

RELIGIOUS REPROACH TOWARDS EXTREME IDEOLOGIES AND VIOLENT CRIME IN THE SOCIETY

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Abstract

Every county of the world is grappling with one or two challenges. These challenges include but not limited to; hunger and starvation, unemployment, under-unemployment, poverty, inflation, insecurity of lives and property, injustice, corruption, systemic problems and violent crimes among dissenting groups to mention but a few. Similarly, the aftermath of September 11 attack on World Trade Centre in United State of America, the incessant war in the middle east, the rise of Arab Spring and the eventual death of Mu' ammar Mohammed Abu Minyar Gaddafi in Libya to mention but a few, has led to the rise of religious extremist groups all over the world. We have the Al-Shabab, Al-Qaeda in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), The Islamic State of Iraq and Lavant (ISIL) also known as Daesh from (*al-Dawla al-Islamiya fil Iraq wa al-Sham*) also known as, The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and the White Supremacist groups to mention but a few. These groups are violently inclined and their activities has led to the death of hundreds of thousands of people and destructions of both public and private institution and properties. Almost all developing countries of the world are grappling with the activities of these extremist groups. Kinetic approaches have been the major method in which countries are fighting these groups. Nigeria as a country is not excluded from this extremist groups. The Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), *Jamā'at Ahl al-Sunnah li-l-Da'awah wa al-Jihād* "Association of the People of the Sunnah for Preaching and Jihād" popularly known as Boko-Haram are the famous extremist group in the country since early 2009. Successive government is investing massively on war Arsenals to fight these groups despite meagre resources and other internal challenges. The Nigeria Army, Navy and Air Force personnel saddled with the responsibility of protecting the country from both internal and external insecurity, is losing men in the battle field on monthly basis. This paper, is qualitative in method, it is main objective is to examine the religious reproach on extremism, violent crime and insecurity. It x-rays basically, the Islamic maxims on extreme ideology and violent crime in society. This paper equally, appraises the counter narrative programme introduced by the Nigerian Army to fight insurgence in the Northeast of the country. This paper recommended that, there is need for aggressive sanitization among Muslim scholars in the country on how to assist the men of the military to counter the ideology of the extremist groups because Islam is a total way of life which means peace and equally stand for peace. It is a religion that advocated for peaceful coexistence among people and equally encourages dialogue whenever there is conflict. The war against insurgence did not start in the battlefield but in the pulpit. This is why the kinetic approach hasn't been successful

Key words: *Religious Reproach, Extreme Ideologies, Violent Crime, Counter Narrative Programme, Nigeria*

1. Introduction.

سيخرج قوم في آخر الزمان: أحداث الأسنان سفهاء الأحلام، يقولون من خير البرية لايجاوز إيمانهم حناجرهم يمرقون من الدين كما يمرقون السهم من الرمية، فاءينما لقيتهم فقتلوهم ، فان في قتلهم اجرا لمن قتلهم يوم القيامة

At the end of time there shall appear a folk, young in age and foolish. They will speak the words of the best of people, but their faith will not be more than their throats. They shall pass through Islam just as an arrow passes through a hunted game. Kill them wherever you find them (during war), for the who kills will be rewarded on the Day of Resurrection. (Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhari: 6:2539)

The above tradition was prognosticated by the Prophet (PBUH) on how young men and innocent Muslims will be brainwashed, indoctrinated and used to carry out violent crimes which are not in consonant to the dictate of Allah. The tradition revealed that, these young Muslims are mentally deficient, immature, and intellectually dependent, that is why they could be propagandized and persuaded to carry out crime against God almighty and humanity at large in the name of religion. Ever since the beginning of 4th Republic in May 29, 1999, successive Nigerian Government has been grappling with innumerable internal challenges which include but not limited to: ethno-religious conflicts, Niger-Delta militancy debacle, political assassinations, pre and post-election crisis, inter-intra Communal conflicts, Youths restiveness due to increase in unemployment to mention but few. These internal challenges have led to destruction of lives and property. Whenever the crisis was not managed properly, due to lack of proactivity by the government i.e. inadequate political will, corruption, influence of the fifth Columnist and conspiracy theories, the crisis often become incessant.

One of the most challenging crises the country is facing in the last one and half decade is, insecurity in the North, this is connected to insurgency. From a politically patronized conservative Muslim cleric in the north, is Muhammad Yusuf. Muhammad Yusuf's Boko-Haram group has developed into an internationally renowned terrorist organization. Although, he might be late just like that of his successor Abubakr Shakau, the pogroms, kidnappings, and suicide bombings orchestrated by this religiously inclined extremist group is disheartening. According to Global Terrorism Index 2020, "*Measuring the impact of terrorism published in February 2021 and posted on the 8th of June 2021*":

In 2019, deaths from terrorism fell for the fifth consecutive year, after peaking in 2014. The total number of deaths fell by 15.5 per cent to 13,826. The fall in deaths was mirrored by a reduction in the impact of terrorism, with 103 countries recording an improvement on their GTI score, compared to 35 that recorded a deterioration. The full GTI score takes into account not only deaths, but also incidents, injuries, and property damage from terrorism, over a five-year period.

Nigeria recorded the second largest reduction in deaths from terrorism in 2019, with the number falling from 2,043 to 1,245, a 39.1 per cent reduction, which was mainly due to a fall in terrorism deaths attributed to Fulani herdsmen, Bandits and Religious extremist groups. This reduction occurred despite a small increase in deaths attributed to Boko Haram, which has been the most

active terrorist group in the country over the past decade. Deaths from terrorism in Nigeria are now 83 per cent lower than at their peak in 2014. (<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2020-measuring-impact-terrorism>.)

