



COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER

at West Point



# ***Boko Haram Beyond the Headlines:***

*Analyses of Africa's Enduring Insurgency*

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*Editor:  
Jacob Zenn*

## CHAPTER 5: Local, Global, or in Between? Boko Haram's Messaging, Strategy, Membership, and Support Networks

*By Omar Mahmoud*

### Introduction

In the run-up to the U.S. State Department Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) designation of the movement commonly referred to as Boko Haram in 2013,<sup>506</sup> one point of debate revolved around the group's domestic focus and potential for a more international trajectory in the future.<sup>507</sup> Since that time, Boko Haram has demonstrated a clear focus beyond Nigeria's borders. It has unleashed a wave of violence in all of Nigeria's Lake Chad region neighbors (Cameroon, Niger, and Chad), and in March 2015 joined the dozens of jihadi organizations around the world that have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State.<sup>508</sup> Nonetheless, the Nigeria-centric nature of the movement remains dominant in terms of Boko Haram's leadership, the location of its safe havens, and locus of most of its violent attacks.

It is this framing of Boko Haram—whether it is considered a Nigerian, sub-regional, regional/African, or an international movement—that has influenced how and why certain actors have responded to it. Indeed, a memo from the incoming U.S. administration under Donald J. Trump to the State Department in January 2017 reportedly even questioned why the United States has been involved in the fight against Boko Haram, ostensibly wondering how the movement affects U.S. interests.<sup>509</sup> This consideration was likely based on a narrow framing of Boko Haram as primarily a domestic Nigerian threat.<sup>510</sup>

This article examines the question of whether Boko Haram is a “domestic” or “international” movement—or where it fits on a spectrum in between those two poles—by using the following methodology.

### *Four Key Factors*

The article will undertake a historical review of Boko Haram and utilize a framework that examines four key factors underpinning the group's activity—messaging, strategy, membership, and support

506 Boko Haram is the most common name for the movement. However, prior to the March 2015 pledge, the group's official name was *Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad*. After the March 2015 pledge, the movement became *Wilayat Gharb Afrqiyyah*, or West Africa Province. Following the split into two factions in August 2016, the Shekau group has returned to its original namesake, while the al-Barnawi faction has continued its Islamic State moniker. The term Boko Haram will be employed here for the sake of clarity, while post-August 2016 distinctions will be made by faction (Shekau or al-Barnawi).

507 For a review of some of the discussions surrounding the FTO debate, see the following. The Heritage Foundation took a strong stand in arguing that while Boko Haram has mainly targeted the Nigerian government, the movement could evolve to target the United States in the future. Morgan Lorraine Roach, “The U.S. State Department Should Designate Boko Haram a Foreign Terrorist Organization,” The Heritage Foundation, May 22, 2012. An alternative view put forth by a group of academics, led by Carl LeVan, argued against the FTO designation, stating that such a process would, in fact, internationalize a movement that had been overwhelmingly domestic to date. “Boko Haram FTO Letter to Secretary Clinton,” carllevan.com, May 21, 2012.

508 Moreover, however, the common portrayal of Boko Haram as “domestic” is not sufficient because it presumes a focus on all of Nigeria when, in fact, Boko Haram's activities have been concentrated on the northeastern portion of the country for most of its history, with less than one percent of attacks reported in southern Nigeria, and only one period in 2012-2013 when the Middle Belt was consistently the subject of violence. Boko Haram's only major attack in the south of the country was a female suicide bomb attack on a fuel depot in Lagos in June 2014. While security officials initially called the incident an accident, Shekau claimed the attack in a subsequent video message. Tim Cocks, “In Nigeria, Boko Haram-style Violence Radiates Southwards,” Reuters, July 14, 2014.

509 Helene Cooper, “Trump Team's Queries About Africa Point to Skepticism About Aid,” *New York Times*, January 13, 2017.

510 Lily Kuo, Abdi Latif Dahir, and Yomi Kazeem, “Here are answers to Donald Trump's many dubious questions about Africa,” Quartz Africa, January 17, 2017. Furthermore, delayed action against the group by countries in the Lake Chad Basin region has been due to perceptions of Boko Haram as an internal Nigerian problem. “Cameroon: Confronting Boko Haram,” International Crisis Group, 2016, p. 22.

networks.<sup>511</sup> “Messaging” evaluates what Boko Haram says to determine what the group has wanted to project about the conflict, and what influences have been present in its messaging content. “Strategy” revolves around how Boko Haram has chosen to carry out its violence. The factors underlying strategic shifts in tactics, target and location, and type of attacks can explain where Boko Haram has focused its attention and why. “Membership” refers to the ethnic and national backgrounds of the foot soldiers and leaders. This data seeks to answer the question ‘who is Boko Haram?’ and provide an indication as to where the locus of the movement lies. Finally, “Support Networks” examines how Boko Haram has been able to resource itself from supply chains (funding, arms, and other goods) and patronage of both domestic and external groups.

### *Geographical Range*

The driving forces behind each of the four factors will be evaluated according a four-tiered geographic scale—domestic (internally within Nigeria’s borders); sub-regional (the Lake Chad sub-region, encompassing Cameroon, Niger, and Chad); regional (a wider range across the African continent to include activity in Senegal, Algeria, and Mali, as well as Libya, Sudan, and Somalia); and international (encompassing activity outside Africa and focused on ties to international extremist organizations like al-Qa`ida and the Islamic State).

### *Phases*

Since Boko Haram has evolved significantly since its founding, this article assesses the geographical scope of the four key factors during three phases of Boko Haram’s history. Phase I refers to when Boko Haram was a preaching group that generally abstained from outright violence from the beginning of Muhammad Yusuf’s involvement in the leadership of the group in 2002 until the July 2009 uprising.<sup>512</sup> Phase II refers to when the group began to pursue violence as a means toward societal change after Yusuf’s death in 2009 with attacks against the Nigerian government, security forces, churches, and oppositional Salafi clerics, among other targets. This covers the post-July 2009 period until the Nigerian government’s May 2013 declaration of a state of emergency. Phase III refers to when the group shifted from a primarily urban to rural focus as a result of growing military pressure, and began to more overtly align itself with international jihadi movements, culminating with Abubakr Shekau’s pledge to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in March 2015. This phase begins in May 2013 and runs until the present.<sup>513</sup>

It is hoped that through this approach a more nuanced framing of Boko Haram can be achieved, while demonstrating shifts in both factors and time. In turn, this analysis can help policymakers and

511 The first two categories—messaging and strategy—focus on actions, in terms of what Boko Haram says (through the full range of mediums and spokesmen) and does (largely through acts of violence). The latter two categories—membership and support networks— focus on sources of sustenance, in terms of where Boko Haram’s membership comes from, and the origins and sponsors of its supply chains and other forms of assistance.

512 Members of the group did engage in a series of violent attacks on police stations in 2003-2004, causing Yusuf to even flee Nigeria for a while. This was conducted by a breakaway faction, and it is unclear the degree to which Yusuf exerted control or direction over it. The attacks were largely repelled, and Yusuf returned to the country in 2005.

513 A fourth phase could reasonably begin after Abubakr Shekau’s pledge, given that it places Boko Haram firmly on the international jihadi scene and ostensibly subordinated Shekau’s leadership to an outside actor. Nonetheless, while significant changes have occurred during this time period, it is this author’s estimation that these have been driven less by outside influence over Boko Haram and more by internal factors, which are largely seen as a continuation of dynamics resulting from the mid-2013 reinvention as a rural movement and pursuit by security forces. Moreover, the split of the movement into two major factions in August 2016 has been another major turning point in this trajectory, but largely continues previous dynamics in many ways rather than ushering in a drastic change, with Shekau reverting to pre-Islamic State practices and the Islamic State-backed Abu Musab al-Barnawi-faction continuing the Wilayat Gharb Afriqiyya mantle. “Boko Haram Has No Face, Says Jonathan; Adds He Doesn’t Give a Damn About Asset Declaration,” Sahara Reporters, June 24, 2012; Conor Gaffey, “Goodluck Jonathan Lost ‘Millions’ to Fake Boko Haram Leaders: Buhari Adviser,” *Newsweek*, January 12, 2016; “Thirty Percent of Terror Funds Sources From Outside Nigeria – Investigation,” *Vanguard*, August 2, 2015; Daniel Flynn, “Buhari Win Means Nigeria, Not Chad, to Lead Boko Haram Fight,” Reuters, April 2, 2015.

practitioners to determine appropriate intervention responses, whether they concern the overall classification of the group or revolve around a specific factor's geographic and temporal underpinnings.

## Phase I (2002-2009)

### Overview

Phase I of the group encompasses Boko Haram's evolution under founder Muhammad Yusuf. During this time, Yusuf preached openly in mosques and appeared in local media, allowing him attract a following in northeastern Nigeria. However, his base and core followership were largely centered in the Borno State capital of Maiduguri. Phase I culminated in a now infamous clash in July 2009 between Yusuf's followers and the Nigerian police. This gave way to a military-led crackdown in four cities in northeastern Nigeria from July 26-29, 2009, in which over 800 of Yusuf's followers and about two dozen Nigerian security officers were killed. The uprising ended when the Nigerian police extrajudicially killed Yusuf, thus ending his leadership over the movement and allowing for Shekau's ascension during Phase II.

### Messaging in Phase I

Messaging is one key area to evaluate the drivers of Boko Haram through an examination of references present in the group's propaganda. Messaging during Phase I primarily came in the form of sermons from Yusuf, which were an important part of his preaching (dawa)—and revenue—as they were recorded and sold throughout Nigeria and neighboring countries on audiocassettes, videos, and later CDs.<sup>514</sup> Local radio and television stations also interviewed Yusuf or broadcasted his preaching, giving him additional exposure.

In his sermons, Yusuf traced the perceived powerlessness of Muslims in Nigeria to a historical narrative regarding the impact of European colonization on diluting the Islamic character of northern Nigeria, which occurred through the introduction of Western (and English) education (i.e., boko), secular law, and democracy. According to Yusuf, the entrenchment of these developments in the Nigerian post-colonial state reflected its illegitimacy.<sup>515</sup> Yusuf advocated for a return to Qur'anic dictates that governed northern Nigeria before the colonial era as a solution, in addition to the imposition of strict sharia law. Yusuf believed it was an Islamic duty to reject the Nigerian constitution, service in the government, and participation in elections. For him, jihad was also an obligation and a means to achieving change, although his sermons indicate he was focused on *Iqamat ul-Hujja*.<sup>516</sup>

In this sense, the content of Yusuf's Hausa- and Kanuri-language discourses showed that his main drivers were his grievances rooted in the Nigerian environment, such as the Nigerian government; other Muslim leaders; and Western influences in education (like English language and mixed gender classes) and cultural norms (like the public acceptance of homosexuality and the promulgation of

514 "Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency," International Crisis Group, 2014, p. 10; Sani Umar, "The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-Radicalism in Nigeria: A Case Study of Boko Haram," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 42 (2012): pp. 118-144.

515 Yusuf also exploited bouts of Muslim-Christian violence in Nigeria as part of an overall conspiracy that was being waged against Muslims, and to present Islam as under attack. The roots of the specific contention with Western education lies within this narrative, as Yusuf viewed it as a foreign form of schooling imposed by colonizing Christian powers at the expense of traditional Muslim teachings and values.

516 This refers to "providing evidence [that the Nigerian government was *taghut*] to his followers before declaring jihad."

Christian holidays and the Christian calendar).<sup>517</sup> Nonetheless, while Nigeria-centric, the problems Yusuf raised, the solutions he sought, and his calls for a return to “pure” Islam resonated throughout the sub-region, including in Niger, Chad, and Cameroon as well.

In addition, external influences were also present. For example, Yusuf cited the Algerian experience during its civil war in the 1990s, when the military disregarded elections that the Islamists won, as an example of the futility of democracy. In his sermon on the history of Muslims, he also extolled the ideology of Usama bin Ladin, the Taliban, Sayyid Qutb, and Hassan al-Banna. In this sense, Yusuf demonstrated overlapping thought patterns with the international salafi-jihadi movement, which in turn provided the ideological underpinnings of his own movement that was based on the Nigerian experience.<sup>518</sup> This focus on jihadi movements external to Nigeria imbued Yusuf’s messaging with a distinct international flavor and implied a degree of influence and emulation, despite the fact that Phase I messaging was primarily was preoccupied by domestic considerations.

### *Strategy in Phase I*

Strategy, namely examining what actions a group pursues and why, also can reveal important insights in terms of geographic framing. Although outwardly focused on preaching during Phase I, Yusuf created an exclusive society of his followers—a “state within a state”—with institutions such as “welfare” and micro-finance that reflected the group’s worldview.<sup>519</sup> In addition, an offshoot of Yusuf’s followership in the early 2000s under the leadership of one of Yusuf’s mentors established a community in Yobe State named “Afghanistan,” where the group lived in isolation in its own Taliban-styled community. (It was eventually broken up after clashes with security forces.) These episodes indicate that Yusuf likely held aspirations for some type of territorial and administrative authority. The strident anti-government nature of his sermons also ensured a clash was almost inevitable, with Boko Haram also storing arms in its mosques and members’ homes in anticipation of a showdown.

The breakaway faction that established Afghanistan did engage in violent activity in 2003-2004, including assaulting police units in Yobe State and Borno State.<sup>520</sup> Yusuf fled to Saudi Arabia to avoid being held responsible for these attacks and returned to Nigeria in 2005 only after negotiations between his followers and the government were reached.<sup>521</sup> This agreement was, however, symbolic of Yusuf’s engagement with the Nigerian state during this period, despite frequent critical rhetoric,

517 In some of his final speeches, Yusuf focused primarily on local events, complaining about the increased military presence on the streets of Maiduguri (known as Operation Flush), castigating a new rule requiring helmets for motorcycle riders, and referring to the Governor of Borno State as a “mad man.” Shaykh Muhammad Yusuf, “Tarihin Musulmai (History of Muslims),” YouTube, October 28, 2011; Shaykh Muhammad Yusuf and Mamman Nur, “Masu Gabatarwa,” YouTube, 2009; Shaykh Muhammad Yusuf, “The Foundation of the Jihadists,” 2009; Andrew Walker, “Join Us or Die: the Birth of Boko Haram,” *Guardian*, February 4, 2016; Adam Nossiter, “Niger Adds its Troops to the War on Boko Haram,” *New York Times*, February 10, 2015.

518 Alex Thurston has documented how Yusuf was influenced by Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, considered to be one of the most influential modern-era jihadi theorists. Thurston noted Yusuf’s focus on concepts such as *al’wala wal bara’* (disavowal of non-Muslims) and *izhar al-din* (the active spread of Islam), stem from Maqdisi’s own work, demonstrating a degree of external overlap. Alex Thurston, “Insights into Boko Haram’s Early Thought: Muhammad Yusuf and Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi,” *Jihadica*, November 2, 2016. Yusuf was not the only one inspired by external jihadi forces, which earned the group the moniker Nigerian Taliban. Key leader Aminu Tashen-Ilimi cited external inspiration during a 2006 interview, stating, “I respect them [the Taliban] and what they did very much,” followed by the foreboding admission that “Bin Laden did very good work ... with attacks he strikes fear in the enemies of Islam. I may not be ready now, but if I could do the same I would.” Emmanuel Goujon and Aminu Abubakar, “Nigeria’s ‘Taliban’ Plot Comeback from Hide-outs,” *Mail and Guardian*, January 11, 2006.

519 Walker; Ahmed Salkida, “The Genesis of Boko Haram: An Insider’s Account,” *Abusidiqu*, May 9, 2014.

520 The primary goal behind these attacks is unclear, but they appeared to degenerate into a cycle of retaliation, hostage taking, and arms seizures, aspects that would become regular futures of future Boko Haram violence.

