
Domestic Counter-Terrorism Mechanism and Human Right Abuse in Nigeria: The North-East Experience

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Abstract

It is no longer strange that the north eastern region of Nigeria is under the siege of Islamic extremists self-styled Boko Haram. The entire region has become a theatre of genocide, bloodshed and insecurity since 2009 till date. This has created worrisome threats to lives and properties and the government forces seem comatose and unable to ameliorate the situation and when it could in the counter-terrorism mechanism, issues bordering on human rights and democratic freedom is brought to bear, hence there is a contradiction between counter-terrorism mechanism and human right and democratic process. It is against these scenarios, that pertinent questions are asked on how well counter-terrorism mechanism could be operated without infringement on fundamental human rights and democratic tenets and what are the probable mechanism that could be adopted in counter-terrorism operations without abuse of human right and democratic rifts. Answers to these questions instigated this research work. Hence, this study examines the extent and nature of counter-terrorism mechanism and human right abuse in the north-east region of Nigeria. It also looks at the solution to mitigate the ugly scenario. The study adopted historical and analytical design as its methodological components to x-ray the relationship between counter-terrorism and human right abuse in north-east Nigeria. Secondary sources of data thus become the hub of its methodology. The study adopted Frustration-Aggression as its theoretical framework.

Keywords: Domestic Terrorism, Counter-terrorism, Insurgency, Human right, Abuse, North East-Nigeria

1.0 Introduction

Terrorism is a terrible act of violence perpetrated by some clandestine group of individuals, most of who are indoctrinated through ideological, religious and political designs. It is a terrible act directed towards or against civilian populations, government officials, politicians, companies, institutions, military installations and critical infrastructures. Terrorism also involves acts that are dangerous to human life and violation of the criminal laws of any state. It is an asymmetric, premeditated war targeted to coerce a government to yield to their demands. It is also regarded as an uncivilized way of some social actors to advance their irrational, political, economic, social and religious goals (Schmid & Jongman, (1988); Jackson, (2007)).

Considering these incessant attacks on non-combatant civilians, government facilities,

military installations, towns and villages, it is obvious that no one is immune to the menace of terrorism because it could happen to anyone, any time and any day. The activities of Boko Haram members have equally deprive their victims of their rights to life which is presume to be the supreme, sacrosanct and recognized under the frame work of international law as enshrined virtually in all the sovereign states in the world, therefore human rights should not be infringe upon by any terrorist organizations nor government counter-terrorism units. Since May 2011 to date over 20,000 people have been killed and 208,509 people displaced (*Global Conflict Tracker, 2018*). Much as Boko Haram terrorists violate and threaten the fundamental rights of the individual or group of individuals in the affected states, the process of checking its spread or trying to completely eliminate its operations should not be done in a way that it will abuse or infringed human rights. This does not mean that counter-terrorism operations should not be encouraged through the collective efforts of the law enforcement agencies, national security agencies or through global collective security cooperation in other to stop the ugly menace.

Counter-terrorism is a fundamental mechanism to achieve national security against terrorists. While human rights and democratic ethos are needed to ensure that the process and out-come of such counter-terrorism operations do not exceed democratic limits and dignity of human person. There is no doubt that counter terrorism and intelligence operations are limited by laws since the laws have to protect human rights and liberties which limits or place intelligence and counter terrorism mechanism in comatose. As a result, double standard or paradoxical relation becomes the order of the day, hence, it complicates an ever larger contextual dilemma - that of the liberty versus security questions. Against this background of trying to solve the freedom and security contradiction, this paper therefore, is aimed at examining counter-terrorism operations and its attended effects on human rights in North-Eastern States of Nigeria.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- (i) To determine the nature and extent of terrorism and counterterrorism mechanisms in Nigeria.
- (ii) To determine how counter-terrorism operations affect human rights and democratic ethos in Nigeria.
- (iii) To proffer strategies on how counter-terrorism operations and human right laws can be used effectively.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions are design to guide this study:

- (i) What are the nature and extent of terrorism and counter terrorism mechanism in Nigeria?
- (ii) To what extent have the counterterrorism operations in Nigeria infringe on human rights and democratic ethos?
- (iii) What are those reformed strategies that can cushion the counter-terrorism mechanism and human right conundrum in Nigeria?

