



IAS PARLIAMENT

Information is Empowering

A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative

Boko Haram - Nigeria's Nightmare

What is the issue?

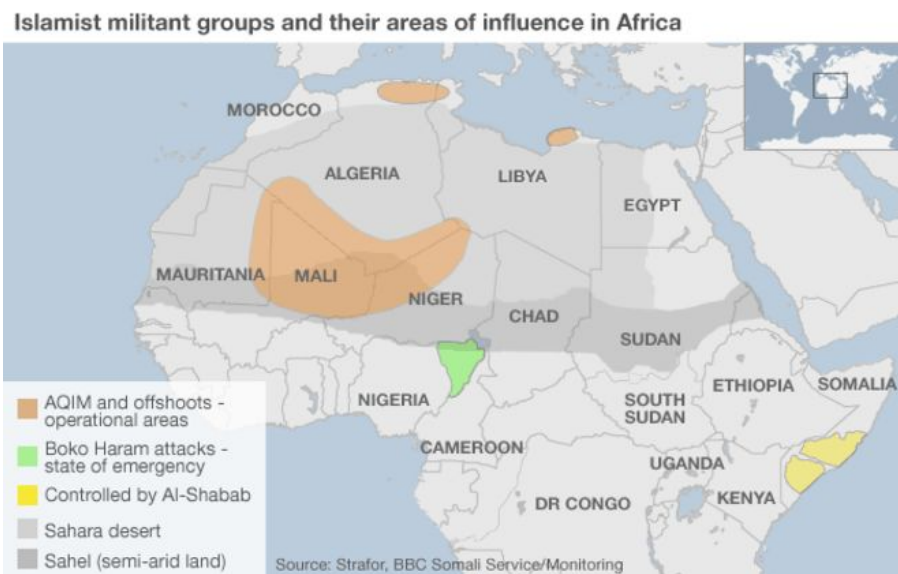
\n\n

\n

- 'Boko Haram' (a terrorist organisation in Nigeria) had recently attacked a couple of villages in northern Nigeria and killed more than a dozen people.
- \n
- The group also engages in regularly kidnapping school girls from the disturbed north-eastern towns of Nigeria - which is proving to be agonising.

\n

\n\n



\n\n

What is the history of Boko Haram's Rise?

\n\n

\n

- **Cultural Riots** - The 2002 'Miss World pageant' was initially planned to be organised in the Nigerian capital city of Abuja.

\n

- But the event was shifted to London due to security concerns arising out of religious tensions against the event.
\n
- The pretext was that ‘many Nigerian Muslims saw the event as an affront to their culture and perception of feminine modesty’.
\n
- Large-scale rioting and violence was particularly intense in the northern towns and more than 200 people were killed.
\n
- While the Boko Haram existed since the 1990s, it was during these riots that it gained prominence under the leadership of radical cleric ‘Mohammed Yusuf’.
\n
- Based mainly based in northeast Nigeria, the group is also active in the neighbouring countries of Chad, Niger and Cameroon.
\n
- **Ideology** - In the “Hausa language” that is commonly spoken in northeast Nigeria, Boko Haram literally means “Western education is forbidden”.
\n
- The group despises anything that may be considered Western, including the established norms of liberal democracy.
\n
- As a consequence, it considers the Nigerian state an enemy, and wants an Islamic state governed by the Quranic principles and Shariat.
\n
- Significantly, in 2015, Boko Haram had pledged its allegiance to the ISIS.
\n

\n\n

How notorious has the group been?

\n\n

- Boko Haram had frequently staged armed attacks and bombings since its early days, but it was only in 2009 that the international community took notice.
\n
- **Violence** - In July 2009, Boko Haram carried out a spate of attacks on churches and government infrastructure and killed scores of policemen.
\n
- Hundreds of civilians and more than 700 terrorists are said to have died in the clashes that followed between security forces and Boko Haram.
\n
- While several top leaders including the organisation’s founder ‘Yusuf’ were

said to have been assassinated, the group soon found a new leader in 'Shekau'.

\n

- In 2014 alone, Boko Haram was responsible for 6,644 deaths, which is even higher than Islamic State's (IS) 6,073 during the same period.

\n

- **Kidnapping** - UNICEF has recently stated that "Boko Haram" had kidnapped more than 1,000 children since 2013 and abductions continue unabated.

\n

- Notably, the statement comes almost 4 years after 276 girls were kidnapped from a boarding school in a north-eastern town in Nigeria.

\n

- More recently, in February this year, it was reported that nearly 110 girls were missing following an attack by the group in another north-east Nigerian town.

\n

\n\n

What are the factors responsible for Boko Haram's rise?

\n\n

\n

- Rise of Boko Haram is partly due to the failure of the Nigerian government to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people in north-east Nigeria.

\n

- While the north-east has historically suffered discrimination, discovery of oil in the south and the subsequent progress there has aggravated the situation.

\n

- Notably, the north was under the rule of 'Muslim Emirs' under British protectorate - much like our pre-independent princely states.

\n

- While the Muslim majority north held on to its conservatism, the Christian majority south was under direct British rule and embraced western education.

\n

- Hence, the south had progressed academically and managed better earning potential while the north had a large chunk of illiterate population.

\n

- These demographic factors hence provide for a ripe ground that supports Boko Haram's ideological propaganda and recruitment strategy.

\n

\n\n

How does the future look?

\n\n

\n

- Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Benin (all that are threatened directly by Boko Haram) had joined to form a Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF).

\n

- The force has existed since 1994, but its mandate was extended in 2012 to give it more teeth to take on multiple jihadist groups in the region.

\n

- These efforts have succeeded in trimming the outfit's influence by restricting its activities and geographical reach greatly.

\n

- There are also reports of a new internal power struggle that is brewing within the organisation.

\n

- Yet, despite all these, the organisation's potency is still very menacing and needs concerted action to neutralise it.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Indian Express

\n



IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering
A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative