

**REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE**

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

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<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 2017-04-04	<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Master's Thesis	<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> SEP 2016 - APR 2017
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<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> The Recruitment of Insurgents in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Boko Haram in Cameroon	<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b> N/A
	<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b> N/A
	<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b> N/A

<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Ndikum, Azieh, Major, Cameroon Special Forces	<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b> N/A
	<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b> N/A
	<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b> N/A

<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street Quantico, VA 22134-5068	<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b> N/A
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<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>	<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>
	<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b> N/A

**12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**  
Approved for public release, distribution unlimited.

**13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES**

**14. ABSTRACT**  
The paper addresses the recruitment of fighters by Boko Haram on the Cameroon-Nigeria border. It brings out the motivations for recruitment, the political, economic, and social situation of the people of the area that prepared the mindset of the people for radicalization and recruitment. The paper further identifies the actors in the process of recruitment and the influence of geography. The study ends by examining the process of recruitment and formulates proposals that could be used by affected countries and international organizations to fight the recruitment of insurgents for Boko Haram.

**15. SUBJECT TERMS**  
Boko Haram, Recruitment, Insurgency, Cameroon, Nigeria

<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>
<b>a. REPORT</b>	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b>	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b>			USMC Command and Staff College
Unclass	Unclass	Unclass	UU	40	<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)</b> (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)

*United States Marine Corps  
Command and Staff College  
Marine Corps University  
2076 South Street  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068*

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**TITLE:**

**The Recruitment of Insurgents in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Boko Haram in Cameroon**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

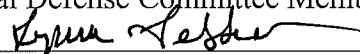
**AUTHOR:**

Ndikum, Azieh

AY 16-17


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Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: Dr. Lynn M. Tesser

Approved: 

Date: 4-4-17

Oral Defense Committee Member: Dr. Edward J. Erickson

Approved: 

Date: 4 April 2017

## Executive Summary

**Title:** The Recruitment of Insurgents in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Boko Haram in Cameroon

**Author:** Ndikum Azieh, MCU, CSC (Cameroon Special Forces).

**Thesis:** After addressing the main drivers of Boko Haram in Nigeria, this paper argues that the political, economic, and social conditions of the border communities of the Extreme North of Cameroon explain combatants' recruitment to Boko Haram. The paper also examines the process of recruiting, and presents recommendations to mitigate the situation.

**Discussion:** Boko Haram emerged in Maiduguri Nigeria in 2002. Though it recruited combatants and sympathizers from Cameroon as early as 2006, Boko Haram started recruiting massively from Cameroon in 2012 to fight in Nigeria and later extended its influence in Cameroon. Today, it has about 4,000 combatants fighting in both Nigeria and Cameroon, though the combatants are based in Nigeria. The group takes advantage of the poor socioeconomic situation, and cross-border solidarity to indoctrinate the population. Boko Haram recruits mostly youths through Koranic schools, traders through the granting of loans and motor bikes, and those in search of a job with the promise of changing their social status. Recruiters are mostly religious leaders, traditional leaders representing the sect, and some members of the business elite.

**Conclusion:** The threat is not only a religious ideology but the result of the socioeconomic and political situation of the border population, which has made residents open for recruitment. Addressing the threat will require a concerted action involving the local population and important socio-economic and infrastructural measures to alleviate poverty, create employment, and implement a comprehensive border policy to complement the present military action.

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## **Preface**

The purpose of this MMS thesis on the recruitment of Boko Haram combatants in Cameroon is to inform public opinion and decision makers as well as actors in the fight against insurgency in sub-Saharan Africa about the identity of combatants, the process of recruitment, the sociopolitical and economic climate that prepares their minds for radicalization. I developed the desire to conduct a research on the recruitment of insurgents during my long years as an intelligence officer in the Rapid Intervention Battalions on the border between Cameroon and Nigeria and my two years serving as the Intelligence Officer of Operation Alpha (code name of

the Cameroonian operation ) fighting against Boko Haram in Cameroon (2013-2015)

I became more interested in the topic when I noted the misconception that a majority of people had about the combatants of Boko Haram, and about the identity of those fighting in Cameroon. Heated debates on Cameroonian television discuss at length the origin and intentions of the insurgents but there has been no academic writing with field investigations. Most experts focus their attention on Boko Haram in Nigeria. My experience permitted me to explore the border communities from a historical, sociological, economic, and political standpoint to understand residents' plight and frustration which leads some of them to radicalization. It is my hope that this modest contribution will contribute to the understanding of Boko Haram and the elaboration of efficient measures to fight its expansion with the global approach proposed in the conclusion.

I would like to express my gratitude to the United States government and the Marines Corps. My sincere thanks also go to my MMS advisor Dr. Lynn Tesser for her patience in reading through my drafts and providing the necessary advice that permitted me to stay focused and produce an organized paper. I have also benefited a lot from the cordial academic environment provided by my faculty advisers and, especially my peers in conference group 16 to whom I will remain indebted. I will also like to thank the LCSC ( Leadership Communication Skills Center) and Ms. Andrea Hamlen for guiding me on the necessary academic writing skills throughout the course. This work would not have not have been complete without the availability of the staff of the Marine Corps University library, especially the Command and Staff Librarian, Mrs. Christi Bayha, to whom I express my sincere gratitude. I also appreciate the contributions of colleagues in Cameroon and the interviews conducted by Mr. Aziz Salatou, a correspondent for le jour newspaper in the field that has given this piece its originality.

Above all, to my dear wife, Madame Lynne Ndikum who has been obliged to be a single parent through my long absence and my kids Emmanuel Badley, Delynne Diamond, Ryia Angel, and Mike Adriel whose love and patience I admire. I appreciate their moral and psychological support throughout my stay out of home. May this academic endeavor be a source of inspiration to them.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		FORM APPROVED - - - OMB NO. 0704-0188	
<small>PUBLIC REPORTING BURDEN FOR THIS COLLECTION OF INFORMATION IS ESTIMATED TO AVERAGE 1 HOUR PER RESPONSE, INCLUDING THE TIME FOR REVIEWING INSTRUCTIONS, SEARCHING EXISTING DATA SOURCES, GATHERING AND MAINTAINING THE DATA NEEDED, AND COMPLETING AND REVIEWING THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION. SEND COMMENTS REGARDING THIS BURDEN ESTIMATE OR ANY OTHER ASPECT OF THIS COLLECTION OF INFORMATION, INCLUDING SUGGESTIONS FOR REDUCING THIS BURDEN, TO WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS SERVICES, DIRECTORATE FOR INFORMATION OPERATIONS AND REPORTS, 1215 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY, SUITE 1204, ARLINGTON, VA 22202-4302, AND TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET, PAPERWORK REDUCTION PROJECT (0704-0188) WASHINGTON, DC 20503</small>			
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (LEAVE BLANK)	2. REPORT DATE	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED STUDENT RESEARCH PAPER	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE		5. FUNDING NUMBERS  N/A	
6. AUTHOR(S)			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  USMC COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE 2076 SOUTH STREET, MCCDC, QUANTICO, VA 22134-5068		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER  NONE	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  SAME AS #7.		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER:  NONE	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES  NONE			
12A. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT  NO RESTRICTIONS		12B. DISTRIBUTION CODE  N/A	
ABSTRACT (MAXIMUM 200 WORDS)			
14. SUBJECT TERMS (KEY WORDS ON WHICH TO PERFORM SEARCH)		15. NUMBER OF PAGES:	
		16. PRICE CODE: N/A	
7. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT  UNCLASSIFIED	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE: UNCLASSIFIED	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT

## **INTRODUCTION**

**"A hungry man is an angry man" - Bob Marley**

The Extreme North of the Republic of Cameroon has been a center of violence for Boko Haram, a Muslim extremist insurgent sect that originated in Nigeria in the early days of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and later became radicalized in 2009.<sup>1</sup> Boko Haram has recruited close to 4,000 combatants from Cameroon initially to fight in Nigeria but later extended its influence in Cameroon in 2013.<sup>2</sup> Much has been written about the Nigerian theatre as the epicenter of Boko Haram but little about Cameroon despite the over 3,000 internally displaced persons and the about 1,000 persons who have died in the conflict. Boko Haram has equally affected the Cameroonian economy and security, despite the measures taken by authorities. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the conditions that made it possible for Boko Haram to recruit insurgents in Cameroon, to better understand the process of recruiting, and the identity of actors, while formulating recommendations to mitigate this situation. The study will be limited to the Cameroon Nigerian border of the Extreme North region of Cameroon, which stretches from Lake Chad in the north to Mubi in the south over a distance of 400 km. After addressing the main drivers of Boko Haram in Nigeria from which Cameroon later became a victim, this paper argues that the political, economic, and social conditions of the border communities of the Extreme North of Cameroon presents conditions ripe for recruitment in large numbers as combatants of Boko Haram. The paper will then examine the process of recruitment, recruiters and recruits, and present recommendations to mitigate the situation.

## **ORIGIN AND MAIN DRIVERS OF BOKO HARAM IN NIGERIA**

Boko Haram in Nigeria finds its roots in the Maitatsine uprising that took place in Nigeria

in 1971 though it later developed in northeast Nigeria in a complex sociopolitical issue due to the multiplicity of drivers.<sup>3</sup> While a group of Islamic clerics founded Boko Haram in 2002 in the Borno state of northeastern Nigeria bordering the Extreme North of Cameroon, the group only became radicalized in 2009 in response to the Nigerian administration's poor management.<sup>4</sup> In 2009 followers of Boko Haram started a process of civil disobedience by refusing to wear helmets when driving motor bikes as prescribed by the laws in force. This led to the arrest of several of its members, which sparked a clash with the police, leaving 800 people dead. The Nigerian police detained Mohammed Yusuf, Boko Haram's leader, and later executed him without trial. Abubakar Shekau, a proponent of using terrorist tactics to advance his agenda, replaced Mohammed Yusuf. He easily developed links with al-Qaida, the dominant terrorist group at the time which permitted his fighters to receive training from al-Qaida on explosives as well as indoctrination.<sup>5</sup>

Boko Haram's new leader based the group's ideology on religious but also on tribal lines. The northwestern part of Cameroon is inhabited by the same dominant ethnic group in northeastern Nigeria. The Kanuri people living in Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, and Chad have the same ancestral origins, migration and settlement. Colonial masters, France and Great Britain, divided this Kanuri kingdom into separate countries. Cross border cultural similarities and socioeconomic and political factors were therefore going to play a very important role in the spread of Boko Haram from Nigeria to the rest of the Lake Chad basin countries, especially Cameroon. In 2012, Boko Haram intensified the recruitment of combatants in Cameroon and became even more violent after the collapse of the Libyan regime which left part of Africa south of the Sahara with tons of uncontrolled weapons going to terrorist groups. On several occasions, Cameroon refused targeting these terrorists on the pretext that "it was a purely Nigerian affair and that Cameroon will not enter into a war that was not his."<sup>6</sup> Even when the border villages of Hile Alifa, Bargaram, Darak,

Fotokol, Bodo, Kousseri, Waza, Limani, Sheriff Musharri, Amchide, Kerawa, Kolofata, Ashigashia, Ngossi, Torou Blangoua, and Makary became preparatory grounds for Boko Haram operations and recruitment centers, it was not yet a concern for the Cameroonian administration.

The kidnapping of French tourist Moulin Fournier and his family on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2013 at Dabanga, a locality on the Cameroon-Nigeria border was the beginning of Boko Haram activities on Cameroonian soil. Then followed by other kidnappings, attacks, and a declaration of war on the Islamic sect by President Paul Biya of Cameroon on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2014 during a summit on Boko Haram in Paris France.

Though founded in 2002, this insurgent movement finds its roots in the fundamentalist ideologies of the Maitatsine Islamic movements founded in the 1970s that were violently cracked down on by the Nigerian government in 1982. Founder Mohammed Yussuf, was a dedicated fundamentalist whose thinking was heavily influenced by the Wahhabi theology.<sup>7</sup> He wanted to transform Nigeria into an Islamic State and impose Sharia law throughout the country. Today, a mixture of historical, political, economic and ethnic antagonisms are the main drivers of Boko Haram in Nigeria, promoting an environment where extremist groups easily gain sympathy.<sup>8</sup> These will include corruption, unequal resource distribution, unemployment, political competition, religious strife, and the indiscriminate use of violence by the Nigerian government to suppress the sect.

Systemic corruption and poor governance have over the years led to the undermining of state authority and legitimacy, thereby opening a pathway for extremist ideology. According to some analysts, Boko Haram is the result of the failure of successive Nigerians administrations to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor.<sup>9</sup> The political and economic elite have become extremely rich while the masses are in abject poverty. The difficulties of a wide majority have

deepened their frustration and progressively radicalize many into extremism.<sup>10</sup>

Economic marginalization and unequal distribution of Nigeria's resources has increased its existing grievances resulting in anti-government revolts through the extremist sect. Seventy two percent of northerners live in poverty as compared to twenty seven percent in the south and thirty five percent in the Niger Delta.<sup>11</sup> The northeastern area serving as a virtual headquarters of Boko Haram has the highest rate of poverty among the six ethno-regional zones.<sup>12</sup> This region has been unable to provide basic social services to its population, making the masses more likely to revolt. In such circumstances and in the absence of hope for any solution, the local population is easily converted to Islamic extremism.

In conjunction with income inequality, there is a high rate of unemployment among the youths of fighting age, thus making them hostile and open to employment by terrorists. It is estimated that eighty percent of youths in the Borno State are unemployed.<sup>13</sup> In the 1990s, while the youth population was growing at a sizeable rate, companies in Kano state of northern Nigeria were closing up, thereby worsening the employment situation and exposing the youths to recruitment by Boko Haram.

The populations of the northern states of Nigeria have a perception of the deterioration of the zone power sharing arrangement between the Nigerian ethno-religious regions.<sup>14</sup> Nigeria has always been a country where ethnic religious factions compete for political power. Since the return of democracy in 1999, there has been an unofficial power sharing agreement among the six ethno-religious zones. Northern Muslims in Nigeria considered the replacement of President Umaru Yar dua, a northern Muslim, after his death by Goodluck Jonathan a southern Christian as a breach of contract. Some of the northerners, mostly illiterates, joined Boko Haram to express their discontent. Many observers have therefore seen the Boko Haram conflict as a north-south political

struggle in Nigeria.<sup>15</sup>

Boko Haram is a logical continuation of the persistent sectarian strife between the different religions in Nigeria. Sectarian conflicts are a common feature in Nigerian political life.<sup>16</sup> All political and economic disputes have religious lines. More than 20,000 people have been killed in religious related violence during the last 20 years in sectarian conflicts mostly between the Muslim north and the Christian south. Boko Haram took advantage of this situation to call for sympathy among the northerners and recruit many to fight a war of liberation from the Christians, especially at a time when the president was a Christian from the south.

