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# SPECIAL REPORT

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## ABOUT THE REPORT

Focusing on the political countdown to Nigeria's upcoming presidential elections, this report assesses the apparent ethno-regional basis of the country's two national political parties and raises questions about the relationship of religious identity and internal conflict. The report is sponsored by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), which has a long-term commitment to peacebuilding in Africa.

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*John Paden*

## Religion and Conflict in Nigeria

### Countdown to the 2015 Elections

#### Summary

- Nigeria is by far the largest country in the world—with a population of just over 180 million—evenly divided between Muslims and Christians.
- The 2011 presidential election split the country along ethno-religious-regional lines. Thus, concerns for the upcoming 2015 election are widespread.
- Muslims in Nigeria include Sufi, Izala, women's organizations, student organizations, emirate traditions, and ordinary people, as well as Boko Haram extremists. Christians range from Catholic to mainstream Protestant to Evangelical to Pentecostal to African syncretism.
- The candidates in the upcoming election are the same as in 2011: Muhammadu Buhari for the All Progressive Congress party (APC) and Goodluck Jonathan for the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP).
- At the national level, the APC is running on the themes of security and anticorruption, the PDP on the theme of transformation.
- The APC believes that it can sweep seventeen of the nineteen northern states as well as the southwest. The PDP is confident that it can win the south-south and southeast as well as parts of Middle Belt. Such a scenario could set up ethno-regional tensions in the aftermath of the election.
- The presidential election is scheduled for February 14, 2015. State-level elections, including for governors, are set for February 28, creating a possible bandwagon effect after the presidential election for whichever party wins. Postelection court challenges follow. The inauguration is scheduled for May 29.
- Do religious symbols exacerbate or mitigate conflict, especially during an electoral season? What are the interfaith efforts to ameliorate or mitigate ethno-religious conflict? What are the consequences of a polarized election?

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- How might recent patterns of extremist violence—with ethno-religious implications—affect this election? The question is framed in the context of broader patterns of religious identity and conflict that have plagued Nigeria’s Fourth Republic.
- Most important will be a national election such that whoever wins, it will stand as a milestone in the quest for democratic practices rather than as a testament to a failed state.

## Introduction

Nigeria’s presidential election of 2011 split the country along both ethno-religious and regional lines. According to official figures, in the twelve far northern states, Muhammadu Buhari won with 64 percent of the vote. In the southeast and south-south, Goodluck Jonathan won with 97 percent. The mixed states of the Middle Belt (north central) and the southwest voted for Jonathan, but at a more modest 58 percent.

The far northern states are overwhelmingly Muslim, and the southeast and south-south are just as clearly Christian. The religiously mixed states of the north central and southwest are also politically mixed. Overall, Nigeria is by far the largest country in the world with religious identities evenly divided between Muslims (90 million) and Christians (90 million). This raises the question of the relationship of religious identities and voting patterns.

The urgent question is whether such patterns will persist in the upcoming presidential election, which is scheduled for February 2015. If political coalitions align with religious identity patterns, will there be instability and conflict in the “losing” zones? Alternatively, if political coalition patterns cross-cut religious identity patterns, could this form a safety net to the inevitable win-lose nature of any presidential election?

Each of the two national parties has selected a presidential and vice presidential team. Current President Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP has been endorsed to run again. He has selected his current vice president, Namadi Sambo, former governor of Kaduna State, as his running mate.

The opposition APC has selected Muhammadu Buhari for the top of its ticket. The final choice for APC vice presidential runner was ceded to the southwest zone. Party leader Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu insisted on the nomination, but after four days of intense talks, others objected to a Muslim-Muslim ticket.<sup>1</sup> The subsequent APC caucus, attended by state governors and former presidential aspirants, decided that the contender should be both from the southwest and a Christian and left the final decision to Buhari. Apparently, three names were forwarded to Buhari: two Muslims, Tinubu and Babatunde Fashola, plus Yemi Osinbajo, a former Lagos State attorney general, justice commissioner, and a Christian pastor.<sup>2</sup> Osinbajo was selected.<sup>3</sup>

The presidential selections set up a potential ethno-religious-regional split that could make the postelection violence of 2011 seem mild, given the high levels of tension and stress in the north today. A key question is whether, in the heat of the campaigns, the religious card will be played by either side, whether overtly or covertly. This is particularly salient in the Middle Belt because of its long history of ethno-religious tensions.

The contest is also of concern at the national level, where stress levels are high over the spread of attacks by Boko Haram violent extremist insurgents from the northeast and far north to the Middle Belt and even the south.<sup>4</sup> The late 2014 drop in world oil prices may also create budget stress and possibly street protests. The question of Boko Haram is complicated because of the questions of who might benefit from such turmoil, not to mention questions of who the Boko Haram factions are and whether they have been infiltrated by criminals or political provocateurs.

## Religious Identity and Conflict

In Nigeria, during the run-up to the party conventions in December 2014 and thereafter, the warning lights regarding the extremist group Boko Haram were flashing red. Former military officers such as Colonel Abubakar Dangiwa Umar were explicit in outlining the danger: “While Nigerians are divided along religious lines, Boko Haram is conquering territories within Nigeria.”<sup>5</sup>

An October 2014 Human Rights Watch report focused on Boko Haram violence against women and girls in northeast Nigeria.<sup>6</sup> The abduction of the Chibok girls from their school in Borno in April 2014 had captured the world’s attention. The bombing of the Central Mosque in Kano on Friday, November 28 sent a message that not even traditional Muslim places of worship were secure.

Across the international community, the number of sophisticated reports on Boko Haram increased, and the question was raised as to whether Nigeria’s religious diversity promoted tolerance or intolerance.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, the number of Boko Haram atrocities continued in the north, accompanied by massive territorial gains in Borno and Adamawa states. During the second quarter of 2014, Boko Haram violence increased in the far north and extended to the Middle Belt. According to one analyst, between April and July 2014, the bombings in this zone included at least ten incidents and killed some 343 people (see table 1).<sup>8</sup>

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**Table 1. Boko Haram Violence, April–July 2014**

April 15 and May 5	Bombings at a motor park in Abuja, killing more than 120—British-born alleged mastermind of first attack captured in Sudan and deported to Nigeria
May 21	Car bombings in a Christian area of Jos, killing more than a hundred
June 2	Bombing at a bar and brothel in Mubi, Adamawa State, killing more than sixty soldiers and civilians
June 9	Suicide bombing—the first in Nigeria’s history—at a military barracks in Gombe, killing one soldier and the female bomber
June 25	Bombing at an elite mall in Abuja as the Nigeria-Argentina World Cup match was about to start, killing twenty
June 26	Bombing attempt at a police station in a popular market in Mubi, Adamawa State
June 28	Bombing at a brothel in Bauchi State, killing eleven
July 12	Plan uncovered by Nigerian police to bomb Abuja’s transport network with suicide bombers and explosives concealed in luggage
July 23	Bombing at Murtala Square in Kaduna after Ramadan sermon by a prominent sheikh, Dahiru Bauchi, killing more than thirty—a second bomb nearly killed former head of state Muhammadu Buhari

