NORTHERN NIGERIA: BACKGROUND TO CONFLICT

Africa Report N°168 – 20 December 2010

International Crisis Group

WORKING TO PREVENT
CONFLICT WORLDWIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NORTHERN NIGERIA: BACKGROUND TO CONFLICT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violence in northern Nigeria has flared up periodically over the last 30 years. Mainly in the form of urban riots, it has pitted Muslims against Christians and has seen confrontations between different Islamic sects. Although there have been some successes in conflict management in the last decade, the 2009 and 2010 troubles in Bauchi, Borno and Yobe states involving the radical Boko Haram sect show that violence still may flare up at any moment. If the situation were to deteriorate significantly, especially on Christian-Muslim lines, it could have serious repercussions for national cohesion in the build up to national elections in April 2011. To deal with the risks, community-level initiatives need to be reinforced, a more subtle security response should be formulated and the management of public resources must be improved. While some in the West panic at what they see as growing Islamic radicalism in the region, the roots of the problem are more complex and lie in Nigeria's history and contemporary politics.

The far north, if taken to comprise the twelve states that reintroduced Sharia (Islamic law) for criminal cases at the beginning of the century, is home to 53 million people. The large majority are Muslim, but there is a substantial Christian minority, both indigenous to the area and the product of migration from the south of the country. The Sokoto Caliphate, formed in 1804-1808, is a reference point for many in the region. As West Africa's most powerful pre-colonial state, it is a source of great pride. But for some, its defeat by the British in 1903 and subsequent dealings with colonial and post-colonial states mean the caliphate is tarnished with the corrupting influence of secular political power. The impact of colonial rule was paradoxical. While policies of indirect rule allowed traditional authorities, principally the Sultan of Sokoto, to continue to expand their power, that power was also circumscribed by the British.

In the first decades of independence, which were marked by frequent violent conflict between the regions for control of state resources, the north saw the military as a route to power and influence. But following the disastrous rule of northern General Sani Abacha (1993-1998), the return to democracy in 1999 was viewed as a chance for the north to seek political and moral renewal. This

lead to the reintroduction of Sharia in twelve states between 1999 and 2002, although only two have applied it seriously. Sharia caused controversy over its compatibility with international human rights standards and the constitution and regarding the position of Christians in those states. It also exacerbated recurrent conflicts between Muslims and Christians. But it was supported by many Muslims, and some Christians, who had lost faith in secular law enforcement authorities, and it also stimulated much open and democratic debate over the rule of law. Tensions over the issue have declined in recent years.

Debates among Muslims in the region tend to divide those who respect the established religious and secular authorities and their two-century-old Sufi heritage from those who take a "reformist" view. The latter cover a very wide range of opinion, from Salafist-type anti-Sufism to Iranian-inspired Shiite movements, and combine anger at the establishment's corruption with a promise of a more individualistic religious experience. Typically, some end up being co-opted by both religious and secular authorities, largely due to the latter's control over public resources. But others maintain a hostile or rejectionist stance that in some isolated cases turns into violent rejection of public authority. As in the south, religion provides a sense of community and security and is increasingly public and political. In combination with more polarised communal politics, this has led to clashes over doctrine and political and spiritual authority.

Violent conflict, whether riots or fighting between insurrectional groups and the police, tends to occur at specific flashpoints. Examples are the cities of Kaduna and Zaria, whose populations are religiously and ethnically very mixed, and the very poor states of the far north east, where anti-establishment groups have emerged. Many factors fuelling these conflicts are common across Nigeria: in particular, the political manipulation of religion and ethnicity and disputes between supposed local groups and "settlers" over distribution of public resources. The failure of the state to assure public order, to contribute to dispute settlement and to implement post-conflict peacebuilding measures is also a factor. Economic decline and absence of employment opportunities, especially as ine-

quality grows, likewise drives conflict. As elsewhere in Nigeria, the north suffers from a potent mix of economic malaise and contentious, community-based distribution of public resources.

But there is also a specifically northern element. A thread of rejectionist thinking runs through northern Nigerian history, according to which collaboration with secular authorities is illegitimate. While calls for an "Islamic state" in Nigeria should not be taken too seriously, despite media hyperbole, they do demonstrate that many in the far north express political and social dissatisfaction through greater adherence to Islam and increasingly look to the religious canon for solutions to multiple problems in their lives.

Much local-level conflict prevention and resolution does occur. For a vast region beset with social and economic problems, the absence of widespread conflict is as notable as the pockets of violence. Some state authorities have done good work on community relations, but the record is uneven. At the federal level, clumsy and heavy-handed security responses are likely to exacerbate conflicts in the future. More fundamentally, preventing and resolving conflict in the far north will require far better management of public resources, an end to their distribution according to ethnic identity and job-creating economic revival.

Northern Nigeria is little understood by those in the south, still less by the international community. Too often it is viewed as part of bigger rivalries in a putative West-Islam divide. All – from Iran to Christian evangelical preachers – need to be more careful of what they say and whom they support. Officials in the West need to put some of their fears about radical Islam into a much more Nigerian perspective. Reformist movements – highly diverse and fragmented – have contributed in many positive ways to debates over governance, corruption and rule of law. While some harbour real hostility to the West, for others criticising the U.S. is really a way of expressing frustration with Nigeria's secular state and its multiple problems.

Dakar/Brussels, 20 December 2010

NORTHERN NIGERIA: BACKGROUND TO CONFLICT

I. INTRODUCTION

This report looks at violent conflict in the far north of Nigeria. The area considered is the twelve states that expanded the scope of Sharia between 1999 and 2002.[1] The region has experienced recurrent violent conflicts, particularly since the early 1980s.[2] These are the product of several complex and inter-locking factors, including a volatile mix of historical grievances, political manipulation and ethnic and religious rivalries. However, the region has historically shown much capacity for peaceful coexistence between its ethnic and religious communities. Local conflicts are sometimes taken to represent the whole of northern Nigerian society, particularly by outside observers, which is far from the case. Traditions of peaceful coexistence show that conflict is not inevitable, and the right mix of social and political measures can alleviate the risks.

The most prominent conflicts have been between Muslims and Christians. Adherents of these religions generally live peacefully together in many parts of the region. But long-existing tensions, especially between Pentecostal Christians and Islamic groups, were aggravated by the reintroduction of Sharia and came to a head in Kaduna, where hundreds if not thousands of people were killed in February and March 2000.[3] There have also been conflicts between opposing Islamic sects; between anti-establishment Islamic groups and the Nigerian state; and between long-established indigenous communities and the more recent "settler" groups. These latter conflicts, fuelled by competition for communally-distributed public resources, are common across the country.

The starting point of efforts to resolve these conflicts must be a better understanding of the historical, cultural and other contexts in which they take place. This report, Crisis Group's first on the region, seeks to provide that background. Based on around 100 interviews with people from all walks of life, many conducted in the local Hausa language, it explains the context of the conflicts, then focuses on the first three of the main categories (conflicts between indigenous and settler groups are not considered in this report). It concludes by examining the strategies by which stakeholders, including Nigerian governments and security agencies, civil society organisations and the international community, have sought to manage these conflicts and the limited results they have had.[4]

---

[1] The twelve states are Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara. The history of Nigeria's regions and states is complex and can be confusing. Nigerians frequently use the term the "North" to designate the old Northern Region, inherited from colonial powers and in place until the creation of new states in 1967 (for the situation just prior to this, see map in Appendix B, showing the delineation of the Northern Region). This region covered over half the country, going as far south as the current capital, Abuja. The term no longer has any official use. The southern part of the defunct region, including Jos and Abuja, has long been referred to as the "middle belt". In other circumstances, Nigerians may refer to six "geo-political zones": the north west; north east; north central; south west; south east; and south south. Although these terms do not refer to any administrative entity, they do form the basis of the geo-political zoning of the country that applies in allocation of federal employment. The concentration on the twelve states of the far north is simply Crisis Group's choice for the scope of this report. In some respects, the conflict risks in this area are unique, but in other respects, such as Christian-Muslim tensions and/or tensions over land use, they are similar to other parts of the country, such as the Jos plateau. Problems in the Jos plateau have been well documented elsewhere, for example in Human Rights Watch reports, "Revenge in the Name of Religion; The Cycle of Violence in Plateau and Kano States", May 2005; and "Arbitrary Killings by Security Forces Submission to the Investigative Bodies on the November 28-29, 2008 Violence in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria", 20 July 2009.

[2] Broad background can be found in Crisis Group Africa Report N°113, *Nigeria: Want in the Midst of Plenty*, 19 July 2006. Comprehensive (although now somewhat outdated) coverage is in Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester, 1998).

[3] Figures for casualties resulting from violence in northern Nigeria, as elsewhere, are highly unreliable. Official and unofficial estimates sometimes exaggerate, but more often underplay them.

[4] See Appendix E for detailed case studies of violence in Kaduna and recent violence in the far north east.

II. COMMUNITIES, ISLAM AND COLONIAL RULE

To better deal with conflicts in northern Nigeria, it is vital to understand the histories of the region's ethnic and religious communities. In particular the "centre-periphery" model of the Sokoto Caliphate has had a profound impact on community relations and debates on the position of religion in the region's politics.

A. THE PRE-COLONIAL ERA

1. The people of northern Nigeria and the early spread of Islam

The far north is home to numerous ethnic groups and religious communities.[5] Largely rural, it also includes historically important urban centres such as Kano, Sokoto, Zaria, Maiduguri and Kaduna. These cities have been famous centres of learning in the Islamic world for centuries.[6] The predominant groups are the Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri, but there are also about 160 smaller groups. The three largest are predominantly Muslim, while many of the smaller are Christian or animist. Muslims are the majority in most of the far northern states, in some cases (Sokoto, Borno) overwhelmingly so, while states such as Kaduna are more mixed. Since British colonisation in the early 1900s, these have crystallised into what are commonly referred to as "majority groups" and "minorities", with further complexity added by the arrival of substantial numbers of mainly Christian immigrants from the country's south.

Across much of the region, but not all (especially not the north east, where the Kanuri dominate) the Hausa and Fulani are considered the majority group or groups, which is a reflection of political hegemony as much as pure numbers. Neither the Hausa nor the Fulani is a rigid lineage group – one can become Hausa by adoption or conversion to Islam, although in doing so one enters at the bottom rung of a highly stratified society. As large Islamised ethnic groups closely associated with the nineteenth-century Sokoto Caliphate, the Hausa and Fulani are often seen as dominant in the region and grouped together as a single Hausa-Fulani group. This is encouraged by Nigeria's politics of communal rivalry and to some degree reflects their own political strategies. However, Hausa and Fulani are distinguishable in terms of names and languages and consider themselves distinct. While nearly all Fulani in the region speak Hausa, the region's lingua franca, not all Hausa speak Fulani.

The earliest peoples in the region consisted of many smaller groups, organised in autonomous or community-based polities. Most had only rudimentary state structures, no imperial rulers and apparently no expansionist ambitions.[7] The Hausa, who partly came from migrations and partly formed in-situ, became an identifiable (and self-identifying) group in roughly the twelfth century. Internal rivalries inhibited the formation of a unified empire, but they established seven major city-states and seven other associated-states – collectively now known as Hausaland – extending into what is the present-day Niger Republic. By the thirteenth century, these states had gained control over much of the region, incorporating some smaller groups into multi-ethnic, Hausa-speaking polities.[8] Initially surrounded by the Bornu Empire to the east and the Songhai Empire to the west, it was not until the seventeenth century that the Hausa Empire flourished, by gaining control of significant trans-Saharan trade in salt, gold and slaves.

The Kanuri originated from the Kanem Empire that emerged by the ninth century in what is now south-western Chad. Internal instability forced them westward across Lake Chad. Subduing the local people, they established the Borno Kingdom, distinct from the Hausa states, in around the eleventh century. Assimilating and inter-marrying with local ethnic groups, they became the largest ethnic group in the north east.

Fulani migrated from present-day Senegal, through the Mali and Songhai empires, to Hausaland in the thirteenth century and Borno in the fifteenth. Though mostly nomadic herdsmen, the scholars among them found appointments

---

[5] This region covers about 469,000 sq km, 51 per cent of Nigeria's land mass, and its 53 million people account for 38 per cent of the country's total population. Located mainly in the Sahelian belt south of the Sahara desert, most of the region is arid, with a low population density of 113 inhabitants per sq km. Figures from the 2006 national population census, available on Wikipedia.

[6] Background on the city of Kano can be found in Bawuro Barkindo "Growing Islamism in Kano City since 1970", in Louis Brenner (ed.), *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Indiana, 1993). For more general context, see Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Histoire des Villes en Afrique noire* (Paris, 1993), Chapter IV, "Les Villes de l'Islam".

[7] On the ancient history and ethnic composition of the area, see J. F. Jemkur, *Aspects of Nok Culture* (Zaria, 1992), pp. 1-20. The largest of these smaller ethnic groups are the Gbagyi, Bajju, Bakulu, Atyap, Ham, Ninzo, Kagoro and Karama.

[8] For general background on the concomitant emergence of Hausa identity and the beginnings of Islam in the region, see Mervyn Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa* (London, 1984); Toyin Falola and Mathew Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge, 2008), chapters 1 and 2. These seven Hausa states were Biram, Daura, Kano, Katsina, Gobir, Rano and Zazzau (or Zaria). The seven other associated states, Zamfara, Kebbi, Yauri, Gwari, Nupe, Kwararafa and Ilorin, were referred to as Banza Bokwai, a somewhat derogatory term meaning not perfectly Hausa.

in Hausa royal houses, as advisers, scribes, judges and tax collectors, and gradually gained great influence among Hausa nobles.

Beyond migrations and early settlements, the initial interactions were also shaped by wars, slavery, commerce and the spread of Islam. Many states waged wars to expand territorial claims and acquire slaves for working feudal plantations or export to North Africa. The Hausa states allied intermittently but occasionally fought each other; they also suffered invasions, notably by the Borno king, Idris Alooma, in the late sixteenth century.

Commercial transactions created other links. For instance, as Hausa merchants travelled southward, they established mid-way bases that later became permanent Hausa settlements amid other peoples. This led to the establishment of Hausa towns that often became the focal points of economic, political and administrative life in their respective areas. Moreover, as the capitals of the Hausa states and of the Borno Empire were major southern entrepots of trans-Saharan trade, they served as conduits for spreading North African and Arab ideas and culture in the region.

The most significant interactions, however, were forged by the spread of Islam, which occurred in two broad phases. Between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries, Islam was introduced largely peacefully, by clerics and merchants (often the same individuals) from North Africa and the Arab world, and from across West Africa. The rulers of the Borno Empire were the first to convert, in the eleventh century. With the coming of Wangarawa traders and scholars from Mali at the end of the fourteenth century and increase in trade with the Songhai Empire in the fifteenth, Hausa kings followed suit. Already by the fourteenth century, Muslim scholars from Mali occupied important administrative posts in the Hausa city-states.[9]

The second phase started as a revivalist revolution at the dawn of the nineteenth century: a Fulani preacher, Shehu Usman dan Fodio, led a jihad initially aimed at purifying Islamic practices in the region and ultimately at installing a new righteous leadership. With support from the nomadic Fulani and disgruntled Hausa peasantry, who had all suffered under the despotism and corruption of the Hausa kings, the jihad overran the by-then fourteen Hausa states between 1804 and 1808 and replaced their chiefs with Fulani emirs. Only Borno, conquered for a limited period (1808-1812), was never fully subdued by the new regime, the Sokoto Caliphate.

2. The Sokoto Caliphate

The new empire derived cohesion from Islam but consisted of autonomous emirates, each with its emir and administration. At the apex was the caliph, based in Sokoto, who doubled as both political leader and spiritual guide. The caliphate retained the pre-jihad feudal system, replacing the Hausa aristocracy with royal Fulani families. Communities paid tithes to the emirs, who in turn paid tribute to the caliph. Between the capitals of the emirates, trade flourished, transport routes were relatively secure, and the cities attained considerable wealth.[10]

The Fulani rulers entrenched Islamic values and practices in most of the region.[11] Although this was sometimes met with passive resistance from sections of the population, it was crucial to fostering a common culture that transcended ethnicity and held the caliphate together. Sharia was applied "more widely, and in some respects more rigidly ... than anywhere else outside Saudi Arabia",[12] and indigenous religious practices, such as traditional Hausa ceremonies (*Bori*), were suppressed, or at least became less visible. However, the Fulani rulers also assimilated many elements of Hausa culture, thus creating the basis for what some see as a progressively homogeneous Hausa-Fulani identity. A prominent scholar observed that the caliphate also promoted a culture of "knowledge and intellectualism", such that "education became the yardstick for all opportunities in the state and knowledge a ladder for climbing heights of respect and dignity".[13]

Yet, the caliphate was not an ideal kingdom. Resistance to Fulani rule, including resistance from Fulani nobles who felt excluded from emerging power structures, and more general insecurity, especially along its periphery, continued throughout the nineteenth century. While Islam helped to consolidate political rule, it also inspired re-

[9] On this period, see Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Nigeria* (Evanston, 1997); M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano* (Boulder, 1997); and John N. Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano* (Berkeley, 1973).

[10] On the Sokoto Caliphate, see H.A.S. Johnston, *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto* (London, 1967); A M Kani and K A Gandi (eds.), *State and Society in the Sokoto Caliphate* (Sokoto, 1990); and Johannes Harnischfeger, *Democratisation and Islamic Law* (Frankfurt, 2008).

[11] An example of how Islam was used as part of the construction of the caliphate is that the Islamic notion of charity (*zakat*) was employed for tax collecting. See Steven Pierce, "Looking like a State: Colonialism and the Discourse of Anticorruption in Northern Nigeria", *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, 2006, p. 902.

[12] J.N.D. Anderson, *Islamic Law in Africa* (London, 1955), cited in Philip Ostien and Sati Fwatshak, "Historical Background", in Philip Ostien (ed.), *Sharia Implementation in Northern Nigeria 1999-2006: A Sourcebook* (Ibadan, 2007), also available online at www.sharia-in-africa.net, p. 3.

[13] Muktar Umar Bunza, "The Sokoto Caliphate after 200 years: A Reflection", conference paper, Usman dan Fodio University, Sokoto, 2004.

volts, particularly where people suffered more intensive taxation. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, many communities, especially at the eastern margins of the caliphate, had been devastated by revolts inspired both by economic grievances and differences over religious doctrine. As the caliphate's prosperity was based in part on plantation labour, warriors from the emirates constantly raided and looted peripheral regions, regarded as heathen territory, to capture slaves.[14] Memories of that era still haunt relations, especially between the Fulani and the smaller groups the raiders plundered.

The late years of the caliphate were marked by increasing tensions between the two major Sufi brotherhoods (Tariqa) – the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya. The Qadiriyya, present in the region from the fifteenth century, became the dominant (and official) order of the caliphate. However, in the nineteenth century, the Tijaniyya, whose social base was among the newly rich traders and bureaucratic classes, became more popular and over time associated with resistance to the ruling aristocracies of the region, and of Sokoto in particular.[15]

In the late nineteenth century the British government established its control of southern Nigeria as a protectorate (with Lagos as a colony). In 1900, it began extending its holding northward, proclaiming that region also a protectorate. Frederick Lugard, appointed High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria, slowly negotiated with the emirs to accept colonial rule. Most cooperated, their kingdoms already weakened by internal dissent following the end of the once-lucrative Atlantic slave trade. Those who resisted were defeated, from Bida in 1901 to Sokoto in 1903. The killing of the fleeing Caliph Attahiru I, in July 1903, marked the end of the caliphate as a sovereign political formation.

The Sokoto Caliphate occupies an important, but ambivalent, position in the consciousness of Muslims in northern Nigeria. Its history is a source of pride, and its legacy gives a sense of community and cohesion. This includes, unusually for West Africa, an indigenous African written text, Hausa, which is still widely used. It has also left behind a structure of traditional governance, centred on the caliphate emirs and their inheritors. This pride is rein-

forced by the fact the caliph did not surrender to British rule, but fought to the death.

However, that very defeat was traumatic for the region.[16] The fact that the caliphate continued to exist under British sovereignty for nearly 60 years has given its heritage much ambivalence. Equally, attitudes to the caliphate and its heritage differ greatly in different locations, following the centre-periphery structure of the entity itself. Over the decades, it has become, in the eyes of many, the locus of a northern Muslim "establishment" that is vulnerable to accusations of selling out to non-Muslim outside powers and, more generally, of moral or material corruption.

