

TERRORISM AND RAPE IN NIGERIA: A CRY FOR JUSTICE

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Abstract

Unarguably, rape has been used as a weapon of war many times in the past century. Although rape has been defined within the international community as a crime against humanity and an integral component of genocide if it is part of a widespread or systematic practice, terrorists continue to use rape as a weapon of war. With an increase in terrorist activity motivated by religion, some terrorists believe that God not only approves of their action, but that God demands their action. One of these terror-groups is Boko Haram. A terror movement whose name translates into “western education is forbidden” in local Hausa dialect, Boko Haram has become a metaphor for insecurity in Nigeria since 2009. Even a casual observer who does not live in Nigeria has likely heard of Boko Haram’s abduction of over 200 school girls from Government Secondary School Chibok in Borno State, north-eastern Nigeria on 14th April, 2014. Therefore, this paper using a qualitative method of data collection and analysis (relying on academic works and media reports); revealed that Boko Haram has abducted many women and girls in north-eastern Nigeria and has perpetrated numerous physical and psychological abuses against them in captivity. Despite inadequate government response to prevent attacks and protect victims, there have been few investigations and no prosecutions. And apart from the Chibok girls that escaped from Boko Haram camps, none of the other victims of abduction or other violations had received any government-supported mental health or medical care. Therefore the paper recommended adequate criminal justice, as well as government-supported medical, psychological and social initiatives to all the victims of rape in Nigeria.

Key words: Terrorism, Rape, Boko Haram, Abduction, Chibok girls

1. INTRODUCTION

“We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people.” - Martin Luther King Jr.

Rape is one of the most pervasive yet least recognized human rights violations in the world (Staudinger and Ortals, 2013). Rape has severe short-and long-term effects on the survivors, perpetrators, families, communities, ethnic groups, region, and the ability of the nation to

become whole once again. The violence tears flesh as well as souls, and the effective healing of both is not guaranteed. Serious complications with childbirth, menstruation, urination, and fecal elimination are common. Many victims are rendered sterile as a result of the trauma, operations, or scar tissue (Marion and Leah et al, 2004). In addition to causing injury, rape increases women's long-term risk of a number of unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and adverse pregnancy outcomes. Patricia Rozée has identified various categories of rape, including: *punitive rape* (used to punish to elicit silence and control); *status rape* (occurring as a result of acknowledged differences in rank—master/slave, nobleman/commoner; etc); *ceremonial rape* (undertaken as part of socially sanctioned rituals or ceremonies); *exchange rape* (when genital contact is used as a bargaining tool or gesture of conciliation or solidarity); *theft rape* (involuntary abduction of individuals as slaves, prostitutes, concubines, or spoils of war); and *survival rape* (when young women become involved with older men to secure goods and/or services needed to survive (quoted in Penn and Nardos 2003). In the case of punitive rape and theft rape, some groups of women and girls are particularly vulnerable in conflict and displacement situations. These include targeted ethnic groups, where there is an official or unofficial policy of using rape as a weapon of genocide. Unaccompanied women or children, children in foster care arrangements, and lone female heads of households are all frequent targets. Elderly women and those with physical or mental disabilities are also vulnerable, as are those women who are held in detention and in detention-like situations including concentration camps (WHO, 1997).

