

## Food Security In Nigeria Amidst Terrorism: An Exploratory Study of Borno State Scenario 2017-2022

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### Abstract

From the last decade, Nigeria is gripped with currently in the grip of a terrible conflict; the last decade in Borno State Northeast region has experienced violent conflict caused by Boko Haram terrorists in the Northeast region especially Borno State. This study is an explanatory assessment of food security amid terrorism in Borno State, Nigeria between 2017–2022. Utilizing a qualitative research method, the study adopts a survey approach through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as the primary data collection instrument. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select fifteen (15) respondents from twelve (12) local government areas in Borno State. These respondents include twelve (12) farmers (each representing one of the selected local governments), an army general, a police chief in charge of security and the commissioner of agriculture in Borno State. The selection criteria focused on individuals with first-hand experience of Boko Haram's impact on agricultural activities and food security. Failed state theory was adopted as a framework to explain the Scenario. Findings indicate that the insurgency has significantly disrupted farming, leading to massive food shortages, unemployment and forced displacement of farmers. The study concludes that Boko Haram's activities have severely undermined food security in Borno State, necessitating urgent security interventions, policy reforms and agricultural rehabilitation programs. The study recommends increased military presence, improved support for displaced farmers and long-term measures to restore agricultural productivity in the region.

**Keywords:** Food Security; Amidst Terrorism; Borno State; Nigeria; Exploratory

### Introduction

From the last decade, Nigeria is witnessing violent conflict caused by Boko Haram terrorists in the Northeast Geopolitical zone. This has impacted negatively in the areas such as population, infrastructures and most importantly agriculture, resulting to the intense food insecurity. Boko Haram emerged in 2002 in Borno state, north-eastern Nigeria. It is a sectarian Islamic movement that has been committing has committed acts of terror and violence throughout the region since 2009. The group's goal was to impose Islam laws' in Nigeria and to root out corruption and injustice. Following the death of their leader, the members of the group vowed to avenge his death, which resulted in the deaths of civilians, law enforcement officers, and members of the group. The crisis in the region is now in its thirteen years resulting to the death of more than twenty seven thousand (27,000) people since its inception in 2009<sup>1</sup>. The Northeast is one of Nigeria's geopolitical zones, and it includes the states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe. The zone covers slightly less than one-third of Nigeria's total land area and is home to 13.5% of the country's population.<sup>2</sup> Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state and the acting epicentre of the Boko Haram crisis has seen a series of bloody

raids and suicide bombings carried out by the violent group. Thousands of men, women, and children have been abducted and killed. In Borno state today, over 1,630,284 people are internally displaced<sup>3</sup>.

Borno state is known as the “home of peace,” even though the last eleven years have seen the opposite. The state is divided into twenty-seven local governments and borders the Niger Republic to the north, Cameroon to the east, and Chad to the Northeast. Borno is one of the North-Eastern states hardest hit by Boko Haram insurgency. Various insurgencies and violence have been perpetrated by Boko haram groups across the state. Eleven years into the crisis in Borno state, there is slight improvement. Borno state is in the grip of a conflict-related humanitarian crisis and civilians are suffering as a result. Between 2011 and 2021, the State was by far the most affected by Boko Haram’s extreme attacks in Nigeria<sup>4</sup>. People have been displaced across the state and into neighbouring countries because of the conflict and the population is still relied on humanitarian assistance to sustain itself.

Boko Haram insurgency has forced thousands of farmers to abandon their farmlands, leading to a sharp decline in agricultural productivity and creating severe food shortages. With farming communities displaced into Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, access to nutritious and safe food has become increasingly limited, resulting in rising malnutrition rates, especially among women and children. The disruption of food supply chains, destruction of storage facilities, and restricted movement due to insecurity have exacerbated food inflation, making staples unaffordable for many households.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, fears of terrorist attacks during planting and harvesting seasons have discouraged agricultural investments, weakening the region’s ability to recover and sustain food production. Addressing this crisis requires a multi-pronged approach, including strengthening security measures, providing agricultural inputs to displaced farmers, and rebuilding local food systems to ensure both availability and safety of food in the conflict-affected areas.

Even though the main goal of Boko Haram in the area is not directly to cripple Nigerian food systems, but the availability of food has been affected by the group’s violent attacks in farmlands and local or rural markets.<sup>6</sup> A population living in conflict-affected areas is more likely to be food insecure as a direct result of the conflict. Boko Haram has harmed agricultural production in Borno state by destroying agricultural resources and infrastructure, affecting food markets and driving up food prices. As a result of the ongoing conflict, Nigeria now ranks among the top countries on the global terrorism index and is in desperate need of humanitarian assistance<sup>7</sup>. The insurgents have systematically targeted agricultural communities, resulting in the deaths of numerous farmers and the displacement of millions. For instance, in November 2020, Boko Haram militants brutally murdered approximately 110 farm laborers in the village of Koshebe, Borno State, as they worked in rice fields. Such attacks have instilled widespread fear, compelling many to abandon their farmlands and seek refuge in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. According to Nigeria Humanitarian Needs Overview<sup>8</sup>, Borno State hosted over 1.6 million IDPs, with 51% residing in camps and camp-like settings, and 49% living within host communities. This mass displacement has disrupted traditional farming activities, leading to diminished agricultural output and exacerbating food shortages.

