

**Testimony of Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe, Esq.**

**On Behalf of Jubilee Campaign**

*What Lies Beneath: Massive Erosions of Religious Freedom & International Security  
The Boko Haram Problem in Nigeria*

**Before the**

**Subcommittee on National Security**

*Rep. Jason Chaffetz, Chairman*

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**U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**

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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee: My name is Emmanuel Ogebe and I have worked on religious liberty issues related to Nigeria for over 15 years. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on this deeply troubling but quite timely issue.

## **INTRODUCTION**

First kindly permit me to start with three sobering factoids:

- Currently, Christianity is the most persecuted religion on earth
- More Christians have been martyred for their faith this century than in previous centuries
- More Christians were killed in Northern Nigeria in 2012 than the rest of the world combined - mostly at the blood-stained hands of Islamist terror group Boko Haram also known as “The People for the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teaching and Jihad.”

This is what Boko Haram’s daily activities look like. This week I met a woman who’s fiancé was shot to death at a gas station simply because he was a Christian. Last year a pastor told how 9 boys on the way back from youth group were stopped by Boko Haram and executed by Boko Haram on the road side – all members of his congregation he had to bury.

This time last year, Boko Haram introduced a new methodology to its cruel and unusual forms of terrorism. In a single day, Boko Haram decapitated about 150 Christians using chainsaws when it mounted a fake checkpoint in Bene Sheikh in Borno state. A dozen Muslim men with government IDs were similarly slaughtered.

Naomi begged Boko Haram to kill her too after they murdered her husband and burnt her home in front of her and her newborn baby. Boko Haram declined saying they do not kill women. Months later, they came to her uncle’s home where she now lived and killed him in front of her.

In February, Boko Haram which has killed over 187 school teachers and destroyed hundreds of schools achieved a new low. It went to a boarding school and, after methodically inspecting the genitaly of the schoolboys, systematically slit the throats of those who met its crude puberty test. 59 boys in all were slaughtered in the Buni Yadi School massacre.

Then in April, Boko Haram attacked another school after hours. There were no boys left to conquer. They abducted about 300 schoolgirls in one of the highest casualty mass terror abductions of our time. Innocent schoolgirls were now fair game for the brutal band of marauding jihadists.

## **A. THE US COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM'S (USCIRF) RESPONSE TO BOKO HARAM'S ANTI-CHRISTIAN GENOCIDE**

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom, the agency Congress charged with monitoring issues of religious persecution, appears to have missed a singular opportunity to alert and advise the US to possibly the worst on-going genocide against Christians at the time.

Contrary to USCIRF's 2013 report and a recurring Department of State narrative, Boko Haram's agenda is Islamist insurgency and is not a reasonable reaction to state actions. Boko Haram has made amply and repeatedly clear its goal and purpose to remove the secular government and replace it with an Islamic Sharia state. State and federal government actions has have not been cited as a justification for its violence. Boko Haram issued an ultimatum in January of 2012 ordering all Christians to leave northern Nigeria in 72 or face attacks. Over 300 people died in the month of January alone as Boko Haram made good on its threat.

If anything, Boko Haram blames the US about as much as it berates the Nigerian government as this excerpt from its numerous diatribes indicate:

"All of them are infidels. Here is what Bush once said and we will repeat it here. He said all the fights going on in Iraq and Afghanistan are Christian war, crusade, it is a known issue. And that they will crush Afghanistan, today I will say my own. To the people of the world, everybody should know his status, it is either you are with us Mujahedeen or you are with the Christians. The likes of Obama, Lincoln, Clinton, Jonathan, Aminu Kano. They are your fathers of democracy, the likes of Tafawa Balewa. It is Usman Dan Fodiyo that is our own.

"We know what is happening in this world, it is a Jihad war against Christians and Christianity. It is a war against western education, democracy and constitution. We have not started, next time we are going inside Abuja; we are going to refinery and town of Christians. Do you know me? I have no problem with Jonathan. This is what I know in Quran. This is a war against Christians and democracy and their constitution, Allah says we should finish them when we get them."

In spite of the well documented nexus with global jihad that goes as far back as Nigerian Islamist fighters being captured fighting alongside the Taliban during the US invasion of Afghanistan, and Bin Laden's personal secretary admitting to traveling to Nigeria in a New York court, the US continued to discount the full global antecedents and jihadist aspirations of Boko Haram.