B. THE COLONIAL ERA

From the colonial proclamation of 1900 to independence in 1960, the British controlled Nigeria through indirect rule. This practice, already well tested in other parts of the empire, involved restructuring local traditional authorities and deposing those office holders who resisted, so as to create a compliant local power base that furthered British interests. Local rulers were used to control the populace and raise revenue but were supervised by British officials who could veto their decisions. Although they restructured many emirate authorities, seeking more compliant office holders, the British also sought to avoid any direct disruption of the region's social structures, including its dominant religion and culture (slave owning was only finally abolished in 1936). Yet, colonial rule introduced significant political, judicial and cultural changes.

Politically, the defeat of the caliph and establishment of Kaduna as the region's new capital diminished the authority and influence of the sultan in Sokoto. He retained spiritual leadership of all Muslims in the region, but a partial transfer of power from the aristocracy to a new political class had begun. Several decades later, in preparation for independence, the colonial administration, seeking to separate judicial from traditional powers, introduced reforms that further reduced the influence of traditional authorities. In 1959, for example, the British governor announced that the sultan and the emirs would thenceforth be subject to ministerial decrees. They were thus stripped of the power to appoint and discipline Islamic judges.[17]

While colonial policy curtailed the powers of the emirs, it paradoxically relied on them for indirect rule. This had important consequences. Indirect rule worked in the emir-

---

[14] Exact figures for slave numbers are hard to verify, but scholar Paul Lovejoy claims that at the end of the nineteenth century, slaves accounted for between 25-50 per cent of the caliphate's total population, making it the second largest slave society in modern history after the U.S. "Problems of Slave Control in the Sokoto Caliphate", in Philip D. Curtin and Paul E. Lovejoy (eds.), *Africans in Bondage: Studies in Slavery and the Slave Trade: Essays in Honour of Philip D. Curtin* (Wisconsin, 1986), p. 236; also see Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 195.
[15] Roman Loimeier, op. cit., pp. 19-25.

[16] The defeat of the caliphate by a British force composed mainly of southern Nigerian colonial troops was also the starting point for the common association of southern Nigerians with foreign Christian powers that remains an important aspect of northern Nigerian thought today.
[17] Johannes Harnischfeger, op. cit.

ates that already had fairly well-established administrative systems, but not so effectively in other areas where emirate administration had never penetrated successfully, largely due to resistance by minority groups. As indirect rule in some ways reinforced emirate administration, many minority areas were further subordinated to emirate power with little regard for their own distinct identities. Conversions to Christianity, often in reaction to the perceived power of the emirate administration, were common among the minority (ie, non-Hausa-Fulani) groups. These smaller groups expressed fears of domination in a post-colonial Nigeria, but a 1958 commission largely dismissed their concerns.[18] Nevertheless, colonial rule facilitated the domination of Hausa and Fulani elites, especially in areas that minority groups had historically considered their exclusive domains, and sowed the seeds for conflicting claims to political space, economic rights and societal values.

The British retained the Islamic law established by the caliphate but over time limited it to civil cases. They restricted the application of punishments such as lashings and subsequently scaled down enforcement of Sharia to the jurisdiction of local-level native courts. Throughout the colonial period, a somewhat vague division of labour operated between the emirate legal councils, which applied common law principles to issues such as commercial property, and the Islamic judges (locally called Alkali), who ruled on family issues. Islamic principles of compensation for violence and murder were frequently applied.[19]

In the final period of colonial rule, in 1959, the British expunged Sharia content on the grounds that some of its provisions were incompatible with the rights of all citizens in a religiously plural society. Under pressure from the colonial government,[20] and in a context where the Alkali had become somewhat discredited by playing an increasingly political role against the new pro-independence parties, the Northern Region's government accepted a compromise code (called the "Penal Code") that established a Sharia court of appeal with jurisdiction only for Muslim personal law. Many northern Muslim leaders viewed those

changes as elevating Christian jurisprudence over their own Islamic judicial heritage.[21]

Culturally, the colonial administration generally discouraged Western innovations. It allowed Christian missionaries and their schools only in the non-Muslim fringes of the defunct caliphate. Even so, it introduced Roman script to replace *ajami* for writing the Hausa language and established a European-style education system alongside the Islamic system. All this jeopardised much pre-existing scholarship and diminished the status of clerics and others unlettered in English.[22] With time, these educational and cultural policies sharpened the older cleavages between Muslim Hausa and Fulani and smaller groups.

Colonial developments also altered the region's economy and demography. The construction of railway lines from Lagos to Kano, between 1898 and 1912, and amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Nigeria protectorates, in 1914, attracted an influx of southern migrants responding to the emerging economic opportunities in Kano, Kaduna and Zaria. In many respects, interaction between the resulting plurality of ethnic groups has been productive and peaceful. The railway, for example, gave a great boost to agriculture, especially the production of cash crops. However, this migration did not lead to greater inter-ethnic integration in all cases. This was partly because the ruling aristocracies from the caliphate era were territorial and not willing to let "strangers" into their areas. It was also partly a result of the British policy of preserving the north's Islamic identity and avoiding potential inter-group tensions. Thus, the British discouraged the movement of non-Muslim migrants into the core Muslim areas of some of the region's cities, pushing them instead into the *sabon gari* (strangers' quarters).

Over time, the distinction between locals ("indigenes") and strangers emerged as a key feature of Nigerian social and political life. These multiple and overlapping mechanisms of communal identification, or "associational ethnicity", provide support networks that are especially important for new immigrants.[23] But, combined with segregation, they have sharpened ethno-religious identities and reinforced discriminatory practices that continue to influence relationships between the Hausa and the Fulani and other urban dwellers.

---

[18] See "Nigeria: Report of The Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Fears of Minorities and the Means of Allaying Them", Colonial Office, London, July 1958, pp. 52-73.
[19] See Allan Christelow "Islamic Law and Judicial Practice in Nigeria: An Historical Perspective", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 22, 2002. See also Philip Ostien, op. cit.; M. Sani Umar, *Islam and Colonialism: Intellectual Responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria to British Colonial Rule* (Leiden, 2005).
[20] Ahmadu Bello later said he was told in very clear terms that the region would never be able to attract the foreign investment it needed for development, unless it amended its laws in accordance with Western principles of justice.

[21] Crisis Group interview, former history lecturer now publisher, Kaduna, 15 July 2009.
[22] Ibrahim Ahmad Aliyu, "Shariah Implementation So Far", *The Journal of Islamic and Comparative Law*, vol. 23, Centre for Islamic Legal Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2002, p. 35.
[23] Chiamaka Jacinta Nwaka, "Dynamism of Conflict in Kano, Response to a Threatened Identity", Conference paper, Berlin, June 2008.

The period leading to independence witnessed the initial major instances of inter-ethnic violence. For instance, in 1953, the Hausa and Igbo migrants clashed in Kano over the attempts by southern parties to hold anti-colonial and pro-independence rallies. That riot, which officially left at least 36 people dead (21 Igbo) and more than 200 injured, reflected the opposition to independence of northern politicians, who feared that an end to British rule would mean domination of the north by the more developed south.[24] It also demonstrated local resentment of Igbo economic domination, for example in petty commerce.

The colonial era was likewise marked by religious tensions, even conflicts. In the eyes of the authorities, the greatest threat came from "Mahdism", a trans-Saharan, Muslim-based anti-colonial movement that originated in a messianic doctrine according to which a Mahdi would emerge at the turn of each century, with the powers to attract a large following, strengthen Islam and make justice triumph. While Mahdists undoubtedly had an anti-colonial influence,[25] and clashes occurred, their importance was often exaggerated by panicked colonial officials. However, an important consequence was to drive the British and the indigenous ruling classes closer together in the face of a common threat.

The later years of the colonial era also saw the deepening of tensions between the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya brotherhoods. As the ruling aristocracy in Sokoto (predominantly Qadiriyya) aligned with the colonial rulers, its members were increasingly accused of collaboration, amassing power and wealth and condoning decadent Western influences. In reaction, leaders in different parts of the region began to align with Tijaniyya, attracted by the brotherhood's apparent anti-colonial and anti-Western stance.[26] Initially the tensions between the two orders were confined to scholars and the political elite. However, by the early 1940s, as Ibrahim Niass, the highly influential Senegalese Tijaniyya leader, and his ally, Emir Muhammad Sanusi of Kano, began to transform Tijaniyya into a more influential mass movement with extensive political and economic networks, the conflict grew into direct confrontation.

The 1951 election greatly increased the political importance of both orders, as two political parties, the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) and the Northern People's Congress (NPC), competed for their allegiance. As the bargaining power of the orders grew, being seen to have religious authority began to carry political implications. In Sokoto, where the Qadiriyya felt particularly challenged by what they saw as an aggressive Tijaniyya presence, the two clashed several times in the mid-1950s.

In spite of these developments, caliphate influence remained strong. In the run-up to independence, the main political party, the NPC, was a predominantly Hausa-Fulani elite organisation led by Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna (the commonly used name for Sultan) of Sokoto and a descendant of Usman dan Fodio.[27] Although the party's younger and more radical elements, seeking to free the *talakawa* (commoners) from the oppressive hold of the *sarauta* (aristocracy), broke away to form the NEPU, it was the NPC that led the region when the country gained independence in 1960.

As in other parts of Africa, colonial rule in northern Nigeria led to population movements, new cities and new economic opportunities. It reinforced some existing identities while stimulating new ones, in some respects setting the stage for long-lasting and violent identity conflicts. Links with the broader Islamic community were strongly reinforced. In the far north, with its tradition of religiously informed public authority, there remains a strong feeling that colonial rule was an alien domination that disrupted or eroded the region's legal, political and cultural values.

The ambivalent views among Muslims concerning public authority in the far north – mistrusted in its relations with secular or Christian "others" (external powers, neighbours or compatriots) – continued after independence. The experience of non-Muslims under colonial rule was equally varied and ambivalent, among both the indigenous Christian groups and immigrants from the south. Some took advantage of educational opportunities, sometimes to the chagrin of Muslim counterparts, while others suffered from what they perceived as the reinforced powers of the Sokoto establishment.

---

[24] For an account of the xenophobic tone by which the northern elite mobilised the masses against southern migrants, see A. Feinstein, *African Revolutionary: The Life and Times of Nigeria's Aminu Kano* (Boulder, 1987), p. 159.

[25] See Paul E. Lovejoy and J. S. Hogendorn, "Revolutionary Mahdism and Resistance to Colonial Rule in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1905-1906", *Journal of African History*, vol. 31, no. 2 (1990), pp. 217-244.

[26] The Tijaniyya initially spread across West Africa under the influence of the nineteenth century jihadist leader Umar Tall, as detailed in David Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tall: The Western Sudan in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1975). For subsequent developments, see Paden, op. cit. (1973).

[27] For the detailed life story of Sir Ahmadu Bello, see his autobiography, *My Life* (Cambridge, 1962); John N. Paden, *Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria* (London, 1986).

III. THE NORTH SINCE INDEPENDENCE I: POLITICS AND ECONOMY

A. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: WHAT PLACE FOR THE NORTH IN THE NIGERIAN NATION?

1. 1960-1966: first republic, the Sardauna and the NPC

Independence in 1960 marked a fresh beginning in all parts of the country. The NPC, led by Sardauna Ahmadu Bello, ruled the Northern Region (one of three regions, the others being Western and Eastern) and was the dominant force in the coalition running the Nigerian federation.[28] The first republic was characterised by squabbling and intense competition between regions.[29] Northerners wished to enhance their influence relative to the more developed south and preserve their religious and cultural identity, inherited from the caliphate era but disrupted by colonial rule. Thus, the Sardauna and the NPC aimed both to unify the peoples of the region as a single bloc that would maintain a dominant influence on national affairs and to restore the north's religious heritage and cultural identity.[30]

Proclaiming a principle of "One North, One Destiny", Ahmadu Bello pursued a "northernisation" policy favouring northerners (of all religious persuasions) in employment in regional and local administrations. This policy, which dated back to 1954, was informed by fears that migrants from the south, with the advantage of their Western education, would continue to establish themselves in the administration and the economy. It "worked to replace non-northern employees in the regional and provincial civil services with northerners".[31] To achieve this, he

introduced crash training programs to equip northern civil servants with the qualifications to assume greater control of their government, at regional and federal levels.

This policy was designed to foster solidarity among all peoples across the region. As the mostly-Christian minority groups benefited from it very widely due to their high level of missionary school education, it gave them a sense of belonging. Many people now see the 1960s as a period of great northern unity, when religious differences were minimised. However, the Sardauna did not undertake any major administrative reforms to respond to the long-standing fears of the region's minorities and their demands for local autonomy from emirate rule. Instead, the suppression of the opposition parties that served as rallying points for the minority groups, such as the Middle Zone League (MZL) and subsequently the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), undermined the sense of regional unity that the ruling party and aristocracies were seeking to sustain.

The second priority of Ahmadu Bello and northern leaders was to promote Islam, both as a unifying instrument and as a means of preserving the region's cultural identity. In 1962, Bello established Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI, "Victory for Islam") as an umbrella body to unite the Muslim sects, propagate Islam and provide an ideological base for the NPC. However, in terms of forging Muslim unity, his efforts achieved limited results. Violent confrontations between adherents of rival Sufi orders continued.

More successful were the campaigns intended to convert "pagan" minority groups to Islam. Supported by state resources and sometimes led by Bello himself, these led to the conversion of over 100,000 non-Muslims, particularly in Zaria and Niger provinces. Bello was also a frequent participant in collective pilgrimages to Mecca and used the networks of the region's Sufi orders to bolster his power. Predictably, these efforts at boosting the *dar al-Islam* (House of Islam) drew strong support from the Muslim majority; but among non-Muslim minorities and Christian migrants from the south, Bello's campaign – and his election as vice president of the World Muslim League in 1963 – raised fears of Islamic hegemony. This alarm, whether reality or merely perception, affected community relations and contributed to the first military coup against the Northern Region-dominated federal government, in January 1966.

---

[28] The position of the NPC at the national level was reinforced by the fact that the Northern Region left behind by the British was larger and more populous than the other two regions combined.

[29] See Falola and Heaton, op. cit., pp. 164-172.

[30] Philip Ostien, op. cit.

[31] Umar I. Kurfi, "Beyond Remembering the Legacies of the Sardauna (1)", *Leadership*, Abuja, 8 January 2010. In fact, the goals of that policy went beyond public administration. As the Sardauna articulated it, "the Northernisation policy does not only apply to clerks, administrative officers, doctors and others. We do not want to go to Lake Chad and meet strangers [ie, southern Nigerians] catching our fish in the water, and taking them away to leave us with nothing. We do not want to go to Sokoto and find a carpenter who is a stranger nailing our houses". See House of Chiefs Debates (mimeo), 19 March 1965, p. 55, quoted in Isaac O. Albert, "The Sociocultural Politics of Ethnic and Religious Conflicts", in Ernest E. Uwazie, Isaac Olawale

Albert and G. N. Uzoigwe (eds.), *Inter-Ethnic and Religious Conflict Resolution in Nigeria* (Ibadan, 1999), p. 73. This analysis has also been informed by Crisis Group interviews, community leader, Maiduguri, August 2009; politician, Kaduna, June 2009.

2. 1966-1999: the military era

The January 1966 coup, led by Christian Igbo officers from the Eastern Region, and in which Ahmadu Bello and several northern political and military leaders were killed, was partly a revolt against the perceived religious and political agenda of the ruling NPC.[32] It elicited mixed re-actions across the region. It was clearly a setback for the northern elite, as it abruptly terminated the efforts of Bello to forge greater northern unity and restore the heritage of the caliphate. Non-Muslim minorities were partly relieved at what initially appeared a liberation from the NPC's stranglehold, and there were reports of jubilation in some minority areas; but that relief soon gave way to outrage, following revelations that their own senior military offi-cers were also eliminated.

The shared anger over the killings and the common fear of southern domination led to a rare closing of ranks be-tween the Hausa, Fulani and minorities; their officers jointly staged a counter-coup in July 1966. The installa-tion of Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon, a Christian from the middle belt (then still part of the Northern Re-gion), as Nigeria's new leader, was part of a compromise by Muslim leaders to retain the solidarity of the non-Muslim minorities in a united Northern Region.

The January killings did grave damage to the northern perception of southern migrants. Many northern leaders, like Sheikh Abubakar Gumi, saw the coup as having ex-posed "the deep-seated hostility held by people in the south against the north".[33] Between July and October 1966, northern mobs killed thousands of southerners, mostly Igbos, across the region, forcing hundreds of thousands to flee back to safety in the south.

Partly in reaction to those killings, the Igbo-dominated Eastern Region seceded from Nigeria on 30 May 1967, declaring itself the Republic of Biafra. The federal gov-ernment's efforts to prevent this led to civil war from 1967 to 1970. Though it was fought far away in the south east, it had long-term impacts on inter-group relations. In particular, many northern youth enlisted in the army, which

expanded from 10,000 in 1967 to 250,000 in 1970. This reinforced the perception of the military as a means for maintaining the north's dominance in the federation. However, many recruits and new officers were from the northern minority groups. Two decades later, many had become very senior officers. On retiring from service, many of them, searching for new relevance and no longer accepting Hausa-Fulani leadership, became leaders of their ethno-religious groups.

Politically, the expansion of federal administrative units by successive military administrations, to 36 states by 1996, altered relations between majority and minority groups all over the country, especially by fracturing the regional platforms of the major ethnic groups and thus eroding their domination over minority groups. The break-up of the Northern Region, initially into six states (of twelve nationwide) in 1967 and eventually into nineteen (of 36) in 1996, undercut the Hausa-Fulani vision of re-gional unity. In the far north, this process did not fully lead to the emergence of a minority group as the majority in any state; but in Kaduna, in particular, it reduced Hausa and Fulani power over the minority populations.[34] Else-where, state creation led to the emergence of new elites from both majority and minority groups.

For most of the period of military rule, the federal gov-ernment was dominated by northerners, whose historic strength in the army was seen as a as way of compensat-ing for their disadvantages in Western education. How-ever, the population of the far north was well aware that it was seeing few of the benefits of federal power. The divi-sion of spoils created tensions, as many northern minority groups and Christian communities felt that they were los-ing out in the allocation of jobs to well-connected but less well-educated Hausa or Fulani. Other political disputes and clumsily implemented policies raised communal temperatures. These often involved international issues, such as the 1986 decision to become a full member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the 1992 decision to recognise Israel, or disputes over subsidies for pilgrimages.[35]

3. 1999- : the return to civilian rule

From 1966 to 1999, Nigeria was ruled by military govern-ments, with an unstable period of civilian rule only from 1979 to 1983 that was cut short by the coup of General Buhari. Each military government promised a more or less rapid return to democracy, only for the transition to

---

[32] One of the Sardauna's closest advisers, Abubakar Gumi, re-calls that the first question coup leader Major Chukwuma Ka-duna Nzeogwu asked him when he (Gumi) was summoned af-ter the killings, was about the Sardauna's religious intentions. In Sheik Abubakar Gumi, *Where I Stand* (Ibadan, 1992), chapter seven. Competing accounts of the 1966 coup abound, including N. J. Miners, *The Nigerian Army 1956-1966* (London, 1971); and Robin Luckham, *The Nigerian Military, A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt, 1960-1967* (Cambridge, 1970). This analysis is also informed by several Crisis Group inter-views, including Alhaji Umaru Dikko, northern politician and former federal transport minister, Kaduna, June 2009.
[33] Gumi, op. cit., chapter seven.

[34] Katsina state, created in 1987, incorporated part of northern Kaduna, where many Hausa and Fulani lived, and thus lowered the proportion of Hausa and Fulani still in Kaduna state.
[35] Debate about joining the OIC was particularly acrimonious and protracted. See Falola, op. cit., pp. 95-102.

be thwarted or cut short. The actual return of democracy in 1999 was celebrated in most parts of the country but was a sobering experience for some in the far north. For the first time since 1979, and despite new President Obasanjo's close ties with its elite, the region had lost control of political power at the centre and was faced with the challenge of designing new strategies for regional self-assertion in the federation. It was within this context that the Zamfara state governor initiated the campaign for restoration of Sharia (see below).