Boko Haram also began to target officials in northern Cameroon because that state had joined the fight against violent extremists.<sup>9</sup> The Nigerian military began to increase its capacity for lethal force, including an attempt to order forty attack helicopters.<sup>10</sup> It extended its confrontation to a Shiite group in Zaria—the Islamic Movement of Nigeria—killing three sons of the founder, Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky.<sup>11</sup>

The implication was that the Nigerian government believed that external forces were behind various extremist groups in the north. In turn, the Islamic Movement of Nigeria maintained that it had never been violent. In short, the levels of violence and fears of extremists propelled the military to increase lethal countermeasures significantly by mid-2014.

Elsewhere in the far north during this period, Boko Haram had taken control of parts of Borno, abducted several hundred secondary school girls from Chibok, engaged in twin bomb-

ings in Kano during the Eid, attempted to kill a major Tijani leader, and tried to kill Muhammadu Buhari.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, the Kano Eid festival, led by the new emir Muhammad Sanusi II, canceled the durbar for security concerns.<sup>13</sup>

In August 2014, Boko Haram declared an Islamic caliphate based in Gwoza, near the Cameroon border. They also took Bama, the second largest city in Borno, and in September sent signals of preparation for an attack on Maiduguri, the capital of Borno, sending thousands of civilians into flight.

Armed with rocket-launchers and armoured vehicles stolen from the demoralized Nigerian army, Boko Haram...has moved beyond its established lairs in the Sambisa forest and the Mandara Mountains. In recent weeks it has taken several towns close to the Cameroon border, among them Gwoza, Gamboru Ngala and Banki. The seizure of Bama could provide a launch-pad for an attack on parts of Maiduguri, the state's capital, about 65 km (40 miles) away, with a population of more than 1m people...The grab for territory signals a change from Boko Haram's hit-and-run tactics. This may be in keeping with pronouncements by its firebrand leader, Abubakar Shekau, that chunks of Borno State are "Muslim Territory" in what appears to be an imitation of the caliphate proclaimed in parts of Iraq and Syria by Islamic State.<sup>14</sup>

In mid-October, the government announced a surprise cease-fire with Boko Haram and a quick return of the abducted Chibok girls. Military leaders were asked to enforce the cease-fire. The Boko Haram response was to increase abductions of girls in the northeast and to attack more villages in Adamawa. Abubakar Shekau sent a public video announcing that the girls had converted to Islam and had been married off to Boko Haram members.<sup>15</sup>

By late October, Boko Haram had taken over the city of Mubi, with a population of well over half a million, the second largest city in Adamawa State. The Nigerian soldiers from the 234th Battalion—previously known as the Special Operations Battalion—simply fled, many to neighboring Cameroon. Boko Haram fighters took over the barracks and weaponry, burned the churches, and told the local Muslim peoples that they were there to protect them from the infidels running the government in Abuja. Subsequent announcements assert that the military, with the help of local hunters, had retaken Mubi, but the situation was clearly in flux. According to some accounts, some 20 percent of Nigerian territory was in Boko Haram hands by December 2014.

Meanwhile, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that by October 2014, approximately 4.6 million people had been internally displaced in the three northeast states and more than half a million children were suffering from malnutrition. The official Nigerian figures were considerably lower.<sup>16</sup> The alarm in the international community was evident from media coverage, including the *New York Times*, which linked the disasters in the north to a divide in national politics: "This uneasy status quo does not threaten Mr. Jonathan's reelection prospects. Already hated in the north of Nigeria, he had little chance of winning that region in any case."<sup>17</sup> *The Economist* was even more pointed in asserting that the nation was divided.<sup>18</sup>

To add fuel to the fire, at the end of October, President Jonathan led a delegation of three hundred Nigerians on a Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This entourage included the president of the Christian Association of Nigeria, Ayo Oritsejafar. Political symbolism was loud and clear, and alarm bells went off in the north.

Finally, not all of the violence attributed to Boko Haram over the past few years may in fact be at the hands of the Abubakar Shekau network. The widely respected Roman Catholic bishop of Sokoto—Matthew Kukah—made an inquiry into a number of Christian church bombings and found that the main evidence pointed to internal church factions. In short, things in Nigeria are not always what they seem.

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Clearly, elements in the south and perhaps abroad would welcome the breakup of the country along religious lines. The Nigerian blogosphere is filled with such exhortations. It is widely believed in the north that Boko Haram has been infiltrated by extremist elements from the south-south, southeast, and elsewhere to promote turmoil for their own purposes. Rumors abound of a potential south-south insurgent force being set up in the bush near Suleja to cause disruption in Abuja in the event that Jonathan loses the election. Even the question of who was behind the bombing of the Central Mosque in Kano on November 28, 2014, is largely unresolved.<sup>19</sup>

### ***Broader Patterns***

At this point, it may be useful to step back from the recent violence and review broader patterns of religious affiliation and conflict across the country. Nigeria is not only the largest half Muslim, half Christian country by far but also ranked as the most religious. With between three hundred and four hundred ethno-linguistic groups, it is as well one of the most complex, though three ethnic identities make up two-thirds of the population: Hausa-Fulani at 30 percent, Yoruba at 20 percent, and Igbo at 17 percent.

In general, Hausa-Fulani tend to be Muslim. Yoruba are split evenly between Muslim and Christian. Igbos are predominantly Christian. Hence ethnic and religious identities may be conjoined, which also tends to reinforce regional zones: the north, predominantly Muslim; the southwest, a mixture of Yoruba Muslims and Christians; and the southeast, predominantly Christian Igbos.

Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has witnessed its share of conflicts, including a 1967–70 civil war when the southeast tried to secede as Biafra. The numerous coups and attempted coups have often had a regional/ethno-religious flavor. Since the return to civilian rule in 1999—the so-called Fourth Republic—insurgencies have flared up in the south-south (Niger Delta) and the northeast (especially Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states), postelection violence was serious in Kaduna in 2011, and in the Middle Belt, herder-farmer violence continues.

