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# Africa e Mediterraneo

C U L T U R A E S O C I E T À

## n. 85 | Moda e sviluppo in Africa

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Unconventional  
Entrepreneurs:  
the Youth in the Ghanaian  
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Quand la mode sauve le  
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La moda africana in Europa  
parla un'altra lingua:  
il caso del *kanga*



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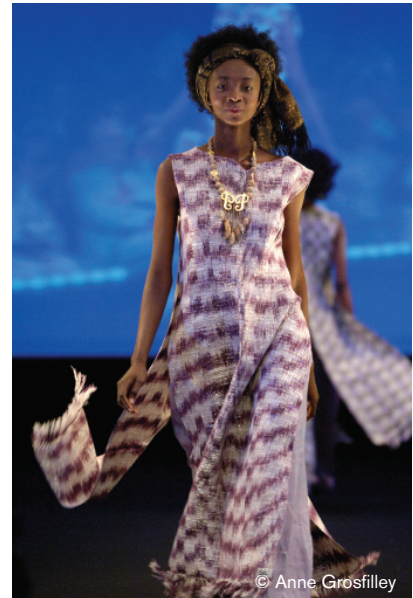
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# A Thematic and Contextual Analysis of Boko Haram in Selected Editorial Cartoons

by Shina Alimi and Michael Olusegun Fajuyigbe

In Nigeria cartoons are utilized by newspapers to convey information about the socio-political reality, as in the case of the *Nation* which offers a sharp representation of Boko Haram activities.

One of the ways Nigerian newspapers covered the threats and activities of the Boko Haram insurgents was by using editorial cartoons. These editorial cartoons feature caricatures that parody individual and collective experiences, contexts and settings in which organized terrorist activities took place in Nigeria. As well as using text, cartoons were also used by Nigerian newspapers to convey delicate but vital information about the Boko Haram insurgency. The selected cartoons expressed the socio-political and economic reality of Nigerian state. These cartoons also depict the contests between Nigerian state and the Boko Haram group. This paper examined the effectiveness of newspaper cartoons as a subset of visual arts at conveying vital but delicate information to the newspaper readers. The *Nation* newspaper has been chosen for analysis for two major reasons. Firstly, the newspaper has a national outlook and is one of the highest circulating in Nigeria. Secondly, the editorial cartoons in the *Nation* newspaper are sharp and timely.

## **Boko Haram Insurgence in Nigeria: A Brief Historical Discourse**

The outbreak of Boko Haram uprising in July 1999 represented another phase in

the history of socio-political violence in Nigeria. Hitherto, the spate of violence in the country has taken the garbs of ethnic bickering, political conflict and religious intolerance. The Boko Haram crisis has thus raised the pattern of violence in the country to the abysmal level of terrorism. It may be difficult to trace the origin of the first terrorist act in Nigeria but available evidence shows that the Maitatsine uprisings of 1980 in Kano, 1982 in Kaduna and Bulumkutu, 1984 in Yola and 1985 in Bauchi represented the first large-scale attempts at imposing religious ideology on a secular, independent Nigeria.<sup>1</sup>

Following the Maitatsine uprisings there were several other crises. These include the Kano metropolitan riot of October 1982, the Ilorin riot of March 1986, the University of Ibadan crisis of May 1986 the nationwide crisis over Nigeria's membership in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in 1986, the Kafanchan/Kaduna/Zaria/Funtua religious riot of March 1987, the Kaduna Polytechnic riot of March 1988, the Bayero University crisis of 1989, the Bauchi Katsina riot of 1991, the Zangon-Kataf riot of May 1992, the Kano disturbance of December 1991, the Shagamu conflict of July 1999 and the recurrent Jos crises of 2001, 2002, 2004 and 2008. The root of these crises varies. Where the crisis was not born out of the need to curb the

excesses of some groups, it arose from the conversion driven by one religious group and the resistance mounted by another religious group.<sup>2</sup>