Despite various interventions, the nexus between ongoing terrorism and persistent food insecurity in Borno State remains inadequately explored. Existing studies often overlook the direct impact of insurgent activities on agricultural livelihoods and food availability. This research aims to fill this gap by analysing deeply of how terrorism undermined food security in Borno State. The study seeks to provide evidence-based insights for policy development. The ultimate goal is to enhance the resilience of local food systems and support the recovery of communities devastated by terrorism-induced disruptions.

## Conceptual Review

### *Concept of Food Security*

Food security is a concept that encompasses the availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability of food to ensure a healthy and active life for all individuals<sup>9</sup>. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), food security exists when “all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences”.<sup>10</sup> This concept is built on four key pillars: availability (sufficient food production and supply), access (affordability and distribution mechanisms), utilization (nutritional quality and safety), and stability (consistency of food supply despite economic or environmental shocks).<sup>11</sup> In developing countries like Nigeria, food security is often threatened by socio-economic challenges such as poverty, conflict, climate change, and weak agricultural policies. Terrorism, particularly in the northeastern region, has significantly disrupted food production and distribution, exacerbating hunger and malnutrition. Ensuring food security requires integrated strategies, including investment in sustainable agriculture, infrastructure development, and conflict resolution mechanisms to enhance resilience against food crises.

### *Concept of Food Availability*

Food availability refers to the sufficient production, distribution, and supply of food to meet the dietary needs of a population. It is one of the key pillars of food security, ensuring that food is consistently accessible at local, national, and international levels<sup>12</sup>. Food availability depends on factors such as domestic agricultural production, food imports, food aid, and the efficiency of supply chains.<sup>13</sup> In Nigeria, food availability is significantly affected by climate change, poor infrastructure and more recently, insecurity caused by terrorism, particularly in the northeastern region. The displacement of farmers due to the Boko Haram insurgency has led to a drastic decline in food production, disrupting local markets and increasing reliance on food imports. Additionally, post-harvest losses, weak storage facilities, and inefficient transport systems further reduce the quantity of available food, exacerbating food insecurity. Addressing food availability challenges requires strategic investments in modern agricultural practices, improved security measures, and enhanced food distribution networks to ensure stable and sufficient food supplies.

### *Food Security and Terrorism in Nigeria: Background*

Nigeria's poverty crisis has deepened in recent years, with poverty levels rising from 40.1% in 2018 to an estimated 56% in 2023, affecting about 129 million people and projections suggest it could reach 38.8% in 2024.<sup>14</sup> Stark regional disparities persist with northern states like Sokoto and Taraba recording poverty rates as high as 79.9% and 80.4%, while Lagos in the south stood at just 4.5%.<sup>15</sup> Contributing factors include economic stagnation, high inflation and insecurity particularly in the northeast, where violence and displacement have exacerbated food insecurity.<sup>16</sup> Despite the government's commitment to lifting 100 million people out of poverty by 2030 an ambitious goal requiring 10 million people annually, achieving this demands comprehensive economic reforms, social investments and strengthened security measures.<sup>17</sup> For starters, the country is vulnerable to climate change and has been plagued by a series of environmental disasters that have impacted people's livelihoods.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, its economy is thriving, yet approximately 48% of its population lives in poverty.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, Boko Haram, a terrorist organization involved in the war, has been

active in north-eastern Nigeria since 2009. As a result, Nigeria is a good case study.

Agriculture remains the backbone of Nigeria's economy, contributing about 25% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employing over 70% of the labor force, particularly in rural areas.<sup>20</sup> The Nigerian government employs an agriculture strategy to meet the first two SDGs, which are to reduce hunger and poverty through attracting private sector investment in agriculture, establishing institutions in rural areas and expanding infrastructure throughout the country.<sup>21</sup> Under the British administration, the Nigerian government began with an extensive oil trade and as a result, disregarded agriculture as an important economic sector as the oil business flourished. They then increased their investment in oil exploration but are now working to reinvest in this area.<sup>22</sup> Because the population is fast growing and the percentage of people living in poverty is only slightly changing, the absolute number of people living in poverty is increasing, creating an increase in the number of people suffering from food insecurity.<sup>23</sup>

