

Mitigating the Menace of Boko Haram: The Media Conundrum

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Abstract Boko Haram group has become the foremost terrorist organisation in Nigeria and has ensured that terrorism is now a recurrent feature in news headlines in both national and international news organisations. The United Nations recently released a report that over 5 million displaced persons by the Boko Haram conflict risk starvation and death in 2017. Their area of operation has expanded from Nigeria into Cameroon, Niger and Chad across sub-Saharan Africa and rumoured to spread from Mali, Iraq and Syria with the pledge of allegiance by the Boko Haram Leader to the Islamic State (ISIS). This paper advocates that lack of viable community media organisations that provide information on rural communities may have played a part in the rise of the group. Journalists reporting conflicts are put in a complex situation where their access to conflict zones has been limited thus impacting on the quality of their reporting. The military is enjoined to provide greater access and protection for journalists covering the conflict as accuracy and objectivity are key elements in reporting and resolution of crises as the media are expected to make government accountable for policies and actions in a democratic dispensation.

Keywords: Media, Terrorism, Boko Haram, Nigeria, Community media

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is a global phenomenon that now dominates major news headlines of the mainstream media from London to Paris, New York to Beijing and Damascus to Moscow. Networks from CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera and France 24 all have terrorism present in their news headlines. Bassiouni (1981) reports that in the 1960s and 1970s, terrorism was mainly attributed to Marxist and Communist radicals in South and North America, right wing radicals in Western Europe mainly in Italy and Germany, and religious extremists in the Middle East. However, with the collapse of regimes in Iraq, Yemen and Libya, coupled with the insurgency in Syria, and Nigeria, Islamic insurgents account for a greater part of terrorist activities in the world.

Sub-Saharan Africa has become some of the hotbeds of violent terrorism activities in recent history. In East Africa; Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda have experienced terrorist acts of different proportions (Blair & Lough, 2013; Ferguson, 2013; Agbiboa, 2014) attributed to the Al Shabab group based mainly in Somalia, while Mali, Cameroun, Niger, Sudan, South Sudan and especially Nigeria have all experienced terrorism attributed mainly to Boko Haram insurgent group operating primarily from North East Nigeria, citizens in the areas where the insurgents consider their strong holds still live in fear and uncertainty as to when the next bomb is going to explode.

The rise of Boko Haram under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf, who was perceived as an advocate for the poor has been attributed to negative economic indices such as hunger, poverty, unemployment, lack of access to healthcare, poor road networks, lack of government presence, etc. roughs about by corruption in the government and neglect of the population to fend for themselves in the decay of government infrastructure and economic fabric that binds the local society together (Adeniyi, 2011; Noakes, 2014; Shode, 2018). The media has been accused of being complicit in the continued Boko Haram insurgency as has been documented by different scholars (Hamid & Baba, 2014; Ayoola & Olaosun, 2014; Shehu, 2015). This paper supports this view and adds that community media

could have helped in bringing the above named negative indices to government attention as well as report on the activities of the Boko Haram group when they were viewed as a religious pressure group with representatives working with the state government in Borno state while behind, their ideologies were being fertilized and nurtured to the point of insurgency against government (Gusau, 2009). Nwanne (2013) defines community media as mass media which serve the needs of those who make up a community. In this sense, these are media dedicated to events in the local environment, and can help in bringing their issues to the attention of government. Calling attention to local vices and groups radicalizing members of the society may have alerted the government to the growing influence of the then religious Boko Haram group before its metamorphosis into an insurgent group.

This paper employed qualitative research methods, using secondary sources of data. Studies grounded on a qualitative approach are exploratory and try to explain 'how' and 'why' a particular phenomenon operates as it does in a given context, in this paper, we try to espouse the view point that the absence of community media and media accountability may have played a role in the emergence of Boko Haram which first began as a religious group and metamorphosed into a violent insurgent group in the aim of achieving their goal of Islamizing Nigeria. Qualitative data is non-numerical, covering images, videos, text and people's written or spoken words. Qualitative data is often gathered through interviews, focus groups or the study of texts. Our paper employs the study of media texts, academic papers and opinion pieces available in newspapers and online portals. These texts were analysed descriptively to create a better understanding of the subject under study (AttrideStirling, 2001).