USCIRF's recommendations did not include labeling Boko Haram a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). The START Country Reports on Terrorism 2012 declared Boko Haram the second most deadly terrorist group in the world right below the Taliban.

Boko Haram has claimed the lives of over 10,000 people since 2009, both Nigerian nationals and international victims. They have killed individuals from over 15 nations – far more than ISIS, AL Qaeda and possibly the Taliban. As the terror attacks have spilled into the international community, they are a threat to not only Nigerian people but also the world at large.

USCIRF missed a singular opportunity to make a concrete, relevant and timely recommendation on a burning issue before the State Department and Congress: — by not making an evaluation and recommendation on a Foreign Terrorist Organization designation. The systemic egregious and ongoing persecution by Boko Haram, by its own admission, has shrunk the religious freedoms of Christians in Nigeria. What could be more relevant than making a recommendation on FTO designation of this culpable non-state actor responsible for Nigeria's regression in religious freedom? It is quite ironic that USCIRF recommended the Nigerian government, who USCIRF concedes does not generally persecute Christians, should be designated a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) but did not recommend FTO designation for Boko Haram which does perniciously persecute Christians.

Finally, one of the most concerning aspects of this report is that USCIRF blames Christian leaders in Nigeria for believing their population is being eradicated. USCIRF concedes that US Government perception is inconsistent with what victims on the ground say. However, it treats the threat of eradication of Christians by Boko Haram as merely a "belief" by Christian leaders and not as a direct manifesto quote of the mass-murdering terror group. In effect, USCIRF catches the lie but then turns the heat on Nigeria's Christian leaders rather than call the Department of State out on its dissimulation. As noted above, Boko Haram itself declared an ultimatum in January of 2012 ordering all Christians to leave the north or face attacks. Data shows that more Christians were killed in Nigeria in 2012 than the rest of the world combined.

Similarly, USCIRF likened the rhetoric of religious leaders to the atrocities of Boko Haram, in effect implying that religious leaders whose congregants had suffered loss of religious liberty also do not have freedom of expression to protest their persecution!

USCIRF finally visited Nigeria for the first time in several years in 2014 but local Christian leaders expressed concerns that while there was a Muslim commissioner in the delegation, no Christian commissioner attended.

## **B. STATE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE**

Part of the State Department's response was to:

- \*deny the religious motivation of a rabid jihadist group that has repeatedly declared its goal of overthrowing the state and establishing a radical Muslim theocracy;

- \*to downplay the repeated threats to America going back several years by claiming this is all "local";

- \*present arguments rationalizing terrorism by psycho-analyzing the "emotional disconnect" between the central government and northern Muslims who fuel the terrorism;

- \*press the government to throw money at the problem with no emphasis on victim compensation, and

- \*be more critical of the military counteroffensive than of the terrorists' atrocities.

In other words, "see no jihad, hear no jihad, say no jihad."

This has led to an absurd situation where the terror group has had to clarify its jihadist credentials in almost direct rebuttals of State Department characterizations. When the US said Boko Haram is "not religious" but economically motivated, the terrorists invested in a video to correct this misinformation. In a video released on November 3rd, 2013, Boko Haram leader Shekau claimed responsibility for the deaths of 35 people in an October 24, 2013 attack in the northern city of Damaturu. He stated: "This is a brief message to the world. We carried out the Damaturu attacks with Allah's help, with Allah's might, with Allah's glory and with victory from Allah, the Creator." Shekau and his group are not shy about the fact that they kill in the name of religion.

If USCIRF's positions were unfortunate, that of the Department of State (DOS) were preposterous, if not tragic. Its 2013 IRF report lamented the non-establishment of a Sharia Supreme Court in Nigeria in violation of the Nigerian constitution. Here's the problem – there is no such requirement in the Nigerian constitution and no one except Boko Haram is advocating for more sharia in Nigeria besides Boko Haram. There was therefore the absurd situation where the US seemed to be sharing a similar position with the Islamist terror group on a theological issue!

The IRF ambassador visited a record 27 countries in 29 months reportedly spending equal time in Ghana (with no reported IRF concerns) as with Nigeria with the world's highest rate of faith-based genocide that year. Nigeria's Christian leadership maintains she never met with them. At the end of the junket-filled tenure, the first ordained Christian pastor to hold the post of IRF ambassador stepped down, not to commit herself more fully to assuaging the global onslaught from which her fellow Christians were dying in record numbers but to earn a better living according to published accounts of her valedictory remarks. Yet the massive erosion of religious freedom at the hands of violent non-state actors and repressive regimes is to my mind truly the gravest civil rights issue of our day.