The return to democracy had further transformative effects on the region. Democratic government has produced a new generation of political elite all over the country. In the far north, there are twelve (out of a national total of 36) very powerful state governors, 36 senators (of 108 nationally), 134 (of 365 nationally) members of the House of Representatives and hundreds of state-level legislators, as well as local government chairs and councillors. There are now many more people with government authority in the region, commanding considerable financial resources. These new leaders may not enjoy the allegiance that the traditional rulers and religious authorities once did, but their control of funds has challenged and eroded traditional rulers' authority and increased the layers of bureaucracy that ordinary people have to confront (and often bribe) on a daily basis. The advantages conferred by access to state machinery and its resources have also created new tensions between ethnic and religious groups. The growing perception, especially among the youth, is that politics now provides the principal avenue for upward social mobility.

By the end of the 1990s, the far north had become politically fractured. Fragmented by the creation of new states, the Hausa-Fulani bloc found itself challenged by increasingly assertive minorities. Torn by controversies over the country's religious identity, there was a rise in tensions between Muslims and Christians. Economic malaise, growing corruption in government, the perversion and decline of social institutions and the rise of criminality all created a sense of disillusionment.

However, democratic rule has had different effects in different places. In some respects it has calmed tensions, by allowing freer expression, but communal competition for resources has, if anything, intensified.[36] Practice differs between states. While some have managed to provide a sense of inclusion for all communities in the new democ-

ratic structures, in others, many feel left out.[37] In the context of the region's Islamic revival (see below), religious leaders, and more generally religious thinking, have increasing influence over politics. Muslim clerics are less and less reticent to speak out on political issues, proffering a range of views, from encouraging people to vote to urging quietism in the face of electoral fraud. In some cases, clerics have become closely involved in party politics and clearly taken sides.[38]

The return of formal democracy has opened up public space and undoubtedly generated possibilities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Nevertheless, Nigeria continues to suffer from a debilitating communal polarisation, and public figures and the media are all too ready to escalate social tensions into a dangerous game of them and us.[39] The democratic dispensations are still relatively new, however, and it remains to be seen how they will affect the far north in the longer term. If democracy comes to be associated with both the south and incompetent governance, it risks being rejected by many. This is especially so in light of the decline of the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), once very popular there, but now only powerful in a few locations, and the creation, nation-wide, of a virtual one-party state under the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The intense debate following the death of President Yar'Adua in May 2010 over the informal "zoning" arrangement, wherein presidential power is swapped between north and south, shows that ethno-regional politics is alive and well at the national level. The far north is thus still a single unit in the country's power politics.

B. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS: OIL BOOM, STAGNATION AND SOCIAL MALAISE

The economic transformations of the 1970s and 1980s had far-reaching impacts on economic and social relations in the region. As the national economy shifted from agriculture to heavy dependence on oil, services and importation of finished products, cash-crop production, which had been the region's mainstay, declined. For instance, across the cotton-producing states (eleven of the thirteen are in

---

[36] One analyst said, "some people, in pressing for their rights, are overstepping the boundaries, by being lawless and disorderly, taking advantage of civilian rule". Crisis Group interview, professor of law, Ahmadu Bello University, June 2009.

[37] Kano is one state with the reputation for having managed this well, not least by incorporating minority representatives on its governing council (although only three of around 50 councillors). Crisis Group interviews, community leader, Yobe state, August 2009; radio station manager, Kano, July 2009; community activists, Kano, October 2010.

[38] See Haruna Wakili, "Islam and the Political Arena in Nigeria: The Ulama and the 2007 Elections", Buffett Centre working paper, March 2009. Political involvement likely lies behind the April 2007 assassination of prominent cleric Sheikh Adam Ja'afar in Kano.

[39] See Section V.A.2 below.

the far north), the decline of cotton production led to mass closures in the textile sector, collapse of rural economies, massive unemployment and increased rural-urban migration.[40] Kano, once the centre of a thriving textile industry, has been particularly badly hit and now has acres of disused factory space. The federal government's Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), inaugurated in 1986, and other economic policies through the 1990s, including import liberalisation and lack of protection for local industries, aggravated agricultural ruin and rural impoverishment.[41] The acute dearth of electrical energy continually impedes industrial development.

Regional poverty, always widespread, became even more severe.[42] In July 2008, the then governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Chukwuma Soludo, observed that persistently high levels of poverty in the country had become "a northern phenomenon": of the ten states with the highest incidence of poverty, eight were in the far northern zone. Jigawa topped the list, with 95 per cent of its people classified as living in poverty.[43] A more recent study found that as many as 76 per cent of northerners are "earning a daily income of less than the equivalent of one American dollar".[44] Unemployment for agricultural workers is often seasonal, leading to frequent movements of people and a fluid urban population.[45] With virtually no modern industries, there is a high dependence on government as the sole source of largesse and dispenser of patronage, intensifying the contests between ethnic and religious groups for control of public office.

The region's economy is particularly affected by lack of skilled manpower. In terms of Western education, it still has the worst indicators in Nigeria, with literacy levels, enrolment rates and success levels in national examinations decreasing as one advances farther north. Female literacy is as low as 21 per cent in the north east and north

west.[46] Under-funded by federal and state governments, dilapidated educational institutions are producing graduates who are virtually unemployable. A growing number of young people, unable to find jobs, face a bleak future.

The troubles of the educational system are reflected in the region's Quranic schools.[47] Many parents have long preferred such institutions, which include a moral content lacking in the Western-style public schools. In Kano state, for instance, over 80 per cent of the 3.7 million persons between 5 and 21 years are estimated to attend some form of Islamic school, either exclusively or in addition to a state school.[48]

Many of these neither live up to parents' moral expectations nor impart the skill necessary for developing the region. With urbanisation, more and more children are sent to schools far from their families, and millions of *Almajiri* children are required to beg for alms (*almajiranchi*) to pay for their upkeep.[49] While this system is ostensibly designed to prepare them for some of the hardships they may encounter later in life, in a context of urbanisation and increasing poverty, it is open to abuse and may foster criminality.[50] In cities like Kano and Kaduna, many of the alms-begging street children have graduated into *Yandaba*, adolescent groups that once served to socialise teenagers into adulthood but have now, in many cases, transformed into gangs. In 2005, the National Council for the Welfare of the Destitute estimated there were 7 million *Almajirai* children in northern Nigeria, mostly in the far northern states.[51]

---

[40] Semshak Gompil, "The Textile Industry in Nigeria/Africa – What Hope for Sustainability", *Journal of Agriculture and Food Science*, vol. 2, no. 2 (October 2004).

[41] Crisis Group interview, Hassan Hassan Suleiman, lecturer, Department of Economics, Bayero University, Kano, 23 June 2009.

[42] "Draft Report: Strategic Assessment of Social Sector Activities in Northern Nigeria", U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), March 2003.

[43] Jigawa State was followed by Kebbi, 89.7 per cent; Kogi, 88.6 per cent; Bauchi, 86.3 per cent; Kwara, 85.2 per cent; Yobe, 83.3 per cent; Zamfara, 80.9 per cent; Gombe, 77 per cent; Sokoto, 76.8 per cent; and Adamawa, 71.7 per cent. See Emeka Mamah, "High Poverty is Northern Phenomenon – Soludo", *Vanguard*, 19 July 2008.

[44] Shehu Sani, *Poverty in Northern Nigeria* (Spectrum Books Limited, 2009), p. 3.

[45] Crisis Group interview, lecturer in economics, Bayero University, Kano, July 2009.

[46] Data obtained from National Bureau of Statistics, Abuja.

[47] Quranic schools have been a medium of early childhood Islamic education in northern Nigeria since the eleventh century but have been especially important since the consolidation of Islam in the early nineteenth century. Sally N. Bolujoko, "Education and Human Capital Development in Northern Nigeria", paper presented at Conference of Northern States Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (CONSIMA), Abuja, 7 October 2008; Crisis Group interview, NGO leader working on child rights, Kaduna, June 2009. See also M. Sani Umar, "Profiles of New Islamic Schools in Northern Nigeria", *The Maghreb Review*, vol. 28, 2003.

[48] "Education Sector Analysis", education ministry, Kano state government, Kano, 2008.

[49] *Almajiri* comes from the Arabic for someone who leaves their home in search of knowledge of the Islamic religion. The plural is *Almajirai*.

[50] Murray Last, "Adolescents in a Muslim City: The Cultural Context of Danger and Risk", *Kano Studies*, special issue, Bayero University, Kano, 1991, p. 19.

[51] Cited in Moses T. Aluaigba, "Circumventing or Superimposing Poverty on the African Child? The Almajiri Syndrome in Northern Nigeria", *Childhood In Africa*, vol. 1, no. 1, The Institute for the African Child, Ohio University, 2009, p. 21. See also Yunusa Zakari Ya'u, "The Youth, Economic Crisis and

In recent years however, there have been considerable efforts in some states to correct some of the failings of the Quranic schooling system, for example by introducing a dual curriculum (as in Kano) and paying the teachers' salaries, hence, in theory at least, relieving the pupils of the obligation to beg for their upkeep.[52]

Since 1999, through the monthly federal allocations to its twelve states and numerous local governments, the region has attracted more federal revenue (in absolute terms) than any decade in its history, due largely to favourable oil prices. While many in the region had expected infrastructure to develop as a result, they have seen little benefit. Instead, economic stagnation is deepening. The general decline in agriculture and unfavourable international markets since the late 1980s has put an end to the groundnut and cotton products for which the region was once famous. In the absence of foreign investments, and with domestic investments concentrated in the south, there are no new industries.

The failure of rural economies has led to large-scale drift of youth from rural to urban areas, part of population movements that also include the arrival of many people from the landlocked and drought-affected countries to the north (Niger and Chad). This exodus has destabilised community life in villages, as many are now left mostly with the very young, the very old and the infirm. In the cities to which the youth are flocking, urbanisation has brought together people of diverse backgrounds. While this has generated much positive social interaction, the crowded environment, with little or no economic infrastructure or social amenities, also produces frequent tensions. Most of the growing urban slums, as new settlements, lack both formal and informal authorities that can regulate public conduct, mediate conflicts and guarantee security.

Tensions have been exacerbated by policies favouring indigenous groups. In all parts of Nigeria, those who can claim to be original inhabitants have a disproportionate share of public resources, an exclusive right to buy and sell land and various other privileges. This generates a huge number of disputes and often violent conflicts over competing claims, as well as over the validity of the "indigeneity certificates" issued by local government authorities, especially in the context of internal migrations.[53]

IV. THE NORTH SINCE INDEPENDENCE II: RELIGION

Many of the conflicts in northern Nigeria are at least ostensibly between religious groups. Although religion may be only one factor in these conflicts in combination with other political and economic issues, it is, nevertheless, a major motivating and legitimising aspect of violence.

The majority of Nigeria's Muslims are Sunni, estimated at 95 per cent, and belong to the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya Sufi orders. These orders are represented by a number of organisations that have been important actors in the region. Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), based in Kaduna and established in 1961, is the largest umbrella Islamic organisation in the country,[54] supporting a network of activists across the region. It is closely associated with the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), headed by the Sultan of Sokoto, and with the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria. A small but growing Shiite minority is estimated at just less than 5 per cent of the Muslim population, though in some cases the label Shiite refers as much to a radical political attitude, and particularly admiration for the Iranian revolution, as to doctrinal differences.[55]

Due to the high concentration of Muslims, as well as historical ties with the Arab world, the dominant world view in northern Nigeria is pan-Islamic. Much thought is given by the population to its place in the global Islamic community. Most Muslims in the region have a strong sense of solidarity with co-religionists' causes, from Iraq to Afghanistan.[56] There is wide support for Arab positions on Israel and the Palestinian demand for a state.[57] During the

---

Identity Transformation: The Case of the *Yandaba* in Kano", in Attahiru Jega (ed.), *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria* (Uppsala, 2000).
[52] Crisis Group interviews, leader of Muslim Women's association, Yobe state, August 2009; community leader, Kano, July 2009.
[53] This issue was raised in several Crisis Group interviews, for example with the head of the Igbo Community Association,

Borno state, July 2009. While one interlocutor said that the local state governor was dealing with the issue well and allowing equal access to education, this was a rare view. Far more typical was that minorities of all kinds are losing out unfairly due to these policies.
[54] Crisis Group interview, officials of Jama'atu Nasril Islam, Kaduna, June 2009.
[55] The doctrinal divergence between Sunni and Shiite stems from disagreements among the followers on whom to follow after the Prophet's death. Further details can be found in standard guides to the Islamic religion, and in Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°37, *Understanding Islamism*, 2 March 2005.
[56] Crisis Group interviews, several common people, Kaduna, Kano, Zaria and Maiduguri, June and July 2009.
[57] In September 2000, at a two-day rally of Muslim youth supporting the Palestinian intifada, a Kaduna-based cleric, Sheikh Abdullahi Tureta, claimed that over 7 million volunteers had registered to fight on the Palestinian side. Such claims cannot be authenticated, but they are indications of strong anti-Western and anti-Israeli sentiments. At the rally, Ahmed Sani Yerima, then Zamfara state governor, offered to lead Nigerian youth ready to fight for the Palestinian struggle; he donated five

Israeli blockade and bombardment of Gaza city in December 2008, hundreds of protesters marched through Kano, calling on the Nigerian government to sever ties with the Jewish state.[58]

Links between Muslims in the region and the wider Islamic world date back to early trade and missionary activities. They have been reinforced by Nigeria's solidarity with the Arab world on several international issues, its membership of the OIC and numerous pilgrimage visits to Saudi Arabia. Equally, Islamic education and scholarship, which confers considerable status, is often associated with time spent at a centre of Islamic learning abroad. Much informed discussion takes place about the political systems of Islamic countries.

There is some degree of admiration for Western technology and wide reliance on radio in general, and the Hausa services of the BBC and Voice of America (VOA) in particular, as reliable sources of information. Equally, some profess admiration for how Western countries manage religious diversity.[59] Alongside that, however, the majority of Muslims in the far north view international affairs in terms of a subtle but continuous conflict between a Judeo-Christian West and an Arab-centred Islamic world.[60] There is also constant apprehension that exposure to Western culture (for example through films) and more broadly Western values, often seen as "moral deviance", is a threat to Islam. In other words, some are ready to embrace technological advancement and modernisation, but on condition that those transformations are achievable in an Islamic framework that excludes broader "Westernisation".

Some go further and believe that the West, with Israel, is in a conspiracy against the Islamic world. The 11 September 2001 attacks on New York and Washington stimulated debate across Nigeria. Initially, attitudes were divided, with some showing sympathy for the U.S., but many stopping short of condemning the action. A radical Islamic preacher, Abubakar Mujahid, put it as follows: "Before we condemn this attack on America, we have to see who carried it out and see their reasons .... Most of the people here [in northern Nigeria] are happy with the attacks because of what America stands for and what it does, in its attitude to the Palestinians, for example. The cowboy way of blazing two guns to get Osama bin Laden

'dead or alive' ... will definitely lead to a confrontation between America and the Islamic world".[61]

The subsequent U.S. "war on terror" was thus seen by many as part of a long Christian-Western campaign against Islam, and some are quick to see the hand of America behind all sorts of conflicts in Africa and beyond.[62] The West is often cited as a useful scapegoat for the world's ills, especially by more radically inclined preachers. By extension, many Muslims look upon local Christians as "moral collaborators" in the war-on-terror campaign. Thus, while relationships between Muslim and Christian leaders appear cordial in many areas, events far outside Nigeria often fuel undercurrents of mutual suspicion between the two groups that sometimes degenerate into violence.

A. CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM TENSIONS

Just as the Muslim community has created bodies to support its interest, so have Christians, the most prominent being the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), formed in 1976. This is an umbrella organisation with a strong national network, representing the common concerns of all churches nationwide.[63] CAN and its members engage in a variety of different roles, in many cases reaching out to Muslim organisations and doing grassroots peacebuilding.

However, in the mid-1980s, the CAN started to take a more militant and political stance. It has since become more active in contentious issues, such as planning permission for churches. In many ways it now buys into a simplistic vision of "them" and "us", for example by actively monitoring the religious balance in government appointments. It portrays itself as the defender of a besieged Christian community against an increasingly dominant Islam, often within a framework of a call for moral "revival". This reflects a wider belief among Christians in the north that they are under threat from militant Islam.[64]

---

[58] Jaafar Jaafar, "Shiites in Kano protest Gaza blockade", *Daily Trust*, 16 December 2008, p. 2.
[59] Crisis Group interview, Islamic cleric, Kaduna, June 2009.
[60] Crisis Group interview, Ismaila Mohammed, history department, Usman Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto, 15 May 2010.

months' salary for the purchase of arms for Palestine and urged all civil servants in the state, and Muslims across the country, to do the same. See Bola Badmus, "Gov Ahmed and Palestinian cause", *Nigerian Tribune*, 26 December 2000.

[61] "Nigeria's firebrand Muslim leaders", BBC News online, 1 October 2001.
[62] Crisis Group interviews, Muslim student leader, Kaduna, August 2009; journalist, Kaduna, July 2009.
[63] Crisis Group interviews, members of CAN in Kaduna, Yobe and Borno states, July and August 2009; Samuel Salifu, CAN general secretary, Abuja, July 2009. See also Falola, op. cit., chapter 4.
[64] Crisis Group interviews with Christians across the region highlighted that many feel they are victims of unfavourable treatment by authorities, or in some cases victims of violence, for example during riots, for which they rarely receive rightful compensation. They at times, therefore, feel the need to be militant in defence of their faith. Crisis Group interviews, secretary general, CAN, Kaduna State chapter, July 2009; and chairman, CAN Yobe state chapter, Damaturu, August 2009. See also Ibrahim and Muazzam, "Religious Identity in the Con-

The CAN's more prominent public and political role comes in a general context of religious revivalism. Evangelical Christianity has flourished across the country in recent decades, including in the north. As inter-denominational Christian groups, such as the Scripture Union, Students Christian Movement and the Fellowship of Christian Students, campaigned to convert non-Christians (including Muslims), numerous Pentecostal churches, like the Deeper Life Christian Ministry, Redeemed Christian Church of God and Living Faith Church (also known as Winners' Chapel), developed extensive branch networks, including to areas where missionaries had been barred since colonial times.[65]

With religion increasingly informing public debate, the risk of polarisation has increased. Some Christian preachers openly portray Islam in a negative light. This includes detailed refutations of the Quran and denigration of specific practices. Some Muslims have replied in kind, for example through detailed analysis designed to show the errors of the Bible, leading to highly dangerous and protracted tit for tat polemics.[66] The use of converts in large public preaching sessions (generally called "crusades" by the Christians) is particularly inflammatory. They are presented as having been "saved" from the other religion and invited to provide a detailed renunciation. Religious choice is generally seen as fluid and biddable, leading to a sense of confrontation as each faith seeks to expand its numbers.

Unsurprisingly, such polarisation has frequently led to violence. In 1982, after the visiting Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, laid the foundation stone of an Anglican church in Kano, 44 people were killed in the course of a violent protest by the Muslim Student's Society (MSS). A now notorious incident occurred in October 1991, when the CAN invited the German revivalist, Reinhard Bonnke, to hold a "crusade" in Kano. Rioting Muslims killed more than 200 mostly southern Christians and burnt over twenty churches.

However, it is Kaduna state, with its religiously mixed population, that has suffered most.[67] In 1987, a dispute between trainee teachers in Kafanchan over the terms of a Christian sermon descended into violence that spread, as rumours of what had happened reached other towns, and the injured or dead were taken back to their homes. After several days of intense violence that also engulfed Kano, the security forces restored order by imposing de facto martial law. Further violence occurred in Kaduna state in 1992, as a dispute over the location of a market again polarised overlapping ethnic and religious identities, leaving several dozen dead.

Kaduna experienced its most serious violence in 2000, when Christian protests at plans to reintroduce Sharia criminal law (see below) ignited several days of very widespread trouble. Thousands died, property was destroyed and whole communities were displaced. The repercussions are still evident, and despite a decade of peacebuilding activities in the state, communities remain polarised and physically separated.

These incidents must be put in a perspective of widespread respect and collaboration between people of Islamic and Christian background in all walks of life in Nigeria that, of course, attracts none of the publicity that riots and violence receive. However, violence does have very detrimental repercussions on community relations nationwide, feeding on and fuelling longstanding mistrust and stereotypes, for example that the "Christian south" is pro-West and that the "Muslim north" is backward and conservative. Violence encourages both sides to take a defensive stance and portray their community as under attack.