DISCUSSION

The Death of Community Media and Rise of Boko Haram

There is a need to look at what role community media may have played in the rise and spread of the Boko Haram insurgency. Ate and Ikerodah (2012) state that community media is a necessity for rural development in developing

countries such as Nigeria. In a larger development communication nexus, community media is expected to fast track rural community development by not just providing information that can ease the life of rural dwellers; but to also increase literacy level among residents of a rural community.

Nwanne (2013) adds that there has been an upsurge in community media since the return of democracy in Nigeria. While this view is largely true, what is however, not clear is their effectiveness in addressing and highlighting local problems and also holding local governments in Nigeria accountable to the people. Local governments in this context include all organs of leadership in a rural community from traditional rulers, community heads, councillors, local government chairmen and other community leaders that can influence the rural society and recognized by the Nigerian constitution and government institutions. The effectiveness of community media especially newspapers could also be hampered by the high illiteracy level in Nigeria (Babalola; 2002; Ihejirika, Mbazie & Ndinojuo, 2015). This can be remedied by the introduction of other community media such as radio. The main problem with setting up a radio station is the high cost and maintenance of such a facility with scarce resources and inability of available credit as part of challenges developing countries face (Grandolini, 2015).

It could be construed that majority of Nigerians who read newspapers get their news from national newspapers more than community newspapers even though the community newspapers are closer to the people, with the major problem being access to the local population (Badiru & Ajao, 2015). This is also supported by findings from the result of a survey of readership of British newspapers where the national newspapers dominated readership numbers compared to community newspapers (The Guardian, 2012). With the size of Nigeria and its multi-faceted ethnographic make up, it becomes quite laborious giving attention to the over 2000 communities in Nigeria within the 40-100 pages available for news editors to present a summary of daily events. The media challenge here is the likely hood that issues in the immediate environment are neglected and instead the public is informed about events in

larger areas and state capitals where most government activities are concentrated. This is also not helped by the dependence of the media on government patronage for survival in developing countries such as Nigeria.

Therefore, media organisations in Nigeria tend to restrict most of their coverage to the Federal Capital Abuja, Lagos (former capital) and other state capitals, while reporting about rural communities only when a significant occurrence or tragedy is recorded in such areas. There have been unconfirmed narrations that some state governors spend most of the time in the Federal Capital Abuja because Nigeria operates a false type of federation where the states together with the Federal Government share income generated from the resources monthly (Ujah, 2018). The Federation is only in name as; a Federation is a union of self-governing states as seen in USA, Australia etc. In Nigeria however, the states were created from partitioning of existing territories instead of territories coming together to form the union or joining the already existing Federation. Nigeria operated as a federation only after obtaining independence from the British in 1960, the military coup of 1966 ended Federation in its true form in Nigeria.

The Nigerian political landscape is such that the state governors are independent of the Federal Government in how they spend their allocated resources but have no control of the police and other security operatives within the state. The governors on the other hand control the local governments within their states and can decide when to hold local government elections or to put off such elections indefinitely and instead appoint caretaker committees to oversee the local government (usually friends and cronies). The local government caretaker chairman on their own also depend on the state governors for directions and in turn spend most of the time around the governor's lodge waiting for when allocation will come from Abuja for it to be shared according to the dictates of the governor and other local politicians thus leaving the local government offices barely inactive (Olu, 2017).

Because of this lack of political and economic activity at the local governments, it would not be viable for an entrepreneur to

set up a media firm as the inactivity will create for lack of news worthy material in the local community. The banks will not provide credit facilities for such ventures as they may be deemed fantasy projects because of their low potential ROI. As already mentioned, illiteracy level of Nigeria is a major factor also as only the literate population can read and make meaning of community media publications. There is also the rural-urban migration pattern common in Nigeria where the young and educated move to the cities in search of better job opportunities rather than staying in the local communities to develop ideas and strategies that would bring about development to their communities. The mainstream media now are left all alone to report on the national issues and try to accommodate very few stories from the over 774 Local Government Areas in Nigeria because of space limitations and shortage of manpower to cover 774 LGAs and still operate at a profit and also the assumption that local communities are not news worthy (Badiru & Ajao, 2015).