The phrase *Boko Haram* is an out-group ascription meaning “Western education is prohibited.” Its preferred name is Jama’atu ahlis Sunnah Lidda-awati Wal Jihad, which translates loosely as Movement (or people) for Sunnah and Jihad. The name also appears increasingly in Western writings abbreviated as JAS (Jama’atu Ahlis Sunnah). The group has caused havoc in the northeast and throughout the north. The government has responded with states of emergency in parts of the north, especially between 2011 and 2014, that have led to a heavy-handed military campaign, which has tended to alienate some of the grassroots. In November 2014, the National Assembly refused to extend the state of emergency in the northeast as a political signal that military solutions were counterproductive.

Meanwhile, in January 2012, a splinter group calling itself Ansarul Muslimna fi Biladis Sudan (Partisans of Muslims in Black Africa), often called Ansaru in English, evolved to include links with violent extremist groups, including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, throughout the Sahel region. The group has protested the killing of Muslims by the JAS and has focused to some extent on kidnapping non-Nigerians for ransom. Because ransom can be lucrative, other criminal groups in the north have also taken up the practice.

In the summer and fall of 2014, Boko Haram took and held ground in Gwoza (Borno) and Mubi (Adamawa) and, as mentioned, declared an Islamic caliphate. From all appearances, the explicit model seemed to be the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. An obvious parallel was the capture and use of sophisticated government military weapons. The response of the Nigerian government was to detain officers for abandoning their posts and demand that they regain lost ground.<sup>20</sup>

## *Muslim Identity Patterns*

A further refinement of religious identities is evident. In the Muslim community, historically, the predominant types have revolved around Sufi brotherhoods. The dominant one, the Tijaniyya, was based in Kano, especially among the merchant class, and had links across West Africa and into parts of North Africa. The Qadiriyya, originally based in Sokoto but more recently in Kano, was associated with the upper-class segments of the Hausa-Fulani establishment. In both cases, efforts were made to link into the Sokoto caliphal legacy. In general, relations between the two brotherhoods were cordial, in part because of a shared premise of saints as intercessors to God.

After the collapse of the First Republic in the wake of assassinations that led to civil war, the military era began the transition to an oil-based economy. This petro-state era had a significant impact on the Muslim establishment in allowing for an increase in the numbers of pilgrims participating in the annual trips to Mecca. Because the Saudi government promoted a Wahhabi version of Islam based only on the Quran and Sunnah, tension with the Sufi versions of Islam common in West Africa was inevitable and facilitated the growth of neo-Salafist groups.

In Nigeria, this took the mild form of Izala (Jama'atul Izatul Bid'ah Wa'ikhamatul Sunnah, or JIBWIS), which originally was based in the new cities of Kaduna and Jos and in the halls of universities, where students no longer had the time to engage in the extensive traditional Sufi voluntary prayers that their parents had. They instead often participated in the Muslim Students Society, which tended to be mainstream but more in the Izala model. The Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN) was also mainstream and encompassed more than five hundred local groups around the country.

Many in the north and southwest identified simply as Muslims, however. Within the emirate areas of the Sokoto caliphate—touching fourteen of the nineteen northern states—this mixture was stable and instances of violence were rare.

The precolonial Borno caliphate in Borno and Yobe states had distinctive features, including a resistance to Sokoto, a Kanuri rather than Hausa-Fulani population base, and a reluctance to engage in Sufism. Over a thousand years, the Borno caliphate produced a distinctive Quran and Sunnah political culture.

All of the establishment Muslim groups are contained within the National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. This organization—which is under serious attack by Boko Haram—is led by the sultan of Sokoto as president, the shehu of Borno as vice president, and a distinguished legal scholar from the southwest as secretary general. The larger question is the extent to which traditional religious leaders still command the support of grassroots followers. In the northeast by the fall of 2014, for example, at least nine emirs had fled, often to Abuja, rather than face the violence of Boko Haram.

The Boko Haram brand has evolved over time, first emerging in 2002–03 in the Borno area. Originally it was quietist, but after clashes with the federal police, it began to take on a more confrontational tone. In 2009, the police assassination of the charismatic leader of the group—Muhammad Yusuf—saw hundreds of young men killed or jailed. In 2010, a jail break by Yusuf followers in Bauchi set the tone of increased violence between security forces and the remnants of the group.

A factional hard-liner—Abubakar Shekau—claimed leadership, often killing more moderate members who rejected his violent jihad. After the election of 2011, Boko Haram hard-line groups, which had gone underground, increased their violence against schools, police stations, banks, churches, bus stops, and even international targets.

Thus, since 2010, Boko Haram factions have ranged from passive supporters in the north—sympathetic to the critiques of injustice, abuse of power, and corruption—to a more recent set of hard-line transnational fighters. Although Boko Haram is quintessentially a Nigerian

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network, this transnational group attracted the attention of the international community. The U.S. State Department put a bounty of seven million dollars on each of the top leaders to encourage their capture, encourage defections, and forestall designation of the entire group, as well as prevent Boko Haram from being linked to other international terrorist groups.

This changed in November 2013, when pressures built up in the United States to designate all of Boko Haram as a foreign terrorist organization. Yet to this day, Boko Haram is a network that defies clear definition, by either the Nigerian government or the international community.

Curiously, in April 2014, Abubakar Shekau—who had been moving from Mali to northern Cameroon “in exile”—announced on Hausa television that the inspiration for his jihad was none other than Usman Dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto caliphate. This was a direct challenge to the Muslim establishment in Nigeria, given that virtually all groups traced some linkage to Usman Dan Fodio’s reform movement in the early nineteenth century. Shekau is Kanuri by ethnicity—although the lingua franca of Boko Haram is Hausa—and the Borno caliphate was never conquered by the Sokoto caliphate. Hence the implication was that Shekau was broadening his focus to the entire north, including the Middle Belt, and not just the northeast.

### ***Christian Identity Patterns***

The Christian side of the Nigerian religious street is also complicated. Five main clusters are clear: Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, evangelical, Pentecostal, and syncretistic groups that blend Christianity with indigenous religions. Some patterns are regional, such as evangelicals in the Middle Belt and syncretists in the southwest. But Pentecostals, mainstream Protestants, and Roman Catholics are spread throughout the country. Mainline Protestant and Catholic Christianity have spread north from the coastal areas.

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) is made up of five blocs: the Christian Council of Nigeria, the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, the Evangelical Fellowship of West Africa, and the Organization of African Instituted Churches. CAN has women and youth wings, a national executive council of 105 members that elects the president, plus a general assembly of 304 members. The current president is Ayo Oritsejafor, senior pastor of the Word of Life Bible Church. The vice president is Archbishop Daniel Okoh, president of the Organization of African Instituted Churches.<sup>21</sup>

In general, Roman Catholics in Nigeria have a long tradition of reaching out to Muslim counterparts. The sense of hierarchy produced a strong similarity between church fathers and emirate authorities. Even the Nigerian versions of mainline Protestants tended to gravitate toward more hierarchical structures and for the most part had no problem interacting with Muslims.