The rape of women has been utilized as a tactic of terror in wars since the beginning of armed conflicts (Eileraas, 2012). Catherine MacKinnon observed that “it appears to go through three main stages: First, rape is a routine and expected reward to the victors. Secondly, rape occurs due to a lack of military discipline. Finally, rape occurs as a military technique to demoralize the opposition” (MacKinnon, 2006). Rape has been used as a weapon of war many times in the past century. In the systematic “rape of Nanking” in 1937, Japanese soldiers killed 300,000 Chinese, and at least 20,000 women and girls were raped, including infants, the elderly, and the infirmed. In the Second World War, sexual humiliation and rape were commonly utilized against Jewish people. Rape took place in concentration and prison camps, as well as in brothels established by the Germans. Documented evidence suggests that it is highly likely rape was utilized as a systematic weapon of terror and retaliation against enemies (Robinson, 1993). Bosnian women were strategically raped and impregnated as a part of ethnic cleansing and during the battle for Bangladeshi independence in 1971 from Pakistan (at that time West Pakistan), a staggering 200,000 women are estimated to have been raped. Some of these women died from the physical consequences of gang rape, and some later committed suicide (Sharlach, 2000 cited in Staudinger and Ortals, 2013). In the Rwandan genocide in 1994, rape was used in a widespread manner, and rape has been used in ongoing conflicts in Darfur and the Congo since 2000 (Marion and Leah et al, 2004). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the prevalence of rape is described as the worst in the world, analysts also define rape as a weapon of war (Eileraas, 2012). One estimate puts the number of rapes in 2011 in the Congo alone at 400,000 (Staudinger and Ortals, 2013). These memories live on today.

Although the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia confirmed rape as a crime against humanity in 2001 and thereby challenged mainstream understandings of rape as an inevitable by-product of war, religion-based terrorists are committing violence against women that we have never witnessed in history. Today, women bodies are becoming ‘battlegrounds’ or “territory to be conquered” (Barkindo, Gudaku, and Wesley, 2013; WHO, 1997). Some call it

‘rape jihad’; others opt for ‘sexual terrorism’ or ‘forced marriage’ (Salifu, 2013; Marion and Leah et al, 2004). Whatever one may choose to call it, it is the use of sexual abuse (under the guise of religion) to spread terror with the intention of controlling or manipulating the government or parts of a population. By intimidating and humiliating families, terrorists hope to exert influence over their targeted audience. Sexual terrorism is often classified as being gendered in nature, due to the fact that the victims are chiefly girls or women. In sexual terrorism, the rape or assault is part of a broader objective: to spread terror or send a message, a motivation similar to that found in the use of suicide bombings. The perpetrators justify sexual terrorism by claiming that the Prophet Mohammed sanctioned the rape of both non-Muslims (infidels or *kaafirs*) and Muslims who do not adhere strictly to Islam (Salifu, 2013; Barkindo, Gudaku, and Wesley, 2013).

Boko Haram, Nigeria’s terror group, whose name roughly translates as “Western education is forbidden” in local Hausa dialect; has abducted at least 500 women and girls in north-eastern Nigeria since 2009 and has perpetrated numerous physical and psychological abuses against them in captivity (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Ido, 2014; John, 2014; Haruna, 2014). The April 14, 2014 abduction of 276 girls from a Government Secondary School in Chibok, a rural town in Borno State, the biggest single incident of abduction by Boko Haram at time of writing, focused a much-needed spotlight on the nexus between Terrorism and Rape.

Structurally, apart from this introduction, the paper is pigeon holed in four compartments. The first gives conceptual explanation and theoretical framework. The second segment highlights the story of some of the girls abused by Boko Haram. The third segment calls the relevant authorities to take action, while the last segment concludes the paper.

2. CONCEPTUAL EXPLANATION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is premised on two major concepts, namely: “Terrorism” and “Rape”. Their legal and academic conceptualizations are therefore necessary for the purpose of clarity.

2.1 Terrorism

The concept “Terrorism” is a very difficult one to pin down to a strait-jacket definition essentially because the term or concept has come to refer to a gamut of inter-locking variables and trends so much so that once the term is mentioned, it evokes a lot of passion and emotion. The difficulty in defining “terrorism” is in agreeing on a basis for determining when the use of violence (directed at whom, by whom, for what ends) is legitimate. These perceptions are at once geographical, ideological and academic. Even the UN has no internationally-agreed definition of terrorism. However, the UN General Assembly Resolution 49/60 (adopted on December 9, 1994), titled “Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism,” contains a provision describing terrorism as: “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 are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them”.

