institutions were the only targets. But later on Christian worship places, mosques, banks, prisons, markets, petrol stations, universities and even the United Nation High Commission in Abuja became their targets. As far as assassination is concerned, every means is good for them: they have adopted hit and run tactics using motorbikes, vehicles loaded with explosives, suicide bombers young and old – male or female.

On the back of gruesome attacks in Kano and Yobe state, in which the insurgents killed over 200 Nigerians, the vigilance group, popularly known as Civilian Joint Task Force, JTF, revealed last Monday that the militant group had perfected strategies to take the death toll an all-time high of 100,000 in the few days remaining for 2014 to end, with the use of 50 female suicide bombers. The Civilian JTF attributed the information to a female suicide bomber its members arrested at the entrance gate of the University of Maiduguri, while another was apprehended at the busy Post Office area of the metropolis (The News, Vol. 43, No. 23, 15 December, 2014, p.13).

Originally, their bone of contention appeared to be that all these institutions were the handiwork of western civilization or had something to do with it and therefore could never be allowed to subsist as far as Islam is concerned because they are offensive to Allah. Hence, it stepped up its campaign against western education, which it believes corrupts the moral values of Muslims, especially of girls, by attacking boarding schools. They were bent on toppling the Nigerian government seen as born of western democracy and therefore sinful and infidel to Islam. After the defeat of democracy, they wanted to see to the establishment of an Islamic state in its place. This attitude is in line with this observation of Ekanem (2014) about Muslims’ self-imposed duty to ruin any authority considered offensive to Islamic tenets and points of view: “Convinced that ‘the subjects’ duty of obedience lapses where the command is sinful,’ and that ‘there must be no obedience to a creature against his creator’ these rebellious groups, led frequently by charismatic leaders, perceived themselves to be acting virtuously by killing the unrighteous.” This explains why even today, many Muslims still detest anything that has to do with western education. However, as we are going to see soon, this is where the inconsistencies of Boko Haram become most glaring.

What is Boko Haram?

Boko Haram is a Nigerian Islamic extremist group which has caused a lot of havoc in the country through waves of violence: bombings, assassinations, abductions and rape in an attempt to overthrow the government and to create an Islamic state. The group’s havoc has spread over to other neighboring countries around Nigeria and apparently very soon beyond. Its followers are said to be influenced by the phrase in the Koran quoted as “Anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors.” And Allah has not “revealed” western civilization, democracy, technology and all that go with it. According to Farouk Chothia of the BBC Africa:

Boko Haram promotes a version of Islam which makes it "haram", or forbidden, for Muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with western society. This includes voting in elections, wearing shirts and trousers or receiving a secular education. Boko Haram regards the Nigerian state as being run by non-believers, even when the country had a Muslim president - and it has extended its military campaign by targeting neighboring states (BBC Africa, 21 January 2015, 18:09 GMT).

Etymologically, the word “Boko” is of Hausa origin meaning animist, Western or non-Islamic education while the term “Haram” is an Arabic word translated “forbidden” or “prohibited” or the rejection of an idea or something as untenable. In Hausa, Boko Haram translates that “Western education is sinful”, it is corrupting to Muslims and therefore, should be prohibited; forbidden or abrogated (Madumere and Onyenze 2013: 248). Again, according to the above BBC source, ‘the group's official
name is Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad, which in Arabic means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad". However, residents in the north-eastern city of Maiduguri – Nigeria, where the group had its headquarters, dubbed it Boko Haram. Loosely translated from the local Hausa language, this means "Western education is forbidden". Boko originally meant fake but in this context came to signify western education, while Haram means forbidden." This attitude of anti-western culture is what is sometimes tagged by some Muslim fundamentalists as the ugly face of modernity:

Some Muslims identify modernity with the culture of the western world, that is to say, Europe, but especially the USA which is considered as the Great Satan by Iranian leader. It is seen as a society filled with all kinds of degradation and evil, such as drug addiction, pornography, eroticism, unrestrained pursuit of pleasure, gambling, abortion, birth control, AIDS, homosexuality, alcoholism, divorce, single parent families etc. (Joinet, 2000:11).

Against this background, modernism exemplified in Western civilization is seen as a direct rebellion against Islam and the spiritual values it stands for. According to some, all modern ideologies are characterized by a worship of man in place of God and licentious behaviours and such cannot but be offensive to radical Muslims.

**Historical background**

Since the end of the cold war the Muslim [sic] world had increasingly became [sic] demonized partly because it remains the most resistant to western cultural infusions thereby becoming a stumbling block for the complete triumph of neo-liberalism.... It could be safely said that after the romance against Communism, Islam and the West parted ways, sowing seeds of a new anti-western Islamic revivalism. The new brand of Islamic revivalism which centered on unconventional military confrontation with the West produced network of extremist and suicidal groups across the Muslim world namely in Algeria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Mali. (Kilani and Ihenacho, 147).