The Evangelical and Pentecostal groups, however, often based in the Middle Belt as a result of western missionary movements, had a more confrontational stance with northern Muslims. This was especially noticeable in Plateau State. These groups are now well situated in the Sabon Gari settlements (new towns) of the north. In some states, such as Kaduna, as a result of ethno-religious conflict the area between the new town and old town areas is a virtual no-go zone. By contrast, the syncretistic groups—such as the African Instituted Churches—especially in the southwest, have set a tone of tolerance that extends to both Muslims and Christians in that area.

The CAN umbrella organization shows clear internal tensions. Although the various churches have cooperated to build an ecumenical center in Abuja, partly to create parity with the national mosque, in recent months the Roman Catholics have suspended their membership in CAN on the grounds that its Pentecostal leaders are too closely associated with the government of President Goodluck Jonathan.

In the early fall of 2014, the detainment of Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor’s private jet in South Africa, complete with nearly ten million dollars in cash to buy weapons, raised suspicions

in the north that the pastor's private militia, Christian Soldiers for Christ, was arming for a confrontation with Muslims. The national security adviser tried to assuage such suspicions with the public statement that the weapons were for the federal government. Many in the north, however, saw this as a cover-up to try to ensure interfaith peace in the country. Ayo, one of his closest confidantes, then joined President Jonathan on a Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem in late October.

### ***Do Religious Symbols Exacerbate or Mitigate Conflict?***

In each of the conflicts mentioned, religious extremists have added fuel to the fire. In some cases, the exacerbation was intentional, but in others indirect or even unintentional. This may occur at the state or local levels, as in the case of Muslim herders versus Christian farmers, especially in Plateau State. In other cases, the national tensions stemming from political party competition—often with regional or ethno-religious implications—have been stoked by party stalwarts on all sides.

The need to balance national presidential tickets has enormous symbolic value. Thus, in 2011, Jonathan selected the Muslim governor of Kaduna, Namadi Sambo, as his running mate. In December 2014, this same team represented the PDP again. In 2011, Buhari selected as his running mate a Pentecostal preacher from the southwest, Tunde Bakare. In 2014, the APC vice presidential candidate was Yemi Osinbajo. Clearly, presidential capacity to reach out across the religious divide is a key to obviating tensions.<sup>22</sup>

In short, the future stability of Nigeria may well lie in the hands of those at the top levels of the party system who must be thoughtful and skilled in managing the realities of religious identity politics. Even more important, given the winner-take-all nature of presidential politics, is the capacity of national leaders to manage ethno-religious symbols in a way that promotes unity rather than disunity.

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The power of example in interfaith relations is extremely important at every level. The imam and the pastor experience in Kaduna State demonstrates how former enemies can join forces to encourage peace between major communities of faith. Other grassroots interfaith nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have also made great strides in states such as Kano, where sports are used to bring youth communities together. Federal universities also have a role to play, one example being the Centre for Peace Studies at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.

In addition, public voices of religious leaders are important at all levels. Likewise, if such voices are silent, peace is an unlikely outcome. At the national level, the quasi-governmental National Interfaith Religious Council (NIREC) set up in 1999 with twenty-five Muslim and twenty-five Christian leaders worked well when led by the sultan of Sokoto and the Roman Catholic archbishop (as president of CAN). More recently, the president of CAN has shifted to a Pentecostal preacher with perceived ties to the Jonathan administration. This has caused the Catholics to put their CAN membership in suspension. Indeed, the NIREC has held few meetings since the split.

Given this NIREC vacuum, an NGO has emerged, the Interfaith Initiative for Peace (IIP). Its August 2014 conference brought together some five hundred religious leaders, academics, and senior government officials at all levels from across the country, especially the north. Future IIP conferences may focus on the need for conflict resolution between the various political party factions once the party conventions have selected candidates. Others may be held outside Nigeria, bringing key Nigerian religious leaders together to address common challenges. Sometimes the focus is on intrafaith cooperation. One such event was the pan-African conference of Muslim leaders that focused on vaccinations and religion, held in Dakar in March 2014.<sup>23</sup>

By the same token, senior Muslim religious leaders in Nigeria and abroad have rallied. This takes real courage at the local level given that Boko Haram has a history of assassinating such outspoken leaders. Significantly, in April 2014, highly respected imams in Saudi Arabia con-

demned the movement as un-Islamic. The sultan of Sokoto has been especially public in this regard. The newly appointed emir of Kano—Muhammad Sanusi II—an Islamic scholar in his own right, responded to the Kano Central Mosque bombing in late November with the statement, “We cannot be intimidated.”<sup>24</sup>

The claim of Abubakar Shekau to be the rightful heir to the jihad of Usman Dan Fodio is a direct challenge to the Sufi brotherhoods, the Izala, the women’s groups (such as FOMWAN), and the emirate leaders, all of which claim a link to the early nineteenth century. Indeed, both the sultan (Sa’ad Abubakar III) and the national security adviser (Mohammed Sambo Dasuki) are direct descendants. The Usmanu Danfodiyo University in Sokoto is a living testament to the legacy of the Sokoto caliphal founders, who were scholars of the highest level.

The overwhelming majority of Muslims and Christians are moderate in their interfaith relations. Only the extremists have taken to violent conflict. The current Boko Haram crises throughout the north, and increasingly throughout the middle zone of the federation, have the potential to destabilize the entire country, however.

The elections of 2015 will determine whether religious or political extremists or moderates prevail. Another test will be whether the inheritors of the Sokoto legacy and the Borno legacy can reestablish their legitimacy at the grassroots level. In the long run, such a narrative firewall against violent extremism may be more potent than attack helicopters and military confrontations. The response of traditional emirate leaders to Boko Haram is a work in progress, but the forceful counternarrative response of the emir of Kano in November 2014 was a significant development.

In a petro-state context, given no official role for emirs and chiefs, their tendency of working closely with the government in power means that the gap between leaders and grassroots may not close. The Boko Haram narrative at present seems to be antigovernment and is moving toward a new order, an Islamic caliphate, that caters to the needs of the grassroots.

