

## Articles

# Demystifying al-Qaida in Nigeria: Cases from Boko Haram's Founding, Launch of Jihad and Suicide Bombings

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### Abstract

*Boko Haram was ranked the world's "most deadly" terrorist group in 2016 and the country where it primarily operates, Nigeria, was ranked the world's third "most terrorised" nation in 2017. However, for such a significant militant group there is a dearth of research on Boko Haram using document analysis that can shed light on the inner workings and decision-making processes of the group's leadership. Most researchers have instead examined structural factors in Nigeria to understand Boko Haram. This has led to an academic consensus that Boko Haram was originally peaceful and only marginally benefitted from its ties to al-Qaida - if at all. This article, in contrast, presents documents of the leadership of al-Qaida and Boko Haram that show early and continuing communications between Boko Haram and al-Qaida and al-Qaida had a significant impact on Boko Haram's founding in 2002, launch of a jihad in 2009 and introduction of suicide bombings in 2011. In addition, the al-Qaida-trained militants in Boko Haram played a leading role in conquering territory in Nigeria in 2013, setting up a line of communication to Islamic State in 2014 and facilitating Boko Haram's switch of allegiance and merger with Islamic State in 2015.*

**Keywords:** Boko Haram, Nigeria, Africa, Terrorism, Islamic State, al-Qaida, Islamophobia, Salafism

### Introduction

In the thirty years since al-Qaida's founding, there has been a significant amount of scholarship on the group and those affiliates and cells that have benefitted from al-Qaida's funding, training and advice. However, there is one group whose origins and violent rise is still misunderstood. This group is *Jamaat Ahl as-Sunnah Liddawah wal-Jihad* [1], which has become known as "Boko Haram" and was ranked the world's "most deadly" terrorist group in 2016 for the number of people it has killed.[2]

The key debates about Boko Haram reflect the debates surrounding jihadism more generally, such as whether structural and local factors or external influences and individual agency best explain Boko Haram's origins and violent rise.[3] The former view, which is supported by Alexander Thurston, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Kyari Muhammed, tends to see only a "marginal" role of al-Qaida in Boko Haram's origins and violent rise and instead sees Boko Haram as the product of "multi-dimensional" factors, such as "religious doctrines, poverty and inequality, post-1999 politics, youth agency, and geography"[4] The latter view, in contrast, finds Boko Haram to be primarily the result of the individual decisions of militants who sought to engage in a jihad in Nigeria and were empowered to do so because of al-Qaida's and particularly al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb's (AQIM) and al-Shabab's funding, training and advice. Neither view can be fully correct but this article argues the latter view is more accurate but also underutilised in explaining Boko Haram's founding, launch of a jihad, and tactical innovations, such as suicide bombings.

The article will present three episodes or cases of Boko Haram from: (i) the group's founding in 2002-2003, (ii) launch of jihad in 2009-2010 and (iii) introduction of suicide bombings in 2011-2012. It is argued that these three cases exemplify how al-Qaida's significant impact on Boko Haram has been misunderstood to be "local" phenomena in most previous research on the group. Furthermore, this article discusses obstacles and opportunities for future research on Boko Haram.

### 2002-2003: The Case of Ibrahim Harun

There are a number of incorrect assumptions about Boko Haram's origins that are reflected in most literature

on the group. One such assumption is that Boko Haram began as a primarily peaceful movement in 2002 or 2003 before becoming violent and that al-Qaida's impact on the group has been speculative or marginal. Thurston, for example, considers al-Qaida's influence on Boko Haram to have been "marginal" to the group's "overall development" and argues that Boko Haram was a "mass religious movement" before transitioning to armed struggle.[5] Jean Herskovits, similarly, has argued that Boko Haram "began in 2002 as a peaceful Islamic splinter group." [6] Consistent with this, Hilary Matfess argues that Boko Haram was a "largely peaceful, dissident religious sect that had been founded by Muhammed Yusuf in 2002" and that Boko Haram's "purported relationship" with "global Salafi-Jihadist groups" began as late as Boko Haram's "joint training with AQIM in 2009-2010." [7] Kyari Muhammed has also argued that Boko Haram "emerged as a home-grown group with local grievances." [8]

One other example from this school of thought that disregards any role of al-Qaida in Boko Haram's origins or violent jihadist motives for Boko Haram's founding comes from Pérouse de Montclos, who wrote that:

"...in 2003, the so-called 'Nigerian Taliban' [Boko Haram's name from 2003 to 2009] were students from the city of Maiduguri who preached a cultural revolution and went to farming in a rural and remote area, the village of Kanama, near the Niger border. Chased away by the army, they returned to Maiduguri and joined the most radical preacher in town, Mohammed Yusuf, who was killed by police in 2009." [9]

Pérouse de Montclos has furthermore characterised Boko Haram's "possible links" to AQIM as the product of "speculation" of "many articles" in the security studies field and "analysis" [of Boko Haram] as "often spoiled by the storytelling of a global jihad linked to al-Qaida or [Islamic State]." [10] One final perspective from another researcher, Adam Higazi, is that adopting the style of al-Qaida has been "good propaganda" for Boko Haram but that there were no operational ties. Notwithstanding evidence to the contrary, Higazi also depicted Boko Haram's pledge of loyalty to Islamic State in March 2015 as "a response to the pressure being exerted by the new regional military alliance against Boko Haram" starting in late January 2015 but not indicative of lengthier negotiations between the two groups or ideological reasons for the pledge. [11]

The common portrayal of Boko Haram's origins in much of the literature on the group is at odds with the first reports about Boko Haram closest in time to the group's founding. In 2004, Boko Haram was widely described to be a small religious movement of 200 to 1,000 mostly educated and well-off members who engaged in military training at a remote camp near the Nigeria-Niger border to launch a jihad and create an Islamic state in Nigeria modeled on Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. [12] Only after 2010 when Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau declared a jihad against Nigeria and the U.S., and the group gained attention in the scholarly community and media, did Boko Haram become portrayed as "peaceful" at the time of its founding.

Analysis of primary source documents from Boko Haram and al-Qaida also paints a different story about al-Qaida's relationship with Boko Haram at the time of the group's founding than is presented in most of the literature. One overlooked example from the time of Boko Haram's founding is that one of Boko Haram's leaders in 2003, a Saudi-born Nigerian named Yusuf Ahmed, and another Boko Haram member named Muhammed Ashafa met with Ibrahim Harun in 2003 to arrange for Harun to send 21 Boko Haram members to train in Niger with AQIM's predecessor, the Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). [13] According to Ibrahim Harun's court transcript from the Eastern District of New York in March 2017, Harun was a Saudi-born Nigerian (from the Republic of Niger) who trained in Afghanistan before 9/11, killed two U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan in 2002 and was deployed to Nigeria in 2003 after meeting with two of the highest ranking al-Qaida members in Pakistan - Abdel Hadi al-Iraqi and Abu Faraj al-Libi - to plan attacks on U.S. and Israeli interests in Nigeria with Boko Haram. [14] Harun's plans in Nigeria came to a halt only when the Boko Haram member who Harun deployed to Pakistan to meet with al-Qaida's external operations unit, Ashafa, was arrested at the airport in Pakistan before his return to Nigeria. [15] The case of Ibrahim Harun is indicative of Boko Haram's ties to al-Qaida's senior leadership in Pakistan since as early as 2003.