The implication of this is that local people will be neglected, their plight and challenges not reported in the mainstream media, what options are left for them other than to resort to self, help wherever it comes from cue in charismatic religious leaders who will enthrall the disillusioned citizens with a solution to all their social and economic shortcomings. While all these are going on, the government may not be aware because no one is reporting it, or they do not consider them worthy of attention. It gets to a point where the religious leader has enough followers to influence happenings in one local government, the government will ignore it as it may be only one local government, the news of the success of the religious leader and his leadership style will spread by word of mouth and soon he will inspire other adherents in other local governments. At this point, the government will start consulting him on government decisions and probably ask him to nominate representative(s) to be appointed to government positions.

Eventually, there will be a falling out arising from disagreement between the religious leader and government which will result into either the overthrow of the government if

the religious leader has many converts or civil crises resulting to insurgency, to put fear in the population to engineer crises, terrorism becomes the main tactic of the insurgent group. This was the genesis of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria with their charismatic late leader Mohammed Yusuf captivating and giving hope to his poor followers and promising them a better future if they convert to his firebrand interpretations of Islamic teachings. Encouraging them to violence if they are questioned and the violence eventually led to his capture and death in the hands of security operatives in Nigeria under controversial circumstance. With his death came more violence where bombings of public places formerly alien to Nigeria before the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency with churches, markets, mosques, police headquarters and the United Nations building in Abuja facing terror attacks that claimed many lives.

Challenges of Media Access to Areas of Boko Haram Conflict

For the mainstream media, the writer observes that giving timely information about the Boko Haram conflict poses its own sets of challenges from both the insurgent group and the Nigerian military that has been battling them since 2009 with varying degrees of success. The military has tried to limit the movement of individuals in the areas of Boko Haram operation to minimize coordination by members of the group. In fact, Maiduguri, the Borno state capital had all GSM communication blocked for a time period with the belief that it will affect the capability of the Boko Haram group to coordinate attacks against government institutions and innocent civilians (Audu, 2013). The measure did not yield the desired effect as attacks and bombings by the group continued. Rather, the measure ended up affecting the ability of residents in the state to conduct business and also may have affected the ability of the media to coordinate and perform their information provision role to the society as military permissions are required to be in the conflict areas.

Denying journalists access to locations of Boko Haram activities and military operations will negatively affect the quality

of news the journalist's reports. Not being able to independently verify reports emanating from the military or Boko Haram is also a problem as the public will not know the true state of affairs and the government will take decisions based on wrong intelligence with the media reporting releases from either the military or Boko Haram as news with no independent corroboration. Such reports were seen from Chibok after the kidnap of the school girls. There were initial reports of the kidnap which the military denied, and then the military accepted that girls were kidnapped, and released information that all but eight of the girls have been rescued, before the military finally agreed that girls were missing, and none had been rescued apart from the girls that escaped during the kidnapping operation (Ibeh & Audu, 2014; Audu, 2014; Ibeh, 2014).

The kidnap of the girls could have been thwarted if there was credible media reportage of the situation instead of the case where the media reports military press release as news with no independent corroboration as access to the areas was heavily restricted by the military. Ayoola and Olaosun (2014) using this premise classified media reports about Boko Haram as unreliable due to the inaccuracies found in newspaper reports on the crises. Their view is supported by a host of scholars (Ademola & Okeke, 2011; Hamid & Baba, 2014).

Boko Haram and Terrorism

In Nigeria, Boko Haram is one of the most active insurgent groups responsible for thousands of deaths and destruction of properties since 2009 when it began its violent armed resistance to the government. According to Global Terrorism Index (2015), Boko Haram overtook ISIS as the deadliest terrorist organization in the world with 6,644 deaths credited to their insurgency in 2015 alone. Their religious terrorism has expanded from North East Nigeria into the Lake Chad area around Cameroon and Chad with links spread across the continent and beyond from Mali, Iraq and Syria with the pledge of allegiance by the Boko Haram Leader to the Islamic State (ISIS).

Onuoha and George (2015) ever that the group has employed different violent tactics in their operations which primarily

include but not limited to assassinations, drive by shootings, ambush and suicide bombings of the civilian population and military targets among others in their attacks against security agents, religious and traditional rulers, worship centres, schools, traders and lately all non-members of the group. George (2013) earlier informed that most of the group's attacks were concentrated in the remote North-Eastern Nigeria stronghold – Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States. Even though the group has claimed responsibility for other attacks such as those that occurred between 2013 and 2015 in Kogi, Bauchi, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Niger and Plateau states, as well as in Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The use of suicide bombings has remained a key element of the group's violent campaign especially after government claims in December 2016 of the group's degradation and decimation.