Similarly, on Easter Monday 2012, the top US diplomat for Africa then, Ambassador Johnnie Carson, declared, "I want to stress that religion does not drive extremism in Jos

or northern Nigeria" despite the fact that 38 innocent Nigerians were killed in terrorist bombings the day before during Easter celebrations.

This is to be contrasted with the bombing in Iraq during the eid Muslim holiday in August 2013. The DOS issued a strident statement on these attacks which incidentally were not attacks on or by Christians saying "The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms the cowardly attacks today in Baghdad. These attacks were aimed at families celebrating the Eid al-Fitr holiday that marks the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The terrorists who committed these acts are enemies of Islam and a shared enemy of the United States, Iraq, and the international community."

In Iraq, US officials advocated strenuously for the inclusion of Shias and Sunnis in the post-occupation government. When asked to similarly advocate on behalf of Christian minorities, US officials reportedly told colleagues that they would not speak on religious issues. These led to a number of absurdities – the highest ranking Christian in Iraqi government was in the Saddam era and the greatest erosion of Christianity was in the post-Saddam era!

To state that religion does not play a role in the extremism exhibited by the terrorist group is disingenuous at best and deeply insensitive to victims. To propose that it can be fixed with a commission is naïve. The US sent out billions of dollars in cash that was physically distributed around Iraq, but still signally failed to win hearts and minds to stem insurgency. To propose a repeat methodology and expect different results in Nigeria is folly.

Similarly, after the massacre of 25 Copts by the Egyptian military on October 9, 2011, "the White House lamented the "tragic loss of life among demonstrators and security forces" (emphasis added) and called for "restraint on all sides." ...Sam Tadros commented, "I call upon the security forces to refrain from killing Christians, and upon Christians to refrain from dying." <http://www.christianpost.com/news/the-war-on-christians-121604/>. This example of moral equivalency is one that not only Nigeria's persecuted minorities face.

America's missed opportunity in properly understanding and promptly responding to the Boko Haram threat has misled the Government of Nigeria, weakened its response and resulted in numerous lives lost as well as a heightened and highly evolved threat to the US homeland and global community.

A US diplomat was reportedly in Nigeria around May 2013 urging the government to pull back the army from confronting Boko Haram and hand over counterinsurgency to regular police. Interestingly the US claimed military aggression as helping Boko Haram recruitment even though Boko Haram first attacked the security forces in 2003 well before recent rights abuses (Christians, especially in Plateau state that has been occupied by the military for almost a decade, have suffered much military aggression but have not, as a result, joined Boko Haram.)

America's response to Nigeria's declaration of a state of emergency in mid May 2013 is instructive. In a statement, Secretary of State John Kerry said "The United States is deeply concerned about the fighting in northeastern Nigeria following President Jonathan's declaration of a state of emergency in the Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. "We are also deeply concerned by credible allegations that Nigerian security forces are committing gross human rights violations, which, in turn, only escalate the violence and fuel extremism.

"The United States condemns Boko Haram's campaign of terror in the strongest terms. We urge Nigeria's security forces to apply disciplined use of force in all operations, protect civilians in any security response, and respect human rights and the rule of law."

What is the problem with the US statement? Well, it refers to the "fighting" in Nigeria as if it is a simple misunderstanding between two people not an "insurgency" as it actually is. It then goes on to lament "gross human rights violations" by the army although where and how US got these "credible" allegations is unknown since the battle was aerial between aircraft and anti-aircraft weapons.

The US condemned Boko Haram's campaign of terror in one line but failed to designate them as a foreign terrorist organization. More negative words were used on the army than on the terrorists Boko haram. Indeed US insists that Nigerian army is escalating the violence and fueling extremism. From reading this, the US appears to dislike the Nigerian army as much as the terrorists. It makes excuses for the terrorists and lampoons the military. Senator Vitter has a comprehensive list of queries to Secretary Kerry that outlines worrisome watering down of terror reporting on Nigeria <http://www.vitter.senate.gov/newsroom/press/vitter-did-state-dept-mislead-on-boko-haram-terrorist-threat-under-clinton-leadership>

Recently the media reported that US Assistant Secretary of State Linda Thomas-Greenfield said Washington was "very troubled by the apparent capture of Bama and the prospects of an attack on Maiduguri. This is a sober reality check for all of us... We are past time for denial and pride." (AFP September 2014) It is truly hoped that the State Department which as recently as in May 2014 pushed for and hailed a "softer approach" to fighting terrorism in Nigeria has finally wised up to a threat of existential proportions to a key African ally and will end its "State of Denial."