The effort to prevent or mitigate conflict, confront extremism, and provide a convincing narrative of cooperation has numerous parallel tracks. This report focuses on improved interfaith relations as a precondition to conflict management. Addressing security, education, employment, and the like may also be a precondition, or at the very least a parallel track. Thus, unless interfaith relations are set right, other policies of conflict management are not likely to succeed. Courage, leadership, and thoughtfulness are needed in all domains: religious, political, social, military, economic, and academic. Clearly, political leadership is essential to facilitating interfaith cooperation and confronting violent extremists.

***Unless interfaith relations are set right, other policies of conflict management are not likely to succeed.***

## Countdown to the 2015 Elections

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), under the chairmanship of Attahiru Jega, has announced that the elections will be held in two stages in February 2015 to allow any litigation to be completed before the swearing-in on May 29. The presidential election and National Assembly elections will be held on February 14. The gubernatorial and State Assembly elections will be held on February 28. States such as Bayelsa, Anambra, Ondo, Ekiti, Osun, and Adamawa will not have governorship contests because they only recently did so.

The INEC placed restrictions on when campaigning could begin, but these restrictions were often honored in the breach.<sup>25</sup> As noted earlier, party conventions were scheduled for early December. Before that time, speculations as to possible candidates, especially by the APC, were extensive, and potential candidates sent feelers out around the country to drum up support.

Given security concerns in many northern states, the question has arisen as to whether the elections could be held at all in states under state-of-emergency conditions, specifically, Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa. Indeed, given increasing extremist violence in northern areas,

might the entire national election be postponed? The technical challenge to the INEC is how to allow the millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) their right to vote.

Suspensions were running high even as early as August 2014, when the national conference in Abuja concluded its deliberations with a number of last-minute surprises that increased tensions between northern and southern delegates. Was there a hidden agenda by President Jonathan's supporters?

### ***The National Conference: Last-Minute Surprises?***

The national conference—established by President Jonathan, held on March 17, 2014, and attended by 492 delegates—considered the full range of challenges facing Nigeria and adopted a consensus model. During the week of August 11, the three-volume, nine-hundred-page conference report was completed. It categorized its recommendations as requiring executive decisions, legislative decisions, and constitutional amendments. The main issues follow:

- **State police.** It was widely recognized that the Nigerian police were not capable of addressing security challenges alone. Soldiers were therefore taking on police work. It was left to each state to determine whether it wanted to introduce state-level police, which was a major step toward enhancing local level security.
- **Immunity clause for leaders in office.** Corruption, poor governance, and impunity were transparent. The impeachment option for governors was clearly being abused. The larger issue was how to hold those in office accountable.
- **Form of government.** The conference agreed to retain the presidential model but to move toward the French system of linking the executive and legislature closer.
- **Demand for eighteen new states.** An additional state in the southeast was agreed on the grounds of parity. The conference recommended that states wanting to come together would not get an additional allocation from the federal government.
- **Diaspora voting.** This issue was agreed to in principle but postponed indefinitely after northern spokesmen announced the presence of seven million northern Nigerians living in Niger and Sudan to counterbalance southern counterparts possibly living in western countries.
- **Derivation of funding.** The south-south zone was unhappy because it thought it had in the 2005 conference been promised 18 percent for derivation, 5 percent for solid mineral development, and 5 percent for an intervention fund for stabilization and reconstruction in those parts of the country ravaged by insurgencies. In the final analysis, the current arrangement was left in place and the matter referred to the president to possibly appoint a technical committee.

On August 13, a debate on the conference report was eclipsed by the introduction—without warning—of a new 2014 draft constitution. The northern delegates, on inspecting the document, immediately came to the conclusion that it might lead to the country's splitting up. They also sensed that because the Supreme Court had ruled that office holders under previous constitutions were still entitled to two terms, President Jonathan and some governors had a way to evade the term limits under the 1999 constitution. They also criticized the process, saying that the conference was in no way empowered to engage in constitutional drafting. This was argued to be the purview of the National Assembly.

Northern delegates intimated that President Jonathan may have intended to put the new draft constitution to a referendum—which he could win—that would obviate the need for elections in February. Some talk by delegates characterized the constitution as setting up a Greater South, to include the Christian Middle Belt, as distinct from a Sharia North. This, in effect, would divide the country and shift the demographic weight southward.

Thus, the conference came to an end with northern suspicions extremely high regarding the intentions of the Jonathan administration. Significantly, the delegation from Benue State, in the Middle Belt, sided strongly with the Muslim north, thus creating a de facto interfaith alliance based on the old northern region.

### ***The Politics of Security***

In early August 2014, National Security Adviser Mohammed Sambo Dasuki presented a paper titled “Challenges of Governance in Era of Insurgency” at Harvard University’s Nigeria Security Summit. The speech, reproduced in the Nigeria press, is significant for what it reveals about the political context of security issues:

Ladies and gentlemen, all the effort of government can only be achieved if there is peace. The ongoing antics of the Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Liddaawati Wal Jihad, commonly known as Boko Haram, is threatening our very democratic foundations. They strive not only to dismantle democratic structures but to prevent the provision of state services, such as health, education, commerce, and security. Their activities have forced thousands to flee their homes, jobs, and communities, pushing them into poverty. It is therefore important to understand the effects of insurgency on governance and the additional challenges that leaders face in striving to deliver on their promises to citizens....I wish to catalogue here efforts made so far to deal with the insurgency. Terrorism has come with both challenges and opportunities. It has enabled us to change our laws, rebuild our institutions, and create platforms for greater coordination and cooperation within and across agencies tasked with security. Additionally we have developed avenues that allow us to synergize our efforts and work more collaboratively with the civil society. In short we have devised a national security model that is inclusive, premised on the provision of peace, security and development, through a whole of society approach.<sup>26</sup>

Assessing security doctrines and structures is difficult, but the issue is clearly a major point of contention between the government and the major opposition party, the APC. Given the APC’s northern orientation, it is likely that peace and security will continue to be a major base of its platform and campaign.

The speech was followed by discussant critiques of Nigeria as a failed state. One significant issue is the capacity, or lack of it, of the Nigerian army to affect the Boko Haram offensive in the northeast.

According to *The Economist*,

Nigeria’s security forces have only slim prospects of rolling back the insurgency. Government soldiers are said to have fled Bama, as they did in earlier attacks on other towns; a whole battalion fled to Cameroon last month....A recent report by Chatham House, a London-based think-tank, points out that soldiers in the north-east are suffering from malfunctioning equipment, low morale, desertions, and mutinies. Despite a large increase in government spending on the army, little of this largess has found its way to the front lines; many of the troops fighting against Boko Haram have been paid late, or sometimes not at all.<sup>27</sup>

Into this dangerous mix of insurgency, military funding, and national politics comes the election of February 2015. Opposition parties are concerned that incumbents have the inherent advantage in terms of finances, organization, campaign permits, and the like. Thus, the basic question is whether the presidential election will be free and fair.