Insurgencies are usually borne out of agitations caused by feelings of marginalization and lack of government attention (Mailafia, 2012). It is the duty of the media to present such topical issues so as to be addressed urgently to avert the bigger crises that could result from the conflict. The Boko Haram insurgency was largely neglected with both the media and government not paying attention to the fundamental underlying issues such that even with the death of their leader, it was felt that the remaining members will either go into hiding or reach some compromise with government, instead the new leader Abubakar Shekau proved to be an Islamic hardliner, more brutal and fearsome than his predecessor. The Nigeria military severally claimed to have killed him at several different times, but all proved to be false as he always debunks such rumours with video releases from Youtube or other confidential sources.

Dangers of reporting the Boko Haram insurgency

Journalists have not been spared in the ongoing Boko Haram conflict. Abang (2017) reports that journalists have lost their lives to Boko Haram attacks and many others live with threats to their lives and those of their loved ones from the Boko Haram group. The situation is complex for journalists as there have been assertions where military accuse them of being

sympathetic to Boko Haram causes and exposing military plans, Boko Haram in turn accuse journalists of working for the government as spies, and also, one part of the public considers them as propaganda agents of the government, another public considers them undermining government efforts in the war against Boko Haram.

Ngwu, Ekwe and Chiaha (2015) in their study found out that over 60% of the respondents believe that the media framed the kidnap of the Chibok girls for political gains, religious and ethnic interests, or a conspiracy against President Goodluck Jonathan thereby creating an issue of unreliability of journalistic endeavours thus creating more problems for reporters either from the government, Boko Haram or the general public depending on which of them feels offended. To this end, journalists may be physically harassed and attacked by either the military or Boko Haram group (Reporters Without Border, 2013; Abimboye & Ibeh, 2014; Ibekwe, 2017), and also psychologically the reliability and integrity of their reports are questioned by the public as was seen in their changing narrative with the kidnap of Chibok school girls. It is really trying times for reporters covering Boko Haram conflicts, their only redemption lies on sticking to journalism ethos where truth, accuracy, and objectivity are paramount to produce high quality and reliable journalistic articles that goes beyond just reporting military operations or Boko Haram attacks.

The Media Military Dynamics

Musa (2013) asserts that the relationship between the military and press in Nigeria is anything but cordial. Journalists and their publishers have been arrested for what the military terms as unfriendly reports or the close relationship between the journalists and the Boko Haram group (Nigerian Army, 2016; Ogundipe, 2017). The military should not see the media as part of the problem; instead, they should be seen as partners in finding a lasting solution to the Boko Haram insurgency. The journalist Ahmed Salkida has been persecuted on the account of his closeness to the group. He has maintained that because he is from the region, he knew many members of the group as

individuals before their being regarded as the dreaded Boko Haram and it would be in the interest of government and the public to listen to some of the concerns being raised as military force alone may not be the solution.

Obi (1993) found that the public knows little or nothing about Nigerian Army activities and policies, Alli (2001) in his book outlines that the Nigerian military like most militaries in the world try to limit the public knowledge of their activities on a need to know basis. However, it will be in the public interest that the military will find a way to work closely with journalists not only to help the journalists produce high quality and reliable materials, but also for the sake of transparency and to keep the public in the know, this necessitated the formation of the Sidle Commission in the United States in 1984 to work out the modalities of cooperation between soldiers and journalists in combat situations (Sidle, 1984). This they can do by embedding selecting journalists as part of missions as already practiced in some developed nations.

The Nigerian army has been accused of human rights abuses in their fight against Boko Haram by Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 2015; Ibekwe 2018). At the moment it is a case of your word against mine. Amnesty International has eye witness testimonies while the leadership of the army denies any abuses. A chilling video produced by ARTE (2016) show men who look like Nigerian military soldiers summarily executing alleged Boko Haram members who had already surrendered. They were made to lie down and then an officer starts shooting at them. In this instance, the Nigerian Army has not incorporated the media in their operations as they would have been the ones reporting first-hand what is really happening in the field as independent arbiters between the army and the public on events that take place during conflict resolution engagements.