The decoded messages on Ashafa's hard drive showed that Harun not only met with leaders of Boko Haram in Nigeria, such as Yusuf Ahmed, but also with members of the GSPC in Nigeria. The head of al-Qaida's external

operations unit was also directing Harun from Pakistan on where to target in Nigeria, and consulting with Harun on a range of issues from storing weapons and conducting surveillance to whether Harun should marry or not.[16] Harun was arrested in Libya in 2005 after fleeing Nigeria when Ashafa was arrested in Pakistan. Harun was then extradited to the U.S. in 2012 after he was able to leave Libya during the country's civil war in 2011 and confessed to Italian border authorities of being a member of al-Qaida.

Yusuf Ahmed was not the only Boko Haram leader with direct ties to al-Qaida at the time of Boko Haram's founding. Two Nigerian scholars, Kyari Muhammed and Abdul Raufu Mustapha [17], who respectively have written that Boko Haram was only "trying to mimic" al-Qaida or "burnish its symbolic credentials" through propaganda about al-Qaida, have nonetheless also written that Boko Haram's founder in 2002 was a certain jihadist named Muhammed Ali.[18] According to Kyari Muhammed, Muhammed Ali was "a Nigerian who was radicalized by jihadi literature in Saudi Arabia and was believed to have fought alongside the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan." [19] Muhammed Ali was also reported in Nigerian press in 2004 to have led Boko Haram with Yusuf Ahmed. According to such reports, the "duo" of Muhammed Ali and Yusuf Ahmed were the only ones who knew the sources of Boko Haram's funding at the time.[20]

Al-Qaida in its *al-Risalah* magazine in January 2017 also recognized Muhammed Ali as the Boko Haram founder and said his initial funding came from "members of al-Qaida residing in the Arabian Peninsula." [21] This could refer to Osama Bin Laden's Yemeni "envoy" to northwest Africa, who visited Nigeria in 2002 on the invitation of a GSPC member in Nigeria.[22] Other researchers who have interviewed former Boko Haram members also found that Muhammed Ali fought in Afghanistan, as Kyari Muhammed suggested, and was a "disciple" of Bin Laden in Sudan in the mid-1990s and had received a promise of money from Bin Laden to form a jihadi cell in Nigeria.[23]

The profiles of Muhammed Ali and Yusuf Ahmed suggest it is unlikely that under their leadership Boko Haram was at the time of its founding simply "a mass religious movement" or a "peaceful Islamic splinter group" or that its "purported relationship" with AQIM (or its predecessor, the GSPC) began only after 2009. Moreover, these two leaders with direct ties to al-Qaida would have been an unlikely choice for a "homegrown" group that emerged as a result of poverty, politics or other domestic problems.

Both Muhammed Ali and Yusuf Ahmed were killed in early 2004 when the Nigerian government cracked down on Boko Haram's base camp in the town of Kanama in Yobe State, Nigeria, near the border with Niger. The camp was called "Afghanistan" in tribute to the group's inspiration, the Taliban. According to northern Nigerian civil society activist-turned-politician Shehu Sani and journalists who reported on Boko Haram in 2004, Boko Haram had "amassed weapons" and engaged in "military training" at the Afghanistan camp.[24] In an academic article in 2015, a scholar on West African intellectual history, Andrea Brigaglia, who conducted fieldwork in Nigeria on Boko Haram's origins, also questioned how a "peaceful" group could have engaged in combat for several weeks with Nigerian security forces if not for the group's prior amassing of weapons and military training at the camp.[25]

Brigaglia's fieldwork in northern Nigeria was unique. He identified the group's early supporters in 2002, including naming the imams in Yobe State who facilitated recruitment to the Afghanistan camp from Salafi mosques, rather than relying on intangible structural factors to explain Boko Haram's founding. Brigaglia suggested that the Afghanistan camp was not a "simple commune" as "virtually all the literature on Boko Haram" depicts. Rather, Brigaglia suggested that the camp represents the genesis of Boko Haram and was "a camp with international connections"; established for the purpose of training "(al-Qaida's?) militants" (*sic*); and was "the first of its kind in the history of Nigeria." [26] However, Brigaglia did not further explore the "international connections" of Boko Haram in 2003 – something that primary sources, such as transcripts from Ibrahim Harun's trial, have since provided.

Brigaglia also argued that the Afghanistan camp was an "appendage" of northern Nigeria's Salafi mission known as *Ahl as-Sunna*. Another often cited leader of Boko Haram in 2002, Muhammed Yusuf, was, according to Brigaglia, responsible for liaising between the Afghanistan camp and mosques in north-eastern Nigeria. Yusuf admitted in an interview that some members of the Afghanistan camp were his students, although he denied

being the group's leader (Muhammed Ali was the leader and clashed with Yusuf over when a jihad should be launched, with Yusuf arguing to delay the jihad).[27] However, Brigaglia argued that some of *Ahl as-Sunna's* leading clerics expected that the Afghanistan camp's members would only carry out attacks or join jihadist groups abroad but not, as Ibrahim Harun planned, within Nigeria.

According to Brigaglia, it was the correct interpretation that the Afghanistan camp was going to be used for training to wage jihad in Nigeria and not abroad that led *Ahl as-Sunna's* most prominent cleric, Shaykh Jafaar Mahmoud Adam, to turn against the camp's jihadi project one year after the camp's founding. Shaykh Jafaar then consented to the Nigerian government crackdown on the camp in late 2003.[28] This has become the origin of Boko Haram's desire for revenge against both Nigerian Salafis and the Nigerian government and is still reflected in the rhetoric in Boko Haram's videos in 2017.[29]

In 2017, a recording of one of Shaykh Jafaar's deputies, Shaykh Aminu Daurawa, was released for the first time and featured him saying in a sermon in the week after 9/11 that "Allah is a suicide bomber." [30] This audio added to other evidence that *Ahl as-Sunna's* most prominent clerics, including Shaykh Jafaar, spoke favorably of al-Qaida, Bin Laden and jihadism after 9/11 and would likely have supported a jihadi training camp for Nigerians to join al-Qaida's jihads at least in Afghanistan and Iraq.[31] Other documentary sources, such as those emerging from the Ibrahim Harun case, are increasingly corroborating Brigaglia's hypothesis about Boko Haram's origins, which this author finds to be convincing, and which challenges most other research on the subject.

#### ***2009-2010: The Launch of Jihad under Shekau's Leadership***

As discussed in the above section, al-Qaida had a significant impact on Boko Haram's founding. This is evidenced by the operational coordination between Yusuf Ahmed and Muhammed Ashafa with Ibrahim Harun and al-Qaida's external operations unit in 2003; the experience of Boko Haram founder, Muhammed Ali, with al-Qaida in Sudan and Afghanistan and reports of his receiving money from al-Qaida to form Boko Haram's Afghanistan camp in 2002; and the objective of the Afghanistan camp to train Nigerians to fight in jihads in Afghanistan and Iraq with the consent, at least initially, of *Ahl As-Sunna's* clerics.

A second area where al-Qaida had a significant impact on Boko Haram was in assisting the group to launch a jihad in Nigeria after Abubakar Shekau became Boko Haram leader in 2009. This assistance mostly came from the al-Qaida affiliate AQIM whose leader, Abdelmalek Droukdel, pledged loyalty to al-Qaida in 2006. Bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, accepted Droukdel's pledge of loyalty in 2007 and claimed to have been "entrusted" to do so by Bin Laden: this is why the GSPC changed its name to AQIM in 2007.[32]

Some Boko Haram members, such as the son of a wealthy Borno State contractor, Adam Kamar, retreated to GSPC camps in the Sahel after the destruction of the Afghanistan camp in late 2003. Kamar and several other Boko Haram members were later tried on terrorism charges in Nigeria in 2007 for their training with the GSPC, which had by then become AQIM.[33] Kamar and 17 other suspects were not convicted, however, due to pressure for their release from groups such as the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN) of which Muhammed Yusuf had been a member.