While poverty in the South has reduced over time, it has increased in the North, notably in the Northeast, because the region is developing slower than the South.<sup>24</sup> The poverty rate in the North is more than 50% higher than in the South.<sup>25</sup> The oil reserves are in the south, the economy is in the Northeast, and the majority of farming is done in the North's rural areas.<sup>26</sup>

Nigeria operates as a federal republic with 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, governed through an executive, legislative, and judicial system. The executive branch is led by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC), who assumed office on May 29, 2023, alongside Vice President Kashim Shettima.<sup>27</sup> The National Assembly, comprising the Senate and House of Representatives, remains APC-dominated, reflecting the party's strong political influence. In early 2025, the National Assembly passed a ₦54.99 trillion (\$36.6 billion) budget, exceeding President Tinubu's initial proposal, reflecting the government's aggressive fiscal strategy.<sup>28</sup> However, economic reforms, including subsidy removals and tax restructuring, have sparked public protests, raising concerns about regional disparities and economic hardship.<sup>29</sup> The government's recent push for legislation imposing stringent penalties for subversive activities has further ignited fears of shrinking civic space.<sup>30</sup> As the country moves toward the 2027 elections, political dynamics are expected to shift with the APC's dominance facing challenges from a fragmented yet vocal opposition.

Terrorism has also played a key role in Nigeria's food scarcity during the last decade. Extremists disguised as herdsmen assault and mutilate farmers daily in states such as Benue, which is considered the country's food basket, due to age-old tensions over land and grazing routes.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Boko Haram jihadists have separated farmers from their farmlands and massacred a large number of civilians in Borno State. This has resulted in food shortages and excessive pricing for the market's limited selections.

Since the inception of the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram (BH) in 2002, their actions in Nigeria and around the world have been universally and vehemently condemned for indiscriminate and brutal attacks on innocent citizens, resulting in numerous deaths, injuries, and property destruction.<sup>32</sup> According to the Leadership Newspaper,<sup>33</sup> around 300 individuals were killed in February 2014, including innocent children. Boko Haram's bloodhounds, who are increasingly attacking vulnerable targets in distant locations, are adopting and killing farmers, interfering with food production activities that provide food security. In the previous decade, Boko Haram insurgents have driven farmers from their farms and killed a large number of people in the region. As a result, there is food insecurity and exorbitant prices for the limited commodities available in Borno State's market. According to Report on December 2, 2020, 76 farmers were killed in a horrendous murder carried out by Boko Haram terrorists in Borno State's north-eastern area of Nigeria. In retaliation for one of their members being arrested by farmers and handed over to the Nigerian army, the terrorists claimed responsibility for the incident.<sup>34</sup>

### ***Terrorism and Farming Activity in Borno State Northeast Nigeria***

Before the discovery of crude oil in Nigeria, Borno State in the northeast was predominantly an agricultural hub. The state was widely recognized for its large-scale cultivation of crops such as rice, peanuts, millet, sesame, and cowpea, which supported both domestic consumption and commercial exports. Mechanized farming flourished in the region, contributing significantly to food security and national economic earnings until the early 1970s when the discovery of crude oil in the western region shifted the country's economic focus.<sup>35</sup> Borno State played a key role in Nigeria's agricultural economy, with groundnut production reaching its peak in the 1970s and 1980s, forming the iconic groundnut pyramids. This agricultural success was made possible by the region's expansive farmland, efficient irrigation systems and a strong farming culture, ensuring food security at the time.<sup>36</sup>

However, this stability changed drastically with the rise of Boko Haram terrorism, which has devastated communities by killing, maiming, and kidnapping people for ransom. As a result, many farmers were forced to abandon their farmlands and seek refuge in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps for safety. The insurgency has crippled the once-thriving agricultural system of Borno State, as farmers now fear for their lives and livelihoods, avoiding their farms due to the constant threat of violence. This breakdown in agricultural activity has severely affected food security in the region and the nation as a whole.

Boko Haram's sectarian agenda and violence are separate. The organization aims to establish God's kingdom on earth by promoting justice for the underprivileged via strict adherence to Islamic law (Sharia). Boko Haram views violence as a legitimate tool to achieve their goals, rather than a perversion of Islam. They also view the state as a source of corruption that exploits the poor and deprives them of their right as citizens.<sup>37</sup> The state is based on Western values and education, which contradict Allah's will. In contrast the Nigeria government views Boko Haram as a terrorist organization, with state security forces repressing it violently, regardless of any underlying causes.<sup>38</sup> According to Amnesty International,<sup>39</sup> the government's indiscriminate execution of suspected Boko Haram members and those who were in the wrong place at the wrong time has contributed to popular support for the group.