Where most of the crises in Nigeria have been explained by ethno-religious factors, it is evident that other factors like economic disequilibrium/inequality, unemployment and cut-throat political rivalry have greatly influenced these problems. However scholars have contrived different approaches to understanding the phenomenon of terrorism. The political approach assumes that the causes of terrorism are rooted in environmental factors. This approach emphasizes that economic deprivation and political marginalization of a group usually trigger the feelings of frustration that could ultimately result in large-scale violence.<sup>3</sup> The psychological approach to the study of terrorism focuses on the motivation of individuals that engage in terrorist acts. This approach also involves the study of personalities, behaviour patterns and attitudes of terrorists, their recruitment methods and strategies of operation. But it is significant to note that these and many other approaches only consider the popular angle or prism of terrorism. A historical study of terrorism in Nigeria would dig deep and provide new vista to the understanding of terrorism in Nigeria. Nigeria is a classic example of a country that pursues economic and political interests at the expense of secure and stable environment. From the Metabsine uprising through the Niger Delta crises to the Boko Haram insurgencies, Nigeria has wallowed into security regression. The Niger Delta crisis deteriorated into destructions of oil installations, kidnapping of both foreign and indigenous oil workers, and disruption of peace in the country.<sup>4</sup> Between 2001 and 2011, the Boko Haram group killed no fewer than 2, 615 innocent citizens and inflicted injury on no fewer than 3,390 people. The proliferation of terrorist groups in Nigeria was not unconnected with global Islamic fundamentalism that provides ideological support and motivation to local groups, and a governmental passive response or poor handling of security reports. Other major factors include financial support from local politicians and international religious organizations, partisan politics and political pa-

tronage of the terrorists. All these make Nigeria a fertile ground for the breeding of individual or group terrorists.<sup>5</sup>

### **The *Nation* Newspaper and Campaign against Boko Haram Insurgency**

Like the Nigerian government, the press has remained at the fore-front of campaign against Boko Haram insurgency. Through timely reports, biting editorials and pungent cartoons, Nigerian newspapers have collectively campaigned against Boko Haram act of terrorism. More than any other institutions, the press informs and educates the masses about strategies and activities of Boko Haram and provides support for the government's effort. While Nigerian newspapers collectively launch vigorous crusades against the insurgents, the role of the *Nation* newspaper in the campaign remains outstanding.

The *Nation* newspaper was launched on July 31st, 2006. Published by Vintage Press Limited, Mushin Lagos, the *Nation* newspaper is privately owned. The newspaper has a national outlook with coverage reaching all geographical regions of Nigeria. In addition to the headquarters in Lagos, the *Nation* has printing press offices in Port Harcourt and Abuja. The newspaper was rated in 2009 by ADVAN, AAPN and MIPAN as the second most read newspaper in Nigeria. The *Nation* was the highest circulating newspaper in Port Harcourt, Calabar, Ilorin, Ado Ekiti, Akure, Yenagoa, Jos and Bauchi; second highest circulating newspaper in Ibadan, Kaduna, Warri, Benin; third leading newspaper in Abuja, Kano, Enugu, Aba and Maiduguri; the fourth most circulating newspaper in Lagos.

Constructed on the tripod principles of "freedom, justice and market economy", the newspaper's reports focus on politics, business and economy, public policies, world affairs, arts and culture, sports, fashion and lifestyle, education, law and health; hence, its varied and wide audience. With elevated and concise language, clarity and coherence, the newspaper is unique in its writing and reporting style. Two other important factors also make the *Nation* newspaper stand out. Its editorials are strong and sharp, while its cartoons are characteristically pungent.

Importantly, most cartoons from the *Nation* newspaper reflect the philosophy as

well as the principle of the newspaper. These cartoons could independently stand as editorials and sometimes could support the newspaper's opinions on the editorial page by reflecting the view of the *Nation's* on various important issues. The *Nation's* editorial cartoons in particular provide critical insight into the causes, course and effects of Boko Haram uprising in Nigeria. These cartoons are characteristically distinctive in that they satirize the reality of the Nigerian state.

