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Our Bodies, Their Battle Ground
Boko Haram and Gender Based Violence Against
Christian Women and Children in North-Eastern Nigeria Since 1999

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Authors

Atta Barkindo (SOAS, University of London)

Benjamin Tyavkase Gudaku (Eduwatch Consults and Research Centre, Abuja)

Caroline Katgurum Wesley (London)

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Abstract

Gender-based violence occurs in all societies. It happens within the home setting or the wider community, affecting women and children disproportionately. In Nigeria, it is an ongoing challenge that can only be understood in its socio-cultural, religious and economic contexts. However, intensive research into Gender-based violence in Nigeria within the context of socio-religious conflict remains very low, inconsistent and in some instances totally ignored. This particular research investigates gender based violence specifically against Christian women and children in the context of the Boko Haram uprising since 1999.

Introduction

Since the Boko Haram uprising, different analysts have examined the nature of violence perpetrated by the sect, categorising the types and degrees of violence in relationship to the targets, tactics and operational capabilities of Boko Haram. More so, security experts have gone further to locate the regional and international links Boko Haram might have with some global Jihadi Organizations such as al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM), movement for unity and jihad in West Africa (MUJWA) and other terrorist organizations within the Sahel. However, what has not been adequately researched is gender based violence, and more specifically against Christian women and children, perpetrated in the context of the Boko Haram conflict. Consequently, this research undertakes to examine this phenomenon. The reason being that first, over the years, GBV has always been examined from cultural, traditional and socio-economic perspectives. There is therefore the need to expand the literature on gender based violence in Nigeria beyond cultural and socio-economic reasons to include gender based violence in the context of a political-religious related insurgency like that of Boko Haram. Second, there is an emphatic presentation of the institutional targets of Boko Haram; like churches, military installations and formations, police barracks, international agencies, health centres, schools and social relaxation spots, known in local parlance as *joints* to the exclusion of the plight of Christian women and children as victims of these attacks. As such, the extent to which individuals are targeted due to their religion and gender is not being highlighted. Furthermore, the ideological justification Boko Haram uses for its activities does not in any way include the doctrinal perspective on why Christian women and children should be targeted. In addition, since World War II, gender based violence in the context conflict has become what Malini Mohana calls the “the invisible war”. As such, it will be research fulfilling to undertake an investigation of this kind to ascertain the level of gender based violence in the context of the Boko Haram conflict.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine GBV in the context of the Boko Haram uprising from two perspectives; first it looks at the gender based violence directly or indirectly perpetrated by Boko Haram members. Second, it examines gender based violence due to the situation created by the Boko Haram conflict. As such, this investigation will include the nature, types and degree of violence against Christian women and children. It also takes into serious consideration the views of women and analyses the ideological motivations, conflict strategies and mobilization processes that are at the root of this gender based violence. The team is aware of the challenges in carrying out a research of this magnitude and therefore, does not pretend to provide all the answers. But it takes seriously the views of the wider community, and more specifically, the opinions of some top government functionaries.

Limitations of the study

It must be clear that the purpose of this dissertation is not to contest established facts regarding the nature of the violent activities of Boko Haram. Rather, it is to broaden the horizon of on-going discussions with a contextual analysis of GBV against Christian women and children. Interestingly, the challenge for this dissertation lies in the continuous violence and the security situation. Subsequently, obtaining information was very difficult and any observation may be deemed premature and hasty. Again, despite the fact that the violent activities of Boko Haram are morally repugnant and should not be tolerated by any civilized society, evidence presented by those interviewed is cautiously treated because most times emotions were invested in the answers. It was observed in some instances that witnesses felt too intimidated to speak out against perpetrators. Although the continuous neglect of GBV in the context of Boko Haram violence is one challenge in dire need of many answers, this research does not in any way pretend to provide all the answers.

Methodology

Due to the fluid nature of the conflict and security concerns, the method adopted in this research is the qualitative research method using historical, descriptive and analytical approaches based on evidence that is gathered. The data collection process will include semi-structured interviews of individuals. In addition, historical and documentary data will be examined including newspaper accounts, diaries, letters, verbal reports and the translation of YouTube videos and audio materials.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

The Notion of Gender Based Violence

Sex and gender are often used interchangeably. However, they are quite distinct and should be used differently. According to Ward, Sex refers to the physical differences between males and females, whereas gender refers to the different socially-prescribed roles of males and females[1]. Gender roles are context-based and are learned through socialization. The biological differences between males and females are universal, whereas the gender roles are quite different and may prescribe all aspects of social life ranging from access to resources, societal and domestic responsibilities, and patterns of courtship. Gender roles may change over time, but are reflections of long-standing assumptions that a society holds about men, women, boys and girls.

Premise on this conception of gender and violence, gender based violence is violence directed against women based on their subordinate status in society. It includes any act by males or males dominated social institutions that inflict physical or psychological harm on women or girls because of their gender. It is violence intended to establish or reinforce gender hierarchies and perpetuate gender inequalities including harmful traditional practices targeting women such as honour killings, acid throwing, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. According to Women Refugees Commission, about six out of every ten women experience physical and/or sexual violence in various parts the world [2]. In conflict situations or other humanitarian crises - such as the brutal conflict ongoing in Syria - the risks to women and girls are aggravated. With the collapse of moral and social order that occurs during these circumstances, women and girls are especially defenceless against physical abuse and exploitation, rape and human trafficking. Women have disproportionately become victims of various forms of violence which are often reinforced by existing socio-cultural norms. Such violence often reflects doubly against women, first, the experience of violence and its aftermath and second through the reactions of their families, particularly the men, to their status as survivors of sexual crime [3]. Gender based violence can be broadly classified into these categories:

- **Overt physical abuse** (includes battering, sexual assault, at home or in the workplace).
- **Psychological abuse** (includes deprivation of liberty, forced marriage, sexual harassment, at home or in the workplace).
- **Deprivation** of resources needed for physical and psychological well-being (including health care, nutrition, education, means of livelihood).
- **Treatment of women as commodities** (includes trafficking in women and girls for sexual exploitation) [4].

In Nigeria as well as most of Africa, gender based violence is legitimized by norms, traditional beliefs and practices [5]. British Council argues that most structurally motivated gender violence emanates from social norms which define what constitute abuse of women both at the private and public levels [6]. Thus, gender violence occurs in both the 'public' and domestic spheres. Such violence not only occurs in the family and in the general community, but is sometimes also perpetuated by the state through policies or the actions of agents of the state such as the police, military or immigration authorities. Nnadi argues that:

Women who are victims of gender-based violence often have little recourse because many state agencies like the police and prisons are themselves guilty of gender bias and discriminatory practices. Many women opt not to report cases of violence to authorities because they fear being ostracized and shamed by communities that are too often quick to blame victims of violence for the abuses they have suffered. ... The truth is that violence against women is so deeply embedded in society that it often fails to garner public criticism and outrage particularly as it is clothed with religious immunity in certain cases [7].

The state legitimizes power inequalities in family and society and perpetuates gender based violence through enactment of discriminatory laws and policies or through the discriminatory application of the law. Gender-based violence happens in all societies, across all social classes, with women particularly at risk from men they know.

Previous Study of Gender Based Violence in Nigeria

Based on the nature of gender based violence discussed above, different studies have been carried out on GBV in West Africa, particularly Nigeria. For example, Alaga shows that in West Africa, gender based violence, especially sexual violence, is a growing experience and the bane is much more intense in conflict and post-conflict settings as it has involved mutilation, sexual slavery and gang-rape of particularly women and girls [8]. In Cote d'Ivoire, a 2003 study by UNFPA showed that 31% of girls admitted to having been forced or coerced into nonconsensual sexual relations. In Guinea Bissau, Amnesty International reported that acts of sexual violence against women had been perpetrated by Senegalese soldiers at military checkpoints and in the barracks [9]. In Liberia, sexual violence was committed against women, men, girls and boys by all parties to the conflict. As a matter of fact, it is estimated that 40% of the population was affected by sexual violence during the 14-year conflict in Liberia [10]. In Sierra Leone, UNICEF estimated that over 250,000 women were raped during the conflict in Sierra Leone. This is a crime that the world should stand up to stop. It is simply one; too many.

In Nigeria, Alawemo and Muterera [11] placed their study within the context of the economy of conflict theory in the study of gender based violence. They argue that most people suffer from the dire effects of conflict, while women and girls are impacted differently because of their gender and the economic position they occupy in society. Added to the suffering experienced through death, injury, displacement, loss of home and property in this outbreaks of violence; women experience abduction, sexual abuse and systematic rape as they are specially targeted as a tactics of war and terror. Women and children make up a higher proportion of casualties of these conflicts because they are less prepared to defend themselves. Consequently they are selected as easy targets for random and systematic acts of violence. They state that:

Women were subjected to violence and hardship.... They were not only physically harassed but also sexually abused and degraded. It was also gathered from our research team that apart from the fact that women were raped, they were also divorced by their husbands, which facilitated a worse emotional stressful and painful condition. The resort to divorce by men whose wives had been sexually abused was a means of dealing with the humiliation acquired from the conflict [12].

In addition to the suffering of women as a result of gender based violence in conflict is the increase risk of HIV/AIDS [13]. Women abducted and raped in conflict situations are often infected with HIV by their captors. Furthermore, Alawemo and Muterera observe that women and their daughters suffered the worst form of sexual abuse as their captors took turns on them every evening for three months. When they were eventually rescued, five of them were pregnant and tested positive to HIV/AIDS [14]. More than the health implications, this eventually led to ostracization and low economic performance. While Marshall examines the increasing use of gender based violence as a tool of war [15], Abama and Kwaja also examined the impact of violence on women in Nigeria by investigating the increasing number of crises associated with armed conflict in which women and children bear most of the brunt. They suggest that in some ways, this reinforces the low level status to which women are subjected on daily basis [16]. In some instances, displacement as a consequence of these conflicts uproot women and children from their homes and expose women and girls to more sexual abuse as they are coerced to submission in order to obtain food and other basic necessities they need to survive. In most violent conflict circumstances, and in situations arising from conflict, women and children live in very unfortunate conditions, where security is not guaranteed. Thus they become victims of crime, including crimes such as rape, and other sexual assaults. Consequently, displacement and relocation are almost always likely to force women suffer from all forms of cultural prejudices of their original societies and the norms of the host communities.