Finally, although the US eventually designated Nigerian-based Jihadist Terror Group Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, the false narrative that sustained the delay in US recognition of this hideous organization continues.

Secretary of State John Kerry's recently released human rights country conditions report continues a systematic pattern of egregious false reporting once again by DOS: "Throughout much of the country, Boko Haram perpetrated numerous killings and attacks, often directly targeting civilians. During the year the sect, which recruited child soldiers, claimed responsibility for coordinated assaults on social and transportation hubs in Kano; an attack on the town of Baga; **multiple attacks on schools and mosques**; an

attack on the town of Benesheik; and the killing of government, religious, and traditional figures. On February 17, the terrorist group Ansaru, believed to be a Boko Haram faction, kidnapped seven foreigners in Bauchi State” – Executive Summary of the Nigeria report <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2013&dliid=22014>

Over 60 churches were attacked and about 2 mosques in 2013. The churches got no mention but the mosques did even though Christians are Boko Haram’s declared number one target.

Boko Haram has gone out of its way to emphasize that it does not attack Islamic places of worship. However it does assassinate Muslim critics after worship when they are vulnerable.

Boko Haram’s first attack inside a mosque in the 5-year insurgency occurred in 2013. Yet the 2014 IRF report elevates that singular incident and makes the following exaggerated claim “Civil society groups, media outlets, and politicians stated Boko Haram killed more Muslims than Christians because its primary bases of operation were in the predominately Muslim north and it frequently targeted schools, security forces, and government installations. In one such August incident, Boko Haram killed more than 20 soldiers and policemen in an attack on the Borno village of Mallam Fatori. Boko Haram also targeted Muslim civilians who aided the security forces; this was widely accepted as the motive of an attack on a mosque in Konduga, Borno State, which killed 44 worshippers on August 11.”

Unwittingly, this report revealed the fact about why Boko Haram attacks Muslims on the rare occasions that it does – there must be a motive sufficient enough to justify killing fellow Muslims when its declared goal is to eradicate Christians. The difference between Boko Haram’s attacks on Muslims and Christians is that it attacks Muslims “for cause” (e.g. collaboration with the authorities) but it attacks Christians “just because.”

Boko Haram has never seen a Christian man that it liked. All are shot or stabbed. Boko Haram uses “kill-shots” for Christian males in northern Nigeria – point-blank gunshots to the head. The most common wounds on Christian male survivors of Boko Haram attacks are head trauma from execution-style shots. The few who have survived these kill-shots spend extensive periods in reconstructive surgery in view of the horrific extent of the injuries sustained.



### C. BOKO HARAM TODAY

"In the two months since Boko Haram fighters kidnapped hundreds of schoolgirls in northeastern Nigeria, the terror group has taken at least 1,000 lives in what may be the deadliest killing spree by a single terrorist group since the Sept. 11 attacks, according to an NBC News analysis of reports from the region."

<http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/missing-nigeria-schoolgirls/bloody-toll-boko-haram-behind-deadliest-killing-spre-9-11-n130206>

Journalist Alex Perry says of Boko Haram "They seem to be even more extreme than al-Qaida. A few years ago, we could've barely imagined that. The lack of education among the highest leadership makes them very difficult to reason with, to talk to, and to expect anything other than [a] nihilist pursuit — or violence and death, really.

"I read [Osama] bin Laden's letters from the stash that was picked up from Abbottabad [Pakistan] after he was killed — and it's really interesting. After about 2007, he clearly rethinks the whole project and starts writing all these letters to different groups around the world saying, "Calm down. Stop the killing. Stop making us so unpopular."  
<http://www.npr.org/2014/07/16/331988815/nigerias-boko-haram-more-extreme-than-al-qaida-journalist-says>.

Boko Haram is no less evil than ISIS in Iraq. Practically every ignoble deed ISIS has done in the last two months of its notoriety has been done by Boko Haram in the last three years. Boko Haram has actually videoed the decapitation of a woman's head — something considered un-islamic even by hardcore jihadists.