521 One other major violent incident often attributed to Boko Haram during this period is the April 13, 2007, assassination of former Yusuf mentor Ja’afar Mahmud Adam in Kano. Ja’afar and Yusuf had clashed publicly during religious debates prior to his death. While responsibility has never officially been determined, the elimination of clerics opposed to Boko Haram’s vision of the world would become a commonly utilized tactic, and may have its roots in this period.

complicating the relationship between his preaching and actions.<sup>522</sup>

Nonetheless, relations with the government ultimately floundered, leading to occasional clashes with security forces in the run up to the July 2009 uprising, which is also when Yusuf and his followers began experimenting with the construction of explosive devices.<sup>523</sup> This would suggest that Yusuf was in the process of organizing the next step in his strategy and moving from preaching to jihad—hence Boko Haram’s post-July 2009 name as the Sunni Muslim Group for Preaching and Jihad.

In this sense, Yusuf’s strategy in Phase I was mostly driven by domestic concerns, with a goal to accumulate followers in northeastern Nigeria and convince them of his movement’s righteousness; establish quasi-state institutions, particularly in Maiduguri; and later on to prepare for a clash with the Nigerian state. On the ground level, there was little in terms of advising from organizations outside of Nigeria, or a focus on extending the struggle beyond Nigeria’s borders at this point, although inspiration behind Yusuf’s group, which was commonly known as the Nigerian Taliban at this time, certainly derived from external sources.

### *Membership in Phase I*

Examining the makeup of both leadership and rank-and-file membership can also help in determining frames. Leadership of Boko Haram during Phase I centered on Yusuf, who was born in Yobe State (Girgir).<sup>524</sup> Yusuf’s mentor, Muhammad Ali (Borno State) and some key deputies, such as Shekau (Tarmuwa Local Government Area, Yobe), Aminu Tashen-Ilimi (Bama, Borno), and Mamman Nur (Maiduguri, Borno), all hailed from northeastern Nigeria.<sup>525</sup> Yusuf’s followers at this time also primarily were Nigerians or from the bordering areas of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, and tended to be from Yusuf’s Kanuri ethnic group.<sup>526</sup> In addition, sub-regional linkages were facilitated by Maiduguri’s role as a center of commerce and Islamic education in the wider Lake Chad sub-region.<sup>527</sup> Thus while the demographics of Boko Haram had a distinctive northeast Nigerian composition under Yusuf, it proved impossible to detach the movement completely from the sub-region—a common theme throughout Boko Haram’s evolution. Beyond this sub-regional aspect, however, there are few examples of Yusuf garnering significant following throughout the country.

522 It is possible Yusuf was leveraging his relationship with the Borno State government to provide space to practice his activities, while building up a support base in which he could more actively challenge the government in the future. Nonetheless, the fallout from this relationship also clearly contributed to a hardening of positions on both sides. See the ‘Support Networks’ section below for more on this aspect.

523 Walker. Borno State Deputy Governor Adamu Dibal, who was instrumental in facilitating Yusuf’s return from exile in 2005, claimed shortly after the 2009 uprising that Yusuf had been planning a major bomb attack during Ramadan a few weeks later. “Interview – Nigerian Sect Planned Bomb Attack During Ramadan,” Reuters, August 4, 2009. Yusuf reportedly was also stockpiling guns from Chad prior to his death. “Curing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency,” p. 12. In addition, weeks before the uprising, followers of Yusuf were reportedly arrested in Biu with explosive devices, while another was killed in an accidental explosion at his house, ostensibly while experimenting with explosives. Ahmed Salkida, “Sect Leader Vows Revenge,” *Daily Trust*, July 27, 2009.

524 Senator Iroegbu, “Court Releases Suspected Killers of Boko Haram Leader, Muhammad Yusuf,” *This Day*, December 21, 2015.

525 Nur, however, has also been reported as having Cameroonian origins, while others refer to his parents as from Chad. Nonetheless, he likely spent his formative years in Maiduguri. Ludovica Iaccino, “Could Ansaru Leader Mamman Nur be the Man Behind Boko Haram Split?” *International Business Times*, August 11, 2016; Uduma Kalu, “How Nur, Shekau Run Boko Haram,” *Vanguard*, September 3, 2011; “Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II),” pp. 19-22.

526 For example, a Nigerian security official involved in combating the July 2009 uprising noted that individuals from Niger and Chad were among the dead, while around the same time Niger expelled some of its citizens who were suspected of being Boko Haram members. “Captives Freed in Nigeria City,” BBC, July 29, 2009; “Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II),” 2014, p. 25; “Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict,” International Crisis Group, 2010, p. 37. Also in July 2009, dozens of Nigeriens with Boko Haram ties were expelled. “Niger: Another Weak Link in the Sahel?” International Crisis Group, 2013, p. 42. Jacob Zenn’s interviews with former Islamic students in Maiduguri in N’djamena, Chad and Yaoundé, Cameroon, June 2015.

527 A common practice is for parents from the neighboring countries of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon to send their children to Nigeria for long periods to study Islam, with Maiduguri serving as a particular center of such activity. For example, this practice and the influence of northern Nigerian Islamic education on northern Cameroon is noted in “Cameroon: Confronting Boko Haram,” pp. 3, 6.

### *Support Networks in Phase I*

Muhammad Yusuf's early rise was enabled by agreements he fostered with northern Nigerian political elites. Yusuf's return to Nigeria from Saudi Arabia after the 2003-2004 violence, for example, was due to the intervention of then Deputy Governor of Borno State, Adamu Dibal.<sup>528</sup> Yusuf also entered into a pact with aspiring Borno State Governor Ali Modu Sheriff and used his followers to support Sheriff's 2003 election bid in return for the implementation of strict sharia law across the state.<sup>529</sup> While that agreement ultimately floundered and was later cited by Boko Haram as evidence of the incompatibility of Islam and the Nigerian Government, it provided Yusuf with a platform to preach openly and increase his support base up until the 2009 clashes.<sup>530</sup>

Some funding for Yusuf's movement came from local elites, including Alhaji Buji Foi, a wealthy businessman who was appointed Commissioner of Religions Affairs in Borno State as part of the agreement with Governor Sheriff.<sup>531</sup> In addition, Yusuf's movement generated income through the provision of small enterprises, such as microcredit schemes, motor taxis, and selling drinking water.<sup>532</sup> Members also reportedly paid daily dues of N100 (0.67 USD), while wealthier supporters provided more substantial donations.<sup>533</sup> Furthermore, Yusuf did receive some external contributions from jihadi actors, including a portion that was likely funneled into Nigeria from al-Qa`ida via Sudanese salafi groups.<sup>534</sup>

In this sense, support for Yusuf's movement in Phase I came from political patronage of Nigerian actors seeking power in Nigeria or, more specifically, Borno State, along with localized financial streams from followers' donations and some direct financial support from al-Qa`ida or other salafi donors. This rendered Yusuf's movement mostly reliant on domestic support networks, which were driven by political self-interest and group loyalty, but also indicated a limited global contribution to Yusuf's support network.

### *Assessment of Phase I (2002-2009)*

Overall, Boko Haram's actions and sources of support were primarily domestic under Muhammad Yusuf from 2002 to 2009, albeit with a sub-regional and international salafi-jihadi reach. The main

528 "Interview – Nigerian Sect Planned Bomb Attack During Ramadan."

529 Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency?* (London, Chatham House, 2014), p.33; Hamza Idris, "Boko Haram: Now, Senators Sheriff, Zanna Clash on the Truth," *Daily Trust*, October 28, 2012.

530 Yusuf denounced Sheriff for not following through on his end of the bargain to implement sharia law, punctuated by the resignation of Alhaji Buji Foi from his post as Borno state's Minister of Religious Affairs in 2007. Ikechukwu Amaechi, "My Last Encounter With Boko Haram Financier – Sheriff," *Daily Independent*, August 11, 2009; Nurudeen M. Abdallah, "How Boko Haram Began, by Borno PDP," *Daily Trust*, November 23, 2011.

531 Familial connections proved important as well. Yusuf established Ibn Taymiyyah mosque in Railway Quarters of Maiduguri on land he bought with the help of his father-in-law, Baba Fugu. Ahmed Salkida, "The Genesis of Boko Haram: An Insider's Account," *Abusidiqu*, May 9, 2014.

532 Pérouse de Montclos, p. 12; Freedom Onuoha, "Boko Haram and the Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat in Nigeria," in Marc Antoine Pérouse de Montclos ed., *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security, and the State in Nigeria* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2014); p. 163.

533 Onuoha, pp. 163-164.

534 The early linkages between Boko Haram under Yusuf and al-Qa`ida or its affiliated organizations have been covered in detail elsewhere, but the main data points revolve around the following. Usama bin Ladin dispatched a Nigerian by the name of Mohammed Ali in 2002 to support salafi groups with \$3 million, some of which reportedly found its way to Yusuf. "Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II)," p. 23. Mohammed Ashafa, who reportedly served as an intermediary between Boko Haram and al-Qa`ida, was arrested with Yusuf in 2005 and charged with sending 21 militants for training as a GSPC camp in Niger and receiving terrorist funding. Ikechukwu Nnochiri, "Boko Haram: How We Caught Nigerian Al Qaeda Leader – SSS," *Vanguard*, April 4, 2012. In 2007, *Daily Trust* editor Mohammed Damagun was arrested and charged with sending 14 Nigerians to a Mauritanian training camp, in addition to receiving al-Qa`ida funds and being linked to elements of Yusuf's group. Ise-Oluwa Ige, "Nigeria: FG Arraigns Damagun for Terrorism," *Vanguard*, January 17, 2007. Moreover, just after the uprising in September 2009, an arrested sect member claimed to have been trained on bomb-making techniques in Afghanistan. Isa Umar Gusau, "Taliban Taught Us Bomb Making in Afghanistan – Sect Member," *Daily Trust*, September 3, 2009.

challenge to viewing Phase I in any strict domestic or sub-regional lens is the role foreign jihadi actors may have played in inspiring group strategy and messaging, and their provision of some funding.

PHASE I	DOMESTIC	SUB-REGIONAL	REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
Messaging	•			•
Strategy	•			•
Membership	•	•		
Support Networks	•			•

PHASE I	DOMESTIC	SUB-REGIONAL	REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
Messaging	<i>Yusuf focused on local events</i>			<i>Yusuf preaching influenced by global Salafi movement</i>
Strategy	<i>Institutional experimentation and majority of preaching confined to Nigeria; preparing for clash with Nigerian state</i>			<i>Institutional experimentation of ‘Taliban’ group similar to external movements</i>
Membership	<i>Leadership and rank-and-file predominantly Nigerian</i>	<i>Some membership from neighboring countries</i>		
Support Networks	<i>Patronage from northeast political elites; majority of funding derived from domestic sources</i>			<i>Limited funding from AQ-linked sources</i>

**Phase II (2009-2013)**

Phase II in Boko Haram’s evolution revolved around Abubakr Shekau’s assumption of leadership following Yusuf’s death in the July 2009 crackdown. During a year of dormancy from July 2009 to September 2010, Boko Haram members regrouped clandestinely within Nigeria and the Lake Chad sub-region, with some traveling as far as the Sahel and Somalia. After Shekau announced publicly that he was the new leader, Boko Haram began carrying out attacks with an unprecedented scale of violence and a geographic reach extending throughout northeastern Nigeria and, to a lesser extent, Nigeria’s Middle Belt. Shekau was primarily responsible for initiating this path of indiscriminate violence to enact the goal of “bringing Nigeria to its knees,” as the movement pursued revenge for the



July 2009 clashes and sought the realization of a more widespread insurgency.<sup>535</sup>

### *Messaging in Phase II*

Boko Haram messaging after Yusuf's death in 2009 underwent a major transition and largely fell into three categories: video messages primarily containing speeches from Shekau (18 total in 2012-13); frequent press statements from Boko Haram spokesmen (mostly Abul Qaqa, who issued more than 50 statements between September 2011 and September 2012); and fliers distributed in northern Nigerian cities and villages. The frequency of Shekau's video messaging increased progressively starting in 2012, while press statements became infrequent after Abul Qaqa's tenure as spokesman came to an end. Fliers were utilized only sporadically.<sup>536</sup>

Shekau's initial messages starting in 2010 were strongly driven by national dynamics, and often addressed to then Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan. Although Shekau spoke mostly in Hausa (with infrequent summaries in Kanuri), his speeches included Qur'anic recitations in Arabic and occasional English when mocking the Nigerian constitution, national anthem, or other colonial legacies. He also often claimed attacks, rejected rumors of his death or negotiations with the government, and engaged in anti-Christian polemics.<sup>537</sup> The list of Boko Haram's demands reflected Shekau's domestic position, as he insisted the constitution be suspended, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan renounce Christianity, the government implement sharia law throughout the country, and Nigerian security forces release women and children of sect members from detention.

Nonetheless, Shekau styled his video statements on international jihadi messaging. He placed AK-47s in the background of his videos, surrounded himself with veiled gunmen, prominently displayed a miswak (twig) in his mouth, and wore an Arab-style *kaffiya*. In addition, he utilized many of the same Qur'anic phrases to open his videos that al-Qa'ida messaging employed.<sup>538</sup> The imitation of such external messaging likely denoted an aspiration for Shekau's statements to be seen within an international jihadi context, rather than any specific external direction over them.

535 Monica Mark, "Boko Haram Vows to Fight Until Nigeria Establishes Sharia Law," *Guardian*, January 27, 2012.

536 The first major video message from Shekau emerged in January 2012. Prior to that, the sect put out one video featuring the United Nations suicide bomber after that attack in September 2011, while a video interview of Shekau in Maiduguri emerged in April 2010. Video messages featuring Shekau rose from two prior to 2012 to six in 2012 to 12 in 2013. In addition, occasional video messages that did not feature Shekau emerged, such as a clip explaining attacks on media offices in May 2012 and two videos depicting Boko Haram militants in training in April 2013. During a yearlong span from September 2011 until his reported death in September 2012, Abul Qaqa issued at least 53 statements to the press. This may have been a penname for multiple individuals, but after security forces announced the death of a Boko Haram spokesman during an operation in Kano in September 2012, statements from Qaqa ceased. In a March 2013 video, Shekau nominated Abu Zinnira as Qaqa's replacement, but he issued only two statements in early 2013 (and potentially another in September 2014). In addition, a media official by the name of Abu Zamira surfaced as part of a faction negotiating with the Nigerian government in the summer of 2013, though it is unclear if it was the same individual. Nonetheless, Shekau himself did not officially nominate another spokesman on his behalf, despite the introduction of Abu Musab al-Barnawi in that position during a January 2015 video. During audio recording of Shekau dated from December 2016, however, Shekau admitted to murdering Abu Zinnira during a leadership dispute. Nigerian press reported sightings of Boko Haram fliers on a number of occasions during this time period, which tend to be confined to just a single city or section of town. In this sense, it is difficult to accurately gauge the frequency of this tactic, given that their limited dissemination radius prevented wider outreach. Nonetheless, at least six different Boko Haram fliers were reported in 2012, a rate that became less frequent in following years. This is based on a compilation of media sources by the author. Salihu Garba, "Kwamandoin Boko Haram Sun Bar Shekau Cikin Rana," VOA Hausa, July 22, 2013; "Abubakr Shekau Kills Boko Haram Spokesman over Leadership Plot," *Vanguard*, February 24, 2017.

537 Some examples of the domestic rhetoric in Shekau's messaging include a January 2012 statement in which the Boko Haram leader said "we are also at war with Christians because ... they killed our fellows and even ate their flesh in Jos;" another January 2012 message that was directed to the residents of Kano and related the story of a Qur'an dumped in a sewer in Maiduguri; and an August 2012 statement complaining about those who say "I pledge to Nigeria, my country." Shekau also often discussed the inadmissibility of democracy and the Nigerian constitution, and mentioned events in Nigeria's Middle Belt in which Muslims were killed. His preoccupation with domestic events was also evident through specific concerns, such as the detention of wives and children of sect members by Nigerian security personnel. Some Boko Haram videos and transcripts are available online but others are not. The author has compiled many of them based on a variety of sources.