The cartoonists whose works are analysed in this paper are Azeez Ozi Sanni, Bennett Omeke, Muyiwa Adetula and Segun Ajiboye. These cartoonists are renowned and recognized for their works. Significantly, the works of these artists can be categorised as political cartoons and have appeared on editorial or opinion pages of this newspaper. Azeez Sanni is a cartoonist whose works usually satirise the timely issues in society. The distinguishing feature of his work is the ability to convey messages through the combination of humour and soberness. His artistic ingenuity lies in the creative combination of thick drawing pens with light strokes. The dominant themes of his work could be summarized as "suffering vs wellbeing", "oppression vs Freedom," and "fear and helplessness". It would appear that his works are guided by the philosophy of humanism. More often than not, his messages are lucid and comprehensible. For their unusual creativity and courage, his works have won the "cartoon of the year" prize in Nigeria.

Muyiwa Adetula popularly known as Mooyiwa Original is a veteran cartoonist in Nigeria. He is popular for the adoption of near-realism and metaphorical approaches. Bennett Omeke is a famous cartoonist and winner of many awards of excellence on political cartoon in Nigeria. He is known for his metaphorical approach to satirising and depicting reality of Nigerian reality. Segun Ajiboye is a prolific and versatile artist. His creativity in the visual art extends beyond painting (landscape painting) to include cartooning, pottery and textiles. Apart from his fame as a painter and freelance cartoonist, Segun Ajiboye has produced copious works of drawings and illustrations. He is also an art historian and lecturer at Obafemi Awolowo University where he teaches

the new generation of Nigerian artists. For the *Nation* newspaper, Segun Aji-boye produces cartoons for the following columns, viz: *Undertow* (Saturday), *Palladium* and *Barometer* (Sunday).

### A Panoramic View of Boko Haram through the *Nation's* Cartoons

#### *Poisoned Apples*

This cartoon presents the roots (fundamental causes) of Boko Haram, as the scourge of organised terrorism is unleashed on the country. Here is a big tree with luxuriant leaves and well-rounded fruits; its roots, deep and wide, spread like tentacles under the earth's surface with the inscriptions: corruption, injustice, poverty, ethnic and religious politics (Plate 1). The cartoon is a graphic representation of the factors responsible for the Boko Haram insurgence; the tree symbolises Nigeria's social structure, the branches refer to the country's diverse ethnic groups and tribes; and the fruits labelled: B.O.K.O.H.A.R.A.M captures the ripened bitterness harboured by some disgruntled elements which feel marginalised in terms of the political configuration in the country. The bitterness is fuelled by corruption, social injustice, poverty, ethno-religious politics, favouritism and gross insensitivity of the government (at all levels) to common man's plight.

These abnormalities are manure that eventually nurture and nourish the religious and political ideology now known in Nigeria as Boko Haram. The ground on which this ethno-religious ideology flourishes is the geographical landscape of northern Nigeria as seen in the hues of brown, chocolate, bronze and burnt sienna. The "red apples" (poisoned apples), refer to series of blood-letting Boko Haram unleashed on the inhabitants of the north-eastern region of Nigeria. The iconography of this cartoon is that the people who ought to be physically and mentally productive have been so poisoned by injustice and corruption that they now fabricate evil from their abused and perverted mindset. As poverty and unemployment ravage Nigerians despite living in abundance; unstable economy, political manoeuvres, and living and property insecurity are on the increase. Hence, the deadly Boko Haram incursion in Nigeria's socio-political history.

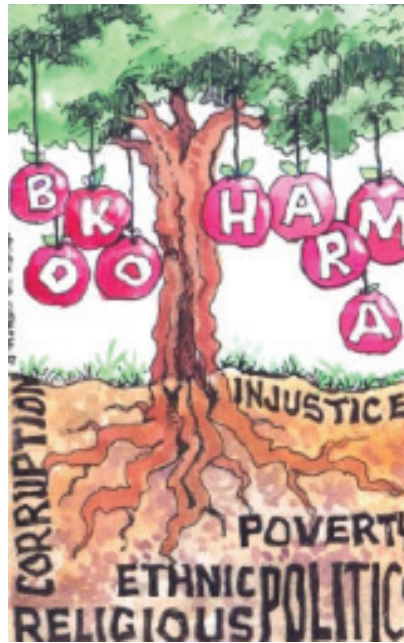


Plate 1: *Poisoned Apples*  
Cartoonist: Segun Aji-boye  
Source: *The Nation Newspaper*, October 17, 2014, p. 2  
Photograph by Michael Olusegun Fajuyigbe