However, having considered these previous investigations, evidence seems to suggest that there are some limitations in the arguments outlined above. First, socio-economic condition may always be a reason and in all contexts for the explanation of gender based violence. Despite the fact that women suffer economically, there are also certain communities where women are empowered and always considered uppermost within the societal structure. For example, amongst the Alago and Migili societies in Nassarawa state, research suggests that women are protected, not necessarily raped or forced to suffer any form of violence more than any group of people. In addition to this, Marshall does not provide any empirical evidence to show how women have been used as tools of war, particularly with the ongoing conflict in northern Nigeria. Above all, increase in the cases of HIV/AIDS infections cannot be reduced to conflict situation alone. There are other peaceful societies that experience the spread of HIV/AIDS. More so, there is rather a convincing argument of the breakdown of moral norms and the high level of sexual promiscuity to the *Americanization* of the Nigerian culture. Finally, these previous investigations, in some aspects, completely exclude the nature of gender based violence in the context of political-religious related insurgency, as in the case of Boko Haram, which this study sets out to achieve.

Gender Based Violence in the Context of a political-religious related insurgency

To understand gender based violence within a political-religious related insurgency, it becomes necessary to clarify what political-religious related insurgency is. It is the actions of a minority group within a state who are intent on forcing a political change by means of a mixture of religious ideology (sic), subversion, propaganda and military pressure, aiming to persuade or intimidate the broad mass of people to accept such change. In the context of the Boko Haram conflict, it becomes pertinent to clarify the struggle to understand it as insurgency or terrorism. Terrorism is the indiscriminate use of violence to intimidate the general majority of the people in the state to accept the political changes advocated by the insurgents. Thus, terrorism is not an independent concept of its own, but a strategy used by the insurgents. Nigeria's contemporary history has been characterized by insurgencies that have manipulated regional and religious sentiments to further their goals [17].

According to Abdu, political-religious insurgency have become a re-occurring decimal in Northern Nigeria. There is virtually no state out of the 19 states that make up Northern Nigeria that is immune from it. Since the 1980s the spate of violence has continued to increase [18]. Recently, this type of insurgency assumed a devastating dimension with the emergence of Boko Haram. Women children have been caught up and are the victims of incessant violence perpetrated by the Boko Haram insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria. Without a doubt, gender based violence is rampant in this ongoing insurgency. Likewise, it is difficult to classify the extent to which Christian women and children have been abused due to their religion and gender. However, unconfirmed sources have suggested that the abuse against Christian women and children have taken place either directly or indirectly by Boko Haram sect members and equally due to the situation created by the conflict. For example, according to Human Rights Watch, Boko Haram has killed more than 1,000 people since 2010[19]. However, what has not been stated clearly is the nature of gender based violence against Christian women and children, which this study tries to clarify in the next two chapters.

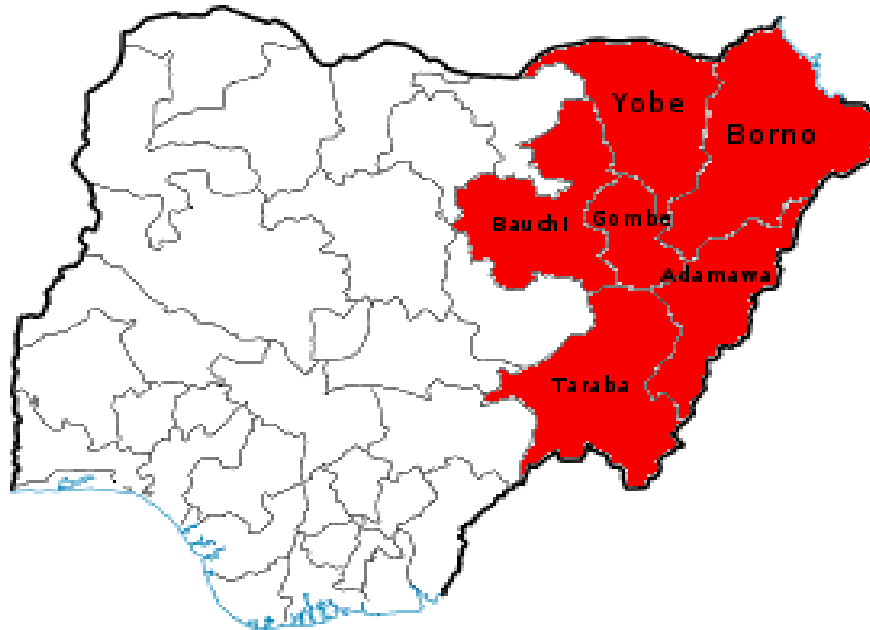
Chapter Two: North-Eastern Nigeria, Boko Haram and Gender Based Violence

The North-Eastern Region of Nigeria

The North-Eastern Region of Nigeria is a territory that “extends from Lake Chad in the North to the Mambilla Plateau in the South, bordered by the Nigeria-Cameroon boundary east” [20]. Its history is related to the northern Premiership of Sr. Ahmadu Bello who, on the eve of Nigeria’s independence, attempted to weld together a political community in the northern part of Nigeria to confront other regions for power sharing agreements. These communities were the old provinces known as the Native Authorities (NAs) created under the British Colonial rule [21]. Interestingly, they were also the remains of the ancient kingdoms of the pre-Jihad and post-Jihad periods with some dating back to the 7th centuries AD [22]. For instance, defunct Adamawa Province (now Adamawa and Taraba States) recorded the highest percentage of ‘Animists’ in 1963 [23] and presently Taraba State has about 73 different languages spoken as first language, the highest number of languages in the country [24]. Thus it is safe to suggest that the North-eastern region is probably the most heterogeneous in the Nigerian Federation in terms of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. Consequently, he identified three key components of the north which he tried to unify. The first of these components was the Sokoto Caliphate, which includes the emirate provinces of Adamawa, Bauchi, Bida, Ilorin, Kano, Katsina, Sokoto and Zaria. The second component was the Borno province and third was the Middle Belt provinces of Kabba, Plateau and Benue [25]. He referred to the northern citizens as “Jama’ar Arewa” [26], meaning a trans-ethnic community of the north. In practical terms it was a forcefully political marriage between very different and diverse ethnic groups. Despite internal opposition to the idea of one north which was seen as involving not recognition of cultural pluralism but rather the projection of one dominant culture over others, in this case the Hausa Fulani hegemonic culture [27], the myth of the One North continued to strive as a post-colonial political entity that symbolized the interests of the north.

The politics of Nigerian civil war and the perceived dominance of the Hausa-Fulani hegemonic culture over other minority tribes in the north forced the then Colonel Yakubu Gowon to make both a strategic and political move in dissolving the colonial constructed three regions of north, east and west of Nigeria and dividing the country into twelve states [28]. This was contained in the States Creation and Transitional Provision Decree No. 14 of 1967 which on 27 May, 1967; a military decree that created six states each in the north and southern parts of the country respectively [29]. The six states in the northern region included, Benue-Plateau state, Kano state, Kwara State, North-central state, North-western state and North-eastern state. Consequently, the north-eastern state became an amalgamation of the Borno province, the Adamawa emirate taken from Sokoto caliphate and the northern Cameroon province initially a German colony, but administered as a UN trust territory after the defeat of Germans in World War II, with the capital located in Maiduguri [30]. Interestingly, on 3 February 1976, the north-eastern state was further divided into three states, Bauchi, Borno and Gongola states. Later on, military politics led to the creation of Gombe state out of Bauchi, Yobe state out of Borno while Gongola was split into Taraba and Adamawa states. Currently, the north-eastern region is made up of six states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe, with 112 local government areas (Fig. 1). It has a total area of 277,314 sq kilometres. According to the 2006 Nigerian census, the total population of the north-eastern region was 18, 984, 299 peoples; Adamawa (3,168,101), Bauchi (4,676,465), Borno (4,151,193), Gombe

(2,353,879), Taraba (2,300,736), and Yobe (2,321,591) [31]. The administration of each of these states is overseen by executive governor who exercises tremendous political power, sometimes mobilizing political support along ethnic and religious lines.



*Map of North-Eastern Nigeria, taken from Wikimedia Commons (accessed 13th September, 2013)
http://www.commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Northeastern_State_Nigeria.png*

Religious Composition of the North-Eastern Region

Census head count since 1963 after Nigeria's independence have not reflected religious characteristics due to political reasons. For this reason it will be difficult to estimate the religious composition of the region and apportion the population of both Christians and Muslims in the six states of the region. The reason is that the manipulation of ethnic and religious sentiments in political mobilization [32] since Nigeria's return to multiparty democracy has killed more than 20,000 people, and more than one third of these have been due to the recent Boko Haram uprising in the north east. In fact, splits between Nigerian Christians and Muslims reflected even in ethnic composition are so obvious that census officials decided not to ask citizens about their religious affiliations or even ethnicity. Ethnic and religious exclusion has infuriated certain Christians in some quarters, who have refused to accept for example the 2006 census results which seems to place them in a slight minority position compared to their Muslim counterparts [33]. In addition, the controversy is not only about ethnicity and religion. More than this, census numbers determine the level of political redistribution, the allocation of oil revenues and civil service hiring. It also affects constituency demarcation and the number of constituency projects. The Federal Character principle enshrined in the constitution also dictates that the relative population percentage of every ethnic and religious group must be used to determine the mix of those groups in all federal appointments, including the armed forces. To douse tension, the issue of ethnicity and religion is left out of the census count with the region playing a prominent role [34].