538 Jeffry R. Halverson, R. Bennet Furlow, and Steve R. Cormon, "How Islamist Extremists Quote the Qur'an," Arizona State University Center for Strategic Communication, July 9, 2012.

Shekau also increasingly incorporated internationally focused themes in his messaging, with threats to world leaders ranging from Barack Obama to Ban Ki-moon to the late Margaret Thatcher; expressions of solidarity with global jihadi struggles, such as Chechnya, Kashmir, Iraq and Palestine; and praise for jihadi leaders, including al-Qa`ida head Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (at least two years before the latter's declaration of a caliphate in 2014).<sup>539</sup> Also Shekau's sermons were often prefaced with Hausa—and later Arabic—*nasheeds* that venerated Shekau and outlined his anti-Christian, -Jewish, and -American views, a type of “art” also common in al-Qa`ida messaging.

The biggest departure in Phase II occurred in November 2012 when a video of Shekau saluting the “Soldiers of God in the Islamic State in Mali” was distributed through a jihadi forum. The clip featured Shekau speaking primarily in Arabic (as opposed to Hausa, which was his regular discourse prior to then) in a desert, praising bin Ladin, al-Zarqawi, and both Abu Umar al-Baghdadi and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.<sup>540</sup> Subsequent videos built on these themes: for example, an April 18, 2013, clip featured a group of militants shooting at targets with the words “Obama’s head” and “Kansas” inscribed above it, and in a May 2013 video Shekau called for militants from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq to come fight in Nigeria.<sup>541</sup> After these videos, the use of Arabic in videos with Shekau became more common.<sup>542</sup> In this sense, while the vast majority of air time was limited to domestic rhetoric, Shekau may have already begun utilizing video messaging as a means of positioning himself and elevating Boko Haram to “membership” in the broader global jihadi movement, which was then led by al-Qa`ida.

While Shekau's messaging was strongly driven by national dynamics with several semblances of international jihadism, fliers from Boko Haram—often signed in Shekau's name—and statements from Boko Haram spokesmen were primarily rooted in local dynamics, and even specific to certain cities or villages. Fliers, for example, focused on themes such as warnings to citizens against collaborating with the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) militia, or to the Nigerian or Cameroonian governments against arresting Boko Haram members.<sup>543</sup> Statements from spokesman Abul Qaqa similarly were specific, such as threats to news stations about the consequences of reporting “falsehoods” about Boko Haram and cell phone providers about not sharing data with the government, or for claiming attacks.<sup>544</sup> While Abul Qaqa avoided the religious and ideological discourses that typified Shekau's messages, he explained the rationale behind attacks, issued new threats, and countered government narratives. In this sense, Abu Qaqa's messaging was closely intertwined with Boko Haram's operations, which were then concentrated in Nigeria.<sup>545</sup>

539 Some of this was not necessarily a new development, however, as Shekau told America to “die with your fury” in a September 2010 message, while a January 2012 compared his struggle with the Nigerian Government to al-Qa`ida's battle against the United States.

540 Previous Shekau statements had been filmed indoors. Following this clip, filming outdoors became a dominant setting.

541 “Boko Haram Claims Victory Over Nigerian Army in New Video,” *Premium Times*, May 29, 2013.

542 A quantitative look at messaging typifies these dynamics. Of the 16 Boko Haram video clips during this time span, 11 featured Shekau, of which five prominently dealt with international themes. Additionally, four out of 10 videos after November 2012 were distributed via jihadi forums, a break from typical methods as previous videos were primarily uploaded on YouTube or distributed directly to journalists. This is based on a compilation of media sources by the author.

543 One example is an August 2012 leaflet distributed in Maiduguri warning residents to cease providing information to security personnel. Another example is an April 2012 flier distributed in Kaduna, which warned of attacks if sect members continue to be arrested in the city. The content of these and other fliers largely came in response to localized incidents. “Boko Haram Set to Attack Kaduna, Police Say They're Ready,” *Leadership*, April 1, 2012; “Disregard Threat Messages from Boko Haram, JTF Tells Residents in Maiduguri, Channels Television, August 29, 2012.

544 Yahaya Ibrahim, “Boko Haram Threaten to Attack GSM Providers,” *Daily Trust*, February 13, 2012; Sunny Nwankwo, “Why We Attacked Maiduguri Market – Boko Haram,” *Leadership*, February 22, 2012.

545 Abul Qaqa did mention in an interview with *The Guardian* in January 2012 that “al Qa`ida are our elders brothers ... we enjoy financial and technical support from them.” Mark, “Boko Haram Vows to Fight Until Nigeria Establishes Sharia Law.”

### Strategy

Beginning in late 2010, Boko Haram attacks occurred almost daily in northeastern Nigeria, especially Maiduguri. At the same time, Abuja, Jos, Kaduna, and the Middle Belt more generally also experienced Boko Haram violence, albeit less frequently. Many operations in the Middle Belt were suicide attacks targeted at churches to create sectarian strife and portray Boko Haram as defending Muslims against the “Crusaders.”<sup>546</sup> In contrast, attacks in the northeast initially were mostly assassinations of anti-Boko Haram clerics, traditional leaders, and government officials; improvised explosive devices (IEDs) at bars and markets; arsons of churches, anti-Boko Haram mosques, and government buildings; ambushes on soldiers; bombings of cell phone masts and media houses; attacks on schools; and “urban invasions,” such as that of the Yobe State capital Damaturu in November 2011.<sup>547</sup>

In 2012, Boko Haram also incorporated Kano and Sokoto into its area of operations with high-profile attacks in both cities. Boko Haram fliers and statements from Abul Qaqa forewarned attacks in those two cities if imprisoned Boko Haram members were not released.<sup>548</sup> This was an indication of Boko Haram’s underlying grievances regarding membership welfare that drove domestic expansion and a reminder that its threats needed to be considered as credible.<sup>549</sup>

Despite the domestic approach to target selection, the second suicide attack Boko Haram ever undertook targeted the United Nations building in Abuja in August 2011. (Boko Haram’s first suicide attack struck the Federal Police headquarters in June 2011.) The international focus of the U.N. headquarters bombing stands out as a significant outlier, and the nature of that attack suggested external support

546 A key part of Boko Haram’s strategy evident in both its messaging and violence in Phase II was to generate sectarian strife between Nigeria’s Muslim and Christian communities, particularly in the religiously mixed Middle Belt. The end of 2011 saw Boko Haram deliver a three-day ultimatum for Christians to leave Nigeria’s north, while a campaign of VBIED attacks during Sunday church services in 2012 targeted central Nigerian cities. The February 26, 2012, and June 10, 2012, suicide vehicle borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED) attacks on churches in Jos were both claimed by Boko Haram spokesman Abul Qaqa. Seriki Adinoyi, Ahamefula Ogbu, and Michael Olugbode, “Eight Killed as Bombers Target Jang’s Church,” *This Day*, February 27, 2012; Hamza Idris, “Boko Claim Responsibility for Jos, Biu Attacks,” *Daily Trust*, June 11, 2012; Emma Johnson and Anthony Awunor, “Boko Haram Issues 3-Day Ultimatum to Southerners,” *The Moment*, January 2, 2012.

547 These types of coordinated assaults involved 50 to 200 fighters, such as in Damaturu in November 2011 and Kano in January 2012, and became a common feature of Boko Haram violence in rural areas of Nigeria in the latter half of 2013 and 2014. “Nigeria’s Kano Rocked by Multiple Explosions,” *BBC*, January 21, 2012; “Over 136 Dead in Yobe Boko Haram Attacks,” *This Day*, November 6, 2011.

548 The forewarnings of the major attacks in both cities were also an indication of Boko Haram’s credibility and that leaders could no longer dismiss its statements and threats. The first major incident in Kano was a coordinated assault on multiple police stations and other locations in the city on January 20, 2012. “Nigeria’s Kano Rocked by Multiple Explosions,” *BBC*, January 21, 2012. While in Sokoto on July 30, 2012, initial violence involved suicide bombers also targeting police institutions. Mahmoud Mohammed, “Police Stations, AIG’s Office, Powa Bombed in Sokoto – Five Killed,” *Leadership*, July 31, 2012. The targeting of a police station likely ties into demands to release detained sect members.

549 Boko Haram initially threatened Kano in 2011 over the detention of its members there, and Kano Governor Kwankwaso released sect members in August of that year. “Boko Haram Writes Gov, Emir, Others ... Threatens to Bomb Kano,” *iReports-NG*, July 29, 2011; Abdulaziz, “Governor Kwankwaso Wants Boko Haram Members Released,” *Leadership*, August 31, 2011. Nonetheless, Boko Haram issued a second threat in late 2011, and spokesman Abul Qaqa explained the January 2012 assault on the city as a response to the lack of compliance. Ibrahim Shuaibu and Michael Olugbode, “Police Seize Would-be Suicide Bomber’s Car,” *This Day*, December 19, 2011; “Boko Haram: Why We Struck Kano,” *Sahara Reporters*, January 22, 2012. On January 29, 2012, Abul Qaqa further warned that similar violence would occur in Sokoto if imprisoned members there were not released, which was followed up by attacks in July of that year. Ndahi Marama, “We’ll Attack Sokoto, Boko Haram Warns Sultan, Tambuwal, Others,” *Vanguard*, January 29, 2012.

and/or coordination, raising concerns about Boko Haram's international jihadi orientation.<sup>550</sup> In this sense, strategy followed a similar balance as messaging, with a predominant domestic focus, laced with snippets of international influence that raised Boko Haram's external profile and perhaps laid the groundwork for future relationships. Nonetheless, Boko Haram has not repeated a similar internationally focused attack in Nigeria since August 2011, with other violence during Phase II directed at local targets within Nigeria's borders, indicative of a predominately domestic approach.

### Membership

In the immediate aftermath of Yusuf's death and the uprising, Boko Haram members fled from northern Nigeria and sought refuge in neighboring Cameroon, Niger, and Chad and, in some cases, further away with AQIM in Algeria and Mali and al-Shabaab in Somalia.<sup>551</sup> This flight deepened sub-regional linkages between Boko Haram and AQIM, with leading Boko Haram members gaining training and bomb-making expertise. It did not, however, alter the primarily domestic and sub-regional composition of Boko Haram membership, as the group did not attract new members from Mali and Somalia. Rather, militants who had joined the movement prior to 2009 returned to Nigeria from abroad, with new training and connections.<sup>552</sup>

Additionally, in 2010 Shekau took over and continued Boko Haram's Nigerian—and particularly Kanuri—leadership, albeit with some sub-regional composition.<sup>553</sup> Rank-and-file membership was more diverse, within some members coming from throughout Nigeria and, increasingly, the sub-region, but Kanuri and then Hausa remained the *lingua franca* of the militants, demonstrating its

550 The targeting of the U.N. headquarters via a SVBIED was similar to an AQIM-claimed attack at U.N. offices in Algiers in 2007, while the FBI noted that the bomb construction resembled previous al-Qa`ida blasts, further suggesting an external role in the attack. Chinedu Offor, Femi Ogbonnikan, and Ekene Okoro, "FBI Links Al-Qaeda to Abuja Blasts - Bomb Scare in Lagos, Motorways Building Evacuated," *Daily Independent*, January 6, 2011. A series of attacks on polio workers in Kano in early 2013 mirrored similar violence by Islamist militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, polio carries a controversial history specific to Nigeria, and it may help explain the attacks (which dates back to unauthorized drug trials by the pharmaceutical company Pfizer in Kano in 1996, and rumors, supported by many respected Islamic clerics, that polio vaccinations in 2003 were part of a conspiracy to render Nigerian Muslim women infertile. Immunizations resumed a year later after further testing and the sourcing of dosages from Muslim nations, but scattered resentment against polio inoculations remains.) "Muslim Suspicion of Polio Vaccine Lingers On," IRIN, February 19, 2004. A similar argument could be made with regard to the attacks on cell phone towers in that they had a domestic root (Boko Haram threatened cell phone companies over perceived cooperation with Nigerian security forces), but mirrored attacks by militants in Afghanistan. "Boko Haram Threatens to Bomb MTN, Airtel, Glo, and NCC," Information Nigeria, February 14, 2012; Jon Boone, "Taliban Target Mobile Phone Masts to Prevent Tipoffs From Afghan Civilians," *Guardian*, November 11, 2011. In this sense, target selection may have been rooted in domestic dynamics, even if inspiration came from abroad. The kidnapping of a French family in Cameroon in early 2013 may have also signaled an increasing awareness of Islamist struggles outside of Nigeria, but the family was eventually released for a three million dollar ransom, reducing it to an income generation tactic, "Nigeria's Boko Haram 'Got \$3m Ransom' to Free Hostages," BBC, April 27, 2013.

551 This apparently was a previously utilized tactic, with members fleeing into Cameroon and Niger following previous clashes with the police in 2004. "Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict," pp. 36-37.

552 Some of the most prominent members who fled to AQIM areas, such as Khalid al-Barnawi, Adam Kamar, and Abu Muhammed, would go on to lead the breakaway movement Ansaru, an indication of the impact their external experience may have had in influencing strategy upon return to Nigeria.

553 Although Boko Haram deliberately did not publicly reveal leadership posts other than Shekau, the Joint Task Force in Maiduguri released a wanted list of four Shura Council members and 14 other Boko Haram commanders in November 2012. Given the opaque nature of Boko Haram leadership, the JTF list likely reportedly simply what was known at the time, and thus it should not be viewed as a thorough profile of the organization's hierarchy. Nonetheless, the list does provide some insight into leadership trends. While details beyond their names were scarce, two of the four reported Shura Council members originated from Borno and at least one commander likely came from Niger and Cameroon each, revealing a dominant northeast Nigerian focus at the highest levels of Boko Haram, but also the presence of militants from the sub-region in leadership positions. "JTF declares 19 top Boko Haram members wanted; N50 million bounty placed on Abubakar Shekau's head," *Pilot Africa*, November 23, 2012. Reported Shura Council Members Momodu Bama came from Bama in Borno State ("Killed Boko Haram Commander Spearheaded Kidnap Of Ali Monguno. Seven French Citizens, Others – Security Sources," *Premium Times*, August 14, 2013) while Khalid al-Barnawi was born in Maiduguri. "Khalid al-Barnawi," Rewards for Justice, accessed February 19, 2016. Commanders Ali Jalingo and Alhaji Mustapha (Massa) Ibrahim likely come from Niger and Cameroon respectively. "Terror Suspect Escapes Arrest in Benue," *Leadership*, January 7, 2013; "Cameroon : Un Coursier Du Boko Haram Aux Arrêts à Waza," *Camerbe*, accessed February 19, 2016.

domestic nature.<sup>554</sup>

### *Support Networks in Phase II*

This section discusses external linkages, funding, and arms in Phase II. As mentioned above, many Boko Haram members returned to Nigeria from abroad after the 2009 crackdown with foreign training, which likely played a crucial role in expanding capabilities. For example, Mamman Nur, Yusuf's former third-in-command, reportedly led a group of 90 militants who received instruction in IEDs and suicide attacks in Somalia, and played a major role in planning the U.N. headquarters attack in August 2011 upon his return. Such trends continued in a limited fashion, with 60 militants reportedly returning from Libya in 2011.<sup>555</sup>

The most significant international linkages, however, came from AQIM. In October 2010, AQIM's media wing Al-Andalus uploaded an Eid message from Shekau on a jihadi-run website, while during the height of AQIM's territorial conquests in northern Mali, Boko Haram fighters and couriers with money and messages traveled between the two groups via Niger.<sup>556</sup> Up to 100 Boko Haram members (or perhaps simply Nigerians) were reportedly present in Gao and Timbuktu, Mali, in April 2012.<sup>557</sup>