#### *Inside-Out*

This is a single panel-cartoon. The evil of Boko Haram is nurtured and unleashed by elements within Nigeria's socio-political structure. The cartoon (Plate 2) presents the image of an infected corn (maize) on a cornstalk tagged Nigeria; and a worm, dressed like a masked sniper tagged BOKO HARAM perches on the corn digging its tiny hand into a large hole on the corncob, while a hand (FG) aims a gun at the worm to rid the maize of its evil companion. A number of grains have been eaten and wasted by the worm which represents Boko Haram's destructive spirit. The grains represent Nigerians, while the fallen grains represent the victims (dead and injured) of Boko Haram's mayhem. The hand and gun are symbolic of the law (government agents) and the Federal Government (FG) that has placed a #500m bounty on Boko Haram's leader to checkmate their atrocities. The worm is a personification of Boko Haram; and like a cankerworm, it has devastating effects on Nigerians as many lives have been destroyed and many have been left homeless. The government is incapacitated (in dealing with the monster of Boko Haram) by the rule of law. How can one possibly eliminate a worm that

has infested a portion of a corn without destroying the healthy grains since the worm shares the same identity with the rest of Nigerians? It is true therefore, as observed in a Yoruba adage that "*kokoro to n jefo, ara efo lo wa*" meaning the worm that devours vegetable is part of the vegetable. This cartoon therefore suggests that Boko Haram activities are fueled and engineered by insiders working insidiously with outsiders to cause socio-political instability in Nigeria. The cartoonist, Bennett Omeke, tried to further illustrate his message with captions. In the top left-corner of the cartoon is the news "FG PLACES N500M BOUNTY ON BOKO HARAM." This is accompanied by the dialogue captions between the Boko Haram and the Federal Government: "PLEASE DON'T SHOOT... IT'S AGAINST THE LAW TO KILL" "?!". The question and exclamation marks highlight the helplessness of the Nigerian government.

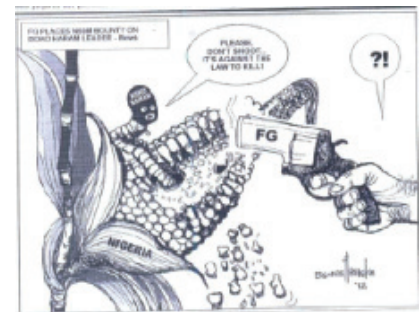


Plate 2: *Inside-Out*  
Cartoonist: Bennett Omeke  
Source: *The Nation Newspaper*, 2012, p. 2

#### *No Confidence*

Among Nigerians and the international community, Borno State, Nigeria is a confirmed war zone; while the rest of north-eastern Nigeria has become synonymous to mayhem, disaster, destruction and sudden death. In this editorial cartoon, a newly deployed member of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme reports at the orientation camp in Borno state. The national youth scheme is a one year compulsory service each graduate ought to offer to the fatherland: Nigeria; for continued national unity, cultural cohesion and mutual understanding. The camp commandment, astounded at the young lady pendant (charm) made of a small gourd, queried "and what's this around your neck, corper?". The lady *corper* retorted "It's called

CAI: Charm Against Insecurity, sir. It's my herbalist grandfather's way of protecting his family member going to the warfront". Against the backdrop of Boko Haram's murder of some NYSC's members, parents and guardians of newly deployed NYSC's members have resorted to "arming" their children and wards deployed to the embattled region with all kinds of spiritual protection against BH attacks. This is in view of the increasing insecurity of life and property, lawlessness, ethnic/religious politics and sadly the inability of the military to curb BH excesses and the failure of NYSC's authority to ensure the safety of its corps members. If corps members have become the prime target of political insurrection in north-eastern Nigeria, then the purpose of NYSC is already undermined. The cartoon is symbolic of the "vote of no confidence" Nigerians have passed on the government regarding national security. The cartoonist, Azeez Sanni, achieves balance by combining thick pen with light strokes; the use of convex white background by the cartoonist is used to emphasize the dark background of the uniformed subjects.