In the foregoing, this paper aims to answer the following salient questions. What is Religious Extremism, extreme Ideologies and violent crime? What are the Causes of religious extremism and violent Crime? Highlights forms of Religious Extremism. What are the names of prominent extremist groups in the world? This paper will identify religious (Islamic) reproach to key extreme ideologies and violent crime, x-rays the significance of Counter Narrative Programme and recommends way forward.

2. Definition of Key Terms

2.1 Religious Reproach

To understand what religious reproach is, we must decipher what religion is? There is no universally acceptable definition of religion, hence, the Qur'ān and the Muslims sees Islam as a total way of life. Their commitment to all dictate of Allah as enshrined in the glorious Qur'ān and interpreted in the noble tradition of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) qualifies them to be considered as devoted, committed and completed Muslim. By implication, been committed to the dictate of religion makes one to be religious. Reproach, is an action word (verb) which means, to express dissatisfaction, disapproval, denunciation or displeasure over something or on someone. Religious reproach, hence, shall be conceptualized for the purpose of this paper, as the dictate of Allah and traditions of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, against extreme ideologies and violent crime in the society.

2.2 Extremism and Religious Extreme Ideologies

Extremism is a complex phenomenon because it involves different groups. What a group sees as moderate or balance is sometimes seen as extreme to the opposing group. However, extremism as to do with activities (belief, feelings, reactions, actions or strategies) of a character far removed from normal or ordinary. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, (1983), in his book titled "*Al-Iqtidhā Şirāt al-Mustaqīm*", "*Extremism is to go beyond the proper limits concerning a matter, beyond what it is deserving, either in praising it or disparaging it*". Lemu (2017), sees religious extremism as "*the expression of extreme and unjust positions or actions taken by some adherents of a religion, based on his/her understanding of a religious teaching or scripture*". Yet according to Lemu (2017), the majority of the adherents regards such position as fanatical, unacceptable and unrepresentative of their faith. Extremism can also be defined from the standpoint of moderation as, a deviation from the point of intermediacy, either to the direction of exaggeration or to the direction of negligence. Both moderation and extremism are relative that any group can claim.

According Jonathan Pinckney & Michael Niconchuk (2020), religious extremism is seen as motivation for terrorism. They submitted that: "*extremism comprises ideological belief about an*

obligation to bring back the political system to a form suggested by religious norms through violence". In order to understand that some certain religious groups are extremist, there are five (5) warning signs these includes: Belief in absolute truth, endorsement of blind obedience, a quest to establish utopia, the extent to which there are, belief that the end justifies the means and a declaration of holy war on their antagonists irrespective of whether they belong to the same religion or not. An ideology is referred to as, a set of beliefs, especially on which people, groups, communities or countries base their actions.

Similarly, Yusuf Qardawi, (nd:39-56) in his book titled, "*The Islamic Revival Between Rejection and Extremism*" (*Al-Sihwah al-Islāmiyyah bayna al-Juhūd wa at-Tatarruf*), highlighted six signs and manifestations of extremism in man both in belief and action. These manifestations include:

- ✓ Unflinchingly clinging to one opinion and not giving consideration or thought to any opposing thought. This is what I referred to as rigidity.
- ✓ Making the people bound on issues that Islamic law (Shari^cah) does not bind them.
- ✓ Strictness in all ramifications.
- ✓ Harshness and incivility.
- ✓ Possessing bad expectations or thinking the worst of others.
- ✓ Falling into the abyss of declaring others as disbelievers.

2.3 Violent Crime

A violent crime is a situation whereby someone physically hurts or threatens to hurt someone. In hurting the person, a weapon is used. There are times when weapon may not be used, this is often through hate-speech. This speech often led others to involve in violent crime against others. The police will record a crime as violent if the offender clearly intended or intends to physically harm you, incite others to crime, regardless of whether or not it results in a physical injury. Crime is considered violent crime when the offender uses or threatens to use violent force upon the others.

(<https://www.definitions.net/definition/violent+crime>)

Crimes often considered as violent include: physical assault, gun and knife crime, sexual violence (such as rape or sexual assault), alcohol and drug-related violence, gang violence, domestic violence, hate crimes (disability, faith, gender, gender identity, race or sexual orientation), robbery, murder or manslaughter, suicide bombing, attack on military formations, burning of public and private properties, banditry, hostage taking and kidnapping to mention but a few. (<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/types-crime/violent-crime/>).

3.1 Causes of Religious Extremism

Major causes of religious extremism vary from one locality to the other. In western world, Muslims are often provoked, tagged with unprintable names such as: terrorist or fanatic due to absolute obedience to their religious rules and regulations. While majority of these Muslims often restraint themselves to react when exasperated, others who belongs to radical groups sees the opportunity to strike violently.

While answering question on the causes of extremism in religion, Rehman Kasule (2017), considered social isolation, disconnectedness and economic discrimination of youths as a major factor. She argues that; if a white Christian male shoots people, it's termed a tragedy done by a depressed person, if it's a black Christian, it may be termed as an act of racism but when the same thing was caused by either a white or black Muslim, it will be termed as: "an act of terrorism".

According to United States Institute of Peace (USIP), religious extremism and violence criminal activities should not be confined by borders because the dynamics of each group in their respective locality differs. The institute argues that:

Violent extremism in today's globalized and technology-driven world is not confined by borders. While the dynamics around groups such as ISIS, Boko-Haram, al-Shabab, and Taliban are interrelated and certainly influenced by geo-politics, the reasons these groups emerged and the reasons individuals join their campaigns are complex, distinct, and locally unique...All over the world violent extremist groups have harnessed their global agendas to local conflicts and the modus operandi is often unique.