If the military have challenges that are promptly reported by the media, it could go a long way in shaping government policy towards their operation. If there are communities sympathetic to Boko Haram and the media is granted access to such areas, they could report about them and find out why they support

Boko Haram. It will be the duty of the government to address the concerns of the locals and discourage them from helping Boko Haram fighters because intelligence is very central to winning battles, and if any government is fighting a guerrilla-style warfare with any group, the government will require the full support of the populace to be able to distinguish between insurgents and civilian population in order to avoid targeting innocent civilians mistakenly or as collateral damage as was seen in the targeting of the Rana IDP Camp (Erunke, 2017).

The supposed limited or non-involvement of the media in military operation against the group can also be one of the reasons why Nigeria military have not been very successful in putting names to Boko Haram command and structure other than the current leader of the group Abubakar Shekau and a few other members. Shekau is known because he routinely releases video and audio messages to debunk government claims or to claim responsibility for attacks and suicide bombings that are attributed to the group. It is important that the media be giving regulated access to territories controlled by Boko Haram in order to provide more insight into the thoughts and ideology of the civilian population, the Boko Haram group and its leaders. This is so because some civilians might be more open to talking with journalists than with gun wielding soldiers who already are suspicious of the civilians because of the difficulty in distinguishing the insurgent from non-combatant population.

The military can affect the quality of media reports about Boko Haram activities by movement restrictions they place on the public (including the media) in the North East. The result is media filing in unconfirmed reports from anonymous sources or the military sending press releases of its campaign directly to the media. The media will be unable to verify the accuracy and objectivity of such information. This could result in more confusion leading to more fatalities and increase in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The Chibok school girls' abduction in 2014 was a good case in point where because of restricted movement in the North East, led to lack of access to quality information, the media could not verify what was happening in

the area which helped the escape of their abductors with the girls.

Involving members of the media during military operations means that such operations are likely to be guided by procedures that all participants must strictly adhere to (Aswell, 1990; McMahon 2000). This was also the challenge faced by the United States of America where conflicts arose about how to objectively report military operations. The US Military decided that it was proper for the media to inform the public and the congress about their military operations for accountability and transparency. The Sidle Commission report (1984) was set up to work out a framework to guide the media-military relationship in combat situations. The commission was set up to look at the modalities of getting the media more involved in reporting on the United States military operations without compromising the lives of military officers and operations.

The Nigerian military can also borrow such an idea and seek ways of improving relations with the media. This improved relation will see the media as a partner and stakeholder rather than the love-hate relationship that currently characterizes the media-military dynamics in Nigeria. This will go a long way in improving the quality of media reports from about the military and Boko Haram activities in the North East of Nigeria which some researchers such as Hamid and Baba (2014) have criticized saying that the media in Nigeria has failed in its agenda setting function with regard to reporting the Boko Haram insurgency. Other scholars have also lent credence to this view by maintaining that the media has not performed its surveillance function properly with regards to the Boko Haram conflicts in Nigeria because their reports lack objectivity (Lawrence, 2011; Okali, 2011; Okpara, 2011).

Hamid and Baba (2014) further argue that the media in reporting daily occurrences are generally expected to display a sense of objectivity by ensuring that there is balance and fairness in their reports; implying that their report must be free from bias with all the parties involved given equal attention. News reports must not be one-sided, and facts must be separated from opinions. Ududo and Bassey (2011) reiterate

that "unfair and unbalanced journalism is capable of eroding away public confidence in the reporter or the media organisation" (p.43). From the analysis of the works of the above scholars, media reports in Nigeria about the Boko Haram crises have a lot to do to improve their credibility.

Relevance of Media Accountability in Reporting Boko Haram Conflict

Media accountability is vital to its credibility as a news source. Measuring the quality of media reporting include holding the media accountable for their publications and also holding the organizations and individuals cited by the media in these publications responsible for their actions either in the form of praise and commendation or a call for trial and punishment as they may deserve. The author argues that accuracy of media reports will lead to a peaceful resolution of the crises as all contentious issues will be in the forefront and solutions can be proffered on how to resolve them by dialoguing until relative peace is maintained and sustained for the socioeconomic and political development of the region and Nigeria as a whole if the process is applied to other conflict situations in the country.