SCSN, for example, accused the Nigerian government of Islamophobia by saying that such trials "employed the machinery of the state to victimize Muslim organizations and individuals" and "stereotyped and slandered Islam and Muslims." [34] Kamar, however, later became a U.S. specially designated terrorist in 2012 for, among other reasons, his alleged direct communications with Ayman al-Zawahiri.[35] Babagana Ismail Kwaljima, who was also released with Kamar in 2007, was arrested again in Nigeria in 2011 in the days before the suicide bombing of the UN building in Nigeria's capital of Abuja in August 2011, which killed 23 people.[36] Kwaljima was believed to have been planning a major attack when he arrested, which was probably the attack on the UN headquarters.

Other Boko Haram members stayed in Nigeria after 2003 and continued following Boko Haram's preachers, who were now under Muhammed Yusuf's leadership and most famously argued that "Boko" is "Haram", which

roughly means “Western education” is “blasphemous” in the Hausa language. Boko Haram carried out few attacks in Nigeria from 2004 to 2009. However, there was another government crackdown on Boko Haram after Muhammed Yusuf announced in June 2009 that he would soon launch a jihad and a “Chadian extremist with limited ties to al-Qaida” reportedly entered Nigeria to launch an attack on “high profile targets” with Boko Haram.[37] This crackdown in July 2009 killed around 800 Boko Haram members including Yusuf.

After July 2009, according to Kyari Muhammed, Boko Haram then “went underground” but was able to “remarkably re-surface” in 2010 with “changed tactics.”[38] Similar to Kyari Muhammed, Abdul Raufu Mustapha wrote that in July 2009 “Boko Haram went underground, re-organized and resurfaced in 2010 under the leadership of [Abubakr] Shekau.”[39] There is a key analytical point that is absent from these two common explanations about Boko Haram’s transition from 2009 to 2010: after Boko Haram went “underground” in 2009 AQIM’s support is the reason why the group was able to “remarkably re-surface” and “re-organize” with “changed tactics” and launch a jihadist campaign in Nigeria in 2010.

Documents found in Bin Laden’s compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan in 2011 confirm what the current Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP [40]) and Ansaru [41] leaders also have stated in their own biographies: after July 2009 Boko Haram members retreated to the Sahel and AQIM provided critical training and financial support to the group (ISWAP and Ansaru are discussed below in this article).[42] One document dated to August 2009 was a letter from AQIM’s commander of the Tariq ibn Ziyad Brigade in the Sahel, Abu Zeid, to AQIM leader Abdelmalek Droukdel. The letter shows that Boko Haram’s new leader, Abubakr Shekau, sent three emissaries in August 2009 to meet with Abu Zeid to “consult on waging a guerilla war” in Nigeria.[43] These three Nigerian emissaries included Khalid al-Barnawi and Abu Muhammed, who later became two of the founders of Ansaru in 2011, and another militant, Abu Rayhan. Khalid Al-Barnawi had been involved in one of the GSPC’s most notorious attacks on Lemgheity military barracks in Mauritania in 2005 with a number of future AQIM commanders, such as Mokhtar Belmokhtar. After 2005, Khalid al-Barnawi led a training camp in Algeria where Abu Muhammed, who had been at the Afghanistan camp in 2003, also trained.[44] There was another training camp for Nigerians at the same time in Algeria led by Adam Kamar, who returned to Algeria after he was released from custody in Nigeria in 2007.[45]

Abu Zeid wrote in the letter to Droukdel in August 2009 that “we know them well” referring to the three emissaries who had fought in the Tariq ibn Ziyad Brigade, and said that they recounted how Muhammed Yusuf’s killing and torture in July 2009 was what also happened to Muhammed Ali in late 2003. Abu Zeid’s statement and Khalid al-Barnawi’s background as well as the case of Ibrahim Harun indicate the relationship of the Boko Haram leadership to AQIM must have predated – by far – August 2009. Considering the clandestine nature of AQIM, it is also unlikely Shekau could have so quickly dispatched three high-level Boko Haram emissaries to meet an AQIM leader such as Abu Zeid after the Nigerian government’s crackdown on Boko Haram from July 26-29, 2009 if not for pre-existing close ties between Boko Haram and AQIM before August 2009.

The letter from Abu Zeid to Droukdel also proves that after Shekau took over leadership of Boko Haram from Muhammed Yusuf, among his first activities was to send the three emissaries to meet with AQIM leadership. The three emissaries told Abu Zeid they faced a “big problem with weapons and money” and wanted trainings of Boko Haram members in intervals of 200 fighters, which Abu Zeid detailed to Droukdel in his letter. Subsequent documents released by AQIM in April 2017 included letters between AQIM and Shekau and AQIM and Khalid al-Barnawi from the months before al-Barnawi split from Shekau and formed Ansaru in 2011. The letters show that AQIM responded positively to the requests of Shekau’s three emissaries.[46] In one letter that Droukdel wrote to Shekau in August 2009, which was also found in Bin Laden’s compound in 2011, Droukdel said “We are happy at the arrival of your delegation” and “we welcome the union [with Boko Haram], and see it as a necessity to strengthen it, develop it, and raise it to a continuous level”. Droukdel also said that AQIM would provide to Boko Haram “waves” of trainings to its members as well as weaponry, “which is not a problem, because of their abundance,” and money “to the extent that we have it, so we have added some extra.”[47]

According to a separate document, Droukdel confirmed to Shekau that he ordered Abu Zeid to provide

\$250,000 to Shekau before Boko Haram launched its first attack under Shekau's leadership on Bauchi prison in September 2010, which freed 150 Boko Haram members who were imprisoned in July 2009 (and hundreds of other common criminals).[48] Reports had also appeared in the Nigerian press in 2012, based on Nigerian intelligence documents that had been made public, of about \$250,000 that AQIM gave to Boko Haram to kidnap foreigners in Nigeria.[49] One month after Boko Haram's attack on Bauchi prison, Shekau wrote to Abu Zeid in October 2010 to say "thank you for the training and financial generosity," which indicates AQIM's money and training likely facilitated Boko Haram's first attack under Shekau.

Another letter found in Bin Laden's compound in 2011 included a request from Shekau asking to speak to "Bin Laden's deputy", Ayman al-Zawahiri, about "joining the organization." [50] This letter was not addressed to anyone in particular but by context of the letter it was likely intended for Droukdel to forward to al-Zawahiri. Al-Zawahiri had been more open than Bin Laden to enlist new affiliates, which was evidenced by al-Zawahiri's acceptance of the GSPC's affiliation with al-Qaida in 2006 when Bin Laden presumably could have done so himself and of al-Shabab's affiliation with al-Qaida in 2012 when Bin Laden declined to do so publicly before his death in May 2011. This may be why Shekau was advised to communicate with al-Zawahiri instead of Bin Laden on matters of "joining the organization" of al-Qaida. However, a loyal courier may have nonetheless delivered Shekau's letter to Bin Laden, which is why it was found in his compound in Pakistan in 2011.[51]