Several studies have shown that the spread of terrorism can be attributed to factors such as the absence of civil liberties, corruption, weak political institutions, political instability, ineffective governance, high levels of repression and civil conflict.<sup>40</sup> Between 1985 and 2012, Krieger and Meierrieks examined 114 countries and found a significant correlation between wealth inequality and terrorism.<sup>41</sup> Their research also identified a strong nonlinear relationship between income levels and terrorist activity, indicating that terrorist attacks are more frequent in middle-income countries.<sup>42</sup> However, other empirical studies provide little evidence to support a direct connection between a nation's deprivation of civil freedoms, income distribution, and terrorism.<sup>43</sup> David and his colleagues argue that "socioeconomic indices such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, economic underdevelopment, and low education, among other factors, underpin the inception and longevity of Boko Haram terrorism."<sup>44</sup> These findings suggest that the pervasive poverty and unemployment in northern Nigeria create a fertile ground for Boko Haram to exploit and recruit vulnerable youth, which led to the adoption of the Relative Deprivation Theory in this study.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

This study adopts "Failed State Theory". The Theory is selected to help explain the laxity in the state and how it created a vacuum and threat to its citizens. Failed State Theory is associated with William Zartman, Robert Rotberg, Robert Jackson, and Stephen Krasner as major proponents. Failed State is a



state that has lost its legitimacy and fails to perform its basic functions such as provision of security and imposing to the rule of law. Among the aforementioned functions of the state, security is recognised as the most fundamental service the state should provide; and it is the condition that must be fulfilled before a state can effectively provide other services such as protection of property, protection of its citizens' property and their rights to participate in politics and provision of infrastructure as well as social services such as health and education.

In Nigeria's context, leaders usually took an oath into office to protect the lives and property of the citizens (provide security). However, in reality, these services are not adequately provided as citizens are left at the mercy of criminal gangs and terrorists who run rampages in the country and terrorize the citizens. Reports daily showcase a terrorist attack or reported,<sup>45</sup> and despite the reactionary measures by the security these criminal activities continue unabated.<sup>46</sup> To further explain the theory, the diagram below figure 1 is used to illustrate the theoretical framework.

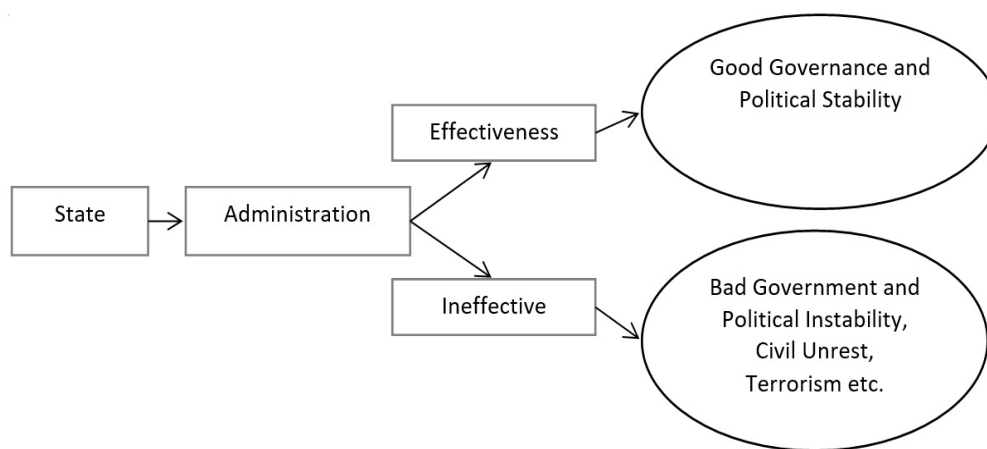


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework on Failed State Theory.

Source: Authors' Illustration.

The Failed State Theory is highly relevant to the discussion of food security amid terrorism in Nigeria, particularly in Borno State. This theory points out that a state fails when it can no longer provide essential services, maintain law and order, or control its territory, leading to widespread insecurity and economic collapse. In the case of Nigeria, the persistent Boko Haram insurgency has exposed the state's inability to secure rural farming communities, ensure food availability, and protect citizens from displacement and hunger.<sup>47</sup> The breakdown of governance in conflict-affected areas has destroyed farmlands, disrupted food supply chains, and forced displacement of thousands into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, where food scarcity and malnutrition are rampant.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the state's weak institutional response, coupled with corruption and poor infrastructure, has exacerbated food insecurity, highlighting characteristics of state failure as outlined by the theory. Addressing this crisis requires strengthening governance structures, improving security measures, and implementing policies that support food production and distribution in conflict-prone regions.

