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# Nigeria's Security: Insurgency, Elections and Coordinating Responses to Multiple Threats

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## Questions and Answers

### Questions

Are there elements in the army that wish to undermine the government's response to the insurgency in the northeast?

How is Boko Haram sustaining itself and how do their logistics operate within and beyond Nigeria?

What exactly happened in Baga and what is the situation there now?

### Sambo Dasuki

Dasuki said that there were a number of individuals in the armed forces who are not committed to the counter-insurgency effort, and this has resulted in a high number of court martials in the last year. However, he denied that there are any high-level sabotage efforts or a conspiracy to prolong the insurgency.

Dasuki said that Boko Haram's tactics are to attack markets, businesses and banks in order to sustain their campaign. They also make money through ransoms paid for the release of people who have been kidnapped.

There was a Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) consisting of units from Cameroon, Chad and Niger that was intended to protect Baga. Dasuki said that at the time of the attack, the Cameroonian and Chadian forces were outside of city while the Nigerian unit had previously withdrawn. This left only the Nigerian contingent to protect Baga. Dasuki said that the Nigerian government does not have an independent estimate of the death toll caused by the attack, and it is therefore relying on figures provided by Amnesty International. He added that additional troops had been sent to the nearby town of Monguno, and the army hoped to recover Baga within two weeks.

### Questions

Why is the government not engaging with universities and other tertiary institutions?

Have the Chibok schoolgirls been dispersed or sold as reports suggest?

Which leaders of Boko Haram would you be willing to talk to?

What is the military doing to ensure that Nigerians affected by the insurgency are registered to vote?

### Sambo Dasuki

Dasuki said that the government is not ostracizing any sector of society in its counter-insurgency strategy. He said that he hopes there will be a programme established that engages with students at all levels. The government has introduced after-school initiatives that aim to help students resist the propaganda of the insurgents.

Dasuki said that he does not have any information on the fate of the Chibok girls further to what is common knowledge. He said that it is likely they have been dispersed and that some of them have been

sold. The US military is currently undertaking surveillance efforts to trace their location, and the Nigerian government is devoting its own small capacity to the search.

Nigeria announced a ceasefire deal with Boko Haram in October 2014. Dasuki said that this came about after the Chadian government received letters from a source claiming to represent Boko Haram fighters. He said that President Jonathan was willing to resolve the crisis through peaceful means and therefore agreed to the idea of starting a discussion. However, this did not lead to any meaningful negotiations. Nigeria has since set up a committee devoted to maintaining a continuous dialogue with the insurgents. Dasuki said that the minister for special duties has created a provision for any former militants who wish to renounce violence.

Dasuki noted that the sultan of Sokoto recently told President Jonathan that he had not yet received a permanent voters' card. He said that he had raised this issue with the chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The chairman responded that the sultan's local polling unit failed to record the fingerprints of those citizens registered to it, meaning that anybody who wished to vote in the area had to be re-registered. It had taken some time to distribute the voters' cards following this. Dasuki said that the law requires elections to be conducted in a period of between 90 and 30 days before the end of the ruling administration's mandate. The date currently scheduled for elections, 14 February, falls towards the beginning of this period. Dasuki therefore asked the commission to consider the possibility of postponing the elections further towards the end of the required time period in order to ensure that all voters' cards are distributed. There were around 30 million cards yet to be delivered. Dasuki said that the commission had assured the government that the process will be completed in the next two weeks, but he is dubious as to whether this will be possible.

#### Questions

Why does Nigeria seem reluctant to accept international assistance against Boko Haram?

Can you clarify whether the NSA is advising that there be a delay in the elections, and if so when would be the ideal time to hold them?

What are the security agency's plans for the end of the amnesty for Niger Delta ex-militants, which expires in 2015, and how do you see this affecting the elections?

#### Sambo Dasuki

Dasuki denied that the government is reluctant to accept external support. He said that the US, the United Kingdom and France were all helping with the counter-insurgency effort. Nigeria has also begun programmes of cooperation with Chad and Niger, while discussions are ongoing with the government in Cameroon to formalize collaborative efforts. He said that while Western countries have not yet provided front-line troops, the US has provided surveillance, the United Kingdom and France have provided economic support, and Britain is also helping to train Nigerian soldiers. In addition, the Chadian army is fighting on Nigerian soil, and Nigerian troops are combatting terrorists on the border of the two countries.

Dasuki said that there is little point in holding the elections three months early if a substantial part of the population is unable to vote. While INEC will ultimately determine when the elections take place, the government is urging it to consider other options if the logistical process of distributing cards is too difficult to accomplish in the given time.

Some ethnic groups are urging the government to extend the amnesty because they have not been included under its umbrella. Dasuki said that this was because these groups were willing to disarm, but did not sign up to other parts of the amnesty programme. He said that he does not think the programme will affect the elections.

### Questions

To what extent are the terrorists recruited and encouraged by extremist preachers?

Were there any punitive actions taken after the negotiations through Chad failed?

What sort of structure is being set up in order to create a formal coordination of countries fighting against the insurgency?

### Sambo Dasuki

Dasuki said that Nigeria certainly has a problem with radical preachers, and that the government has instigated a programme that targets this issue. It is currently focused on ensuring that moderate clerics send the right message to their congregations in order to counter the negative influence of radical preachers.

The ceasefire was arranged through President Déby of Chad. Dasuki said that the Chadian president provided the mediation out of concern for the situation. When the negotiations did not lead to a deal, the government was not in a position to punish either those fighters involved in the talks or the mediators.

Nigerian representatives recently attended a meeting in Niamey to put together a joint counter-insurgency strategy, operation of which will be headquartered in N'Djamena. Dasuki said that while he is not privy to the precise details of the strategy, he does not consider the efforts to be of merit. He noted that the current MNJTF was not effective, as other countries did not commit their troops in any meaningful way. He suspects the new plans will have a similarly ineffective outcome.

### Questions

Could you elaborate on the government's deradicalization strategies on the ground?

Do you actively seek out direct feedback from the troops fighting Boko Haram?

When will Nigerians in the diaspora be able to vote?

Is there any evidence of cooperation between Fulani herdsmen and Boko Haram?

How confident are you that systemic problems in the military in terms of building morale and leadership can be successfully addressed?

### Sambo Dasuki

Dasuki said that there is a programme running in Kuje prison that aims to deradicalize former insurgents. The programme is always open to new research that might help its effectiveness.

The government does receive direct feedback from soldiers. Dasuki said that claims that the Nigerian army is ill-equipped are disingenuous. He said that news reports have showcased the high level of sophistication of the weapons that Boko Haram has taken from the army in recent battles. For example, four pieces of artillery and six armoured personnel carriers, all with 4,000 rounds of ammunition, were lost in Baga. Dasuki said that soldiers' complaints about not being paid are also false. He said that as units are paid together, if only one or two people make the complaint then it is likely that they are lying. The government believes that many of these claims were made by people who simply wanted an excuse not to fight.

Dasuki said that an amendment has been passed that will allow those in the diaspora to vote in the future.

Dasuki said that although there is some limited cooperation between the Fulani and Boko Haram, very few members of that tribe are directly involved in the insurgency. He said that 70–80 per cent of Boko Haram fighters are of Kanuri extraction.

Dasuki maintained that he is very confident the military's problems can be solved. He said that the army realized that many people were joining only because they wanted a job, rather than a career in the military. Recruitment is now based purely on merit. It is hoped that this will help build a more professional fighting force over time. Dasuki said that the effectiveness of British training was recently demonstrated after a major attack in Adamawa state, where two British-trained companies restored order and led the recovery.