Similarly, while recapitulating his view on religious extremism, Laurence R.I. & Berman, E. (2006), in their article titled "*Religious Extremism: The good, the bad and the deadly*", argues that, the conservative ideologies of these extremist groups often lead them to violence, because, they will be willing to murder. They've embraced an extreme ideology that sanction violence in the service of Allāh. They have no sympathy for their victims, because they view those victims as enemies of Allāh and Islām. They're ready to sacrifice their own lives because they expect huge and immediate reward afterlife in form of martyrdom.

According to United States Institute of Peace (USIP) (2016), the major causes of sporadic increase of different violent extremist groups around the globe is grievances tied to social marginalization, political exclusion, lack of access to justice or resources, and repression or abuse by state and security services in affected countries.

Similarly, according to Global Terrorism Index report of 2020, there are many socio-economic factors that are associated with extreme ideologies, violence and terrorism that are common to all countries. Although, there are also notable differences between economically developed and developing countries. These factors include but not limited to:

- High levels of group grievance and a weak rule of law is correlated with terrorism across all countries.
- In the more economically developed countries, social disenfranchisement and exclusion play an important role in terrorism.
- In less economically developed countries, religious or ethnic ruptures, and corruption are more strongly associated with high levels of terrorism. (Institute for Economics & Peace. Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism, Sydney, November 2020. Available from: <http://visionofhumanity.org/reports> (Accessed 23/11/2031))

It's imperative to distinguish a clear norm about appropriate behaviour and very little latitude in accepting different pattern of norms or particular behaviour among various religious groups. The focus is not the behaviour in particular, but on the extent to which particular behaviours are normatively prescribed within a religious group with little room for deviations. At times what's perceived as extreme in a group can be seen as moderation in another group".

Religion is often used as a tool to fuel conflicts because whenever people are poor, happy, sad, disconnected, in a state of despair, euphoria or dejected, religion is most times the last resort. In fact, religion permeate every facet of man's life, from birth to naming, marriage, divorce, business, morals, dressing, eating, drinking and sleeping to mention but a few, there are religious etiquettes guiding all these acts. Causes of extremism all over the world could be tied to, socio-economical, political and theological understanding and differences. Summarily, the major causes of religious extremism can be summarized as follows: Ignorance, indoctrination, sectarian sentiment and quest for paradise are the major causes of extremism among religious groups. Similarly, among major causes of these extremism in religious issues are: rigidity & exclusivity of theological views, quest for paradise, economic reasons, and trying to monopolize Allāh, Misinterpretation and Misconception, Political reason, Irresponsible Parenting, Systemic Problem, Corruption & Social Injustice to mention but a few

4.1 Forms of Religious Extremism

Forms of extremism is of two major types according to al-Mutairi (2008:74), firstly on the basis of belief and secondly on the basis of deeds or actions. While that of the former is related to hate speech against others, it often led to inciting others who lack emotional intelligence, frustrated and depressed to violence. This is more pronounced among the Khawārij and Rāfidah sect. They declare out of ignorance other Muslims as disbelievers. According to Ibn Taymiyyah in his "*Fatawa*", the second features of the Khārijites and other extremist groups is that, they declare people disbelievers due to sins and vices. Based on their declaration of disbelief due to sins, the blood and wealth of the Muslims become lawful for them. Whichever territory they occupy is seen as the abode of peace and wherever other Muslims are, it is land of disbelief and war. Ibn Taymiyyah (2015).

Secondly, with respect to deeds, most times often involves neglecting religious duties or transgressing beyond laid down conditions. The one with these heretical deeds often considered violently inclined to crimes such as: kidnapping, hostage taking, killings of civilians, suicide bombings, attacking military checkpoints and formation, destruction of farm lands and livestock.

Shaykh Abdur-Rahmān Ibn Mualā al-Luwayhiq al-Mutairi (2008), in his book "*Religious Extremism in the Lives of Contemporary Muslims*", highlighted that, there are elements of similarities between modern contemporary extremist groups and the Khawārij or the Rāfidha sects in Islām. This is because, they all agreed in: declaring a sinner as disbelievers, completely dissociated themselves from the society, declaring others who failed to migrate to their side as disbelievers, and lives of these Muslims are lawful for them to terminate by all means. al-Mutairi: (2008:99-100). All these crimes have been committed by religious extremist groups such as: ISIS, Boko-Haram, ISWAP, al-Shabab, Bandits and White Supremacists in the name of their radical ideologies.

Yan Tatsine the militant religious extremist group founded by Mohammad Marwa in the 1970s-80s, is similar to the likes of Boko-Haram, ISWAP, al-Shabab and Taliban fighters. Aside the manifestation of their extreme ideologies in their spiritual enclaves (*Halqa*), they became violently inclined and at times goes with action such as:

- i. Attacking Muslim Scholars who have contrary opinions to theirs
- ii. They lure jobless, underemployed and unemployed youths to their gathering with promise interest-free loans to start business.
- iii. They became hostile and even disobedient to civil authorities and laws.
- iv. Discouraged youths from attending schools. It's on record that, some of these unemployed youths often destroyed their hard-earned certificate due to joblessness and indoctrination.
- v. Other Muslims who disagreed with their actions became targets.
- vi. In case of arrest or invitation by the Police for questioning, Police personnel, check point and stations were ransacked, attacked and set ablaze.
- vii. Since other Muslims who failed to agree with them or join them in their enclave are disbelievers, hundreds of thousands of Muslims and non-Muslims were eliminated through suicide bombings, planting of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) on major roads, destruction of private and public institutions, places of worship and farmlands.
- viii. Schools were targeted and kidnapping, hostage taken become part of their modus operandi.
- ix. Military formations, become target.
- x. Establishing a state within a sovereign nation.

Does Islām support of all these crimes against oneself, family, community, society, nation and humanity at large? The answer is "NO".

4.2 Names of Some Prominent Extremist Groups in the World

S/n	Name	Type	Location
1	The Islamic State of Iraq and Lavant (ISIL) also known as Daesh from (<i>al-Dawla al-Islamiya fil Iraq wa al-Sham</i>) also known as, The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)	Religious & Political	Syria, Iraq, Yemen
2	Al-Qaeda in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)	Religious & Political	The Sahel region south of the Sahara Desert, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger and Senegal and Mali
3	The Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) a branch of West Africa Islamic State Group	Religious & Political	Nigeria, Cameroon & Chad
4	<i>Jamā'at Ahl al-Sunnah li-l-Da'awah wa al-Jihād</i> "Association of the People of the Sunnah for Preaching and Jihād" or "People Committed to the Prophet's Teaching for Propagation and Jihād" popularly known as Boko-Haram	Religious & Political	Nigeria, Cameroon & Chad
5	The Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS)	Religious & Political	Sahara & Sahel
6	Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) or Ansar al-Islam	Religious & Political	Burkina Faso
7	Al-Shabāb.	Political & Religious Political	Somalia and Kenya
8	The National Socialist Underground (Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund or NSU)—	A far-right and Neo-Nazi terrorist organization, Socio-Political	Sweden
9	The Russian Imperial Movement (RIM)	Neo-Nazis & White Supremacists	Russia
10	The anti-Muslim Movement in Myanmar (969 movement," The organizer of Buddhist Terror)	Socio-Political racist group	Myanmar
11	Generation Identity (GI) also known The Identitären Bewegung (Identitarian Movement)	Europe's fastest and most famous Far-right group. Also, known as Pan-European Movement	France, Germany, Sweden
12	The Base White Supremacist Network also known as the International Survivalist and Self-Defense Network	Neo-Nazis & White Supremacists	North America, Europe, South Africa, and Australia
13	The Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM).	A neo-Nazi nationalist Racist Movement	Sweden
14	The Order of Nine Angles (ONA or O9A).	a neo-Nazi Racist Movement	United Kingdom

5.1 Religious (Islāmic) Reproach towards Key Extreme Ideologies & Violent Crime in the Society

We cannot understand the Islāmic reproach towards extreme ideologies and violent crimes orchestrated by the like of Boko-Haram, ISWAP, Bandits, in Nigeria as nation unless we decipher, decrypt or unravel the following salient questions: what is Islām & Who is a Muslim?

5.2 What is Islām?

Etymologically, Islām is derived from an Arabic trilateral verb "s-l-m" which means to make peace, secure, safe, submissive and assured. It's equally from a verbal now of the verb "Aslama". The verb according to Adetona should be defined as, "he resigned or submitted himself". Islām is a total way of life. It's the only religion, denomination or belief in the world that was named by the founder Allāh as, enshrined in the following Qur'ānic statement “*This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.* (Al-Qur'ān 5:3)”

5.3 Who is Muslim?

A Muslim is the one who submitted himself in totality to the dictates of Allāh, advocate of peaceful coexistence in his society and is righteous in all aspects. This submissiveness and righteousness are enshrined in the glorious Qur'ān and interpreted in the tradition of noble Prophet Muhammad (PHUH). Allāh states in the Qur'ān that: **بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ** Yes, “[on the contrary], whoever submits his face [i.e., self] in Islām to Allah while being a doer of good will have his reward with his Lord. And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve”. (Al-Qur'ān 2:112)

According to Sayyid Qutb (nd:118) in his interpretation of the above verse:

Here again we find the most important feature of the Islamic faith: total, unconditional, mental and physical surrender to God. It is, however, a surrender that must be manifested in a practical form, expressed in the verse in the proviso, 'while doing good works,' because Islam makes a direct functional link between abstract belief and everyday behaviour, between faith and action, inner convictions and outward deeds. In this way, religious faith becomes a complete way of life, and man's character and actions merge into a single entity- hence the generous reward granted by God Almighty to believers without discrimination or preference of one group over another. Those who willingly and completely surrender themselves to God "shall have reward with their Lord; they shall have nothing to fear nor shall they grieve.

Similarly, the Prophet (PBUH), defined a Muslim according to a report credited to him as: **المسلم** *“A Muslim is the one that other Muslims are secured from the evil of his tongue and his hand. And an immigrant is one who migrates from what Allāh has forbidden”*.

It's indeed demoralizing that a religion of peace, that got her name from the God almighty whose name is As-Salām (The Peace), that stands for peace, and instruct her adherents to be advocate of peaceful coexistence in their respective societies can be misrepresented in the manner in which these violent groups has done.

Islām does not in any way or at any time in the history of humanity support violent aggressive behaviour against oneself, an individual, parents, biological children, neighbour, community or against anyone. Islām lay down modus-operandi of war when it becomes the last resort. In Islām, dialogue, patience, diplomacy, treaty, reconciliation (*Sulh*), arbitration and ability to overlook others shortcomings are considered the best way to settle disputes and conflicts. Al-Qur'ān is categorical on this when it states as follows:

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقْتُلُوا الَّتِي تَبَغَى حَتَّى تَقَىءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly. (Al-Qur'ān 49:9)

Islām is not in support of offensive or violent crimes orchestrated by these extremist groups. Neither do they represent Islām nor are they fighting for the religion. In fact, violent and criminal activities of these extremist groups have led to sporadic increase in Islamophobia and bigotry against Islām and the Muslims around the globe. They're tarnishing the image of Islām out of stupidity, rigidity, ignorance, misconceptions, misrepresentation and conservatism in their non-compromising ideologies. If these were the way at which the Prophet (PBUH) propagated Islām within the 23 years span of his mission, it's inconceivable that Islām will still exists today.