According to Ekanem however, the 1963 census which was highly manipulated in favour of Northern Nigeria, and probably in favour of the Muslim population gave an insight into the religious affiliation of the then Western, Eastern and Northern regions [35]. The North-East was

then made up of Bauchi, Borno and Adamawa Provinces. Figures indicate that the population was divided between Muslims, Christians and Animists.

*The 1963 Census
North-Eastern Nigeria*

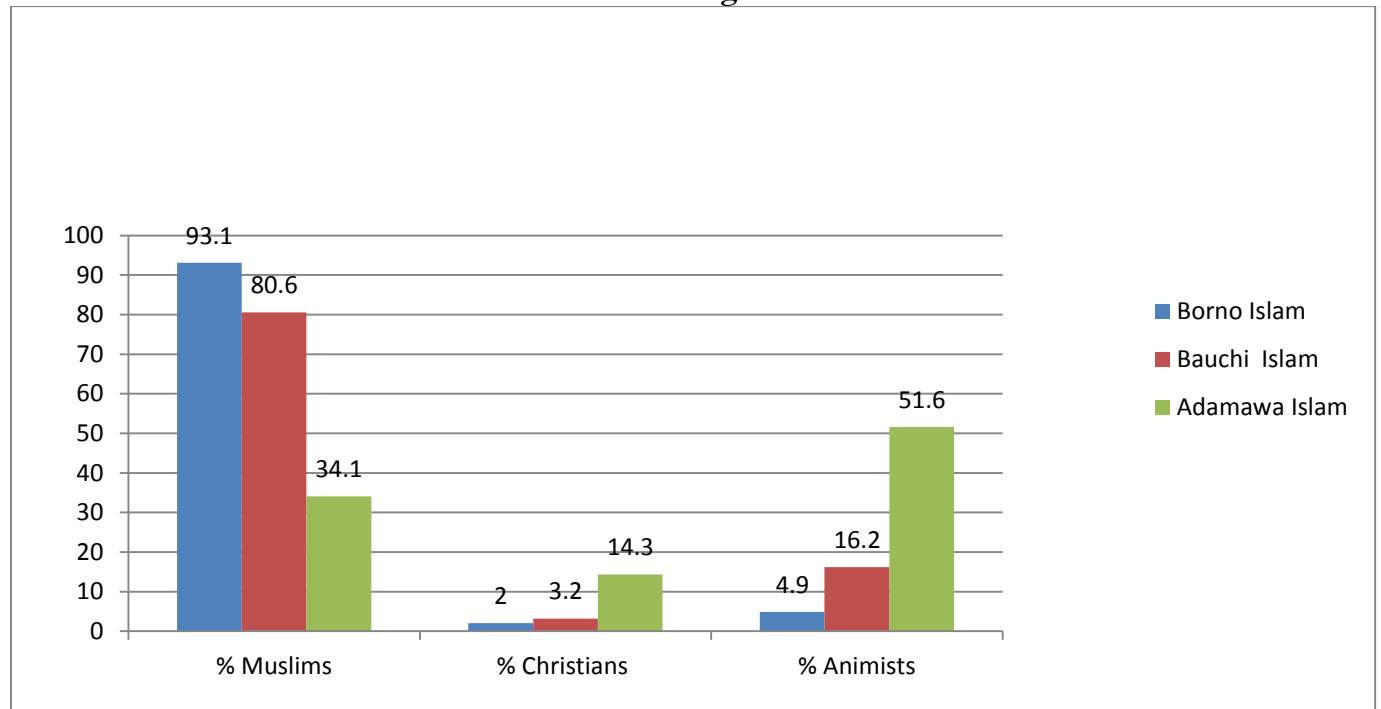


Figure 1 1963 Census, North-Eastern Nigeria

From the table above, Muslims were noted to be highest in Borno Province and the least in Adamawa Province. The percentage of Christians and Animists is highest in the Adamawa province. These figures, experts like Alkali, Abubakar Kawu Monguno and Ballama Shettima Mustafa all suggest is still very relevant to understanding the religious affiliation of the entire north-eastern region of Nigeria [36].

Boko Haram Violence in North-Eastern Region

Even before the 19th century Othman Dan Fodio Jihad, Islam had already been established, in some measure in north-eastern Nigeria through the Kanem Borno Empire [37]. Around the 12th century, scholars and merchants from North Africa made inroads through the trade routes of the Sahara desert into the then Kanem Borno Empire [38]. The rulers of Kanem not only established Islam within their empire but also embarked upon an extensive process of the Islamization of their subjects and intensified diplomatic contacts with the Muslim world of the time. That was why they were able to establish the Maliki Madrasa, an Islamic college in Cairo together with a hostel for Borno Scholars. Furthermore, the leaders were aware of the prominent doctrinal schools of Islam that were available but chose to align themselves with the Sunni Mazhab (school) of Ibn Malik. This choice will indicate the nature of Islamic sects that eventually emerged from the north-east [39]. For example, south of the north-eastern region from the corridors of the land between Uba-Biu-Garkida

axis down to the Upper Benue Valley in Adamawa, Muri and the Jukun-Kwararafa territory, the predominant Islam sect that emerged has, for most of the time being the Tijaniyya.

The Islamic sects that emerged in north-eastern Nigeria were both the sufi sects; Tijaniyya and Qadariyya [40] and the non-sufi sects which included the Izala movement otherwise known as Jama'atu Izalatul Bid'a wa Ikamatu Sunna (JIBWIS) that emerged and was able to infiltrate into north-eastern Nigeria. This group was inspired by the former Grand Qadi of Northern Nigeria, late Shaykh Abubakar Gumi. Initially, the Izala movement did not, as matter of policy, challenge the state or political authority. Gumi was, in fact, the officially sanctioned scholar with unhindered access to the corridors of power in Nigeria. The Izala movement primarily attacked Sufi Muslim groups, accusing them of innovation and apostasy. It fought against innovations such as Sufi genuflection in greeting elders, the keeping of concubines by traditional rulers, celebration of the Prophet's birthday, visiting graves and tombs of dead scholars and denial of women rights in a proper education. Sources suggest that even before Nigeria's return to multiparty democracy in 1999, the Izala movement has infiltrated in all the states and local governments of the north-eastern region. It was specifically linked to the Maitatsine Movement that killed scores of people in then then Gongola (now Adamawa and Taraba States) [41].

The second non-sufi sect that emerged in the north-eastern region was the Shiites. The emergence of the Shiites in the North-East and Nigeria in general was fired by the Iranian revolution in 1979 and supported by the distinct quality of revolutionary idealism found in the works of the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb [42]. At the beginning, they were treated as religious outcasts in the northeast, but yet they became noticeable players on the region's religious, and indeed social, terrain. The group was later splitted into two; first, the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) led by Sheikh Ibrahim El Zakzaky which operates throughout the region with strong presence in Yobe (Potiskum in particular) and Bauchi. The second group was the Rasulul A'azam Foundation (RAAF) under the leadership of Sheikh Muhammad Nura Dass which is strongest in Gombe and Bauchi. The two groups existed and operated as one Shiite movement until 1992 when it split into two because some members could no longer bear the alleged confrontational nature of Sheikh Ibrahim El Zakzaky's attitude towards the government; an attitude they believed was only inspired by the Iranian Revolution. On the contrary, RAAF prides itself as the only orthodox Shiite organization in Nigeria based on the teachings of Imam Ja'afar, hence their type of Shiism (Ja'afariyya) is as practiced in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon. It is non-confrontational in its practice and concerned more with Shiite doctrine and rituals than with confrontational politics. Thus, while IMN sees nothing good in the Nigerian State due to its secular nature and the injustices perpetrated by its leaders, RAAF not only recognizes the state as legitimate, but also argues that it must be obeyed. Institutions of higher learning constitute the most important pool from which both IMN and RAAF membership are recruited.

Recent investigations indicate that the Muhammad Yusuf; the late leader of Boko Haram, who was killed in military shootout with the Nigeria security forces, claimed to be part of the Shiites under the leadership of Ibrahim El-Zakzaky originally, and when the Kano-based *Jama'atul Tajdidi Islam* (JTI) of Abubakar Mujahid broke away from the Shiites in the 1990s, Yusuf also became a member of the JTI and was even the amir (leader) of JTI for Borno State [43]. To many analysts, the late Boko Haram leader has been part and parcel of the ongoing and unchecked Islamic radicalization that was taking place in north-eastern Nigeria. Initially, the group was known in 1995 as *abl al-sunna wa jama'a al-hijra*; the People Committed to hijra and the Prophet's Teachings [44]. In 2002, the group

declared the entire city of Maiduguri “intolerably corrupt and irredeemable”. [45] Under a new leader, Ali Muhammad, they embarked on hijra; along the lines of the Prophet, from Maiduguri to a village called Kanama, Yobe state [46].

In December 2003, a community dispute regarding fishing rights led to a siege of its mosque by the Nigerian army and the brutal execution of the leader, Mohammad Ali and seventy others [47]. Under the leadership of Muhammad Yusuf, the survivors returned to Maiduguri, recruited and expanded their network across the north-eastern states [48]. However, sustained security pressure culminated in an assault on Boko Haram in 2009 where dozens of people were rounded up and executed without trial, including Yusuf [49]. Last argues that “there is no doubt the suppression operation of 2009, and the killing of Muhammad Yusuf by Nigerian security forces in July of 2009 (sic), was a turning point for Boko Haram” [50]. This turning point, according to Cook, is reflected in the ideological, structural and operational changes within the group. This is likely so because, since 2009, the group has tactically transformed itself into a violent sect, driven by a desire for vengeance against the state and western related institutions [51]. A research indicating the sense of violence and atrocities perpetrated by the Boko Haram sect is done by Professor Adagba Okpaga, Ugwu Sam Chijioko and Eme Okechukwu Innocent in the *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* [52]. However, the failure of most of the investigations is the exclusion of the extent to which these atrocities specifically targeted Christian women and children either as an ideological policy or a conflict strategy by the sect.