Shekau's letter to al-Zawahiri was a follow-up to Abu Zeid's request to Shekau's three emissaries when they met in August 2009 about whether Boko Haram was "an organization" or wanted to "join an organization." The three emissaries said Shekau was injured in July 2009 but wanted to speak directly on the matter of "joining an organization", which appears to be why Shekau wrote directly to al-Zawahiri to ask about joining al-Qaida. The three emissaries also said that they were "delaying" the matter of forming "an organization" until they "established jihad in Nigeria". This is likely why Shekau declared a jihad in a video and released his first written statement on a jihadi web forum announcing Boko Haram's new official name—Jamaat Ahl as-Sunnah Liddawah wal-Jihad—at the first anniversary of Muhammed Yusuf's death in July 2010 and two months ahead of Boko Haram's first attack on Bauchi prison in September 2010. Even though AQIM and Boko Haram had not publicized their "union" at this time in 2010, an accredited AQIM member of the al-Fallujah jihadi web forum, Abu-Dujanah al-Tunisi, reacted to Shekau's written statement by saying that he had "credible information" that Boko Haram had "joined" AQIM and that the "union" would soon come.[52] Shekau's July 2010 video showed, however, that he had already begun to disobey Droukdel's advice to not declare a jihad "until the time is ripe from all perspectives with calm nerves, together with a comprehensive consultation with the jihad leaders in the Islamic world." [53]

Shekau's actions immediately after the July 2009 crackdown and AQIM's support to Boko Haram before Boko Haram's first attack in September 2010 present an opposite assessment of Boko Haram's ties to AQIM than what researchers, such as Thurston, have described as "informal", "loose", and "marginal." [54] Such terms are not applicable to the level of trust exhibited by the top levels of AQIM and Boko Haram leadership, including Shekau, Droukdel and Abu Zeid, whereby Shekau could immediately reach out to AQIM's leadership in 2009 and receive virtually all the support that he requested from AQIM during a time of need.

### ***2011-2012: AQIM and Al-Shabab Support for Suicide Bombings in Nigeria***

This article has argued that al-Qaida and AQIM had a significant impact on Boko Haram's founding in 2002-2003 and its launch of a jihad in 2009-2010. A third area in which AQIM and al-Shabab had a significant impact on Boko Haram was in suicide bombings. In addition to empirical evidence of AQIM's and al-Shabab's influence on suicide bombings in Nigeria, there are theoretical perspectives to support that expertise in suicide bombings was imported to Nigeria. Michael C. Horowitz, for example, found in 2010 that the "diffusion" of suicide bombing reflects "some sort of transmission from group to group" and that "while it is tempting to evaluate the behavior of every group solely in terms of its local context, a broader perspective is necessary". In this case it was Boko Haram's suicide bombings (or suicide bombings by Boko Haram members who then became aligned with Ansaru, as this section discusses) that were a product of the "combination of learning and emulation" from AQIM and al-Shabab.[55]

There had never been a suicide bombing in Nigeria's history before Boko Haram's first suicide attack on the Federal Police Headquarters in Abuja in June 2011. However, from June 2011 until the end of 2011 there were seven suicide bombings in Nigeria and throughout 2012 there were 29 more suicide bombings in the country. [56] This totaled 36 suicide attacks in an 18-month period from June 2011 until the end of 2012, according to data this author has collected. The rapid rise in suicide bombings in Nigeria suggests not that Boko Haram gradually learned the tactic through trial and error, but rather that the group learned the tactic from other groups and immediately carried out suicide bombings in Nigeria with proficiency.

Although Boko Haram's relationship with AQIM was closer than to al-Shabab, there is evidence that both AQIM and al-Shabab provided trainings in suicide bombing to Boko Haram before the group's first suicide bombing in June 2011. The first suicide bombing in Nigeria's history at the Federal Police headquarters in June 2011 was preceded by a Boko Haram member who the day before the attack warned the media that members who "arrived from Somalia" would soon carry out an attack.[57] This warning proved to be correct. Another Boko Haram member who claimed the attack the day after it was launched, Abu Fatima, later joined Ansaru in 2012 and became its "commander of suicide operations".[58] Yet another Boko Haram spokesman claimed to a journalist who has contacts to Boko Haram leadership, Ahmed Salkida, that the bomb used in the suicide attack "was a ready-made bomb acquired from abroad," presumably from AQIM.[59]

Mamman Nur, who was Muhammed Yusuf's third-in-command behind Shekau, also led up to 90 Boko Haram members in training with al-Shabab after Yusuf's death in July 2009.[60] After this training, Nur was reported to have masterminded the second suicide bombing in Nigeria's history at the UN building in August 2011, which killed 23 people. As mentioned earlier, this attack was also planned in coordination with AQIM-trained Babagana Ismail Kwaljima, who had been released from custody on terrorism charges with Adam Kamar in 2007.[61]

A UN report also found that a group of Boko Haram members returned to Nigeria from training with al-Shabab in March 2011, which was three months before the group's first suicide bombing in June 2011.[62] This suggests that the return of al-Shabab-trained Boko Haram members to Nigeria in 2011 immediately preceded the introduction of suicide bombings in the country and that the training Boko Haram members received from abroad contributed to the group's first suicide bombings. It is possible that AQIM and al-Shabab coordinated the training of the Nigerian suicide bombers with AQIM sending some Boko Haram fighters with Mamman Nur to Somalia before their return to Nigeria in the first half of 2011.

Geographically, the suicide bombings in Nigeria from June 2011 until the end of 2012 were primarily in Nigeria's Middle Belt [63] region, where 30 of the 36 suicide bombings took place: only six were in the three states of north-eastern Nigeria - Borno, Yobe and Adamawa - during that 18-month period. This is despite that the vast majority of other attacks from June 2011 until the end of 2012 were concentrated in north-eastern Nigeria, albeit mostly relatively small-scale attacks, such as assassinations of Islamic clerics, bombings and shootings at police stations, government offices or churches, and bank robberies.[64] It was the suicide bombings in the Middle Belt that made Boko Haram a major threat to international targets and to Nigeria's unity. Nearly half of the suicide bombings in the Middle Belt targeted churches, especially on holidays such as Easter and Christmas, which escalated Muslim-Christian tensions because the Middle Belt is a fault line between Nigeria's majority Muslim population in the north and majority Christian population in the south.

The Middle Belt and states surrounding the region, such as Kano, is also where Ansaru was most active, with its kidnapping of 11 foreigners in four operations from 2011-2013. One of the kidnappings was led by two Mauritanian AQIM members in Kano targeting a German engineer in January 2012; it was claimed by AQIM's al-Andalus agency directly.[65] In three of the kidnappings the hostages were killed in rescue attempts, while in only one instance a hostage escaped.[66]

According to the documents released by AQIM in April 2017, Ansaru, whose shura [council] included Khalid al-Barnawi and Abu Muhammed, broke away from Shekau in 2011. Among other reasons that Khalid al-Barnawi cited for breaking away from Boko Haram was that Shekau had fighters killed who had gone for training in Somalia (with al-Shabab) or in Algeria (with AQIM). This training in 2010 coincided with the

condolence messages at the one-year anniversary of Muhammed Yusuf's death that AQIM and al-Shabab released in July 2010, thus indicating their support for Boko Haram at that time.[67] However, AQIM support only continued to Ansaru under Khalid al-Barnawi's leadership and did not extend to Boko Haram under Shekau's leadership after al-Barnawi had broken away from Shekau in 2011 and formed Ansaru.