In the absence of a *legal* definition, attempts have been made since the 1980s to reach agreement on an academic consensus definition. The latest outcome is the Revised Academic Consensus Definition of Terrorism (2011). It is the result of three rounds of consultations among academics and other professionals. According to this revised consensus definition, “Terrorism refers, on the one hand, to a doctrine about the presumed effectiveness of a special form or tactic of fear-generating, coercive political violence and, on the other hand, to a conspiratorial practice of calculated, demonstrative, direct violent action without legal or moral restraints, targeting mainly civilians and non-combatants, performed for its propagandistic and psychological effects on various audiences and conflict parties” (Schmid, 2011).

These definitions are very illustrative. They pointed out that: Terrorism involves violence or—equally important—the threat of violence that can cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages. Terrorists attempt to create a general climate of fear in a population and thereby to bring about a particular political objective. Terrorism is therefore designed to have psychological effects that reach far beyond its impact on the immediate victims or object of an attack.

2.2 Rape

Like “Terrorism”, Rape is a serious offense punishable by law, but there exists no consensus regarding the precise definition of this crime. Legal definitions of rape vary from state to state and are subject to continual debate. English common law defined rape as the carnal knowledge of a woman forcibly and against her will. In contemporary legal usage, rape generally refers to unwanted sexual intercourse (with either woman or man) that involves the use of force and the lack of “consent”. Yet there is widespread disagreement regarding the meanings of “penetration,” “force,” and “consent”—the primary elements of this legal definition (Eileraas, 2012). Rape is defined by the United Nations as “sexual intercourse without valid consent” (United Nations, 2012; cited in Staudinger and Ortals, 2013). The World Health Organization defined rape in 2002 as “physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration—even if slight—of the vulva or anus, using a penis, other body parts or an object” (WHO, 2012; cited in Staudinger and Ortals, 2013). These definitions refer to rapes of women or men.

From the above cited definitions, rape is a persistent and universal problem occurring in every culture and social group. However, during terrorists’ attacks, women and girls are often raped for special forms of violence by men as a way of attacking the morale of the enemy, both women and men. Such rape often redounds doubly against women, first through the direct experience of rape and its aftermath and secondly through the reactions of their families, particularly the men, to their status as survivors of sexual crime. This is the nexus between Terrorism and Rape.

However, Terrorists are not a homogeneous group. Their roots are diverse, not being the same from place to place. Some see themselves as legitimate geopolitical actors, while others are nothing more than gangs or thrill-kill cults. Thus, there is not a single ‘theory of terrorism’ but many theoretical discourses. These tend to be grounded in broader theoretical traditions and perspectives, such as Psychological, Sociological, and Criminological theories (O’Connor, 2014). However, most theories draw on the distinctive contributions and traditions of multiple disciplines. Thus, this paper adopted a Philosophical Explanation of Religion-based Terrorism to explain the nexus between Terrorism and Rape.

2.3 THE PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLANATION OF RELIGIOUS TERRORISM

More than one criminologist has pointed out that the disciplines of theology, religion, and philosophy have had important things to say about terrorism (Stitt, 2003; Kraemer, 2004). Since 1980, there has been an increase in terrorist activity motivated by religion. It is also a fact that about a quarter of all terrorist groups and about half of the most dangerous ones on earth are primarily motivated by religious concerns (Hoffman 1993). They believe that God not only approves of their action, but that God demands their action. Their cause is sacred, and consists of a combined sense of hope for the future and vengeance for the past. Bruce Hoffman has characterized modern religious terrorism as having three traits: (a) the perpetrators must use religious scriptures to justify or explain their violent acts or to gain recruits, (b) clerical figures must be involved in leadership roles, (c) perpetrators use apocalyptic images of destruction to justify the acts (Hoffman, 1997). The trick to successful use of terrorism in the name of religion rests upon convincing believers or convertees that a “neglected duty” exists in the fundamental,

