

## THE MEDIA AND BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA: A CONTENT ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

*The media is being regarded as the fourth estate of the realm, a very important institution and often plays a key role in current fight against terror all over the world. The media occupy a position that is similar to that of a middleman providing necessary information about the affairs of a particular issue to the producers, which is the government and the general public as consumer. Therefore, is susceptible to manipulation either positively or negatively. The media has been accused of contributing in the worsening state of insecurity and conflicts escalation in Nigeria due to their pattern of reportage which primarily aim at maximizing profit by manipulating the audience. More worrisome is the fact that insurgents, mainly, seek first and foremost to manipulate and explore the media for their own selfish purposes by sending out messages that will increase their publicity. This study therefore, carried out an incisive analysis of the Media and Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria, making references to development in Adamawa State. The major objectives of the study include: whether or not the media are accomplices to the aims of the terrorists, who crave cheap publicity to inflict pain. Therefore, it was concluded that media should deliberately work to improve upon its performance criteria so by restoring confidence reposed on it by the generality of media users and the media should adopt a more positive approach to newsgathering and reporting. Finally, Boko Haram and other terrorist groups will always continue to be as long as the government and media fail to mitigate terrorists' exploitation of the news cycle.*

**Keywords:** Media, Terrorism, Boko Haram, Insurgency, Reporting

### INTRODUCTION

Around the globe, insurgency has sadly become one of the defining features of our society today. Eze (2014) reported that since 1992 when the first Al-Qaeda attack was recorded, countless numbers of insurgencies have resulted in deaths of millions of people and displacement of many. Eze (2014) posited that in the last ten years, over two million people have died from terror attacks throughout the world. More than half a million have been orphaned, disabled or seriously injured. According to Anna (2013), terrorism is basically a media phenomenon; you can look at it as a species of psychological warfare waged through the media, which means that while we know terrorists influence the media, media coverage also influences terrorists. Terrorists, by definition, want attention. They commit violent acts to cause fear, terror and disrupt normal life, all in the hope of gaining attention for a cause.

According to Ekwueme and Obayi (2012), the African continent has, in the past decade been assailed with high incidence of terrorism. Such groups like the notorious Al-Shabab in Somalia have mushroomed over the years to become a potent threat to the stability of the continent. Eze (2014) observed that one striking factor in today's insurgency throughout the Africa is the growth in the number of them with fundamentalist ideology. The ruthless attacks, audacity, sophistication and dexterity with which they operate have taken security operatives, weapon in Africa especially by surprise. People are killed, maimed, kidnapped, displaced and facilities wrecked or plundered. The implication of this is that it has exacerbated poverty, brought massive human suffering, and destroyed property. The society has lost confidence in the system and relies on God for His mercy and protection.

In Nigeria, insurgency involving the Islamic sect group – Boko Haram (the radical Islamic sect, *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* - people committed to the propagation of the Prophet's teachings and Jihad ) come to limelight in 2009 after the arrest and subsequent murder of the former leader Late Muhammed Yusuf. Since then however, the group have successfully launched attacks that have claimed lives and properties worth billions of Naira, most of which were attributed to the way and

manner in which media handles them (Hamid and Baba, 2014). Popoola (2012) averred that a major challenge facing journalism in Nigeria today is that of surviving the attacks of the Muslim fundamentalist religious sect, the Boko Haram. Nigeria operates a plural media system in which both the public and privately owned media exist side-by-side. The media are often referred to as the fourth estate and the watchdog of the society or the environment which it exist. This implies that the media exists as an organ of information (sourcing and disseminating information) educational promotion, surveillance, social enlightenment and mobilization. These functions set the media apart as an important link/factor in the relationship between the government and the governed and make them a sine qua non to societal growth and development.

Furthermore, Peresin (2007) asserted that terrorists, namely, seek first and foremost to manipulate and exploit the media for their own purposes by sending messages of violence and thus gaining mass publicity. On the other hand, national countries by all means also have to include both national and international media into their counterterrorist strategy. Since all those are democratic countries with free media, it is not likely to expect that the media shall react upon a direct inquiry and request of the country in accordance with the expectations of the national safety apparatus. The news media can help terrorists just by reporting their frightful acts to a mass audience (Rather, 2012).