Because Ansaru operated in and around the Middle Belt in 2011-2013, where 30 of the 36 suicide bombings were carried out from June 2011 until the end of 2012, and Boko Haram under Shekau primarily operated in north-eastern Nigeria, it is likely the suicide bombings in Nigeria from June 2011 until the end of 2012 were carried out by Ansaru and AQIM- and al-Shabab-trained militants in Boko Haram. However, the AQIM- and al-Shabab-trained militants in Boko Haram were likely antagonistic to Shekau and closely aligned with Ansaru. One example of this is the case of the mastermind of a major suicide car bombing at a church outside of Abuja on Christmas Day 2011 that killed 41 people. This mastermind, Kabiru Sokoto, claimed in his court trial to have received a portion of \$250,000 from "a group in Algeria" and was also reported to have made a phone call to the suicide bomber of the Federal Police headquarters in the hours before that attack in June 2011 and to have made phone calls to Mamman Nur.[68] Kabiru Sokoto said in his trial, however, that Khalid al-Barnawi's deputy, Abu Muhammed, was in charge of "North Central" - referring to the Middle Belt - and that he answered to Abu Muhammed, not Shekau.[69]

Kabiru Sokoto's claim suggests that his operation was carried out by fighters in Boko Haram who were aligned with Khalid al-Barnawi and Abu Muhammed of Ansaru and Mamman Nur. Mamman Nur had rivaled Shekau for the leadership of Boko Haram after Muhammed Yusuf's death in July 2009. He was bolstered by the credibility he had gained from training in Somalia, which Shekau may not have permitted because it enabled Nur to challenge Shekau's hold on the group's leadership. However, Nur did not formally break with Shekau because he wanted to prevent the infighting that Boko Haram carried out against Ansaru after Khalid al-Barnawi had broken away from Shekau in 2011.[70] Presumably, Kabiru Sokoto and other beneficiaries of AQIM and al-Shabab funding and training also did not formally break from Boko Haram for the same reasons as Nur.

There were also specific ideological and personality issues that explain why Khalid al-Barnawi broke with Shekau but Nur did not. For example, Khalid al-Barnawi wrote to AQIM that Shekau declared *takfir* on civilians as if he were a "graduate" of the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) from which the GSPC broke in 1998. Shekau, also like one of the GIA's leaders, considered himself to be the "caliph and greatest imam" and ignored the advice of both Boko Haram's shura and AQIM's shura. Khalid al-Barnawi's longer history with AQIM and the GSPC than Nur could explain why al-Barnawi was reminded of the GSPC's own experiences with the GIA and could not bear co-existing with Shekau in 2011 while Nur could. The AQIM documents released in April 2017 show that once Shekau stopped responding to "letters of advice" from AQIM leaders, such as sharia advisor Abu al-Hasan Rashid al-Bulaydi, Khalid al-Barnawi and his supporters consulted with AQIM and formed Ansaru in 2011.[71]

Most likely, Ansaru kept the remainder of the \$250,000 from AQIM for itself after Ansaru split from Shekau in 2011. Ansaru then used the money for kidnappings and major suicide bombings, especially at churches in the Middle Belt on Christian holidays. This would have been consistent with AQIM's desire to fund kidnappings of foreigners for ransom in Nigeria and Droukdel's perception of the conflict in Nigeria in his statements as one between a "Crusader minority" and a Muslim majority (although Muslims and Christians are nearly equally distributed in Nigeria).[72]

Shekau's spokesmen in Boko Haram claimed many of the suicide attacks in the Middle Belt, including the Kabiru Sokoto-masterminded attack at the church outside of Abuja on Christmas Day 2011, even though Kabiru Sokoto did not answer to Shekau.[73] This is because the militants involved in such attacks, such as Mamman Nur and Kabiru Sokoto, had not formally broken with Shekau like Ansaru did. Shekau's spokesman, who was in phone contact with Kabiru Sokoto, still admitted after his arrest in January 2012 that "most of us were tired of fighting but we could not come out to say so because of fear of reprisal from our leader, Imam Shekau, on dissenting members." [74]



Thurston has argued that because Boko Haram “could” have learned to carry out suicide bombings on its own that is incorrect to suggest that the tactic was therefore not “homegrown” while Pérouse de Montclos has argued that Boko Haram “did not need any foreign instruction to rebel against the Nigerian government.”[75] However, the evidence about the first series of suicide bombings in Nigeria, like the evidence about Boko Haram’s founding in 2002-2003 and the launch of jihad in 2009-2010, suggests that Boko Haram did seek and benefit significantly from the support of al-Qaida and its affiliates. The first suicide bombings in Nigeria from June 2011 until the end of 2012 were carried out by Ansaru or Ansaru-aligned militants in Boko Haram who were trained and funded by AQIM and al-Shabab. Thurston also misinterprets factional relations in Boko Haram and the impact of the group’s training with AQIM and al-Shabab where he writes that Boko Haram’s “self-generated” attacks, such as assassinations on motorbikes, do not “correlate” with “the alleged interventions of outsiders.”[76] In the two years after Ansaru broke from Shekau in May 2011, the impact of the training with AQIM and al-Shabab was evidenced not through the attacks of Shekau’s faction of Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria, which were mostly “self-generated”, but through the suicide bombings and kidnappings of Ansaru and Ansaru-aligned militants in Boko Haram in the Middle Belt region.

### ***Obstacles to Recognising Al-Qaida’s Significant Impact on Boko Haram***

This article presented three cases that show al-Qaida had a significant impact on Boko Haram’s founding in 2002-2003, launch of jihad in 2009-2010 and first series of Boko Haram suicide attacks in 2011-2012. These cases should not, however, be considered the full evidence of al-Qaida funding, training and advising of Boko Haram but rather they should be seen as a sample of this. For example, in separate analyses this author has detailed how Ansaru members, such as Khalid al-Barnawi and Abu Fatima, and Ansaru-aligned Boko Haram members, such as Mamman Nur, rejoined Boko Haram under Shekau’s leadership in 2013. In addition to them, Ansaru-aligned Nigerian militants who fought alongside AQIM in Mali rejoined Boko Haram when they returned to Nigeria after the French-led military intervention in Mali in February 2013.[77] This paved the way for Boko Haram’s occupation of territory in north-eastern Nigeria starting in March 2013. If those analyses or the analysis in this article are correct, Thurston’s claim that al-Qaida’s impact on Boko Haram was “marginal” or that AQIM did “perhaps not” have a “decisive effect” on Boko Haram are major under-estimates. [78]

The occupation of territory, for instance, not only allowed Boko Haram to achieve one of its original aims envisaged in 2002 - to govern a Taliban-like state (at least in terms of sharia punishments) - but it also opened up space for the group’s kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls in 2014 and the group’s pledge of loyalty to the Islamic State in 2015. Thurston has recognised that, “If training in Mali occurred, and if it allowed Boko Haram to begin holding territory in Nigeria in 2013, these developments do not seem to have enthused AQIM.”[79] Such “developments” did not “enthuse” AQIM because when Boko Haram occupied territory in Nigeria in 2013 some of the group’s tactics, such as “enslaving” the kidnapped Chibok schoolgirls, using girls in suicide bombings and burning boys in their school dormitories, were not to the liking of either AQIM or Ansaru members who did not rejoin Boko Haram.[80]

This does not mean, however, that Ansaru members, Ansaru-aligned Boko Haram members and AQIM-allied Nigerian militants who fought in Mali did not rejoin Shekau’s faction of Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria and improve its capabilities in kidnappings-for-ransom, which became Boko Haram’s biggest “war chest”; suicide bombings, which increased from less than 10 in north-eastern Nigeria and neighboring countries from 2011 to 2013 to more than 200 in the same region from 2014 to 2016; and conquering territory.[81] Rather, after they rejoined with Boko Haram in 2013 Shekau exploited those capabilities in ways AQIM did not approve. Shekau’s excesses are also why Mamman Nur, Abu Fatima and Khalid al-Barnawi all broke again from Shekau by 2016 and Nur, Abu Fatima and Muhammed Yusuf’s son, Abu Musab al-Barnawi, took over the lead of ISWAP in August 2016 and ejected Shekau from the group (Khalid al-Barnawi returned to Ansaru before his arrest in April 2016).