mainstream part of the religion. Religious terrorism is therefore, NOT about extremism, fanaticism, sects, or cults, but is instead all about a fundamentalist or militant interpretation of the basic tenets. Most religious traditions are filled with plenty of violent images at their core, and destruction or self-destruction is a central part of the logic behind religion-based terrorism (Juergensmeyer, 2001). Evil is often defined as malignant narcissism from a theological point of view, and religion easily serves as moral cover for self-centered terrorists and psychopaths (Stitt, 2003). Recently, President Barack Obama declared that "No religion is responsible for terrorism — people are responsible for violence and terrorism". He clarified that Groups like the Islamic State and al-Qaeda "try to portray themselves as religious leaders, holy warriors in defense of Islam," but "we must never accept the premise that they put forward, because it is a lie" (Spiering, 2015)

To be sure, the usual pattern in religious-based terrorism is for a psychopathic, spiritual leader to arise that is regarded as somewhat eccentric at first (a tendency toward messianism). But then, as this leader develops their charisma, they tend to appear more and more mainstream and scholarly. They begin to mingle political with religious issues (a tendency toward theocracy), and little-known religious symbols or pieces of sacred text take on new significance. Quite often, these symbols are claimed to be an important part of that religion's history that has somehow been neglected. The stage is then set for blaming somebody for the betrayal of this sacred heritage. First, the politicians in one's own country are blamed, but soon a foreign influence, like secularization or modernization is blamed. Recruitment generally is followed by a reeducation program that changes the way a person thinks about good and evil. Anything foreign, secular, or modern without question becomes evil; and anything supporting an all-out, uncompromising struggle with the enemy, including the rape of innocent women and girls, becomes good (O'Connor, 2014). In light of this theory, let's look at the origin and activities of Boko Haram.

2.3.1 Boko Haram and its atrocities

Boko Haram is the name commonly used to refer to the organization "*Jama'atu Ahlisunnah Lidda'awati wa'l-Jihad*", or the "People Committed for the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad". Boko Haram is a Hausa phrase meaning 'Western education is forbidden' or 'Western education is sinful'. This name was given to the movement in the early 2000s by the local population in Maiduguri, the capital of the northern Nigerian state of Borno where the movement originated. Although now widely used and popularised by the media, the name does not necessarily capture the full objective of the movement, which is to overthrow the Nigerian government, which is perceived as corrupt, and establish an Islamic state with Sharia law and get rid of western influences such as universities. The movement rejects western civilisation at large, including scientific theories of evolution or the big bang theory, and preaches the superiority of Muslim civilisation. In its earlier forms, Boko Haram was also known as the Nigerian Taliban or Yusufiyya (Barna, 2014). There is a lot of speculation about the sect and its links with foreign jihadists (Gardner, 2014). So it has always been 'international' in the same way that communities around Nigeria's porous northeastern border region are. Yet the initial focus of radicalization and of the movement's objectives has been within Nigeria's borders (Montclos, 2014).

The origins of Boko Haram are connected to Mohammed Yusuf, a *Malam* (Islamic scholar) who led a wing of radical youth scholars in the 1990s in Maiduguri, giving roots to the movement. However, its origins are most commonly dated to 2002, when some of Yusuf's followers, in protest against the corruption of Nigerian society, left Maiduguri for Kanamma, a village in the neighbouring Yobe state. The movement tried to establish a 'state within a state' – its own

community where true Muslim values could be pursued, with morality police and a welfare system (hence the resemblance to the Afghan Taliban). Following a conflict with the local community in 2003, ostensibly over a river, the remaining followers of the movement regrouped in Maiduguri in 2004 (Barna, 2014).

The military reaction to Boko Haram culminated in 2009 when the government cracked down on the group, taking Yusuf into custody and killing him in an 'extrajudicial execution'. According to some estimates, around 1000 Boko Haram members may have been killed and imprisoned in the first half of 2009. Following the death of Mohammed Yusuf in 2009, the movement's radicalisation and extremism were accentuated under the leadership of Abubaker Shekau, who took over as head of the organisation's core faction. Although Nigerian security apparatchiks claimed that Shekau might have died in July or August 2013, there is no evidence of his death. On the contrary, numerous videos have appeared since then featuring Shekau, although their authenticity is disputed. Since Boko Haram re-emerged in 2010, its attacks have grown in intensity and scope. On a conservative estimate, the death toll arising from Boko Haram's activities between July 2009 and July 2014 is over 13000. This includes 2000 deaths in 2014 (Barna, 2014; Gardner, 2014).