The above remarks by a professor of Islamic studies paint a vivid picture of the attitude that led to the formation of Islamic extremist groups around the world such as Boko Haram. The Boko Haram group was founded in 2002 in Northern Nigeria and was committed to the propagation of the Islamic teachings and Jihad. Initially, its main focus was to oppose western education considered abominable to Islam. Hence many Muslims refuse to send their children to western-styled schools, but are very contented with bringing them up through education limited to the study of the Koran. It was against this background, that the charismatic Muslim cleric, Mohammed Yusuf, founded Boko Haram in Maiduguri in 2002. The establishment was said to be for the interest of poor neglected Muslim children. Originally, it was considered a purely Islamic religious sect. However, it has proved in many cases that there is something more than religion here. Yusuf set up a religious complex, which included a mosque and an Islamic school. Many poor Muslim families from across Nigeria, and even beyond, enrolled their children at the school probably with the hope of having their kids sent abroad for greener pastures. However, since Boko Haram was not only interested in education, its political goal being to create an Islamic state, the school soon turned into a recruiting ground for jihadists.

In 2009, the group launched series of military operations intended to overthrow the ruling democratic government of Nigeria and to create an Islamic state thereafter. It carried out series of attack on police stations and other government buildings and facilities in Maiduguri. This led to shoot-outs in Maiduguri during which hundreds of Boko Haram militants were killed and Nigerian security agents seized their headquarters, capturing many militants and their leader. Thousands of residents fled the city and meanwhile Mohammed Yusuf, the leader of the group was allegedly killed in prison and his body was shown on the state television. The death of Yusuf really infuriated his followers provoking their regrouping under a new leader, Abubakar Shekau, who stepped up new waves of insurgency. It was these waves of attacks against the government that mistakenly set aside the year 2009 as the year of the birth of Boko Haram while in actual fact it was already in existence since 2002. Nowadays, the group targets both military and civilian institutions in Nigeria and other West African states. Assaults on civilian institutions, for instance markets and motor parks are a part of the irrational schemes of the group, given that Muslim civilians in the north have nothing to do with western civilization more than Boko Haram itself.

**The multi-facial Boko Haram**

The terrorist group has many faces. And this makes it very difficult to contain it. Its members, sponsors, supporters and real militants are scattered all over Nigeria and even abroad. They are wide-spread and cut across the entire spectrum and sectors of the Nigerian society and other neighbouring countries. Some of them are hidden even within the very heart of the Nigerian government, thereby making Boko Haram the military wing of their political opposition parties fighting the ruling party. Others are in various government parastatal organizations: the customs, the police force, House of
Assembly, House of Representatives and even the military. Some wealthy Muslim businessmen, former Muslim leaders are their major sponsors, providing financial supports necessary for logistics, intelligence and weaponry while those in the military, police, immigration in addition to some fighting with Boko Haram are responsible for sabotaging government efforts to tackle the extremists. These sympathizers and sponsors found in the very heart of the Nigerian government do not only provide the needed funds but also information regarding government plans and strategies to foil the activities of Boko Haram. These unidentified promoters constitute the faceless Boko Haram and ironically the means by which they transmit information and funds to their beneficiaries, are all of typical western culture. This is contradictory to the very motives of Boko Haram. And moreover, this issue of a house divided against itself concerning those who secretly allow themselves to be used in the destruction of their fatherland is a terrible bone of contention and a cog in the wheel of progress perpetrated by the terrorist group. Here, it is found a real illogicality in the whole set-up. There are also the poor uneducated Muslim masses, which are the real executors of the violent projects of bombing, abducting and killing. After being brainwashed, they are ever ready to take up arms and irrationally to go to their death as suicide bombers without giving a thought to the proximate and ultimate consequences of their devastating actions. These are the most dangerous to deal with, because uneducated; it is enough to promise them seven virgins in paradise to motivate them to go and die as well as kill ‘in the name of Allah’. They do not even bother themselves to ask why their employers would not themselves opt for such a beatific vision of heaven by terminating their own lives. This too is contradictory, illogical and crazy.

The political face of Boko Haram

Considering how effective the Boko Haram terrorist group has been over the years, there has always been suspicions that the dreaded Islamic sect has sympathizers and members in the very heart of the government and security agencies of Nigeria. From time to time such speculations have been proven right in certain sectors. In one instance, an officer of the Nigeria Immigration Services Ahmed Grema Mohammed was arrested and he confessed of being a high profile Boko Haram member. He also named other security agents involved in various attacks against government establishments and the assassination of prominent figures in the country.