However, Boko Haram has, as yet, not beheaded an American but this is not for want of trying. Boko Haram has attacked US nationals. I repeat - Boko Haram has attacked US citizens. During the bombing of the UN HQ in Abuja, there were several Americans known to be in the building who survived the attack. One was an American official stationed at the US embassy in Nigeria and the second was an American civilian working as a UN diplomat whom I was supposed to see at the UN that day. I was in Nigeria on the day of the bombing. Yet the U.S. has made no public statement or admission about the American survivors of that horrific attack including when asked at a May hearing of the Foreign Affairs committee.

After two years of secrecy, an American journalist recently uncovered the identity of one of the Americans in the building that day.  
[http://www.worldmag.com/2014/09/another\\_problem\\_for\\_hillary](http://www.worldmag.com/2014/09/another_problem_for_hillary).

**Since then, Boko Haram has unsuccessfully attempted to abduct several Americans in northern Nigeria that we know of based on numerous fact-finding missions.**

In a recent video, Boko Haram leader Abu Shekau declared "I want to cut White people and Obama's people", shortly after ISIS beheaded America journalist James Foley. In the same video, in which Boko Haram is shown slitting the throats of innocent people in

Gwoza, a town it captured last month, Shekau claims he killed 1000 Christians that day. This cannot be verified as he still controls that town but he has seldom made a claim that has not been proven true. Yet this direct threat to Americans and a claim of responsibility for possibly the worst single-day massacre of Christians has not been reported in the media.

Further supporting the credibility of this massacre, a Catholic Diocese in the northeast which reported last year that 50 out of 51 of its churches had been attacked just reported last week that it has lost 2500 members to Boko Haram <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/bishop-borno-adamawa-catholic-dioceses-have-lost-over-2-500-parishioners-to-insurgency/188815/>

The number of churches attacked in just this one catholic diocese in Nigeria is more than the worst violence against Coptic Christians in 700 years which claimed less than 50 churches.

The death toll of 2500 Catholics killed in this single diocese is more than double the entire Christians killed worldwide in 2012 based on data provided by World Watch Monitor.

It is not clear what period this data covers but it is still phenomenal nonetheless. Given Boko Haram's recent claim that it killed 1000 Christians after the capture of Gwoza and considering that it has captured about half a dozen towns since last month, such record-setting casualty figures would appear plausible.

## D. BATTLE FOR AFRICA

Although World Watch Monitor has consistently reported a geometric spike in Islamist terrorism in Africa (northern Nigeria alone accounted for more Christian deaths than the rest of the world combined in 2012) the United States missed an historic opportunity to engage on the centrality of religious liberty to national and global security.

Incidentally, during the US Africa summit last month, President Obama ordered airstrikes in Iraq to help save persecuted minorities who were besieged on mountaintops by ISIS—the Islamist terror group that has overrun swathes of that country. Starving refugees on mountaintops, towns overrun and their Christian population exterminated, children decapitated, girls taken as slave brides—these are not just tragic breaking news headlines from Iraq. They are the daily reality of life—and death—in northern Nigeria since the jihadi terror group Boko Haram, like ISIS, ordered Christians to leave town or die.

In fairness, when MUJAO, a jihadist group, overran northern Mali last year and destroyed churches and even relics of Timbuctoo's rich history, French and African troops, with US logistical support, helped roll back that burgeoning insurgency. In one particularly poignant online video, MUJAO insurgents were trying two men embroiled in a dispute for the affections of a woman. To crudely resolve this romantic triangle, the terrorists applied their own version of Solomonic wisdom—they shot the woman to death with a burst of AK47s as a barbaric "problem solved." MUJAO pushed Mali to the WWM's top ten most persecuted countries in 2012 from not ever being on the list of the top 50 before.

Similarly, in East Africa, after the horrific mall slaughter of Christians in Kenya (Alshabab terrorists painstakingly quizzed captives on Qur'anic verses to determine who was doomed to die and who freed), US troops ultimately captured one of the terror masterminds during a raid.

However, the *Wall Street Journal* reports that in spite of the high-profile #BringBackOurGirls (BBOG) campaign that even the First Lady Michelle Obama tweeted, US aerial surveillance flights in search of the hundreds of abducted Nigerian school girls are being cut back, barely two months after the US offered assistance.