Although religious fault-lines are clearly instrumentalised by Boko Haram and some sections of the media, in reality the group is indiscriminately targeting both Muslim and Christian civilians, through attacks on mosques and churches, as well as public spaces such as markets and bus stations. It has also attacked schools and colleges. Also, on a conservative estimate, Boko Haram has abducted at least 500 women and girls from north-eastern Nigeria since 2009 and has perpetrated numerous physical and psychological abuses against them in captivity (Ido, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2014). The increase in the number of abductions since mid-2013 appears to mark a change of strategy by Boko Haram (this was to be followed by the use of female suicide bombers). From 2009 through early 2013, the group did not appear to target women and girls specifically. Although they have abducted many women and girls from villages around Gwoza and Damboa, the abduction of 276 young girls from Government Secondary School Chibok on 14 April 2014 made Boko Haram international headline news. Since then, attacks have continued and more women and girls have been kidnapped, including 8 (aged 12–15) in May, 2014 and more than 60 in June, 2014 (Gbemiga, 2014; Smith, 2014). While some have managed to escape, many are still missing at time of writing this paper.

On 5th May, 2014 a video emerged in which Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau claimed responsibility for the abduction of Chibok girls and threatened more abductions. Shekau claimed that "Allah instructed me to sell them...I will carry out his instructions." and "Slavery is allowed in my religion, and I shall capture people and make them slaves." He added: "Western education is sin, it is forbidden, and women must go and marry." He said the girls should not have been in school and instead should have been married since girls as young as nine are suitable for marriage (John et al, 2014).

However, religious scholars working under the world's largest bloc of Islamic countries denounced the mass kidnappings of Nigerian girls by the extremist group claiming to be fighting for Islam. In a statement on 8th May, 2014; the Jeddah-based International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA) condemned the abductions as a "heinous act" and demanded that the victims be immediately released without any condition. "Crime and other crimes committed by the likes of these extremist organizations contradicts all humanitarian principles and moral values and violates the provisions of the Qur'an and Sunnah," said the academy, which is dedicated to the advanced study of Islam (Shaikh, 2014). Also, on 9th May, 2014 the Grand Mufti of Saudi

Arabia, Sheikh Abdulaziz Al al-Sheikh, joined other religious leaders in the Muslim world in condemning the kidnappings, describing Boko Haram as misguided and intent on smearing the name of Islam. He stated that Islam is against kidnapping, and that marrying kidnapped girls is not permitted (Reuters, 2014). No surprises there, as this senseless kidnapping of children has been roundly condemned by almost the entire Muslim world. But how has it gone down with al-Qaeda and Islamic State (ISIS), to which Boko Haram professes nominal allegiance? There has not been a public reaction from any of them, which led Frank Gardner - BBC security correspondent, to conclude that "whatever links there have been in the past between Boko Haram and al-Qaeda's various franchises, the Nigerian group's latest actions have attracted such unanimous international condemnation that few will want to be publicly associated with them for quite some time" (Gardner, 2014).