5.4 *Islāmic Reproach towards Extreme Ideology*

Be it ideology or acts Islām as a way of life, reject anything extreme in clear term. In several verses, the Qur'ān castigate and lampoon whoever transgresses beyond limit or bound set by Allāh. For instance, the Qur'ān stated unequivocally that: *فَأَسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا ۗ إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ* “So, remain on a right course as you have been commanded, [you] and those who have turned back with you [to Allah], and do not transgress. Indeed, He is Seeing of what you do”. (Al-Qur'ān 11:112)

Similarly, the Qur'ān explicitly stated that, there are innumerable times people might want to transgress beyond the limits set by Allāh, and whoever transgresses beyond such boundary is indeed an unjust fellow whose recompense is with his God. *تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ* “These are the limits of Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah – it is those who are the wrongdoers [i.e., the unjust]”. (Al-Qur'ān 2:229)

According to Suliman A. Hageel (1984), extremism is a worldwide occurrence that's displayed in behavioural or intellectual extremes. In fact, religious extreme ideologies should not be confined to only Islām. In the United States of America, there exist the White Supremacist who sees nothing in Black and are ready to kill for this extreme ideology. Indeed, the issue of extremism is a worldwide challenge that should not be viewed as Muslim negative impact in the society. Islām reject unequivocally any form of coercion, aggression, terror, violence, insecurity of lives and property in all ramifications.

To appreciate the fact that going beyond the limits is not a new phenomenon in the world but an age long natural issue, it will interest us to decipher the message of Allāh in the Qur'ān to the people of the book where Allāh caution them as follows:

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ
لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ

Say, "O People of the Scripture, do not exceed limits in your religion beyond the truth and do not follow the inclinations of a people who had gone astray before and misled many and have strayed from the soundness of the way. Cursed were those who disbelieved among the Children of Israel by the tongue of David and of Jesus, the son of Mary. That was because they disobeyed and [habitually] transgressed. (Al-Qur'ān 5:77-8)

Aside the caution not to transgress beyond the limits of Allāh, those who transgressed beyond the limits were caused by Allāh in clear term. They indulge and mollycoddled transgressors among them without any form of caution or enlightenment to checkmate their excesses and intemperance.

Historically, the mission of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), lasted for 23 years but the categories of people who eventually accepted his message during his sojourn and after his demise can be classified into three (3) main groups. Firstly, those who remain steadfast along the path. Secondly, those who are lethargic and lackadaisical and not living up to expectations set by Allāh, e.g. they pray occasionally and hardly fast in the month of Ramaḍān. The last but not the least are those ones who go to extreme and want to be judge in the court of Allāh. They see themselves as the purest and outstanding than anyone. The Qur'ān caution explicitly all these groups that:

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفُوحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ
أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى

Those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, only [committing] slight ones. Indeed, your Lord is vast in forgiveness. He was most knowing of you when He produced you from the earth and when you were fetuses in the wombs of your mothers. So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him. (Al-Qur'ān 53:32).

According to al-Mutairi (2008:69), Islām in reality, is a balanced in all ramifications. It balances between the lax person and extremist like a valley between two mountains, guidance between two

positions of misguidance and a moderate position between reprehensible extremes. The one who's intransigent to the dictates of Allāh and the one who transgressed beyond limits set by Allāh should be considered as squanderers whereas, Qur'ān described the perfected religion of Allāh as a moderate and balanced total way of life. Allāh states in the Qur'ān that:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنُعَلِّمَ
مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّكُمْ إِنَّا بِاللَّهِ بِالنَّاسِ
لِرَعُوفٍ رَحِيمٍ

And thus, We have made you a median [i.e., just] community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you. And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allah has guided. And never would Allah have caused you to lose your faith [i.e., your previous prayers]. Indeed, Allah is, to the people, Kind and Merciful. (Al-Qur'ān 2:144)

At time when war become inevitable, Islām forbids offensive war but recommends defensive war. However, a situation whereby the enemy are not ready for reconciliation, dialogue or treaty, which imperatively makes war inevitable, transgression in battlefield is prohibited in clear term. The Qur'ān state that: *“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors”*. (Al-Qur'ān 2:190). Similarly, Allāh forbids extremism in matters of foods which are made lawful to be considered as unlawful. Allāh declares in Qur'ān that: *“O! you who have believed, do not prohibit the good things which Allah has made lawful to you and do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors”*. (Al-Qur'ān 5:87)

The Prophet (PBUH), on several occasions has discouraged Muslims from extremism in all ramifications. He panegyricized and impelled Muslims to be moderate in all their engagements. For instance, the Prophet (PBUH) stated in the following tradition that:

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ السَّلَامِ بْنُ مُطَهَّرٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عُمَرُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ، عَنْ مَعْنِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ الْغِفَارِيِّ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْمَقْبُرِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِي
هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: إِنَّ الدِّينَ يُسْرٌ، وَلَنْ يُشَادَّ الدِّينَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا غَلَبَهُ، فَسَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا، وَاسْتَعِينُوا
بِالْعُدْوَةِ وَالرُّوحَةِ وَشَيْءٍ مِنَ النَّجْةِ "

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by worshipping in the mornings, the afternoons, and during the last hours of the nights." (Sahih al-Bukhari 39: Book 2, Hadith 32)

Pertinently, in another narration, during the time of Umar bn Abdul-'Azīz, Anas bn Mālik the Governor of Madīnah narrated a Prophetic statement to Abu Umamah and his son Sahl where he said: The Prophet PBUH said:

إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَقُولُ لَا تُشَدِّدُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَيُشَدِّدَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَإِنَّ قَوْمًا شَدَّدُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ فَشَدَّدَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ فَتَأْتِكُمْ بِقَائِيَهُمْ فِي الصَّوَامِعِ وَالْدِيَارِ فِي رَهْبَانِيَّةٍ ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ " .

He said: The Messenger of Allah PBUH used to say: Do not impose austerities on yourselves so that austerities will be imposed on you, for people have imposed austerities on themselves and Allah imposed austerities on them. Their survivors are to be found in cells and monasteries. (Then he quoted:) "Monasticism, they invented it; we did not prescribe it for them." (Sunan Abi Dawūd 4904 (Book 43, Hadith 132 Hadith 4886)

Similarly, the Prophet PBUH was reported to have said “*Indeed, Allāh is gentle and He loves gentleness. He bestows for the sake of gentleness that which He does not bestow in harshness*”. (Sahih Muslim:2593)

According to Bello (2021), those who are propagating these extremist ideologies want to reinvent another Islām. Their scholars are unapologetically critical of the ‘*Aqīdah*’ (creed) and Fiqh (jurisprudence) of their brethren wherever they're. The same group of people they're hostile to had hitherto, provided them with platforms to ventilate what he referred to as, Khārijites extreme ideology. Rather than seek means of collaboration and intellectualization of grey areas of dissension, their *Zawiyas*, *Asalatu* sessions and religious ceremonies are classified as *Majlis-l-Bi'di'a* and their *Madāris* and *Ilmiyyah* schools were branded as haven of irreligious indoctrination that must be submerged at all cost, Bello submitted.

Wherever they enter, Islām that has been practiced by people centuries before their respective birth suddenly is no longer seen as being good enough and the Muslims in these areas must be re-indoctrinated on the right creed by fire or by force. It's pertinent to note that, these extremists deploy varieties of styles to indoctrinate people. The submission of Bello above is in line with Qur'ān states: إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِبَعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ “Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects – you, [O Muhammad], are not [associated] with them in anything. Their affair is only [left] to Allah; then He will inform them about what they used to do”. (Al-Qur'ān 6;159).

5.5 *Islāmic Reproach towards Banditry*

Banditry can be defined as a type of organized crime committed by outlaws typically involving the threat or use of violence. Banditry is not limited to northern part of the country; it has extended to other parts of the country. Most times we see pictures of Bandits particularly those ones interviewed by Shaykh Gumi in the north they're Muslims and often read Qur'ān and speaks fluent Arabic, the language of Qur'ān. The question now is, what's the precepts or maxim in the Qur'ān against enemy of the state that are hellbent in terrorizing people through kidnapping, hostage taking, killings, thefts, destroying farm lands private and public property?

إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خَلْفٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ. إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Indeed, the penalty for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive upon earth [to cause] corruption is none but that they be killed or crucified or that their hands and feet be cut off from opposite sides or that they be exiled from the land. That is for them a disgrace in this world; and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment, Except for those who return [repenting] before you overcome [i.e., apprehend] them. And know that Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. (Al-Qur'an 5:33-34).

It's imperious to note that, the verses above gave a clear maxim on what the state should do to the bandit, the enemy of state, but what is interesting in the statement of Allāh above is that, there is need for counter narrative and re-radicalization programme in order to rehabilitate the repented outlaws.

As regards the condemnation by the Qur'an on the act of banditry, there's widely different submissions among scholars on the punishment for this violent crime. According to the Hannafi, Shāfi'i and Hambali school of thoughts, the detailed punishment prescribed by the Qur'an must be carried out to the latter. A rebel who kills without taking any property is put to death, while another who has taken property without killing has his limbs cut off. Whoever committed the two crime must be put to death and crucified. According to Sayyid Qutb (nd), A rebel who helps spread fear but has neither killed must be banished. On highway robbers (*Hirabah*), according to Doi, this is one of the capital crimes and as such the offender after proven guilty should be executed in order to serve as deterrent to others. Qur'an states 4:35: *As to the thief male or female cut off his or her hand: A punishment by way of example, from God, For the crime: and God is Exalted in Power*

5.6 Religious (Islamic) Reproach on Killings Orchestrated by the Extremist Groups

It's completely forbidden in Islām to kill anyone unjustly or plunder his wealth and property, or humiliate or malign his honour and integrity, irrespective of creed, race, gender and status is outrightly forbidden in Islām. According to Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri (2010:85), Islām is a religion of peace that guarantees the protection of life, property and honour. A true believer is the one who embody these exemplary qualities. Muslims irrespective of their challenges must exemplify the lofty virtues of accommodation, tolerance, forbearance and moderation.

مَنْ أَجَلَ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُونَ

Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. And Our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, [even] after that, throughout the land, were transgressors. (Al-Qur'an 5:32)

Those who involve in act of terrorism, kidnapping, hostage taking and killings of civilians, groom and indoctrinate young people for suicide bombings in anticipation of paradise by means of martyrdom should realize that Allāh has decreed a permanent torment in hell awaiting them. While interpreting the theme of Qur'ān 5:33, Shaykh Tahir-ul-Qadri (2010), writes:

This verse highlights the sanctity of human life in general. The sanctity of man or woman, the old or the young, the rich or the poor has not been specified. The point being that, the Qur'ān has not only prohibited killings of a man without any justification, but has also declared that it is akin to the murder of humanity entire. As for the law of retribution, which authorizes capital punishment for a murderer, it has been legislated for safeguarding the sanctity of human life.