Mohammed confessed to be actively involved in the killings of some senior civil servants, security agents, and politicians in Damaturu who spoke against the activities of Boko Haram, particularly the former chairman of Damboa Council, Alhaji Lawal Kawu. He also took part in the attack on the old Police Headquarters in Damaturu, where some policemen were killed and large quantity of arms and ammunition carted away. In addition, he was among the terrorists that attacked Damaturu Prison, burnt some primary schools, the State CID office and the Police Safety Vehicle, among others. The suspect revealed to JTF that he and 15 other members of the organization were intensively trained for three months on G3 and AK 47 rifles, as well as in assassinations and special operations in Niger Republic (pointblanknews.com/.../jtf-arrests-immigration-officer-with-boko-haram-)

This issue of the involvement of officials of the very administration of Nigeria in attacks against Nigeria is equally hard to reconcile. It is a contradiction.

The international terrorist face

There are equally paid mercenaries fighting alongside Boko Haram from other countries such as Niger, Chad, Sudan and Yemen. According to some of them, they are simply paid labourers and are not really interested in the cause Boko Haram is fighting for. Being unemployed in their own countries, they are simply looking for their daily bread; thus with the offer of a few hundreds of dollars they are ready to engage in a battle that is not really theirs. Many of such get killed in the Nigerian territory, the truth that prompts some of them to insist that their stipends be paid to their families before they embark. I can sense a certain inconsistency here. Even if Boko Haram considers its insurgency as a planned coup d'état attempting to topple the Nigerian government, everybody would agree with me that coups are usually internal affairs, targeting a corrupt system. However, in this case, it is hard to comprehend what foreigners really stand to gain in terms of political posts after the succumbing of the incumbent government. In this regards, young, unemployed Niger youths were interviewed by the BBC reporter, Thomas Fessy last year and admitted being employed by Boko Haram to fight in Nigeria, with a payment of the sum of three thousand dollars.

Young Nigerien at the border town of Nigeria and Niger Republic Diffa have confessed to be recruits of the Islamist militant group Boko Haram. A member of a gang in Niger told the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) that Boko Haram Islamist militants from Nigeria “regularly come across the border looking for recruits.” The gang members, in their 20s, said they were paid $3,085 (about N$500,000) to join the insurgency and since they were jobless, they were willing to take the cash, but with no interest in protecting sharia law. However, they said they were willing to strike if given the assignment to do so, as
they blamed their decision to join the militant group on their joblessness. We have no jobs; some of us are still at high school, but we need money. Violence has become a form of work for us (247ureports.com/how-boko-haram-recruits-niger-republic-youths-wit h-)

I see a great deal of irrationality here, people going to die for a cause that is not theirs. Heroic acts of young men and women who go out to risk their lives in defense of their fatherlands are what are celebrated in many countries on commemoration day. But in this context, those who get killed, whether they are Nigerians or foreigners are gone forever, with no Remembrance Day or monuments in their honour. At the initial stage, Boko Haram got most of its funds from local donors who were sympathetic to its cause especially that of imposing Islamic law on Nigeria and sanitizing Nigeria of Western influences. However, of late, Boko Haram has broadened its spectrum to include funding from foreign donors. In February 2012, some arrested officials revealed that while the organization initially relied on donations from members, its links with Al-Qaeda had paved the way for supports from groups in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. The transaction passes through an Islamic model of money transfer called ‘hawala’ which is a global network (of agents) that makes the financing difficult to track (Kilani, 2013). When I hear of Boko Haram bombing a bank, my mind goes straight to the above situation in which money gets to the terrorist group through the same means that the group is vehemently poised to destroy because it is western. This use of complex modern facilities for money transfer also betrays illogicalities on the part of Boko Haram whose major agenda initially was to obliterate anything associated with western civilization. According to E. J. Hogendoorn, author of a report on Boko Haram for the International Crisis Group, Osama bin Laden sent money to the tune of $3 million to certain groups in Nigeria for the spreading of his ideologies and part of this money was used for the sponsorship of the Boko Haram group. In 2011, correspondence between Bin Laden and Boko Haram was alleged to have been found in Bin Laden’s compound after the raid that got rid of him. All these are a bundle of inconsistencies on the part of Boko Haram which employs foreign agencies and western technologies in attempt to destroy its country.