3. NARRATIVES OF WOMEN AND GIRLS ABUSED BY BOKO HARAM

The abduction by Boko Haram of 276 schoolgirls (57 of whom have since escaped, while 219 are still unaccounted for) has shocked the world. #Bringbackourgirls has become a Twitter phenomenon, with over 3.3 million tweets from across the planet. Celebrities have come out in support of the campaign, along with global leaders and their spouses. However, very little is known about the abuses endured by women and girls in Boko Haram camps (believed to be in the 518-squarekilometer Sambisa Forest Reserve and around the Gwoza hills, in Borno state). Many women and girls were subjected to physical and psychological abuse; forced labor; forced participation in military operations, including carrying ammunition or luring men into ambush; forced marriage to their captors (with a reputed "bride price" of ₦2,000 each (\$12.50/£7.50); and sexual abuse, including rape (Ido, 2014; Daniel, 2014; Dumoh, 2014; Sotubo, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2014). Even before the Chibok girls' abduction saga, Director of Defence Information has reported the strange and bizarre discovery of "several used and unused condoms" in the captured terrorists' camps (Omonobi, 2013). Though the rape of women and girls abducted by Boko Haram has been underreported because of a culture of silence, stigma, and shame around sexual abuse in Nigeria's conservative North; below are narratives of some girls and women on the sexual abuses they endured (as documented in Human Rights Watch's 2014 report entitled: "Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp: Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girls in Northeast Nigeria").

An 18-year-old victim described how a Boko Haram combatant sexually abused her when she went to use the bathroom:

I did not know he followed me when I walked a short distance away from the tree under which we slept. He grabbed me from behind, roughly fondling me while trying to take off his pants. I screamed in fright and he hurriedly left me as I continued to shout for help.

A 15-year-old who was abducted in 2013 and spent four weeks with Boko Haram told Human Rights Watch:

After we were declared "married" I was ordered to live in his cave but I always managed to avoid him. He soon began to threaten me with a knife to have sex with him, and when I still refused he brought out his gun, warning that he would kill me if I shouted. Then he began to rape me every night. He was a huge man in his mid-30s and I had never had sex before. It was very painful and I cried bitterly because I was bleeding afterwards.

A 19-year-old woman, who was married and had children, described how she and one other woman were raped after having been abducted with four other women in April 2014:

When we arrived at the camp they left us under a tree. I managed to sleep; I was exhausted and afraid. Late in the night, two insurgents shook me and another woman awake, saying their leader

wanted to see us. We had no choice but to follow them, but as soon as we moved deep into the woods, one of them dragged me away, while his partner took the other woman in another direction. I guessed what they had in mind and began to cry. I begged him, telling him I was a married woman. He ignored my pleas, flung me on the ground, and raped me. I could not tell anyone what happened, not even my husband. I still feel so ashamed and cheated. The other woman told me she was also raped, but vowed never to speak of it again as she was single and believes that news of her rape would foreclose her chances of marriage.

A 20-year-old woman, abducted in September 2013, told Human Rights Watch that the insurgent she was “married” to wore a mask all the time, even when he raped her. Even though she had since escaped, she said, “I am still afraid to go anywhere because he could be any one of the people around me. Every time I see a huge dark man, I jump in fright that it might be him coming to get me back. I stay awake some nights because I dream of those terrible weeks I spent in their camp.”

Another victim, who was raped in 2013 in a Boko Haram camp near Gwoza, described how a commander’s wife appeared to encourage the crime:

I was lying down in the cave pretending to be ill because I did not want the “marriage” the commander planned to conduct for me with another insurgent on his return from the Sambisa camp. When the insurgent who had paid my dowry came in to force himself on me, the commander’s wife blocked the cave entrance and watched as the man raped me.

Apart from the above harrowing narratives documented by Human Rights Watch, more chilling revelations have emerged. Stephen Davis, an Australian negotiator, who visited Nigeria to mediate the release of the Chibok girls captured by Boko Haram, gave chilling accounts of girls taken captive by the terror group. “Girls tell how they were raped every day, week after week. One girl was raped every day, sometimes several times a day by groups of men. Some did not survive the ordeal,” Stephen Davis, who seems to have an insight into the operations of Boko Haram, recounted in an article contributed to Sunday Vanguard, titled, ‘When I met Asari and agreed a peace deal’ (Daniel, 2014).