Plate 3: Vote of No Confidence  
Cartoonist: Azeez Sanni  
Source: The Nation On Sunday, December 18, 2011, p. 12

#### *Internally Display Persons (IDPs)*

This cartoon is a graphic representation of the traumatic effects of Boko Haram mayhem in northeastern Nigeria; it is an incidental consequence of failed leadership with respect to insecurity of lives and properties in the country. Borno indigenes, men, women, children and the elderly in their hundreds are depicted with pathetic expressions and postures fleeing the war torn Borno state. Many carry their essential belongings on their head such as mattress portmanteau, boxes, and sacks of clothes. Leading the flight

is an elderly man pulling his bicycle with a young boy of four. A vulture watches and waits patiently in the left-hand corner of the cartoon as scores of Kanuris flee their homes and land. Close to the vulture is a signpost inscribed BORNO NIGERIA, the word BORNO is obscured by a double strikethrough drawn across it, which is suggestive of Borno state becoming history if nothing is done to stop the exodus. Where there is insecurity, and a town is being ravaged by incessant bombings and killings of innocent lives, then it is natural that the internally displaced persons (IDPs) flee for their dear lives into the unknown. The "unknown" is a place where the basic necessities of life, food, clothing, shelter are not guaranteed; where hunger, lack, poverty and epidemics become everyday reality. In line with iconographic analysis, the survivors here are now refugees. The vulture is a symbol of death, awaiting the refugees as they become weak and weary through hunger, thirst and the agony of long distance trips. Some may die and become food for the vultures; hence, the refugees' physical and mental condition is that of despair, earnestness and flight.



Plate 4: The Flight  
Cartoonist: Azeez Sanni  
Source: The Nation Newspaper, July 18, 2011, p. 20

#### *Victims of National Insecurity*

This depicts scores of skulls - a heap of dry skulls in the left-hand corner of the cartoon - and a tree with many branches. Two vultures perch on an elongated tree branch, engrossed in conversation. In between the skulls and the tree is a space captured in solid black to enhance the contrast between the dead and the scavengers (vultures). The dry skulls are victims of national insecurity obviously murdered by the three musketeer evils (killer squads) of Boko Haram, armed robbers and the police recruits who "killed at will on daily basis". The dead here includes innocent Nigerians and

casualties from both the police and Boko Haram sides. The fragile security in the region also provides an opportunity for the armed robbers to kill and loot without restraint. The vultures are symbolic of those who benefit economically from the socio-political unrest that engulfs the north-central and north-eastern regions of the country. The artist hammers on the incompetence of the police, and the recruits in particular whose actions increase the number of victims as the police fail to differentiate between BH adherents and ordinary civilians. The solid black represents the eerie night of the graveyard, and the sorrow, anguish and agonizing pain caused by mass murder of innocent souls. This is the worst effect of national insecurity that has beclouded Nigeria's social-political and cultural landscapes almost a decade since Boko Haram insurgence. The cartoonist metaphorically and creatively conveys the message albeit abstract.



Plate 5: Victims of National Insecurity  
Cartoonist: Azeez Sanni  
Source: The Nation Newspaper, December 7, 2011, p. 20