The Place of Christian Women in Boko Haram Ideology

Generally, the fundamental aspect of Boko Haram’s ideology is based on the concept of salafism. Salafism as a word comes from the first generation of Muslims collectively referred to as *al-Salaf al-Saleh* meaning pious predecessors which could include the companions, the followers of the prophet and the followers of the followers of the Prophet. This is because amongst the Sunni Muslims especially, “temporal proximity to the prophet is associated with the truest form of Islam”. Although there are considerable controversies regarding the terms salafism and Wahhabism, their central message is the same; return to the original form of Islam. How to return to this original way of practicing Islam has given rise to Salafi jihadists that believe in the use of violence, Salafi purists that denounce violence, Salafi activists that call for participation in political processes [48] and many other brands of salafism [53]. In Nigeria salafism flourished under the career preaching of al-Shaykh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi around 1978 with the establishment of *Jama’at ‘izalat al-bid’a wa iqamat al-sunna*; the group dedicated to the removal of religious innovation and the establishment of the Sunna (traditions of the Prophet) which subsequently became known as JIBWIS or izala. Therefore, it is safe to argue that Boko Haram ideology is the ultra-salafi radicalism; the call to return to the fundamentals of Islamic religion and rejection of everything deemed un-Islamic.

Likewise, Boko Haram concept of women is based on this Sunni ultra-salafi radicalism. According to Lela Gilbert, women are traditionally treated as second-class citizens under this salafi ideology. However, Christian women are in even worse straits than Muslims because they are the weakest members of an infidel outcast. Whatever abuses Muslim women and girls may suffer, Christian females suffering are aggressively more intense and life threatening [54]. The ultra-salafi ideological mindset cast women as ‘lesser beings who, to varying degrees, require male guardianship. Female sexuality is generally perceived as a powerful and dangerous force, a predatory threat to male spirituality and family honour. It is simply categorized as a perilous feminine element that demands stringent supervision. This has led to the enactment of various forms of sharia law to grave endangerment to women [55]. According to, “Muslims often see the woman as the hunter and the

man as the passive victim of her ardor; indeed, sexual needs make her the ‘symbol of unreason, disorder, the anti-divine force of nature and disciple of the devil.’ Although this view remains controversial in some Islamic doctrines, what is generally accepted is that female sexuality is thought of as being so powerful that it constitutes a real danger to society.” [56]. This ideological worldview, experts argue, have influenced the humiliating circumstances women in Muslims states, including northern Nigeria have found themselves. This includes widespread domestic violence, rape and murder. In many instances female genital mutilation, kidnappings and forced marriages of young women including pre-pubescent girls to much older men [57]. For example, the Women’s Forum Against Fundamentalism in Iran (WFAFI) reports the following items in Iran’s legal system: Article 18 of Iran’s passport law states that married women require their husband’s permission to apply for a passport. In fact, article 102 of Iran’s Constitution indicates that women who appear on streets and in public without the prescribed Islamic Hijab will be condemned to 74 strokes of the lash [58]. If Muslim women could be treated based on this ideology, it is necessary to consider gender based violence against Christian women and children by Boko Haram.

Gender Based Violence against Women and Children under Boko Haram

Discrimination against indigenous Christian communities is endemic in at least 16 out of the 19 northern states. More often than not, Christians are denied equal rights, state jobs and office promotions. The level of discrimination is such that many Muslim managers refuse to hire a Christian outright. A report conducted by Ann and Emmanuel Ogebe indicates that Christian neighbourhoods are often overlooked for development or basic maintenance. In Sabon Gari; new quarters, specifically demarcated to accommodate Christian settlers in most of the Northern states are deprived of good roads, water lines, electricity and other basic amenities. They are enclaves meant for the infidels and the unbelievers and therefore must be separated. A classic example of this persecution is recorded in Tafawa Balewa local government Area in Bauchi state. It is a Christian community. However, the government refused to maintain public schools and finally shut them down, in order to deprive Christian children, particularly girls, of education. Most of the mission schools have also been confiscated without compensation by the state government and stripped of their faith-based roots. More astonishing is the fact that the Bauchi state government relocated the local government headquarters of Tafawa Balewa, a Christian Community, to a Muslim-dominated town in violation of the Nigerian constitution. When the Hon. Rifkatu Samson Danna, the member representing the community, objected, the state legislature suspended her from the parliament. Interestingly, she was the only woman and the only Christian in parliament. The Muslim community is so determined to prevent Christians from having church buildings, what when selling lands to Christians, official land deeds commonly include the proviso, “Not to be used for a bar, a brothel, or a church”. [59]

With the emergence of Boko Haram, there was an increase in violence against Christian women and children. This, some sources suggests, was motivated by religious hatred, desire for power and conquest of the weaker infidels, intention to lure Christian women away from their faith and communities, the intention to humiliate, intimidate and dishonour victims, their families and their Christian communities. In 2012, Abubakar Shekau cited the arrests of the wives and children of Boko Haram members as one of Boko Haram’s violence against Christian women and children. One reason for this was likely personal: “the more than 100 women and children detained by the security forces in 2012 included Shekau’s wife, the wife of the commander in Kano, the wife of the commander in Sokoto, who gave birth while in prison and the wife of the vehicle suicide-bomber who attacked *ThisDay* media house in Abuja” [60]. Yet evidence of gender based violence committed directly or indirectly Boko Haram members, and or due to the situation created by the Boko Haram

conflict suggests that they are motivated by the Sunni ultra-salafi ideology that suppresses women, more so Christian women.

Interviews conducted in the six states of the north-eastern region of Nigeria indicates the different types of gender based violence suffer by Christian women and children. First, there is an evidence of kidnapping and forced marriages, with compulsory conversion to Islam. Second, there is domestic violence, in case of a Christian convert to punish un-Islamic practices like Christian prayers, bible reading, attending bible study groups or church activities. Third, rape is to deflower Christian girls and force them to marry Muslim older men. In addition, there is also evidence of physical abuse of Christian girls not for not covering their heads or otherwise wearing “provocative” clothing in mixed neighbourhoods or communities. The consequences of women’s un-Islamic dress may include beatings, rapes or having acid thrown in their unveiled faces, which is becoming a common form of assault. Further, there is the burning of shops and business premises belonging to Christian women based on the Islamic principle that the role of the woman is at home. There is also the blasphemy accusations – bearing in mind that a woman’s testimony is worth ½ of a man’s and therefore she has no defence. Marginalization or exploitation of women who are either widowed or left on their own because of their husbands’ imprisonment, disappearance or death. Finally abduction, imprisonment, abuse and murder of Christian women and girls [61]. The gender based violence conducted by Boko Haram extended from domestic level to included transnational Christian women and families. On February 19, 2012, Boko Haram kidnapped a seven-member French family in Waza National Park, Cameroon, transferred them to Borno, and issued two proof-of-live videos showing the family. In the second video, Shekau said, “we are holding them hostage because the leaders of Cameroon and Nigeria detained our women and children under inhuman conditions”. On April 19, 2013, Boko Haram released the family at a village in Borno near the Cameroonian border in return for a \$3 million ransom and 16 members imprisoned in Cameroon [62]. The chapter below demonstrates state by state the level of gender based violence conducted directly or indirectly by Boko Haram members or due to the Boko Haram conflict in the entire north-east.

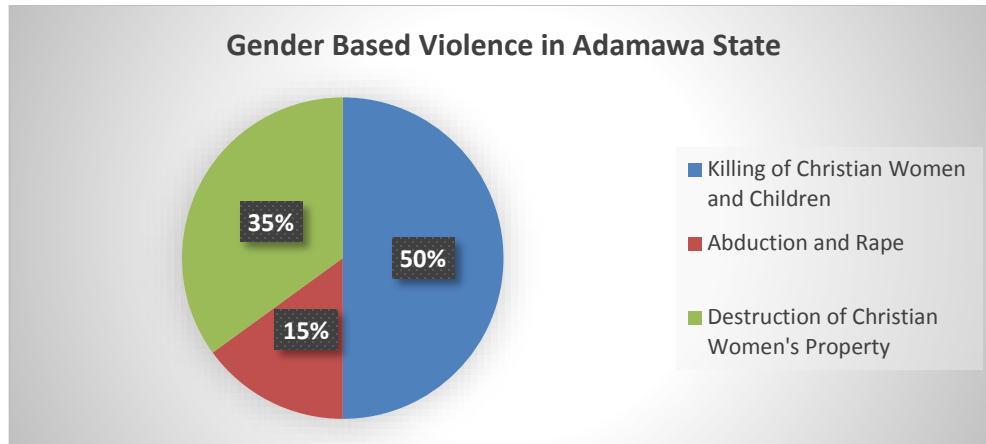
Chapter Three: Gender Based Violence and Boko Haram in the North-Eastern States

The phenomenon of gender based violence under Boko Haram is multi-faceted, especially within the north-eastern region. Therefore, it is necessary to note that the negative interplay of education, politics, religion and socio- economic conditions contribute in one way or the other in understanding the nature of this violence. Consequently, the chapter undertakes to narrate the experiences of Christian women and children from different communities across north-eastern Nigeria. It is intended to determine the type and degree of gender based violence, in addition to the ideology behind it. This is predicated on the assumption that Boko Haram sect members have directly or indirectly participated in gender based violence, including other forms of atrocities committed due the situation created by the conflict. It is important to concede that most of those interviewed preferred not to be identified for security reasons. However, this does not in any way downplay the fact of gender based violence ongoing against Christian women and children in the north-eastern part of Nigeria.