In supporting the above view, Azeez (2009) stated that reporting on terrorism presents a number of dilemmas and paradoxes to journalists, whose responsibility is to inform the public objectively, fairly and accurately. Thus, there are many unsettling questions on the ways the media report terrorism, for which scholars of mass communication have not found absolute and definite answers. Such questions include whether or not the media are accomplices to the aims of the terrorists, who crave cheap publicity; whether the media are not actually magnifying the threat and fear in people in the way they report terrorism instead of allaying their fear; and whether or not the media are really objective and accurate in the way they report terrorism and in their narrative and framing of terrorists.

Therefore, what is the place of the Nigerian media in the reportage of Boko Haram insurgency? Can Nigerian media play any role in resolving the Boko–Haram insurgence? These are the complex questions that this article attempts to put into perspective with the aim of providing a personal viewpoint on how the media has been reporting terrorism in Nigeria. To achieve the objective of the study, the following thematic areas were explored:

- i. Conceptual clarification of Terrorism
- ii. Overview of the Boko Haram sect
- iii. The Media and Terrorism in Nigeria
- iv. Resolving Boko-Haram Insurgence: the Role of the Media
- v. Approaches to Improving Media Terrorism Reportage

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION OF TERRORISM**

Terrorism is a term used to describe violence or other harmful acts. Garrison (2004) cited in Eke (2013) noted that there is general disagreement among scholars as to the concept of terrorism. It has been viewed that terrorism is value laden and subjectively defined in line with the ideological school of the individual defining it. Thus, terrorism both as practiced and justified by terrorist themselves, is a tool used to achieve a specific outcome by using force or violence on one segment of society with the primary goal of causing fear in the larger society to make change in that society.

However, based on the work of Koh (2002) cited in Biernatzki (2002), the United Nations General Assembly offered one definition of terrorism that has apparently been deemed serviceable for most purposes: criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes...whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that may be invoked to justify them . It is an unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives. The FBI formulated the following definition of terrorism: “Terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives” (Biernatzki, 2002).

From the above definition, terrorists seek change through the use of fear and intimidation. Therefore, specific terrorist tactics are often employed to maximize the impact of their activities. Terrorism is intended to instill terror in a larger target audience and can also be intended to recruit more

supporters. Bozarth (2005) opined that conventional warfare makes extensive use of psychological 'warfare' to amplify its impact and terrorism relies almost exclusively on psychological 'warfare' for its intended impact. As a form of unconventional warfare, terrorism is sometimes used when attempting to force socio-political change by convincing a government or population to agree to demands to avoid future harm or fear of harm, destabilization of existing government, motivating a discontented population to join a mutiny, escalating a conflict in the hope of upsetting the status quo, expressing an injustice, or drawing attention to a cause (Eke, 2013).

## **OVERVIEW OF THE BOKO HARAM SECT**

Viewed critically, Boko Haram is a radical, revolutionary Islamic movement that is questioning orthodox political and economic traditions in Nigeria, but which is most pronounced in the North East part of Nigeria. The Boko Haram has come to violently co-exist with the people as a consequence of the political confusion in the country that is caused by competition among the political class. Ahokegh (2013) argued that the activities of Boko Haram as reaction in desperation, and being it, it is wrongly targeted at those who have no governmental security instrument to protect them. However, the group is making a case against the government it opposes; that the government is incapable of discharging its constitutional responsibility of protecting its citizenry. Arguably, the group raises the consciousness of Nigerians to the idea that this government is a failed one and should not continue in power. The group may have started as a front for politicians seeking political power, the reality now is that it has assumed the status of a cultural and religious movement capable of drawing sympathy from an angry and disenchanted Northern Muslim audience, and of course with great potentials of drumming huge support from millions of angry and hungry people spread across the Maghreb region where the exclusion from economic and political contest has been their lot.

Murtada and Ahmad (2014) reported that when the government came into action, several members of the group were arrested in Bauchi, sparking deadly clashes with Nigerian security forces which led to the deaths of an estimated 700 people. During the fighting with the security forces Boko Haram fighters reportedly used fuel-laden motorcycles and bows with poison arrows to attack a police station. The group's founder and then leader Mohammed Yusuf was killed during this time while in police custody. After Yusuf's killing, a new leader emerged whose identity was not known at the time (Murtada and Ahmad, 2014). The sect which is officially known as "*Jama'atu Ahli-Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad*", had orchestrated series of deadly attacks which have left hundreds of lives dead and property destroyed. Boko Haram started in Kanamma, Yunusari LGA of Yobe state in December 2003, with a name "Nigerian Taliban" (Kyari, 2014). Muhammed Ali, a resident of Saudi Arabia initiated the movement. He is a member of mufahideen in Afghanistan. Ali initiated Muhammed Yusuf who was the known leader of boko haram. Boko haram is believed to be Global aspiration, but the grievances are local. The group exerts influence in the north eastern Nigerian states of Borno, Adamawa state, Kaduna state, Bauchi state, Yobe state and Kano state. According to Nossiter, (2012) the group conducted its operations more or less peacefully during the first seven years of its existence. That changed in 2009 when the Nigerian government launched an investigation into the group's activities following reports that its members were arming themselves. Prior to that, the government repeatedly ignored warnings about the increasingly militant character of the organisation, including that of a military officer.