1.3 Methodology

The study adopted historical and analytical design because of its exigency and consistency. Hence, to analyze the relationship between counterterrorism and human rights abuse as a result of the activities of the Islamic extremist self-styled Boko Haram in north-east Nigeria, the study relied solely on secondary sources of data such as journals, articles, gazettes,

correspondence, newspapers, books, and internet sources.

2.0 Theoretical Review:

Frustration-Aggression (FA) theory that was proposed by Dollard, J, *et al* (1939), and developed by Miller and his other colleagues in 1941, and Leonard Berkowitz in 1969 was chosen for this study. The principle hypothesis proposed by Dollard, *et al* (1939) posits ‘that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always lead to some form of aggression. In 1939, Dollard and his colleagues in New Haven, United States published a monograph on aggression in which they presented what is today known as the frustration-aggression hypothesis which appears to have influenced contemporary western thinking more than any other publications. This tends to provide justification for behaving aggressively.

The principal hypothesis posits that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presuppose the existence of frustration, and the existence of frustration on the other hand always lead to aggression. According to Dennen (2005), the term frustration is used to refer not only to the process of blocking of one’s goal attainment but also to the reaction to such blocking. To be frustrated means that one’s reaction to the thwarting circumstances is one of annoyance.

Dollard, *et al* (1939) posits that frustration is the blocking of on-going goal-directed behaviour which often leads to aggression, while aggression is an action with the intent to harm and can be physical or non-physical. Aggression manifests in many areas in our society today which include domestic violence, abuse, school bullying, and war, etc. In other words, the magnitude of frustration one faces might lead him wanting to achieve setting goals. Blocking of these goals at the point of achievement can lead one into act of aggression. Therefore, aggressive behaviour occurs when one who is excited and his goal is getting close to the point of achievement suddenly experience hindrance, barriers or neglect. This implies that there is no counter-terrorism if there is no act of terror, or terrorist act or terrorism. Thus, the root causes of terrorism should be critically put into consideration when carryout measures to prevent or eliminate terrorism so as to prevent excessive military measures which consequently abuse human rights.

The strength of this theory lies in the fact that it provides us with real-world applications particularly in understanding how mass killings of group of people occur. Scholars have suggested that mass killing were rooted in frustrations which were caused by social and economic difficulties people faced in the society or community.

2.1 Empirical Review:

2.1.1 Terrorism and Counterterrorism Mechanism in Nigeria

The most contemporary dilemma facing the globe is the threat to human security. Terrorism seems to be the front burner followed by climate change, natural disasters, mass unemployment, etc. These ugly scenarios remain the bane of societal development. The government and the people are incapacitated in cushioning these monsters diverting attention and resources from core development issues to addressing insecurity without which no development could strive; hence the world has to grapple with these problems given more attention to them as ever before.

Right from the beginning of this century, particularly after 9/11 attacks in the United States, terrorism has become a centre point for the world, although, its existence had been recorded before now. Its impact, though, was of minimal effect in Sub-Sahara Africa until the

emergence of Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM), Jihadist in Sahel Sudan, the emergence of al-Shabaab in Somalia, and the Islamic extremism self-styled Boko Haram in North-East Nigeria, etc. The impact of terrorism especially in Nigeria created a high risk factor and new security challenges to the government and its security agencies. This, in fact, gave rise to critical situation that could be said that Nigeria security environment seem to be in a failed or failing state.

Meanwhile, terrorism as it is said has no universal definition because it is shrouded in controversy as there are a lot of debates on it. Each conceptual frame-work may be the pejorative nature and an effect of the definer's surrounding variables. Given this, it is worth recalling by Wittgenstein's aphorism, "let the use of the word teach you its meaning" (*Horgan, 2005*). It is a word that is in every body's lips and nobody explains it adequately. In fact, conceptualization of terrorism is rather one of the most difficult tasks to scholars and governments across the world. Terrorism is also elusive because there is also the problem of differentiating the concept from other forms of violent acts such as the act of guerrilla warfare, serial killing, kidnapping, armed robbery, assassination and genocide etc. Those who have sympathy for the victims of terrorist attack have a negative feeling and they describe the actors as "terrorists", while those who believe in terrorist ideology and causes see it as the act of liberation and refer to those involve in it as "freedom fighters" (*Aderonke, 2015*).