It is widely known in the north—and to the international community—that the “bunkering” of oil in the Delta is fueling PDP campaign funds. Large ships are no longer waiting out at sea for smaller vessels to off-load stolen crude oil but actually come into port and load up with manifests, indicating government authority to do so.

This political environment is related to the security issue of the two hundred abducted school girls. The Northern Elders Forum, an NGO, challenged the president to either get the girls back by the end of October or forfeit the support of the north in the election. Outraged, the president's aides replied that he would not be intimidated into doing his duty as commander-in-chief. Security had become the central issue in the north and was becoming the central issue for the international community.

The obvious question is whether national political leadership will emerge in either the opposition party or the government party to change the direction of policies and begin to redress the grievances of the north.

### ***Northern APC Presidential Candidates***

Northern political candidates will be successful only in a coalition with the south. In the south, the major demographic center is Lagos, which has approximately sixteen million inhabitants, about half of whom are Muslim and half Christian. Its northern counterpart is Kano, which has approximately twelve million inhabitants, predominantly Muslim. Both states have elected governors who are leaders in the APC. Indeed, many consider the two cities to be the centers of government opposition.

Governor Babatunde Fashola of Lagos is widely regarded as one of Nigeria's most effective executive governors because of his extraordinary ability to implement development projects.<sup>28</sup> His mother was a Christian and his father a Muslim. He was raised by his mother in the Christian church but converted to Islam at the age of twenty-one. He is raising his children to respect both religions and is a powerful voice for interfaith cooperation.<sup>29</sup> Because Fashola is a Yoruba Muslim, however, and the north thinks its time for a northern Muslim president, it was difficult to imagine him on a Muslim-Muslim national ticket. He had been considered as a possible vice presidential candidate, but the slot went to another Lagos senior figure, Yemi Osinbajo, on December 17.

The presidential candidate focus therefore shifted to the governor of Kano State, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso.<sup>30</sup> Born on October 21, 1956, he trained as a civil engineer at Kaduna Polytech and then in the UK at Nottingham University (1987–91). While in the UK, he was involved in student politics, deputy speaker of the House of Representatives, and an elected delegate to the constitutional conference. In 1999, again in Nigeria, Kwankwaso was elected governor of Kano State (1999–2003) on the PDP ticket. In 2003, he was appointed federal minister of defense (2003–06) and subsequently special adviser to President Jonathan on Darfur and Somalia (2006–07). During 2009 and 2010, he served as representative of the Northwest Zone on the Niger Delta Development Commission. In 2011, he was again elected PDP governor of Kano State. In 2014, he switched to the APC and has been a major critic of the Jonathan administration. This move is especially salient given that he has worked closely with the Jonathan government and knows its strengths and weaknesses. Considered young, Kwankwaso is dynamic, an engineer with a passion for "making things work" and an ability to withstand the pressures of opposition political life. He has cracked down on violence in Kano using a special cohort of youth neighborhood watch monitors—replete with distinguishable hats and gear. Nigerian governors do not control the state police, which are federal.

In September 2014, Kwankwaso sent exploratory envoys around the country to determine possible support for a presidential bid. He neither had a national organization in place nor was the usual wheeler-dealer Nigerian politician, which might affect his coalition-building abilities. He did, however, represent mid-career professionals in the north who wanted to end the insurgency and get back to developmental initiatives. Clearly, jobs and education are key to stifling the insurgency and promoting development.

In late October 2014, shortly after the announcement of Atiku Abubakar and Muhammadu Buhari as APC candidates, Kwankwaso announced his own candidacy. He claimed the need for

a shift of political generations and a new approach to politics. He also claimed that because of his ties with the PDP and his friendships with most northern governors, he enjoyed cross-party support.

Waiting in the wings, however, was a second northern contender—Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, speaker of the House of Representatives since 2011. Born on January 10, 1966, in Sokoto State, he is the son of the waziri of Tambuwal Village, attended Usmanu Danfodiyo University, received a law degree in 1991, and became a member of the bar in 1992. In 2003, he was elected to the federal House of Representatives as a member of the All Nigeria Peoples Party. After defecting to the PDP, he was reelected in 2007, serving as deputy chief whip of the House from 2007 to 2011, when he was elected speaker, the fourth highest office in Nigeria. In late October 2014, he switched parties again, this time to the APC. Through back channels, he told Kwankwaso that he too intended to run for president on an APC ticket. In late November, Tambuwal filed papers for the Sokoto gubernatorial race as well. He remained a major national figure and was pressured and harassed by the Jonathan faction and security forces for his continuing role as speaker of the House of Representatives.

Tambuwal has an extensive national base of political contacts and strong backing from the Tinubu/Fashola faction of the APC. Fearless in the face of pressures from the Jonathan faction of the PDP, he has traveled internationally and is widely considered one of the brightest and most able of his generation.<sup>31</sup> As a constitutional lawyer, he is dedicated to making the civilian Fourth Republic a success.

Of the older generation, the two northern APC candidates were Atiku Abubakar and Muhammadu Buhari, both extremely well-known figures. Atiku, as he is best known, was vice president on the PDP ticket under President Olusegun Obasanjo from 1999 to 2007. Buhari was military head of state in the mid-1980s and ran for president as the opposition candidate in 2003, 2007, and 2011.

Atiku announced his intention to contest in late September 2014. Born in Adamawa to an itinerant Fulani trader on November 25, 1946, Atiku studied at the Institute of Administration in Zaria State and went into the customs service until he resigned in 1989 to pursue business interests. Wealth and political savvy have enabled him to build and maintain his political network throughout Nigeria. Yet his home base in Yola, Adamawa State, is complicated by the many contending political factions in that state. It is also not clear how much political support he has in the south among the APC political heavyweights.

Muhammadu Buhari, born in Katsina State on December 17, 1942, is a retired major general in the Nigerian army who served as governor of the former North-Eastern State (today the states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe) from 1975 to 1976, as minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources from 1976 to 1978, and as head of the Nigerian state in 1984 and 1985. Buhari has become a folk hero at the grassroots level in the north because of his opposition to corruption and his swiftness in dealing with insurrections. He also never sought to enrich himself while managing the petroleum industry or as head of state. At present, he lives modestly in Kaduna. He is the central figure in the APC.<sup>32</sup> The best known of the APC candidates, he has extensive ties in the southwest. In the southeast, however, he is occasionally vilified as a Muslim extremist.