#### *The Contest*

The cartoon depicts two strong arms, hands clasped and elbows resting firmly on the northern tips of Nigeria's map. At the top in the centre is an inscription "FELLOW NIGERIANS ... THIS IS THE BATTLE OF THE CENTURY". The black and white background creates a contrast which accentuates the contest between the warring parties. The cartoon is symbolic of the face-off between the Nigerian Army and Boko Haram guerrillas. As the security agents try to quell the insurgence and restore order, BH increases and expands its scope of destruction with equal and more alarming intensity, as represented by the two muscular

hands. Obviously, it is a metaphor that mocks the might of the nation's military, and despite its might (as represented by the stronger and bigger arm), it cannot match the resilience of BH militia. The northern end of the nation, as indicated on the map, has become the platform (a battlefield) for the contest. The cartoon is a mockery of the competence and strategic preparation of the Nigerian army to curb the menace of BH which brought the spate of national insecurity in Nigeria to its climax. It should be noted however, that the national insecurity is caused by the inability of the Nigerian army to checkmate and uproot BH insurgency as well as by failed leadership and lack of political resolve.



Plate 6: The Contest  
Cartoonist: Azeez Sanni  
Source: The Nation Newspaper, July 27, 2011, p. 20

### Bokophobia

This piece illustrates the fear and anxiety which the activities of BH have provoked in the minds of Nigerians, whose psyche has been conditioned by a new phobia which can be described as *bokophobia*. The cartoon depicts a potbelly lawmaker who with a dramatic gesture jumps off his comfortable sofa and screams “BOMBS! ...” causing a cacophony. Grippled by a pervading fear, the ‘honorable’ flings the meal and wine he is enjoying in different directions. To his right is a half-eaten chicken thigh, a beer bottle (contents spilt), a plate of food scattered on the sofa, and to his left is the glass and wine spilled on the settee. A woman, obviously the lawmaker’s wife, in astonishment gasps and waves her hand simultaneously as the husband does a “high jump”. “Easy dear! It’s only the sound from JUNIOR’S BALLOON!” she tries to calm her frightened husband down. The onomatopoeic word (GBAUMMMM!!!) inscribed in the top-left corner of the cartoon completes the graphic expression of irrationality, commotion, amazement, intense fear

and agitation. Ironic and funny, isn’t it? At the sound of a mere deflated balloon, the lawmaker jumped off the settee like an athlete, his corpulent belly flying out of his underwear. The lawmaker represents the Nigerian legislature which has been dilly-dallying on Boko Haram matters and its members who have been feasting and dining at the expense of tax payers’ money while the nation’s security is endangered daily. The lawmaker is not alone in this *bokophobia*, even the police and army are scared of Boko Haram’s deadly surprises while many Nigerians are terrified of sudden death caused by bombs. To many, the fear of Boko Haram is the beginning of wisdom and any onomatopoeic sound often sends people scurrying in different directions seeking safety.



Plate 7: Bokophobia  
Cartoonist: Azeez Sanni  
Source: The Nation Newspaper, July 4, 2011, p. 20

### Monstrous Boko Rule

The mayhem caused by BH to lives and properties and to peace and security in Nigeria can be compared to the monstrous, vicious and ravaging effects of predatory animals like dragon, gorilla, snake and vultures. Bats and worms are also metaphors used in describing the personality and character of BH. For instance, in plate 8, BH is personified as bats (representing evil of the dark groves) captured in their hundreds flying over a settlement tagged NIGERIA. Here people are running riot in different directions seeking safety as the bats prowl over the countryside. Bats are nocturnal birds and they represent evil. An inscription in the top-left corner of the cartoon reads “WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PLATEAU MASSACRE”.



Plate 8: We Rule  
Cartoonist: Azeez Sanni  
Source: The Nation Newspaper, July 28, 2011, p. 20

### Insecurity

Plate 9a pictures BH as a gigantic/enormous gorilla. Also known as Mr. Insecurity, the monster sacks the entire north-eastern Nigeria; its gigantic strides only leave behind trails of destruction: of cars, buildings, infrastructures and human lives. Dressed in terrorist attire and armed with dynamite and spirals of ammunition, the monster squeezes an image representing the Federal Government in its left hand. The figure screams and waves frantically for help as the police and army helicopters circulate above in an attempt to curtail the gorilla’s aggression in vain. Two inscriptions are instructive: “Boko Haram will be history” says a PDP chieftain; and “I just hope historians won’t forget how long Boko Haram ruled’- a victim groans underneath the monster’s enormous feet. The gorilla is vicious and angry, its giant strides leave behind scores of dead and injured people and its long sharp canine teeth poised to tear apart the Federal Government. The cartoon is indicative of BH’s malicious personality like an intractable monster that delights in the destruction of lives and public infrastructures. In addition, BH also shares similar traits with snakes and dragons.