Hamid and Baba (2014) asserted that these attacks which started in July, 2009 when the Nigerian Police started investigating the sect, following reports that it was arming itself, have gone sophisticated with bomb detonation every now and then. The sect which opposes Western education, culture, modern science and democracy was formed in 2002 by Muhammad Yusuf in Maiduguri. However, Ekwueme (2011) cited in Popoola (2012), "The group came into existence in the 1960s but only started to draw attention in 2002. Mohammed Yusuf became its leader in the same year. In 2004, it moved to Kanamma, Yobe state where it set up a base called 'Afghanistan' from where it attacked nearby police stations, killing police officers." Popoola (2012) observed that for strategic operational reasons, Yusuf extended the operations of the group to Maiduguri, Borno state, in 2009 where he attacked and killed several political and religious leaders or their families, especially, those who had openly condemned or criticized Boko Haram's activities.

To support the above view, Hamid and Baba (2014) asserted the group have evolved from various efforts by extremists elements dating back to the 1940s though the end of the 1990s that sought to radicalize various segments of northern Nigeria, especially the North-East. The late Muhammad Yusuf

was said to have taken over the leadership after the departure of Abubakar and indoctrinated the sect with his own teaching which he claimed were based on purity and Shari'a Law. Shortly after his takeover, he commenced what many described as "Intensive Membership Mobilization" after his first release from police custody in November, 2008 in Maiduguri. This intensive mobilization recorded a huge success (Hamid and Baba, 2014). Ekwueme (2011) cited in Popoola (2012) further claims that the group exploited the country's dysfunctional school system that is plagued with numerous strikes by teachers, widespread youth unemployment, and a high prevalence of illiteracy. It group also exploits the absence of an effective security system in the country.

There have been harsh criticisms of the group for its campaign of violence and blood, with some describing the group as a bunch of anarchists. These criticisms sometimes come with blind rage that often makes constructive engagement difficult to conceive and suggesting that a solution would only come when the group has been exterminated. The group has been growing in ambition and capability. It initially targeted the northern states of Bauchi, Borno, Kano and Yobe, but began to operate further afield in late 2010, when it bombed buildings in Jos. On 16 and 17 April 2013, Nigerian forces launched a counterinsurgency operation against Boko Haram in the town of Baga in Borno state. This led to the destruction of more than 2,200 buildings, mainly homes, and caused many people to flee, but humanitarian access has been limited since. The following month, Boko Haram launched a large-scale attack on the town of Bama, also in Borno state, in which 55 people were killed. In May 2013, formal President Jonathan declared a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states after acknowledging that Boko Haram had taken control of parts of Borno. One of the most deadly attacks of Boko Haram included the kidnapping of over 250 girls from their school in Chibok, and recent bombing of Abuja market in October, 2015 (Obalonye, 2015).

## **THE MEDIA AND TERRORISM IN NIGERIA**

The greatest security challenge facing Nigerian government today is the imposing impunity of terrorist activities of the Boko Haram, an Islamic fundamentalist based in Northern Nigeria. It is on record that a casualty figure of over 10,000 people dead and many people injured, with millions of Naira worth of properties destroyed. The traditional responsibilities of the mass media in conscientising the society at every circumstance and situation are enormous, vital and have far reaching implications. Any organised society, government or institution which takes the media for granted does so at its own peril. The mass media often plays a key role in today's fight against terror all over the world. The media has enough potential and can contribute effectively to conflict resolution and reconciliation.