## Methodology

The qualitative research method was used in this study with a focus on the survey method using Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as the instrument for data collection. The sample size for this study was purposively selected from 12 local government areas in Borno State. These respondents were selected based on the following criteria; *(Must be farmers who have experienced the deathly activities of*

*Boko Haram, must come from areas that are greatly affected by insurgency, people who have access to information and can give the desired results, security personnel, government officials that have first-hand information on the activities of Boko Haram especially those in-charge of Agricultural activities in Borno State).* Fifteen (15) respondents were selected as follows; Twelve (12) farmers each representing the Twelve (12) local government areas selected, one (1) army general, one (1) police chief in charge of security in the area, and the commissioner of agriculture in Borno state. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used as the instrument of data collection. Questions were designed and distributed to the respondents respectively and their responses were recorded analyzed and interpreted respectively.

## Findings and Results

The study coded the respondents from R1 – R45, as shown in Table 4.1 below. R1 – R3 are the respondents from Maiduguri municipal council, R4 – R6 are from Chibok Local Government, R7 – R9 are from Kondugu Local Government, R10 – R12 are those from Gwoza Local Government, R13 – R15 are the respondents from Mafa Local Government, while, R16 – R18 are the participants from Marle LG. Other R19 – R20 are the participants from Kidwa LG, the participants from Jere LG take the range of R21 – 23, and those from Nnganzi LG are coded R24 – R26, while those from Bama LG have the code R27 – R29, Kukawa, and Mongono LG have the code of R30 – R32 and R33 – R36, Nigeria Army have the code R37 and R39, Nigeria Police have the code R40- 42 and the Borno State ministry of Agriculture and Natural resources have the code R43- R45 respectively.

Similarly, the farmers in IDP camps and other respondents are ranked from 1st through 45<sup>th</sup>. This ranking was done with no particular preference but for ease of analysis.

Table 1 Respondents Coding

Code	LGA's and other organizations	Status/Position	Place & Time of interview	Frequencies	Respondents
R1	Maiduguri Municipal Council	The Chairman, All Farmers Association of Nigeria Borno State Chapter (AFAN)	Muna Elbadawi IDP Camp, Borno State, Maiduguri 1:20 pm	1 <sup>st</sup>	1
R2	Maiduguri Municipal Council			2 <sup>nd</sup>	
R3	Maiduguri Municipal Council			3 <sup>rd</sup>	
R4	Chibok	The Chairman Rice Farmers Association of Nigeria Borno State Chapter (RIFAN). He has been a farmer for about 36 years now also an active member of the association. He was elected to serve as the chairman of the association in 2020	Muna Elbadawi IDP Camp, Borno State, Maiduguri 11:00 am	4 <sup>th</sup>	2
R5	Chibok			5 <sup>th</sup>	
R6	Chibok			6 <sup>th</sup>	

R7	Konduga		Muna Elbadawi	7 <sup>th</sup>	
R8	Konduga	He has been a farmer for about 42 years now	IDP Camp, Borno State Maiduguri	8 <sup>th</sup>	3
R9	Konduga		9:00 am	9 <sup>th</sup>	
R10	Gwoza		Muna Elbadawi	10 <sup>th</sup>	
R11	Gwoza	He has been into farming for about 30 years now	IDP Camp, Borno State Maiduguri	11 <sup>th</sup>	4
R12	Gwoza		10:30 pm	12 <sup>th</sup>	
R13	Mafa		Muna Elbadawi	13 <sup>th</sup>	
R14	Mafa	He has been a farmer for about 28 years now	IDP Camp, Borno State Maiduguri	14 <sup>th</sup>	5
R15	Mafa		11:45 pm	15 <sup>th</sup>	
R16	Marle	He has been a farmer for about 33 years now	Muna Elbadawi IDP Camp, Borno State Maiduguri	16 <sup>th</sup>	6
R17	Marle		12:20 pm	17 <sup>th</sup>	
R18	Marle			18 <sup>th</sup>	
R19	Dikwa			19 <sup>th</sup>	
R20	Dikwa	He has been a farmer for about 29 years now	Muna Elbadawi IDP Camp, Borno State Maiduguri	20 <sup>th</sup>	7
R21	Dikwa		2:30 pm	21 <sup>st</sup>	
R22	Jere		Elmiskin IDP Camp, Borno State Maiduguri	22 <sup>nd</sup>	
R23	Jere	He has been a farmer for 34 years now		23 <sup>rd</sup>	8
R24	Jere		3:10 pm	24 <sup>th</sup>	
R25	Nganzi		Elmiskin IDP Camp, Maiduguri, Borno State.	25 <sup>th</sup>	
R26	Nganzi	He has been a farmer for about 41 years now		26 <sup>th</sup>	9
R27	Nganzi		2:30 pm	27 <sup>th</sup>	
R28	Bama		Elmiskin IDP Camp, Maiduguri, Borno State.	28 <sup>th</sup>	
R29	Bama	He has been into farming for about 28 years now		29 <sup>th</sup>	10
R30	Bama		3:03 pm	30 <sup>th</sup>	
R31	Kukawa		Elmiskin IDP Camp, Maiduguri, Borno State.	31 <sup>st</sup>	
R32	Kukawa	He has been into farming for about 26 years now		32 <sup>nd</sup>	11
R33	Kukawa		3:35 pm	33 <sup>rd</sup>	