The Nigerian government's heavy handed approach in combatting violent extremism has increasingly radicalized the movement. The use of extreme violence by the Nigerian government as a solution to problems raised by Boko Haram only radicalized the youths of the north. Boko Haram was not committed to violence before 2009. The Maiduguri repression of 2009 and, the execution without trial of Boko Haram's first leader Mohammed Yusuf in 2009 ushered in a new leader that was not only radical, but used several government actions to request the sympathy of the Nigerian people. The harsh behavior of security forces reduced the possibility of the forces to gather intelligence and permitted Boko Haram to expand widely.<sup>17</sup> This is one of the reasons why Boko Haram exploded in 2009 to occupy most of the Borno State, the Extreme North region of Cameroon and the Lake Chad basin as a whole.

Boko Haram in Cameroon in general and the recruitments of its combatants from Cameroon in particular has not attracted the attention of many authors despite the rich literature that exists on Boko Haram in Nigeria. However, a few publications have been of interest in the preparation of this thesis. An article by Corentin Cohen on political instability in Lake Chad gives a general picture of its population and the old criminal habits of the people in the area where Boko

Haram has been dominating socio-political life.<sup>18</sup> Christian Seignobos, who writes on the innovations of war on the Mandara mountains, is very edifying on the changes in tactics and techniques used by Boko Haram both in Cameroon and Nigeria where the Mandara mountains stretch. His major concern is the change in logistics and tactics over time.<sup>19</sup> Writing on the operational activities in the fight against Boko Haram, Aziz Salatou has been interested in the lack of a coordinated action of Cameroon forces against Boko Haram in his article “Cacophony au front” (Confusion in the Battlefield).<sup>20</sup> One of the best publications that treats the subject summarily is the November 2016 publication of the International Crisis Group which estimates that there are about 3,500 to 4,000 Cameroonians currently serving as combatants for Boko Haram.<sup>21</sup> Although these authors have been very elaborate in their analysis, they have failed to sufficiently address the crucial problem of the recruitment of terrorists. The space dedicated to recruitment of insurgents does not permit them to answer the questions: who, where, why, how, and with who was recruitment of insurgents done in Cameroon. This thesis fills this gap.

My description and analysis of Boko Haram on the Cameroon Nigeria border owes mainly to primary and secondary sources. Because of the scarcity of written material on Boko Haram in Cameroon, this work has relied to a very large extent on primary sources. The proximity of the author to the area of study and his experience in the field for two years as intelligence officer working with captured insurgents and those who surrendered shapes this thesis’ analysis. Unclassified intelligence reports, interviews with captured insurgents, a captured recruiter, and actors in the field also provide valuable insights in understanding the intricacies involved in the recruitment of Boko Haram insurgents in Cameroon.

## **THE IDENTITY OF FIGHTERS RECRUITED FROM CAMEROON AND RECRUITERS**

The identity of Boko Haram combatants and recruiters is the most likely question that every person studying terrorism and insurgency in Sub-Saharan Africa will ask. Many Cameroonians argue that none of them are Cameroonians and consider the sect to be an aggressive incursion from neighboring Nigeria.

### **Combatants**

Boko Haram recruits from Cameroon are generally Cameroonians of the border villages between the ages of 16 and 40. Those between the ages of 17 and 30 constitute a significant majority. About seventy five percent of them are men while women are about ten percent. The rest are children and older people.<sup>22</sup> Boko Haram uses the men in active combat while the women stay behind to cook their food and perform other domestic responsibilities in the terrorist camp. Also, the terrorist group uses the children in the battlefield for forward observation and in some cases, as human shields to protect the advancement of insurgents.<sup>23</sup> In April 2014, a detachment of Cameroonian Special Forces uncovered an attempt by Boko Haram to use women and children as human shield in Amchide. The older people are mostly religious leaders (called marabouts) who prepare the group psychologically and mystically before any operation. From the age perspective, the youths are therefore the dominant target group of Boko Haram. It is worth noting that there has been no top-level member of Boko Haram of Cameroonian origin. They are instead at the execution or tactical level.

Aziz Salatou, a correspondent on Boko Haram in a Cameroon based daily newspaper, distinguishes the recruits of Boko Haram according to their assigned tasks: combatants, logisticians, marabouts, and intelligence agents.<sup>24</sup> While all combatants are conscious of their commitment to the sect, some of the logisticians are simply out for business. Logisticians include

suppliers of rice, flour, corn, millet, cows and other food products that leave Cameroon for Nigeria. In most cases, Boko Haram became attractive because of the profits obtained by merchants in the sale of their goods, and with time they became active agents of the sect. Marabouts are mostly the ideological leaders who believe in the apocalypse. They preach this ideology all day to their members with the intention of having more converts or preparing their combatants for future operations. Of late they have been indoctrinating their combatants with the ISIS principle of being feared rather than to be afraid. The only way of being feared is by being inhuman, committing atrocities, beheading people, and undertaking other forms of massive killings. Most of the children under the age of ten found themselves there either because they came with their parents, from Koranic schools, or Boko Haram captured their villages and they had no option. Through indoctrination, they grow up to be as violent or if not more violent than their parents.

Boko Haram's intelligence agents sympathize with the ideology, but do not necessarily stay in the camps. Some may receive compensation for providing information to insurgents but many of them are voluntary. Villages like Double, Manawashe, Homeka, Bonderi Gousda Vreket had more informants for Boko Haram in 2014 than for friendly forces. The intelligence officer of Operation Alpha fighting against Boko Haram had more difficulties than Boko Haram in the mastery of information in the battlefield. He was sure that there were activists of Boko Haram who mastered the terrain and had real time information on the deployment of friendly forces.<sup>25</sup>

From an ethnic perspective, Boko Haram recruited close to 80 percent of its combatants from Cameroon among the Kanuri ethnic group. This is understandably so because the leader of Boko Haram in 2009, Abubaker Shekau, decided to exploit ethnic lines. These people still share cross border ethnic solidarity despite the new boundaries that were imposed by the colonial masters (France and Britain in 1960).<sup>26</sup> The second ethnic group is the Mafa found in the Mayo Sava and

Logone and Chari Divisions of the Extreme North of Cameroon. They are found in small communities but share the same social burden like the Kanuri majority. Other communities like the Guiziga, Peul, Arab, Kotoko, Toupouri and Massa found in the region are represented among the recruits but with a very low ratio. On the chain of logistics, recruits could be found from other regions of Cameroon just for their economic interest.

## **Recruiters**

The question of who recruits for Boko Haram in Cameroon has been for a long time a concern. Yet they do not differ from those who recruit in Nigeria. Followers vary from one village to the other and from one target population to the other. In general, university lecturers, Koranic school teachers, traditional leaders, and businessmen take part in recruitment.

University lecturers are the main class of people who identify recruits of the educated class of Boko Haram combatants from Nigerian universities. Dr. Mohammed Nazeef Yunus, associate professor in the department of Islamic studies in the Kogi state university, was until his arrest in November 2013 an active recruiter of both Cameroonians and Nigerians in the university. He encouraged extremism through his lectures and convinced those who approach him for personal problems to join the movement. Many students confessed after his arrest having been approached by this lecturer for recruitment.<sup>27</sup> The purpose of university lecturers is to have educated people in every village to propagate their Salafist ideology. Many of those who accepted did so either for economic reasons (financial reward) or because they were convinced by the ideology.

Boko Haram recruited many young children during their stay in the many Koranic schools in northeastern Nigeria. Many parents of border villages in Cameroon developed the habit of sending their children to learn the Koran in Nigeria. These children spent several years reciting the

Koran, influenced by their teachers to join the sect. Many who graduated from these schools could recite the Koran from the first to the last verse. The pupils of these Koranic schools became converted by the Salafist Muslim ideology which first started in these schools. Some of them slaughtered their parents on their return as a sign of their commitment to the Salafist branch, and on the pretext that they were not true Muslims.

Boko Haram used traditional rulers converted to the ideology to recruit other combatants in their respective villages. This class of recruiters had a lot of influence in the traditional African setup. This was the case of the Lawan (traditional ruler) of Sheriff Mushari who convinced all the youths of his village to join the sect for a better livelihood. He later escaped to Nigeria when he was hunted by Cameroonian security forces in 2014.<sup>28</sup>

Businessmen in Nigeria played an equally active role in the recruitment of insurgents from Cameroon. Most of them were those involved in cross border commerce, in the buying of cotton, the sale of spare motor parts, loin cloths, household equipment, and foodstuffs. As they were converted to the ideology of the sect, they convinced their Cameroonian business contacts in the markets of Amchide, Limani, Mora, Kouser, Fotokol and Maroua to follow the ideals of the sect. Some went as far as providing capital for some beginners and bought motor bikes for the active combatants.

### **ATTRACTIVE FACTORS TO RECRUITMENT: THE CASE OF BOKO HARAM IN CAMEROON**

Conflict theorists may disagree on a number of issues but generally agree that no one factor independently leads to the outbreak of a crisis. According to John Galtung, conflicts are a result of a variety of triggers. Certain political, economic, and social conditions made it possible for the (initially all Nigerian) Boko Haram to recruit with ease from Cameroon use these Cameroonian

recruits to fight in Nigeria, and later start terrorist activities on Cameroonian soil.<sup>29</sup> The socio-economic and political situation of certain localities explains why the Islamic sect was only able to recruit in specific areas cited above. Regardless of the classification given to these factors that made it possible for Boko Haram to recruit from Cameroon, the bottom line is poverty, illiteracy, famine, lack of infrastructure, government corruption and incompetence, and cross cultural ethnic solidarity which facilitated the spread of the Salafist Islamic ideology on both sites of the border. Abubakar Shekau, the sects` leader from 2009, spread religious ideology on religious and ethnic (Kanuri) lines to attract border populations in Cameroon.

Politically, the absence of the effective presence of state institutions in the border areas of the Extreme North of Cameroon deeply affected the spirit of nationalism, and made the population influenced by events in Nigeria.<sup>30</sup> There are few Cameroonian state institutions in the border towns, and the few that exist are either ill equipped or have no personnel. At the outbreak of the Boko Haram insurgency in 2013, the divisional officers for Kolofata, Fotokol, and Hile Alifa subdivisions (border administrative units) were the only civil servants in these border localities. The situation is the same in police and gendarmerie units that are found along the border.<sup>31</sup> The Gendarmerie post of Bonderi in the Mayo Sava had eight gendarmes while the frontier police post of Kolofata had two policemen. The legion commander of the Extreme North region was obliged to close the brigade by the end of 2014 for fear of it becoming a potential target. In the same way, he instructed those of the brigade of Kolofata to relocate in the BIR (Special Intervention Battalion) camp for their safety.<sup>32</sup> They could not influence the trend of events alone with administrative structures that require 20 state workers. The sentiment among the population that they were not Cameroonians was deep in their mind. They could only identify themselves on similar religious and ethnic lines. Unfortunately, when Boko Haram became radicalized in Nigeria, they felt it was

a duty to join them either by sympathy, solidarity, commitment or an opportunity to change their social status through the financial benefits they would receive.

The border regions of the Extreme North of Cameroon had an acute lack of a representative political elite who can represent them in the local and national decision-making process which deepened their frustration. The Mayo Sava and the Logone and Chari Divisions, which are the principal administrative units affected by the recruitment of Boko Haram, have had the same political elite for the past 50 years chosen haphazardly by the political leaders of Cameroon. Some members of government from these localities have been in office since 1983 while some elected officials have occupied the same position since 1969.<sup>33</sup> These personalities have lost contacts and legitimacy. They do not understand the sufferings of the majority of the youths born after they came to power. They benefit from the confidence of the head of state and scarcely return to their people to legitimize their position. In the absence of a possibility to transmit their grievances to hierarchy, the youths developed further frustration that prepared their mindset for radicalization and recruitment into Boko Haram. They feel deprived of their political choice and progressively lost a sense of belonging. Boko Haram took advantage of this situation.

Furthermore, the Republic of Cameroon has no efficient policy on the management of borders. The absence of such a policy brings neglect to strategic borders sometimes completely inhabited by foreigners. These foreigners dominate the sociopolitical and economic life and make it part of their territory. This was the case with the localities of Homeka, Kerawa, Ashigashia, Tourou, Gossi, Bargaram and Hile Alifa which Boko Haram initially used as hideouts and eventually recruited almost all youths to join the sect before authorities found out.

The Cameroon-Nigerian border has changed three times since independence, and is the product of colonization characterized by porous and unmaterialized frontier lines where movement

to and from Nigeria in many areas is uncontrolled. It becomes extremely difficult for an illiterate population to know at one moment or the other if he is in Cameroon or Nigeria. It is even more confusing since all residents raise cattle, practice the same religion, speak the same local language, and have the same origins and migrations. With Boko Haram controlling basically all of the Borno state by March 2012, it became easy to recruit on the Cameroonian part of the border. In the Lake Chad area, the only natural boundary is the El Beid River which dries up in the dry season. With the advancement of the Sahara Desert, everywhere becomes a road and populations move to and from Nigeria as if they were in the same country. The evolution of events in Nigeria from 2009 followed the same trend with the border communities who frequent Nigeria and Nigerians who frequent their community sharing the same extremist ideas. Their recruitment in the sect became very natural as the sect became the only political driving force in northeastern Nigeria. Boko Haram's Islamic Koranic teachers trained in the Sambisa forest came and stayed in some villages for months indoctrinating the local youths later accepting recruitment.<sup>34</sup> They behaved in these villages as if they were home.

Economically, Boko Haram took advantage of the deplorable economic situation of the border localities to spread its ideology and obtain mass recruitment. In effect, the border areas of the Extreme North are among the poorest in the Republic of Cameroon. Only 30 percent of the population can offer themselves two meals a day. Poor agricultural production aggravated by the advancement of the Sahara Desert, unemployment, and economic dependence on the vibrant economy of Nigeria made the recruitment of terrorists easy. Many who were desperate and needy were ready to accept any situation provided it gave them a livelihood. This explains why the early recruits actually joined Boko Haram for a monthly salary that could permit them to live a decent life.

Agricultural production, particularly in the Logone and Chari division and the Mayo Sava over the past years has been disastrous making the people rely on the food aid given them by Nigerian religious authorities, who are most of the time extremists. This has been due partly to lack of appropriate farming techniques, lack of incentives, the advancement of the Sahara Desert, and regular floods from Lake Chad.<sup>35</sup> The production capacity of these areas has been very low while the population has been growing at a sizeable rate. In 1972, the Republic of Cameroon created a rice production and modernization company (SEMRY) to take advantage of the floods from Lake Chad for rice cultivation, to provide jobs, and to satisfy the food demands of the population.<sup>36</sup> SEMRY received subventions from the state in the 1970s and had a lot of success but was mismanaged with the arrival of the petroleum boom in the late 1970s and the 1980s, rendering the growing population hungry and jobless. In the same way, the cotton production company (SODECOTON) is a state-owned company created in the mid-1970s to fight unemployment and boost the economy of the northern regions of Cameroon. It was also the state's response to population growth but managerial crisis limited it to seasonal production than regular production with irrigation as the project was intended to be.<sup>37</sup> With this poor agriculture and lack of food self-sufficiency, Boko Haram used food (rice that was bought from a distributor in Cameroon [SOACAM] to capture the interest of the local population.) They accepted gifts and several months later, they felt it was a duty to take sides with people who sympathized with them by joining them in their armed struggle against what they considered to be infidels first of all in Nigeria and later in Cameroon.