What makes northern Nigeria's situation worse is not only that the US response has been inadequate, but that the Administration has steadfastly downplayed the religious underpinnings of the insurgency and, in particular, has outrightly denied the persecution of Christians.

This is a pattern of mischaracterization that we saw in Mali and in Kenya as well. Religious freedom or extremism was seldom recognized as the core issue. In a briefing in DC with some of the African officers responsible for fighting off MUJAO, one general leaned over to me and asked me, "what is a VEO?" I explained to him that Washington's politically correct but "multiculturally misguided" new sobriquet VEO meant "Violent

Similarly, the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls only garnered attention as a "girls' education" issue—not as a religious freedom issue—and even after the terrorists declared that the girls had been "converted to Islam," the media continues to distort the facts.

The *Wall Street Journal* infamously reported about protesters in the BBOG campaign that "Their rallies have become a referendum on whether Nigerian women—particularly poor, young, Muslim girls—are valued by a government of mostly wealthy, elderly, Christian men." About 90% of the abducted girls are Christians, but the media itself falsely implied that they were Muslim when even the US Administration has conceded this fact. Ironically, although there is validity to the fact that Nigeria's President Jonathan was slow to respond to these primarily Christian victims; most commentators conceded that Boko Haram's egregious terrorism against Christians is partly to hit back at Jonathan, who is Christian.

It is not only the US government and the media that has glossed over persecuted religious communities in Africa. A bill in Congress provides for a special envoy on religious persecution in the Middle East, but its mandate does not include Africa. Sadly, the first African American ambassador for International Religious Freedom left office without bringing to the fore the horrific situation in Africa during her tenure.

Within weeks of ISIS' atrocities in Iraq, major American Christian relief organizations were launching appeals and coordinating relief efforts. ISIS issued its ultimatum for Christians to leave Mosul in July 2014. Boko Haram issued its ultimatum for Christians to leave northern Nigeria in January 2012. Yet none of the major US relief organizations have heeded our calls to help with the humanitarian crisis that has since unfolded, while swathes of northern Nigeria have been de-Christianized via religious genocide.

Why there is all around neglect of persecuted African Christians should be the subject of interesting research someday but it is a sad day when a 16-year old Pakistani girl called Malala chooses to go to Nigeria for her birthday and denounces the same type of Islamist extremism that put a bullet in her head while Western Christendom watches. It is indeed a missed opportunity—all around.

If contemporary history has taught us anything, it is that the true problem will be recognized when it is too late. The Central African Republic sprang from not even being on the top 50 persecuted countries list previously up to the top ten persecuted countries in 2013. However, it was only after Christians began to retaliate brutal massacres by Muslim bands that Western media headlines blared about the religious nature of the conflict, with Christians portrayed as the aggressors.

Christians in Nigeria who make up approximately half of that country's population have not retaliated. Yet, they are portrayed as somehow being responsible for their own persecution by "neglecting" Muslims. Ironically, this was the same flawed thesis put forward to explain the ISIS insurgency—that they were neglected by a non-inclusive

Iraqi government. Violent Jihad is as Violent Jihad does. It cannot be rationalized through the actions of its victims. It can but be understood through its own lens, and therein lies the West's continuing missed opportunity of understanding the fundamental correlation between ISIS in Iraq, MUJAO in Mali, Alshabab in Kenya, and Boko Haram in Nigeria. Violent jihadist groups are never about an inclusive government, they are about an exclusive government.

Africa is in the maelstrom of another elephant fight. From colonialism to Nazism then communism and now Islamism.

## **E. RECOMMENDATIONS**

When Congress passed the International Religious Freedom Act, little could it have known how foresighted and prescient it was on what would turn out to be the gravest human rights issue of this decade, and arguably the greatest global security threat. The ISIS crisis in Iraq and Syria, the Gaza crisis in Palestine, Boko Haram in Nigeria all have religious dimensions to them fuelled by non-state actor terror groups. North Korea and Iran which are two global other global security trigger points are states who perniciously infringe on religious liberty making only the Ukraine crisis as one that has no overt religious undertones.

Restriction on religious freedom have tightened in the last 6 years. The world is seeing a reversion from "cold war" imprisonment to "old war" decapitations. We have moved from "iron curtain" to "iron veil" countries.