However, Popoola (2012) says that insurgence and conflict is the bread and butter of journalism. It provides ready-made material for media men to exploit. Media audiences are usually excited to read detailed stories on how events unfolded. In the process, media houses increase their profit margins. It is commonly claimed that terrorists and the media both benefit from high levels of media attention to terrorism (Hoffman, 2006). From the above statement, it is clear that Boko Haram insurgent in Nigeria gain from media attention that communicates their goals and grievances to a wider audience. This perspective holds that insurgent and media outlets have a symbiotic relationship in which both can benefit from media attention to insurgency. Igoe (2010) asserted that media do not hype insurgence, professional journalists argue that insurgency is an important public policy issue and deserves substantial coverage from the media. Norms of professional journalism including objectivity and balance limit media outlets' willingness to exploit insurgency to increase their audience share and lead them to devote substantial attention to the views of governments when covering episodes of political violence (Igoe, 2010). Hamid and Baba (2014) asserted that in reporting fundamental events such as insurgence, adequacy of coverage is no doubt demanded. Thus, the media owe the public an expedient responsibility not just to report such developments, but to adequately give such account. The core responsibility of the media is the surveillance function. Here, Hamid and Baba (2014) observed that the media are expected to bring to the consciousness of the public impending dangers. This function places a demand on the media to cover, analyze and report significant developments within and outside a given society.

However, as noted by Peresin (2007), insurgents, mainly, seek first and foremost to manipulate and exploit the media for their own purposes by sending messages of violence and thus gaining mass publicity. According to Peresin (2007), the majority of experts justly call the contemporary terrorism mass media oriented terrorism. This is because, by analysing insurgent activities, one may notice that in the majority of cases they are carried out precisely in order to draw the attention of the international

media. The modern technologies have made it possible for small insurgent groups to use the mass media as a powerful gun, in such a way the mass media serves in the interests of terrorists, against its own will (Peresin, 2007). More so, Sharifi (2015) argued that insurgents have recognize that the media is a fast paced industry where interest in stories is lost quickly. This spurs them on to even more novel and gruesome attacks in order to keep their presence in the media, and by extension, in the public debate. Sharifi (2015) suggested that insurgents are like any other organization; they are constantly updating their methods, creating new styles, keeping the public interested in their deeds. This has posed serious challenges for security forces and policymakers. Margaret Thatcher, British Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990, paid specific attention to this effect by calling the media the “oxygen” of terrorists (Muller, Spaaij and Ruitenberg, 2003). According to Margaret Thatcher, the solution to this problem is simple. Thatcher suggested the media simply not pay any attention to terrorist acts and refrain from reporting them. By withholding the “oxygen” in this way, she contended, terrorism would die. Walter (1978) cited in Biernatzki (2002) says that insurgents recognize that their best route to public recognition is through appealing to traditional news values: drama, conflict and tragedy, as fueled by competition among the media.

In Nigeria, studies have shown that the Nigerian media have not fared well in this regard. Okpara (2010) cited in Hamid and Baba (2014) observed that the Nigerian media are yet to effectively play the surveillance function of the media in their reportage of insurgency. He contended that this led to the unabated insurgent activities in Nigeria. The Nigerian media have not done well in discharging their surveillance role, particularly in the Boko-Haram crisis. In reporting daily occurrences, including the outbreak of conflicts, the media despite the ownership pattern are generally expected to display a real sense of objectivity. They must ensure balance and fairness in their reports; this implies that their report must be free from bias. To guarantee this, all parties involved must be given equal attention. Stories must not be one-sided. Facts must be separated from opinions. Consequently, Popoola (2012) averred that the government sees the media men as unpatriotic and uncommitted to the national interest, peace and stability of the country. The belief of the government is that journalists’ surveillance of society should be comprehensive and that they should, therefore, have information that could lead to the arrest of all the members of Boko Haram. This notion is apparently confirmed by the fact that almost every day there is news about activities of this sect in the press. Sometimes, it is as if they enjoy more publicity than the government. While Boko Haram is allegedly killing journalists for giving information to security agencies, government is accusing the media of not being patriotic (Popoola, 2012).

Furthermore, Igoe (2010) asserted that the new media such as blogs, content farms, and social networks linked to traditional media outlets influence coverage of insurgency. Igoe (2010) also opined that this issue is increasingly important as the audiences and “news holes” of traditional media decline in size and as more people rely on new media for news and information. More so, for Weimann (2012), insurgent groups use social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and internet forums to spread their messages, recruit members and gather intelligence. Weimann (2012) noted that insurgent groups take to social media because social media tools are cheap and accessible, facilitate quick, broad dissemination of messages, and allow for unfettered communication with an audience without the filter or selectivity of mainstream news outlets. Also, social media platforms allow insurgent groups to engage with their networks.