B. DEBATES WITHIN ISLAM

1. Sufis and reformists

Since the late 1970s, there has been a surge of Islamic reformist groups in the region. In spite of their differences, they share broadly common stated goals of promoting a purist vision of Islam based on Sharia; eradicating heretical innovations; and, for many, establishing an Islamic state. They have profoundly influenced the debate over

---

text of Structural Adjustment in Nigeria", in Attahiru Jega, op. cit., p. 76

[65] The Deeper Life Christian Ministry, for instance, has over 6,000 branches in Nigeria. There are no estimates of how much money foreign Christian missions have spent in the country over the years, but one event is probably some indication: in May 2005, U.S. televangelist Benny Hinn left Nigeria complaining that $4 million his ministry spent on a three-day crusade in Lagos was "money down the drain", as the turnout had fallen far short of the 6 million people he had expected. "HOLY ANGER: American evangelist, Benny Hinn leaves Nigeria in annoyance, saying $4 million went down the drain in 3-day crusade", *Daily Sun*, Lagos, 9 May 2005. A recent analysis of this phenomenon is Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago, 2009).

[66] See Falola, op. cit., p. 259 for an analysis of two particularly polemical works: I K Sani and D K Amoo, "Why you should never be a Christian", (undated, but released in the early 1990s in the form, common in the markets of northern Nigeria, of a widely available pamphlet, with no formal publisher); and G.J.O Moshay, "Who is this Allah?", (similarly an informally published pamphlet, available from 1990).

[67] For more details and analysis of violence in Kaduna, see Appendix D below; for an analysis of the patterns and actors of such violence, see Section V.A.2 below. See also Falola, op. cit., chapter 6.

religion and politics in northern Nigeria, generally in favour of legalistic textual interpretations of religion.

Although the Sufi orders remain predominant, the Izala movement in particular has contributed to a general religious revivalism and much greater public and political role for Islam.[68] Founded in 1978 by Sheikh Ismaila Idris in Jos, Plateau state, but officially registered in 1985,[69] it is essentially anti-Sufi, opposed to what it terms *bidaa* (innovation) practiced by the brotherhoods, such as pilgrimage to, or intercession at the tombs of saints, recital of praise-songs to the Prophet, a range of local customs and traditions and submission of the faithful to the authority of Sufi sheikhs. It is motivated by the political and religious ideologies of Abubakar Gumi, the Grand Kadi (judge) of northern Nigeria from 1962 to his death in 1992, and propagator of reformist Islamic ideas. In his early career, Gumi was close to the Sardauna and the established Sufi orders. But after Ahmadu Bello's assassination, he started to distance himself from traditional authorities. With his political career blocked by resistance from Christian politicians, especially those from the north, to introduction of a federal Sharia court of appeal he had hoped to lead, he adopted a new strategy, establishing a mass movement through which to advance his ideology.

The Izala movement became particularly strong and outspoken in the 1980s. Well before it became official, Gumi had been preaching the reform of Islam and emphasising political unity among all Muslims in northern Nigeria. Under his leadership, it stressed the importance of the Quran and the Sunna as the only foundations of the faith. The movement contends that Sufi sectarianism undermines Muslim unity and therefore that elimination of the brotherhoods would be the most important step toward achieving that unity. Gumi also took overtly political positions, in particular in favour of Islamic government.

Following tours by Gumi and other influential leaders, Izala rapidly grew in numbers. With the ban on political parties following the January 1966 coup in place until 1978, many were attracted to it as a forum where they could express their dissatisfaction with both the political

and religious leaders of the far north. Others were drawn to the possibility of more individualistic religious experiences, free of the hierarchies of Sufi orders. Sensing they were being undermined, those orders organised their riposte. 70 Sufi scholars (from both orders) published a pamphlet accusing Gumi of various forms of corruption, including fashioning his practice of *tafsir* (interpretation) on his own personal views rather than on the Sunna. In April 1977, they challenged him to a public debate. Amid accusations of bad faith, it never happened, and the conflict threatened to turn violent. As Izala began to challenge the orders more openly, it instigated conflicts, especially with the Tijaniyya, that continued until the late 1980s.[70]

However, Izala suffered two serious setbacks in the early 1990s. In 1991, it split into two groups after one of its leaders was accused of embezzling funds and excluded from the organisation. Gumi's death in September 1992 left it without a charismatic leader, a void still not filled. Since this time, Izala can no longer be considered a structured movement, but as a set of ideas, it retains a profound influence over northern Nigeria, as well as among Muslims in the south and in neighbouring countries. With a general revival of public religiosity, its reformist ideas have a considerable hold on many sections of society, and its adherents have gained positions of power and influence in many states.

Another reform movement, the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSS), based in universities, was established in 1954 to protect the interests of those attending Christian missionary schools; its aims and membership have expanded significantly over the years.[71] It began its religious activism by campaigning against alcohol consumption on university campuses in the far north, sometimes burning student union bars. It has been involved in several violent incidents and is widely regarded as a breeding ground for young radical preachers.

The Islamic Movement of Nigeria, better known as the Muslim Brotherhood, emerged in the early 1980s, as a more radical offshoot of the MSS. Its leader, El-Zakzaky, had been a member of MSS while studying at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. However, he was not satisfied with what he considered its lack of political orientation. "He strongly felt that the society must have a definite and concrete political goal ... geared towards the practical and revolutionary transformation of the country along the lines of Islam. That meant the preparation of Muslims for the

---

[68] See Susan M. O'Brien, "La charia contestée: démocratie, débat et diversité musulmane dans les 'États charia' du Nigeria", *Politique Africaine*, no. 106, June 2007.
[69] The full name of the movement is Jamaat Izalat al-Bida wa Iqamat al-Sunnah (Society for the Eradication of Evil Innovations and the Re-establishment of the Sunna). It is also known as JIBWIS for short or as Yan Izala in Hausa. The best study of it is Ibrahima Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Post Colonial Nigeria* (Leiden, 2003). See also M. Sani Umar, "Changing Islamic Identity in Nigeria from the 1960s to the 1980s, from Sufism to Anti-Sufism", in Louis Brenner (ed.), op. cit.; Roman Loimeier, op. cit. Insights to its ideology can be gleaned from Sheikh Abubakar Gumi, op. cit.

[70] On the conflicts between Sufi orders and the Izala movement in the 1980s, see Falola, op. cit., pp. 237-246.
[71] Crisis Group interview, Mallam Yusuf Yakubu Arrigasiyu, director of media and publicity, Muslim Students Society, northern states headquarters, Kaduna, August 2009.

inevitable clash with Kufr (ie, non-Muslims)".[72] Inspired, as many were in the region, by the Iranian revolution of 1979 (he visited Tehran shortly afterwards), El-Zakzaky split with the MSS to form the new group.

The Islamic Movement campaigns for an Islamic government in Nigeria and stricter adherence to Islamic law.[73] Guided by the slogan, "Islam Only", it dismisses the Nigerian state, its flag, national anthem and other symbols as expressions of thought that must be shunned by all true Muslims.[74] It may in some respects, therefore, be considered more a revolutionary than a reformist movement. Many Muslims in the region regard it as a Shiite organisation, because some of its observances are more akin to Shiite traditions, but most members do not accept that label.[75] El-Zakzaky's teachings blend Sunni and Shiite ideas, and the movement fundamentally believes and proclaims that "there is no government except that of Islam". For many poor youths in the region, joining it has become an act of rebellion against the corruption of the traditional religious and political establishment.

The movement professes to reject violence and is indeed seen by many as a peaceful and legitimate Islamic reform movement.[76] But some of its criticisms of the established order and its refusal to recognise the legitimacy of secular authorities have brought it into conflict with the state.[77] This was particularly so under the military governments of Generals Babangida and Abacha. Between 1981 and 1999, the government arrested El-Zakzaky at least four times, and he spent nine of those eighteen years in prison. Confrontation reached a peak in the last years of military rule. Between 1996 and 1998, a number of conflicts broke out between supporters demanding his release from prison and the authorities, leading to several deaths.[78]

In subsequent years conflicts have erupted between Shiites (not necessarily linked to El-Zakzaky) and Sunnis. These have centred around doctrinal disputes and provocative preaching, for example in Sokoto between February and April 2005, when several people were killed in clashes. These incidents soured relations already strained due to Shiite reluctance to accept the authority of the Sultan of Sokoto. Tensions rose again in 2007, when the murder of two Sunni clerics was blamed on the Shiites, leading to mob violence. However, many observers say El-Zakzaky's preaching no longer has the fiery edge of earlier years. The impatience of some younger Muslims with his more sober approach to the quest for an Islamic state may have contributed to the recent emergence of more militant anti-establishment movements (discussed below).[79]

2. Sharia and *hisbah*

A prominent scholar has observed: "Until the present day, politicians of the north, the religious scholars and modern Muslim intellectuals claim the legacy of Usman dan Fodio for themselves in order to legitimise their political strategies and programs".[80] In that context, debates over Sharia (which dan Fodio first introduced), and its relationship to customary, colonial or national law, have been a permanent feature of politics in the region for 200 years.

As discussed above, British colonial authorities left in place many elements of Sharia but gradually reduced its scope as they introduced common law codes. On the eve of independence they further limited its scope, and it was formally excluded from the legal system of independent Nigeria when the Islamic court of appeal was abolished in 1967. However, aspects of Sharia continued to be used, as part of "area" or customary law (practised at village level).[81] In 1978, the issue again came to the fore, in the context of drafting a new civilian constitution. Heated debates focused on using the word "secular" to describe the state and on the proposed creation of a federal-level

---

[72] Mohammed Dahiru Sulaiman, "Islamic Fundamentalism: The Shi'a in Katsina", in Ismaila A. Tsiga and Abdalla U. Adamu (eds.), *Islam and the History of Learning in Katsina* (Ibadan, Nigeria, 1997), p. 57.
[73] Crisis Group interview, Mallam Ibrahim Yinusa, editor, *Al-mizan* newspaper, published by the Islamic Movement of Nigeria, Kaduna, June 2009.
[74] Crisis Group interview, Mohammed Dahiru Sulaiman, academic, Kano, May 2010.
[75] Crisis Group interview, Mallam Ibrahim Yinusa, media editor, Kaduna, May 2010.
[76] Crisis Group interviews, journalist, Kaduna, June 2009; Christian leader (who explained his peaceful interaction with El-Zakzaky's group), Kaduna, July 2009.
[77] Such rejection should not in itself be taken to constitute Islamic radicalism, as Nigerian federal authorities have very often lacked legitimacy, and many of the movement's criticisms of military rule echoed those of other civil society groups nationwide.
[78] For example, on 30 January 1998, security forces in Kaduna broke up a demonstration demanding his release, killing three

---

demonstrators. On 17 April, they arrested one of his wives, Hajia Zeinet Ibrahim, in Kaduna, for participating in a demonstration demanding his release. The day after, eight pro-El-Zakzaky demonstrators died in a clash with the police. On 18 September, the police fired on another group of his followers, killing five.
[79] On this sectarian violence, Crisis Group interviews, Sunni cleric, Sokoto, July 2009; see "Shiite, Sunni clash reported in Nigeria", United Press International, 21 April 2005. The two murdered clerics were Sheikh Adam Ja'afar, April 2007 in Kano, and Dan-Maishiyya, July 2007 in Sokoto. They were likely killed because of political in-fighting, not Sunni-Shiite tensions. Crisis Group interviews, Kano, October 2010.
[80] Roman Loimeier, op. cit., pp. 3-4.
[81] See H B Yusuf, "Managing Muslim-Christian Conflicts in Northern Nigeria: A Case Study of Kaduna State", in *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations*, no. 18 (2007); Christelow, op. cit.

Sharia court of appeal. Eventually the matter was settled through compromise. The court was not created, and the new constitution prohibited the adoption of any single religion by the state, but the word "secular" was dropped.[82]

The return to civilian rule in 1999 was seen by some in the far north as a challenge to their authority, by others as an opportunity for religious and cultural renewal. The loss of power to a Christian southerner was considered a reversal of political fortunes. The new beginning called for moral and religious revival. It was in the quest for political legitimacy, as much as for religious purity, that the Zamfara state governor, Ahmed Yerima, started the campaign to restore (or more accurately enlarge) Sharia in 1999. That initiative, however, instantly found wide resonance with many Muslims.[83]

For the clerics, it was an opportunity to restore a religious and moral heritage (and position of social power) suppressed after colonial conquest.[84] Common people saw Sharia as an instrument for achieving a just, safe, compassionate and less corrupt society.[85] For the political elite, having lost its hold on the federal government, Sharia was potentially an instrument for regional self-assertion and putting pressure on President Obasanjo. The Sardauna of Sokoto was initially sceptical but did not want to be seen as obstructive. Thus the Zamfara government's lead had a bandwagon effect on other states, whose governors followed with varying degrees of enthusiasm.[86]

The federal government declared Sharia incompatible with the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion, but the far northern governors argued that the same constitution vested in states concurrent powers to establish their own court systems. Obasanjo, avoiding a confrontation with the pro-Sharia states in order not to inflame religious passions, merely called for moderation in Sharia's application.

International debate on Sharia in northern Nigeria has been distorted by such headline grabbing events as the sentencing to death by stoning of Amina Lawal for adultery in 2002, though Lawal's conviction was ultimately overturned on the basis of arguments made within Islamic law. Such extreme punitive measures are very rare, and most serious crimes continue to be dealt with by normal secular law courts. However, Sharia does signify a more prominent role for religion in public affairs in general and greater policing of "public morals".

The views of the north's non-Muslims vary. Initially the issue strained the already fragile relations between Christians and Muslims, culminating in riots in Kaduna and Kano in 2000. In many areas, minority Christian populations still consider Sharia restrictive of their rights (in terms, for example, of public music and alcohol consumption), and fears remain that Christians may be subjected to it against their will. However, over the years, attitudes have calmed, as state governments have been restrained in applying the harsher punishments. The exact effect of Sharia on non-Muslims varies across the region, as it has not been widely applied in some states. Where it has, Christians tend to be free to drink alcohol if they do so in private, and to use secular courts if they wish. In many cases, authorities have made efforts to underline the common benefits that may derive from Sharia (especially as many people, including Christians, have little faith in the state's justice system) and to build bridges with Christian communities.[87]

In some states, implementation of Sharia has been driven by *hisbah* (Islamic law enforcement) organisations. These uniformed enforcement groups, composed mainly of locally-recruited young men, have been most active in Kano and Zamfara states, much less so elsewhere. Their role is to ensure observance of Sharia and report breaches to the police. In some respects, their introduction follows a similar logic to the emergence of vigilante groups or non-official security providers in other parts of the country, namely the deep public distrust of the federal police and a desire to seek other means of justice.

---

[82] The issue, which seems to come up at points of political transition (or hoped-for transition) was raised again the 1980s, but with no significant change. See Falola, op. cit., pp. 77-93.

[83] For an early view, see Murray Last, "La charia dans le Nord-Nigeria", in *Politique Africaine*, no. 79, 2000. He pointed out that many ordinary people saw parallels between the 1999 extension of Sharia and the lost glory of the caliphate era.

[84] Crisis Group interview, Imam Mohammed Sani Isa, Kaduna, 12 June 2009. See also Wakili, op. cit.

[85] Crisis Group Interview, Aminu Mohammed Dukku, lecturer, sociology department, Bayero University, Kano. 23 June 2009. Several Crisis Group interlocutors stressed that they saw Sharia as a response to social immorality and associated low-level criminality.

[86] On Sharia's relations to democracy, the Kano state governor, Ibrahim Shekarau, said, "implementation of Sharia has always been the major aspiration of the Muslim electorate in all the Muslim majority states[,] and ... democracy is all about responding to the yearnings of the electorate". See Shekarau, "The Implementation of Sharia in a Democracy: The Nigerian Experience", keynote address, International Conference on the Implementation of Sharia in Democracy: The Nigerian Experience, Abuja, July 2004.

[87] Crisis Group interviews, head of the Supreme Council of Sharia in Nigeria, Kaduna, June 2009; Christian leader, Kaduna July 2009. One person pointed out that, in Kano, Christians tend to accept Sharia because they know they are in a small minority, while this is not the case in Kaduna, for example. Crisis Group interview, community activist, Kano, October 2010. On this issue, see Phillip Ostien, op. cit.; and H B Yusuf, op. cit., for a range of Christian views.

The *hisbah* groups operate with the consent and support of state governments, although the exact nature of that support, as well as mechanisms for accountability, vary from one state to another.[88] In some, the government pays a small salary and provides uniforms, vehicles and offices at both the state capital and local levels. In others they are less organised and unpaid. Kano has the most developed organisation, due to the push of Governor Shekarau. It has 9,000 members (most paid a small stipend), an active censorship board and committees to look at public morality issues. In some states, new members undergo a training program with a brief outline of their duties and the limits of their powers.

Introduction of the *hisbah* has raised controversies. In February 2006, the federal government accused the Kano state government of seeking foreign funding to turn it into a parallel police force. Kano *hisbah* officials rejected that accusation and maintain that "there is a distinction between *hisbah* and the police. *Hisbah* preaches, while the police do not. *Hisbah* apprehends offenders, hands them over to the police, but does not prosecute, because it is not empowered to do so".[89] However, as the Nigeria Police Force is the only police force permitted under the federal constitution, there have been tensions and occasional clashes between it and *hisbah* groups.

In the early years of operation, there were reports of *hisbah* violence, as operatives sometimes assaulted women they judged to be inappropriately dressed, destroyed alcohol merchants' shops and dealt severe punishment on anyone alleged to have insulted Islam. However, there were no reports of extrajudicial killings. With time, both the enthusiasm and the human rights abuses of the early years have declined. Controversies have centred on more prosaic issues, such as whether men and women can mix in public transport. The Kano *hisbah* tried to stop this (following a state law banning women from riding motorbike taxis), but failed to consider that people are forced to share transport due to cost. The state government has since introduced rickshaw motorbikes, so that male drivers can transport female passengers, but, in reality, the Sharia restrictions have been quietly dropped.[90]

Hisbah operatives are now most likely to describe their work in terms of social mediation. They encourage (or impose) out-of-court settlement of land, marriage and inheritance disputes and facilitate reconciliation of family issues. In this way, they have reduced the need for local people to resort to the police and the courts to settle disputes. They encourage forgiveness and reconciliation, based on Islamic principles, assist the Nigeria Police Force, even serving as traffic wardens, help regulate markets and aid in the Hajj. In some cases, they have the authority to make arrests, but they generally relinquish suspects to the police (who may then bring the suspect before a Sharia court). *Hisbah* officials consider the flexibility of this approach, and Sharia's openness to forgiveness and financial restitution to victims to be advantages. While some locals and observers may object to such moral policing, it has undoubtedly achieved some success at this level.

However, there are several critical voices of Sharia and the *hisbah* from within the Islamic community. The initial expectations that Sharia would curb corruption in government, enhance socio-economic welfare, reduce grassroots-level crime and ensure more efficient dispensation of justice have not been realised. Crime statistics in Nigeria are very unreliable, but there is little evidence that Sharia has reduced overall criminality in the twelve Sharia states. Equally, Sharia has done little to stem corruption in government.[91]

There are muted but continuing protests that Sharia's punitive provisions are applied only to the poor. Some take the position that Sharia was implemented without the necessary moral education being in place. The Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria expressed early concern that the criminal aspects of Sharia were being carried out, while the injunctions to create a more just society were being ignored.[92] However, despite the shortcomings, many see these very discussions as part of what

---

[88] Analysis of the *hisbah* is based on Crisis Group interviews, members of *hisbah* boards and ordinary *hisbah* officials, Kano and Kaduna, May and October 2010; academic, Kano, October 2010; head of the Supreme Council of Sharia in Nigeria, Kaduna, June 2009. See also O'Brien, op. cit.; and Fatima L. Adamu, "Gender, Hisba and the Enforcement of Morality in Northern Nigeria", *Africa*, no. 78 (2008).
[89] Crisis Group interview, Dr Saidu Ahmed Dukawa, director general of *hisbah* in Kano State, May 2010.
[90] Similar tensions occurred in Gusau, in Zamfara; see Murray Last, op. cit. (2000).