Plate 9a: Insecurity  
Cartoonist: Azeez Sanni  
Source: The Nation Newspaper, July 24, 2012, p. 20

Plate 9b depicts BH as a venomous and huge snake uprooting “THE HOME OF PEACE” as it coils around the Shehu of Bornu’s palace - the symbol of Kanuri’s people and authority - and as usual the inhabitants scammed for safety but not without casualties. In plate 9c, the cartoonist presents BH as a fiery dragon which the police and other security agents try to hunt down, and who ironically in the process end up taking captives of both the police and security officials. The flying fire-spitting dragon is personified as “INSECURITY” while it tries to devour its victim. The iconographic symbolism in these cartoons is that of the invincibility of the Boko Haram sect as terrorism rules over Nigeria’s security space.

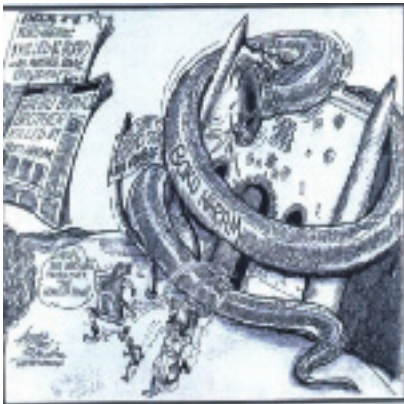


Plate 9b: *Boko Haram (Snake)*  
Cartoonist: Azeez Sanni  
Source: *The Nation Newspaper*, June 8, 2011, p. 20



Plate 9c: *Insecurity (Dragon)*  
Cartoonist: Azeez Sanni  
Source: *The Nation Newspaper*, December 23, 2011, p. 20

### Chibok girls

The nation weeps! Its eyes fill with tears and lips are pushed outward expressing sadness as the sign (hand bill) reads “234 girls still missing”. The cartoon is a surrealistic representation of the map of Nigeria at the base of which are four turbaned guerrillas armed with swords and

firearms; only their eyes are visible. The turbaned guerrillas are Boko Haram, the weeping map of Nigeria represent mother Nigeria and in particular the parents and relatives of the abducted Chibok girls. The tear drops flow freely against the boldly written information on the poster that 234 school girls are still missing. The images of Boko Haram soldiers standing on guard with guns and arrows suggests a readiness to launch a counter attack at any rescue team put in place by the Federal Government or its agencies. As the nation weeps and feels sorrows for the yet-to-be-rescued kidnapped Chibok girls, the tears continue to cascade and the search for the girls becomes more fruitless by the day. The cartoon is symbolic of the trauma, shock, sadness and gruesome loneliness often experienced by families and friends of those who lost their lives or sustained irreparable loss and physical disability due to Boko Haram actions across the north-central and north-eastern regions of Nigeria.



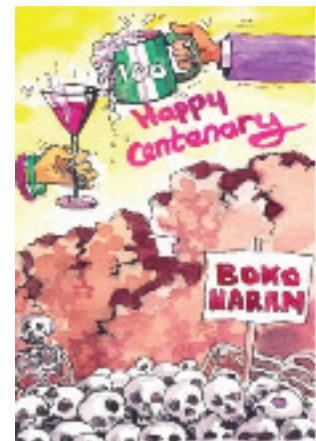
Plate 10: *234 Girls Still Missing*  
Cartoonist: Segun Ajiboye  
Source: *The Nation Newspaper*, October 17, 2014, p. 2  
Photograph by Michael Olusegun Fajuyigbe