Part of the concern about recognising al-Qaida’s significant impact on Boko Haram is that, according to

Thurston, it reflects an “alarmist agenda.”[82] However, a certain level of alarmism may have been useful for countering Boko Haram. In 2007, the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN) claim that the Nigerian government’s allegations about Adam Kamar and Babagana Ismail Kwaljima were not true but Islamophobic and the sultan of Sokoto’s claim at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington D.C in 2007 that “there is no al-Qaida in Nigeria” led to complacency.[83] That same year, Ousmane Kane described Boko Haram as “largely homegrown, not [an] offshoot of militant groups with ties to the Middle East” and argued that “if Islamism exist[ed] in [sub-Saharan Africa], it exist[ed] in the form of moderate revivalists attempting to implement social change.”[84] This complacency was shattered when Boko Haram went “underground” in 2009 and then “remarkably resurfaced” with its first series of attacks in 2010 with AQIM support, and when Nigeria experienced the first series of Ansaru and Boko Haram kidnappings and suicide bombings in 2011, also with support from AQIM and al-Shabab. At the time in 2011, Ansaru’s first kidnapping in Nigeria was “ruled out” as an al-Qaida operation by, among others, Thurston, because AQIM “had to [Thurston’s] knowledge, made no inroads into Nigerian territory.”[85]

A lack of alarm - and perhaps also awareness - about al-Qaida in the early 2000s likely also contributed to Shaykh Jafaar’s and other Salafi clerics’ promotion of al-Qaida and Bin Laden in their sermons and on billboards in cities such as Kano, even as late as 2006.[86] Had Nigerian Salafis never formed what Thurston admits was a “close relationship” with Boko Haram and tolerated an al-Qaida presence at the Afghanistan camp in Nigeria in 2002, the Nigerian government’s crackdowns in 2003 and 2009 and Boko Haram’s reprisals with AQIM and al-Shabab support may have never become a defining feature of the conflict in Nigeria.[87]

Others, such as Abdul Raufu Mustapha and Pérouse de Montclos, have argued respectively that analysis showing al-Qaida’s significant impact on Boko Haram comes from a “Western security mind-set” and that it may “help authoritarian and corrupt regimes to get international financial and military support in their war on terrorism.”[88] Similar to Pérouse de Montclos, Thurston has expressed concern that this analysis may lead to the “stereotyping” of “African Islam” as “essentially pacifist” until it is influenced by a more “militant” style of “Arab Islam” and be used by Nigerian politicians to “downplay” Boko Haram’s “domestic support” or “security force abuses.”[89] However, the three foremost Boko Haram “insiders” and a former lawyer for Muhammed Yusuf, who are all Nigerian Muslims, have recognised al-Qaida’s impact on Boko Haram’s financing, ideology and operations.[90] Moreover, it is problematic to distort analysis that al-Qaida had a significant impact on Boko Haram despite the evidence because it may lead to poor counter-terrorism policies or incorrect assumptions. Researchers and officials can neutrally evaluate the analysis in this article and, if it is accepted, still prescribe counter-terrorism solutions that they believe are not counter-productive.

Finally, the prevailing meta-narrative that Boko Haram is “homegrown” and “local” has in effect, if not also by intent of Gulf-based research patrons[91], not only led to a misunderstanding of al-Qaida’s significant impact on Boko Haram’s founding, launch of jihad and suicide bombings, but it has also inhibited a broader critique of the impact of external actors on Boko Haram. For example, to this author’s knowledge, Brigaglia is still the only scholar to have investigated the early *Ahl as-Sunna*-Boko Haram alliance in 2002 in any depth and not only from an ideological but also a logistical, operational and individual agency perspective.[92] Moreover, the antagonism towards non-Salafi Muslims, such as Sufis, secular governance and democracy and the promotion of jihadism by Gulf-funded and Gulf-trained Salafis in Nigeria created conditions for the early expansion of Boko Haram’s ideology and recruitment pool in the 2000s. Muhammed Yusuf may have broken from Shaykh Jafaar in the mid-2000s but Yusuf carried with him the legacy of the Afghanistan camp in his preaching until his death in 2009, which transferred to Shekau with his declaration of jihad in 2010.[93] Further research on these aspects of Boko Haram’s founding in 2002 would not only overturn the conventional wisdom that it was a “peaceful” group in 2002 but also shed further light on the extent to which Shaykh Jafaar or his deputies in *Ahl as-Sunna* collaborated with, and knew about, al-Qaida’s role in the Afghanistan camp in 2002.

## Conclusion

While this article does not argue that external factors and individual agency are the only ways to explain the

founding and rise of Boko Haram, the article does suggest that more research on external influences and the decision-making processes of Boko Haram leaders using primary sources be conducted. The strongest reason for emphasising external influences and individual agency is that it contributes to understanding the indicators for what the teacher of critical thinking and advanced analytic techniques, Randolph H. Pherson, has termed “signposts of change” or “sudden shifts”.[94] Why did Boko Haram form a training camp in Nigeria right after 9/11 in 2002? Why did Boko Haram suddenly begin launching attacks in September 2010 after being “underground” for a year? Why were an unprecedented 30 of 36 suicide bombings from June 2011 until the end of 2012 in the Middle Belt? And why did Boko Haram begin raiding military barracks and conquering territory in Nigeria one month after the French-led military intervention in Mali in February 2013? Structural factors did not vary significantly before these changes, but the external influences and individual decisions of militants did.

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## Notes

[1] This name in Arabic literally means the “[Sunni Muslim] Group for Preaching and Jihad.”

[2] Dionne Searcey and Marc Santora, “Boko Haram Ranked Ahead of ISIS for Deadliest Terror Group,” *New York Times*, 18 November 2015. “Boko Haram has been the most deadly terror group in Africa (2010-2016),” *The Atlas*, 2016; URL: <https://www.theatlas.com/charts/HJ2t0y3Zb>.

[3] Daniela Pisoiu and Sandra Hain, “Theories of Terrorism: An Introduction.” Routledge, (September 2017).

[4] Alexander Thurston, “Boko Haram The History of an African Jihadist Movement,” Princeton: Princeton University Press (forthcoming January 2018). Alex Thurston, “The disease is unbelief’: Boko Haram’s religious and political worldview,” *The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World Analysis Paper*, No. 22, January 2016; URL: <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Brookings-Analysis-Paper-Alex-Thurston-Final-Web.pdf>

[5] Ibid.

[6] Jean Herskovits, “In Nigeria, Boko Haram Is Not the Problem,” *New York Times*, 2 January 2012; URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/02/opinion/in-nigeria-boko-haram-is-not-the-problem.html>.

[7] Hilary Matfess, “Women and the War on Boko Haram: Wives, Women Witness,” London: Hurst Publishers (forthcoming 2018).

[8] Kyari Mohammed, “The message and methods of Boko Haram,” in: Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (Ed.) *Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, (Ibadan: French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA)–Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2014.

[9] Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, “Jihad in Sub-Saharan Africa-Challenging the Narratives of the War on Terror,” *World Policy Institute*, October 2016; URL: [http://www.worldpolicy.org/sites/default/files/policy\\_papers/Jihad%20in%20Sub-Saharan%20Africa-Challenging%20the%20Narratives%20of%20the%20War%20on%20Terror.pdf](http://www.worldpolicy.org/sites/default/files/policy_papers/Jihad%20in%20Sub-Saharan%20Africa-Challenging%20the%20Narratives%20of%20the%20War%20on%20Terror.pdf).

[10] Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (2016) A Sectarian Jihad in Nigeria: The Case of Boko Haram, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 27:5, pp. 878-895. Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, “Introduction,” in: Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, op. cit. (2014).