554 In this phase, active Boko Haram recruitment efforts in the sub-region began to pick up pace. For example, a number of suspected Boko Haram members were arrested in southern Niger, particularly in the Diffa region in 2012, while U.S. security officials claimed Boko Haram had been recruiting in the area since the late 2000s. In February 2010, Cameroon President Paul Biya also expressed concerns about extremist recruitment in the north of his country. In this sense, Boko Haram had begun to lay the seeds for sub-regional recruitment and potential expansion at this time. "US Soldiers Quietly Help Build Wall Against Boko Haram," Reuters, September 18, 2015. In February 2012, Diffa authorities arrested a number of suspected Boko Haram militants attempting to set up a cell in the city, Sudarsan Raghavan, "Niger Struggles Against Militant Islam," *Washington Post*, August 16, 2012. Five more militants were suspected in Zinder in 2012. "Niger Police Arrest 5 Suspected Boko Haram Members," *Vanguard*, September 27, 2012. While in September 2012, other suspected militants were arrested in the town of Kwanni on the Nigeria border. "Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II)," p. 17; Dibussi Tande, "Boko Haram and the Fear of Islamic Extremism in Cameroon: Part 1 – Boko Haram's Cameroon Connection," Scribbles from the Den blog, January 10, 2012. Rank-and-file membership during this time period likely remained largely Nigerian, with a few individuals from the sub-region. Within Nigeria, there was a strong focus on membership originating from the northeast, but suspected militants from as far as Osun, Sokoto, and Oyo states, including Yorubas, were arrested during this period. Overall, while the vast majority of Boko Haram members appear to have had Nigerian roots, militants from all sub-regional nations with suspected ties to Boko Haram were also expelled from Nigeria during this phase, while others were caught up in battles on Nigerian soil, an indication of the sect's continued cross-border appeal. Based on a database maintained by the author of Boko Haram members reported in local media outlets, 123 suspected militants were identified during this period, 85 of which did not have their country of origin identified. Out of the 38 whose country of origin was clearly defined, 36 came from Nigeria. Nonetheless, the example of Abdullahi Guto, a Chadian national arrested in Niger state in February 2012, indicates the presence of non-Nigerians in the sect as well, "Police Arrest Chadian, Islamic Teacher in Niger," Nigerian Eye, February 18, 2012; Abdul Salam Muhammad, "JTF Arrests Suspected Sect Leader, Wife in Kano," *Vanguard*, May 11, 2012; Nnenna Ibeh, "Jaji Military Church Bomb Planner Sold Yams to Spy on Targets," *Premium Times*, January 18, 2013; Lawan Danjuma Adamu, "The Untold Story of Kabiru Sokoto," *Daily Trust*, February 13, 2012. In November 2010, 400 Chadians living in Maiduguri were expelled; some may have belonged to Boko Haram, but the majority were kicked out for lacking official documents. "Chad's North West: The Next High Risk Area," International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 11. In August 2011, 43 Cameroonian members were also expelled from Nigeria, Ntaryike Divine, Jr., "Cameroon Serving As Hideout For Nigeria's Boko Haram - Cleric," Backstage Cameroon, August 14, 2011. Chadian and Cameroonian nationals were part of a July 2011 gun battle in Maiduguri that killed 36 suspected Boko Haram members. Ntaryike Divine, Jr., "Cameroon Serving As Hideout For Nigeria's Boko Haram - Cleric," Backstage Cameroon, August 14, 2011.

555 "Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II)," p. 24; "Treasury Sanctions Senior Boko Haram Leaders," U.S. Department of the Treasury, December 1, 2015.

556 A U.N. report noted that seven Boko Haram members were arrested in Niger in January 2012 on their way to Mali with training materials and the contact details of AQIM members on their persons. "Report of the Assessment Mission on the Impact of the Libyan Crisis on the Sahel Region," United Nations Security Council, 2012, pp.11-12. Between March and August 2012, Niger also arrested 13 suspected Boko Haram members on their way to Mali. Sudarsan Raghavan, "Niger Struggles Against Militant Islam," *Washington Post*, August 16, 2012. In June 2012, a courier was arrested in Niger with two letters from AQIM addressed to Shekau and 35,000 Euros. "Terrorist Financing in West Africa," Financial Action Task Force, 2013, p. 24. While in October 2012, a Nigerian military official informed Reuters that Boko Haram members were crossing its border daily in an attempt to reach Mali. "Niger Seeks joint Southern Border Patrols to Bar Boko Haram," Reuters, October 7, 2012.

557 Some of these reported members may have been more closely linked to Boko Haram offshoot Ansaru, given the discovery of an Ansaru flier at Mokhtar Belmokhtar's house in Gao after French forces intervened. The relationship between Ansaru and Belmokhtar was further demonstrated by the presence of a self-identified Ansaru member during a September 2013 put out by Belmokhtar's al-Mulathamun Brigade. "Dozens of Boko Haram Help Mali's Rebel Seize Gao," *Vanguard*, April 2, 2012; Jade Haméon, "Au Mali, Dans la Maison du Djihadiste Mokhtar Belmokhtar," *L'Express*, September 2, 2013.

The lessons gained from this experience likely resulted in the boost in Boko Haram's desert warfare capabilities, including the appearance of technicals [vehicles with a mounted gun] and the use of RPGs for the first time in Nigeria in early 2013, along with 'shaped charge' IEDs for suicide attacks.<sup>558</sup> This enhanced Boko Haram's capabilities, allowing it to overrun military barracks and ensure the flight of security actors, laying the seeds for a more formal occupation of territory during Phase III.

Despite the international training and financial support, the majority of Boko Haram's funding remained domestic or sub-regional. Financing largely derived from bank robberies, which earned the group an estimated \$6 million; criminal activities like extortion and the theft of government worker salaries; and the kidnapping of wealthy Nigerians, which the U.S. government estimated could net up to \$1 million per incident.<sup>559</sup> Kidnapping foreigners for ransom also became a source of income, with four incidents in northern Cameroon netting Boko Haram several millions of dollars in ransoms in 2013 and 2014.<sup>560</sup> Political support likely did not play an important role in Phase II like it did during Phase I, despite claims that some northern governors paid Boko Haram to avoid attacks in their states, and the arrest of a few political officials accused of ties with Boko Haram.<sup>561</sup>

Arms and supplies followed a similar path as the above, albeit with a higher reliance on sub-regional smuggling networks. Boko Haram began to pillage arms from Nigerian military barracks and other

558 "Baga Clashes: Nigeria Army Seizes Heavy Weapons," BBC, April 23, 2013; "Boko Haram: From Motorcycle Fighters to Flame Throwers," *Nation*, May 09, 2013; Drew Hinshaw, "In Nigeria Battle, Militants Reveal Bolstered Firepower," *Wall Street Journal*, April 22, 2013. The deadlier 'shaped-charged' IEDs were initially used by al-Qa'ida militants in Iraq, and some analysts point to the employment of the technique by Boko Haram as evidence of external training, likely from AQIM. Oscar Nkala "Nigeria Police Claim Drop in IED Attacks in 2013," Defence Web, April 16, 2014; Anneli Botha, "Practical Guide to Understanding and Preventing Suicide Operations in Africa," (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2013), p. 95.

559 Terrence McCoy, "This is How Boko Haram Funds its Evil," *Washington Post*, June 6, 2014; Hamza Idris, "JTF – Boko Haram Extorts Money Through SMS," *Daily Trust*, October 27, 2012; Kingsley Omonobi, "Army Blocks Move to Hoist Flag in Damaturu," *Vanguard*, October 26, 2012; "JTF Arrests Suspected Killers of Gen. Shuwa," *Vanguard*, May 7, 2013; "Robbers Kill 3 Soldiers, Snatch LG Salary," *PM News*, August 2, 2012; "Gunmen Snatch Workers Salary in Yobe," *Premium Times*, accessed February 19, 2016; "Bandits Killed 2 Soldiers in an Ambush," *PM News*, June 14, 2012. The estimate provided by the United States might be on the high end. For example, former oil minister Shettima Ali Monguno was kidnapped from Maiduguri in May 2013 but released after a N50 million (approximately \$300,000) ransom was reportedly paid. Ola' Audu, "How Boko Haram Turned to Kidnapping to Raise Funds in Borno," *Premium Times*, May 20, 2013; "Former Nigerian Oil Minister, Ali Monguno, Released After N50million Ransom Paid," *African Spotlight*, May 6, 2013; Phil Stewart and Lesley Wroughton, "How Boko Haram is Beating U.S. Efforts to Choke its Financing," Reuters, July 1, 2014.

560 Based on media reporting, Boko Haram earned more than \$15 million from four kidnappings in northern Cameroon. This included \$3 million from a French family of seven abducted in February 2013, \$12.5 million after the seizure of a French priest in November 2013, and undisclosed amounts for the release of two Italian priests and a Canadian nun abducted in April 2014 and 10 Chinese construction workers taken in May 2014, in addition to the family of Cameroon Vice President Amadou Ali, seized from Kolofata in July 2014. "Nigeria's Boko Haram 'Got \$3m Ransom' to Free Hostages," BBC, April 27, 2013; Yuh Timchia, "Boko Haram 'Was Paid' \$12.5 Million to Release French Priest," *Africa Review*, January 7, 2014; Ann Mereille Nzouankeu, "Kidnapped Italian Priests and Canadian Nun Freed in Cameroon," Reuters, June 1, 2014; "Boko Haram: 27 Chinese, Local Hostages Released in Cameroon," *Vanguard*, October 11, 2014. A recent report from the International Crisis Group put the figure slightly lower at \$11 million, but also a total of \$5.7 million for the Chinese construction workers and the family of Cameroonian Vice President Amadou Ali. "Cameroon: Confronting Boko Haram," pp. 16-17.

561 The governors of Kano and Bauchi in 2011 were rumored to pay Boko Haram to avoid attacks in their states, a point one-time Boko Haram spokesman Ali Sanda Umar Konduga seemingly confirmed when he stated "most of them [northern governors] pay us monthly to leave them alone." "Faces of Boko Haram Sponsors," 9jabook, January 26, 2012; "We're on Northern Governors Payroll – Boko Haram," *Vanguard*, January 24, 2012; Pérouse de Montclos, p. 13; "Terrorist Financing in West Africa," p. 21. Senator Mohammed Ali Ndume was arrested in 2011 after Konduga named him and Nigeria's Ambassador to Sao Tome and Principe Saidu Pindar as key supporters. Ndume was eventually cleared of all charges in mid-2017, while Pindar died in a car crash in 2011 before he could deliver the N10 million he reportedly promised for the sect. "SSS: Statement, Nigerian Lawmaker Ran Boko Haram," Sahara Reporters, November 21, 2011; Ikechukwu Nnochiri, "Boko Haram Spokesman Bags 3-year Jail Term," *Vanguard*, November 7, 2011; "Boko Haram Sponsors: SSS Detains Senator," *Daily Post*, November 22, 2011; John Chuks Azu, "Terrorism: Court Admits Phone Evidence Against Ndume," *Daily Trust*, February 24, 2016; "Court Frees Ndume From Terrorism Charges," Channels Television, July 4, 2017. These were two most high-profile public investigations into Boko Haram support during this period, although Boko Haram subsequently denied Konduga was a member of their group after his arrest. Nazifi Dawud Khalid, "Boko Haram Disowns Konduga ... Says Ndume Also a Target," *Daily Trust*, November 24, 2011. Other rumors that northern political elites funded Boko Haram as an outlet for their frustration regarding the reelection of southerner Goodluck Jonathan as president in 2011 never materialized into sufficient evidence.

police stations that they raided, which was a tactic also utilized during the 2003-2004 police clashes.<sup>562</sup> Explosive materials were also stolen from local construction sites and fertilizer markets, while the regional arms pipeline proved important as Boko Haram weapons were reported to have originated from locations such as Chad, Mali, Libya, and as far as Darfur.<sup>563</sup>

The influence of sub-regional and regional elements within Boko Haram's support networks in Phase II are likely explained in the context of a group reaching out to available mediums of support to enhance capabilities, while pursuing a strategy that ultimately remained largely confined within a domestic lens. Nonetheless, while subtle, such elements may have also laid the groundwork for a future adjustment of strategy based on the influence of these linkages.

### *Overall Assessment in Phase II*

During Phase II of the group's evolution, messaging in the form of Shekau videos, press statements from spokesmen, and the use of fliers showed that Boko Haram was driven predominantly by a domestic focus. Nonetheless, Shekau videos revealed a growing identification with the global salafi-jihadi movement in terms of style.<sup>564</sup> This was indicative of a shift in messaging dynamics, which included a greater non-Nigerian emphasis through the prism of international jihad.

Strategy also reflected domestic dynamics, as Boko Haram restricted operations to within Nigeria, and in turn focused efforts on sectarian conflict in the Middle Belt. The bombing of the U.N. building in Abuja, however, remains an important incident—albeit an aberration—that more closely mirrored the targeting and tactics practiced by al-Qa`ida. It is significant that a similar event was not repeated, as other violence was directed at national targets. The expansion of attacks to northwestern Nigeria was often driven by grievances regarding the treatment of its members, marking Boko Haram as a domestic movement primarily pursuing a strategy of confrontation with Nigerian Christians and the Nigerian state.

Boko Haram membership in Phase II was also principally Nigerian, but, like Phase I, had a significant number sub-regional members. This can be credited to the flight of members to neighboring countries after the crackdown in Nigeria in July 2009, the emergence of leadership with sub-regional roots, the need for increased recruitment in bordering regions to supply the growing insurgency in Nigeria. These trends would manifest themselves more substantially in Phase III.

Support networks remained principally Nigerian in terms of funding, but regional linkages, in particular to AQIM, proved important for training and on-the-ground experience in northern Mali. The sourcing of arms typified this duality: Boko Haram's stockpiles of weapons grew through the raiding of Nigerian army bases and police stations, while other arms and equipment were acquired from the sub-region and region more broadly, such as Chad and Libya.

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562 For example, an early 2013 video displayed arms allegedly seized during an attack at a military base in Monguno, Borno State. "Boko Haram Militants Shows Off Weapons 'Captured' From An Army Barack Raid," Sahara TV, YouTube, April 29, 2013.

563 A 2012 Nigeria police report concluded that the majority of IEDs are constructed from local sources. "Nigeria Presentation at the 2012 CCW Group of Experts Meeting on IED," Nigerian police, accessed August 5, 2014. Officials investigating the August 2011 suicide bomb at the U.N. headquarters deduced it "probably consisted of both stolen factory-made explosives and home-made materials." Joe Brock, "Special Report: Nigeria's Boko Haram: Between Rebellion and Jihad," Reuters, February 2, 2012. Meanwhile, militants were also suspected of stealing C4 for construction sites and raiding fertilizer markets for inputs. "Boko Haram Storms Fertiliser Markets For Bombs," Nigeria News blog, accessed February 18, 2016. A Boko Haram arms smuggler captured in Damaturu in 2011 admitted that weapons were purchased in Chad and Cameroon. "Borno Police Uncover Boko Haram Hideouts ... Kill 6, Alleged Foreign Connection," Gist Mania, accessed February 18, 2016. In August 2012, Nigerian security officials intercepted a cache of arms, including eight rocket propelled launchers, in Daban Mara town by the Chadian border. "Task Force Intercepts Arms Cache, Kills Two," *Guardian*, July 31, 2012. Rumors of regional arms trafficking through Libya, especially in the immediate aftermath of the fall of dictator Muammar Qaddafi persist, but little concrete open source evidence has materialized.

564 This occurred in tandem with Shekau's increasing use of Arabic, threats to world leaders, and greetings to jihadi leaders in other conflict areas.

Although sub-regional, regional, and international elements became more visible during Phase II, the majority of activities and linkages for Boko Haram still reflected its Nigeria-focused strategy. In this sense, the group’s operational tempo remained firmly directed at the Nigerian Government during Phase II, despite mounting indications that the next phase would hold a decidedly broader outlook.