[91] In Kano state, a probe instituted by the government in December 2004 indicted the former governor, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, and ordered him to refund almost a billion naira (about $6.6 million). Similarly, in November 2009, a commission of inquiry ordered the former governor of Bauchi state, Adamu Mu'azu, to refund naira 1.6 billion (about $10.3 million), which he allegedly misappropriated. See "Ex-governor, others to refund N18bn", *The Nation*, 13 November 2009. The former governors of Jigawa state, Saminu Turaki, and Sokoto state, Attahiru Bafarawa, are being prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on charges of corruption involving N36 billion ($240 million) and N15 billion ($100 million), respectively. Figures made available to Crisis Group by legal department of EFCC, Abuja, May 2010.
[92] In H B Yusuf, op. cit., p. 251.

Sharia has brought and consider that it has stimulated much debate over the rule of law and equality.[93]

The uneven extension of Sharia and the *hisbah* and the fluctuations in their popularity need to be seen as part of widespread popular dissatisfaction with the Nigerian state and with general moral decline, as well as of the search for solutions within religious canon. In this sense, Sharia can be understood as an extension of other less prominent forms of civilian protest – for example, the Islamic anti-corruption organisation the Muslim League for Accountability.[94]

The introduction of Sharia and the activities of the *hisbah* have raised the question of women's rights in the region.[95] At one level, it is clear that Sharia does not treat men and women equally and that the intrusion of the *hisbah* into family matters gives religion a very prominent role in settling disputes that may sit uncomfortably with notions of legal and other forms of equality. Many involved in elaborating Sharia strongly object to women playing a prominent role in public life, and the region has few elected female politicians.[96] Many in the south and abroad, and some in the region, object to this attitude. However, most Crisis Group interlocutors, including women working in human rights areas, offered a more nuanced view. For them, women's rights can be pursued and developed within the Islamic canon, by challenging narrow interpretations and drawing on the diversity of Islamic traditions. A number of NGOs have been set up to forward this agenda. Although this attitude is largely limited to those with resources and education, it points to emerging possibilities for seeking gender equity within a Sharia context.[97]

3. The radical fringe

At around the same time as the emergence of the Izala movement, a smaller, far more radical group emerged. A young preacher from northern Cameroon, commonly known as Marwa, started gathering a significant following in Kano, much to the consternation of the city's established religious elite. He presented himself as an epochal liberator and took an aggressive stance against Western influence, refusing to accept the legitimacy of secular authorities. As the ranks of his followers swelled during the 1970s with unemployed urban youth, relations with the police deteriorated, and the group became increasingly ready to use violence. In December 1980 a confrontation with police at an open-air rally sparked massive rioting, causing destructive chaos in Kano for several weeks, leaving many hundred dead and spreading to other states. Despite Marwa's death in the initial riots, pockets of violence continued for several years.[98]

Marwa's movement, the Maitatsine, was for some time seen as a one-off, variously interpreted as a revolution of the underclass or a reoccurrence of Mahdist-type millenarian Islam. However, in the early 2000s, a similar group emerged in north-eastern Nigeria. Generally referred to as the "Nigerian Taliban", it also rejected all secular authority. Over time, its position hardened, until it entered into a seemingly inevitable clash with the police in Borno state, in 2004, resulting in dozens of deaths.

The group then re-emerged, this time commonly known as Boko Haram ("Western Education is Forbidden").[99] Centred around the radical young preacher Mohammed Yusuf, it gradually built support among unemployed youth in Maiduguri, the state capital. In a strikingly similar way to the Maitatsine, its relations with the police deteriorated, and it took an increasingly violent and radical stance against all secular authorities. The seemingly inevitable (and for the group prepared) clash took place in July 2009, leaving hundreds dead in Maiduguri. Despite Yusuf's death at the hands of the security forces, the group has since re-formed. In September 2010, it conducted a spectacular prison break in Bauchi, freeing over 700 prisoners, including 150 of its members. It is currently behind a series of targeted killings in Maiduguri.

As with the Maitatsine, interpretations of the motivations and worldview of the Boko Haram movement differ. Some, including members of the sect, point to disgust with the corruption of secular authorities. Others see its violent rejectionist ideology as coming from a religiously informed

---

[93] See O'Brien, op. cit.; Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, "Politics and Sharia in Northern Nigeria", in Benjamin Soares and Rene Otayek (eds.), *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa* (New York, 2007).
[94] This small organisation campaigns for better use of public resources, for election campaigns to be run on issues rather than religious or ethnic lines and for women to exercise their right to vote. Crisis Group interview, head of the Muslim League for Accountability, Kaduna, August 2009.
[95] *Hisbah* groups frequently include women (around 1,500 of Kano's 9,000-strong corps or 17 per cent), who tend to limit their policing to family matters.
[96] There are four elected politicians at federal level from the twelve Sharia states: three in the House of Representatives (from Kaduna, Kebbi and Yobe states) and one in the Senate, (from Niger state). This is out of a total of 26 women in the 365-strong House of Representatives and eight women in the 108-strong Senate. (The Sharia states constitute around a third of the country's population.)
[97] Crisis Group interview, prominent women's rights activist, Kano, October 2010. See also Adamu, op. cit.; M. Sani Umar, "Gender Issues in Application of Islamic Law in Nigeria", *Al-Jami'ah*, vol. 45, 2007.

[98] See Falola, op. cit., pp. 137-162.
[99] Details of the Taliban and Boko Haram movements are drawn from extensive Crisis Group fieldwork in 2009-2010. For further detail see Appendix E below.

world view.[100] While the comparison with the Maitatsine is persuasive in many respects, the Boko Haram has emerged at a different historical point, and it is clear that it draws considerable inspiration from al-Qaeda, with which it has concrete links.[101] Several individuals have, since 2006, been charged by the Nigerian state with having links to international terrorist organisations and having received training from the North African and Sahelian branch of al-Qaeda, though to date no convictions appear to have resulted from these cases.[102]

As with many jihadi movements, Boko Haram needs to be understood in both its Nigerian and international aspects. Links with al-Qaeda may provide the means to sustain the group for far longer than the Maitatsine. The highly violent reaction of the security forces in 2009, the group's ability to find refuge in both urban centres in Nigeria and bordering countries and indications of evolving tactics all point to a serious and persistent problem.

The attempted bombing of a passenger jet in the U.S. in December 2009 by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a young man from a rich family in Kaduna, again focused attention on this extreme radical fringe. However, it would be mistaken to draw too direct parallels between this case and the more long-standing problem of radical rejectionism in the north. Although some see the anti-Western discourse common in northern Nigeria as a contributory factor in his radicalisation, Abdulmutallab was radicalised principally in Yemen and appears to fit the profile of young men who drift into violent extremism during long periods away from their area of origin. No links are known between Abdulmatallab and Boko Haram.

---

[100] Crisis Group interviews, two religious affairs specialists, Kano, October 2010.

[101] Crisis Group interviews, security specialists, Abuja and Europe, September and October 2010.

[102] In 2006, the government charged Mallam Mohamed Ashafa, alleged leader of an organisation called al-Qaeda Network, with five counts of receiving and distributing funds for terrorist activities in the country. The case was adjourned several times until March 2008, when the court granted Ashafa bail on medical grounds. On 16 January 2007, Mohammed Bello Ilyas Damagun, director of the Abuja-based Media Trust Limited, was charged on three counts of receiving funds from al-Qaeda, and collaborating with the Nigerian Taliban for terrorist purposes. The charges also alleged that Damagun had sent fourteen young men for terrorist and other combat training at a camp in Mauritania, run by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). In December 2006, Mohamed Yusuf, who subsequently emerged as the leader of Boko Haram, was arraigned on a five-count charge of maintaining ties with, and receiving funds from, extremists known to be al-Qaeda agents in Pakistan; he was freed on bail and the charges subsequently dropped. Also, in November 2007, the authorities arraigned five Islamist militants with suspected links to al-Qaeda in an Abuja court, charging them with plotting attacks on government establishments and U.S. interests in the country. Three of them were also charged with training with a terrorist organisation in Algeria between 2005 and August 2007.

V. CONFLICT DYNAMICS AND POLICY RESPONSES

A. DYNAMICS OF CONFLICTS

Northern Nigeria is a vast area with millions of people of various backgrounds living alongside each other, in a country with a poor record of managing community relations. In many ways the absence of sustained conflict in the area is remarkable. Many social mechanisms exist to defuse or manage conflicts, including between religious groups. Crisis Group gathered many accounts of consultations and joint calls for tolerance on the part of Christian and Muslim leaders. A specific example was the swift reaction by some Christian leaders to distance themselves from the provocative Danish cartoons of the Prophet in 2005, a move that may have helped avoid much communal violence.[103] Nevertheless, conflict does flare up, and escalate, in various locations and under specific conditions. Understanding exactly how is important in order to better deal with the risks.

1. Patterns, actors, instruments

For the first two decades after independence, tensions and conflicts between the diverse religious groups in the region were often managed and resolved peacefully, rarely degenerating into major violence. In Kano, for instance, only three of eleven incidents of large-scale violence recorded between 1953 and 2004 occurred during the first half of that period.[104] Such trouble has become recurrent only since the Maitatsine riots of 1980.

Conflicts between Muslims and Christians, or between ethnic groups strongly marked as either one or the other, have been the "most violent instances of inter-group crisis in Nigeria".[105] Such violence is, of course, a major feature of the country's "middle belt", and especially Jos. In the region under consideration in this report, it has occurred more frequently in the central zone, at the convergence of Hausa-Fulani Muslims and non-Muslim groups, and almost entirely in urban centres (especially Kaduna, but also Kano and Bauchi) with large migrant populations.[106] The

area around Kaduna has been described as a "dangerous convergence of religious and ethnic fears and animosities … [in which it] is often difficult to differentiate between religious and ethnic conflicts, as the dividing line between the two is very thin".[107] This convergence involves several tensions and pressures, historical and contemporary, including some clashes over religious "truths" and practices, but also over such issues as citizenship, group and individual rights and communal distribution of public resources.

The second dimension involves confrontations within the Islamic fold. An early manifestation of this was the conflict between the Izala movement and the Sufi brotherhoods in the 1980s. The more recurrent manifestation of intra-Muslim violence has been the clashes between Sunnis and Shiites, especially in Sokoto state and Zaria, since the mid-1990s. The third major dimension of conflicts in the region is the revolt against the secular state and even orthodox religious authorities by radical, anti-establishment groups such as the "Nigerian Taliban" and Boko Haram. Intra-Muslim and anti-establishment conflicts tend to occur more frequently in areas more homogeneously Muslim, notably Sokoto, Kano and Maiduguri.

The major perpetrators of the violence have been young men, of whom current or former *Almajirai* constitute a major category*;* but even the employed or under-employed, such as commercial motorcycle operators, have been frequently involved in mass violence. In addition, violence has frequently started between students on university campuses, as in Kaduna in the 1980s.[108] Sparks for violence often come from disputes over preaching or the locations of religious buildings. It is then sustained by group mentalities, which give cover for perpetrators and opportunities for leadership.

The mass media has also contributed: sensational newspaper headlines have provoked or aggravated violence on several occasions. The circulation of rumour, whether through media or more informally, frequently serves to spread and sustain violence. A notable example occurred on the eve of Nigeria's hosting of the Miss World beauty pageant in November 2002, when *Thisday* made what were considered insulting remarks linking the Prophet Mohammed to the event. Over 200 people were killed in subsequent rioting in Kaduna. In other cases, the media have

---

[103] Crisis Group interviews, Yoruba community leader, Damaturu, August 2009; Christian leader, Kaduna, July 2009; academic, Zaria, July 2009; politician, Kano, July 2009.
[104] Haruna Wakili, "Youth and Rioting in Kano, 1991-2004", Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies, Bayero University, Kano, *Journal of Humanities*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2005), p. 45.
[105] Eghosa E. Osaghae and Rotimi T. Suberu, *A History of Identities, Violence, and Stability in Nigeria*, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Oxford University, Working Paper, 6 January 2005, p. 19.
[106] Major instances include the Kafanchan-Kaduna crises (1987 and 1999), Zangon-Kataf riots (1992), Tafawa Balewa clashes

(1991, 1995 and 2001), Kaduna Sharia riots (2000) and the Miss World riots, Kaduna (2002). See Shehu Sani, *The Killing Fields, Religious Violence in Northern Nigeria* (Ibadan, 2007).
[107] "Nigeria: Continuing Dialogue(s) for Nation Building?", International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), Stockholm, 2000, p. 296.
[108] See Ibrahim Mu'azzam and Jibrin Ibrahim, in Attahiru Jega (ed.), op. cit.

carried outright hate speech directed at religious groups.[109] Traditionally, communications in preparation for violence have originated from Friday mosque services or been passed around the neighbourhoods involved. More recently, with the introduction of cell phones, SMS text messages have become a significant means of disseminating information, for both mobilisation and resistance.[110]

The conflicts are waged largely with machetes, swords, spears, bows and arrows, iron rods and incendiary or inflammable material for setting property ablaze. More recently, guns have come increasingly into use, but this is still under-reported by the mass media, which often assumes that all gun-related deaths result from police "shoot on sight" orders.[111] Assailants consistently focus on the places of worship and business premises of the opposing group. Thus, churches, mosques, shops, warehouses and hotels have been most frequently targeted. The choice is intended not only to destroy the buildings but also to deliver an unambiguous message about "who owns the land".[112]

Those directly involved in mob violence are largely underemployed young men. However, the role of ringleaders and sponsors is relatively poorly understood. In some instances, violence erupts after months of divisive discourse around mosques and churches. In other cases, it is more carefully planned, including by political sponsors. Targeted killings that appear to have both religious and political motivations have also occurred in recent years, including the murders of the two prominent imams in 2007.[113]

2. Factors fuelling the conflicts

Many observers have attributed conflicts in the far north to religious differences. Such differences, intolerance or even hatred are important; religion provides a simple instrument for stereotyping and demonising opponents, and exhortations to violence acquire greater potency once framed in religious terms. Religion provides a legitimising framework for violence that would otherwise be considered unacceptable.[114] Given the desire of some to im-

pose their faith on others or to fight any perceived imposition or discrimination, each group reacts to actions by the other with suspicions of hidden agendas and a sense of insecurity. For instance, while most Muslims regard Sharia as a legitimate application of their religious faith to their daily lives, many Christians read it as part of a plan to transform Nigeria into an Islamic state, in which they would be reduced to second-class status, with consequences, for example, concerning access to land to build churches.[115]

As has been noted, doctrinal debates between Islamic groups have sometimes degenerated into violence. The conflicts and clashes between the Izala and the Sufi brotherhoods in the 1980s were directly the result of doctrinal disputes. Similarly, the Maitatsine uprising in 1980 was essentially a conflict within Islam. It is common to hear, when discussing such conflict in the region, that the main cause is "ignorance" – of the peaceful precepts of different faiths, of the culture of a different community and so forth. It is widely believed, therefore, that better education, including religious and moral education, would reduce the number of people who can be manipulated to take part in violence.[116]

Others argue that religion is a cover for or a surface aspect of deeper antagonisms and that the factors causing and driving the conflicts transcend it to include a complex mix of history, political, economic, ethnic and other factors. It is a common refrain in discussing conflicts in the region that apparently religious tensions are in fact political, whether due to the restriction of political freedoms under military rule or the scheming of politicians since 1999. People feel that politicians are responsible for violence, either by using gangs of young men for political thuggery or by stirring up trouble in order to seek a payoff from federal authorities.

The following is a typical view: "These elite only raise their voices when they lose out in the game of sharing power and resources among themselves. During President

---

[109] See A. Bashir, "Religious Intolerance, Harmony and Nation Building", in E.T. Jolayemi et al. (eds.), *Leading Issues in General Studies, Humanities and Social Sciences*, University of Ilorin, Nigeria (2002); Falola, op. cit., chapter 9.

[110] Crisis Group interview, Ibrahim Yusuf, mass communication department, University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri, 23 May 2010.

[111] Ime A. John, Aminu Z. Mohammed, Andrew D. Pinto and Celestine A. Nkanta, "Gun Violence in Nigeria: A Focus on Ethno-Religious Conflict in Kano", *Journal of Public Health Policy*, no. 28 (2007).

[112] Crisis Group interview, Aminu Z. Mohammed, businessman whose hotel was burnt down during the Kaduna riots, 2000.

[113] On the killing of the imams, see Section IV.B.1 above.

[114] Falola, op. cit., Epilogue.

[115] There is an enormous amount of literature in Nigeria in which one side of the Christian-Muslim divide offers its views on the other. Much but not all of it is polemical. Many texts sit somewhere between the two, combining a stated desire to build better dialogue with elements of abuse or intolerance. A fairly moderate view can be found in Joseph Kenny, "The Challenge of Islam in Nigeria", *West African Journal of Ecclesial Studies*, no. 4 (1992), available at www.diafrica.org.

[116] The comments of an NGO leader in Kaduna are typical: "The main cause of conflict is ignorance from both secular and religious perspectives. It is better to understand your differences and to manage them rather than to pretend that differences do not exist or try to suppress others who are different. You can understand your differences only through education". Crisis Group interview, July 2009.

Obasanjo's regime, if a northerner was sent packing from government, he quickly rushed home to hoodwink and manipulate youths to stage an armed conflict so that he could negotiate for yet another position in government".[117] An interlocutor argued that his state governor was creating trouble in order to shift public resources into a "security fund" so he did not have to account for their use.[118] Tensions and conflicts stirred up by politicians often take on religious or associated ethnic dimensions simply because these are society's most visible lines of division.[119]

It is also important to consider not only the factors leading to conflict, but also those that contribute to escalation or continuation. These include irresponsible media reporting,[120] defensive and fearful attitudes towards other communities and the use of religious or ethnic conflict as a cover for criminality and looting. In addition, there is a reprisal cycle between communities, often in reaction to news of killings elsewhere.[121] Equally, the cycle of violence is maintained by the failure of authorities to implement necessary measures, including providing promised compensation to victims.

Some scholars have noted underlying tensions within Hausa-Fulani society, for example over control of land and taxes.[122] These are difficult to identify, given the reluctance of that community to expose any divisions to the outside world, but it is reasonable to suppose that they may be a contributing factor in the radicalisation of some youth, who feel marginalised within Hausa-Fulani society.

There are also long-running animosities between the dominant Hausa-Fulani and numerous minority groups. Grievances date back to slave raids under the Sokoto Caliphate, colonial indirect rule and continuing perceptions of marginalisation among Christian minorities, exacerbated by an intensification of ethno-religious consciousness and

identity in Nigeria since the late 1970s.[123] These tensions have also been influenced by uneven policies of predominantly Muslim state and local authorities, some of which Christian minorities consider as discriminatory. State bias in favour of the majority may have emboldened Muslim youths to engage in acts of violence without fear of state sanctions[124] and driven minorities to disregard the rule of law and judicial institutions that they consider biased against them.

Environmental, demographic and economic factors also underlie these conflicts. The Sahelian drought of the 1970s-1980s and subsequent desertification have diminished grazing lands, ruined pastoral livelihoods and aggravated food and other insecurities, displacing many from the far north and from neighbouring countries such as Chad and Niger into a precarious existence in urban slums. These processes, accompanied by economic crisis since the 1980s, have swollen urban populations. Kano's, estimated at 261,000 in 1964, was 3.6 million in 2009, a fourteen-fold increase over 45 years.[125] This predominantly poor and youthful population is prone to lawlessness and violence.

Politics and religion have always been inextricably linked in the north, and recent political developments have affected religious coexistence. The expansion of the country's political structure from three regions in 1960 to 36 states in 1996 undermined regionalism and reconfigured state-level coalitions. The smaller, predominantly Christian, ethnic groups began emerging as more significant political actors within their states. Threatened by this development, the ruling classes in the region began to explore new strategies for retaining their influence and control. In the far north, they fell back increasingly on religion "as a tool to forge a new hegemonic coalition", and it became a major instrument for mobilising constituencies, sometimes violently.[126]

Growing disillusionment, especially among Muslim youth, with the "deception" and "insincerity"[127] that have characterised implementation of Sharia is also feeding into conflicts. Sharia was meant to herald a corruption-free and

---

[117] Crisis Group interview, political activist, Kano, July 2009.
[118] Crisis Group interview, NGO leader, Kaduna, June 2009.
[119] Murray Last pointed out that churches and mosques may be easy targets for anger, even if that anger is not fundamentally about religious practice, "Muslims and Christians in Nigeria: An Economy of Political Panic", *The Round Table*, October 2007.
[120] In some cases, ignorance of events elsewhere that carries many dangers of escalation is due not to poor media reporting but to its absence. A community leader described how during the violence instigated by the "Taliban" group in Yobe in 2004, his area was without electricity and therefore without television news for three months. Crisis Group interview, Damaturu, July 2009.
[121] Crisis Group interviews, academic, Zaria, July 2009; riot victim, Kaduna, June 2009.
[122] See Pierce, op. cit.