This Day newspaper of Friday, February 20, 2015 carries the embarrassing news of the diplomatic tension between France and the Cameroun over the arrest of about eight French nationals fighting alongside Boko Haram. According to findings, France was reported to have chided her former colony for insisting on trying the terrorists in Cameroun instead of handing them over to the French authorities. Enraged by the audacity of Cameroun to hold its citizens, the French Foreign Minister, Mr. Lauren Fabuci, was alleged to have ordered that the suspects be handed over to the European country with immediate effect. However, Camerounian authorities were said to have felt slighted and have protested the manner in which France had demanded the release of its nationals (This Day, Friday, February 20, 2015 3 Latest News in Nigeria, World Update)

If France, that has consistently condemned Boko Haram and has declared its total support for Nigeria in its fight against the Islamic sect has its nationals (though may be inadvertently) in the camp of Boko Haram then anything linked with the group is meddled with confusion. According to the same newspaper source, other than Chadians, Boko Haram has a large presence of Arabs, Malians and other Islamists who have joined the group.

A Bandit Group

In addition to sponsorship from sympathizers and members, kidnapping for funds is another source of sustenance for Boko Haram. Sometime in 2014, the wife of a top government official and some traditional rulers in the Cameroun were kidnapped. For their release, Chadian negotiators had to strike a deal with the terrorists agreeing to pay millions of US dollars in cash and specified types of assorted weapons in kind. According to the Global Slavery Index, Nigeria has the highest number of people in modern slavery of any sub-Saharan country. Paradoxically, the group also rates Nigeria’s anti-trafficking agency, Naptip, as one of the strongest government responses to human trafficking on the continent. The organization is really shocked by the realities of working in northern Nigeria, a typical military zone occasioned by Boko Haram. Despite the harsh measures put in place by the Nigerian government to punish human traffickers, by the government’s own admission, about 8 million children are currently engaged in forced labour. The terrorists are capitalizing on and benefiting from this obnoxious deal to procure fighters for its insurgency: Here is how one of Nigerian dailies portrays the issue: “As the insecurity in the region has spiraled, the worry is that more and more children are falling through the cracks. And as Boko Haram increases its reliance on child suicide bombers, concerns are growing that orphaned children could end up in the hands of the terror group.” “Children For Sale In Nigeria” This Day, Friday, February 20, 2015 3 Latest News in Nigeria, World Update. Escapees from Boko Haram captivity narrates how the militants confiscate hundreds of cattle from abducted villagers after burning down their villages and plundering their farmlands. These are their subsidiary means of survival apart from looting and bunkering of banks before bombings.
The paradox of its military campaign

Its attempt to establish an Islamic caliphate through terrorist means is to say the least a very clumsy project. The evidence of this clumsiness was at its peak after the disastrous bombing of the United Nations building at Abuja in 2011, the violence which claimed not less than twenty-one lives while injuring more than seventy. What the UN stands for is the long-standing established cooperation and support among member states. If Iran and Saudi Arabia which are typical Islamic nations ranked among the original members of the United Nations since 1945 and till date cannot still afford to disregard its precepts, one wonders what type of Islamic state Boko Haram intends to establish which will not seek incorporation into the United Nations. Its destruction of the UN building is a clear evidence of its untenable campaign. Should it succeed to overthrow the Nigerian government and to establish an Islamic nation in its place will it not still need the cooperation of other nations? Will it not seek the recognition of the UN or of other member states in the world? Will the Federal Republic of Boko Haram be a completely isolated nation on its own with no association with any other nation on earth? Will there not be any diplomatic link between the new Islamic state and other nations? The root cause of the problem with this terrorist group is enormous; the set-up of their ugly approach is well captured in this remark of Albert Einstein:

I may indicate briefly what to me constitutes the essence of the crisis of our time. It concerns the relationship of the individual to the society. The individual has become more conscious than ever of his dependence upon society. But he does not experience this dependence as a positive asset, as an organic tie, as a protective force, but rather as a threat to his natural rights, or even to its economic existence. Moreover, his position in society is such that the egotistical drives of his make-up are constantly being accentuated, while his social drives, which are by nature weaker, progressively deteriorate. ... Unknowingly prisoners of their own egotism, they feel insecure, lonely, and deprived of the naïve, simple, and unsophisticated enjoyment of life. Man can find meaning in life, short and perilous as it is, only through devoting himself to society.

I quite agree with Einstein that man acquires at birth, through heredity, a biological constitution which is "fixed and unalterable, including the natural urges which are characteristics of the human species. In addition, during his lifetime, he acquires a cultural constitution which he adopts from society through communication and through many other types of influences. It is this cultural constitution which, with the passage of time, is subject to change and which determines to a very large extent the relationship between the individual and society." (7) It is such a cultural constitution that can adequately explain the bestiality of the irrationality of the aggressive acts of Boko Haram. Its inhuman projects appear totally illogical to any rational being.