PHASE II	DOMESTIC	SUB-REGIONAL	REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
Messaging	•			•
Strategy	•			•
Membership	•	•		
Support Networks	•	•	•	

PHASE II	DOMESTIC	SUB-REGIONAL	REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
Messaging	<i>Shekau videos, press statements, and fliers mostly focused on domestic events</i>			<i>Rhetoric and style of Shekau messaging increasingly mirrored messaging from international jihadi groups</i>
Strategy	<i>Vast majority of violence confined locally; strategy to confront Nigerian state and focus on Middle Belt dynamics</i>			<i>U.N. attack in Abuja important outlier similar to attacks by jihadi groups elsewhere</i>
Membership	<i>Nigerian focus at leadership and rank-and-file levels continued</i>	<i>Emergence of some leadership with sub-regional linkages; recruitment expanding beyond Nigerian borders</i>		
Support Networks	<i>Funding and most arms sourced domestically</i>	<i>Sub-regional arms pipeline tapped</i>	<i>Training from regional jihadis formative; ties with northern Mali militants grew</i>	



### Phase III (2013-2016)

In May 2013, the Nigerian government declared a state of emergency in the three northeastern states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe, while vigilante forces collectively referred to as the Civilian JTF emerged, initially in urban centers. This turn of events pushed Boko Haram from its urban area of operations, especially Maiduguri, and forced it to become a rural-based insurgency. Phase III, under Shekau's direction, then saw Boko Haram shift toward increasingly targeting civilians as "punishment" for perceived collaboration with the military and Civilian JTF, while attempting to consolidate territorial control, duplicating the Islamic State's successes in Syria and Iraq, and fulfilling Muhammad Yusuf's original vision of an Islamic state in Nigeria.

Boko Haram also saw its most significant change in affiliation with Shekau's pledge to al-Baghdadi—and al-Baghdadi's acceptance of it—in March 2015, making Boko Haram the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP). While this led to Boko Haram's adoption of Islamic State's professional media techniques and use of social media, it did not translate into operational success. Rather, a military offensive launched in 2015 forced Boko Haram out of some of the territory it had taken over prior to the pledge.

An emerging rift centering around Shekau's targeting of Muslim civilians also split the movement into two main factions in August 2016. Abu Musab al-Barnawi, a son of Boko Haram founder Muhammad Yusuf, continued in the role of ISWAP leader and maintained operations and messaging consistent with the Islamic State's approach in the aftermath of the split. Shekau withdrew from the al-Barnawi-led ISWAP (but did not officially withdraw his overall recognition of al-Baghdadi as Caliph), and instead led his own faction under Boko Haram's pre-Islamic State name. He has continued his struggle in a manner similar to before his March 2015 pledge, especially in terms of calling for indiscriminate violence and creating messaging marked by a lower degree of professionalization, but also bombastic outbursts.

#### *Messaging in Phase III*

Initially, Shekau continued to dominate Boko Haram messaging in Phase III, appearing in 11 of 13 official Boko Haram messages in 2014.<sup>565</sup> In early 2015, however, Boko Haram set up an official Twitter account called Al-Urhwa Al-Wutqha (AUAW) in coordination with the Islamic State. Shekau did not feature on this Twitter account for the first month of its operation, which foreshadowed the diminished role he would play in messaging after his allegiance to the Islamic State.

Prior to the setting up of the Twitter account and even in the first few weeks of its opening, Shekau's videos, which were still aired separately from the Twitter account, used Boko Haram's regular branding. The content was also fairly similar to Phase II.<sup>566</sup> Some notable distinctions, however, were Shekau's more frequent taunts of sub-regional and world leaders, such as the Cameroonian, Chadian, and Nigerian presidents or then U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; praise for international jihadi violence like the Charlie Hebdo shooting in Paris; condemnation of other Islamic groups like Shi'a's, Zaydis, and Naqshbandis; the use of Arabic subtitles during Hausa speeches; and the incorporation of

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565 This is based on author's compilation of media statements.

566 Videos remained largely grainy copies, although some clips in 2014 demonstrated a noticeably high-quality resolution.

tanks, technicals, and militants in outdoor settings behind Shekau during his speeches.<sup>567</sup> To counter government narratives, Boko Haram videos also began to show footage of specific Boko Haram attacks and seized weaponry, or *ghanima* (“spoils”) from barracks to demonstrate the group’s victories over government forces.<sup>568</sup>

The AUAW Twitter account first appeared in mid-January 2015 as Boko Haram’s official Twitter account and was subsequently “verified” by Islamic State media operatives.<sup>569</sup> AUAW released high-quality videos in addition to tweets on organizational and battlefield updates, photos, and other documents, such as a written statement threatening neighboring countries. The last AUAW account was shut down on March 8, 2015, one day after Shekau issued his pledge al-Baghdadi. That no other productions with the same logos emerged afterwards suggests that AUAW was a platform to preview and promote the transition to a ‘new’ Boko Haram, which was rebranded as ISWAP after Shekau’s pledge.<sup>570</sup>

After Shekau’s pledge, the Islamic State-coordinated “Media Office of the West Africa Province (MOWAP)” took over Boko Haram messaging. In roughly its first year of operation starting in March 2015, it released 12 videos. Two audio statements from Shekau also emerged during this time, but were rooted in Shekau’s own personal desire to refute public rumors of his death and that Boko Haram was engaging in negotiations with the Nigerian and Chadian governments, rather than official publications. Both revolved around themes Shekau had frequently addressed in Phase II when those issues arose in the media.<sup>571</sup>

MOWAP videos featured West Africa Province attack scenes, displays of captured weaponry, beheadings of security personnel, the administration of sharia justice, and interviews with or speeches by local

567 Shekau had released 26 different messages after May 2013, and at least 18 of them mentioned President Obama or other world leaders predominately of Western nations, based on a compilation of media sources by the author. A display of captured weaponry during a November 3, 2013, video and an attack scene at an air base in Maiduguri during a December 12, 2013, clip were among the first to utilize Arabic subtitles to describe the scenes. A February 19, 2014, video of Shekau firing from a technical and then reading his speech in front of a tank, two technicals, and 10 masked gunmen outdoors, was one of the first to include both war vehicles and gunmen in the scene. As early as December 2013, Shekau stated, “Don’t think we will stop in Maiduguri; tomorrow you still see us in America itself,” but this was largely dismissed as bluster from the Boko Haram leader at the time. “Boko Haram Threatens to Attack U.S. in New Video,” Channels Television, December 12, 2013; Mohammed Lere, “Boko Haram Threatens Cameroon,” *Premium Times*, January 8, 2015; Mustapha Muhammad, “Nigeria’s Boko Haram Leader Applauds Charlie Hebo Attackers,” Bloomberg, January 14, 2015. Less than a month later, Shekau continued on this sub-regional trend, directly threatening Chadian President Idriss Déby during a February 8, 2015, clip in which he also derided the emerging regional coalition aimed at countering the spread of his group. “Boko Haram Leader in New Video Talks Tough,” *PM News*, February 9, 2015.

568 A December 13, 2013, video was a particularly damaging example, as it showed militants attacking an air base in Maiduguri around dawn and setting fire to fighter jets seemingly unimpeded. A March 2014 video showing an attack on the notorious Giwa Barracks in Maiduguri, a detention center for suspected Boko Haram militants, had a similar effect, with hundreds of purported detainees fleeing in the aftermath. Videos from December 13, September 25, and May 28, 2013, either contained messaging claiming to have stolen weapons during operations against Nigerian security forces or displayed neatly arranged stacks of the seized arms.

569 As early as late 2014, Boko Haram messages had already become more varied, with multiple media outlets disseminating Boko Haram rhetoric, often without the appearance of Shekau. This was a major shift as of 48 likely official Boko Haram videos prior to the March 2015 *bay`a*. Shekau appeared in 37 of them, in contrast to not a single one of MOWAP produced clips, based on a compilation of media sources by the author. Four different Twitter accounts were used until March. (Each account was eventually suspended.)

570 As described by Jacob Zenn in an August 2015 article for the Combating Terrorism Center, Islamic State media operative Shaybah al-Hamad and the North Africa-based Africa Media cooperated to run AUAW’s Twitter accounts and facilitate media connections to the Islamic State. Jacob Zenn, “Wilayat West Africa Reboots for the Caliphate,” *CTC Sentinel* 8:8 (2015).

571 The audio clips were released in August and September 2015 and came in reaction to events reported in the local press. Both were also released through non-official Islamic State channels, suggesting a disconnect between Shekau and his sect’s new Islamic State-linked messaging wing. In the first, Shekau rejected claims by Chadian President Idriss Deby that he had been deposed in favor of a new leader, while in the second, Shekau denied that his movement was negotiating with the Nigerian government. Shekau likely felt compelled to counter these developments. Otherwise, the formerly loquacious leader was remarkably quiet. The fact that both messages were in audio rather than video format also raised questions as to his status. In addition, a clip of Shekau surfaced on March 24, 2016, but it was likely dated in that he made no mention of the Islamic State, the logos were derived from a previous media outlet, and it was of poor quality. Thus, it likely did not represent a new or official message from the Boko Haram leader. “Buhari is a Liar and Has Deceived You, Says Shekau,” *Vanguard*, September 20, 2015; “Shekau Rebuffs Idriss Deby’s Claims, Says I am Alive, in Charge,” *AllAfrica*, August 16, 2015.

fighters, largely utilizing a combination of spoken Hausa and Arabic subtitles. Some of these elements were present in Boko Haram messaging prior to the emergence of West Africa Province, but the newer videos released by the Islamic State were of higher quality and designed to widen appeal to the Islamic State's international followership and bolster the Islamic State's own narratives about "expanding (tatamadad)"—to West Africa in this case. Moreover, the new West Africa Province videos covered certain themes that the Islamic State coordinated throughout its provinces, which further demonstrated how West Africa Province was integrated with the Islamic State media network.<sup>572</sup>

Following the split between Shekau and al-Barnawi, messaging has continued on two separate tracks, with Shekau reverting to his pre-Islamic State messaging style as Boko Haram leader, but the al-Barnawi faction showing enduring linkages and collaboration with Islamic State media operatives.<sup>573</sup> Nonetheless, messaging from the al-Barnawi faction has been infrequent, while Shekau in early 2017 began putting Islamic State logos back on his videos, an indication that he still considered his faction to be in league with the international jihadi outfit.<sup>574</sup> In this sense, the heavy international influence on Boko Haram messaging has continued.

### *Strategy in Phase III*

Two events led to major changes in Boko Haram's strategy after mid-2013: first, the rise of the Civilian JTF and, second, the Nigerian government's declaration of a state of emergency in the three north-eastern states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa on May 14, 2013.<sup>575</sup> Taking these shifting dynamics into account, elements of Boko Haram's strategy regarding civilian targeting and urban bomb attacks, escalating sub-regional violence, territorial control, and post-territorial control are discussed below.

Boko Haram reacted to the rise of the Civilian JTF by targeting civilians as 'punishment' for them

572 Signs of external influence and even coordination with Islamic State media outlets go beyond production quality and language usage. An October 2015 video featured an older Boko Haram militant urging Somalia-based al-Shabaab militants to join the Islamic State. It came out less than two weeks after similar videos emerged from other Islamic State wilayat in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and the Sinai, and showed that Boko Haram was now in the Islamic State network. In addition, a November 2, 2015, video showed the sharia punishment of amputation for thieves, a theme commonly featured in Islamic State videos, which was repeated just days later in a Wilayat Homs video. Also an October 7, 2015, video reaffirming Shekau as emir depicted militants in a circle extending their hands upon one another, similar to how Wilayat Khursan and Wilayat Sinai *bay`a* videos closed. Islamic State auxiliary media outlets similarly released Boko Haram messages, which provides further evidence of external involvement in Boko Haram. Amaq Agency, an Islamic State-associated media outlet, for example, published an infographic on December 16, 2015, of West Africa Province operations between November 13 and December 12, 2015 (corresponding to the month of Safar in the Islamic calendar). Wilayat in Yemen and Iraq have circulated similar statistical reporting. Another Islamic State-related media outlet, Al Naba Agency, also released an info graphic on ISWA operations three days later covering the previous two months (Safar and Muharram). Aaron Zelin, "New video message from The Islamic State: 'Amputate Their Hands In Recompense For What They Committed – Wilayat Hims,'" *Jihadology*, November 7, 2015.

573 In the year following the split, only four al-Barnawi faction videos have emerged, as it has relied on Islamic State/Amaq statements on social media to claim attacks (21 total incidents), and increasingly toward the end of 2016 and beginning of 2017, distributed photos in lieu of videos. An Al-Naba production from January 2017 interviewed a "source" from al-Barnawi's group, demonstrating the continued media linkages with the Islamic State. Shekau's faction, on the other hand, has issued 18 video messages since August 2016, of which nine have featured Shekau himself. This resumed focus on leadership messaging is an indication of the lessened Islamic State messaging dynamics and Shekau's centralization of his faction's messaging wing, but the lack of complete domination also reflects trends incorporated from the Islamic State's period.

574 This dovetails with the fact that Shekau never officially withdrew his *bay`a* to the Islamic State caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Arabic also dominates al-Barnawi faction's messaging, but in early July 2017, the Islamic State released an attack claim on social media on behalf of the al-Barnawi faction that was translated into Hausa as well. This was the first recorded instance of a Hausa attack claim, and it may signal a greater desire to ensure local resonance of Islamic State/al-Barnawi messaging.

575 The combination of local youths scouting urban neighborhoods backed up by an increased security presence in Borno State precipitated Boko Haram's flight to the countryside, and it is fundamental to understanding the evolution in Boko Haram tactics and violence in Phase III.

allowing the vigilantes to operate in their towns.<sup>576</sup> Moreover, unlike in Phase II when Boko Haram focused on the cities, Phase III saw a countryside focus as militants were pushed to rural areas that Boko Haram devastated, and then used to orchestrate attacks on cities in a Maoist fashion.<sup>577</sup> One effect of this was that Boko Haram attacks became deadlier, with casualty rates spiking during indiscriminate assaults on lightly protected rural communities.<sup>578</sup>

Boko Haram also carried out symbolic—albeit sporadic—bombings in major Nigerian cities as well. In early 2014, for example, Boko Haram carried out major bombings in Abuja, Kaduna, Jos, and Kano.<sup>579</sup> Nonetheless, the pace of attacks did not match the frequency of 2012, and none have succeeded from November 2015 to mid-2017.<sup>580</sup> In this sense, these major bombings were an exception, with the locus of violence predominantly in the three states affected by the state of emergency.<sup>581</sup>

Boko Haram's strategy became distinctly more sub-regional in Phase III. Cross-border activities, which previously involved mostly smuggling and recruiting, transformed into active targeting, with Cameroon suffering its first major Boko Haram violence in March 2014 and near daily incidents throughout 2015.<sup>582</sup> Cameroon also witnessed increased targeting against its own vigilante groups akin to the Civilian JTF in Nigeria, traditional leaders, and civilians who were opposed to Boko Haram.<sup>583</sup> Boko Haram spread attacks to Niger and Chad in 2015 for the first time as well, albeit at lesser rates than in Nigeria or Cameroon, marking the group as a bona fide sub-regional threat.<sup>584</sup>

576 This was not an immediate shift. At first vigilantes themselves were targeted, then the family members of vigilantes, then communities where vigilantes operated, and eventually to civilians in Borno State as a whole. An Amnesty International report in 2015 also described how towns in Borno State with a civilian vigilante presence, such as Gwoza and Bama, were heavily targeted by Boko Haram, compared to towns like Dikwa that did not have similar groups and thus suffered less violence. "Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter, and Kill," Amnesty International, 2015), p. 30. Initially restricted to Borno State, the focus on civilian targeting expanded as vigilante groups correspondingly sprung up elsewhere, with revenge attacks also occurring in Cameroon. An April 17, 2015, attack in Bia and October 15, 2015, violence in Amchidé were revenge attacks in response to the development of vigilante organizations in those towns. "Human Rights Under Fire: Attacks and Violations in Cameroon's Struggle With Boko Haram," Amnesty International, 2015, pp. 27-29.