The Prophet PBUH was on record to have denied offering prayer on the one who killed himself. The Prophet often hitherto supplicated for his worst enemies until divine instructions orders otherwise, he however, didn't offer funeral prayer over the one who committed suicide. *عن جابر بن سمره (رض) قال: أتى النبي (ص) برجل قتل نفسه بمشاقص، فلم يصل عليه.* “On the authority of Jābir son of Samura (May Allāh be pleased with him) who said: Someone who killed himself with a spear was brought to the Prophet (PBUH) but he did not pray over him”. (Sahih Bukhāri: 2:672)

From the above tradition it's evidently explicit to note that suicide bombings either individually done or it involves many casualties is forbidden in Islām. The one who commits it defies Allāh's law and thus shall be condemned to hellfire. In another narration, the Prophet PBUH said: “*Anyone who kills a non-Muslim under treaty will not smell the fragrance of paradise, even though it's fragrance can be smelt at a distance of forty years*”. (Sahih Bukhāri: 3:1155)

Islam forbids bloodshed in totality, in case of man slaughter, established that, blood money must be paid to the family of victim. The blood money is the same for the victim of man slaughter irrespective of creed, race, gender and social status. The Prophet (PBUH) was reported to have said: *دية اليهودي والنصراني وكل ذمي مثل دية الحر المسلم*: “*The blood money for a Jew, a Christian and every non-Muslim citizen is like that of the Muslim*” (Abdur-Razzāq, Musannaf, vol.10: 97-8). The Prophet unequivocally declared in his farewell pilgrimage as follows: “*Indeed your blood and property are inviolable, like the inviolability of this day of yours and this month of yours and this land of yours, until the day you meet your Lord*”.

5.7 Religious Precept on Acquisition of Western Education

Can education which facilitates a civilization with advancement at high level of art, science and technologies be forbidden in Islam? The world has become closer now due to the positive impacts of western education. *‘Ibādah* is easier today due to impacts of this education. For instances, people no longer trek to perform pilgrimage; the education saves man’s time through advancement in means of communication and transportations. The world has become global village courtesy of western education and civilization. Why will Islam forbid this education? How will Islam forbid learning and searching for beneficial knowledge? According to Sidiq (2018):

Contrarily, Islam and learning are inseparable, due to the fact that the first revelation received by the prophet (PBUH), Qur'an 96:1-5 justify the significance of learning and literacy in the success of any endeavours and accomplishment of any mission in human life. It stresses that knowledge and literacy are very important and as such, the age of physical and temporary miracle is obsolete.

Pertinently, searching for beneficial education cannot be forbidden in Islam because it is viewed as a necessary requirement for successful accomplishment of any mission. In the spirit of Islam, knowledge is so important because, it enables the one who has it, differentiate between what is forbidden from lawful. It is the friend of one who possessed it in the deserts, society in solitude, companion when bereft of friends, it also lights the way to heaven, serves as armour against enemies and indeed ornament in the company of friend. With Education, Muslims are guided to the light of goodness and to a noble position, associate with sovereigns in the world and attain perfections of happiness in the hereafter Sidiq (2018), argues that, the purpose of man's creation to worship Allah based on monotheism, which emphasized that only Allah should be worship, cannot be achieved except through acquisition of knowledge in all its ramifications.

Knowledge stimulates positive force in human endeavours as it liberates and emancipate man from darkness of ignorance into the light of guidance. It also develops man's image personality, integrity, intellect and faculty. It must indeed be in the spectrum of Islamic law, general knowledge in humanities, science and technologies. Allah places those who are knowledgeable and learned over the rest in many places in the Qur'an. For instance; *Those truly fear Allah among His servant who have knowledge* (Qur'an 35:28) and also: *Allah will raise up, to (suitable) rank and degrees those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge* (Qur'an 58:1). The prophet in some of his traditions encouraged Muslims to search for knowledge irrespective of the region such education is emanating from. He declared as follows: "The acquisition of knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim men and women".

6.1 Religious Precept on Jihād or Harb?

Jihād is an Arabic word which means, striving in the cause of Allah through one's efforts made to advance the cause of Allah, truth and justice. Etymologically, the term *Jihad*, is from an Arabic trilateral verb "*Ja-ha-da*" or "*J-h-d*" which can be interpreted as "he struggled" or he "Strive". According Doi, striving and struggling is basically the root meaning of *Jihad* and it does not necessarily mean the use of sword, bomb, explosive, atomic nuclear weapon, Ak 47, and fighter jet, or shielding of blood in battle field. If it is war, it is called *Al-Harb* or *Al-Qital*. Invariably, *Jihad* can also be defined, as striving and struggling that involves enduring and persevering during the cause of advancing the word of Allah, truth and justice against any aggression, violence and imminent onslaught of enemies

Jihād is of three kinds: firstly, *Jihād* with one's wealth, body, health, intellect, self or life in the cause of doing the right thing and repelling evil and injustice. Secondly, *Jihādu-n-Nafs* which means the *Jihād* with oneself, this is the *Jihād* the prophet (PBUH) refers to as the greatest *Jihād*.