The Extreme North region of Cameroon has the largest population size and the largest rate of unemployed youths, which leads this youthful population to criminality for a livelihood. The 2006 population census statistics put the population of the Extreme North at 3.1 million and

projections for 2015 were 4 million<sup>38</sup> Seventy five percent of this population is below the age of thirty-five (the active age) without a corresponding availability of jobs or the hope of having jobs. Most of the youths move to Nigeria in search of a livelihood. A majority end up in the informal sector, buying motor spare parts, motor bikes, contraband fuel, and other basic household necessities to sell in the border towns and the closest Cameroonian towns where these supplies are scarce. It is during these business visits that most of the youths in the informal sector were contacted and convinced to serve Boko Haram to change their social status. Some poor recruits accept the job just for a salary but later undergo the process of indoctrination.<sup>39</sup> In an operational visit to the village of Bia situated at 20 miles to the border with Nigeria on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2015, a Special Intervention Battalion regular patrol discovered that only aged persons, women and children were in the village; all men of active age had joined Boko Haram because of one of these motivations cited above.<sup>40</sup>

The economic life of the border populations of Cameroon is one hundred percent attached to Nigeria and has become over the years an active part of a purely Nigerian business community.<sup>41</sup> The population sells all their local produce in Nigeria and buys all their basic supplies from Nigeria. The prices of basic necessities and consumer goods are very cheap in Nigeria because of its large production capacity.<sup>42</sup> For example, gasoline sold in Nigeria is sold at less than half the price in Cameroon. It is during such regular visits that Cameroonians get in contact with extremist Muslim preachers from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia visiting Nigeria during the spread of Wahhabism. The economic life of the population prepares their state of mind to a very large extent to accept extremism and later become fighters after being recruited. Boko Haram becomes a solution to population unemployment.

Socially, the acute lack of social amenities in border communities made these populations

closer to Nigeria and by extension closer to the roots of Boko Haram. In the field of infrastructure, there is no tarred road linking the border communities to the major cities of Cameroon, whereas Nigerian roads move up to the border. It is fondly said in Cameroon that “When you are moving along the Cameroon-Nigeria border and you meet a tarred road, know that you have crossed the border.” This lack of infrastructure made the population to be more inclined to Nigeria as they feel comfortable travelling through to the big cities in Nigeria with ease in search of a livelihood. When Nigerian communities started fighting on the side of Boko Haram, most of the youths identified themselves as part of them and decided progressively to join them. Some of them told their friends that they were going to a *Hijra* which means in Arabic an area where the Sharia law is applied.

The lack of health facilities in the border villages obliges the border communities to move to Nigeria for their health concerns, thereby making them closer to Nigeria than their country of origin. A good example is the population of Fotokol, a subdivision with a medical center that had no medical doctor whereas Gambarou on the Nigerian side across the El Beid River had a reference hospital and a military clinic at Ngala with each having more than 10 medical doctors.<sup>43</sup> These contacts made them live as members of one community with the same challenges. They naturally followed Nigerians in Boko Haram when the message of resisting Western civilization became popular in northeastern Nigeria.

In the domain of education, the border communities of Cameroon are largely illiterate. There are no schools and the few that exist either do not have classrooms or do not have teachers. As a consequence, the Islamic teachers easily transformed those who cross the border to Nigeria to study, and the task of shaping the ideology of illiterates who stayed behind was pretty easy. They were in most cases told that they will have a better life after death than being alive if they die for Allah. For example, the lone primary school in Sheriff Mushari has three classrooms and

two teachers. Most of the children do not even go to school. They either follow their parents to take care of the family cattle and later move to Nigeria for business in the informal sector or attend Koranic schools. This brought them closer to the ideology of Boko Haram

The border populations' political, economic, social, and spiritual life depended on the evolution of events in Nigeria. Parents of border communities that are predominantly Muslim send all their children to Koranic schools in Nigeria. It was in these schools that the Salafist ideology was first identified in the early 1990s.<sup>44</sup> Children left their parents without any formal education and stayed in Nigeria for several years reciting the Koran. Koranic schools taught the most radical ideas of Islam without any opportunity for secular education. They grew up knowing that the teachers in Koranic schools were closest to God. Those who studied in these schools changed their way of behaving when they returned to their villages i.e. (isolation, separate worship place, violence on those who think otherwise, some even beheaded their parents to show their attachment to Allah). It was this class of Koranic school graduates from northeastern Nigeria that constituted the first recruits and the first ambassadors of Boko Haram in Cameroon. The villages of Kidjimatari and Kerawa in Kolofata sub-division witnessed these behaviors from youths returning from Nigeria several years before the outbreak of the conflict.

The above analysis shows clearly that before the beginning of the process of recruitment on Cameroonian territory, the border populations were politically weak, poor, unemployed, and in need of social amenities. Their proximity to religion and their cultural relationship with Kanuris in Nigeria made them to identify more with Nigeria, despite the legal border which was disregarded by many. It was this situation that Boko Haram met in 2012 which virtually opened the door for mass recruitment of insurgents estimated today at 4,000 combatants fighting in both Nigeria and Cameroon. Boko Haram exploited these weaknesses and in each case corresponded a mode of

recruitment and indoctrination.

### **THE PROCESS OF RECRUITMENT OF BOKO HARAM IN CAMEROON**

Initial Boko Haram recruits from Cameroon had only the tasks to assist the sect accomplish their mission in Nigeria. Until 2013, Cameroon was not a target for Boko Haram. The group periodically escaped from Nigeria to stay in Cameroon but did not attack any locality. The first recruits were therefore moving out either for a job, to serve an ideological cause, or to assist their tribesmen in what they considered to be oppression in Nigeria. In some rare cases, they captured merchants coming back from the weekly market of Maiduguri and obliged them to fight on their side. In certain cases, border villages were encircled and all the youths taken away by force for training in Boko Haram camps in Nigeria.

By 2011, the stage was set for the easy recruitment of terrorists by Boko Haram on Cameroonian territory. The sociopolitical, economic and cultural situation made the mindset of the population disposed to accept any information. The activists were coincidentally at the same time extending their influence in the region following the collapse of the Libyan regime and the spread all over the area of weapons that Muamar Gaddafi had gathered for more than 40 years. Boko Haram therefore needed Cameroonians to extend their influence, acquire more logistics in Nigeria, and get combatants to fight in Nigeria with no social ties or constraints.<sup>45</sup> The established process was through Koranic schools, students in the University of Maiduguri, informal trade, giving of gifts and provision of water wells in the communities, financial rewards and salary, extremists preaching in the border areas, and force.