It is a putative third world war which I struggled to call an "incremental" , "retail" or "franchise" war but which was given better expression by His Holiness Pope Francis just last week when he said "even today, after the second failure of another world war, perhaps one can speak of a third war, one fought piecemeal, with crimes, massacres, destruction."

We face a troubling new era of third world war, diffuse and internal, amorphous, borderless and embedded – the ultimate Trojan. Nation's prepared for Biological warfare only to be ambushed by Theological warfare.

We have hybrid non-state actor warriors – the rise of the nebulous "enemy combatants" - from a matrix of multi-national identities. Britain which just a couple of centuries ago sent out missionaries who in many cases lay down their lives to evangelize the world to Christianity by building schools and hospitals is now exporting hundreds of radical jihadists blowing up themselves and others as well as schools and teachers and aid workers.

This hodge-podge of fighters who, for want of a better name can best be described as UFOs – Unidentified Fighting Objects – are from different climes fighting in disparate lands all at once. Yet they feed off each other. ISIS inspired by Boko Haram's tales of mass abduction of schoolgirls as slave brides has itself kidnapped women for the same

reason. Boko Haram fired up by ISIS' declaration of a caliphate has similarly annexed over half a dozen towns, videoed the slaughtering of inhabitants and also declared its own caliphate while extending greetings to ISIS. The Moro Islamist terror group in Philippines too has been re-energized.

At a time like this, IRF can ill afford to be the forgotten step-child of US foreign policy or even broader global diplomacy and security. A robust and well-funded and respected IRF office would likely have been a veritable early warning system on what has become a national security conundrum on multiple fronts.

Therefore Congress needs to increase funding and staff levels to enable USCIRF perform a crucial role in informing US positions on foreign policy, national security and global security relative to IRF.

USCIRF itself should see itself as being on the cutting edge of a burning issue and should deploy a rigorous and robust approach to evaluating situations and recommending solutions.

DOS should accord USCIRF the respect and accommodations it needs to perform a vital function that must be seen as mission critical and not merely an irritant.

The administration should not leave the office of IRF ambassador bereft of leadership for as long as it has – reportedly half the life of the current administration. If necessary, Congress should amend the Act to allow for the appointment of an acting ambassador until a substantive ambassador is installed.

The White House Office of Faith-Based Initiatives should be expanded to include an office of IRF. Similarly the IRF ambassador should be included in deliberations of the National Security Council as well as the Atrocities Prevention Panel.

## **F. CONCLUSION: IS BOKO HARAM BLOWING UP OUR GIRLS?**

In my June 11 testimony before the Africa subcommittee congressional hearing on 300 Nigerian schoolgirls abducted by Boko Haram, I noted that that same week Boko Haram had deployed their first female suicide bomber.

Following the unleashing of four female suicide bombers in as many days in July, the troubling question now arises - is Boko Haram blowing up our girls?

The trend is worrisome. This is the highest number of consecutive suicide bombings by females in recent world history.

The ages of the ladies is equally disconcerting. They have ranged from 16-19 - the exact same demographic of the 300 school girls abducted by Boko Haram in Chibok, northern Nigeria sparking global outrage.

After a one month investigation, it was my sad and unfortunate duty this week to meet with members of the Chibok community and inform them that we have positively identified one of the remains recovered from the site of a school bombing as that of an abducted Chibok schoolgirl.

From our inquiries, it appears that the girl was likely clothed in a burqa strapped with explosives probably unknown to her. She was then probably released into the school campus under a ruse from where the bomb on her was remotely detonated killing her and several students. This is our working theory of the case which brings us to the conclusion that she was not a complicit female suicide bomber but a remotely-detonated homicide victim bomber (DVB).

Boko Haram has therefore introduced into the terror lexicon the new concept of Captive Human-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (CHIED.)

Subjects we spoke to indicate that in another case of DVB or CHIED, the young girl was dropped off at a police checkpoint possibly under the pretext that she was being released. As she sought to draw the attention of the police for help, she was likely remotely detonated instantly killing. We do not have conclusive evidence in this case but the theory of that case is strikingly similar to the one we have investigated.

We have asked the community leaders to notify the family of the pastor whose daughter was blown up at a school probably as a both a punishment and a message for her daring to seek an education. We are unable to release her name at this time as we have not confirmed parental notification.