Gender Based Violence in Adamawa State

Boko Haram activities extended into Adamawa state from neighbouring Borno state (the birthplace of Boko Haram) by 2009. Adamawa state is on the South-eastern part of Borno state. As a matter of fact, both states enjoy easy access to neighbouring countries of Cameroon and Chad with all the contraptions of organised border crimes. Unsurprisingly, therefore, eleven attacks have taken place so far in Adamawa state: 7 of these occurred in Jimeta-Yola, the state capital, 2 attacks in Mubi and Maiha Local Government Areas, while Mayo-Balewa and Ganje towns have suffered an attack each. In all these attacks, there is a substantial evidence to suggest that Christian women and children were targeted in various degrees. One hundred and fifty people were interviewed across the whole of Adamawa State, including Christian women, eye witnesses, police officers, traditional rulers and religious leaders. Data gathered from the interviews demonstrate that gender based violence, specifically against Christian women and children was more pronounced in the extra judicial execution of Christian women and children, the destruction of shops belonging to Christian women, and the abduction and rape of Christian girls in tertiary institutions. As indicated on the chart below, 50% of those interviewed confessed to the witnessing of murder of several Christian women and children, with many unaccounted for. On the other hand, there was 35% response hinted on the destruction of property belonging specifically to Christian women as shown on table 2, with 15% evidence of abduction and rape. Indirect forms of violence against Christian women included forced marriages, forced conversions and domestic violence which lots of respondents were very careful to talk about for fear of death or harassment.

Table 2 Showing the type and percentage of GVB in Adamawa State



As indicated in the chart above, respondents were not ready to talk about not all forms of gender based violence in Adamawa State, particularly in Yola, the state capital. However, this does not in any way suggest an absence of such incidents in the State. Moreover, security concerns prevented so many women from speaking out for fear of molestation and constant harassment by Boko Haram sect members, their followers or sympathisers. In fact, there were allegations that some Christians had to give up their children in marriage to Muslim men in order to protect them. In other instances, the husbands of Christian women were selected and murdered. The widows were forced to convert to Islam and marry Muslim men. One of the most prominent examples of this is the attack on Christ Apostolic Church, located on Church Road in Jimeta. Reliable sources indicated during the interview that the church was attacked on January 6, 2012 when Christians in their hundreds gathered for worship. Nineteenth people, including the pastor, simply identified as Moses from Numan Local Government Area of the state and his son were killed. The pastor's wife, Victoria, who had sustained injuries, spoke in a very limited manner for fear of further attacks. Confirming the incidence, Victoria alleged that she was forced to profess the *Shahada* (the Islamic profession of faith). She was forcefully declared a Muslim and marriage was being contracted to a Muslim man before she was rescued by security forces. Dorcas Ejembi who lost her only child in a Boko Haram attack near Peace Hospital in Jimeta says the ideological framework of the group is simple unreasonable. She cannot even understand why Islamic law founded on Arab culture and worldview will be imposed on Nigerian Christian women who are neither Muslims nor Arabs.

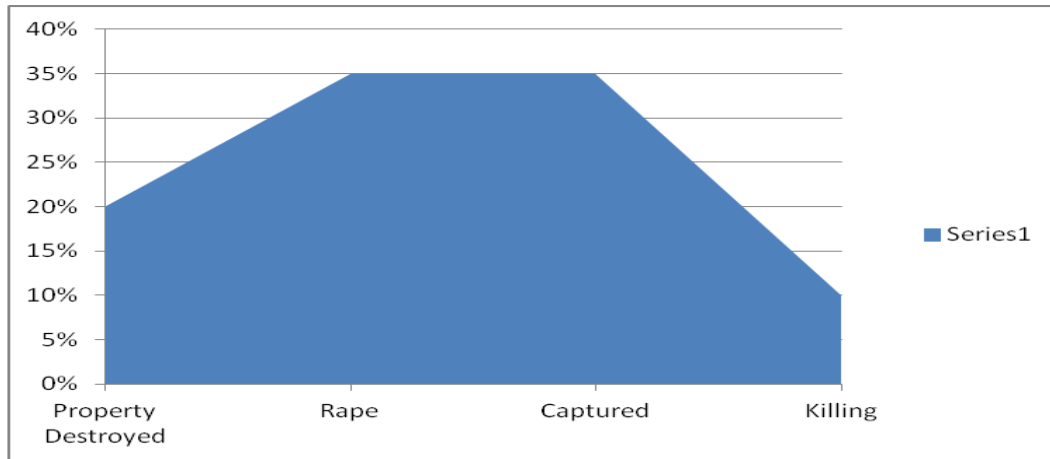
In Ganye Local Government Area of Adamawa state, two banks, under the headship of Christian women were attacked and the women were targeted. Boko Haram justification for the attack was that sharia law forbids women, Christian women for that matter, in holding such position. Moreover, profit-making banking is considered haram in the context of Sharia. In another development, many Christian women and children have been left widows and orphans in Ganye. Sources also confirmed the selection and abduction of only Christian women during a wedding ceremony that involved the entire community within Ganye. The whereabouts of these women remain unknown. More than the abduction, Rejoice Stephen, the leader of Christian Women Group in Ganye alleged that Shops belonging to Christian women were selected and burned down. They accused the Christian women of trading in items that are forbidden in Sharia law. In Mubi and Mayo Belwa local government areas, most victims declined to comment when interviewed. While some hinted that they were too sad to make statements over their experiences. Other credible sources informed NPVRN that Christian male students were selected from the hostels of Adamawa State University, Mubi and gunned down. Their female counterparts were taken to an unknown destination, repeatedly raped and finally executed.

Interestingly, most of those interviewed observed that Boko-Haram is a fabrication of the political class as means to settle (real or imagined) political scores. Despite the pronounced show of emotions, one thing is clear from those interviewed; the government of Adamawa state has not only failed to protect Christians but is in league with the extremists to eliminate Christians from the state. Likewise, one could argue that there is an obvious culture of fear and silence in most parts of the state regarding the atrocities of Boko Haram against Christian women and children. In addition, the inability to ascertain who is a Boko Haram member, a follower and a sympathiser has left people in constant fear and mutual suspicion that sometimes talking to researchers could land them into the hand of the perpetrator. As one of the victims in Adamawa state advised, “listen to what is not said. There is more information to it than the word given to you”.

Gender Based Violence in Bauchi State

Bauchi state has witnessed several Boko Haram attacks, and at the moment of this investigation, these attacks are ongoing. Within Bauchi metropolis, four deadly attacks have occurred. However, Tafawa-Balewa and Bogoro Local Government Areas of the state where the indigenous Christians are in the majority are the worst hit targets of the Boko Haram attacks. The headquarters of the two local governments and their surrounding villages have suffered over 50 different attacks between 2011 till date. First and foremost, the continued attacks on these areas, judged to be Christian enclaves only reveal among many other things that the dangerous ideology of Boko Haram is essentially driven by Islamic religious fundamentalism and fanaticism, sustained by crass impunity. In addition, reliable sources seem to suggest that Boko Haram attackers believe Christian women are responsible for making their children hold Islam in disdain, as a religion that perpetrates terror. This has angered Boko Haram sect members; who in turn have made Christian women and their children the most hunted targets. During the data collection process in Bauchi, access to Islamic religious leaders, government officials and other security agencies was almost impossible. This is because, all government related institutions are directly or indirectly controlled by Muslims. However, interviews were conducted with some Christian senior civil servants, NGOs, Christian women organizations and other a few security personnel that do not want to be identify. From the data collected in the course the study, Christian women, particularly those from Tafawa-Balewa and Bogoro Local Government have directly suffered the following types of gender based violence: capture (abduction), rape, destruction of business shops of Christian women, killing of Christian women and children. As a matter of fact capture and rape of Christian women was as high as 35% in each of the cases. The persons who confessed to having been raped during the interview said it only happened after their abduction, which is why both types of violence share the same percentage. Meanwhile 10% of respondents testify to witnessing killing of Christian women and children, while 20% all alleged the destruction of properties of Christian women as shown on table 3.

Table 3 Showing the Type and Percentage of GBV in Bauchi State



Critics accuse the Bauchi state government of collaborating with violent extremists to repress Christians and defraud them of their fundamental rights to freedom of religion. For example, Christian widows have been ejected from their family homes based on Sharia rulings, especially if such family has a Muslim landlord. Christian women are also denied access to maternal health-care by first making religious identity a condition for hospital registration card. This helps identify Christian women and assist in delays and denials to health facilities. Worst still, the only government health facility (general Hospital) has been relocated from Tafawa-Balewa (a Christian area) to Bununu (a Muslim dominated hamlet). In addition, the only Girls Secondary School that was in Tafawa- Balewa has been moved to Bununu too, thereby leading to denial of access to girl education. Both cases were approved by the state house of assembly. Although the government cites insecurity and persistent attacks by Boko- haram terrorists as reason for the relocation of the facilities, reliable sources informed NPVRN that the reason why the 2 local governments have come under unending attacks is the rejection of Islam by the Christian communities. The withdrawal of government owned institutions from these Christian areas has only hasten attacks against Christians, but more specifically, gender based violence against Christian women and children. In fact following the attack of terrorists on *Zar* of Tafawa-Balewa town; a Christian settlement, the governor declared in support of the Muslim attackers “I will demolish Tafawa-Balewa town and make it a grazing ground for the Fulani people”. Such statements demonstrate the partiality and weakness of state approach to an ongoing conflict.

