

Jihad & Its Violent Objectives

Jihad As New Security Threat In Southeast Nigeria & Its Christian Population

Islamic jihad or threat of same is one of the newest triggers of insecurity in the Southeast Region of Nigeria and its outpost neighbors dominated and controlled by Christians. Islamic jihad or threat of same in the Southeast is divided into *political* and *cultural* or physical (violent attacks) and psychological (cultural) jihad. Jihad is presently on course in the Region and its outposts in Delta, Edo, Benue, Kogi, Rivers and Cross River States and other Christian neighbors and it is being remotely executed by state actors using jihadist Fulani Herdsmen who are disguised or camouflaged as “rural cattle grazers”.

The state actor involvement in this is facilitated through the grossly lopsided Nigerian security forces especially the Nigerian Army. It is no longer hidden that the security forces provide the jihadists with cover and protection including their movement and permanent occupation of the forests, bushes and farmlands in the Southeast and its outposts or gateway States or Regions. The above findings are according to several investigations by **International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law**.

Defining Islamic Jihad

Literally, ‘Jihad’ in the world of Islam is “struggle” for (1) ‘self righteousness’ so as to make paradise in life after death, (2) ‘using one’s wealth or material possession for advancement or growth of Islam’ and (3) ‘struggle or Islamic war against infidels or unbelievers (i.e. Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Heathens, etc) and apostates (i.e. act or those who renounced or abandoned Islam)’. “Political Jihad” is a common modern name given to attacks and killing of non Muslims such as Christians and burning or destruction of their properties including their sacred places of worship or learning by radical Muslims.

According to the British Broadcasting Service (BBC) report of 11th December 2014, ‘Jihad is a term commonly used to differentiate between violent and non violent Muslims or Islamists. The Jihadists aim to reorder Government and Society in accordance with Islamic Law or Sharia. Jihadists also see “struggle” as necessary to eradicate obstacles to restoring Allah’s rule on Earth and defending the Muslim Communities or “Ummah” against the infidels or apostates. If ‘Ummah’ (Muslim Community) is threatened by aggressors or any, the Jihadists hold that Jihad is not just a collective obligation or ‘fard kifaya’ but also an individual duty or ‘fard ayn’ that must be fulfilled by every able Muslim just like ritual prayer and fasting during Ramadan’.

The BBC report further clarified that ‘Jihadists aim at (1) changing the political and social organization of the State, (2) establishing sovereignty on a territory perceived as occupied or dominated by non-Muslims (i.e. jihadist activities of the Fulani Jihadists in Eastern Nigeria), (3) defending the “Ummah” or Muslim Communities from external non-Muslim threats, focusing on what the Jihadists referred to as “far-enemies” and “near-enemies”, (4) correcting other Muslims’ behavior and (5) intimidating and marginalizing other Muslim sects. Jihadists also divide the world into “the realm of Islam” (dar al-Islam) or Lands under Muslim rule where Sharia prevails; and “the realm of war” (dar al-harb); or Lands not under Muslim rule and where under certain circumstances, war in defense of faith can be sanctioned. Muslim rulers and Governments who Jihadists believe have abandoned the prescriptions of Sharia are considered by them to be outside ‘dar al-Islam’ or “the realm of Islam” and therefore are legitimate targets for jihadist attack.’