### Happy centenary

Celebration in the midst of mourning! The devastation caused by the Boko Haram scourge has left many homes bereft of their loved ones, many of whom are landlords and tenants. The cartoon, divided into different parts, is a paradox and a tale of the presidency’s whimsical attitude to the ravaging activities of Boko Haram across northern Nigeria. The top part presents two hands holding wine glasses; in contrast to the revelling atmosphere,

the other part in the background depicts scores of dry skulls and skeletal remains of the dead dumped in a valley. The cartoonist depicts the centenary birthday - 100 years of Nigeria’s existence and 54 years of nationhood (1914-2014). Two wine cups held by two hands are also depicted. A cylindrical cup, painted with the white and green colours of the Nigerian flag with 100 screen-printed on it, is held by a long-sleeved male hand, while a V-shaped glass is held by a female hand adorned with red and green bangles. In festive mood, the two hands make a toast in response to the caption “HAPPY CENTINARY”. The two hands represent the hand of President Goodluck Jonathan and his wife, Dame Patience as they share the anniversary wine overflowing from the centenary cup. The merriment is heightened by the contrasting sorrow emanating from the valley of skulls (which represent the geographic terrain of north-eastern Nigeria and parts of the North to which the Haram devastation has spread). A 100 years of existence in the life of an individual, institution or a nation calls for celebration as depicted above. The celebration and merriment that follow, especially at the Aso Rock Villa, in Abuja is in order. However, is it not a paradox to roll out drums while claiming to lament the devastation caused by the Boko Haram insurgency? This is the crux of the cartoon which emphasises the complacent, nonchalant and hypocritical stance of the Federal Government to the socio-political uprising in north-eastern Nigeria, and the issue of national security in Nigeria.

Plate 11: *Happy Centenary*  
Cartoonist: Segun Ajiboye  
Source: *The Nation Newspaper*, October 17, 2014, p. 2  
Photograph by Michael Olusegun Fajuyigbe



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I giornali nigeriani affrontano il tema di Boko Haram anche ricorrendo a vignette satiriche. In questo saggio si approfondisce il caso di *The Nation*, giornale che offre vignette particolarmente pungenti e che si distingue tra tutti per chiarezza, concisione, coerenza. Le vignette di *The Nation* hanno l'autonomia e l'efficacia di un editoriale e forniscono uno sguardo critico sulle cause, l'attualità e le conseguenze dell'azione di Boko Haram, attraverso lo strumento pungente della satira. Il lavoro del fumettista Azeez Sanni, per esempio, si distingue per la combinazione di umorismo e sobrietà, e per il messaggio lucido che il suo lavoro trasmette.

L'articolo approfondisce alcune vignette in cui si riscontra un interessante uso del simbolismo grafico a rappresentare, con grande efficacia, temi complessi come corruzione, povertà, conflitti etnici e politici, ingiustizia sociale, ma anche anche l'insensibilità del governo. In alcuni casi l'analisi politica delle cause si fa più approfondita, suggerendo ad esempio che le attività terroristiche siano sostenute dall'interno in accordo con soggetti esterni interessati a creare instabilità politica nel Paese.

### *Phantom Comes Home*

Another depiction of Boko Haram as a monster is captured in the dreadful, fearsome and deathly image of assassin (Plate 12). The image, from head to toe, is attired in black apparel like a Ninja and fortified with weapons of wars and destruction such as AK 47, axe, firearm, gun and explosives. The inscription on the assassin's breast plate reads "BOKO HARAM". The monster carries its prey: a dead, scrawny form; legs tucked in an oversized army boot dangle; its trousers and shirts are torn; and an identification badge inscribed "The Nigerian" hangs from its neck region. The cartoon is an iconographic symbol of death that claims the lives of innocent Nigerians.



Plate 12: The Assassin  
Cartoonist: Muiyiwa Adetula  
Source: The Nation Newspaper

Since 2015, the effort of Nigerian State in fighting Boko Haram insurgency has impressively yielded positive results. The problems of insecurity in general and Boko Haram insurgency in particular have been seriously tackled. This is evidenced in the display of strong political will by the State to solve the problem of insecurity and drastic low tides of Boko Haram activities in Nigeria. But more importantly, the roles of the press in fighting Boko Haram remain significant.

### NOTES

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