577 Mao Zedong said, "The countryside surrounds the cities (*nongcun baowei chengshi*)." As one Maiduguri resident explained to the author, prior to 2013, his family in rural southern Borno begged him to leave Maiduguri and come live with them due to the security issues in the city. By the beginning of 2014, his family left his home village for the relative safety of Maiduguri instead. This is exemplified by a database on Boko Haram attacks maintained by the Navanti Group, which recorded a decline in violent incidents in Maiduguri from 159 in 2012 to 58 in 2013 to just eight in 2014. Nonetheless, the targeting of Maiduguri has increased since the August 2016 split, primarily by the Shekau faction.

578 Incidents such as the February 2014 assault on Bama or May 2014 large-scale attack on Gamboru-Ngala, each with more than 100 estimated killed, signal this trend. "Nigerian Senator: '135 Civilians Killed' in Attacks," BBC, April 12, 2014; "Boko Haram Attack Kills Hundreds in Nigeria," Al Jazeera, May 8, 2014.

579 Examples of such attacks include a March 18, 2014, VBIED detonated in a predominately Christian area of Kano; the April 14, 2014, VBIED at Nyanya motor park in Abuja that killed 75 (claimed by Shekau); back-to-back blasts in Jos on May 20, 2014, that killed over 100 (also claimed by Shekau); and twin attacks on July 23, 2014, in Kaduna, which may have targeted influential cleric Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi and then-presidential candidate Muhammadu Buhari. "Police: 4 Killed in Kano Car Bomb," *PM News*, May 19, 2014; Ayorinde Oluokun, "Abuja Bus Station Blasts Came from 2 Bombs, 71 Killed," *PM News*, April 14, 2014; "Jos Bomb Toll At Least 118 – NEMA," *Vanguard*, May 20, 2014; Misbahu Bashir, "Kaduna Suicide Bombs Kill 85," *Daily Trust*, July 24, 2014.

580 This may not be from a lack of trying. Nigerian authorities have consistently reported on the arrest of Boko Haram militants elsewhere in the country, such as the arrest of three Chadians linked to the al-Barnawi faction in Gombe in February 2017. "Nigerian Troops Capture Foreign Terrorists," PRNigeria, February 26, 2017.

581 This is the author's reflection based on conflict tracking.

582 In January 2016, Cameroon Communications Minister Issa Tchiroma Bakary informed reporters that his government counted 315 separate attacks mainly over the past two years, resulting in 1,168 deaths. "Boko Haram has Killed Nearly 1,200 People Since 2013 – Cameroon," AFP, January 15, 2016. This is likely a conservative estimate, as a Cameroonian reporter closely following developments in the north stated that in 2015 alone Boko Haram attacked the country 296 times, or nearly once per day. Chief Bisong Eta, "Within the past 12 months, (January 1 to December 31), Boko Haram attacked Cameroon 296 times!" Twitter, December 31, 2015.

583 For example, see the November 21, 2015, suicide bombing at the traditional chief of Leymarie's house and the July 7, 2015, attack on vigilante forces in Mbrece. Sylvain Andzongo, "Female Suicide Bombers in Cameroon Attack that Kills Eight," Reuters, November 22, 2015; "Cameroun: Deux Attaqués Attribuées à Boko Haram Dans L'Extrême-Nord," RFI, July 8, 2015.

584 The first major attacks on both Chadian and Nigerian soil occurred in February 2015. Abdoulaye Massalaki, "Niger Forces Kill 109 Boko Haram Militants in Battle – State TV," Reuters, February 7, 2015; Madjiasra Nako, "Boko Haram Attacks Village in Chad as Revolt Spreads," Reuters, February 13, 2015.

The lead-up to violence in Niger, Chad, and Cameroon followed the same pattern as Boko Haram's expansion to Kano and Sokoto in 2012: warnings from Shekau to political leaders to cease involvement in anti-Boko Haram operations, followed by attacks, and a deepening of the militant presence to the point where violence became regularized.<sup>585</sup> This was likely an indication that Boko Haram's sub-regional expansion was a deliberate, retributive strategy rooted in an attempt to retaliate against governments that were cooperating with Nigeria's counterinsurgency efforts.

In July 2014, Boko Haram began occupying towns and villages in northeast Nigeria for the first time. The decision to occupy rural towns, and in many cases restrict populations from leaving, marked a strategic shift toward territorial control and governance. At its height in late 2014, Boko Haram occupied up to 20 Local Government Areas in an approach that mirrored the territorial consolidation of Islamic State months prior in Iraq and Syria. Given Shekau's *bay`a* to al-Baghdadi thereafter, Boko Haram's strategy to control territory—and especially the promotion of it in Boko Haram media—appears to have been part of his pre-pledge positioning.<sup>586</sup> Nonetheless, administration in these territories was limited, and most visibly evident through the renaming of towns, the appointing of new Boko Haram commanders to replace traditional elites, and the provision of sharia punishments for alleged infractions, such as disrespecting Islam, committing adultery, engaging in alleged homosexual activity, or spying on Boko Haram.<sup>587</sup>

Before Nigeria's presidential elections in early 2015 and continuing after the inauguration of new President Muhammadu Buhari, the military renewed its offensive with more troops, military contractors from South Africa, and a new round of airstrikes on Boko Haram positions. The militants were dislodged from territories under their control and scattered to hideouts throughout the sub-region. This spurred a return to Boko Haram's previous tactics, such as the employment of asymmetric bomb attacks, especially the use of female suicide bombings, instead of mass raids.<sup>588</sup>

The rural locus of Boko Haram's strategy in Phase III has continued since the split between al-Barnawi and Shekau. The al-Barnawi faction has primarily focused efforts in northern Borno State and along the borders with Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, with a preference to target military forces rather than civilians, while Shekau's troops have been more present in central Borno and along the Cameroon

585 This path was followed closely in Kano, but the sect was never able to recreate a similar level of violence in Sokoto after its initial assaults. In Cameroon, a flier reported to be from Shekau surfaced in early February 2014, warning Cameroon not to attack the sect or the group would be forced to react ("Boko Haram Met en Garde le Cameroun," *Le Septentrion*, February 6, 2014) ahead of the onset of regular Boko Haram violence in March 2014. "7 Dead in Boko Haram Attack in Cameroon," AFP, March 3, 2014. Shekau also threatened Mahamadou Issoufou and Idris Deby, the leaders of Niger and Chad, respectively, in two late January/early February 2015 video messages after both countries became involved in a regional anti-Boko Haram coalition, but prior to Boko Haram's first violent operations there. "Boko Haram Leader in New Video Talks Tough."

586 Julia Payne, "Insight – Nigerians Face Killings, Hunger in Boko Haram's 'state,'" Reuters, January 19, 2015; Chika Oduah, "Executions, Beatings, and Force Marriage: Life as a Boko Haram Captive," *Al Jazeera*, March 23, 2015; Adam Nossiter, "Boko Haram Refugees Recount Brutality and Random Killings in Nigeria's North," *New York Times*, February 6, 2015.

587 For example, the primarily Christian area of Gwoza was renamed Dar el Hikma, Arabic for "House of Wisdom." Nonetheless, Boko Haram mostly engaged in predatory activity, such as looting villages, in contrast to the level of bureaucracy imposed by the Islamic State in areas under its control in Syria and Iraq, or that which it appears in propaganda in places like Wilayat Sinai or Khurasan (Afghanistan). From all indications, the degree of governance in towns under Boko Haram control varied depending on the emir appointed, and has also been described as "haphazard." "Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter, and Kill," Amnesty International, 2015, p. 15; Monica Mark, "This is How Boko Haram is Trying to Turn Captives into Suicide Bombers," BuzzFeed, February 15, 2016; Payne, "Insight – Nigerians Face Killings, Hunger in Boko Haram's 'state,'" "Dead Bodies Found in Bama Wells," PRNigeria, March 19, 2015; "Boko Haram Renames Another Town in Borno, 21 Killed in Clash With Military," *This Day*, November 7, 2014; "Boko Haram Renames Another Town in Adamawa: Witnesses," *Vanguard*, November 6, 2014; Jonathan Landay, Warren Strobel, and Phil Stewart, "Exclusive: Seized Documents Reveal Islamic State's Department of War Spoils," Reuters, December 28, 2015.

588 It is important to note that while declining in frequency, Boko Haram remains capable of mass raids on rural villages, as the January 30, 2016, attack by over 50 militants on Dalori, a town just 12 kilometers from Maiduguri, would indicate. Complex operations, involving multiple suicide bombers detonating simultaneously or in various parts of the same location, also have become the norm, with civilian soft targets such as markets, transport stations, and mosques commonly hit. Official Islamic State messaging on Boko Haram attacks, however, ignored the more than 100 female suicide attacks that Boko Haram carried out, as well as its civilian casualties. Ola' Audu, "Update: Scores Killed in Boko Haram Attack on Dalori Village, Borno," *Premium Times*, January 31, 2016.

border, and engaged in a high number of indiscriminate suicide attacks.<sup>589</sup>

Notably, out of the over 100 attacks West Africa Province carried out in the first year of its operation, the Islamic State only claimed those with a high propaganda value, such as an attacks on Shi'as in Kano in October 2015 or other geographically significant male suicide bombings, like those in N'djamena, Chad, and Abuja, in June 2015.<sup>590</sup> In this sense, while external influence grew in ISWAP messaging, the average ISWAP attack did not seem to meet the requirements to be 'advertised' by the Islamic State. This suggests that the vast majority of decisions regarding violence were made at a national or sub-regional, rather than international, level.<sup>591</sup> Such dynamics may have precipitated the movement's split, with the Shekau faction rejecting the Islamic State's influence on internal group strategy.<sup>592</sup>

### *Membership in Phase III*

Phase III saw a rise in sub-regional recruitment, forced recruitment, and the first operational cells external to Nigeria, which will be discussed below. In addition, there were signs of non-Nigerians in leadership roles, which was representative of Boko Haram's decreasing Nigeria-centric approach.<sup>593</sup>

589 Nonetheless, by the end of 2016, the al-Barnawi faction was also present in southern areas of Borno State near Damboa and in Yobe State as well. This is the author's reflection based on conflict tracking.

590 Considering that West Africa Province conducted more than 130 suicide operations between its March 2015 pledge and August 2016 split into two factions, the relatively few claims by the Islamic State represent a small fraction of total operations. An Al-Amaq infographic in December 2015 outlined a list of targets deemed appropriate, which included the armies of each Lake Chad Basin country, pro-government gunmen (civilian vigilante groups), pro-government parties, and Shiites militias—and all claimed attacks have corresponded to this list. Initial attack reporting in 2015 only claimed incidents in highly symbolic locations (such as N'Djamena, Chad—the organization's first attack there—and Abuja and Kano, all major Nigerian cities that demonstrate reach), and those perpetrated by male suicide bombers, often publishing the names and photos of the 'martyrs,' in contrast to the silence over the female bombers. Just prior to the 2016 split and continuing thereafter, attack claims became more frequent and less strict in terms of the importance placed on geography and male suicide operations. From June 2016 until August 2017, the Islamic State or Al-Amaq News Agency claimed 29 different West Africa Province attacks, as more routine clashes in rural areas became the dominant theme. Nonetheless, the stringent reporting dynamics on targeting remained, as all of those claimed attacks targeted security personnel.

591 One oft cited example of potential external influence in Boko Haram target selection is the November 2015 suicide attack on a procession of Shiite Muslims in Kano state, given the Islamic State antipathy toward Shi'as and the fact that the attack was publicized by multiple Islamic State-media outlets. Shiite Muslims in Nigeria, however, have been attacked in the city of Potiskum, Nigeria, on at least four separate occasions since 2012. Boko Haram has not officially claimed any of the incidents, but the use of suicide bombers in July and November 2014 points to the sect's responsibility, while in a December 2014 video statement, Shekau referred to Shiites as pagans and noted his sect would continue to target the group. Mohammed Lere, "Boko Haram Leader, Shekau, Releases New Video; Vows to Attack Emir Sanusi of Kano," *Premium Times*, December 17, 2014. These attacks occurred prior to the *bay'at* to the Islamic State, potentially diminishing the extent of external influence in ISWA's decision-making. Maina, "Boko Haram: Suicide Bomber Kills 11, Injures 37 in Mosque Blast Near Emir of Fika's Palace," *Daily Post*, July 30, 2014; "Scores Dead, Other Injured in Potiskum Explosion," Channels Television, November 3, 2014.

592 It is likely that Shekau's refusal to alter his attack patterns based on Islamic State demands contributed to the global jihadi organization's move away from him. AFRICOM head Lieutenant General Waldhauser stated in June 2016, two months prior to the split, that some in the movement had left Shekau over his refusal to halt the usage of child suicide bombers. An audio statement from key operative Mammam Nur, who joined the al-Barnawi faction during the split, also complained about Shekau's view on the permissibility of indiscriminately killing of Muslim civilians, rehashing a debate that initially surfaced with the breakaway movement Ansaru. The complete lack of reporting from Islamic State media outlets on female suicide attacks, a tactic commonly used by Shekau, further points to likely differences in approach, leading to the split. Phil Stewart, "Boko Haram Fracturing Over Islamic State Ties, US General Warns," Reuters, June 22, 2016; "New Boko Haram Leader, al-Barnawi, Accuses Abubakar Shekau Of Killing Fellow Muslims, Living In Luxury," Sahara Reporters, August 5, 2016.

593 While details on leadership remained elusive, some information could be gleaned from the publication of three Nigerian Army lists of 100 'Most Wanted' militants. Those lists largely did not provide the names of wanted militants, but rather relied on photographs. Nigerian security officials have claimed some success as a result of the lists' dissemination, capturing six members within a month of the first list's distribution, then issuing the second in February 2016, which was followed by a third list of just 55 militants in November 2016. Nonetheless, the credibility of initial list has also been called into question, as Shekau appeared twice as number 97 and 100, with both images screengrabs from video messaging. In addition, the validity of the list as an identification tool was diminished when the capture of presumed number 28 was later revealed to be a case of mistaken identity. In total, the arrests of 15 militants across the three lists had been announced by mid-2017, according to a count by the author. Ndahi Marama, "Military Declare 100 Boko Haram Terrorists Suspects Wanted in Borno," *Vanguard*, October 28, 2015; "Joint Investigation Committee Clears Mister Abubakar Sadiq," PRNigeria, December 18, 2015; "Boko Haram: Nigerian Army Reopens Key Highways, Releases More Names of Wanted Terrorists," *Premium Times*, February 27, 2016.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that the leader of both factions following the split—al-Barnawi and Shekau—are Nigerian Kanuris with ties to Borno State, an indication that power and influence within the movement remains dependent on these demographics.