Boko Haram's initial target in the process of recruitment from Cameroon included university students and Koranic school students of Cameroonian origin at the University of

Maiduguri, which is the headquarters of the sect.<sup>46</sup> With the lack of social amenities, schools and the socio-economic relations in Northern Nigeria, most of their children went to school in Maiduguri and Kano. Boko Haram targeted this particular group because they were already sympathizers with their cause and had the possibility of convincing other members of their communities to join Boko Haram. It is in this way that a large majority of them who came back isolated themselves from the population, prayed in separate places and were violent against all moderate Muslims whom they considered as hypocrites.<sup>47</sup> The localities of Kolofata, Kerawa, Ashigashia and Dimili witnessed this change of attitude in their youth about a year before Boko Haram's manifestation in Cameroon.

The second means of recruitment was by offering loans and entrepreneurial assistance acting as an incentive that attracts new recruits.<sup>48</sup> Despite the violence directed outward, Boko Haram has continued functioning as a kind of state within its region. As Mercy Corps, has documented, people in northeast Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin have turned to Boko Haram for help. Mercy Corps documented a number of instances in which aspiring and fledgling entrepreneurs accepted loans and capital from Boko Haram. According to the report, Boko Haram has recruited by exploiting "common desires of youth in this region, to get ahead economically and distinguish themselves in their communities."<sup>49</sup>

Thirdly, Boko Haram also used the existence of a flourishing informal trade between Cameroon and Nigeria to recruit more than 500 youths into the sect. This is perhaps the aspect of recruitment that is not limited to the border localities. Traders who bought spare parts, electronics, household equipment and fuel from Nigeria were easily convinced to join the group. Even worse were those who sold food items to Nigeria like rice, Irish potatoes, corn, millet, onions and groundnuts.<sup>50</sup> While a bag of 50kgs of rice cost 18,000 francs (\$36) in the Maroua central market

(Cameroon) in 2013 and 2014, Boko Haram was buying the same bag at 50,000 francs (\$100) 80 miles away. As a consequence, most traders preferred selling their produce on the Nigerian market (dominated by Boko Haram at that time) to gain more profit. Some merchants progressively became active logicians of Boko Haram, causing scarcity on the local market, and discovered they were very deep in the system. Many preferred to continue to gain more money. This was same with other goods produced in Cameroon. There are traders who became actively a chain of the logistics of Boko Haram without necessarily knowing that they were fueling an unjust cause.

The fourth method used by Boko Haram was the provision of basic social amenities like water wells and the donations of gifts to the needy population to attract recruits. According to Owani, a handicap shoe repairer and Boko Haram informant who was arrested in Kolofata in August 2014, Boko Haram took several months to get its message through.<sup>51</sup> They will dig a well in the name of charity, provide some small money ranging from \$100 to \$200 to start a business. Later on, they will tell recruits to inform them of all happenings in the area. At the end, they will convince recruits and local inhabitants to join them to serve Allah and have a better life. The process took several months and attracted the sympathy of the local population with time. It was only after the high intensity conflict of 2014 that intelligence sources revealed these methods. It was not easy to combat them.

The fifth method of recruitment was employment for a monthly income. A wide majority of those recruited in the border area joined for purely economic reasons. For example, in the localities of Bia, Homaka, Ngossi, Ngetchwe, Kolofata, Ashigashia, Kerawa and Sheriff Moshari, a motor bike and sums of money ranging from \$100 to \$400 with a promise of a monthly salary of \$200 was offered to the youths.<sup>52</sup> In an area of famine and rising unemployment, many readily accepted. Some youths accepted recruitment after the primary successes of the sect with

kidnappings and distribution of ransoms. Early recruits came back to their villages after a few months proud to have accomplished a great deal for their faith and ethnic group. Boko Haram membership also allowed them to change their social status. They moved around with their AK47 in the village admired by their peers. They had no sentiments about killing people in Nigeria in the name of the sect since they came from distant places. They proved to be more efficient and received more financial rewards from the sect than Nigerian fighters. On their periodic return to their villages, they displayed riches that they did not possess before entering the group. Initial recruitment seriously affected the villages of Kerawa, Zelevet, Manawashe, Ashigashia, Homeka, Fotokol, Bargaram, and Hile Alifa.

The sixth method was to replace the vacuum created by the state in northeast Nigeria and part of Cameroon. To fill that gap, local groups organized self-help networks along religious or ethnic lines. Boko Haram was one of those groups serving as a kind of para-government, offering help paying the bills; support for the unemployed, widows, and children; and a sense of belonging that filled the gap left by the absence of the state. By the mid-2005, Boko Haram had expanded its state-like activities into paramilitary incursions in Nigeria, and with their assistance extended to the Cameroonian localities. Cameroonians were more than willing to join them. Initially they violently attacked other Salafist and Muslim groups that criticized their interpretation of the Koran before later occupying territory.

Some border villagers joined this terrorist group by force after their villages were entirely captured by Boko Haram, and were obliged to join the group or be killed. There are border villages like Bia, Dimili, Ashigashia which were entirely Boko Haram villages in 2014. The few who never accepted the ideology of Boko Haram had to make a choice of joining them or of being beheaded.<sup>53</sup> Many of those who were recruited by force ended up escaping during some of their early

operations. This was the case in the locality of Maleri on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2014 when Boko Haram activists encircled and took away all youths between the ages of 15 and 23.<sup>54</sup>

Though a continuous process, the recruitment of Boko Haram fighters has had tremendous setbacks since the Cameroon government started decisive operations against the sect in May 2014. Though based in Nigeria, most recruits occasionally come to their villages in the night to steal food crops and domestic animals. The intelligence network in certain localities regularly reports their presence, and the government organized manhunt against them. However, it will take some time for those already integrated in the sect to return to their villages because of the fear of government arrest and the continuous problem of famine and unemployment in border localities.

## CONCLUSION

The recruitment of insurgents in Cameroon by Boko Haram has been a long process that started in the background with the migration of the Kanuri in Cameroon and Nigeria. The political, economic, and social situation of the border population weakened their willpower to resist recruitment. Boko Haram had an easy pathway into the impoverished population that were economically dependent on Nigeria, and ethnically more inclined to Nigeria. This partly explains why Boko Haram organized attacks in Nigeria and took refuge in Cameroon. The sect is rightfully perceived as a means to an end by a poor, hungry, impoverished, marginalized and frustrated population. The fight against this sect will therefore never be successful if Nigeria and Cameroon fight differently. The fight against Boko Haram deserves a more global and concerted approach involving actors of both countries. The boundary line drawn on the map by the colonial master has had little or no impact on the cross-border solidarity of the population. Countries of the Lake Chad

Basin Commission should also stay above these boundaries and address the insurgents collectively.

This study shows clearly that terrorism is just a means used by Nigerians to express their social frustration. The main drivers of the sect are political, economic, and social rather than religious. The above analysis is also a testimony that the border towns of Cameroon had sizeable political, economic, and social problems facilitating the manifestations of a radical religious ideology from neighboring Nigeria. The ideology only found its threshold in the existing problems in these localities. Governments, partner nations, and international organizations engaged in the fight against Boko Haram must lay emphasis on the economic, social, and political life of the population. The population (center of gravity) is an actor and victim of all the atrocities caused by Boko Haram. A reform of the political climate will facilitate an inclusive social dialogue; investment in the agricultural and pastoral sectors will permit the masses to satisfy their basic needs; and the provision of social amenities is necessary to bring a lasting solution in these areas. The current security measures taken by each country individually and the measures taken collectively within the auspices of the Lake Chad Basin Commission with the support of the United States and other international partners will yield fruits in the short term. However, the threats will resurface over time as the same causes will produce the same effects in recruitment and radicalization. A common saying goes that “a hungry man is an angry man.” Poverty, misery, social exclusion, marginalization, the absence of the state and corruption heightened the spread of the terrorist ideology. Insurgents used this advantage in religious places to give false hope to the population and obtain their recruitment in the sect.