[123] A. R. Mustapha, "Ethnicity and Democratisation in Nigeria: A Case Study of Zangon Kataf", Mimeo, 1994.
[124] Crisis Group interviews, several Christian leaders, June-August 2009.
[125] Taken from B.A.W Trevallion, "Metropolitan Kano: Report of the Twenty-Year Development Plan, 1963-1983", Greater Kano Planning Authority, 1966 and 2006 Census, National Population Commission, Abuja.
[126] Jibrin Ibrahim, "The Politics of Religion in Nigeria: The Parameters of the 1987 Crisis in Kaduna State", *Review of African Political Economy* (1989), p. 81.
[127] Crisis Group interviews, Muslim youth leaders, Kaduna, Kano and Zaria, July 2009.

more compassionate state, but many in the region now believe that the political establishment has become even more corrupt and uncaring than it was during the earlier era. Many youths conclude that the promises of Sharia will never be truly realised until it is implemented by religious rather than political authorities – in other words, after the installation of an Islamic state. This frequently leads them into conflict with established authorities.

External support to local religious organisations, seeking the allegiance of Africa's largest Muslim and largest Christian communities, has intensified Christian-Muslim rivalries. Christian missions in the U.S. have invested considerably in evangelical work in Nigeria, including the far north. While leading U.S. evangelists have not recently been allowed to conduct revival programs there, they have offered training to local missionaries and sponsored the establishment of new churches. Saudi Arabia, Sudan, other Arab states and Iran, along with Islamic charities based in those countries,[128] have also contributed substantial resources for propagating Islam in the region, or sometimes for empowering particular sects. The vast majority of this money is intended for normal charitable work or to cement the ties of Islamic brotherhood. However, its use is poorly monitored, and some has clearly found its way to people who preach division and intolerance. Some in the region are suspected of fostering and exaggerating differences between sects in order to keep international funds flowing.

The prominent Hausa-language Islamist magazine *Sakon Islam* is sponsored by Muslim organisations in Iran.[129] After the 1979 revolution, that country's Shiite leadership sponsored many members of MSS, including El-Zakzaky, to travel there for religious training and offered the organisation financial support.[130] In 1987, the Saudi government awarded the King Faisal International Prize to Gumi for his "services to Islam".[131]

Actual links with international networks that propagate violence on the basis of religion are likely to be very few, and their importance is often exaggerated in both the southern Nigerian and international media. But international links and expressions of solidarity with groups engaged in conflicts elsewhere do fan the flames and are used by extremists to mobilise support. In the wake of the January 2010 clashes around Jos, the West African branch of al-Qaeda (AQIM), offered training and arms to Nigerian Muslims to help them fight the enemy.[132]

As discussed above, disillusionment with the implementation of Sharia is widespread. This has strengthened the lure of Islamic revolution, further encouraged by the influence of more radical Islamist doctrines from the Middle East. These had been gaining ground since the Iranian revolution but have attracted an even greater following since the U.S. government's "war on terror". In spite of the fact that Nigeria has been governed for most of its history by Muslims, many view it as aligned to the Western world and unable to advance Islamic interests.[133] For them, the government represents *jahiliyya* (ignorance) that will never allow for an Islamic state and therefore should be fought in the same way that Usman dan Fodio waged the jihad against the Hausa kings. This sentiment is contributing significantly to the emergence of anti-establishment groups inclined to violence.[134]

B. RESPONSES AND POLICY OPTIONS

Communal or religiously-motivated violence in the far north has to some degree abated in the last ten years.[135] The possible causes for this vary from place to place. Peace-building strategies of state governors and civil society groups have likely played a role. It is also possible that the return to civilian rule and a very imperfect form of democracy led political and religious actors to use violence in an early game of positioning that has settled over time.

However, there are clearly on-going risks. These span the range of different conflict types identified in this report. Few of the underlying causes described in the preceding section have been properly or lastingly dealt with. At a minimum, the region faces the prospect of periodic outbursts of violence. If the situation were to deteriorate significantly, especially on Muslim-Christian lines, it could further undermine Nigeria's fragile nation-building project, particularly to the extent that events in the north are

---

[128] Funding organisations have included the Muslim World League, World Assembly of Muslim Youth, International Islamic Relief Organisation, al-Haramain Islamic Foundation and al-Muntada al-Islami, a London-based agency associated with the official Saudi state charity and *daawa* (religious mission) institutions.
[129] Crisis Group interview, Muslim leader, Kaduna, July 2009.
[130] John Paden, "Islam and Democratic Federalism in Nigeria", *Africa Notes*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2002, no. 8, p. 4.
[131] Loimeier, op. cit., p. 156.

[132] See "AQIM Offers To Train And Arm Nigerian Muslims: SITE", RTTnews online, 3 February 2010.
[133] Crisis Group focus group discussions, Muslim youth leaders, Kaduna, June 2009.
[134] Crisis Group interview, Ismaila Mohammed, history department, Usman Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto, May 2010.
[135] This is certainly not the case as regards the Jos area, which is outside the scope of this report, but whose volatility, pitting "indigenous" Christian ethnic groups against nomadic or "settler" Islamic groups, shares many features of violence in Kaduna state between 2000 and 2002.

read in the south as having a direct negative impact on relations between the country's communities.[136]

1. A limited policy response

The public policy responses used to counter violence in the region can be grouped into two categories: community-level initiatives and security and legal responses. At the community level, a series of bodies exist to further dialogue, both between Muslims and between Muslims and Christians. In the former case, the main bodies are the NSCIA and the linked JNI. They provide a forum for leaders of the main doctrinal groups to meet and iron out differences. Some of their leaders have played an important role in defusing violence. The NSCIA, for example, recently reconstituted a committee for dialogue between Sufi and Izala groups.

At the level of Muslim-Christian relations, various bodies have been set up over the years, but many have floundered, unable to overcome religious polarisation. For example, President Babangida established the National Advisory Council on Religious Affairs (NACRA) in 1987, but it was so divided that it never even appointed a chair. A new body was set up at the end of military rule in 1999, the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), with 50 members, evenly comprised of Christian and Muslims. Its stated aims are to serve as a "permanent and sustainable channel of communication and interaction ... between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria" and to "create fora and channels for peaceful resolution of any friction or misunderstanding that may arise from time to time".[137]

In the north, all twelve Sharia states have a minister for religious affairs, tasked with community relations, and other bodies such as licensing panels for imams and preachers. In conjunction with the Corporate Affairs Commission in the federal capital, Abuja, they are tasked with regulating religious life, including registering religious

group and dealing with planning issues for new mosques and churches.[138]

These bodies are complemented by a range of civil society and faith-based initiatives. The Kaduna Peace declaration of 2002 is a prominent example. Signed by 22 prominent religious leaders, it denounced communal violence and endorsed sanctions against those who create trouble. A more permanent body that has gained a degree of national and international prominence is the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC), also in Kaduna. It was founded by James Wuye, a Pentecostal pastor, and Muhammad Ashafa, an imam, who once led opposing community militias but reconciled and now work together for peace.[139] It aims to re-establish relationships damaged by violence, minimise the likelihood of reoccurrence and organise projects that involve both Christians and Muslims, such as cultural events and workshops.

These prominent examples are among inter-faith initiatives in the region far too numerous to mention in detail. Although many are recent, they can be understood in light of the older "tolerance" doctrine for managing communal relations, according to which patient dialogue and greater knowledge of the other side's point of view will translate into more peaceful cohabitation. This doctrine has been very popular with the country's leaders, military and civilian alike. However, it has clear limits. In particular, strongly-held religious and identity beliefs are often impervious to calls for tolerance. The risk, therefore, is that the civil society and inter-faith bodies become talking shops for like-minded people, creating what one analyst called an "economy" of self-serving civil society initiatives.[140] There is also the risk that some of these bodies become detached from the reality on the ground.[141]

---

[136] Reacting to the 2000 violence in Kaduna, the governors of the five south-eastern states (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo) jointly warned that "any further attack on easterners (in the north) will compel us to reassess our faith in the continued existence of Nigeria as a corporate entity", *New Nigerian*, Kaduna, 3 February 2002, p. 1. More recently, Ralph Uwazuruike, leader of the separatist Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), has threatened that "as security is not guaranteed (for southerners in northern Nigeria), there must be Biafra". "There'll be no peace until Nigeria Divides", *Nigerian Newsworld*, Abuja, 15 September 2008, p. 47. See Falola, op. cit., Epilogue, for a more detailed discussion of the problems of religion and national identity in Nigeria.
[137] "Constitution of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council", 19 September 2001.

[138] Crisis Group interview, Alhaji Musa Muhammed, public relations officer, Yobe State Islamic Centre, Damaturu, Yobe state, August 2009.
[139] A documentary film, "The Imam and the Pastor", highlights the partnership between the two men and their communities and has been shown in many inter-faith forums in Nigeria. See Bunmi Akpata-Ohohe, "The Imam and the Pastor", *Africa Today*, 29 December 2006; also, "A Documentary from the Heart of Nigeria", FLTfilms.org.uk.
[140] Murray Last, op. cit. (2007). For the history of the "tolerance doctrine", see Falola op. cit., chapter 10.
[141] The following criticism was made by Bilikisu Yusuf, the director of the Federation of Muslim Women's Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN): "The group [NSCIA] is ... not as effective as they ought to be .... All they do is just meet and discuss the sighting of the moon for the month of Ramadan and the start of Eid el-Fitr, and when to break your fast ... that is about it". In discussion with Thomas Bohnett during the World Faiths Development Dialogue/United States Institute of Peace Berkley Center Symposium on Women, Religion and Peace, 8 July 2010.

It should finally be noted that many community-level initiatives are framed in highly religious language. Calls for tolerance for other points of view may, therefore, often be accompanied by calls for both communities to cleanse themselves of their sins, with the implication that violence and disorder is due to deviation from correct moral behaviour. This is often extrapolated to the belief that Nigeria itself needs to escape from its sinful state if it is to solve its multiple problems. Again, polarised religious identities can lend a polemic edge to this religiously-informed view of conflict. For some, purification and dealing with sin means ridding the country of the opposing religion, after which peace can finally be attained.

At the security level, the response of public authorities is habitually too late and far too heavy handed. Typically, the police initially keep out of communal riots, worried about their limited ability to manage crowds and about potential hostility toward them. As things deteriorate, and calls for a response grow, police and army are thrown at the problem. They frequently arrest many hundreds of rioters (or just members of the public they can round up), who may spend several weeks in appalling prison conditions before being released. Very few if any are formally prosecuted. These responses generally clear the immediate trouble but at the expense of longer-term management of the issues.

A heavy-handed response is particularly ill-suited to deal with the radical fringe problem. The killing of Mohammed Yusuf in 2009, along with several others linked to his organisation, has provided those who took over the group with a valuable recruitment tool. In the words of an observer, Yusuf's killing "has now made his followers to see him as a martyr of Islam .... Many of them now look forward to dying in similar manner as their leader, and this may heighten insecurity in the society".[142] Members of Boko Haram said they would avenge the extrajudicial killing of their leader "even if it takes one hundred years".[143]

The Boko Haram violence of 2009-2010, when the radical Islamic sect took over large parts of Maiduguri before violently confronting the police, points to major failings in the state's security apparatus. Sources indicated clearly that state security structures had informed their superiors several times of the imminent threat. Despite the clear

precedent of the "Nigerian Taliban", very little was done.[144] This was due to poor coordination between security agencies and also to a desire on the part of local politicians – worried by its potential local support – to co-opt the group.

2. Toward better conflict prevention and management

The recent reduction in communal violence in the North has shallow roots. To further manage and, most importantly, prevent conflict, better strategies are required both at community and security levels. At the community level, the vast majority of religious and civil society groups need to be pushed out of their comfort zone. They need to indicate their openness to dialogue with those whose instinct is to reject contact with public authority. While direct dialogue may not be possible with the small very radical fringe, a much more inclusive dialogue is needed to reduce its recruiting pool.

As well as reaching out to these more recalcitrant elements, religious and civil society groups need to be far more representative of society as a whole and develop far greater traction at the grassroots. The balance of NIREC, with just three women out of 50 members, is simply unacceptable and points to a failure to build on some of the peacebuilding possibilities presented by different gender perspectives.

Finally, consideration needs to be given to the content of inter- and intra-community dialogues. This will naturally evolve if the main bodies become more representative. But efforts need to be made to steer it toward the questions of violence and, in particular, preventative actions, building on some fragmentary successes that have been recorded in the region. The temptation to use such forums to debate issues of religious doctrine, in the mistaken belief that the other side suffers from "ignorance" of some kind, should be avoided. Such doctrinal issues are in any case endlessly debated on widely-circulated radio and audio cassettes.

At the security level, a new approach is needed that focuses on better intelligence and prevention measures and avoids heavy-handed reactive responses. The police suffer from poor internal coordination and poor gathering and

---

[142] Crisis Group interviews, Mallam Yusuf Yakubu Arrigasiyu, director of media and publicity, MSS; and executive director, Muslim League for Accountability (MULAC), Kaduna, August 2009.

[143] Crisis Group interviews, members of Boko Haram, Bauchi, June 2010.

[144] The police and security service commands in the north eastern states had apparently submitted at least fourteen reports on the growth and activities of the group, including to the national security adviser (NSA); director general of the State Security Service (SSS); inspector general of police (IGP); secretary to the federation government (SGF); and the chief security officer (CSO) to the president. Crisis Group interview, senior officer of a security agency, October 2009.

use of intelligence.[145] Furthermore, particularly in collecting intelligence on potential conflicts, they receive little cooperation from citizens. Emmanuel Ojukwu, the police public relations officer, attributes this to the persistence of "a 'we and them' dichotomy between the force and the public",[146] partly resulting from the long history of abuse and distrust in police-citizen relations. The protection of sources is often inadequate, with the result that few members of the public feel safe cooperating with the police.[147]

Some positive steps are currently being taken in this respect, and fuller programs on intelligence-led policing are being introduced. However, far greater efforts are needed, including specific training for police officers deployed in hotspots such as Maiduguri on how to deal with young men who are drawn to violent radicalism. More broadly, basic human rights of all those in the custody of security forces must be respected, so as to avoid fuelling the at times bitter personal grievances that can drive radicalisation.

These problems of intelligence gathering and inter-service coordination are hardly unique to Nigeria. However, further efforts must be made if the security sector is to move from reaction to prevention. It is vital that the police make additional efforts to build alliances on the ground. The fact that all police are under federal control, and those serving in the far north may come from any part of the country, has made community relations difficult. However, if mistrust can be overcome and bridges built, potentially fruitful alliances to improve intelligence gathering could be created with, for example, the *hisbah* groups. Further, given that many militants of hardcore rejectionist groups find refuge in neighbouring countries, regional coordination needs to be stepped up a gear. In order for

this to become effective, linguistic barriers will need to be overcome and historic rivalries between Nigeria and its francophone neighbours be put aside in the face of what is undoubtedly a common threat.

In terms of response, a fundamental shift is needed from mass beatings, killings and arrests that very rarely result in prosecution to investigation and prosecution of ringleaders. Incitement to violence needs to be taken far more seriously than participation in a riot that is likely only the final consequence of a long chain of polarisation between communities. The tolerance of inflammatory discourse and outright hate speech shown by authorities needs to fundamentally change. Strong messages must be sent that such speech is unacceptable, including through prosecution of key culprits.

Dealing with the radical and violent fringe will need a combination of better intelligence and sophisticated deradicalisation strategies. Intelligence should be coordinated carefully with neighbouring countries, where Boko Haram members are finding refuge. And political sensitivities must be overcome, recognising the fact that these violent groups could, if their tactics evolved, pose a serious threat to national security. In some countries intensive religious instruction has been used with a degree of success, especially among prison populations, alongside other inducements such as vocational training [148] This approach could be usefully explored with identified militants of these extreme groups and should be accompanied by more general prison reform, as prison conditions are often identified as a key obstacle to deradicalisation in such settings.

---

[145] One reason for this is that the police intelligence capacity was greatly whittled down by military regimes, especially from the late 1970s. In 2006, the report of the Presidential Committee on Reform of the Nigeria Police Force noted that in recent years, the detection of crimes, including organised violence, "has been based virtually on luck, instead of the application of scientific facts and the use of reliable criminal intelligence". See "Motions Without Movement: Report of Presidential Committees on Police Reform in Nigeria", Centre for Law Enforcement Education Foundation, Lagos, 2008, p. 82; Crisis Group interview, senior police officer, Abuja, 11 June 2010.

[146] Crisis Group interview, Emmanuel Ojukwu, commissioner of police and force public relations officer, Nigeria Police Force Headquarters, Abuja, 5 June 2010.

[147] This issue was raised by Okechukwu Nwanguma, "Boko Haram Crisis: A Consequence of the Irresponsiveness and Irresponsibility of the Federal and Police Authorities in Borno State", Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN), 26 April 2010. He cited the example of an imam whose report to the police about a problem his followers had with members of Boko Haram, was promptly leaked to the Boko Haram leader, Yusuf.

[148] Prison deradicalisation programs in a number of countries have enjoyed varying degrees of success. In Indonesia, where Crisis Group has worked extensively, prominent militant prisoners with reservations about the use of violence against civilians were given access to other detainees to discuss their approach to jihad. Although the success of the initiative is difficult to evaluate, it did bring round some key militants to cooperate with the police. See Crisis Group Asia Report N°142, *"Deradicalisation" and Indonesian Prisons*, 19 November 2007. In general, deradicalisation programs vary widely and take place in very different settings, but some common features and indications of possible best practices have emerged. Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Singapore are among other countries that have pursued programs aimed at individual deradicalisation and disengagement of militants in prisons. Perhaps the most prominent example of collective deradicalisation in a prison setting is the Egyptian Islamic Group. For these, see "Prisons and Terrorism. Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries", The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2010; and Angel Rabasa, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Jeremy J. Ghez and Christopher Boucek, *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2010).

In the final reckoning, communal violence in northern Nigeria is about the place of different communities in the country and the religious aspects of that debate. 50 years after independence, it is clear that the nation-building strategies of successive governments have had only limited impact in terms of national cohesion. This is not necessarily a fault of their programs, such as the National Youth Service that sends young people to work in far-flung areas of the country and is remembered by many adults as an important part of their "Nigerian" upbringing. Rather, such strategies have been constantly undermined by two factors. First, insincere and corrupt governance has constantly reduced respect for public authority, making peacebuilding strategies extremely hard to implement. Secondly, the formal and informal distribution of resources through community groups has a polarising effect nationwide. Reducing violence in the far north is also dependent on dealing with these hard issues.

VI. CONCLUSION

The apparent relative calm that much of northern Nigeria had enjoyed for several years was broken by the violent emergence of Boko Haram in 2009. That amply demonstrated the on-going risks of violent flare-ups, exacerbated by clumsy security response. In the build-up to the national elections of 2011, the risk is that violence with very local roots can have a polarising effect on the wider country. Nigeria has seen this before, with disastrous results in the civil war of the 1960s. To avoid such a scenario, communal polarisation needs to be fought at every level – local, regional and national.