Two additional APC presidential candidates were Sam Nda-Isaiah, a Christian from Niger State and owner/proprietor of the Leadership media group, and Governor Rochas Okorochoa of Imo State in the southeast and a Christian/Igbo leader. Between them, these two received only a handful of the eight thousand delegate votes at the Lagos APC convention in December 2014.

The leading northern Muslim opposition leaders—Kwankwaso, Tambuwal, Abubakar, and Buhari—thus represent two distinct generations: those who have served at high national level (Abubakar and Buhari), in their late sixties or early seventies, and those of a mid-career

generation who have extensive state and federal experiences (Kwankwaso and Tambuwal). The final result of the APC convention voted overwhelmingly for Buhari, Kwankwaso coming in at second, and Abubakar a close third.

### ***The PDP Candidate***

On the PDP side, what was more certain to most observers was the reelection bid of current President Goodluck Jonathan. Born November 29, 1957, he is an Ijaw-speaking Christian from a modest family in Bayelsa State. He holds a bachelor's degree in zoology, a master's in hydrobiology and fisheries biology, and a doctorate in zoology from the University of Port Harcourt. A teacher before entering politics in 1998, he served as governor of Bayelsa from December 2005 to May 2007, when he was selected to serve as vice presidential running mate to Umaru Yar'Adua. When Yar'Adua died in May 2010, Jonathan assumed the presidency and in 2011 ran in his own right.

Jonathan announced his bid for the PDP ticket on November 11, 2014. His close supporters tried to arrange for a unanimous vote of support at the convention, insisting on his "incumbent's right of first refusal." Jonathan's base is in the south-south. Although many of those in Bayelsa State who know him best are not supporting him, he does have the blessing of many ex-militants from the Delta, who are doing very well under his presidency. Jonathan's detractors often claim he is a captive of such forces.

More ominously, Jonathan's support in the southeast seems mobilized by Christian groups fearful of developments in the north. Of Jonathan's fifteen reportedly close advisers, only two are from the north: Ambassador Hassan Tukur from Adamawa State and Malam Adamu Muazu from Bauchi State. Two others are senior Christian leaders—Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, president of CAN, and John Kennedy Opara, executive secretary of the Nigerian Christian Pilgrims Board—who have been mobilizing Christian groups across the country in support of Jonathan. The absence of Vice President Namadi Sambo from the inner circle is conspicuous.<sup>33</sup>

On the positive side, Jonathan's "transformation" campaign was in full swing between August and October and had the apparent support of two former northern opposition governors. Attahiru Bafarawa of Sokoto and Ibrahim Shekarau of Kano had joined the PDP partly because the current governors in those two states had defected to the APC. In addition, the military has been reshaped on Jonathan's watch to reflect loyalty to the president. Jonathan has also been active and visible on the international scene, though his detractors argue that he has been oblivious to the problems at home, especially in the north. His international campaign consultants are first-rate professionals.

Perhaps most politically important to Jonathan's campaign, the State Security Service—which is tasked with protecting the president and other high state officials—conducts regular grass-roots assessments of how the February election will play out in all 774 local government authorities. This can be justified on security grounds, but more significantly provides vital information about the president's strengths and any necessary political adjustments, including the possibility of canceling elections in the name of security concerns. It also allows for the possibility that presidential election results have already been calibrated to ensure a Jonathan victory.

## **Conclusions**

Why is the national election scheduled for February 2015 of particular importance in Nigeria, apart from the winner-take-all stakes in a petro-state? There has, after all, never been a Nigerian national election the incumbent did not win. Transitions from military regimes to civilian regimes are of course a separate matter. This situation raises the frustration levels of opposition parties, even if they are able to form cross-regional national coalitions before the election. In the past, this has led to national instability.

During the First Republic (1960–66), under a parliamentary system, the ruling coalition components came from the north and east and evolved into a national two-party system. In May 1964, tensions in Ibadan and Lagos resulted in a countrywide general strike. By the December 1964 election, strife in the southwest spilled over into a follow-up election in the southwest in the spring of 1965. Tensions rose, and in January 1966, eleven top political leaders in the north and southwest were assassinated in a coup attempt. Backlash against the perceived perpetrators was serious. In the wake of a countercoup, the national system broke down when the southeast attempted to secede into a new state of Biafra. The result was a civil war from 1967 to 1970, in the course of which two million people perished.

This civil war is the central trauma of the Nigerian political experience. During the reconstruction period, every effort was therefore made to design mechanisms to facilitate national unity. These include

- designing population census data to exclude religious and ethnic identities,
- trying to achieve political party regional balance on national tickets,
- prohibiting ethnic or religious labels of political parties,
- implementing the principle of north-south power shifting,
- requiring power-sharing principles at both federal and state executive levels,
- establishing the symbolism of nonpreferentialist religious balance at the national level,
- sharing the national budget in a transparent and balanced way among the states,
- establishing interfaith conflict mediation centers at the leadership level,
- promoting interfaith communication and cooperation, and
- setting up zoning structures as surrogates for ethno-religious identities.

During the Second Republic (1979–83), the incumbent northern-based party won the 1983 national presidency. In response to political corruption, however, a bloodless senior-officer military coup at the end of 1983 put Buhari in place as head of state.

During the stillborn “Third Republic” (June 1993), the military abrogated the national election on the basis of allegations of malfeasance in the southeast and south-south. The return to civilian rule in 1999 and the election of General Obasanjo—of the PDP—provided a transition to the current Fourth Republic. Obasanjo was reelected in 2003. In 2007, PDP candidate Umaru Yar’Adua from Katsina State won the election but died in May 2010. Under the doctrine of necessity, his vice president, Goodluck Jonathan, from Bayelsa State, was then installed as president and then reelected in 2011.

Throughout these pendulum swings between civilian and military regimes, and the turmoil of the civil war, coups, and countercoups, many Nigerians have retained a vision of civilian government in which finances were transparent, incumbents were held accountable, and challenges of development were addressed equitably. The case presented to the Nigerian voters in 2015 will thus revolve around these issues but within a larger context of strengthening national unity.

Nigeria faces numerous challenges, including the insurgency of Boko Haram and continued turmoil in the Delta. The drop in world oil prices will make it imperative that oil theft be curtailed so that legitimate development functions can occur. Most important will be a national election such that whoever wins, it will stand as a milestone in the quest for democratic practices rather than as a testament to a failed state. The capacity to employ the symbolism of interfaith cooperation at all levels will be a contribution not only to Nigerians, but to the world.

## Notes

1. “Deadlock over Buhari’s Running Mate,” *Daily Trust*, December 16, 2014.

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An online edition of this and related reports can be found on our website ([www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)), together with additional information on the subject.