The global approach which involves not only the involvement of all actors, victims and stakeholders but also a broad-based framework which deals with the threat not only from the military perspective is highly recommended. In such an approach, the military, economic, social

and political approach will all be complementary.

### **The 10 administrative regions of Cameroon**



Map 1: Map of Cameroon showing the 10 administrative regions of Cameroon

Source : [www.nationsonline.org/.../map/cameroon-administrative-map](http://www.nationsonline.org/.../map/cameroon-administrative-map).

## TOWNS AND VILLAGES CLAIMED BY BOKO HARAM

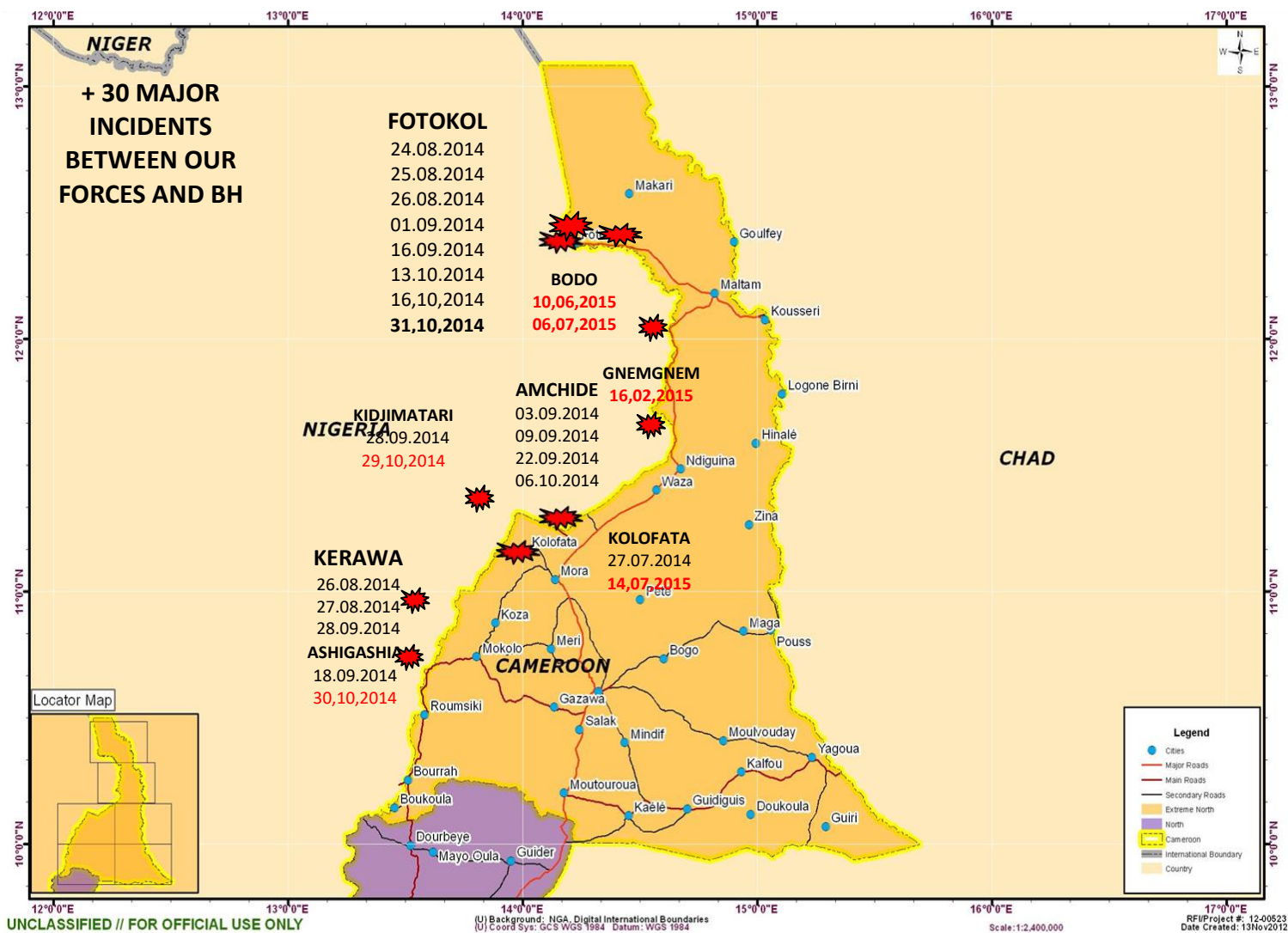


**Map 2** shows northeast Nigeria and northwest Cameroon with Boko Haram occupying all major towns on the Nigerian side of the border. The Map also shows in blue areas in Cameroon that were temporally under the control of Boko Haram before being chased out by Cameroonian security forces in December 2014.

Source : [www.conflictmap.org/conflict/boko\\_haram](http://www.conflictmap.org/conflict/boko_haram)

**Map 3** Border villages where combatants were recruited and regularly attacked.

**(U) Cameroon – Extreme North State Overview**



Source: Opération Alpha archives (intelligence office)

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Boko Haram is an Arabic word which literally means that western education is a crime and advocates for the application of Sharia law. Its takes its foundation from the Salafist branch of Islam.

<sup>2</sup> International Crises Group, *Cameroun Faire face à Boko Haram*, Rapport Afrique, Brussels, Belgium, 16 November 2016, 13.

<sup>3</sup> The Maitatsine riots were a series of violent uprisings instigated by Islamist militants in Northern Nigeria between 1980 and 1985 and represented Northern Nigeria's first major wave of religiously-inspired violence. The riots prompted immense ethno-religious discord between Muslims and Christians in subsequent years to come. It was led by a Cameroonian, Mahammadou Marwa, based in Kano.

<sup>4</sup> Adimbola O. Adesoji, "Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram: Islamic Fundamentalism, the Response of the Nigerian State," *Africa Today*, 57, No. 4 (2011), 98-119.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Ousman, Boko Haram captive, by Cameroonian Forces of Law and Order, August 12 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Aziz, Salatou, "Cacophonie au front." *Le Jour*, no 1680, Yaounde, April 28, 2014, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Wahhabi theology was founded by Mohammed Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-92) and stresses the absolute sovereignty of God. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab also rejected any reliance on the intercession of Mohammed and denounced pilgrimages to saints' tombs, declaring that their domes or shrines should be destroyed. As an opposer of innovation, he advocated a return to what he saw as the purity of the first generation of Islam, the salaf and the teaching of any school of law. His ideas were deeply influenced by the teachings of Ibn Taymiyah (1263-1328) who saw the state as an adjunct of religion and opposed discursive theology.

<sup>8</sup> Ploch, Lauren, "Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," *CRS Report for Congress*, Washington DC, 2013, 8

<sup>9</sup> Patricio Asfura and Julis Macquied, *Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict: Grievances Motivations and Institutional Resilience in North East Nigeria*. CNA, Analysis and Solutions, Washington DC, 2015, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Leena Hoffmann, "Who speaks for the North? Politics and Influence in Northern Nigeria," Chatham House, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2004, 4-5.

<sup>11</sup> Mohammed Aly Sergie and Toni Johnson, "Islam: Governing Sharia," *CFR Backgrounders*, July 25, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> International Crisis Group, "Curbing Violence in Nigeria: The Boko Haram Insurgency," 2014, 11.