Dakar/Brussels, 20 December 2010

APPENDIX A

MAP OF NIGERIA

APPENDIX B

MAP OF NIGERIAN ADMINISTRATIVE BORDERS
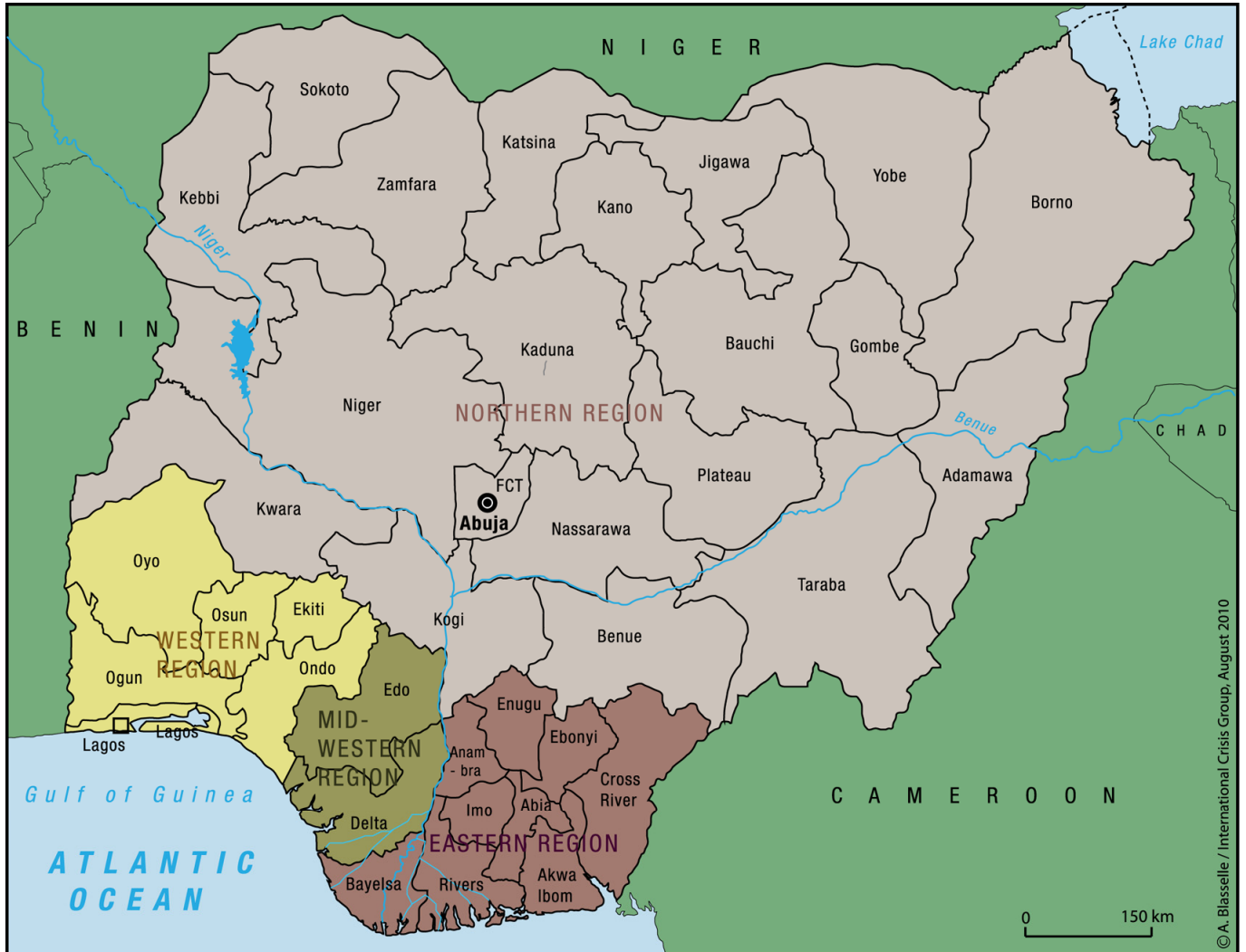
Nigerian administrative borders

Regions in 1966

	Western region
	Eastern region
	Northern region
	Midwestern region

States in 2010

— State Border

Edo State Name

FCT Federal Capital Territory

□ Former Capital

◎ New Capital

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY

ANPP	All Nigerian People's Party
AQ	Al-Qaeda
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
IMC	Interfaith Mediation Centre
JNI	Arabic acronym for Jama'atu Nasril Islam (Victory for Islam)
MSS	Muslim Students Society
MZL	Middle Zone League
NACRA	National Advisory Council on Religious Affairs
NEPU	Northern Elements Progressive Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIREC	Nigerian Inter-Religious Council
NPC	Northern People's Congress
NSCIA	Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Conference
PDP	People's Democratic Party
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
UMBC	United Middle Belt Congress
VOA	Voice of America

APPENDIX D

TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS AND VIOLENCE (EXCLUDING NIGER DELTA)

1960	In October, independence from the UK amid pronounced cultural and political differences among its dominant ethnicities (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba). Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa heads a coalition government.
1962-1963	Controversial census fuels regional and ethnic tensions.
1963	Becomes a federal republic with Nnamdi Azikiwe as its first president.
1966	Fear of Islamic hegemony contributes to first military coup in January, against the northern-dominated federal government. Successive coups heighten ethnic tensions and lead to over 30 years of military rule.
	Between July and October, northern mobs kill thousands of southerners, mostly Igbos, forcing hundreds of thousands to flee back to safety in the south.
1967	The Eastern Region secedes as the Republic of Biafra, on 30 May, sparking a brutal three-year civil war.
1970	Biafra surrenders and is reintegrated.
1979	Lt. Gen. Obasanjo transfers power to the civilian regime of Shehu Shagari.
1980	In December, confrontation between Maitatsine (a fundamentalist Muslim group) and police at a rally in Kano sparks massive, weeks-long rioting, leaving many hundreds dead and spreading to other states. Despite leader's death in the initial riots, sporadic violence continues for several years.
1982	The Archbishop of Canterbury lays the foundation stone of an Anglican church in Kano. 44 people are killed following violent protests by Muslim Students Society.
1983	Shagari government (viewed as corrupt and incompetent) overthrown in military coup by Mohammadu Buhari.
1985	Buhari government overthrown in military coup, by Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Babangida. He sets 1990 as the official deadline for a return to democratic governance, a date he changes to 1992 after surviving a coup attempt.
1987	Dispute between trainee teachers in Kafanchan over a Christian sermon descends into violence.
1991	In October, pending visit of German revivalist Reinhard Bonnke at behest of Christian Association of Nigeria triggers rioting in which Muslims kill more than 200 mostly southern Christians and burn over twenty churches.

1993	In June, Babangida cancels election results showing a presidential victory for Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola, leading to mass violence. In August, he hands over power to a civilian-led transitional regime headed by Ernest Shonekan.
1993	In November, General Sani Abacha seizes power.
1998	In June, Abacha dies in mysterious circumstances. Abiola dies in prison a month later.
1999	Controversial election of former military leader Olusegun Obasanjo as president marks return to democracy.
1999-2002	Sharia (Islamic law) adopted by twelve northern states.
2000	Christian opposition to Sharia leads to Christian-Muslim clashes, mainly in Kaduna and Kano, that cause hundreds of deaths.
2001	In September, religious violence after Muslim prayers in Jos kills at least 1,000.
2002	In February, some 100 people are killed in Lagos in clashes between Hausas from mainly Islamic north and ethnic Yorubas from predominantly Christian south west.
2002	In November, more than 200 people die in four days of rioting, mainly in Kaduna, stoked by Muslim fury over the Miss World beauty pageant planned for December. The event is relocated to the UK.
2004	Clash between "Nigerian Taliban" and police in Borno state results in dozens of deaths.
	In May, state of emergency is declared in the central Plateau state after more than 200 Muslims are killed in Yelwa in attacks by Christian militia; revenge attacks are launched by Muslim youths in Kano.
2006	In February, more than 100 people are killed when a Muslim protest against Danish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad runs out of control. Violence begins in Maiduguri and retaliatory attacks in southern city of Onitsha.
2007	Following tensions over Obasanjo's attempts at manipulating constitution to allow a third term, Umaru Yar'Adua becomes president in an election condemned by the international community as massively flawed.
2008	In November, at least 200 people are killed during clashes between Christians and Muslims in the town of Jos over disputed local government election.
2009	In July, hundreds die in Maiduguri, after Boko Haram Islamist movement launches a campaign of violence. Security forces storm its stronghold and kill the movement's leader on 30 July. More than 50 killed and over 100 arrested in operation.
	In December, at least 40 people are killed in clashes between security forces and members of an Islamic sect armed with machetes in the northern city of Bauchi.

	That same month, attempted bombing of U.S. passenger jet by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a young man from a rich family in Kaduna, refocuses attention on extreme radical fringe.
2010	In January, at least 149 people are killed during two days of violence between Christian and Muslim gangs in Jos.
	In March, more than 120 people are killed in clashes between Muslims and Christians in Jos.
	Yar'Adua dies on 5 May, after prolonged illness and five-month absence that created constitutional crisis. Vice President Ebele Goodluck Jonthan is sworn in as president on 6 May, to serve until the election scheduled in April 2011.
	In September, Boko Haram free over 700 prisoners, including 150 of its members, in dramatic prison break in Bauchi.
	In October, Boko Haram commits a series of assassinations in Maiduguri.

APPENDIX E

TWO CASE STUDIES OF CONFLICT

1. Ethnic and Christian-Muslim conflicts: Kaduna State

Kaduna State includes two broad cultural blocs, of roughly equal size overall. The first is the Muslim Hausa-Fulani, which mainly occupies the northern part of the state and dominates traditional governance remaining from the Zaria (Zazzau) emirate, a part of the Sokoto Caliphate. The second comprises a non-Muslim population of some 30 groups, located in the southern and western half of the territory. However, Hausa enclaves are to be found throughout this non-Muslim half of the territory, the focal points of economic, political and administrative life in their respective areas[149] and a pattern of settlement representative of socio-economic relations between the Hausa and the non-Muslim communities. Complex forms of patron-client relations exist between these two groups. The smaller were in the past the target for slave-raiding and the exaction of tribute by the Hausa-Fulani. Their political and military vulnerability to Hausa-Fulani hegemony arose from their relatively inferior technology, smaller settlements and decentralised political organisation.

Islam provided the ideological foundation for the emirate system. Different forms of animist worship have, at least until recent times, predominated among the non-Muslim populations. Regarded as non-believers by the emirate population, they became particularly receptive to Christian conversion and education. Thus, historically, the leadership of these smaller groups has been dominated by mission-educated elites, many of whom have also been employed as pastors or lay teachers.[150] Today, these ethnic minority elites often occupy a leading position in the CAN, which has persistently attacked the hegemony of Muslim Hausa-Fulani elites in the north and in the whole of Nigeria.

The political, cultural and religious cleavages are reinforced by an economic imbalance. The southern districts are relatively less developed than the northern sections. Moreover, even within the southern area, socio-economic opportunities and infrastructure improvements have tended to be concentrated in areas or enclaves inhabited by Hausa settlers.[151]

These differences have periodically escalated into violent agitation and confrontation. In 1942, political protests developed among the Kaje ethnic group of the Zangon Katab district over perceived discrimination by the native authority administration against the southern Zaria population. Similar protests took place in 1948 among the Kataf of the same Zangon Katab district. At different times until independence, the Kataf and other related peoples in Southern Kaduna rioted in protest against oppressive features of the emirate system, particularly the headship of Fulani ruling families over predominantly non-Fulani districts.

The polarisation that followed Nigeria joining the OIC in 1986 appeared to have opened a new phase of ethno-religious conflict in Kaduna state. The Kafanchan disturbances (March 1987) started as a theological disagreement between Christian and Muslim students of the Kafanchan Teachers College. They rapidly degenerated into a fracas that spilled into the town and ignited age-old tension between politically dominant Muslim Hausa-Fulani in the town centre and the predominantly Christian or animist groups in the suburbs. The fiercest violence occurred in Kaduna city, Katsina and Funtua, where Muslim mobs attacked non-Muslims and their properties (mainly churches and hotels) in retaliation for the killing of Muslims and burning of mosques in Kafanchan town. According to official estimates, the crisis claimed nineteen lives and resulted in the destruction of 169 hotels, 152 churches, five mosques and 95 vehicles.[152]

Even more serious rioting took place during February 1992 in Zango, a town in the Zangon Katab local government area of Kaduna state. The Zangon Katab local government council, chaired by a Kataf, Juri Babang Ayok, had in January 1992 announced the impending relocation of the Zango weekly market from the Hausa-dominated town centre to a new site on the outskirts of town. The Hausa community there resisted, claiming that the new site was part of the Muslim annual *Eid* prayer ground and that the relocation was designed to hurt its economic position. It obtained a court injunction, with accompanying police protection, restraining the relocation. The dispute escalated, on 6 February, into clashes that, according to official estimates, left 95 persons (mostly Hausa) dead, 252 others injured and 133 houses and 26 farmlands destroyed.

---

[149] M.G. Smith, *Government of Zazzau* (London, 1960), p. 2.
[150] A. D. Yahaya, *The Native Authority System in Northern Nigeria* (Zaria, 1980), p. 28.
[151] Ibid, p. 74.

[152] *New Nigerian*, 17 April 1987, p. 9; and Jibrin Ibrahim, op. cit.

The Kaduna state government appointed Justice Rahila Cudjoe to head a commission of inquiry into the violence. It had barely concluded its public sittings when a new wave of rioting broke out in the town in May. The rioting and tit-for-tat attacks between the Christian and Muslim communities eventually engulfed Kaduna, Zaria and Ikara. Two factors mainly responsible for the escalation were reports and rumours of dispossession of Hausa Muslims by non-Muslims in Zangon Katab and emotions evoked among Kaduna Muslims by the sight of dead or severely injured Zangon Hausa conveyed into Kaduna city from Zango. 471 persons were officially confirmed killed in the May disturbances, with 250 and 188 of these deaths in Kaduna city and Zangon Katab respectively. According to police sources, 518 persons were injured and 229 houses and 218 vehicles were destroyed.[153]

In 2000, Kaduna state was hit by even more destructive Muslim-Christian violence. Following Zamfara state's lead in restoring Sharia, Muslim leaders began a campaign for a similar restoration. CAN, northern minority groups and southern immigrants countered that introducing Islamic criminal law in Kaduna would be inappropriate, as the state had a multi-religious and cosmopolitan composition, unlike Zamfara, which was more homogeneously Muslim.[154] Christians saw the campaign as an attempt to advance Islamic influence beyond states with clear Muslim predominance and to restore Hausa-Fulani supremacy. This had to be resisted, they believed, to discourage similar attempts in other states.

In December 1999, the Kaduna state House of Assembly formed an eleven-member committee to examine the applicability of Sharia criminal law. This polarised the body and the state along religious lines.[155] On the sidelines, JNI and CAN organised separate public conferences that, rather than foster dialogue and a search for common ground, led to a hardening of positions.[156] In the absence of an effective institutional mediation mechanism for reconciling these positions, it seemed clear that the controversy could degenerate to violence.

On 21 February 2000, CAN organised a procession to the governor's office to protest "the planned introduction of Sharia in the state".[157] Attacks on it by stone-throwing hoodlums rapidly degenerated to violence in all parts of Kaduna.[158] Fighting lasted for four days, with dead and injured estimated between 1,800 and 5,000.[159] While a government commission was investigating that first riot, another major clash broke out from 22 to 24 May 2000.

Recurrent incidents of ethno-religious violence have taken a severe toll in the region. For instance, after the Sharia riot in Kaduna in 2000, the fact-finding panel set up by the state government put the material loss at more than N40 billion (about $266 million). All the conflicts have led to significant population displacements. After the 2000 Sharia riots, for instance, many fled the city for good, resettling in towns such as Abuja, Jos or Minna. Some southerners left for the south, never to return.

In Kaduna city, particularly, these conflicts have redrawn the ethno-religious demography. A climate of fear has forced Muslims, mostly the Hausa-Fulani who resided in Narayi, Sabon-Tasha, Barnawa, Ungwar Pama, Ungwar Romi and other Christian-dominated areas to move to the predominantly Muslim Tudun-Wada area. Similarly, Christians in Muslim-dominated areas, including up to 10,000 Igbo entrepreneurs, have largely moved to the southern part of the city, which they dubbed "New Jerusalem".[160] Many who fled the state during the Sharia crisis have returned, but they are also massed in the southern parts of the city. Others would like to return to where they lived before 2000 but sold their properties.[161] Ten years after the Sharia riots, the segregated settlement remains largely unchanged.

Though relative peace exists currently, due to the collective efforts of the state government, religious bodies and NGOs,[162] the division caused by the Sharia crisis persists. Social relations, once relatively cordial among the ethnic and religious groups, remain tense. Many Muslims avoid Christian-dominated areas and vice versa, for fear of sudden violence.[163] The atmosphere in Kaduna is particularly tense whenever there is a report of violence in another northern state. Although the city has not witnessed any large-scale violence since 2002, there is continuing risk of recurrence.

---

[153] *New Nigerian*, 20 July 1992.
[154] Crisis Group interview, secretary general, CAN Kaduna branch, Kaduna, July 2009.
[155] Osaghae and Suberu, op. cit., p. 134.
[156] H. Abdu and L. Umar, "Hope Betrayed: A Report on Impunity and State-Sponsored Violence in Nigeria", World Organisation against Torture (Brussels, 2002), p. 93.
[157] Ibid.

[158] K. Maier, "Northern Exposure: Northern Nigerian states adopt Sharia", *The New Republic*, vol. 223, no. 7 (14 August 2000).
[159] Shehu Sani, *The Killing Fields*, op. cit., p. 108; *Women Advocate*, September 2000, p. 16; *The News,* Lagos, 5 June 2000.
[160] Crisis Group interviews, journalist, Kaduna, June 2009; head of the Yoruba community, Kaduna, June 2009. See also Femi Adi, "Kaduna: A Divided City", *The NEWS*, Lagos, 15 March 2010.
[161] Crisis Group interview, media operator, Kaduna, July 2009.
[162] Crisis Group interviews, media operator, Kaduna, July 2009; senior traditional leader, Kaduna state, June 2009.
[163] Crisis Group interviews, riot victims, Kaduna, June and July 2009.

2. Anti-Establishment Conflicts in Borno and Yobe States: from Taliban to Boko Haram

Violence in Borno, Yobe and Bauchi States in 2009 and 2010 pitted police and army against a rejectionist group commonly referred to as Boko Haram, raising again the issue of radical rejectionist groups.

Events

The immediate predecessor of Boko Haram was the so-called "Nigerian Taliban", which emerged in Yobe and Borno states in 2003.[164] Between 2003 and 2004, it fought security forces on three occasions. On 31 December 2003, roughly 200 clashed with police in Geidam and Kanamma, Yobe state. Some say the police provoked this;[165] others maintain the group's sophisticated organisation implied plans for violence. Whichever was the case, the group raided two police stations, killed a policeman and seized some AK-47 rifles. They subsequently attacked three police stations in the state capital, Damaturu, and confronted other police units near the Borno state capital, Maiduguri. After four days of fighting in January 2004, security forces routed them, killing at least eighteen and arresting dozens.

The second clash followed an incident in June 2004, when four members of the group, arrested during the January fight, attempted to escape jail in Damaturu and were shot dead by police.[166] Retaliating and apparently also trying to seize more guns, the group attacked police stations in Bama and Gworza (eastern Borno state, close to the Cameroon border) in September, killing six people and abducting four. Security forces again subdued them, killing 24 and arresting many more. Others fled into nearby Cameroon and Niger.[167]

On 8 October 2004, the group launched a third attack. Ambushing a police patrol in Kala-Balge, near Lake Chad, it killed three officers instantly and captured twelve,

whom they later killed.[168] Heavy deployments of police and army dispersed them: some again fled into Cameroon, police said, but most retreated to Maiduguri, according to locals.[169]

In 2006-2009, the group re-emerged, primarily in Borno state, under the banner "Boko Haram".[170] Its leadership, particularly Mohammed Yusuf, showed it was a direct continuation of the Taliban.[171] On 25 July 2009, police arrested several leaders on suspicion they were preparing for violence. The Bauchi state governor, Isa Yuguda, said he ordered the arrests after intelligence indicated the group was planning to over-run Bauchi city. They had already clashed with police in Borno state. Protesting the arrests, and probably also trying to free their detained leaders, several hundred members attacked the Dutsen Tanshi police station in Bauchi, on 26 July 2009, but they were repelled and at least 50 of them killed.

For the next four days, the group battled police, reinforced by the army, in Bauchi, Borno, Kano and Yobe states. The worst violence was in Maiduguri, where the sect was based. On 30 July, army units stormed its headquarters, captured Yusuf, who had fled to his father-in-law's house, and handed him over to the police. He was shot dead in custody hours later.[172] Exact casualty figures were never published, but the Red Cross reported over 780 bodies buried in mass graves.[173] CAN showed 29 churches burnt and at least three pastors killed, and police listed 28 of its officers among those killed.

---

[164] As is common, the name of this movement is subject to some controversy. It never called itself Taliban, never admitted formal links with the fighters in Afghanistan and insisted its origins were entirely local. But as many members professed admiration for the Taliban in Afghanistan and flew flags marked "Afghanistan" during their brief occupation of Kanamma in December 2003, they came to be known publicly as the "Nigerian Taliban".