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R34	Monguno			34 <sup>th</sup>	
R35	Monguno	He has been a farmer for about 25 years now	Elmiskin IDP Camp, Maiduguri, Borno State. 4:15 pm	35 <sup>th</sup>	12
R36	Monguno			36 <sup>th</sup>	
R37	Borno State Ministry for Agriculture and Natural Resources			37 <sup>th</sup>	
R38	Borno State Ministry for Agriculture and Natural Resources	He is a civil servant with about 30 years of working experience	Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Borno State, Maiduguri 11:04 am	38 <sup>th</sup>	13
R39	Borno State Ministry for Agriculture and Natural Resources			39 <sup>th</sup>	
R40	The Nigeria Police Force, Borno State Command			40 <sup>th</sup>	
R41	The Nigeria Police Force, Borno State Command	He is a Public servant with about 27 years of experience in security matters	Borno State Police Command, Maiduguri 4:25 pm	41 <sup>st</sup>	14
R42	The Nigeria Police Force, Borno State Command			42 <sup>nd</sup>	
R43	Nigeria Army, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) Operation Lafiya Dole (Peace by Force), Borno State Nigeria Army, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) Operation Lafiya Dole (Peace by Force), Borno State			43 <sup>rd</sup>	
R44	Nigeria Army, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) Operation Lafiya Dole (Peace by Force), Borno State	He is a public servant with 25 years of experience in Defence matters	Commandant Officer Base, Borno State, Maiduguri 3:15 pm	44 <sup>th</sup>	15
R45	Nigeria Army, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) Operation Lafiya Dole (Peace by Force), Borno State			45 <sup>th</sup>	

Source: Authors Fieldwork (2022).

Respondents from the Municipal Local Government of Maiduguri Chibok Local Government and Konduga Local Government believe that Borno State is naturally endowed with resources such as hospitable land for cultivation and favorable climatic conditions that increase crop productivity and, as a result, sustain food security in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria. However, farming practices have been severely affected since the resurgence of Boko Haram terrorism. Farmers are no longer inclined to farm primarily because it is unsafe. The high level of insecurity that threatens farmers has caused them to reduce their involvement in farming at the expense of food security.

Boko Haram terrorists are currently settling in the bush where our farmlands are located, their activities put fear in us the farmers as a result cannot go to the areas again to farm at the moment because they have killed many farmers in their farmlands and many kidnaped. Before the advent of the terrorist group, farmers used to cultivate all manners of cereals crops for self-consumption surplus to market to sell it are no longer so. Farmers are now in IDP camps relying on the government and other bodies before they eat, some have turned to beggars just to get daily bread (R1).

It is vital to note that the Boko Haram insurgents are largely concentrated in the rural Local Governments where these farmers are mostly engaged in farming. Because there are no security officers to question or repeal them, the remoteness of these Local Governments from the State Capital makes it easy for Boko Haram terrorists to spread horror on the farmers.

Respondents in Gwoza Mafa and Marle Local Governments agreed that Boko Haram terrorism is a faceless human being with whom they have been living with unaware. As a result, determining who is a member of the group has become extremely difficult, making everyone a suspect. Similarly, because they are difficult to identify, they make it nearly impossible for the authorities to eradicate them. The insurgency attack mostly farmers. They travel at random: to the market, the farm, mosques, churches, and even the road. They have caused the state to be at war with unknown faces. They live and eat alongside the farmer, making it difficult to determine who is a Boko Haram terrorist in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria. By extension, they have informants who constantly alert them to any potential government plan of assault.

Nobody can forecast their location because they have not settled in a particular place. This has resulted to the backwardness in farming activities in Borno State, northeast Nigeria.

Yes, Boko Haram attacked farmers unexpectedly in their farmlands; they have killed many of my relatives and childhood friends. They are the reason farmers run away to safer places. Our farms are no-go areas because of their presence there, and their activity prevents us from having access to our farms to carry out any agricultural activity (R4).

Similarly, replies from respondents from Dikwa, Jere, and Nganzi Local Governments testify that the consequences of Boko Haram terrorism on farming activities in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria, go beyond what can be explained. According to them, the insurgency's actions have caused collateral harm to farming activities in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria. They stated that aside from food security, it has left a massive void that will not be filled in the foreseeable future. Many individuals, including adolescents, women, and capable men, are now out of work since they can no longer work on the farm. They go on to say that several houses were burned down and women and girls were raped, leaving others as untimely widows.