Agba (2007) argues that the media should go back to the concept of journalism in public interest to be able to discharge its proper role in times of crises. It is the position of this paper to state that to achieve the above objective, the mass media in Nigeria needs to solve its internal problem of cohesion and integration; for there are as many media houses as there are many political interests. There are therefore, external and internal obstacles in the realization of the positive role of the media in this insurgence era. In all, it is argued that the media require a political ideology that guarantees freedom of speech and access to information.

### **RESOLVING BOKO-HARAM INSURGENCE, THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA**

It is also an acknowledged fact that the mass media has a very important role to play in tackling insurgence and to serve the goal of national development. This is because the mass media is described as a pivot of social interaction, seeking to use the power of mass information to solve the problem of national cohesion and integration, which are both critical to the growth of healthy society (Agba, 2007). Among the impediments to mass media reportage of acts that breed insecurity, especially insurgent are lack of research and investigation, people’s reluctance to supply information on terrorists, fear of being

attacked by terrorists, self censorship for fear of victimization, lack of insurance policy for journalists, poor remuneration, security threats and lack of access to the scene of insurgent acts (Nwabueze and Ebeze, 2013).

However, the Nigerian mass media and its practitioners are often confronted with the problem of freedom, restrictive regulations, legal limitations, decrees, and a host of other ways of gagging the media and till date, the freedom of information bill is yet to be passed. According to Iruonagbe, Imhonopi and Ahmadu (2013), the Nigerian political system has employed various measures to curb the political communication activities of the media. These include subsidies to manipulable publishers and broadcast, favoritism in the allocation of tightly controlled paper stocks and newsprint, manipulation of access to news, limitation to what may be published or broadcast, threats of incarceration and proscription, the frequent use of treason and sedition laws to control media output, the shielding of sensitive government proceedings, and the protection of what are regarded as individual reputations and privacy. In another hand, the media in exercising its freedom of expression and sharing of information, the media has had running battles with those in position of authority; security agencies in particular. According to Shettima (2015), security agencies devise strategies aimed at fighting insurgents but these strategies end up being disclosed by the media and as a result, these steps are killed by these media reports despite enormous human and material resources that might have been put in by security agencies overtime. Shettima (2015) also observed that in some cases, deployments made to haunt insurgents get reported, thus giving insurgents clues about number of boots coming after them, sometimes including telling the world the routes being taken by troops. This according to him makes insurgents in turns to prepare to ambush troops.

Apart from these instances, certain avoidable reports give undue superiority to Boko Haram which boosts their confidence and disorganized commanders of Boko Haram rely on the media to reach their fighters. For example, In April 2015, Shettima (2015) noted that a national and respected media house reported that leader of Boko Haram Abubakar Shekau was calling on his followers to continue fighting and do not relent in their struggles. However, these instances above do not indicate that the media has not helped in the fight against the insurgency. As reported by Shettima (2015), the media has done far more positive things than posing some challenges. For example, he noted that journalist often sacrifice their lives in an attempt to expose activities of insurgents. He concluded by stating that media remains a hero in the fight against insurgency.

Therefore, it is the position of this paper that the media performed the following roles in the fight against the insurgency:

- i. The media convey information to the people and security agencies with a view to letting them know some of the activities of insurgents through investigative journalism.
- ii. The media assist in the articulation and pursuit of the national interest especially as it regard to insurgency activities.
- iii. To provide informed criticism and viable alternatives to public policies on security matters.
- iv. The media monitor the performance of government security agencies and other concerned agencies, with a view to preventing their deviation from clearly stated objectives. For example, prevention of human right abuses in the course of their operations.
- v. The media plays advocacy role in speaking out against societal ills and vices and recommending practical solutions to problems.

Therefore, to achieve these ends, the media must be seen, and must itself perform as an agent of development and nation-building. The Nigerian media should be commended for not wavering in this role since the inception of Boko Haram onslaught in 2009. Though Eze (2014) opined that concerns are raised that only horrible statistics of the dead, injured, attacked, kidnapped or houses burnt are reeled out often for public consumption. The media is therefore charged to up genuine sensitization effort on safety precautions to apply in this perilous time. It should be able to sway the society to give undiluted support and reliable information to the government and security agencies in this fight.