Boko Haram compensated for its loss of popular support as a consequence of its violence against civilians by increasingly engaging in financial inducement, religious manipulation, coercion, and even drug use to acquire new recruits, while refocusing efforts outside of Nigeria, especially in northern Cameroon.<sup>594</sup> A similar recruitment pattern also existed in southern Niger, particularly around the Diffa area that borders Borno State, but with youth recruits often lured by the promises of material gain.<sup>595</sup> Recruitment in Chad was not as pronounced as Cameroon or Niger, but the emergence in November 2014 of a video in which a militant spoke Chad's Buduma language, the arrest of 60 Boko Haram militants in late June 2015 in N'Djamena, and Niger's December 2015 decision to deport dozens of Chadian Boko Haram members detained in Niger indicated that recruitment in Chad had achieved a level of success.<sup>596</sup> The expansion of violence to all sub-regional nations, especially in urban settings such as Maroua, Cameroon; Diffa, Niger; and N'Djamena, Chad, was another indication of successful external recruitment efforts, given the likelihood that some cell members originated from

594 Eleven young boys abducted in Cameroon and taken across the Nigerian border to Adamawa to enroll in a Qur'anic school escaped in August 2014. "Boko Haram Kills Three, Abducts 12 in Cameroon," *This Day*, August 20, 2014. While the Cameroonian Army claimed to release 900 hostages during operations along its border region in late November 2015, "Cameroon Says Frees 900 Boko Haram Hostages in Military Operations," Reuters, December 2, 2015. At the same time, Boko Haram engaged in forced recruitment. The militants abducted thousands of young men and women during operations and enlisted others at gunpoint during periods of territorial control. Reports of this phenomenon were most prominent in Nigeria, although Cameroon also suffered a similar fate. Cameroon became a particular source of concern by early 2014. Both Amnesty International and the International Crisis Group estimated between 3,000 and 4,000 northern Cameroonians joined Boko Haram. In August 2014, Cameroon Deputy Prime Minister and Kolofata native Amadou Ali also claimed he possessed a list of 450 youths from his hometown who had become Boko Haram members. Hans de Marie Heungoup, "Cameroon's Rising Religious Tensions," *African Arguments*, September 8, 2015; "Boko Haram Plans More Attacks, Recruits Many Young People," AFP, August 8, 2014. Separately, a Cameroonian security official noted in April 2014 that 200 youth from the Kolofata region had been recruited in the past two months, traveling to Nigeria, "Cameroon: Boko Haram Enrôle de Jeunes Camerounais à la Frontière," AFP, April 3, 2014; "Boko Haram Plans More Attacks, Recruits Many Young People," AFP, August 8, 2014; Celia Lebur, "Boko Haram's Increasing Attacks Worry Cameroon," AFP, November 20, 2014; "No Shortage of Recruits for Boko Haram in Cameroon's Far North," IRIN, March 5, 2015; "Boko Haram Recrute des Jeunes Camerounais Dans l'Extrême-Nord," *Le Septentrion*, May 19, 2014; "Boko Haram Plans More Attacks, Recruits Many Young People," AFP, August 8, 2014; Salihu Garba, "Yan Boko Haram Sun Sace Mutane Fiye da Dubu Uku Banda na Chibok," VOA Hausa, August 19, 2014. With estimates of male abductees running into the low thousands, this tactic has ensured that rank-and-file membership in Boko Haram retained a Nigerian character, and helped offset losses inflicted by government troops. A compilation of claims by regional security agencies indicates that more than 6,000 suspected Boko Haram militants have been killed since the beginning of 2015. These figures should be taken cautiously, however, as the inflation of death tolls has been a common aspect of the battle against militancy in the region.

595 In May 2015, journalist Jochen Stahnke talked to locals on the town of Bagara who claimed Boko Haram offered potential recruits 300,000FCA (approximately \$500), a motorbike, and a bride to join the movement. Jochen Stahnke, "Guest Post: An Account from Diffa, Niger About the War with Boko Haram," *Sahel blog*, July 16, 2015. The BBC in April 2014 met a gang in southern Niger that claimed they received money to aid Boko Haram activities. Thomas Fessy, "Niger Hit by Boko Haram Fallout," BBC, April 22, 2014. An ECOWAS report from 2014 also stated Boko Haram was increasingly targeting Nigerian youth for recruitment. David Lewis, "Niger Fears Contagion from Nigeria's Boko Haram Analysis," Reuters, March 19, 2014.

596 Up to 1,000 individuals associated with Boko Haram surrendered to Chadian forces at Baga Sola on Lake Chad in the latter half of 2016, although up to 70 percent were reportedly women and children. Nonetheless, the majority were confirmed as Chadians, further evidence of Boko Haram's recruitment (voluntary or forced) in the country. Ashley Hammer, "The Human Cost of Chad's War Against Boko Haram," IRIN, December 5, 2016; "Chad Arrests 60 Suspected Militants After Suicide Bomb Attack," Reuters, June 29, 2015; "Insight – Chad's Deby Plays for High Stakes in Boko Haram Talks," Reuters, November 3, 2014; "Boko Haram: Le Niger Va Remettre Des Centaines De Détenus Au Nigeria," RFI, December 8, 2015. In addition, a former University of Maiduguri professor alleged in November 2015 that Boko Haram works with Buduma and Kalumba ethnic groups found in Chad, while persistent rumors suggest that many suicide bombers in the Lake Chad region have been ethnic Buduma. Aminu Abubakar, "Questions over Boko Haram Attacks Despite Military Claims of Success," AFP, November 27, 2015; Xavier Aldekoa, "La Tribu Maldita del Lago," *Revista 5W*. The Buduma may engage with Boko Haram in an attempt to "counter the economic domination of Hausa traders." "Boko Haram on the Back Foot?" International Crisis Group, May 4, 2016, p. 10.

the area in which they operated.<sup>597</sup> This also reportedly resulted in sub-regional recruits, especially from Chad or Cameroon, taking up leadership positions, such as commanders.<sup>598</sup> Phase III also saw reports of new Boko Haram recruits from the region more broadly, including Tuaregs, Gambians, Guineans, and other North Africans, whose interest in joining Boko Haram coincided with an Islamic State call for foreign fighters to migrate to Libya or Nigeria.<sup>599</sup> Nonetheless, these fighters have not appeared in Boko Haram messaging nor largely have they been substantiated in any other way. More significant was Senegal's arrest of Makhtar Diokhané, Diokhané's wife and sister-in-law, two imams who were in contact with Boko Haram members, and another individual whose brother had fought and died for Boko Haram. Diokhané had sought to establish a Boko Haram cell in Senegal, but was arrested in Niger in 2015 and later extradited to Senegal. The case was representative of a newfound desire to export Boko Haram ideology outside its previous sub-regional bounds and the potential for the Lake Chad Basin to become a hub for militancy in the region.<sup>600</sup>

597 Using local members to plan and conduct attacks reduces the risk of detection and relies on local knowledge of the operating environment, while militants have also been known to conduct attacks within their home regions, sometimes even as a means of initiation into the sect. A reliance on this tactic would indicate that a high rate of attacks in a new area is likely predicated on successful prior recruitment efforts in that area. An example of this dynamic was seen in August 2015 when militants originating from areas nearby to Kukuwa-Gari in Yobe State participated in a major attack killing over 150. "Death Toll in Nigeria Boko Haram Massacre Rises to 160: Locals," AFP, August 18, 2015. Externally, Cameroonian security officials claimed that recruits from Kolofata partook in a major kidnapping operation in the town in July 2014. "Boko Haram Plans More Attacks, Recruits Many Young People," AFP, August 8, 2014. Perpetrators of an April 2015 attack in Bia, Cameroon, also came from the town. "Human Rights Under Fire: Attacks and Violations in Cameroon's Struggle With Boko Haram," Amnesty International, 2015, p. 29. Then in December 2015, an imam in a Nigerian village was killed by his own nephew during a Boko Haram attack. "Niger Says Boko Haram Gunmen Kill 18 in Village Bordering Nigeria," Reuters, November 27, 2015. Nonetheless, Nigerians belonging to Boko Haram have also operated throughout the region, as the December 2015 decision by Niger to return 457 suspected Boko Haram Nigerians caught on its soil would signify. "Boko Haram: Le Niger Va Remettre Des Centaines De Détenus Au Nigeria," RFI, December 8, 2015.

598 During Boko Haram's period of territorial rule, the militants appointed foreigners to leadership positions. For example, a 'foreigner' of unknown origin was killed near Mafa, Borno State, in May 2015, but had reached the level of emir status before his demise. In addition, a video seen by Reuters in May 2015 featured a judge reportedly of likely Sudanese origin overseeing sharia punishments, while other sharia courts and tank repairmen were reportedly under the guidance of Chadian nationals. The ability of foreigners to serve in positions of authority on Nigerian soil is reflective of a diminished Nigeria-centric focus at the leadership level. "Nigeria Troops Kill Boko Haram Commander and Others, Foreign Currency Recovered," PRNigeria, May 25, 2015; Julia Payne, "Captured Video Appears to Show Foreign Fighters in Nigeria's Boko Haram," Reuters, May 26, 2015; Jacob Zenn, "Mindful of the Islamic State, Boko Haram Broadens Reach into Lake Chad Region," *Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, February 6, 2015.

599 Rank-and-file membership throughout the wider West African region also likely increased, especially since Shekau's *bay`a*, with persistent rumors asserting the presence of small numbers of foreign fighters in the Lake Chad Basin region. Seini Boukar Lamine, a Cameroonian traditional leader who spent three months as a hostage of Boko Haram, noted he saw many "fair-skinned combatants" who could have been from "Sudan, Algeria, and other Arab countries." Additionally, during the June 2015 crackdown on Boko Haram in the Chadian capital, some of the arrestees reportedly came from Mali. The Cameroonian government also announced the death of two Tuareg militants during an attack in Fotokol in September 2014, while a prominent northern Cameroonian journalist claimed several light-skinned Tuareg or Arabs were sighted in Sigal, Cameroon, in April 2015. The Islamic State has supported the influx of foreign fighters to Boko Haram, calling those who cannot make it Syria or Iraq to travel to other wilayat such as West Africa. This emerging phenomenon was further exemplified by the January 2016 arrest in Mali of a Gambian, Guinean, and two Guinea-Bissau nationals reportedly making their way to join Boko Haram. James Schneider, "Boko Haram: Fearsome yet Reliant on Exploited Children," *New African*, July 22, 2015; "Chad Arrests 60 Suspected Boko Haram After Suicide Bomb Attack," Reuters, June 29, 2015; William Wallis, "Boko Haram Opens New Front Against Nigerian Forces," *Financial Times*, September 9, 2014; "Le Cameroun en Guerre," *L'Oeil du Sahel*, April 20, 2015; "IS Fighters Call for Migration to IS Outside of Iraq/Syria, Lone Wolf Attacks," SITE Intelligence Group, August 3, 2015; "Echos de nos marches avec tamani : Kayes : le 1er arrondissement a interpellé hier 4 suspects jihadistes," Mailweb, January 27, 2016. Some Ghanaian students also reportedly trained in Niger or Nigeria before traveling to join the Islamic State in Syria. "Ghana Investigates Islamic State Recruitment in Universities," BBC, August 28, 2015. In December 2016 and January 2017, the Nigerian Army reported the arrest of an individual from Burkina Faso and Mali, respectively, during counter-Boko Haram operations in northeast Nigeria. "Boko Haram Suspects: Troops Arrest 26 Foreigners, 3332 Civilians," PRNigeria, February 2, 2017; "How we dislodged Boko Haram from Sambisa Forest — Nigerian Army," *Premium Times*, December 29, 2016.

600 Baba Ahmed, "Senegal Fears Extremism and Imam Arrests, Regional Attacks," Associated Press, February 8, 2016; Sanna Camara, "In Sweeping Offensive, Senegal Arrests Imams, Women With Suspected Links To Boko Haram," *Premium Times*, November 13, 2015; "Terrorisme : Le Sénégal Demande au Niger l'Extradition de Makhtar Diokhané," *ActuNiger*, November 5, 2015. Half a dozen Senegalese were also reportedly arrested in Mauritania for trying join Boko Haram as well in mid-February 2016. "La Mauritanie Extrade Discrètement des Prémumés Jihadistes au Sénégal," *Seneweb*, February 19, 2016. Senegal has not suffered from terrorist violence to date, but it shows some worrying signs. Recent reports suggest that up to 30 Senegalese have traveled to Libya in support of the Islamic State. Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Scrambles to Contain Growing ISIS Threat in Libya," *New York Times*, February 21, 2016.



### *Support Networks in Phase III*

Boko Haram's shift to rural hideouts in Phase III triggered new demands for the militants, such as the need for food, medicine, and fuel in large quantities. This caused Boko Haram to begin a 'live-off-the-land' approach and strengthen localized logistics networks to support its emerging state. As a result, stealing food, medicine, and other supplies during operations, including hijacking trucks and cattle-rustling, became an increasingly common tactic.<sup>601</sup> The simultaneous looting of civilian property in towns that Boko Haram raided as well as the militants' purchasing of goods at markets helped ensure steady access to resources, notwithstanding occasional rumors of low stockpiles.<sup>602</sup> Even despite Nigerian army efforts to disrupt Boko Haram's cross-border logistics routes, especially for fuel supplies, Boko Haram proved resilient, indicating the presence of a robust resupply system.<sup>603</sup>

The main sources of arms in Phase III continued to be Nigerian security forces and sub-regional trafficking, while explosives came from construction sites in Nigeria and Cameroon.<sup>604</sup> The discovery of major arms caches in Cameroon and Chad highlighted the role of the sub-regional arms pipeline, along with the discovery in Chad of an army convoy from Libya, destined for the Lake Chad region in April 2016.<sup>605</sup> Nonetheless, arms seized from Nigerian stockpiles in Boko Haram's barracks raids re-

601 As an example of the importance of sourcing food during operations, Boko Haram militants, during a January attack on Dalori just outside of Maiduguri, first went house-to-house looking for food and livestock. Shehu Abubakar, Omirin Olatunji, Maiduguri, and Ibrahim Kabiru Sule, "Attack on Maiduguri Villages ... 85 Corpses Recovered," *Daily Trust*, February 1, 2016. Two thousand cattle were found at a Boko Haram camp in Sambisa forest in December 2015. "Military Strikes Inside Sambisa," PRNigeria, December 6, 2015. During a December 2015 operation in Borno State, militants stole four trucks worth of foodstuffs from Takulashi village, burning four more they were unable to take. "Boko Haram Torches Village Near Kidnapped Girls' Town," AFP, December 8, 2015. The hijacking of food trucks has also involved a cross-border element as many targeted in northern Cameroon have been driven into Nigeria. In a February 2015 incident, 500 sacks of rice were intercepted by militants in northern Cameroon and taken across the border. Aziz Salatou, "Un Camion Suspect Intercepté à Kangeléri," *Le Jour*, February 26, 2015; "Le Cameroun en Guerre," *L'Oeil du Sahel*, July 1, 2015. A March 2014 attack in Buni Yadi saw gunmen specifically go after two buses full of food. "Gunmen Kill 111 in Katsina, Benue, Yobe," *Leadership*, March 14, 2014. And the Emir of Gwoza complained about militants seizing harvests in Borno state in April 2014. "Emir Says Insurgency Paralysed Economic Activities in Gwoza," *Leadership*, April 13, 2014. For example, drug stores were looted during an attack in June 2015 in Borno State. "Aminu Abubkar, 'Citizens Hit Again in NE Nigeria, as Boko Haram Kills 42,'" AFP, June 24, 2015. In November 2014, 800,000 CFA (approximately \$1,500) worth of medical supplies were stolen during an attack in northern Cameroon. David Wenaï, "Le Centre de Santé D'Aïssa-Hardé Pillé par Boko Haram," *L'Oeil de Sahel*, November 12, 2015.

602 Julia Payne, "Nigeria's Boko Haram in Disarray as Government Forces Advance," Reuters, May 5, 2015. Local Nigerian media reports have claimed that militants trade in weekly markets in both Bida and Boboshe in Borno State. Shehu Abubakar, "Borno Market Where Boko Haram Trades," *Daily Trust*, December 5, 2015; "Soldiers Kill 100 Insurgents, Rescue 1,200 Captives in Borno," *Leadership*, February 3, 2016. The Nigerian Army assured that it would shut down markets benefiting Boko Haram in February 2016. "Unpatriotic Elements Aid Terrorists, as Soldiers Arrested with Unauthorized Military Items," PRNigeria, February 9, 2016.