However, in tribute to the memory of this fine young Christian lady who was quite active in her campus fellowship, we reproduce here two songs that she used to love to sing:

*My pride is to be in the holy home because I know one day I will go to heaven.*

*My pride is to be in the holy home.*

*I am singing a song to praise my God. I am going to church to praise my God.*

*One day I will go to heaven. I am preaching the word of God I want to be at his right hand; so my pride is to be in the house of the lord.*

*We have come to the end of the world now. We have to stand firm and be strong in the Lord because we are now in a bad situation and there is milk and honey in the place where I am going. No matter the condition, I will not go back. The lord is my refuge. We are now in a bad situation. We better turn to God now to enjoy with Him on last day.*

May her gentle soul rest in peace...

As parents of the missing Chibok schoolgirls once said to me, "I can't understand why you won't send your kids to school but that is your prerogative. However why do you have a problem with me sending my own kids to school?" As Boko Haram now abducts and blows up other peoples' children, the world now sees a whole new vista of terror unlike anything our current civilization is capable of rationalizing.

The era when a parent's worst nightmare for their school-age kids was flunking out of high school has now been displaced with abduction, trafficking and detonation. We must as one and at once put an end to Boko Haram and its ilk and bring back our girls.

Thank you.







EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:  
PROFILE OF EMMANUEL OGEBE, ESQ

Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe is an experienced attorney specializing in international human rights with an emphasis on Africa. He earned the singular distinction of being the youngest law graduate in his home country of Nigeria. Exiled to the US after becoming one of Nigeria's political detainees during the brutal years of military dictatorship under General Abacha, Mr. Ogebe has played a role in shaping US Congressional, and foreign policy towards Nigeria's quest for democracy. In addition to testifying before the New York City council on the historic move to name a street after a slain Nigerian activist, he was first invited to testify on Nigeria before the US Congress in the 90s. Mr. Ogebe has been a guest speaker at university campuses across the US and on radio and TV programs.

Mr. Ogebe has vast experience in managing, designing and implementing complex international programs and projects in Nigeria. For over a dozen years, he has worked in an environment reputed for hardship, poor infrastructure, political risk and corruption. His specialization in US-Nigeria affairs has positioned him strategically to relate to key players on both sides of the aisle and on both sides of the Atlantic. He was consulted by the Clinton Administration as well as the Bush Administration on their Presidential visits to Nigeria in 2000 and 2003 respectively. Mr. Ogebe's experience includes working on behalf of a US Government funding entity to identify and forge co-funding alliances with stakeholders on development projects under the bilateral trade, aid, and development promotion policies.

Since country conditions account for a major component of project attrition rates in Nigeria, Mr. Ogebe's expertise in mitigating the variables that have come to be known as the "Nigerian factor," have exponentially expanded his success rate. Mr. Ogebe is also skilled at organizing local personnel and partners as well as setting up infrastructure in a timely and cost-efficient manner. His diversity of experience in a panoramic portfolio of projects from HIV/AIDS, African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and Medium Scale Enterprises (MSE) to Agriculture, Petroleum etc.

Mr. Ogebe is presently practicing as a Special Legal Consultant on Nigeria licensed by the Washington DC Bar in 2003. He holds the distinction of being the first specialist on Nigeria out of 100,000 lawyers admitted in the US capital. His consulting firm the US Nigeria Law Group is located in Washington DC

He also doubles as Special Counsel for the Justice for Jos Project of Jubilee Campaign which has worked in the last 4 years to document, litigate and garner international attention to the horrific crimes against humanity targeting northern Nigeria's minority Christian population. He engages with the United Nations, The International Criminal Court, the EU and the US amongst others to advocate on behalf of the persecuted minorities. In November 2013, Mr Ogebe testified before the US Congress' Africa subcommittee on Nigeria and was credited by the chairman of being helpful to the US administration's policy reversal in designating Nigerian terror group Boko Haram a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

Mr. Ogebe had filed two briefs to Secretary of State Clinton and Secretary of State Kerry in 2012 and 2013 making the case for Boko Haram FTO designation. He was also instrumental to the decision of the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to examine Boko Haram for crimes against humanity. Mr Ogebe serves as Nigeria Expert and Chief Fact-finder for the Washington Working Group on Nigeria – a Coalition working to address the northern Nigeria crisis in the international community. Mr Ogebe is a recipient of President Obama's Bronze Volunteer Award for his work providing pro bono legal assistance to NGOs in northern Nigeria.