In this respect, Spencer (2008) contends that the term freedom fighter is used as a moral judgment when classifying terrorism as a concept. In the same manner, Pienaar (2007) opines that throughout history, terrorists have claimed to be freedom fighters, fighting against dictatorships and oppression. In this respect, "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter". Terrorism, therefore, appears to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping, and may transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the local in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum (*FBI, 2006*). It is on this note that Israel (2014) sees terrorism as the contemporary name given to, and the modern permutation of warfare deliberately waged against civilians with the purpose of destroying their will to support either leaders or policies that the agent of such violence find objectionable. In other words, terrorism and counter-terrorism are not new concepts within the international community since both concepts or terms have been with us since the dawn of recorded history (*Imobighe, 2006*).

According to Imobighe (2006), both concepts are linked in a confrontational kind of way and are regarded as "two sides of the same coin" and related in the form of "action-reaction" sort of way. This means that counter-terrorism is a reaction to the presence of terrorism, and it also derives its substance from terrorism. On a general ground, counter-terrorism represents the various forms of response to first, pre-empts, prevents, and eliminates terrorism, and on a second note involves the use of intelligence, counter intelligence as well as military and Para-military forces to deal with all forms of terrorist threats. It is on this front that human rights are compromised because the major measure or response to comb terrorism particularly in the case of the self-styled Boko Haram terrorists in north eastern Nigeria which adopts instruments of violence that are equally associated with the terrorists such as bombardment of the locations of the terrorist gangs, capture and torture of the terrorists. In short, the full weight of the coercive apparatus of the state is used for terrorists in Nigeria (*Imobighe, 2006*).

2.2 Counter-Terrorism Operations in Nigeria and infringement of Human Rights and Democratic Ethos

Human right which is also known as natural right or fundamental rights relate to certain freedoms or privileges that are held to be innate part of the human person, which cannot be denied by society (*Tunde, 2006:53*). These are rights everyone is expected to enjoy without interference and are generally refers to as “inalienable rights”. Apart for right to life which is presume to be supreme of all rights, the United Nations Agreements on human Rights recognized other forms of rights such as freedom of thought; conscience and religion; freedom of opinion and expression; freedom of assembly and association; rights to privacy and protection of that privacy by law. It is on this premise that Eso (1985), Agwunobi and Oyedolapo (2012) opine that human right is the right which stands above the ordinary law of the land and antecedent to the political society and a primary condition to a civilized existence. It is also on this background that Saqib (2015) defined human rights as those rights which a person possesses by his simple characteristics of being a human. These he said are rights which are available to a person and which protect the person’s interest, freedom, dignity and other fundamental rights against the interference and excesses of state’s agent coercive measures when countering terrorism.

It should be noted that the concern of human rights in the world today stems from the perception widely shared with J. J. Rousseau that “ man though born free is everywhere in chains”. Today, increasing awareness couple with the preoccupation on how best to safeguard them from rampant violation have made the term “human rights” a song on almost everyone’s lips, yet the contradiction, inconsistency, confusion, misinterpretation and absurdity that pervade the motion is quite telling (*Vance, 2001*). In other words it is no longer strange to say that the world in this contemporary age including Africa has witnessed a resurgence of terrorism. Boko Haram terrorist organization has been threatening the right to life, peace and security of the Nigerian citizen in the North-Eastern zone of the country. Nigeria, therefore, is no doubt under the siege of terrorists. In short the contemporary Nigerian state has become a theatre of genocide, bloodshed and insecurity due to the activities of the Boko Haram Islamic sect led by its leader, Abubaka Shekau. The terrorists continued to unleash havoc on the populace in the north-eastern region. Since 2009, the sect has created worrisome threats to lives and properties particularly in North Eastern States of Nigeria.

According to Aderonke (2015), who went into memory lane and contends that the trend of terror attack perpetuated by the Boko Haram sect is attributed to the extra-judicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf in July, 2009 by the Nigeria Police. Yusuf was arrested by the Nigerian Military at the Mosque headquarters of the sect and handed him over to the state police but was killed without due process of the law, hence violate the principle of fair hearing and the rule of law. The consequence of this killing by the police led to a violent revolt by the Boko Haram sect members led by their new leader, Abubaka Mohammed Shekau after the demise of Yusuf. Hence, the killing of Yusuf by the Police as a counter-terrorism mechanism yielded no result based on not adherence to the rule of law; instead it escalated the situation that the nation is facing today.