The Chibok girls

The whole world was enraged when more than 200 girls were abducted from their boarding school in April 2014 in the northern Nigerian town of Chibok by Boko Haram. Globally, such an act was condemned as barbaric and inhuman. However, down home in Nigeria, some Muslim and even Christian parents were accusing the out-gone president Goodluck Jonathan of selling out 'our virgins' for political self interest and negligence about their fate. Of late, speculations hold that now that Boko Haram has been pushed to the wall, in its change of tactics and strategies it is using the abducted and indoctrinated Chibok girls as militants, especially as suicide bombers. If this is true as it really seems, what then was the essence of the all-year-long outcry: "BRING BACK OUR GIRLS" that raged on everywhere in the world? Testimonies abound that many of those schoolgirls are seriously employed by their captors, now their husbands, as fighters and assassins. This appears true because among the thousands of women liberated from the Boko Haram group none seems to be an abducted Chibok girls. According to what some witnesses told the BBC Panorama, some of the Chibok schoolgirls have been forced to join the Islamist militant group Boko Haram and are actually fighting against the federal troop coming to liberate them from their captors. Seventeen-years-old Miriam (not her real name) fled Boko Haram after being held for six months. And here is her testimony as recorded by the BBC Panorama about the Chibok girls:

While in captivity, Miriam described meeting some of the Chibok schoolgirls. She said they were kept in a separate house to the other captives. Miriam is pregnant with the child of a member of Boko Haram "They told us: 'You women should learn from your husbands because they are giving their blood for the cause. We must also go to war for Allah.'" She said the girls had been "brainwashed" and that she had witnessed some of them kill several men in her village. "They were Christian men. They [the Boko Haram fighters] forced the Christians to lie down. Then the girls cut their throats." (Tulip Mazumdar BBC Panorama, www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33259003 29 June 2015).

Right now as I am writing this paper, news reaching us from the state Commissioner of police, Mr. Opakun of Borno State of Nigeria has it that "Two female suicide bombers detonated explosives at Sabon Gari Market in Damboa LGA of Borno State, killing three persons." What a contradiction, especially given the fact that in Nigeria
women are known for their tenderness, generosity and total option for life and its preservation! The above speculation that Chibok girls are now suicide bombers appears convincing when in another instance a 14-year-old Muslim girl volunteered by her parents to Boko Haram was caught in an attempt to bomb the Kano market on December 10 2014. The girl was arrested with explosives strapped to her little body and she told journalists that her parents donated her to Boko Haram to take part in a suicide attacks. The girl, who was identified as Zahra'u Babangida, was arrested in Kano on December 10 following a double suicide bombing in a market that killed 10 people.

She said her mother and father, both Boko Haram sympathizers, took her to an insurgent hideout in a forest near the town of Gidan Zana in Kano state. She said one alleged militant leader asked her whether she knew what a suicide bombing was. "They said, 'Can you do it?' I said no. "They said, 'You will go to heaven if you do it.' I said 'No I can't.' They said they would shoot me or throw me into a dungeon," Zahra'u told journalists.... Faced with the threat of death, Zahra'u said she finally agreed to take part in the attack but "never had any intention of doing it." Several days later, Zahra'u said she and three other girls, all wearing explosives, were brought to the Kantin Kwari market by unidentified men. Zahra'u said she was injured when one of the girls detonated her bomb and then she fled the scene, ending up at a hospital on the outskirts of Kano where she was discovered to be carrying explosives.

A mother who had carried her baby for nine months in the womb and nurtured her for several years only to donate her as a suicide bomber to a militant group is a total disgrace to motherhood according to African dispensation. This is true because in Africa, parents, particularly mothers were regarded as sacred vessels transporting new lives into the world. Hence mothers were considered co-creators with God and were respected for that role. That was why pregnant women were so much pampered and respected even to the point of being worshipped for what they stood for. Abortion was unthought-of or was in fact the greatest abomination in Africa which attracted great penalties and called for sacrifices to appease the gods and the ancestors. This thought pattern flows through the following lines of Pope Francis while addressing pilgrims during his January 7 2015 general audience.

To be a mother is a great treasure. Mothers, in their unconditional and sacrificial love for their children, are the antidote to individualism; they are the greatest enemies against war... To be a mother is a gift....through their sacrifices mothers assist in helping society to overcome its self-centered tendencies, as well as its lack of openness, generosity and concern for others. In this sense motherhood is more than child bearing; it is a life choice entailing sacrifice, respect for life and commitment to passing on those human and religious values which are essential for a healthy society.

Pope Francis then drew attention to the phrase “martyrdom of mothers” coined by Archbishop Oscar Romero, who served as the archbishop of El Salvador and was shot and killed in 1980 for speaking out against social injustices committed by the government. This maternal martyrdom, the pontiff remarked, consists of a mother’s ability to offer herself in silence, prayer and total surrender, “without any fanfare,” to her motherly duties. A mother’s sensitivity “to all that threatens human life and welfare is a source of enrichment for society and the Church,” he said, observing how it is common in moments of difficulty to encounter the tenderness, dedication and moral strength of our mothers (rabotam@hotmail.com).