[11] Had Higazi consulted primary source documents, such as communiqués between Boko Haram and Islamic State-loyal Africa Media news agency from 2014, the Twitter account that Africa Media set up for Boko Haram in early January 2015, which was two months before the account hosted Boko Haram’s pledge to Islamic State, or now public internal audios from Boko Haram leaders, such as Mamman Nur and Abu Fatima, he may have since reconsidered his claim, which was unsourced and was not evidence-based.

Thurston has similarly argued that the “timing of the affiliation” with Islamic State reflected Boko Haram’s “weakness”, although he provided no evidence to corroborate the claim. Primary sources show that Boko Haram leaders, including Mamman Nur, Abu Fatima and Shekau, made the pledge to Abubakr al-Baghdadi because they all believed he was a legitimate caliph. The continued recognition of al-Baghdadi as caliph by Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) leader Abu Musab al-Barnawi in his sermons in ISWAP territory that are posted on the Telegram application and by Boko Haram leader Shekau shows that even despite Islamic State’s territorial losses in 2017 and Shekau’s demotion by Islamic State in August 2016 all leaders’ loyalty to al-Baghdadi has transcended temporal battlefield victories and losses and organizational politics and fracturing. Moreover, Boko Haram’s reported losses as a result of “military pressure” in 2015 were mainly in major towns in north-eastern Nigeria, while most of the Borno countryside, eastern Yobe, and the north-eastern tip of Adamawa have remained “not accessible” and have been under ISWAP or Boko Haram de-facto control since 2014, according to the UN. Translations of Africa Media documents and Boko Haram’s internal audios are available in Abdulbasit Kassim and Michael Nwankpa, “The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State,” London: Hurst (forthcoming 2018). See also Jacob Zenn, “Boko Haram and the Islamist Insurgency in West Africa,” Testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Terrorism, Non-Proliferation, and Trade Subcommittee,” 24 February 2016; URL: [https://gallery.mailchimp.com/28b6673fcc2022a1dd557acae/files/jacob\\_zenn\\_written\\_testimony\\_feb\\_24\\_2016.pdf](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/28b6673fcc2022a1dd557acae/files/jacob_zenn_written_testimony_feb_24_2016.pdf) . UNOCHA Northeastern Nigeria Humanitarian Situation Update, September 2017; URL: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20102017\\_ocha\\_nga\\_ne\\_sitrep\\_no\\_sept\\_2017.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20102017_ocha_nga_ne_sitrep_no_sept_2017.pdf) . Alexander Thurston, “Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement,” Princeton University Press (forthcoming January 2018); pp. 183. Adam Higazi, “Mobilisation into and against Boko Haram in North-East Nigeria,” in M. Cahen, M.E. Pommerolle, K. Tall (Eds.), *Collective Mobilisations in Africa: Contestation, Resistance, Revolt*. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

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[13] United States District Court. “United States of America against Ibrahim Suleiman Adnan Adam Harun” Case 1:12-cr-00134-BMC-MDG, 4 August 2016. “Al Qaeda Operative Convicted Of Multiple Terrorism Offenses Targeting Americans Overseas,” Department of Justice U.S. Attorney’s Office Eastern District of New York, 16 March 2017. Kamarudeen Ogundele, “Suspect Admits Links with al-Qaeda,” *The Nation*, 4 April 2012; URL; [https://issuu.com/thenation/docs/april\\_04\\_2012](https://issuu.com/thenation/docs/april_04_2012) .

[14] USA v. Hausa, Eastern District of New York, Docket number 1:12-cr-00134, 21 February 2012; URL: <https://www.unitedstatescourts.org/federal/nyed/327440/>.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] This author expresses remorse for Abdul Raufu Mustapha’s passing in 2017 and would like to refer readers to an obituary in his name; URL: <https://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/about/news/professor-abdul-raufu-mustapha-1954-2017> .

[18] Muhammed Ali is not to be confused with Ali Mohamed, the U.S. Army officer who infiltrated Egyptian Islamic Jihad in the 1980s and later became a trainer for al-Qaida. J. M. Berger. *Ali Mohamed: A Sourcebook for Researchers* (N.p.: Intelwire Press, 2006), pp. 1-2.

[19] Abdul Raufu Mustapha, “Understanding Boko Haram,” in: A. R. Mustapha (Ed.) *Sects & Social Disorder: Muslim Identities & Conflict in Northern Nigeria*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp., 147- 198. Kyari Mohammed, “The message and methods of Boko Haram,” in *Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, edited by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (Ibadan: French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA)–Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2014.

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[26] Ibid; Andrea Brigaglia, “A Contribution to the History of the Wahhabi Da’wa in West Africa: The Career and the Murder of

Shaykh Ja'far Mahmoud Adam (Daura, ca. 1961/1962-Kano 2007),” *Islamic Africa*, 3(1), pp. 1 - 23, 2012.

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[32] Don Ressler, Gabriel Koehler-Derrick, Liam Collins, Muhammad al- Ubaydi, Nelly Lahoud, and Stuart Caudill, “Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Ladin Sidelined?” West Poin, N.Y.: t Combating Terrorism Center, 3 May 2012; URL: <https://ctc.usma.edu/posts/letters-from-abbottabad-bin-ladin-sidelined> .

[33] “Five Nigerians on Terror Charges,” *BBC*, 27 November 2009; URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7108629.stm> .

[34] Reuben Buhari, “Islamic Body Seeks Release of Suspected Al-Qaeda Members,” *This Day*, 10 December 2007; URL: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200712100511.html/> .

[35] Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency”, *International Crisis Group Africa Report # 216*, 3 April 2014; URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/curbing-violence-nigeria-ii-boko-haram-insurgency> .

[36] John Gambrell, “Nigeria: 2 suspects arrested in UN HQ bombing,” *AP*, 31 August 2011; URL: <https://www.newsday.com/news/world/nigeria-2-suspects-arrested-in-un-hq-bombing-1.3134914> .

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[39] Abdul Raufu Mustapha, “Understanding Boko Haram,” in *Sects & Social Disorder: Muslim Identities & Conflict in Northern Nigeria*, Ed. by A. R. Mustapha, pp. 147- 198. Oxford: James Currey, 2014.

[40] Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) is the name Boko Haram adopted after it pledged allegiance to Islamic State in March 2015. It has been led by Abu Musab al-Barnawi (Habib Yusuf), who is Muhammed Yusuf’s son, since August 2016. It was led by Abubakr Shekau from March 2015 to August 2016.

[41] Jama`atu Ansarul Muslimina Fibiladis Sudan, also known as Ansaru, means “Supporters of Muslims in the Land of Black Africa.” See also, Jacob Zenn, “Ansaru: A Profile of Nigeria’s Newest Jihadist Movement,” *Terrorism Monitor*, 10 January 2013; URL: <https://jamestown.org/program/ansaru-a-profile-of-nigerias-newest-jihadist-movement/> .

[42] *Al-Risalah*, January 2017; URL <http://jihadology.net/2017/01/10/new-issue-of-the-magazine-al-risalah-4/> . *Al-Naba* #41, 3 August 2016; URL: <https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/the-islamic-state-e2809cal-nabacc84-newsletter-4122.pdf> .

[43] Abdallah Abu Zayd ‘Abd-al-Hamid to ‘our Shaykh and Emir, Abu Mus’ab ‘Abd-al-Wadud’ Subject: A letter from the Emir of the Nigeria group”, Bin Laden’s Bookshelf: Office of the Director of National Intelligence (released in January 2017 but dated to August 2009); URL: <https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ubl2017/english/Letter%20from%20Abdallah%20Abu%20Zayd%20Abd-al-Hamid%20to%20Abu%20Mus%20ab%20Abd-al-Wadud.pdf> .