It is the act of striving and struggling to avoid evils no matter how attractive it is, and at the same time be good and righteous no matter how challenging and difficult it is. It is on record that the Prophet (PBUH) said; “*We have returned from the less Jihād to the greater Jihād*”. Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī (19:4298). When he was asked what was the greater *Jihād*, he answered it is *Jihād* against carnal self. Lastly, the last kind of *Jihād* is that of military struggle, physical combat, war, battle to repel aggression and injustice. It is a military struggle to uphold justice, fairness and equity all for the sake of Allah; so that the word of Allah, justice, fairness and equality will be the order of the day while that of evil and influence will be relegated or even eliminated

7.1 The Significance of Counter Narrative Programme

Even if there's relative peace restored back in North East of the country, the negative impacts of the war against the insurgence is mind-blowing. Are we to talk about the gargantuan tax payers money Nigerian Government is spending to fight the battle kinetically, or the death of hundreds of thousands of civilians and gallant military men, or the destructions of public and private properties? Over ten million Nigerians had become homeless and refugees in their own country. The emergency of Internally Displaced Camps (IDPs) also come with unforeseen challenges. Despite all these, the war is still ongoing and on daily basis the extremist group is recruiting new foot soldiers.

Poverty, Joblessness, unemployment or social injustices can be considered as some of the causes of people involvement in this war as established earlier. It's imperative to note that, religious extremism remain a pivotal cause of the conflict. This often emanates from misinterpretation, misconception, misapplication and rigid conservative understanding of Qur'ānic precepts.

A detailed academic scrutinization of this issue revealed that, some of the members of this group were indoctrinated and brainwashed by half-baked, ultra conservative, ignorant and rigid scholars.

Thus, in order to win the war which has not been won in totality kinetically, there is need to address the remote primary cause. This to my understanding and research is what the Counter Narrative Programme introduced by the former Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen. TY Buratai aim to achieve. That's, an enlightenment program for the public which include but not limited to: the repentant Boko-Haram/ISWAP, Civilians in the IDPs, Keke Napep Unions, Road Transport Employer's members and other stakeholders in the North East.

While it's on record that the Counter Narrative Programme started in 2017, it's imperative to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of the Director, Directorate of Islāmīc Affairs Nigerian Army, Brig Gen SG Mustapha and other stakeholders in this program. This is because:

The biggest enemy of Islam and Muslims is the ignorant one whose ignorance often lead him to destruction. He destroys the image of Islām as a result of his indoctrination, stupidity, rigidity, ignorance and confusion.

The essence of our creation by Allāh is to worship Him, we cannot worship Him, with searching for the real information about Him. It's stated in Hadith al-Qudsi (The Sacred Hadith) that Allāh declared that: Know me before you worship me, if you don't know me, how will you worship me.

Islām is not in support of Bombing, kidnapping, Banditry, killings, Assassination, destruction of farm lands, destruction of public and private properties. Islām is a well-balanced, moderate religion and total way of life.

7.2 Recommendations and Conclusion

The United States Institute of Peace argues that, violent extremism among religious groups goes beyond kinetic approach because, peace cannot be attained in the battlefield where Tucano, Fighter jets and Drones are hovering around. Hence, there must be a window opportunity for repentant extremists to be rehabilitated, empowered and reincorporated into the society. This to the best of my knowledge is what Counter Narrative Programme is set to fulfill.

- ❖ A war that emanated from propagation of extreme ideologies in the pulpit (*minbar*) as a result of ignorance, indoctrination, misrepresentation, misconceptions and social injustices cannot be defeated in totality in the battlefield. Hence, there is need for continuous orientation, reorientation of people in the rural areas particularly in the Northeast
- ❖ There is a serious need for both Local, State and Federal Government to incorporate local villagers, district heads, traditional rulers and proprietors of 'Ilmiyyah schools to key-in into this Counter Narrative Programme. They must be financially empowered. Properly registered and continuously monitored. We must understand and communicate that local context is the key to effective solution. It's good to seek for foreign support in fighting this war. However, it's imperative to understand that, the solution to foreign countries challenges cannot be totally use to solve similar local challenges. We must glocalised finding eternal solutions to our challenges
- ❖ Religious groups, leaders and Civil Societies need to key in into this Counter Narrative Programme of the Directorates of Islamic Affairs Nigerian Army. A war that's has not been finally won kinetically since over a decade cannot be defeated in totality kinetically.
- ❖ Terrorist groups flourish when they can increase their influence. The major drivers of influence are media coverage, recruitment of sympathizers, and finances. All of these different facets need to be tackled together to break up terrorist organizations. Media organization's must remember that, even though, they can enjoy publicity, International validation due to their reportage, no matter how they think they are saved as a journalist, their respective families might not be.
- ❖ The way we celebrate our Men of Nigerian Army, Air force, Navy and other law enforcement officers is disheartening. Let us celebrate them more. Let us recognize that,

it's not a crime for them to be what they're, they belong to a family and if not for them, Nigeria us not save from extinction.

- ❖ A need for Nigerian Army to incorporate all other Law Enforcement Agencies into this Counter Narrative Programme. Agencies such as: Nigerian Police Force, NDLEA, Nigerian Immigration and Custom Service to mention but a few.
- ❖ There is need for agencies of the Government to be more productive and proactive in the discharging their respective duties.
- ❖ As the threat of terrorism, extremism and violent Crime continues to change, policymakers need to be aware of novel approaches to counter-terrorism. The prospect of using social impact bonds in counter-terrorism
- ❖ There is a need for total overhauling of our Judicial system in this country. Although, I might be judicially novice and naive, the delay in justice dispensation in this country is worrisome. All corrupt Judges, prosecuting and defendant's attorneys must remember that, they will face God almighty one day where account of their respective actions and decisions will be re-evaluated and re-judged. A clarion call for responsible just law enforcement

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