A pertinent question which needs perfect answer here, is whether counter-terrorism measures adopted by the government have respect for human rights and democratic ethos? Respect for human rights is sacrosanct not because it is an intrinsic element of effective counter-terrorism or counter-insurgency, but because it is also a fundamental, constitutional and international legal obligation. Unfortunately, the government of Nigeria in most cases operates with total

disregard for the rule of law and respect for human rights. In fact, impunity remains a widespread phenomenon within the government circle while countering terrorism or insurgency. For instance, the government has only brought a few individuals to justice for abuse of human rights and corruption. The government also did not investigate majority of the alleged cases of police and other security agency's abuse of human rights or punish any perpetrator over the years while fighting Boko Haram terrorists in the north-eastern region and in the country generally. This is evident in the summary execution, assault, torture, and other forms of abuse against the civilian population (*Mohammed, 2015*).

According to Mohammed (2015), the Nigerian security agents made several arbitrary arrests, and detained several suspects without fair trial. They also use torture, killed the suspects unlawfully and harm the very people they are supposed to protect with utmost impunity, therefore, leaving the citizens helpless and hopeless. In short, the Nigerian military in attempt for counter terrorism in the north eastern region of the country have committed war crimes and possible crimes against humanity in the same manner the self-styled Boko Haram terrorists have done (*Amnesty International, 2017*).

With the support of the government and the military, a vigilant group known as the Civilian Joint Task Force(C-JTF) emerged in Maiduguri in the north eastern region with children as members, and amazingly committed extra judicial killings against selves assumed enemies or alleged Boko Haram suspects. The government and its agents on the other hand committed numerous arbitrary and unlawful killing and detention of alleged terrorist suspects. The Joint Task Force (JTF) which is composed of the military, police and other security services also conducted several raids on criminal suspect in Boko Haram dominated states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kano, Kogi, Plateau, Sokoto, Taraba, Katsina, Jigawa and Yobe which resulted to several deaths and injuries to both the criminal and civilians. This is what made some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other relevant authorities to accuse the government operatives of indiscriminate and extrajudicial killings (*Country Report on Human Rights Practice, 2013*).

Mohammed (2015) went further to assert that Nigerian government is a party to the major sources of International Humanitarian Laws (IHL), i.e. the Geneva conventions, their protocol and other customary international law. Yet the government and its security agencies abuse these against the provisions of the international human right law such as prolonged pre-trial detention, denial for fair public trial, infringements on citizens privacy rights; denial of freedoms of speech, denial of freedoms of press, assembly, religion, and movement; child abuse, violence against women; sexual exploitation of children; trafficking in persons, forced and child labour, and a host of others. All these offences conflict with the international counterterrorism standard or insurgency measures. Other obvious case that involved the Joint Task Forces (JTFs) was its conducted raid on militant groups and criminal suspects in the North Eastern states that resulted to the deaths of some of the alleged terrorists, criminals and unfortunately civilians whom they were supposed to protect. While some of the victims sustained serious injuries, some were captured and extra judicially killed. The Joint Task Force Restore Order (JTF-RO) which was later disbanded in August 2013, like the JTFs also carried out summary executions, assaults, torture, and other forms of abuse in Borno, Kano and Yobe states.

The government of Nigeria often claims innocence of the activities of its security agencies in the fight against insurgency. But the truth remains that the government has not done enough to check the excesses of the security agencies and to bring the perpetrators of war crimes or

other offences to book. The government rather claimed that the JTF-RO personnel's do face disciplinary charges for human rights abuses or violations if found wanting. None of these claims were verified till date. The Baga case in Borno State in April 16, 2013 is another pertinent example. Witnesses of the killing of a Soldier in Baga town claimed that Boko Haram sect members shot and killed a soldier with the Multinational Joint Task Force composed of soldiers from Nigeria, Niger and Chad. In response, Nigeria army and members of the Joint Task Force shot indiscriminately at individuals and animals at sight and destroyed the homes and properties of those they were to protect against insurgency thereby abused the fundamental rights of the victims of the reprisal attack. Yet, none of the officers that perpetrated this act were tried and prosecuted (*Amnesty International, 2017*).