#### **APPROACHES TO IMPROVING MEDIA TERRORISM REPORTAGE**

As posited by Nwabueze and Ebeze (2013), the media and the general public must rise to the challenge of combating rising insecurity in the nation by embarking on communication based approaches that

would effectively stigmatize such acts in the society. While the journalists and other media workers are urged to engage in responsible journalism committed towards discouraging the acts of insecurity in the nation, the public should step-up the use of citizens or civic journalism through the mass media as a way of complementing media workers' role in exposing and combating insecurity in the nation.

In supporting the above view, Shettima (2015) argued that the challenges posed by the media in exposing security strategies is because the security agencies have refused to take the media into confidence. Shettima (2015) claimed that worst mistake one in authority can make is to disregard or underrate the capacity of a journalist to know what the man in authority tries to hide. Therefore, "as long as you want to hide, the journalist wants to expose". Shettima (2015) concluded by stating that it the best approach to take a journalist into confidence by treating him or her as a partner rather than an opponent.

The media, on its part, must respect such confidence. Media practitioners should be more constructive in their critical appraisal of actions taken by individuals or groups, including government officials, especially when such actions are presumed to be in the national or public interest. Furthermore, neither the mass media nor the government should behave as if it has a monopoly of understanding and in protecting the national interest. Both government officials and media practitioners are bound by the constitution to protect the interest of the nation and both should work together in this regard.

To effectively perform its role, the Media must be independent. This does not mean absence of government involvement but rather that the Media should be given the freehand to perform within the ethics of the profession even when they are owned by private individuals. Finally, the Media must deliberately work to improve upon its performance criteria so that it can restore the confidence reposed in it by the generality of media users and the media should adopt a more positive approach to newsgathering. It should take greater pains to investigate reports and should avoid the temptation to regard as gospel truth whatever comes from top government officials who should always be held accountable for their actions. Such accountability must include being asked to account for unfulfilled promises made to the people.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Media (especially social media) attention is one of the most important vehicles for terrorists to communicate with their audiences. It is free, it widely broadcasts their capabilities, and through media, terrorists can easily gain recognition. It also forms an important platform for terrorist groups to follow their political objectives. Without capturing airtime, the terrorist group would have no place in public or political debates. Airtime is oxygen for terrorists. Nigeria has no doubt witnessed and is still witnessing several forms of internal security disturbances in every corner of the nation. One of such insecurity is occasioned by the Boko Haram insurgency devastating the north east part of Nigeria. Since the inception of the group, however, the group have successfully launched attacks that have claimed lives and properties worth billions of Naira, most of which were attributed to the way and manner in which media handles them (Hamid and Baba, 2014). The mass media are blamed in several occasions on inflaming the conflict, particularly regarding the nature of their reportage. Sharifi (2015) observed that the journalists have not fully grasped how much terrorists benefit from exploiting their reporting. Sharifi (2015) believed that journalists, who are at the forefront of today's information warfare, must maintain impartiality and independence in the midst of competing and diverse narratives. They must also remember that serving the public interest is the ultimate goal of their daily work. Parity in their reporting has never been as vital as it is now.

To counteract this dangerous cycle, Nigerian government spokespeople must always be available and accessible to the media so that an official version of events is broadcasted. It takes journalists hours to get the government's statements after an attack. In today's world of instant news, where the Boko Haram insurgency use cell phones, Twitter, YouTube and other social media to spread their messages instantly, the government is falling behind. The Boko Haram and other terrorist groups will always be on the winning side as long as the government and media fail to mitigate terrorists' exploitation of the news cycle. Only with a quick and robust presence in the media and proactive efforts to lead the narratives can the government effectively deprive terrorists of maintaining ascendancy in the information landscape (Sharifi, 2015).

It is recommended by this paper that there is a great need for the media to improve on training and professionalism to enable journalists do their work more effectively. Therefore, regular workshops on reporting terrorism, conflict reporting, journalism ethics, mass media in a multi-cultural society,

professionalism in journalism, among other topics are essential to continually keep media workers abreast with trends in mass media use in combating insecurity in Nigeria. This would ensure that the mass media are not used to worsen the problem of insecurity due to lack of knowledge on how to handle this specialized journalism area.

Journalists or reporters should not allow their personal views and emotions as well as ethnic, religious political and ideological sentiments to influence their reports on conflicts as such may call to question the credibility of the reports and put their lives at risk. Finally, this study recommends that the moral duty of journalism should be maintained. These include that every journalist is to have respect for the truth and to publish or prepare for publication only the truth to the best of his knowledge and that the duty of the journalist to publish only facts, never to suppress such facts as he knows, never to falsify either to suit his own purposes or any other purposes.

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