The act of that mother, donating her 14-year-old daughter to terrorist is to say the least worst than an abortion. Her action is more than cruel and contradictory and such brutalities are commonplace with Boko Haram. On the 22nd of Feb. 2015, “A small girl believed to be working for Boko Haram, detonated a bomb at the GSM market in Potiskum, Yobe, killing at least 5 people at first count. This action of a potential mother was barbaric and illogical vis-à-vis her expected role as co-creator with God. This was supposed to be a small innocent girl, who herself had not been killed in abortion, so irrationally taking her life with the aim of destroying other innocent lives. This was the peak of illogicality. The greatest blame goes first and foremost to the parents and then to the brainwashers. In fact there is a chain of causal illogicalities.

Ambiguity of purpose

Initially, a self-proclaimed warrior group against Western education, knowledge, civilization, and all that such stand for in the life of the population, but as time went on Boko Haram became more and more ambiguous regarding its point of view and prospects. At the onset, they were giving impression of trying to Islamicize the whole of Northern Nigeria, thereby winning it over to Allah after eliminating every trace of the infidels’ evil and demonic religion. When they attacked the Nigerian government institutions and enterprises and killing for the sole purpose of displaying its power and superiority over the on-the-spot administration, people were made to believe that they did so because such were offshoots and resultant of the detested Western civilization. Later on, they have become more and more difficult to understand, and their aim and targets more and more elusive. They have turned into a dreaded specialized bandit group,
kidnapping people for ransom and killing brutally for pleasure. They were talking of the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in the north. Everybody would believe, as I do that the only religion in such a caliphate would reasonably have been Islam, when all the infidels should have been eliminated. Expectedly, Islam logically should become the state religion of such an Islamic caliphate. But much to the surprise of any reasonable person, the same Islamic group is the one attacking Muslim villages, razing them to the ground and massacring their inhabitants. The same group is responsible for the brutal murder of thousands of Muslims during prayers and the destruction of mosques and many Muslim enterprises.

Reign of terror

Their is a terrible reign. Citizens of villages captured by the group have their stories: “Living under Boko Haram was like living in a minefield. You are always afraid your next step could be your last. I thank God I’m now safe from them.” Here is the picture of the devastated scene painted by a security source of the havoc committed by Boko Haram:

Although the group has fled much of Borno state, a former stronghold, the militants have left behind devastating destruction in northeast Nigeria. Entire towns were razed, with homes destroyed and corpses scattered in the empty streets. A security source from Bama said Boko Haram has nearly demolished the town in Borno. Only a few structures still standing, as the terrorists have virtually destroyed all structures in the town (Morgan Winsor @MorganWinsorIBT on April 23 2015).

With the above destruction of human lives, property and environment, the Boko Haram group never for once ask itself who the citizens of their terrorizing caliphate would be. A caliphate is a social group and as such should be characterized by a common good that must be attractive to all inhabitants. It is such a good that normally endears the society to citizens, making them proud to be identified with it and sometimes die for it. But who will ever be willing to belong to such a caliphate? Paradoxically, may be Boko Haram would be ruling over an empty space after having executed all its potential citizens in terrorist attacks. Channels Headlines news of 1st July 2015 reports that two suicide bombers attack the General Hospital Molai in the Borno state capital. The bombers disguised as patients and attempting to gain entry into the hospital were stopped for routine security check. They then detonated their explosives, killing themselves and injuring other patients. Their sole mission in the hospital was to finish up patients of their earlier attacks still receiving treatment. If such intending bombers could still call themselves human beings, then there is a contradiction somewhere. In fact, this is one of the thousand and one paradoxes of Boko Haram. This occurred against the background of the massacre of 150 men, women and children by the same insurgents in Kukwa in the same region a day before. The President, a Muslim to the core, surprisingly describes such act as “a very heinous atrocity which must be unreservedly condemned by all people of conscience.” He equally urged Muslims around the world to reject with one voice, the claim by attackers to be acting in the name of Islam.” (Channels Headlines news 2nd July 2015. Attacks on Mosques).

The evidence of the clumsiness of Boko Haram’s projects is portrayed in nowhere better than the killing of fellow Muslims, especially clerics and traditional rulers and the destruction of mosques. Initially, their anger was thought to be vented only against Christians and their leaders, who for them are infidels to be eliminated. But now their violence spares not even fellow Muslims and their enterprises. “The masquerade has also wounded its guardian”. That was exactly the situation surrounding the bomb blast in Kano Central Mosque on Friday 14 November 2014 which left 120 worshippers dead, while injuring not less than 270.