Evidence also suggest that apart from the atrocities committed directly by Boko Haram members, and the alleged clandestine but institutional support provided by the Bauchi state government, other forms of gender based violence have been recorded due to the conflict situation. Members of civil rights groups have cited instances of forced teenage pregnancies that lead to forced marriages between Christian girls and Muslim older men. Consequently, Bauchi is one of the leading states in cases of Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF). There are other cases of forced conversion, domestic violence against Christian women and girls in addition to rape, denial of promotion or outright dismissal from work. Domestic violence happens in cases where Christian orphans or widows are forced to live with their Muslim relatives. For example, in February 2004, a Christian teacher in Bauchi State, Florence Chukwu was threatened, humiliated and almost killed for mishandling the Qur’an. The teacher came in contact with a copy of the Qur’an while taking it from a student who was reading it while class was in session. However, some courageous victims interviewed included Polum Yelmi who lost her husband in 2001 and was repeatedly raped for refusing to marry a Muslim. Other women victims that have suffered similar fate included Dianatu Ali who was evicted

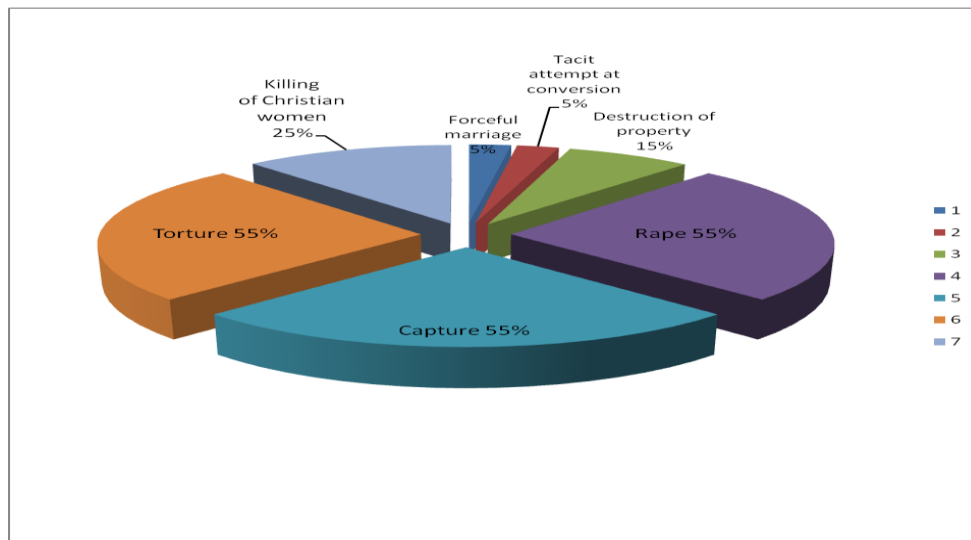
from the house of her late husband and was forced to stay in an uncompleted building with her six children. With the relocation of the only government secondary school where Dianatu lives with her children, it is feared that the children may fall prey to lure of sex for money in other to make ends meet. The danger of under- aged girls exposed to sex is scaring to contemplate let alone to experience.

The most revealing of the impact of gender based violence in Bauchi state is the story of Altina Bullatu; a story representative of the plight of most Christian women and Children. Altina is a widow and lives with her granddaughter, Jummai, who is deaf and dumb at Zur village of Bogoro Local Government Area. On one of the attacks on the village, the suspected Islamic insurgents captured Jummai and raped her for 2 weeks. By the time she was discovered where she was tied in the bush, she was almost unconscious. From Altina's analysis of the conflict, the Islamic insurgents are just out to intimidate and terrorize the Christians till they run-away from their ancestral land for the Hausa-Fulani to take over. Politically, Christians are dominated and Christian women and children are exploited with the support of government policies and structures [66]. Unfortunately, most of these atrocities are hidden from international researchers and human rights activists. Access to villages and place where these incidents occur are denied to international investigators. Such agents are normally, though not always, limited to Bauchi, the capital city of the state. However, the cosmopolitan nature of Bauchi town, the presence of security formations and very importantly the dominance of Muslims in the city has made it less attractive to Boko Haram attackers, unlike their slaughter fields of Tafawa –Balewa and Bogoro Local Government Areas.

Gender Based Violence in Borno State.

Maiduguri, the Borno state capital is reputed to be the birth place and the headquarters of Boko haram. More than 70 attacks have occurred in Maiduguri alone and such attacks are still ongoing. Several others attacks have taken place in Bama, Ngobolu-Ngala, Dikwa among other local government areas. Due to severe onslaught, including killing of unsuspecting travellers by Boko Haram when NPVRN visited Maiduguri, it was pretty difficult and simply unsafe to go the hinterlands for interviews. Several people were interviewed including security personnel, members of the civilian JTF, NGOs, Christian women organizations, Christian religious leaders and some prominent journalists. Most of them pleaded to remain anonymous and were not ready to confirm their personal experiences. However, at least seventeen of the Christian women victims interviewed confirmed they were captured, tortured and raped. The type and degree of gender based violence committed directly by Boko Haram members tilted towards abduction and rape. Abduction, generally referred to as capture in Maiduguri is 55%, while rape is 55%. This is understandable because Borno is where the conflict is most intense and many Boko Haram leaders are located there. Second, as earlier indicated, Abubakar Shekau, the leader of Boko Haram, cited the arrests of the wives and children of Boko Haram members in 2012 as one of Boko Haram's reasons for violence against Christian women and children. Analysts suggest this may likely be personal because the more than 100 women and children detained by the security forces in 2012 included Shekau's wife, the wife of the commander in Kano, the wife of the commander in Sokoto, who gave birth while in prison and the wife of the vehicle suicide-bomber who attacked *ThisDay* media house in Abuja. Other categories of GBV included forced marriage, 5%; destruction of businesses and shops belonging to Christian women, 15%; torture of Christian women, 55%; attempts at conversion, 5%; and the killing of Christian women, 25%. Other analysts argue that these figures could be higher if people can have access to victims and most of the remote areas under the control of Boko Haram.

Table 4 Showing the Type and Percentage of GBV Borno State



Other atrocities include threats and the capture of Christian women for ransom. In some instances, Christian women are under pressure to dress in hijab like their Muslim counterparts in order to be less susceptible to gender based violence. The ideological motivation for these atrocities are based on the ultra-salafi form of radicalism that opposed by some Muslims even in Nigeria. However, why the gender based violence of capture, torture and rape are pronounced Borno is because the state is the enclave of Boko- Haram where they operate with impunity, unlike in Taraba or most parts of Adamawa states. As a matter of fact, the following interviews substantiate some of the issues raised. For example, Jennifer Gyang was abducted on May 1, 2013 after her parents and brothers escaped. Jennifer and other five Christian women were kept for two weeks within a hideout in Maiduguri and repeatedly raped. Some of the reasons advanced by their captors was that Jennifer Gyang and the other women were Christians. Islamic law allows Christians to pay the jizya; a special tax for Christians under Islamic law paid for their own protection. Consequently, the rape of these women was justified on the bases of sex as jizya. More than this, Jennifer and the other Christian women were considered as settlers. The name Gyang is suggestive of the ethnic Berom from Jos, central Nigeria. This seems to confirm the messages of Boko Haram on youtube videos calling on Muslims to revenge against the ethnic Beroms for the killing of Mulism in Jos north. The manipulation of the indigene-settler concept as a justification for the rape and torture of Christian women and girls extended to include Christian girls in University of Maiduguri. On August 9, 2013, Clara Idowu, a Christian Yoruba girl from Kwara state, central Nigeria. According to Clara, Boko Haram gun men killed the Christian men in private students' hostel she was living, separated Muslim women from Christian women. They raped all the Christian women and abducted some.

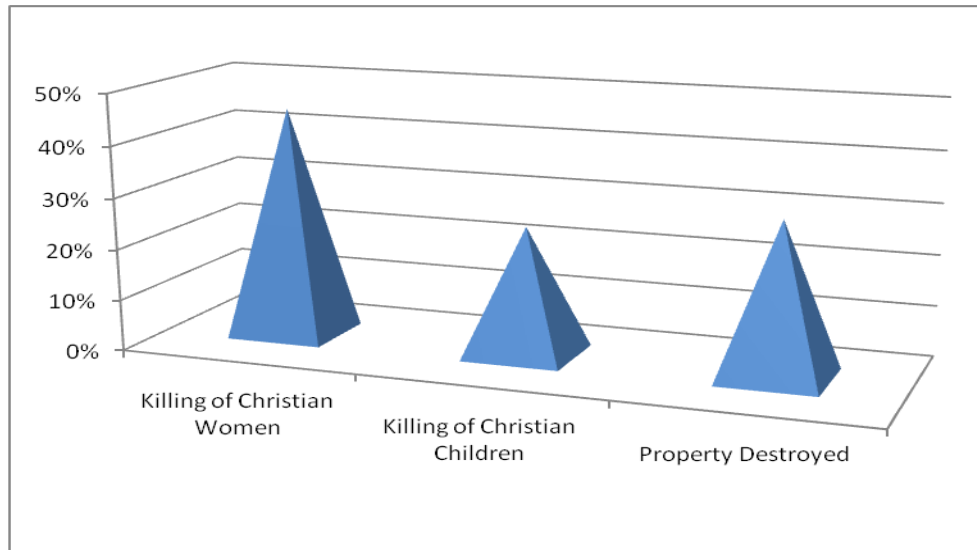
Though she became pregnant as a result of the rape and later miscarried, her analysis of the conflict is worth mentioning. Clara claimed that prevailing insecurity in the entire northern region is not unconnected with lack of western education that liberates and empowers. Her argument confirms the report of DFID on education and gender in northern Nigeria. According to DFID Gender Report of 2012: 'More than two-thirds of 15-19 years old girls in northern Nigeria are unable to read a sentence compared to less than 10 percent in the south; and only four percent of females complete secondary school in the northern zone. Over half of all women in the north are married by the age of 16 and are expected to bear a child in the first year of marriage' [63]. On a general note, the fact that some women were ready publically confess to being raped without minding stigmatization that

is associated with it goes to show the extent to which victims are indeed pained by this ordeal. Meanwhile 6 other women reported of being raped but pleaded for anonymity, scores are widowed and many others have their business concerns and properties destroyed/bombed around the post office area of Maiduguri. What stands their plight out as a case of gender based violence is the fact just in neighbourhood where majority of the shops are owned by men still remain untouched as the men are armed protecting their shops. Paulina believes that they were a soft target as women, which was why the attackers took maximum advantage of the situation. From body language of most the persons interviewed, it seems much of what they suffered still remain unsaid. This is not unconnected with the fear of further vicious attacks by the Boko Haram. Some of the victims are so traumatized that proper coordination of thoughts is still a distant dream for now.