Olukoyun (2004) notes that media accountability is very fundamental in democratic environments. He continues that the Nigerian media are "imbued with a self-conscious tradition of outspokenness, which at the limits sometimes teeters on anarchy" (p.71). The Nigerian constitution in Section 22, explicitly requires the media to monitor government activities and ensure accountability of the governed to the people." Similarly, having played a seminal role in civil society struggles against the authoritarian state, the media were expected to advance the cause of democracy by holding elected rulers up to standards of decency and probity. The public (people) is supreme and deserve to be qualitatively informed about military operations in the war against Boko Haram, the success or failures of such expeditions, and how it can be improved to ensure minimal damage and also ensure a reintegration of members of the Boko Haram group into the Nigerian society because at the end of the day, they are still Nigerians. The defeat

of Boko Haram was one of the cardinal campaign promises of President Buhari during the electioneering process; therefore, it is important to X-Ray information being fed to the public in order to garner public support for government policies and plans in prosecuting the war against the Boko Haram insurgents by the Nigerian military.

Accountability also ensures that principal actors will adopt and implement standard operation procedures in their efforts to end the insurgency, and those in violation of any part of these agreed procedures can be held accountable and liable by the people through the legal system. In the absence of high quality media reports, this becomes a herculean task. Information should be independently verified before publishing. Not doing so will greatly undermine the credibility of the media and the people may imbibe media reports with a pinch of salt. For media accountability to be effective, factors such as political structure, high levels of education and income are essential, as they affect how the population interacts with the media and where the indices for such factors are low, they invariably affect media accountability negatively. Part of the problem of media accountability in a country like Nigeria is the absence of strong democratic institutions. This study hopes to help create a framework for a greater collaboration between the military and the media, where the media is allowed to independently report from conflict zones and have access to military operations without compromising the operational integrity and tactics in order not to risk the lives of military and intelligence officers who are tasked with protecting the lives and properties of Nigerians and also maintaining the territorial integrity of Nigeria as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

There was wide coverage of the claims by the Federal Government of Nigeria and its Military that the Boko Haram group has been finally defeated with the capture of their purported headquarter in Sambisa Forest "Camp Zero" (or Zairo) in December 2016(Al Jazeera News, 2016; Deutsche Welle, 2016). This claim precedes a previous one in 2015 when the Minister of Information Lai Mohammed and affirmed by President Mohammed Buhari stated that Boko Haram has been

“technically defeated” (BBC News, 2015; VOA News, 2015). The Nigerian media played along and reported the defeat of the group, but then, their attacks continued, suicide attacks, attacks on military positions; this makes the claim of their defeat questionable and the media role in promoting this narrative regrettable. The media as the fourth estate of the realm are expected not to promote a view point that serves the government interest at the detriment of the public interest.

CONCLUSION

A lot of factors have been advanced for the emergence and continued violence perpetrated in the North East of Nigeria by the Boko Haram terrorist group poor governance that encouraged corruption, which in turn brought about a high rate of poverty and unemployment in the region. These we advocated may have been aggravated by the lack of community media to report on happenings in the rural areas and also the inability of the mainstream media in Nigeria to adequately cover developmental challenges in the rural areas. The situation may have been further worsened by the low literacy rate in Northern Nigeria compared to the South. The residents of such areas depend heavily on opinion and religious leaders for guidance in understanding events happening around them.

Whatever point of view advanced by the opinion leader becomes the reality for these people. The founders of Boko Haram played on this by blaming the government for the ills of the society and promised to return the region to a Mohammed an era type of government where a strict obeisance of the sharia code is believed to draw adherents closer to “Allah” and a future paradise in the life after earth. The media can play a crucial role by ensuring that journalism is practiced with the highest standards where honesty, accuracy and objectivity are paramount in order to give credibility to media articles. Reports should not only focus on atrocities committed by the Boko Haram insurgents, the actions of security agencies fighting the insurgents should also be x-rayed to ensure that the standard operating procedures and rules of engagement as enshrined in

the UN Charter are maintained because at the end of the day, the battle is among Nigerians and in a not too distant future, the report cards of every party in the conflict will be laid bare for public scrutiny.

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