It was in the same mosque that the Emir Sanusi in a rare speech by a Muslim cleric had publicly denounced the indiscriminate and wanton destruction of lives and property by the Boko Haram group the Friday before, urging northerners to take up arms against those irrational destroyers. Officially the emir is the country’s number two cleric, behind the Sultan of Sokoto. He is a hugely influential figure in Nigeria, which is home to more than 80 million Muslims, most of whom live in the north. Formerly, the Emir has served as the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria.

Previous attacks on Kano which is one of the greatest Muslim towns in the north had already sent a wrong signal about the activities of Boko Haram across the Muslim world. On November 14, a suicide bomber attacked a petrol station killing six people, including three policemen. Equally the Islamists have a record of attacking prominent clerics. In July 2012, a suicide bomber killed five people leaving Friday prayers at the home of the Shehu of Borno in Maiduguri. The Shehu is Nigeria’s number three Islamic leader. Boko Haram had threatened Sanusi’s predecessor and the Sultan of Sokoto for allegedly betraying the faith of Muslims by submitting to the authority of the secular government in Abuja. Early 2013, the convoy of Sanusi’s predecessor was also attacked. <rabotam@hotmail.com>

Suicide bombers

The whole issue of suicide bombing is wangled in
confusion and irrationality; people presumed to be sane agreeing to kill themselves for money paid to their families whom they voluntarily leave without a breadwinner. Some who are sympathetic to Boko Haram’s cause even volunteer to give their lives for that purpose, so that as many people as possible would die with them. The question is: as they are the first to be shattered by their explosives, how would they appreciate the extent of the disaster caused by their ignominious raid?

In normal circumstances, people should argue that since the cause is worth dying for, the organizers of the suicide bombings should take the lead in killing themselves for that just cause. The suicide bombers do not argue that way. The concept of the instinct of self-preservation is universal, cutting across all cultures and races; it is known to be natural to every human being across the globe without exception. But the ideologies of Boko Haram violate this principle innate in humans, in a relentlessly irrational manner and without qualms of conscience.

Globalization spares nobody

Globalization is an umbrella term referring to increasing universal connectivity, integration and interdependence in the economic, social, technological, cultural, political and ecological spheres. It is a unitary process inclusive of many sub-processes perhaps as best understood as enhanced economic interdependence, increased cultural influence, rapid advances of information technology, and novel governance and geopolitical challenges. According to Wikipedia, it is “the process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas and other aspects of culture. Advances in transportation and telecommunications infrastructures, including the rise of the telegraph and its development, the Internet, are major factors in globalization, generating further interdependence of economic and cultural activities.” (en.wikipedia.org/?title=Globalization).

Through globalization, the world has turned into a small village with a flow of information engendering speedy global communication and corporation. Philosophy, religion, language, arts and other aspects of culture spread and mix as nations exchange products and ideas rapidly. Global movement of people, goods, and ideas expand significantly following the new global trend. The development of new forms of transportation and telecommunications that shorten time and space allows for increasingly speedy rates of global interchange. Modern modes of transportation even make travel faster. The arrival on the scene of electronic communications, notably mobile phones and internet, links up billions of people the world over, in numerous new ways.

It is through globalization that life is rendered more comfortable because multitude of problems get solved in the twinkling of an eye. Hence, the impact of globalization knows no bounds as it unites people of all races, beliefs, ideologies and epochs into a single dependent fold. This high speed technological innovative system recognizes no bounds. Globalization also provides efficacious links between terrorists. Even Islam is not spared in its grasp. This is what Kilani, a staunch Muslim scholar, alludes to in these lines:

The negative portrayal of the Muslims notwithstanding, the muslims [sic] have adopted the tools of globalization for networking and advocacy. If one considers the use of cellular phones and computers, especially in modern life, the dawah methodology of the Muslims across the globe is following the use of ICT as instant Islamic admonitions are becoming accessible to almost everybody. There are many online groups that are devoted to the propagation of Islam (145).

He goes on to add that the institution of marriage has received the biggest boost of globalization with the establishment of many online matrimonial sites for spouse selection. “The Muslims are also visible in social media like face book, twitter, instagram and others with both the positive and negative effects on the family. One noticeable effect of the social media is what could be termed as the tsunamis of family breakdown in the society and the Muslim have also taken their own share of this breakdown. Today, there is e-divorce in which a husband divorces his wife just by sending sms on his phone to the wife. This is a strange experience but which unfortunately is gaining currency globally among young and educated Muslims.’ (Kilani, 145).