2. "Buhari Names VP Candidate Today...Tinubu Holds Out Till Last Minute," *Daily Trust*, December 17, 2014.
3. Yemi Osinbajo is a southwestern (Yoruba) Christian, a protégé of Tinubu, former attorney general of Lagos State, and married to Obafemi Awolowo's granddaughter.
4. Jacob Zenn, "Boko Haram Opens New Fronts in Lagos and Nigeria's Middle Belt," *Terrorism Monitor* 12, no. 15, July 25, 2014.
5. "Col. Umar Warns: While Nigerians Are Divided, Boko Haram Is Taking Over Our Country," *Sahara Reporters*, November 14, 2014.
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9. "Boko Haram Kidnaps Wife of Cameroon's Vice PM, Kills 3 At Least," *Reuters*, July 27, 2014, [www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/27/us-cameroon-violence-boko-haram-idUSKBN0FWOCQ20140727](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/27/us-cameroon-violence-boko-haram-idUSKBN0FWOCQ20140727).
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11. "Sheikh El-Zakzaky Speaks on Clash Between Shiites and Nigerian Troops," *Sahara Reporters*, July 26, 2014. See also "Nigerian Troops Kill Sheikh Zakzaky's Sons, Others in Zaria," *Sahara Reporters*, July 25, 2014; "Zakzaky's 3 Sons, 9 Others Killed as Soldiers, Shiites Clash in Zaria," *Daily Trust*, July 26, 2014.
12. "6 Killed, 13 Injured in Kano Twin Blasts," *Daily Trust*, July 28, 2014; "Buhari, Sheikh Dahiru's Narrow Escape Nigeria Saved from Calamity—Jonathan," *Daily Trust*, July 28, 2014.
13. "Emir Sanusi Leads First Eid Prayers Amidst Tight Security," *Daily Trust*, July 28, 2014.
14. "Nigeria's Jihadists: The Other Caliphate," *The Economist*, September 6, 2014.
15. "Full Video and Transcript of Boko Haram Leader Shekau's Latest Video on Chibok Girls and Ceasefire Talks," *Sahara Reporters*, November 1, 2014.
16. Information on IDPs in the northeast, released informally by the Nigeria Emergency Management Agency, as of December 2014 was as follows: in the twelve Borno camps, 402,810; in the six Yola/Adamawa camps, 160,198; in the Yobe camps, 116,538. The total is 679,546 IDPs in the identified camps.
17. "In Nigeria, Fragile Hopes of Boko Haram Freeing Schools are Dashed," *New York Times*, October 31, 2014.
18. "Nigeria: A Nation Divided," *The Economist*, October 25, 2014.
19. See John Campbell, "Who Is Responsible for the Upsurge in Terrorism in Kano, Nigeria?" December 11, 2014, <http://blogs.cf.org/campbell/2014/12/11/who-is-responsible-for-the-upsurge-in-terrorism-in-kano-nigeria/>.
20. "Nigerian Defense Headquarters Orders Fleeing Soldiers to Retake Mubi from Boko Haram," *Sahara Reporters*, October 30, 2014; "Nigeria Detains Military Commanders for Abandoning Mubi to Boko Haram," *Sahara Reporters*, November 2, 2014.
21. The many CAN websites feature comments on current politics in Nigeria and concerns about Boko Haram. Previous CAN presidents have included Roman Catholic Archbishop (now Cardinal) John Onaiyekan; Bishop Taiwo Akinola (Anglican); Cardinal Archbishop of Lagos, Anthony Olunmi Okogie; and Sunday Mbang, prelate of the Methodist Church of Nigeria.
22. Regarding interfaith symbol management, President Jonathan has been "learning on the job." See "Terror: Don't Lose Hope, Jonathan Tells Nigerians," *Daily Trust*, July 26, 2014.
23. At the Dakar conference, the Izala was represented by Muhammad Kabir Haruna and Abdullahi Bala Lau; the Tijaniyya Movement of Nigeria by Ibrahim, Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi; the Qadiriyya Movement of Nigeria by Qaribullah Nasir Kabara and Bazullahi Nasir Kabara; FOMWAN by Aisha Ahmad Hassan, Saratu Lawal, and Farida Sada Yusufu; and the northern emirs by Haliru Ndanuda Yahaya (emir of Songa, Kwara State).
24. "Attack on Kano Central Mosque," *Sunday Trust*, November 30, 2014.
25. Despite the prohibition, by August 2014 Abuja was filled with billboards supporting Jonathan. See "161 Pro-Jonathan Billboards in Abuja," *Daily Trust*, September 11, 2014.
26. The speech goes on to elaborate on the national strategy, [www.peoplesdailyng.com/challenges-of-governance-in-era-of-insurgency](http://www.peoplesdailyng.com/challenges-of-governance-in-era-of-insurgency).
27. "Nigeria's Jihadists," *The Economist*.
28. Babatunde Raji Fashola was born June 28, 1963. He studied law at the University of Benin and graduated in 1987, is a member of the Nigerian Bar and an advocate of the Supreme Court, and is regarded as a protégé of former Lagos Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who he succeeded in 2007. Re-elected in April 2011, he switched to the APC.
29. Fashola was the concluding speaker at the August 2014 interfaith conference in Abuja and received a standing ovation.
30. The author is grateful to Governor Kwankwaso for extensive private discussions in March 2014.
31. The author has had extensive discussions with Speaker Aminu Waziri Tambuwal throughout 2014 in both Abuja and Washington, DC.
32. The author has known General Buhari as a friend for more than thirty years.
33. The fifteen reportedly top power brokers are identified as Special Assistant on Research and Documentation Oronto Douglas, Dame Patience Jonathan, Ambassador Hassan Tukur, Gordon Ogbua, Chief Amalate J. Turner, Senator Anyim Pius Anyim, Ijaw Chief Edwin Clark, Petroleum Minister Diezani Alison Madueke, CAN president Ayo Oritsejafar, NCPB executive secretary John Kennedy Opara, Brigadier-General Jones Oladehinde Arogbafa, PDP board of trustees chairman Tony Anenih, Akwa Ibom Governor Godswill Akpabio, PDP chairman Malam Adamu Muazu, and Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. Muideen Olaniyi, Ismail Adebayo, Abbas Jimoh, and Chris Ezeh, "2015: 15 Power Brokers in Aso Rock," *Sunday Trust*, November 16, 2014, [www.dailytrust.com.ng/sunday/index.php/top-stories/18768-2015-15-power-brokers-in-aso-rock](http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/sunday/index.php/top-stories/18768-2015-15-power-brokers-in-aso-rock).



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