Despite the country's position in Africa as a super nation, and a subject to the jurisdiction of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Right, the authorities do not have respect for the provisions of regional human rights and international humanitarian laws. This is evident in the non-compliance of the rule. For example, on July 1, 2013 the military announced the court-martial of 18 soldiers alleged to have aided members of Boko Haram sect for the murder and manslaughter of soldiers and civilians and who were made to face death penalty, life imprisonment or dismissal from the force as the consequence of their actions. On September same year, these soldiers were reported to faced death sentence but the government officials denied the media reports and told the public that the court martial trial was still going on, although the proceedings were not made public. This incident has exposed the insincerity and inconsistency on the part of the government of Nigeria in the pursuit of human rights preservation and respect for democratic ethos (*Amnesty International, 2017*)

Members of the counter terrorist unit of the police on 20th September 2013 killed nine persons in an uncompleted building site in Apo district of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja alleging that the victims were members of Boko Haram terrorist organization. They also alleged that the victims had their weapons buried on the building site. The action of security operatives and their cohorts unfortunately was supported by the State Security leadership who defended their actions as self-defence in response to being shot at upon their arrival at the uncompleted building site. Although, the National Human Right Commission (NHRC) and the National Assembly condemned the action, but up till today there is no report from any investigation to their innocence (*Country Reports on Human Rights, 2013*).

Reports also show that the police arbitrary interfere with the rights of privacy of family members of alleged suspected Boko Haram members. The abuse of such right usually occurs immediately after a bomb attack by suspected terrorists or militants without warrants while searching for evidence and suspected members of Boko Haram terrorists. On September 14, 2013, the Civilian Joint Task Force (C-JTF) member killed four Boko Haram suspects who were trying to avoid been arrested during a joint military operation with the JTF-RO in Michika Local Government Area of Adamawa State. Unfortunately, no criminal charge was brought against the civilian JTF-RO members who were responsible for the killings. Report also stated that security forces harassed and rape unsuspecting women while conducting raids to arrest Boko Haram suspects.

According to Amnesty International (AI) report of October 15, 2013, hundreds of Boko Haram suspects in custody were reported dead. Her request for proper investigation of this allegation and that of the alleged death of over 950 persons in a military custody and other numerous reported killings at military detention Centre of Boko Haram suspects are yet to be investigated by the government in other to prosecute officers involved in these acts against

international humanitarian law. Some former detainees who were live witnessed to some of these inhuman behaviours of the military personnel told Amnesty International (AI) that detainees died regularly of suffocation, starvation, lack of medical treatment, and extrajudicial executions, yet the government still did not act urgently to protect these individuals and provide them with opportunities to enjoying their fundamental rights which is enshrine in both the domestic and international laws on human rights. The Amnesty International(AI) (2013) also reported the amazing discovery of 20 emaciated corpses alleged to have been dropped by the JTF RO personnel and meant to be picked later for mass burial by her delegates on their visit to the state specialist Hospital Mortuary in Maiduguri, Borno state. The Borno State Environmental Protection Agency was accused of picking up of such corpses for mass burial but the government is yet to investigate this barbaric abuse of human right (*Amnesty International, 2013*).

On 8 April, 2013 two employees of the Leadership Newspaper, Tony Amokeode and Chibuzor Ukaibe were unlawfully arrested by security operative for publishing article alleging that for President Jonathan ordered the disruption of his political opponents which automatically abused their fundamental rights of freedom of expression and press. On 12 February, 2013 Muhammed Suleiman Gama and Yakubu Musa Faggae both of Wazobia FM in Kano were also unlawfully arrested for comments on air about polio vaccination campaign alleged to have provoked the killing of 10 immunization workers (*Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2013*). The report went further to prove that dozens of civilians were killed and scores of houses were rased in Wuse District in Plateau State by army troops following the alleged killings and mutilation of six soldiers in May, 2015. On 12 and 13 December 2015 over three hundred members of the Shia Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) including the sons of their leader were killed in Zaria, Kaduna State following the disruption of the convoy of the Chief of Army Staff by a roadblock purportedly installed by the set members. The spiritual head of this group of worshipers, Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, is still unlawfully detained in prison despite series of court orders granting him release(*CountryReportsonHumanRightsPractice,2015: Danfulani, 2017*).