The above remarks from a powerful Muslim testify to the fact that globalization, itself as a real brainchild of western civilization, does not shun Muslims. Boko Haram’s threats are pasted on Islamic websites – themselves a product of Western innovative modernity. The executions of hostages are transmitted to the world through Islamic channels which are products of Western technologies. The bombs, cell phones used and modern military logistic techniques employed by Boko Haram are not products of Islamic studies but of Western education and scientific discoveries.

The Arab Spring offer[sic] an opportunity to redress the age-long understanding that dictatorship and authoritarianism are the only political model for the Muslim world and to reaffirm that Muslims, like other global citizens desire a secure and democratic society. The social media like the Face book became an online staging ground for the budding movement for the Arab spring in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria. While the will of the people is the most vital ingredient in the Arab Spring that removed the Arab dictators in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, the role of the social media cannot be underestimated. (Kilani: 146).
He continues, referring to the ease with which people move around the world (courtesy of modern means of transport and available communication instruments) and how such has promoted unprecedentedly the degree of interaction between Muslims across the world, especially those belonging to the middle and upper classes. It has enabled them to forge new links in scholarship, trade, commerce and welfare programs (Kilani: 147).

The above and a whole lot of other testimonies are revelatory of the clumsiness of the ideologies of Boko Haram vis-à-vis western civilization. And Kilani himself testifies to the illogicality of the logic of Boko Haram by asserting: “Islam does not accept the incoherent ideological paradigm of the Boko Haram because Islamic society gave to the world people like Ibn Sina (Avicena – 980-1037), Al-Ghazali (1058-1100, Ibn Rushd (Averoes - 1126-1198) and Ibn Khaldum (1332-1406) who were pace setters in their various fields of learning. The programme of Islamization of knowledge which was pioneered by Ismail Raji Faruqi (d1986) is a core effort at making education in all ramifications acceptable to Muslims without jettisoning Islamic creeds and values.” (Kilani: 148).

**Conclusion**

According to some concerned sympathizers, the threat that Boko Haram poses will only disappear if Nigeria’s government manages to reduce the northern region's chronic poverty and builds an education system which gains the support of local Muslims. But I must quickly ask: is this even possible? My answer is NO! The reason is that in the past the Nigerian government had tried that and failed woefully. It even established mobile schools meant to track and follow the young nomadic cattle herders, but this did not succeed. If such a well-adapted educational system which did not tamper with their occupation could not win the support of those local people, then nothing will ever please them. But embarrassingly, the poverty in the north is often cited to the exploitive advantage of Boko Haram. The execution of their projects contradicts their very ideology by escalating instead of minimizing poverty and misery. One can now see that the entire activities of Boko Haram are all enmeshed in inconsistencies, contradictions and ambiguities. They do not take cognizance of such inconsistencies. This is attested to by the BBC reports on the dressing mode of new recruits to the extremist group: Arriving one by one to meet the BBC crew earlier on a street corner in Diffa, they all wore skinny jeans, bright coloured T-shirts and shiny chains, like those seen around the necks of American rappers on music videos. Their attitude and brand new clothes made them stand out when they walked down the dusty streets of Diffa.

“The fashion style is clearly inspired by western consumerism rather than Islamist militancy.” [our emphasis]. 247ureports.com/how-boko-haram-recruits-niger-republic-youths-wit h-

The total condemnation of Cardinal Dolan of the atrocities committed by ISIS by the execution of 21 Coptic Christians can be unequivocally applied to Boko Haram:

With ISIS threatening all of human civilization, no one of any background or religion can remain silent. The ISIS militants who are perpetrating these acts of violence in the name of Islam threaten civilization, everything that is decent and noble about humanity…. These aren’t sporadic attacks. This is part of an orchestrated fanaticism, and ideology that sees Christianity, Judaism, and any religion of peace as the enemy. (New York City, N.Y., Feb 19, 2015 (CNA, The New York Post.)

No wonder Boko Haram pledging allegiance to ISIS. Today, even as I am writing this paper, the massacre of Boko Haram has not abated. In fact, it is raging on stronger and stronger; adopting new strategies and styles and their real intention becoming more and more ambiguous. Their suicide attacks are spreading to other West African sub-regions. Nobody knows exactly what they are up to and what they are struggling for or what they stand to gain by the immensity of such bloodshed and destruction of environment. If they are up to the total eradication of the about 100 million Nigerian non-Islamic infidels, they have not yet seen the futility of their plan. Even if that was really their plan, one would observe that even Muslims do not escape their chastising whips. Hence, if by way of conclusion I am asked to suggest how to put to rest the endless massacre of Boko Haram, my answer would simply be: I DON’T KNOW; HENCE MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON US.

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"How Boko Haram recruits Niger Republic youths with $3000 ..."

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