Yes, Boko Haram terrorists prevent us from accessing our farmlands for agricultural activities in the state. Because we all ran to this place for safety with no access to our farmlands. I can't go there for the safety of my life. I have lost many of my close relations and friends to their violent activities (R12).

Yes, Boko Haram's violent actions prevent us from reaching our farmlands to continue our farming activities in Borno state. No farmer can risk his life because of the nature of the group's violent act. I lost two (2) of my children in 2018, and one was kidnapped by a terrorist sect. I have not recovered from that trauma till today (R9).

These are the effects of insurgency. The number of street beggars, known as almajiria has grown geometrically. It is becoming typical to see fully grown adults taken from the streets before they can live. Begging is no longer linked with juveniles in Borno State, adult and married men and women who are obliged to do it as a way of survival. These are the persons who should have been engaged in farming operations.

Respondents in Bama, Kukawa, and Mungono Local Governments, respectively, could not hide their emotional reactions to the consequences of Boko Haram terrorists on farming activities in Borno State, North-East Nigeria. The parties agreed that there would be no more farming activity in Borno State. Terrorists have degraded the practice and we are all now street beggars. Over 700% of the aforementioned local governments' population is currently in IDP status, making life even more difficult for farmers in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria. It should be noted that the victims of Boko Haram terrorism are poor people living in distant or rural Local Government areas where Boko Haram is primarily active. As a result, farming activity in those local governments has ceased.

Boko Haram groups are presently staying in our farmlands, thereby making farming activities difficult for us. Their deadly attacks have made us run away for our dear lives. This has reduced the food security level in Borno State. Farmers who were depending on their farmlands for self-consumption, to produce more to sell in the market and make money, are now relying on aids to feed. Some of us have more than one wife with many children; hence, it is difficult for us to feed like before. It is not easy at all (R2).

### **Effect of Boko Haram Terrorism on Food Availability in Borno State Northeast Nigeria: The Ways Forward**

Food security and farming activities have been jeopardized since the outbreak of the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State, northeast Nigeria. Boko Haram terrorism had an effect on food availability in Borno State. when the insurgents denied farmers access to their farmlands and forced them to migrate to internally displaced persons' homes for protection.

Boko Haram terrorism has affected farming activities and food security in the following ways: the killing of farmers, kidnaping some and preventing others from accessing their farmlands for farming and the transport movement of their farm produce to the storehouses and the marketplaces to sell (R12).

Internally displaced People are described as those who are forcibly relocated or evicted from their original residences as a result of terrorist actions by Boko Haram rebels <sup>49</sup>. Before the Boko Haram insurgency, Borno state in Northeast Nigeria was recognized as an agrarian state with most residents practicing various farming styles. Because of the enormous arable territory, farmers engaged in both automated and mechanized agricultural systems, allowing the state to have sufficient food security and even transport farm produce outside the state for commercial purposes.

Despite their low output, these farmers ensure that their state does not experience food insecurity, according to Nwozor, Olanrewaju, et.al.<sup>50</sup> However, the emergency of Boko Haram terrorism has hampered farming output in Borno State, having a substantial impact on food availability in the state.

On the impact of terrorism on food supply in Borno State, North East Nigeria, a Maiduguri Municipal Council respondent stated:

Boko haram terrorism has not only terrorized human life and property, but it has also displaced farmers, denying them access to their lands, which has a huge negative impact on the availability of food security (R1).

This was also aided by the response of participants from the Chibok Local Government, who admitted that the effect of Boko Haram terrorism on food availability cannot be quantified, and as a result, the state has become destitute, with the people living as strangers in their ancestral homeland (R4).

The research from Bama, Dikwa, and Gwoza Local Governments confirmed the considerable detrimental impact of Boko Haram terrorism on food availability in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria. The respondents unanimously agreed that Boko Haram terrorism has seriously declined food availability in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria. Farmers have been denied access to their farmlands, many have been slain, and others are now living in IDP camps, with many women becoming widows. All of these happened as a result of Boko Haram terrorism.

The responses of the participants from Borno State especially from these local governments: Konduga, Mafa, Marle, and Jere etc, testified the devastating effects of the Boko Haram activities. Their reactions demonstrates that the impact of Boko Haram activities on the food supply in the state is unthinkable. Borno State is now importing food from Niger and Cameroon to maintain food supply. According to them, this is something the state has never seen before.

