**BOKO HARAM: WHEN THE LEADERS LOOK THE OTHER WAY**

One must commend ECOWAS leaders and indeed the entire international community for given the necessary backing to Nigeria in fighting the current terrorism threatening Nigeria. It is actually a payback time for the country, whose armed forces have participated brilliantly in peace keeping efforts in various countries in the past.

Many analysts have traced the origin of Boko Haram to social exclusion, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and exonerating the state and local government of the states currently in trouble. If that is the case, then it also important for these analysts to give answers to the following questions: Which government is responsible for impoverishing the people? Which government is responsible for the education of the people? Which government is directly responsible for social inclusion programmes?

In attempt to answer these questions, in my view, we may also ask the question; why is it that other states or states in the South, seems to be relatively peaceful? Who is responsible for the peace being experienced in Lagos? I’m sure somebody will attribute the success to Governor Babatunde Fashola’s ingenuousness. The big question then arises - Why can’t we attribute such relative good governance in Lagos and some states to President Jonathan? Why do we have to continuously lay blame to Mr. President only when it turns out sour in the affected states?

When the Minister of Information, Mr Labaran Maku said on a media chat that northern governors were not doing enough to tackle the issue of insecurity in the North, the chairman of the northern governors’ forum, Governor Babangida Aliyu quickly took him up and said the problem would have been nipped in the bud if the federal government had listened to all their suggestions. The Governor however did not tell the nation what the government of the northern states (past and present) have done to reduce poverty, unemployment and illiteracy in the North by borrowing a leaf from their southern counterparts. Without subjecting the issue to political brick backs, it is clear that previous and current governments of the North have not done enough for their people, the backlash of which is now staring the nation at the face.

Why then is the Federal government being held responsible for the wary situation in the North? The crisis in the North today could also be attributed to leaders of the military juntas,majority of whom came from the North and who out of many years of neglect left their people to wallow in abject poverty. If the federal government is to be blamed for the current challenges in the north, then it also becomes wise to give credit to the federal government for the relative peace and good governance in states like Lagos and others! The fact still remains that politicians in the North, of which the honourable minister of information Labaran Maku belongs, have not done enough to elevate the economic well being of their people. It is also the reason why we cannot prosecute the people that have been agitating for true fiscal federalism or regional government. A true fiscal federalism will in all cases encourage her citizens to ask questions and hold responsible any public officer found wanting in the misappropriation of government funds.

If the problem of insecurity must become a thing of the past, governments of the states concerned the Muslim leaders in the north and the northern community leaders must rub minds and proffer solutions to the imbroglio. As they deliberate on these issues, the federal government should also motivate the Nigerian Armed Forces to work together with the international community to fish out the perpetrators of the heinous crime. Leaders in the North and most especially the North East should be reminded that if they do not sit up, their region would soon be annihilated economically from other parts of Nigeria while the insecurity persists. Now that this same insecurity has led to the unfortunate death of Emir of Gwoza, and may claim more prominent people, it is hoped that the concerned leaders will wake up and safe their region.

At this juncture, it is good to advise the Nigerian army to exercise caution in the recruitment of soldiers at this critical time, otherwise they must be ready to recruit Boko Haram insurgents in disguise!  While it is understandable that, the military needs more hands to fight the insurgents, it is unthinkable to believe that high level professionalism will be achieved  in the process, bearing in mind the challenges of accessing personal data in Nigeria.

We must also prevail on the political parties to make a roll call of their members who have one connection with the sect in one way or the other. Specifically former governor of Borno State, Alhaji Ali Modu Sherrif, now a stalwart of another party, during whose tenure Boko Haram members were allegedly recruited as politically thugs. Senator Ali Udume, who was once reportedly fingered in the activities of the sect and has been making different statements, should also be called by his party to sheath his verbal swords.

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