Gender Based Violence in Gombe State

Gombe state has suffered less attacks compared to neighbouring Bauchi state. This is not unconnected to the lack of Kanuri ethnic factor in the state. Substantial evidence suggests that where the Kanuri population is huge as in Borno and Yobe states resolute attacks are bound to occur. In Gombe state, banks and police stations are common places of attacks. For instance, the Divisional Police Headquarters at Tudun- Hatsi and Round-About areas of Gombe municipality have been bombed. Their main target was the Christian women who headed the divisional office. Commercial banks in Bajoga and Ashaka towns under the headship of Christian women have not been spared the attacks. This has made Christian women to shun headship appointments in the area for fear of been targeted by Boko Haram. Traditional rulers from Billiri, Kaltungo and Kumo local government areas were interviewed in addition to Catholic women organization, Islamic scholars opposed to Boko Haram and more than 200 people who claimed to be victims of Boko Haram attacks. Generally, the type and degree of gender based violence violence suffered by Christian women and children as a result of the conflict included: 50% killing of Christian women, 20% abduction and killing of children in Christian homes in addition to 30% destruction of shops and properties belonging to Christian women, especially Christian business women. Meanwhile the data collected in Gombe did not confirm any case of rape, forced marriage, covered or overt attempts at conversion. There is also no evidence of the denial of access to health and educational facilities to Christian women and children as in the case of Bauchi state. This, however does not in any way suggest that they have not occurred.

Table 5 Showing the Type and Percentage of GBV in Gombe State



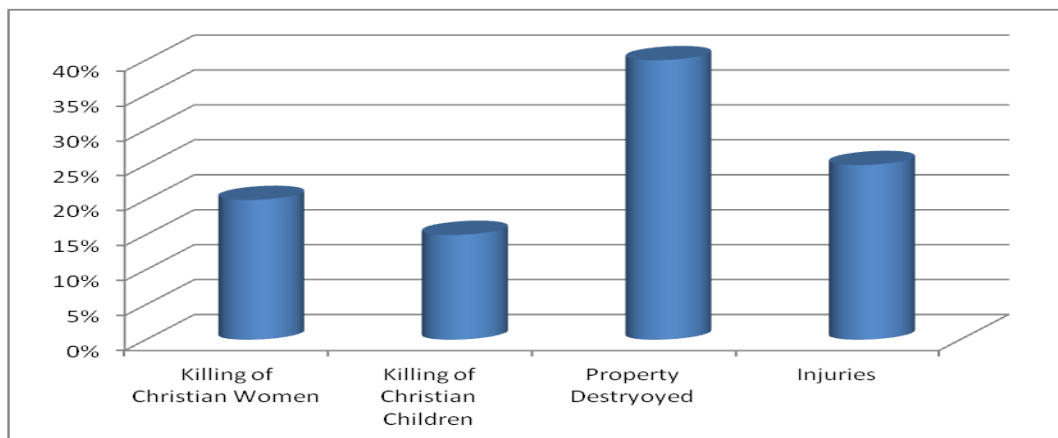
Direct attacks in Gombe by Boko Haram militants against Christian women and children have been very minimal. This is because, unlike Yobe, Adamawa and Bauchi states, Gombe not share direct border with Borno where the militants are based. There are more indigenous Muslims who belong to various ethnic groups outside the Kanuri tribe. Some of these Muslims have confirmed that the attacks of the Militants is a Kanuri revolt rather than Islamic one. Yet it is necessary to concede that Christian women have been at the receiving end of socio-political developments in Gombe state. This underscores the fact that Christian women have not been particularly empowered. For instance, the only woman from the state nationally Assembly, Hon. Bello Binta Maigari representing Gombe/Kaltungo/Shongon Federal Constituency is not a Christian woman. The implication is that Christian women are tactically denied access to state resources and all the financial gains that go with it. Thus in addition to the physical violence, isolation and exclusion, Christian women in Gombe state are constantly denied the opportunity to serve in government.

Likewise, most of the Christian women and young girls that accepted to be interviewed confirmed the evidence of violence against them due to the situation created by the conflict. For example, Veronica Yakubu, being a Christian woman from the maligned Christian settlement of Bambara, lost her shop and property worth millions of naira when Boko Haram insurgents selected to destroy businesses belonging to Christians. The argument advanced for this was that the place of the woman was at home and not in the public domain. In her assessment of the conflict, Veronica opted for dialogue and negotiations rather than military offensive in winning the hearts of the people. Favour Daniel was another victim, confirmed in a phone interview how they were attacked because were Christians. She called on northern leaders to end impunity and enthrone the culture of accountability. Other Christian women who spoke to NPVRN team did so with fear for further attacks. What must not be forgotten is that in Gombe state, there is a large population of Christians from the southern part of the country, especially the Igbos who have settled and are thriving in business. Some of these attacks carried against Christian women and children go beyond the issue of religious ideology to include the indigene-settler problems in Nigeria. The growth of Igbo businesses in states like Gombe have been a source of grave concern for the indigenous Muslim community. The Boko Haram conflict has become a perfect occasion to target Christians, more so Christian women and children.

Gender Based Violence in Taraba State

Taraba state has the least number of Boko Haram attacks in the zone and less affected by the activities of the sect. This is probably due to the fact that first, it is the farthest away from Borno state, the enclave of Boko Haram. More importantly, the state has higher population of Christians and animists than Muslims with virtually no evidence of any Kanuri connection. In addition, Taraba state, until recently, was the only state in the north-east with a Christian governor, Danbaba Suntai. These factors, in a way influenced the type and degree of gender based violence that have occurred since the Boko Haram uprising. As indicated on the table below, research conducted in Taraba state suggests that the type of gender based violence suffered Christian women included: destruction of shops, injuries and killings. Four attacks were carried out and in these attacks, Christian women and children were specifically targeted. First the killing of Christian women was about 25%, the destruction of business properties and shops belonging to Christian women was about 37%, injuries sustained by Christian women and children 22% and the killing of Children 12%. However, no cases of rape, forced marriage, kidnapping and domestic violence were reported. There have been an increased tension between Christians and Muslims in Taraba state since the Christian state governor was involved in a plane crash in November 2012 and has since being replaced by his Muslim deputy governor as acting governor. This palpable tension could have been responsible for the unwillingness of most respondents to confirm some types of the gender based violence that have taken place for fear of attacks and death.

Table 6 Showing the Type and Percentage of GBV in Taraba State



In a more specific manner, two of the attacks took place in Jalingo, the state capital, one of which occurred at Dorowa, a popular relaxation spot of low income earners where locally brewed alcohol *burukutu* is sold and the other was at Anguwan Joda near the Taraba State government house. The other attacks were targeted at banks in Karim Lamido and Wukari towns, all headed by Christian women. In Wukari, three Christian female security officers were killed. A source told NPVRN on authority that one of the female security officers, Josephine Pelleng had earlier foiled an attempt to attack the bank through her intelligence gathering that made the bank's authorities to beef up security at the bank for that week. Boko Haram sect members got hint of this, which is why they particularly targeted her.

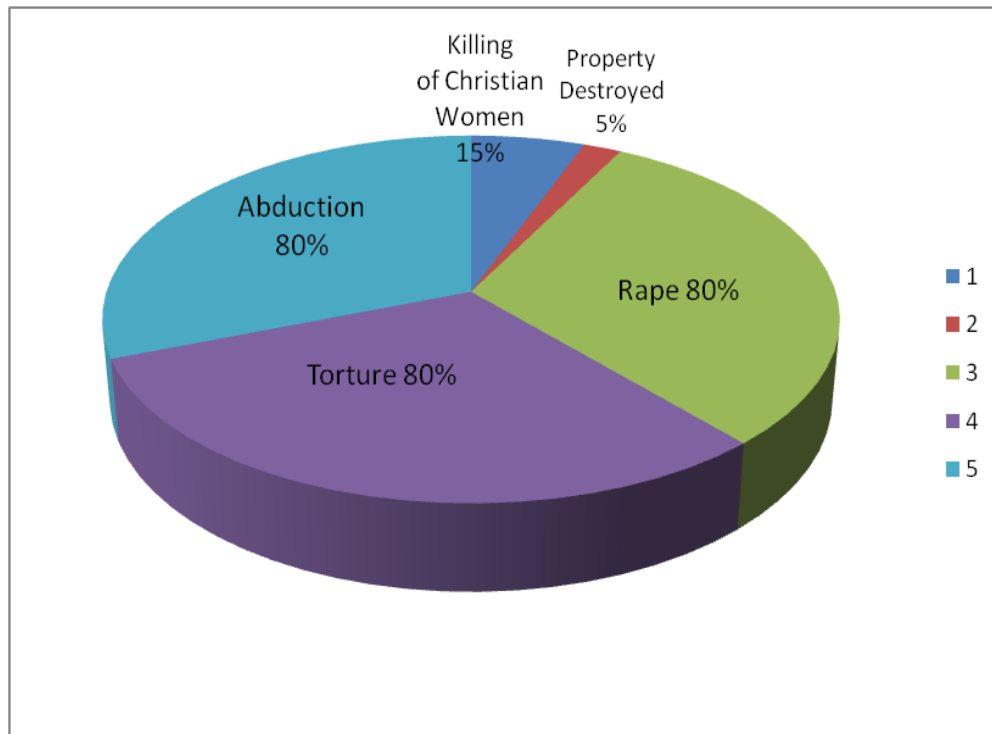
What has made the attack in the Dorowa area of Jalingo town a gender issue, is the fact that all the women who sell there are either Christians or persons who have inclinations for the Christian faith. A source revealed that 60% of them are Catholics and that some of them are even members of

Zumunta Mata (a local wing of the Catholic Women Association). When NPVRN's researchers visited the attacked area of Dorowa, two schools of thought were prominent concerning the rationale for the act. Rhoda Daniel, Talatu Adamu and Sarah Shukai argued that the attack was targeted at destroying the place where Christian women make brisk business of selling *burukutu* (locally brewed beer). Thus, they concluded that since Christian women are majority of shop owners, the attack cannot be dismissed as having no religious and gender based connection. The other school of thought, however, thinks that the attack was not targeted at Christian women alone. After all, the totality of those who gather to drink have men in the greater part, and Muslim men included. Therefore, the insinuations that the attack was religious and gender motivated is unacceptable. But Tani Chindo disagrees that even among the low income earners, women are at the rung of the ladder, which account for the fewer number as those who patronize the place for the sole purpose of drinking. Whatever the arguments are, the ideological reason for Boko Haram attack should always be at the forefront. Thus in addition to attack on Christian women who run the place, they are also carrying out the Islamic injunction to enjoin good and forbid evil. Alcohol consumption is evil that must be destroyed everywhere including its Christian producers. Furthermore, the attack on the bank in Karim- Lamido was aimed primarily at killing a Mobile Police officer, Celina Kuju, who sources said was a Christian lady trained in counter terrorism in Israel. She was attached to bank on special request and had demonstrated high level of professionalism in her duty. As a matter of fact, she foiled prior attempt at attacking the bank. It is also very possible that the attack was aimed at having access to the bank's money. Despite the high population of Christians and the distance of Taraba state from Borno state; the hotbed of Boko Haram, the prospects of gender based violence remains and does not seem to decline.

Gender Based Violence in Yobe State

Yobe state has the uninviting description of 'raping slap and killing field' because of the atrocities of Boko- Haram. This goes to confirm the claim that Yobe and Borno states are the strong enclaves of the terrorist group; where they operate with impunity. The operations of the dreaded terrorist group have left many with lamentations. Interviews conducted with security analysts, journalists and focus group discussions held in Damaturu, Yobe state capital, all confirmed the direct and indirect level of gender based violence committed against Christian women and children in Yobe state. For instance, 80% of Christian women interviewed alleged they were abducted, raped and tortured. All those who confess rape said they were abducted and tortured before eventually being raped. However, only 5% confirmed to the burning of shops belonging to Christian women. The reason could be that Damaturu is the smallest of all the state capitals with the least number of Christians. Moreover, very minimal number of Christian women are engaged in businesses to own shops and properties. Furthermore, sources suggest that 15% of all the violence have seen to the killing of Christian women and children.

Table 7 Showing the Type and Percentage of GBV Yobe State



For example, Maria James, a 200 level student of the Department of Agricultural Extension Services, College of Agriculture, Gujba, Yobe state, was raped along with her Christian girl friends on September 29, 2013. While thanking God that she was not one of the over 78 killed in the attack, she bemoans the brutal rape she underwent. According to her, she and 3 of her friends escaped from the hostels into the bush when the attack was on-going, just to be captured by over 10 armed men who were stationed in the bush to re-enforce in case of counter attack by the military. Maria explained that the terrorists used their knives to tear their clothes; leaving them naked. Immediately, one of them ordered them to lie down, instructing another of his colleagues to shoot them. It was at this point that one of her three friends, Halima, who is a Muslim exclaimed: ‘awuzubillahil’, a popular Muslim explanation meaning, *on Allah we depend for protection* (from evil). Halima, the Muslim girl who made the pronouncement still got preferential treatment as only two of the rapists had carnal knowledge of her. The rest of them had to satisfy the libido of the entire group, adding that it is the most horrific experience in her life. One of the raped ladies, whom NPVRN’s researchers traced to Nafada town of Gombe state pleaded for anonymity. According to her, Boko-Haram is divided into: ideological Boko-Haram, political Boko-Haram and the criminal Boko-Haram. The criminal group is mostly involved in attacking banks, killing and looting, while the political wing of the terrorist group is interested in killing persons, whose views are perceived to be anti-north, adding that north here means the interest of the Muslims. Some Christian women who preferred not to be mentioned also alluded to the attack on Government Girls Secondary School, Mamudo, where over 42 students, mostly Christians were selected and executed.

NPVRN noticed indisposed-attitude to talk about gender based violence by women. To this end, it was guessed that stigma usually associated with cases of rape was responsible. Another presupposition of NPVRN was that culturally, it is anathema for women to tell their sexual experiences to men. This was thought to have contributed towards the silence of women about sexual violence suffered. One Martina Joseph while refusing to share her rape experience said

NGOs come, hear their views without paying a dime and yet are in the habit of making use of the views to attract money from foreign agencies. This, for her is why she will not open up on the issue. However, NPVRN researchers met a group of 4 Christian women, who were relocating from Damaturu, the Yobe state capital, to Dekina in Kogi State. Three of them who preferred not to be mentioned, confirmed to having suffered sexual violence at the instance of members of Boko-Haram. For them, women are afraid to disclose the violence they suffer because if such is made public and Boko-Haram members get to know that their atrocities are been exposed, then whoever would have made the disclosure runs the risk of been killed in the most brutal manner. Yobe remains on security alert, many gory tales of atrocities and gender based violence against Christian women and children remain unexposed and the killing fields continue.

Conclusion

Research into gender based violence against Christian women and children remains at its lowest in Nigeria. Security concerns, bureaucratic processes and the financial implications remain the greatest obstacles in exposing the truth of coordinated gender based violence that have so far taken place since the Boko Haram uprising. However, trends that emerged in the course of this study call for further investigation. For instance, about over 80% of persons interviewed in Borno and Yobe states where the Kanuri ethnic connection is dominant suffered gender based violence of at least three of the following: rape, abduction, killing of Christian women, tacit attempts at conversion. This points to the nature of deep seated gender based violence that pervades the terrain. However, for states that are far away from Borno such as Taraba southern part of Adamawa, the attacks were predominantly targeted Banks and police station, to kill Christian women in the leadership of such institutions. This is not suggestive of the fact that stealing of money and arms from banks and police stations respectively could not have motivated some of the attacks. Finally, there is need to carry out in-depth research on day to day violence and discrimination against Christian women in northern Nigeria.

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- 63 Interview with Clara Idowu in Maiduguri, August 27, 2013.

List of Major Respondents that accepted to be identified

S/no	Name	sex	Place	State	Date
01	Rejoice Stephen	F	Ganye	Adamawa	23/09/2013
02	Dorcas Ejembi	F	Jimeta	Adamawa	25/09/2013
03	Victoria Moses	F	Jimeta	Adamawa	25/09/2013
04	Thamus Maigida	M	Tafawa- Balewa	Bauchi	14/10/2013
05	Emmanuel Tumi	M	Tafawa- Balewa	Bauchi	14/10/2013
06	Janet Joshua	F	Bauchi	Bauchi	17/10/2013
07	Rebeca Manzo	F	Boi	Bauchi	15/10/2013
08	Dianatu Ali	F	Tafawa- Balewa	Bauchi	14/10/2013
09	Polum Yelmi	F	Tafawa- Balewa	Bauchi	15/10/2013
10	Altina Ballatu	F	Boi	Bauchi	15/10/2013
11	Jennifer Gyang	F	Maiduguri	Borno	01/10/2013
12	Clara Idowu	F	Maiduguri	Borno	01/10/2013
13	Paulina James	F	Maiduguri	Borno	03/10/2013
14	Comfort James	F	Maiduguri	Borno	03/10/2013
15	Veronica James	F	Gombe	Gombe	09/10/2013
16	Favour Daniel	F	Ihiarra	Anambra	09/10/2013
17	Rhoda Musa	F	Gombe	Gombe	09/10/2013
18	Chinenye Nwachukwu	F	Biliri	Gombe	10/10/2013
19	Juliana Godwin	F	Biliri	Gombe	10/10/2013
20	Sarah Shukai	F	Jalingo	Taraba	27/09/2013
21	Talatu Adamu	F	Jalingo	Taraba	27/09/2013
22	Rhoda Daniel	F	Jalingo	Taraba	27/0/2013
23	Tani Chindo	F	Jalingo	Taraba	27/09/2013
24	Maria James	F	Gujba	Yobe	29/09/2013

Appendices of Group Discussion

Four Focus Group discussions were conducted. Each group was made up of ten people including professionals, ordinary people, political and religious leaders. A member of each group was allowed to interview at least 50 people for the group discussion. Sample questions centered the type of

gender based violence committed directly or indirectly by members of Boko Haram against Christian women and children, including the ideological justification was given for such crimes.

Group 1 Discussion in Bauchi (Bauchi State) August 2, 2013: The discussion focused mainly on abduction, rape and murder of Christian women, including the destruction of business premises belonging to these women. 75% of the respondents agreed that the target of Christian women and children is done directly by Boko Haram members alongside other people who take advantage of the conflict situation.

Group 2 Discussion in Gombe (Gombe State) August 9, 2013: In Gombe capital of Gombe state, the indigene-settler concept was discussed as an additional framework to the attack on Christian women and children. Most respondents accepted that Islamic identity in Gombe lacks the Kanuri content, therefore attacks against Christians (especially Christian women) was more motivated by the fear of Christian settlers who seem to be thriving in their businesses. This additional frameworks, they suggest, require the government to revise the laws to give all Nigerians equal of rights wherever they find themselves in the country.

Group 3 Discussion in Jalingo (Taraba State) September 16, 2012: In Jalingo, questions border on the level of misinformation, the type of facts ordinary people have access to and the extent to which prejudices and mutual suspicion between Christians and Muslims lead the level of gender based violence suffered by Christian women and children. 60% seemed attached to the single narrative structure and blamed everything on the Boko Haram extremists, the failure of security services and other Muslims to produce counter narrative against the activities of Boko Haram.

Group 4 Discussion in Yola (Adamawa State) 23rd July 2012: Discussions in Adamawa State centered on specific types of gender based violence against Christian women and children; forced marriage, forced conversion and sexual violence. Discussants seem to suggest that lack of dialogue, social integration and undue loyalty to religious orientation seem to reinforce some of the ideological beliefs at the base of these types of gender based violence.

Pictures on Page 1: Pictures were obtained courtesy of Associated Press.