They also stated that as a result of Boko Haram terrorism in Borno State, their children are completely out of both Islamic and conventional schools. <sup>51</sup>

While respondents from Ngnzi, Kukawa, and Monguwo lamented the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on food supply in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria. They said that Boko Haram terrorism had severely affected their farming programmes efforts, resulting in a food crisis in the state. The respondents supplied lots of proof of how Boko Haram denied them access to their farmlands, effectively eradicating their traditional rice, peanut, soya bean, and cowpea production. The Boko Haram insurgency has severely harmed indigenous crop cultivation, reducing food availability in the state. <sup>52</sup>

Food security is an effort in any state or country to ensure the availability of affordable, accessible and balanced food for the common man. However, terrorism by Boko Haram terrorists in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria, has rendered this impossible. This was made impossible by their lethal activities which endanger the people of Borno State in Northeast Nigeria.

### ***Discussion of Findings***

The findings reveal that food security in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria, has been severely affected due to the activities of Boko Haram terrorists. Respondents from various local governments, including Maiduguri Municipal, Chibok, and Konduga acknowledged that the state is naturally endowed with fertile land and favorable climatic conditions that previously supported agricultural productivity. However, the resurgence of the Boko Haram insurgency has made farming an unsafe endeavor, leading to a drastic reduction in agricultural activities. The occupation of farmlands by terrorists has instilled fear among farmers, forcing many to abandon their farms and seek refuge in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. This displacement has resulted in a dependency on humanitarian aid for survival, further straining food availability in the region.

The testimonies from respondents in Gwoza, Mafa, and Marle Local Governments highlight the covert nature of Boko Haram insurgents, making it difficult to identify and counteract their activities. The unpredictable movements of terrorists have disrupted farming practices, leaving farmers unable to access their lands for cultivation. The situation is further exacerbated by the absence of security forces in remote areas, allowing terrorists to operate freely and terrorize farming communities. The impact extends beyond food security, leading to widespread unemployment as farmers lose their primary source of livelihood.

Similarly, responses from Dikwa, Jere, and Nganzi Local Governments underscore the far-reaching consequences of the insurgency on food security and economic stability. The destruction of homes, displacement of families, and the psychological trauma inflicted on victims have created a significant void in the agricultural workforce. The insurgents' attacks have not only disrupted food production but have also increased the prevalence of begging, with many able-bodied individuals resorting to street begging for survival. Women and children have been particularly vulnerable, with many becoming widows and orphans due to the insurgents' violent actions.

Furthermore, respondents from Bama, Kukawa, and Monguno Local Governments expressed emotional distress over the complete collapse of farming activities in their communities. The once-thriving agricultural sector has been replaced by dependency on aid and food imports from neighboring countries such as Niger and Cameroon. The findings also reveal that Boko Haram terrorism has negatively affected education in the region, as children are unable to attend both Islamic and conventional schools due to insecurity.

The overall findings indicate that the Boko Haram insurgency has led to a food crisis in Borno State, as farmers have been denied access to their farmlands, resulting in reduced crop production. The destruction of farmlands, displacement of farmers, and loss of human capital have collectively weakened food availability, making the state increasingly reliant on external food sources. The insurgency has turned Borno from a self-sufficient agrarian society into a region plagued by food shortages and economic distress. Addressing this crisis requires urgent security interventions, rehabilitation of displaced farmers, and sustainable agricultural recovery programs to restore food security in Borno State.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

No nation or state can have food security in a state of instability. However, stable peace is essential for Borno State, Northeast Nigeria, to be self-sufficient in food security. This study was carried out to investigate food production amid terrorism in Borno State, northeast Nigeria. This investigation was concluded with exploratory analysis.

Boko Haram terrorism has a significant impact on food security in Borno State. Based on the degree of food scarcity and rising living costs in Borno State, the conclusion was reached. These indications were discovered from the respondents who happened to be direct victims of the mayhem. From their direct voices, the researchers learned that Boko Haram activities have shattered any agricultural programmes and seriously cause threats to the food security which as a result destroyed farmer's means of livelihood.

## Recommendation

There is no single study that can address the overall topic at hand. As a result, future researchers who intend to undertake a similar study should consider the following research areas.

Similar research should be undertaken in the other states in the Northeast, Nigeria to see compatibility of the results. As a result; attempts might be made to undertake similar studies in other northeast states to see if the results are comparable.

Single local government study should be carried out for more in-depth investigation. Boko Haram is not only a terrorist sect that is threatening the peace of the state. Therefore, studies could be undertaken to examine the comparison of their effect on food security in Borno State Northeast Nigeria.

Finally, this study is based on empirical implications and the findings have contributed to the present literature. By examining the entire Borno State rather than just a piece of it, it increased the breadth and range of earlier studies in this area. Its discovery has provided a new perspective for other scholars to employ when conducting studies in this field.

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