[165] Crisis Group interview, prominent Islamic preacher in Kaduna and former director of an international Islamic organisation, June 2009.

[166] Crisis Group interview, senior official, Nigeria Prisons Service, Abuja, 15 October 2009.

[167] Crisis Group interview, former police commissioner, July 2009.

[168] Crisis Group interview, senior police officer, Abuja, July 2010.

[169] Crisis Group interviews, local sources, Maiduguri, Borno state, September 2009.

[170] As with the Taliban, the Boko Haram never identified itself as such. It earned that label due to its vocal rejection of "Western education". It was also commonly known as Yusufiyyah. It used various names, indicating its members were strict followers of Islamic texts (broadly equivalent to "Salafist"). Tracts found in Bauchi in 2010, and seen by Crisis Group use the name Ahllissunnah Wal lidda'awati Jihad (Salafist group for propagation and jihad).

[171] Crisis Group interviews, several sources, Borno and Yobe states, July-September 2009.

[172] The Borno state police commissioner said he died in a shoot-out, but several groups, including the Nigerian Bar Association, insisted he was executed extrajudicially, while still in handcuffs. Others who died controversially in police custody included a former commissioner for religious affairs in the state, Alhaji Buji Foi, who was previously close to Yusuf but had fallen out with him. Several well-informed security sources believe that Yusuf's and Foi's killings were intended to stop any information concerning the support they had previously received from local political authorities coming out. Crisis Group interviews, Kano and Abuja, October 2010.

[173] "780 killed in Nigeria clashes, says Red Cross", *Daily Nation*, 31 July 2009.

Unsurprisingly, the events of July 2009 did not put an end to the sect's activities. Taking refuge in neighbouring Niger and Chad, or simply lying low in Maiduguri,[174] it used martyrdom videos of the events to radicalise its membership, and in the first months of 2010, there were clashes with security forces. The group has now begun to issue increasingly radical messages to the press, stating an intention to wage war on secular authorities and seek revenge on those it considers have betrayed it. On 8 September 2010, it executed a spectacular prison break in Bauchi, a highly violent, military-type operation that freed 150 of its members and several hundred other prisoners. One prison guard, one policeman and two civilians were reported killed. This has been followed by a series of assassinations of clerics and policemen who spoke out against the sect, principally in Maidugari.

Interpretations

The Taliban and Boko Haram are among several radical, anti-establishment groups that have emerged among Muslims in the region in recent years. The interpretations of their motivations and world views differ widely. Many believe that they are part of a generalised discontent with the Nigerian state and a product of a moribund economy. Others claim that they emerged from doctrinal religious disputes. In either case, they have been characterised by radical rejectionism, including refusal to enter dialogue or compromise with secular authorities.

The movements have attracted Muslim youth, including university students and some young people who apparently were revolted by corruption in their wealthy families.[175] These middle class youths then developed a following among more marginalised youths. The initial Taliban numbered only a few hundred, but Boko Haram drew a much larger membership that was probably boosted by worsening unemployment. Most were Nigerian, but small numbers came from neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger.[176] Members wore long beards, red or black headscarves and refused to use certain modern (purportedly Western) goods, such as wristwatches and safety helmets.

The original Boko Haram leader, Mohammed Yusuf, was born in Girgir, Jakusko local government area, Yobe state, on 29 January 1970. He had basic Western educa-

tion but undertook a Quranic education in Chad and Niger. He was a member of the Borno state Sharia Implementation Committee under Governor Mallah Kachallah (1999-2003) and active in debates on Islamic issues on local radio and television stations. He later joined the Taliban movement for a short period. A colleague recalled that even while on the committee, Yusuf was "against the system of government, and he used to regularly preach against it".[177]

The view that the group was merely opposed to Western education tends to oversimplify its complex and somewhat vague ideology. It is clear that it rejects secularism, seen as incompatible with Islam, and Western influence in general, considered the source of secularist ideology.[178] Western education comes in for particular criticism, which echoes long-standing mistrust in northern Nigeria of colonial and Christian influence carried through schooling. Yusuf constantly railed against what he saw as the corrupting influences of a "Godless" system of education introduced during colonial rule.[179] However, this apparent rejection of Western education and associated technology sits uneasily with the organisation's ready use of the internet to disseminate its ideas. As a recent study has shown, when challenged to define exactly what elements of Western education are objectionable or incompatible with Islam, Yusuf was unable to provide a clear answer.[180]

Followers whom Crisis Group was able to interview said they were angry at northern state governors' insincerity in applying Sharia and allowing massive corruption and il-

---

[174] Crisis Group interviews, security experts, Abuja, 2010.
[175] Crisis Group interviews, several sources, Borno and Yobe States, July and September 2009. For instance, the son of the former secretary to the Borno state government (fourth highest state official), a fourth year university student, reportedly abandoned his studies and joined the sect. Crisis Group interview, Alhaji Baba Shehu, secretary general, Dapchi Youth Development Association, Damaturu, Yobe state, July 2009.
[176] Crisis Group interview, senior police officer, Maiduguri, Borno state, 12 October 2009.

[177] Crisis Group interview, religious leader, Maiduguri, Borno state, 21 August 2009.
[178] In a BBC interview, Yusuf explained: "There are prominent Islamic preachers who have seen and understood that the present Western-style education is mixed with issues that run contrary to our beliefs in Islam".
[179] Crisis Group interviews, members of Boko Haram, Bauchi, May 2010. The Hausa language name, Boko Haram, is generally translated as "Western education is sacrilege". The group preferred to talk about Western civilisation in general. Yusuf explained its attitude: "The difference is that while the first [education] gives the impression that we are opposed to formal education coming from the West, that is Europe, which is not true, the second [civilisation] affirms our belief in the supremacy of Islamic culture .... we are talking of Western ways of life which include: constitutional provision as it relates to, for instance, the rights and privileges of women, the idea of homosexualism …, lesbianism, sanctions in cases of terrible crimes like drug trafficking, rape of infants, multi-party democracy in an overwhelmingly Islamic country like Nigeria, blue films, prostitution, drinking beer and alcohol, and many others that are opposed to Islamic civilisation". See "Nigeria: Boko Haram resurrects, declares total jihad", *Vanguard*, 14 August 2009.
[180] Abdalla Uba Adamu, "African Neo-Kharijites and Islamic militancy against authority: the Boko Haram sect/Yusufiyya Kharijites of Northern Nigeria", upublished paper, 2010.

legal affluence to continue amid grinding poverty.[181] Believing that Sharia can never be implemented properly under a secular state, they insisted on establishing an Islamic regime. A Maiduguri resident said, "they were opposed to a lot of Western culture and what they saw as its anti-Islamic and corrupting influences … opposed to the federal and state governments which they saw as propagating these Western influences as a cover-up for their own corruption … opposed to security forces which they saw as protecting the corrupt governments and oppressing fundamentalist Muslims … opposed to Christians whom they regarded as infidels aligned to the West, and who had to be converted to Islam, forcefully".[182]

Many youths in Maiduguri saw Boko Haram as a social movement protesting the "corruption" of the secular state and campaigning militantly for an Islamic state. Seeking the strength to defy the authority of that "corrupt" state, they were attracted by "the bravado which many [Boko Haram] members usually displayed against security agents, especially the police … and so wanted to join them, in order to enjoy whatever immunity that made them seemingly untouchable".[183]

That members of the group offered ethnic motivations, centred on the corruption of the secular elite, appears confirmed by many interlocutors. This resonates with much religiously inspired rejection of state authority across the country, including in the Christian churches.[184] However, the debates that Yusuf entered into with other Islamic scholars, and the group's preaching – available on cassettes across the region – concerned almost exclusively detailed points of religious doctrine and what actions can and cannot be permitted within Islam. While this did include debates on the relations between democracy and Islam, it would be incorrect to think that Yusuf was a social reformer or was overly concerned with corruption.

His concern with a pure interpretation of Islamic texts, combined with the group's rejection of public authority, clearly places Boko Haram within the fold of international al-Qaeda type movements. Since the death of Yusuf, who his successors have tried hard to turn into a martyr figure, there are signs of a growing rapprochement with al-Qaeda ideology and an increasingly violent and radical tone. For example, speeches and pamphlets seen by Crisis Group in October 2010 carry clear jihadi ico-

nography, with deliberate attempts to echo the stage props of jihadi groups in Afghanistan (reading a speech while sitting in front of a white cloth with two AK47s propped behind, for example). Concrete personal links are said to already exist between the group and the al-Qaeda affiliate in the West African Sahel, known as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.[185]

Public reactions to the Boko Haram movement, its violent actions and the equally violent reactions of security forces are ambivalent and hard to gauge. On one hand, many northern Muslims share the movement's desire for stricter implementation of Sharia, or even for an Islamic state, and its hostility to federal authorities. This undoubtedly explains why some politicians in the area got close to the group in its early years, sensing that it might develop popular support. Equally, the fact that the group has a very strong presence in Maiduguri and at times in 2009 openly ran parts of the town indicates that the local population either offered some support, was intimidated or – most likely – both.

But many now reject its violent tactics, and some now see Yusuf as merely having exploited the dire economic conditions and popular religious sentiments to build a personality cult.[186] Many Maiduguri residents considered his followers cultists and lawless, often in breach of public regulations.[187] Indeed, many learned scholars, including the late Sheikh Adam Ja'afar, Sheikh Abba Aji and Yahaya Jingir, rejected Boko Haram's militant ideology as a perversion of Islam's peaceful teachings but were unable to dissuade it from violence.[188] Reacting to the July 2009 violence, JNI "firmly and categorically (dissociated) Islam and Muslims from this … devilish … motley outfit [that] constituted themselves into a terror group".[189]

---

[181] Crisis Group interviews, members of Boko Haram, Bauchi, 5 June 2010.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Crisis Group interview, independent analyst of religious groups in the north east, Maiduguri, August 2009.
[184] See, for example, Dan Smith, *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria* (Princeton, 2008), chapter 7; and specifically on the north, Pierce, op. cit.

[185] Crisis Group interviews, security specialists, Abuja and Europe, September and October 2010.
[186] Crisis Group interviews, lecturer in peace and conflict management and resolution, National Open University of Nigeria, Maiduguri, August 2009; public relations consultant, Maiduguri; several local residents, May-June 2010. Some said Yusuf reminded them of Sani Ahmed Yerima, former Zamfara state governor, who "used the campaign for Sharia" to advance his own political fortunes.
[187] Crisis Group interviews, several local people, Maiduguri, May-June 2010.
[188] Crisis Group interviews, several religious leaders, Maiduguri, May-June 2010.
[189] "Statement by Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA)", signed by the Sultan of Sokoto and leader of Nigerian Muslims, Alhaji Mohammed Sa'ad Abubakar, 6 August 2009.

APPENDIX F

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a twelve-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and made available simultaneously on the website, www.crisisgroup.org. Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. Crisis Group is co-chaired by the former European Commissioner for External Relations Christopher Patten and former U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering. Its President and Chief Executive since July 2009 has been Louise Arbour, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda.

Crisis Group's international headquarters are in Brussels, with major advocacy offices in Washington DC (where it is based as a legal entity) and New York, a smaller one in London and liaison presences in Moscow and Beijing. The organisation currently operates nine regional offices (in Bishkek, Bogotá, Dakar, Islamabad, Istanbul, Jakarta, Nairobi, Pristina and Tbilisi) and has local field representation in fourteen additional locations (Baku, Bangkok, Beirut, Bujumbura, Damascus, Dili, Jerusalem, Kabul, Kathmandu, Kinshasa, Port-au-Prince, Pretoria, Sarajevo and Seoul). Crisis Group currently covers some 60 areas of actual or potential conflict across four continents. In Africa, this includes Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe; in Asia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma/Myanmar, Indonesia, Kashmir, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan Strait, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; in Europe, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Russia (North Caucasus), Serbia and Turkey; in the Middle East and North Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Gulf States, Iran, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen; and in Latin America and the Caribbean, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti and Venezuela.

APPENDIX G

CRISIS GROUP REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS ON AFRICA SINCE 2007

Central Africa

Congo: Staying Engaged after the Election, Africa Briefing N°44, 9 January 2007 (also available in French).

Northern Uganda: Seizing the Opportunity for Peace, Africa Report N°124, 26 April 2007.

Congo: Consolidating the Peace, Africa Report N°128, 5 July 2007 (also available in French).

Burundi: Finalising Peace with the FNL, Africa Report N°131, 28 August 2007 (also available in French).

Northern Uganda Peace Process: The Need to Maintain Momentum, Africa Briefing N°46, 14 September 2007.

Congo: Bringing Peace to North Kivu, Africa Report N°133, 31 October 2007 (also available in French).

Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State, Africa Report N°136, 13 December 2007 (also available in French).

Congo: Four Priorities for Sustainable Peace in Ituri, Africa Report N°140, 13 May 2008 (also available in French).

Burundi: Restarting Political Dialogue, Africa Briefing N°53, 19 August 2008 (also available in French).

Chad: A New Conflict Resolution Framework, Africa Report N°144, 24 September 2008 (also available in French).

Central African Republic: Untangling the Political Dialogue, Africa Briefing N°55, 9 December 2008 (also available in French).

Northern Uganda: The Road to Peace, with or without Kony, Africa Report N°146, 10 December 2008.

Chad: Powder Keg in the East, Africa Report N°149, 15 April 2009 (also available in French).

Congo: Five Priorities for a Peacebuilding Strategy, Africa Report N°150, 11 May 2009 (also available in French).

Congo: A Comprehensive Strategy to Disarm the FDLR, Africa Report N°151, 9 July 2009 (also available in French).

Burundi: réussir l'intégration des FNL, Africa Briefing N°63, 30 July 2009.

Chad: Escaping from the Oil Trap, Africa Briefing N°65, 26 August 2009 (also available in French).

CAR: Keeping the Dialogue Alive, Africa Briefing N°69, 12 January 2010 (also available in French).

Burundi: Ensuring Credible Elections, Africa Report N°155, 12 February 2010 (also available in French).

Libye/Tchad: au-delà d'une politique d'influence, Africa Briefing N°71, 23 March 2010 (also available in Arabic).

Congo: A Stalled Democratic Agenda, Africa Briefing N°73, 8 April 2010 (also available in French).

Chad: Beyond Superficial Stability, Africa Report N°162, 17 August 2010 (only available in French).

Congo: Pas de stabilité au Kivu malgré le rapprochement avec le Rwanda, Africa Report N°165, 16 November 2010 (only available in French).

Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic, Africa Report N°167, 16 December 2010.

Horn Of Africa

Somalia: The Tough Part Is Ahead, Africa Briefing N°45, 26 January 2007.

Darfur: Revitalising the Peace Process, Africa Report N°125, 30 April 2007 (also available in Arabic).

A Strategy for Comprehensive Peace in Sudan, Africa Report N°130, 26 July 2007 (also available in Arabic).

Sudan: Breaking the Abyei Deadlock, Africa Briefing N°47, 12 October 2007 (also available in Arabic).

Ethiopia and Eritrea: Stopping the Slide to War, Africa Briefing N°48, 5 November 2007.

Darfur's New Security Reality, Africa Report N°134, 26 November 2007 (also available in Arabic).

Kenya in Crisis, Africa Report N°137, 21 February 2008.

Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement: Beyond the Crisis, Africa Briefing N°50, 13 March 2008 (also available in Arabic).

Beyond the Fragile Peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea: Averting New War, Africa Report N°141, 17 June 2008.

Sudan's Southern Kordofan Problem: The Next Darfur?, Africa Report N°145, 21 October 2008 (also available in Arabic).

Somalia: To Move Beyond the Failed State, Africa Report N°147, 23 December 2008.

Sudan: Justice, Peace and the ICC, Africa Report N°152, 17 July 2009.

Somalia: The Trouble with Puntland, Africa Briefing N°64, 12 August 2009.

Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and Its Discontents, Africa Report N°153, 4 September 2009.

Somaliland: A Way out of the Electoral Crisis, Africa Briefing N°67, 7 December 2009.

Sudan: Preventing Implosion, Africa Briefing N°68, 17 December 2009.

Jonglei's Tribal Conflicts: Countering Insecurity in South Sudan, Africa Report N°154, 23 December 2009.

Rigged Elections in Darfur and the Consequences of a Probable NCP Victory in Sudan, Africa Briefing N°72, 30 March 2010.

LRA: A Regional Strategy Beyond Killing Kony, Africa Report N°157, 28 April 2010 (also available in French).

Sudan: Regional Perspectives on the Prospect of Southern Independence, Africa Report N°159, 6 May 2010.

Somalia's Divided Islamists, Africa Briefing N°74, 18 May 2010 (also available in Somali).

Sudan: Defining the North-South Border, Africa Briefing N°75, 2 September 2010.

Eritrea: The Siege State, Africa Report N°163, 21 September 2010.

Negotiating Sudan's North-South Future, Africa Briefing N°76, 23 November 2010.

Southern Africa

Zimbabwe: An End to the Stalemate?, Africa Report N°122, 5 March 2007.

Zimbabwe: A Regional Solution?, Africa Report N°132, 18 September 2007.

Zimbabwe: Prospects from a Flawed Election, Africa Report N°138, 20 March 2008.

Negotiating Zimbabwe's Transition, Africa Briefing N°51, 21 May 2008.

Ending Zimbabwe's Nightmare: A Possible Way Forward, Africa Briefing N°56, 16 December 2008.

Zimbabwe: Engaging the Inclusive Government, Africa Briefing N°59, 20 April 2009.

Zimbabwe: Political and Security Challenges to the Transition, Africa Briefing N°70, 3 March 2010.

Madagascar: sortir du cycle de crises, Africa Report N°156, 18 March 2010.

Madagascar: la crise à un tournant critique?, Africa Report N°166, 18 November 2010 (only available in French).

West Africa

Guinea: Change or Chaos, Africa Report N°121, 14 February 2007 (also available in French).

Nigeria's Elections: Avoiding a Political Crisis, Africa Report N°123, 28 March 2007.

Nigeria: Failed Elections, Failing State?, Africa Report N°126, 30 May 2007.

Côte d'Ivoire: Can the Ouagadougou Agreement Bring Peace?, Africa Report N°127, 27 June 2007 (also available in French).

Sierra Leone: The Election Opportunity, Africa Report N°129, 12 July 2007.

Guinea: Change on Hold, Africa Briefing N°49, 8 November 2007 (also available in French).

Nigeria: Ending Unrest in the Niger Delta, Africa Report N°135, 5 December 2007.

Côte d'Ivoire: Ensuring Credible Elections, Africa Report N°139, 22 April 2008 (only available in French).

Guinea: Ensuring Democratic Reforms, Africa Briefing N°52, 24 June 2008 (also available in French).

Guinea-Bissau: In Need of a State, Africa Report N°142, 2 July 2008 (also available in French).

Sierra Leone: A New Era of Reform?, Africa Report N°143, 31 July 2008.

Nigeria: Ogoni Land after Shell, Africa Briefing N°54, 18 September 2008.

Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform, Africa Report N°148, 13 January 2009.

Guinea-Bissau: Building a Real Stability Pact, Africa Briefing N°57, 29 January 2009 (also available in French).

Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun, Africa Briefing N°58, 5 March 2009 (also available in French).

Nigeria: Seizing the Moment in the Niger Delta, Africa Briefing N°60, 30 April 2009.

Guinea-Bissau: Beyond Rule of the Gun, Africa Briefing N°61, 25 June 2009 (also available in Portuguese).

Côte d'Ivoire: What's Needed to End the Crisis, Africa Briefing N°62, 2 July 2009 (also available in French).

Guinea: Military Rule Must End, Africa Briefing N°66, 16 October 2009 (also available in French).

Côte d'Ivoire: sécuriser le processus électoral, Africa Report N°158, 5 May 2010.

Cameroon: Fragile State?, Africa Report N°160, 25 May 2010 (also available in French).

Cameroon: The Dangers of a Fracturing Regime, Africa Report N°161, 24 June 2010 (also available in French).

Guinea: Reforming the Army, Africa Report N°164, 23 September 2010 (also available in French).

Côte d'Ivoire: Sortir enfin de l'ornière?, Africa Briefing N°77, 25 November 2010 (only available in French).

APPENDIX H

INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP BOARD OF TRUSTEES