

threats, capabilities and realities of the dangers posed by the terror gang. These statements have been credited to our country's Commander-in-Chief and President Goodluck Jonathan obviously.

With the strength and efficiency of Nigeria's security agencies, perhaps terrorism would have been nipped before it took the country hostage. This is shown by the evident competencies displayed in peace-keeping activities in other countries. Therefore, it is clear that given the right directions and with non-partisan commitments the country's security can do better. The fact is that with these attacks, the economy of the entire country is in spider speed.

The attitude of some countries to our agony obviously underscores and also exposes our collective lacklustre preparedness to confront terror. Terror, as against other violent hostilities, is indeed a crime against humanity and cannot be fought without communal participation. And sadly, key policy-makers in Nigeria seem to believe foreign countries, especially those that have been under such attacks are the ones to rout terrorism out of our country. Perhaps, not so. Some of these countries have interests other than fighting terrorism. There are underlying political and economic interests.

Terrorism is the worst form of guerrilla warfare because it lacks popular ideological colouration. Only popular politics or popular political leadership or put simply, pro-people governments can attract effective communal involvement in the battle against terrorism. Terrorism is a result of bad governance or wrong attitudes by governments to public management.

Terror attacks seem more like a response to governance and that is perhaps why people will

positively respond in collective resistance in some countries and won't in others. It is worst when a government and its security forces become confused with partisan views and reactions to such attacks. Obviously, this is Nigeria's dilemma. The attacks and the reactions have been politicised or even ethnicised. This is a major threat to our collective aspirations for a strong, united and well-governed country.

The Chibok girls disappearance, just like the safety of all residents, should have taken prime attention before any other consideration by any government, no matter its political affiliation. But, the truth is until our political leaders reason beyond the visionless claps of hollow political supporters, even the security agencies may be seen as aiding opposition when they do their jobs in accordance with their professional competence.

What is required to govern a country is not likely to include discriminative understanding of grave national challenges by state officials. A national challenge does not bear tribal marks or emblems of political parties. What is required is to confront the challenges as a government while the citizens react as patriots who must see their individual and collective stake in the struggle against those challenges.

What the public and particularly the parents and friends of the kidnapped girls want to hear are not statements such as 'we have located the Chibok girls' as the Nigerian military was quoted to have initially announced. Or that 'we are closing in on the location of the Chibok girls'. No. Perhaps those empowered to rescue the girls should tell us less of the location. Go quietly and bring back the girls unharmed. **LE**

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# Terror attacks in Nigeria

## De-industrialisation to blame

Africa's biggest economy with a gross domestic product of over US\$500-billion and its most populous country with a population of 167-million is plagued by many problems caused by de-industrialisation. The unemployed have been taken over by religious fanaticism, writes **Denja Yaqub**.

**T**he issue of violent crimes in Nigeria did not start with the advent of Boko Haram, the murderous gang that falsely claims the propagation of Islam as its underlying mission.

The country has been contending with several violent crimes before now. Crimes such as armed robbery, kidnappings, ritual killings, political assassinations, domestic violence

etc have been prevalent in our country since independence and indeed during years of colonialism.

That these crimes are on the increase is basically a product of lack of good governance as evident in mass unemployment, dearth of industries, corruption, disdainful display of stolen wealth and lack of cultural and moral values even in remote communities.

Until the early years of this millennium, Lagos, Kano, Port Harcourt and Ibadan were the strongest industrial bases of the Nigerian economy, apart from oil.

There were industrial layouts in these cities where active factories producing textile materials, chemicals, pharmaceutical products, cement, shoes, bags, tides and skin, plastics, food, and other necessities were bubbling with productive activities involving several millions of Nigerian youths engaged in active employment.

Apart from the layouts in Kano, Lagos, Ibadan and Port Harcourt, there were strong industrial presence in other cities such as Ilorin where Tate & Lye, Philip Morris, Coca Cola etc engaged several young Nigerians as employees. In Okpella, Edo State, there were almost 3,000 workers engaged at the Bendel Cement Company. Some more at the Bendel Flour Mill at Ewu.

Kaduna was home to several textile firms, just like Ilupeju, Oba Akran, Oshodi, Ikeja were in Lagos as well as Sherada industrial layout, Bompai in Kano.

There were rubber plantations in most parts of the south as well as the south east. Enugu was booming with coal production. Plateau State blossomed with mining. Indeed, Nasarawa State, which has the highest deposit of mineral resources in Nigeria had

better life when the old Plateau State existed. Nasarawa still has the largest deposit of mineral resources of global quality and commercial value at the international market.

When workers knocked off from work in these cities, a visitor would mistake the crowd on the roads for football fans coming from the stadium after a major international match.

What has happened now is the reality of the complete shut-down of these industrial layouts because the factories have either relocated to other countries or folded up completely, throwing out several millions back to the streets to join the unemployed.

What has now taken over industrialisation is religious fanaticism, which is more 'decent' than armed robbery. While churches have become an industry that is growing faster than any other 'industry', having acquired dead factory houses and converted them to churches with those thrown out of employment as members. Today, the crowd coming out of church services have outnumbered those coming from work.

Religion as the opium of the poor has completely replaced industries and other productive employment. The faithful, who are largely unemployed, watch as a very tiny few come to church services in convoys of stolen riches.

In the north, where the impact of unemployment is much harsher and religion is consequentially deeper, as well as other disadvantages such as access to education as a result of growing poverty being a consequence of absence of markets for farm products and the collapse of industry, people like everywhere else have taken to deeper reliance on divine interventions. Of course, this has

now subjected the holy books of the Bible and Al-Quran to all sorts of interpretations.

The thoughtless adoption of neo-liberal social economic policies originating from imperial countries of the west without local content that is people-driven caused the disappearance of industries and employment as well as the growth of private accumulation of wealth at the detriment of society in general.

Resulting from these is the resort to self-help clothed in kidnappings, robberies, Internet scams, terrorism and other deadly crimes that have cost lives and properties unabated.

What has happened in the Nigerian situation is that apart from infrastructural absence, policies driven by neo-liberal interests stunted growth: any growth that should have provided food, shelter, and anything capable of making a citizen live in average comfort.

The social economic and political burden of the crisis created by this is what has manifested in violent crimes like terror attacks and robberies. In the absence of a conscious radical political mass revolution that can displace the subsisting anti-people system. For now, the only palliative we can have even within the existing system is good governance, which can only be achieved through clean and transparent choices of leadership.

The cost of these attacks is clearly evident in economic inactivity and a serious government need to give a holistic solution in terms of developing home-grown policies that will return industries, create more jobs through infrastructural renewal, access to quality public education, moral regeneration and a disciplined political class that abhors corruption and corrupt processes. ■