In fact, from 2013 till date the number of the death of alleged Boko Haram suspects, security agencies and that of innocent civilians as a result of counter-terrorism measure have become impossible to determine and terror activities have continued throughout 2017 and into 2018. The government unfortunately refused to comment on this unfortunate situation created by the excessive abuse of human rights and fragrant disregards of democratic ethos. In other words, it is obvious that the government have not been able to minimize or completely curbed the widespread abuses of human rights and democratic infringement by its security agencies in the north eastern region. This nonchalant attitude had created a climate of impunity where by the civilian population in the north eastern region are constantly victimized by both Boko Haram terrorists and the government security agencies in the name of counter Terrorism mechanism (*Buchanan-Clark & Peter, 2017*).

2.3 Reformed Strategies that can cushion Counter-terrorism Mechanism and Human Right Conundrums in Nigeria

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the use of excessive force and other forms of abuses in counter-terrorism/insurgency in Nigeria is now a common practice. Over the years, security agencies committed numerous killings and arbitrary arrest of suspected terrorists and innocent citizens found it difficult to differentiate between terrorist attacks by Boko Haram and counter terrorism mechanism by security agencies, in such cases, counter terrorism mechanism done more harm against the civilian than the terrorist act. Considering the

complexities of the threats pose by the activities of both the government security agencies and Boko Haram, one could say that the counter terrorism/insurgency mechanism should as a matter of urgency be reformed to ensure human rights are not abused with reckless impunity just the same way the Boko Haram terrorists do.

In other words, the call for effective counter terrorism approach in Nigeria must go beyond maximum military responses. In addition to intensive military measures, efforts should be made to identify the root causes of the Terrorism in north-east states of Nigeria. In this respect, Akinola (2013) suggests that apart from military measures and security cooperation with neighbouring states, counter-terrorism approach in north-east need to encompass inter-religious dialogues and mediation processes. This he said is ought to address issues of socio-economic development and governance, as well as the problem of pro-security, detaining and rehabilitating insurgents who have broken the law.

Also developmental reforms and policies geared towards improving economic infrastructure, human enterprise and political institutions should be adopted and strengthened to complement military responses to counter terrorism. Therefore the government should focus her attention on educational needs of the people in the affected region and the country in general so as to completely eliminate all forms of vulnerabilities or probable emergence of insurgency in the country. If this is achieved, violent extremism would be curtail since the extremists who exploit the economically weak would no longer find them to indoctrinate and influenced.

The regional and central government should also improve governance by strengthening the rule of law. In other words, serious campaign against corruption can reduce the support base and appeal that Boko Haram has gained from the vast number of unemployed youths. Youths are undoubtedly the major victims in most of the crisis; therefore, the regional government in particular should prioritize youth empowerment in their programs annually so as to curtail their involvement, exposure and recruitment by the dissident groups in the society.

Government should also work closely with her neighbouring countries of West African sub region, the Sahel region and the entire African continent to fight insurgency and other forms of terrorism. The government should also learn to adapt speedily to the changing tactics of the dissident terrorists. Rules of engagement should be observed by security operator. What this means, is rules that governed military operation without violation, human rights should be taken into cognizance. Also, operational order must be given for any counter measure or operation having the backing of those in authority.

Proper surveillance of area of attack by our security personnel should be properly articulated to avoid collateral damage of the innocent civilians. Also, military guided architectural design should be put in place to guide the area of operations. Military/ community or civil military relations should be robust to ensure proper security measure through community oriented partnership. Another probable approach include alternate dispute resolution format such as mediation, peaceful negotiation and inter-religious dialogues to address Christian-Muslim relations in the country.

3.1 Conclusion

This paper has attempted to discuss the link between domestic counter-terrorism and human rights abuse in north east Nigeria. The study has exposed the fact that the war against Boko Haram insurgency in the north eastern region has compromised national security and human

rights as stipulated in international humanitarian laws as applicable to Nigeria. Human Rights, thus, have been abused with reckless impunity by government forces. This has heightened tensions in the dominated north east region and the country in general, instead of ameliorate it. This implies that military or force approach or counter-terrorism mechanism that have been going on is absolutely not working, in cushioning this ugly scenario a new strategic reform that will collaborate serene security and protection of human rights rules and regulations should be implemented.

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