<sup>13</sup> Nigerian Bureau of Statistics 2011 report, <http://knoema.fr/NURELASS2011/unemployment-rate-by-educational-level-age-group-sex-and-sector-2011>, accessed on the 17/01/2017

<sup>14</sup> Mohammed Aly Sergie and Toni Johnson, "Islam: Governing Sharia," *CFR Backgrounders*, July 25, 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Lauren Ploch, "Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," *CRS Report for Congress*, Washington DC, 2013, 11-13

<sup>16</sup> Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, "Politics by other means: Nigeria Conflict Assessment", 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Patricio Asfura and Julis Macquied, "Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict: Grievances Motivations and Institutional Resilience in North East Nigeria." CNA, Analysis and Solutions, Washington DC, 2015, 8.

<sup>18</sup> Corentin Cohen, Boko Haram, "Une Impossible Sociologie Politique" *Afrique Contemporaine*, October 2015, 87.

<sup>19</sup> Christian Seignobos, "Boko Haram : innovations guerrières depuis les monts Mandara. Cosaquerie motorisée et islamisation forcée", *Afrique contemporaine*, 4. No 252 /4 (2014), p. 149-169, 156.

<sup>20</sup> Aziz, Salatou, *Cacophonie au Front*, (Confusion in the Battle Field), Le Jour, Yaounde, June 2014, 6.

<sup>21</sup> International Crises Group, "Cameroun Faire Face à Boko Haram," *Rapport Afrique*, Brussels, Belgium, 16 November 2016, 11-13.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Ousman, for instructor of Boko Haram captured in Kousseri on August 12, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Throughout my experience in the fight against Boko Haram, there has been no identifiable leader of Cameroonian origin. All those who have captured were recruited by Nigerians. Cameroonians fighting with Boko Haram are being used as an instrument to obtain political ends by activists in particular and northeastern Nigerians in general.

<sup>25</sup> The author of this MMS paper was an intelligence officer for Operation Alpha in Cameroon from 2014 to 2015 and had time to evaluate the influence of Boko Haram in the affected area. In certain villages, it appeared that everybody was either an active combatant of Boko Haram or an informant either by fear or sympathy.

<sup>26</sup> The Kanuri are part of the great empire of Kanem Borno who migrated from Western Sudan in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century to settle in the today Lake Chad basin found in Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad and Niger. All the Kanuri of Nigeria and Cameroon where part of German Cameroon but the victors of the First World War decided to divide this German possessions in Africa without any ethnic considerations. Despite this division, the people have continued to have ethnic solidarity amplified by their common social problems on both sides of the border.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.nairaland.com/1525768/university-lecturer-recruits-boko-haram>. Accessed on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2017.

<sup>28</sup> Ndikum, Azieh, “*Intelligence report*”. No 2014/040/ops/alpha, Maroua, November 2014.

<sup>29</sup> John Galtung, *Theories of Conflict, Definitions, Dimensions, Negations and Formations*, Columba University Press, 1958, 58.

<sup>30</sup> Sumo Tayo Aime Raoul, *La Gestion des Périphéries Nationale*, Yaoundé, Université de Yaounde 1, 2014 18, (Unpublished).

<sup>31</sup> The field visit to these localities in 2013 in my capacity as the intelligence officer permitted me to take note of absence of staff in these administrative structures.

<sup>32</sup> Ndikum, Azieh, “*Connaissances des Forces et Sources D`opposition : La Nébuleuse Boko Haram et ses Attaques en Territoire Camerounais*,” Maroua, March 2015, 7.

<sup>33</sup> The vice prime minister in charge of relations with the assemblies was appointed member of government in 1983 while the speaker of the national assembly entered the Federal Assembly in 1969.

<sup>34</sup> Sambisa Forest is the command post of Boko Haram. It is found 120 miles from Maroua and 80 miles from the border with Cameroon. This is also where the groups’ training camp is found. The forest is in a mountainous region with difficult access. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2016, the Nigerian military announced that the camp was completely under their control, though the leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, announced in a video two weeks later that he is still in control of the situation.

<sup>35</sup> Gonne, “*La Situation Extrême de l’Extrême Nord Cameroun*.” Paper presented during the doctoral seminar to graduate students of the University of Maroua in January 2016. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Aziz Salatou, Journalist for a Cameroonian daily Newspaper *Le Jour*, specializing in the northern regions of Cameroon, January 19, 2017

<sup>37</sup> Aziz, Salatou, “*La situation des plantations a capital public de l’extrême nord Cameroun*,” Garoua, *le jour*, 1, No 2332 (2017), 5.

<sup>38</sup> The 2006 population census figures are indicative especially concerning population in the border areas who live in areas with very difficult access. There is neither industrial agriculture nor any production industry that can employ the youths. They mostly get into informal trade from Nigeria to Cameroon which puts them in contact with extremists.

<sup>39</sup> International Crises Group, “*Cameroun Faire Face à Boko Haram*”, *Rapport Afrique*, Brussels, Belgium, 16 November 2016, 14.

<sup>40</sup> These were visits that were part of the activities of this intelligence officer. Such visits permitted me to prepare an accurate IPBS (Intelligence preparation of the battle space)

<sup>41</sup> Nidkum, Azieh, pass over note between Major Ndikum outgoing intelligence officer and major Mahaman, incoming intelligence officer of the alpha operation in charge of Boko Haram, March, 2015.

<sup>42</sup> Nigeria has a population of 183 million people with a vibrant economy. It produces in large scale to satisfy its large population. Large scale production generally reduces the cost of production and consumer prices.

<sup>43</sup> Aziz, Salatou, “*Diagnostic de la Crise a la Frontier Cameroun- Nigeria*,” *Le jour*, Vol 1, No 2320 Yaounde January 2017, 12.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Boko Haram combatant Ousman captured in Kousseri-Cameroon in August 12 2014.

<sup>46</sup> International Crises Group, “*Cameroun Faire Face à Boko Haram*,” *Rapport Afrique*, Brussels, Belgium, 16 November 2016, 14.

<sup>47</sup> Aziz Salatou, “*Diagnostic de la Crise a la Frontier Cameroun- Nigeria*,” *Le jour*, Yaounde January 2017, 14.

<sup>48</sup> Hilary Matfess, Here is Why Some People Join Boko Haram Despite the Violence, *Washington Post*, Washington, April 26, 2016.

<sup>49</sup> Mercy Corps, “*Motivations and Empty Promises: Voices of Former Boko Haram Combatants and Nigerian Youths*,” Annual report, April, 2016.

<sup>50</sup> In 2014, the gendarmerie legion commander for the north region was relieved from his functions for dealings with Boko Haram. This was because he was found guilty of sending trucks to sell foodstuffs in Nigeria. He did so because of the very high and attractive prices that were offered by Boko Haram.

<sup>51</sup> Nidkum, Azieh, Pass over note between Major Ndikum outgoing intel officer and major Mahaman, incoming intel officer of the alpha operation in charge of Boko Haram, March 2015.

<sup>52</sup> International Crisis Group, “*Cameroun Faire Face à Boko Haram*,” *Rapport Afrique*, Brussels, Belgium, 16 November 2016, P 15.

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<sup>53</sup> Mark Fonteh and Azieh Ndikum, The “*Boko Haramisation “of Cameroon: A Prolonged Nightmare for a Sustaining Assemblage,*” International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies, ISSN 2356-5926. 2, Issue 1, June 2015.

<sup>54</sup> Maman Noel, New Attacks of Boko Haram in the Extreme North, *Cameroon-Tribune*, No.10751/6950 (5<sup>th</sup> January 2015).

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