603 A Boko Haram food and fuel supplier was arrested in August 2015. "Troops Discover Poles for IEDs ... Nabs Boko Haram Supplies," PRNigeria, August 6, 2015. A Boko Haram fuel depot in Guzamala LGA, Borno State, was disrupted in September 2015, "Troops Dismantle Boko Haram Terrorists Fuel Depot," PRNigeria, September 24, 2015. In October 2015, a Boko Haram fuel dump was discovered in Maiduguri itself. "Another Boko Haram Fuel Dump Discovered in Maiduguri," PRNigeria, October 1, 2015.

604 Boko Haram has conducted raids for supplies such as ammonium nitrate fertilizer, C4, and dynamite in order to construct explosive devices. Construction companies in particular have been targeted, such as the looting of 125 kilograms of dynamite from Ric Rock in Yobe in July 2013 ("Suspected Islamists Steal 125 kg of dynamite in North Nigeria," Reuters, July 31, 2013), Mother Cat Company in Bauchi state in April 2014 (Ahmed Mohammed, "Gunmen Attack Construction Company in Bauchi," *Daily Trust*, April 15, 2014), and Ashaka Cement Company in Gombe state in November 2014 ("Boko Haram Members Left Ashaka with Eight Hilux Loaded of Dynamite – Residents," Channels Television, November 5, 2014).

605 Arms caches suspected to be destined for Boko Haram were discovered in March and June 2014 in northern Cameroon and in N'Djamena in June 2015. Peter Kum, "Une Cache D'armes De Boko Haram Découverte Dans Le Logon Et Chari," Cameroon-Info.net, March 28, 2014; Moki Edwin Kindzeka, "Cameroon's Military Seizes War Weapons," VOA Hausa, June 18, 2014; Madjiasra Nako and Moumine Ngarmbassa, "Suicide Blast in Chad Capital Kills 11 During Police Raid," Reuters, June 29, 2015. The regional arms trade likely takes a back seat to sub-regional access. However, the sect's involvement has been noted through the arrest of a suspected Boko Haram arms dealer in Burkina Faso in 2013 ("Terrorist Financing in West Africa," p. 24) and the detention of a purported associate of Chadian President Deby, Mahamat Bichara Gnoti, on the Sudanese border in November 2014 with 19 SAM2 missiles destined for Boko Haram. "Chad's President's Friend Buy 19 Missiles for Boko Haram," *Leadership*, November 23, 2014. In addition, the U.S. military announced in April 2016 that an arms convoy originating from Islamic State actors in Libya and destined for Lake Chad was intercepted at the Chad-Libya border on April 7, 2016, the first concrete example of material support flowing to Boko Haram militants. Helene Cooper, "Boko Haram and ISIS are Collaborating More, U.S. Military Says," *New York Times*, April 20, 2016.

mained important.<sup>606</sup> Furthermore, IEDs used in October 2015 were traced back to the sale of Beluga bombs from France to Nigeria in the 1980s, which showed additional evidence of Boko Haram's ability to source materials locally by pilfering from barracks or buying on the black market.<sup>607</sup>

Boko Haram continued to receive funding from kidnapping foreign nationals through 2014, while the introduction of territorial control from mid-2014 onward opened up new avenues, such as taxes and checkpoints, raiding banks, and exchanging captives (both foreigners and Nigerian or Cameroonian nationals) for cash.<sup>608</sup> Boko Haram also reportedly became involved in legitimate trades, such as fish from Lake Chad and pepper in Niger, while the group often sold stolen cattle, demonstrating its ability to source revenue within the sub-region.<sup>609</sup>

Boko Haram's ties to militants in northern Mali likely declined after 2013, especially after the French intervention severed networks between Boko Haram and AQIM.<sup>610</sup> Boko Haram's orientation toward the Islamic State, however, shifted the direction of international linkages. The newfound relationship meant less in terms of material support or funding, but redirected Boko Haram's narrative to be fully part of a global jihadi struggle, which inspired young fighters on the remote battlefields of northeastern Nigeria, as well as the several dozen to several hundred Boko Haram members (and independent

606 The display of captured weaponry has continued as a common feature in al-Barnawi messaging following the split. Nigerian Director of Defense Information Major-General Chris Olukolade admitted in September 2014 that "we agree and are aware Boko Haram has stolen [our] arms," while arms left behind during Boko Haram attacks in Malam Fatori in April 2015 reportedly carried Nigerian Army logos. Celia Lebur, "Nigeria's Malam Fatori: A Liberated Ghost Town," AFP, April 5, 2015. For example, a T-72 tank was taken during an attack in Gudunbali, Borno State, in November 2015. Nicholas Ibekwe, "Exclusive: At least 105 Nigerian Soldiers Missing After Fierce Gun Battle with Boko Haram," *Premium Times*, November 19, 2015. A Vickers MK.3 Eagle Tank with Boko Haram flag on it was recaptured in February 2015, "Pictured: A Vickers MK.3 Eagle Tank Recaptured From Boko Haram in Maiduguri," Laila's Blog, February 3, 2015. The Nigerian Army reported the capture of an APC with Boko Haram insignia in Michika in February 2015 ("NOA\_Nigeria," Twitter, February 19, 2015), and an APC stolen from Gwoza with words 'PMF Training College' was sighted during a February 2015 battle in Cameroon, evidence of Boko Haram's ability to deploy the stolen vehicles across borders. Bate Felix, "Blood-Soaked Truck Symbolises Boko Haram's War Without Borders," Reuters, February 18, 2015.

607 Nicolas Champeaux and Olivier Fort, "Info RFI: Des Bombes Françaises Refont Surface Aux Mains De Boko Haram," RFI, October 13, 2015.

608 Three high-profile incidents of foreign nationals kidnapped in northern Cameroon generated substantial income during this period, including a reported \$12.5 million for a French priest abducted in November 2013 (Yuh Timchia, "Boko Haram 'Was Paid' \$12.5 Million to Release French Priest," *Africa Review*, January 7, 2015) and undisclosed but likely ransom payments for two Italian priests and a Canadian nun abducted in April 2014 and 10 Chinese construction workers abducted near Waza in May 2014. A trader traveling through Gwoza paid \$40 to go through checkpoints. "A Nation Divided," *Economist*, October 25, 2014; Siobhan O'Grady, "Boko Haram Turns Robin Hood Strategy on its Head," *Foreign Policy*, March 3, 2015. During their takeover of Mubi, Boko Haram fighters raided the Diamond Bank branch there and walked off with N100 million (approximately \$600,000), in addition to robberies of other banks. "How 30 Boko Haram Insurgents Overran 1,000 Troops in Mubi," *This Day*, December 29, 2014; Ogala Emmanuel and Ibang Isine, "Special Report: Inside Boko Haram's Routes of Death, Destruction and Humanitarian Crises," *Premium Times*, October 24, 2015; Kareem Haruna, "Boko Haram Rules Bama with Force, Jail Residents, Collect Fees for Bail – Escapees," *Leadership*, October 22, 2014; Julia Payne, "Nigeria's Boko Haram In Disarray as Government Forces Advance," Reuters, May 5, 2015; "Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter, and Kill," Amnesty International, 2015, p. 65.

609 "Niger: Le Poisson Fumé, Source D'importants Revenus Pour Boko Haram," RFI, February 25, 2015; "Niger Troops Bomb Fish Farmers Financing Boko Haram," *PM News*, February 25, 2015; Pierre Pinto, "Niger: Les Habitants De Diffa Souffrent Des Restrictions," RFI, July 13, 2015. Boko Haram has been accused of stealing cattle and selling it throughout the region. "Tchad: Boko Haram Accusé De Vol De Bétail," RFI, September 9, 2014; "Nigerian Troops Clear Terrorists From Aulari in Sambisa," PRNigeria, December 14, 2015. In northern Cameroon, 7,000 cattle and sheep were stolen by February 2013. "Human Rights Under Fire: Attacks And Violations In Cameroon's Struggle With Boko Haram," Amnesty International, 2015, p. 23. Borno State herders in January 2016 claimed to have lost a combined total of 200,000 livestock because of Boko Haram, although not all appear to have been stolen. Ibrahim Sawab, "Herders Lose 1,637 Members, 200,773 Livestock to Boko Haram," *Daily Trust*, January 28, 2016. A recent estimate puts Boko Haram stolen cattle in northern Cameroon at 12,000 heads, worth \$3.4 million. "Cameroon: Confronting Boko Haram," p. 17.

610 French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius stated in October 2013 that documents found in northern Mali indicated Boko Haram members had trained in the Ifoghas Mountains, but little concrete evidence to link Boko Haram militants to northern Mali had emerged since then. Paul Schemm, "France Says Nigerian Militants Trained in Mali," Associated Press, November 14, 2013.

Nigerians), who traveled to Libya to fight or train with the Islamic State there.<sup>611</sup>

The August 2016 factional split between al-Barnawi and Shekau, however, in some ways demonstrates Shekau's rejection of external control over his decision-making process. It is important to note, however, that despite no longer enjoying the support of the Islamic State and returning his faction of Boko Haram to pre-pledge dynamics in terms of violence and messaging, Shekau has yet to officially renounce his loyalty to al-Baghdadi. This leaves open the possibility of some sort of relationship or association in the future.

### *Assessment of Phase III*

Phase III saw the most dramatic shifts in Boko Haram's history, with actions and support both moving beyond Nigeria's borders. For the first time, messaging contained specific references and threats to other countries in the sub-region, while Boko Haram's media showed significant coordination with international jihadi networks.

Strategy also underwent significant changes, with frequent Boko Haram operations in Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. External influence may have also played a role in the push for territorial control, which was a significant departure from previous tactics. Nonetheless, territorial control was restricted to areas within Nigeria's borders, while attacks in Niger and Chad declined by early 2016.

Membership demographics also underwent significant changes in Phase III, with Boko Haram increasing its recruitment throughout the sub-region. Leadership also witnessed similar dynamics in terms of a greater sub-regional focus, continuing trends that began during Phase II.

Support networks reached a pinnacle with Shekau's pledge of allegiance to al-Baghdadi, which was Boko Haram's first official affiliation to an external jihadi organization. While this ultimately split the movement, external influence continues within the al-Barnawi faction, which has remained ISWAP, while Shekau has stopped short of completely abandoning his loyalty to al-Baghdadi. Despite these dynamics, material support largely remained domestic and sub-regional, perhaps precluding a reliance on external links.

The domestic Nigerian character of Boko Haram retained importance, as the locus of violence and operations still occurs within the country.<sup>612</sup> Nonetheless, Boko Haram transitioned into an exporter of terrorism to the sub-region and, to a lesser extent, elsewhere in the region, such as Senegal. This departed from Phase II, where external linkages were primarily leveraged for the purposes of domestic activity.

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611 Aside from intelligence reports, the biggest piece of evidence to date on material links followed the aforementioned army convoy from Libya intercepted at the Chadian border in April 2016. An eyewitness reported a parade held in Sirte, Libya, in April 2015 on the occasion of the arrival of Boko Haram fighters from Nigeria. "Control and Crucifixions: Life in Libya Under IS," BBC, February 3, 2016. Up to 200 Boko Haram fighters may have been present in Sirte by August 2015. Zenn, "Wilayat West Africa Reboots for the Caliphate." In January 2016, Nigerian authorities disrupted four Islamic State-linked cells in central Nigeria, involving 18 individuals. Many were preparing to travel to Libya, while two Nigerians reportedly already operated there. One of the principal funders reportedly came from Sudan, while a Nigerian was also one of those arrested. On another level, Nigerians have also surfaced in messaging from Libya but have not necessarily overtly associated themselves with Boko Haram. "DSS Arrests ISIS Recruiter, Terrorists and Kidnappers Nationwide," PRNigeria, February 9, 2016. In February 2016, Islamic State militants also eulogized the death of a fighter from Nigeria in Libya, although a connection to Boko Haram was not specified. "Killed Nigerian IS Fighter in Libya Eulogized on Telegram," SITE Intelligence Group, February 15, 2016; Emma Farge, "Islamic State Fighters Head South in Libya, Threatening Sahel," Reuters, February 11, 2016.

612 For example, the majority of operations in Cameroon occur in border regions, and many involve militants coming from Nigeria, indicating the continued importance of safe havens there. The wife of a Boko Haram militant told Cameroon authorities in early February how female bombers trained at a house in Ngoshe, Nigeria, before crossing over into Cameroon to undertake their missions. Aziz Salatou "Boko Haram: Une Candidate au Suicide Parle," *Le Jour*, February 3, 2016.

PHASE III	DOMESTIC	SUB-REGIONAL	REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
Messaging	•	•		•
Strategy	•	•		•
Membership	•	•	•	
Support Networks	•	•	•	•

PHASE III	DOMESTIC	SUB-REGIONAL	REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
Messaging	<i>Continued threats and publication of events in Nigeria</i>	<i>Threats to sub-regional nations</i>		<i>Convergence with Islamic State media productions</i>
Strategy	<i>Majority of attacks and territorial push within Nigerian borders</i>	<i>Advent of violent operations in all sub-regional nations</i>		<i>External influence may have played role in shifting tactics toward territorial control</i>
Membership	<i>Forced recruitment ensures Nigerian membership</i>	<i>Increased recruitment in all sub-regional nations; continued emergence of non-Nigerian leaders</i>	<i>Regional membership small but becoming more prominent</i>	
Support Networks	<i>Funding, arms, and supply networks largely domestic</i>	<i>Some logistic networks extending through sub-region</i>	<i>Connections to Islamic State militants in Libya grew</i>	<i>Officially member of international jihadi network after pledge; split also a rejection of too much external control</i>

**Conclusion**

Boko Haram has undergone a number of shifts throughout its history, but a key theme has been the deepening of sub-regional, regional, and international activity. The focus of the group’s actions, both in terms of messaging and attacks, is now beyond Nigeria, while support for membership and support networks reflects a similar balance. At the same time, however, sub-regional, regional, and international elements have been present at various levels since Boko Haram’s founding, and the current center of gravity remains linked to northeast Nigeria, clouding simplistic depictions of Boko Haram as a domestic movement that has become international.

*Final Summary Chart*

	<b>PHASE I</b>	<b>PHASE II</b>	<b>PHASE III</b>
Messaging	<i>Domestic International</i>	<i>Domestic International</i>	<i>Domestic Sub-regional International</i>
Strategy	<i>Domestic International</i>	<i>Domestic International</i>	<i>Domestic Sub-regional International</i>
Membership	<i>Domestic Sub-regional</i>	<i>Domestic Sub-regional</i>	<i>Domestic Sub-regional Regional</i>
Support Networks	<i>Domestic International</i>	<i>Domestic Sub-regional Regional</i>	<i>Domestic Sub-regional Regional International</i>

The intensity of geographic involvement varies also depending on factor, and must be considered in determining overall frame. For example, messaging content has primarily been domestically focused, but included external influence since the days of Muhammad Yusuf. Strategy has been confined to Nigeria with a recent expansion sub-regionally, but also likely derives from external influence in terms of the emphasis on territorial control. Membership largely originates in the sub-region, but has been accelerated by forced recruitment dynamics and growing regional partnerships. Support networks typify the paradox: the ability to source goods locally demonstrates a level of internal self-reliance, while Boko Haram's inclusion as part of the Islamic State's global jihadi network places the movement on the world stage, with the prospect of further linkages with Islamic State affiliates elsewhere. In this sense, the inter-linkages between Boko Haram's various geographic frames within each factor are also important in determining the group's overall influence and trajectory.

Considering that the framing of the movement based on its potential to be or become a threat is largely tied to geographic orientation, in turn influencing responses, this framework suggests that intervention strategies may be more appropriate if revolving around a specific factor or set of factors, rather than targeting all aspects group as a whole. For example, at times it may make more sense for international actors to target support networks given the international linkages and thus threat, rather than focus on a group strategy that has been predominately domestic.

At any rate, the history of Boko Haram clearly demonstrates that its continuum from domestic threat to one beyond has varied heavily over time. Nonetheless, another key lesson is that an inappropriate framing of the movement (e.g., viewing it purely as a Nigerian problem) can have devastating results, requiring more substantial resources to stem its advance down the road.