Similarly, a clergy and expert on counter-terrorism, Oladimeji Thompson, of The Omoluabi Network, who has been working with other groups to assist victims of the abduction overcome their pains, gave a chilling narration based on an account of one of the Chibok girls escapees. He said, “One of the girls I interviewed was being raped 15 times by 15 men every day.” He said the girl was traumatised and confused. “It’s obvious this girl needs to be managed. She looked confused. She found it hard to talk to me but after much prodding; she confessed to me that she was raped 15 times by 15 men throughout the time she was with the Islamic insurgents before she could escape from their den” (Dumo, 2014).

The instances above are only a few of the accounts of sexual slavery, gang rape and other forms of sexual violence used by Boko Haram terrorists against women and girls in north-eastern Nigeria. Many more victims live in silence; either too scared of reprisal or too ashamed to talk. Kareem Haruna, a Leadership Newspaper Correspondent, towed this line of thought. He argued that “there may be hundreds of more women out there that have been raped in their homes or in various camps of the Boko Haram; some may have been inflicted with HIV/AIDS, or left with undesirable pregnancies or children which they have to care for alone, or even claim it belongs to their husbands. So many of them have been jaundiced psychologically and may not be able to get remedy till they die” (Haruna, 2014). Because northern Nigerian women’s value is still so closely associated with virginity, wifhood, and bearing children, rape can and often does result in “social murder” (Penn and Nardos 2003). Unmarried girls who are raped have little prospect

for getting married and the married women are often prone to stigmatization as survivors of sexual crime.

4. A CRY FOR JUSTICE

Among their basic human rights, Nigerian women and girls have the right to bodily integrity, to security of person, and to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. These rights are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention against Torture, the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Women in Africa, Maputo Protocol, and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Also, Nigeria's 1999 federal constitution provides safeguards for the rights of citizens to dignity of human persons, personal liberty, and freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.

However, residents of villages and towns ravaged by Boko Haram attacks during which women and girls were abducted complained about inadequate government response to prevent attacks and protect victims, often in imminent danger, and to provide adequate medical and psychological support for victims (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Only the Chibok students who escaped from Boko Haram captivity had received limited counseling and medical care. None of the other victims of abduction or other violations, all from desperately poor families, had received or were aware of any government supported mental health or medical care (Gbemiga, 2014; Ido, 2014; Smith, 2014). More worrisome, since 2009 security forces have arrested thousands of people suspected of involvement in Boko Haram's violence, but the criminal justice responses are inadequate. There have been few investigations and no prosecutions concerning rape (Human Rights Watch, 2014). As a result, rape victims may remain too scared to come forward.

To ensure justice, Nigerian authorities and the relevant international bodies should investigate and prosecute, based on international fair trial standards, all the terrorists that committed serious crimes in violation of national and international law. They should develop adequate protection measures, including protection programs and psychological support, before, during, and after the trial for all victims and witnesses whose physical safety and psychological well-being are at risk. In addition, Nigerian government should provide adequate measures to ensure access to free medical and mental health services to victims of rape and other violence. Particularly, they should ensure that hospitals and clinics are equipped with medical supplies to treat the victims.

5. CONCLUSION

As avowed earlier in this paper, rape is the most common type of violence used against women during violent conflicts and often occurs alongside genocides or state terrorism as a strategy to humiliate, ethnically cleanse, or silence opponents. Although, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia has defined rape as a crime against humanity and an integral component of genocide if it is part of a widespread or systematic practice, terrorists continue to use rape as a weapon of war. With an increase in terrorist activity motivated by religion, some terrorists believe that God not only approves of their action, but that God demands their action. One of these terror-groups is Boko Haram. Boko Haram has abducted many women and girls in north-eastern Nigeria and has perpetrated numerous physical and psychological abuses against them in captivity. Despite inadequate government response to prevent attacks and protect victims, apart from the Chibok girls that escaped from Boko Haram captivity, none of the other victims of abduction or other violations had received any government-supported mental health or medical care. Like other forms of sexual assault, responding to sexual terrorism requires criminal

justice, medical, psychological and social initiatives. My paper is therefore a cry for justice because I believe that it is within our powers to eliminate all the man-made discrimination and subjugation against women. Justice delayed is justice denied; it is terror continued.

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