[44] “Exclusif...Mort des deux otages occidentaux tués au Nigeria: Une source d’AQMI livre quelques détails,” *Agence Nouakchott d’Information*, 10 March 2012

[45] Barnawi, Kamar: Qaeda-linked Militants with Boko Haram Ties,” *Agence France-Presse*, June 21, 2012; URL: <https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2012/06/21/qaeda-linked-militants-with-boko-haram-ties/> .

[46] At least one of these letters was found in Bin Laden’s compound in 2011 and released by the U.S government in November 2017. Shaykh Abu Al-Hasan Rashid, “Documents of Advice And Sharia Instruction to the Fighters In Nigeria,” (released in April 2017 but dated to before Bin Laden’s death in May 2011); URL: <https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/shaykh-abucc84-al-hcca3asan-rashicc84d-22sharicc84ah-advice-and-guidance-for-the-mujacc84hidicc84n-of-nigeria22.pdf> . A translation of these letters are available in Abdulbasit Kassim and Michael Nwankpa, “The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State,” Hurst (forthcoming 2018).

[47] Ibid.

[48] Abdulbasit Kassim, "The Initial Source of Boko Haram Funding Explained," *Medium*, 16 May 2017; URL: <https://medium.com/@ak61/the-initial-source-of-boko-haram-funding-explained-1b142fd5a672> . "More than 700 inmates escape during attack on Nigerian prison," *The Guardian*, 8 September 2010; URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/08/muslim-extremists-escape-nigeria-prison> .

[49] Boko Haram Gets Sponsorship from Algeria, FG Tells Court," *Vanguard*, 10 May 2013. Lawan Adamu, "The Untold Story of Kabiru Sokoto," *Daily Trust*, 13 February 2012.

[50] Abubakar Shekau, "Praise be to God the Lord of all worlds," Bin Laden's Bookshelf: Office of the Director of National Intelligence (released in August 2016 but dated to before Bin Laden's death in May 2011); URL: <https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ubl2016/english/Praise%20be%20to%20God%20the%20Lord%20of%20all%20worlds.pdf> .

[51] Don Rassler, Gabriel Koehler-Derrick, Liam Collins, Muhammad al- Ûbaydi, Nelly Lahoud, and Stuart Caudill, "Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Ladin Sidelined?" West Point, N.Y.: Combating Terrorism Center, 3 May 2012; URL: <https://ctc.usma.edu/posts/letters-from-abbottabad-bin-ladin-sidelined> .

[52] Abu Dujanah al-Tunisi's statement was released on several Arabic language jihadi web forums, including a post to Ansar al-Mujahidin 23877.

[53] The video of Shekau's declaration of jihad was posted to Youtube only in 2013 but was likely filmed in 2010 because of Shekau's references to then current events, such as the World Cup in 2010. The video was not widely seen, although Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported on it in July 2010 and may have received it directly from Boko Haram but not posted it on the AFP website. "Late Shekau Declaration of War against Christianity and Western Education," 26 August 2013; URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Okrm2ZryK90> . A translation of the video is available in Abdulbasit Kassim and Michael Nwankpa, "The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State," London: Hurst (forthcoming 2018). 'America, die with your fury,' *AFP*, 14 July 2010; URL: <https://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/america-die-with-your-fury-489783> .

[54] Alex Thurston, "The disease is unbelief': Boko Haram's religious and political worldview," The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World Analysis Paper, No. 22, January 2016; URL: <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Brookings-Analysis-Paper-Alex-Thurston-Final-Web.pdf> .

[55] Michael C. Horowitz, "Non-State Actors and the Diffusion of Innovations: The Case of Suicide Terrorism". *International Organization*, Vol. 64, No.1 (Winter 2010), pp. 33-64.

[56] This is based on the author's data set of suicide attacks in Nigeria from 2011 to 2015. The data is based on news reports of suicide bombings during this period. The author thanks Omar Mahmoud for corroborating some of this data.

[57] Ahhmed Salkida, "The Story Of Nigeria's First Suicide Bomber-*BluePrint Magazine*," Sahara Reporters, 26 June 2011. "Police Headquarters Bombing: IG Had Meeting With Bomber," *Point Blank News*, 17 June 2011.

[58] Udumu Kalu, "Al-Qa`ida-Boko Haram Links in Kano Since 2009," *Vanguard*, 24 December 2011. Ahhmed Salkida, "The Story Of Nigeria's First Suicide Bomber"*BluePrint Magazine*," Sahara Reporters, 26 June 2011. "Police Headquarters Bombing: IG Had Meeting With Bomber," *Point Blank News*, June 17, 2011. "Nigerian Islamists vow 'fiercer' attacks," *AFP*, 15 June 2011. "Another Islamic Sect Emerges to Counter Boko Haram?" *Desert Herald*, 2 June 2012

[59] Ahmed Salkida, "The Story Of Nigeria's First Suicide Bomber, *BluePrint Magazine*," June 26, 2011; URL: <http://saharareporters.com/2011/06/26/story-nigerias-first-suicide-bomber-blueprint-magazine> .

[60] U.S. Department of The Treasury Press Center, "Treasury Sanctions Senior Boko Haram Leaders Treasury Sanctions Senior Boko Haram Leaders," 1 December 2015.; URL: <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0290.aspx> .

[61] Despite the reports, this author believes it was likely Abu Muhammed and not necessarily Mamman Nur who was the foremost mastermind of the attack on the UN building. John Gambrell, "Nigeria: 2 Suspects Arrested in UN HQ Bombing," *Associated Press*, August 31, 2011; "Boko Haram Gets Sponsorship from Algeria, FG Tells Court," *Vanguard*, May 10, 2013; "Boko Haram Promises Bloodier Days; Threatens More Attacks On Churches And Government Buildings," *Sahara Reporters*, 19 July 2012. Lawan Adamu, "The Untold Story of Kabiru Sokoto," *Daily Trust*, 13 February 2012. "I am Alive, Says Abubakar Shekau in New Video," *Vanguard*, 26 September 2013.

[62] The Federal Police headquarters and UN building suicide bombings in June 2011 and August 2011 were both were suicide car bombings. Letter dated 12 July 2013 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council. 25 July 2013; URL: [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2013\\_440.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2013_440.pdf) .

[63] Nigeria's "Middle Belt," which includes Kaduna, Jos (Plateau State), and areas around Abuja, is a region of central Nigeria

populated by diverse ethnic groups. It is where majority Muslim northern Nigeria and majority Christian southern Nigeria meet and where religious clashes have taken place.

[64] This data is compiled in the author's data set. Available on request.

[65] On June 2, 2012 Algeria's Arabic-language Ech-Chourouk newspaper's website quoted "well-informed sources" saying the two Mauritanian AQIM kidnappers of the German engineer were Ibrahim Daoussa and Abdelhalim Saral. "Nigeria Detains 5 with 'Al Qaeda-links' over German Kidnap," *Agence France-Presse*, 27 March 2012; Lawal Danuma, "Kidnapped German Killed in JTF Raid," *Daily Trust*, 31 May 2012. "al-Andalus Media presents a new statement from al-Qā'idah in the Islamic Maghrib: "On the Killing of the German Prisoner in Nigeria", *al-Andalus Media*, 15 June 2012.; URL: <http://jihadology.net/2012/06/12/al-andalus-media-presents-a-new-statement-from-al-qaidah-in-the-islamic-maghrib-on-the-killing-of-the-german-prisoner-in-nigeria/>. "Al-Andalus Media presents a new statement and video message from al-Qā'ida in the Islamic Maghrib: "To the German Government: If They Release Umm Sayf Allah al-Anṣārī Then We Will Release To You Our Prisoner", *al-Andalus Media*. 23 March 2012.; URL: <http://jihadology.net/2012/03/23/al-andalus-media-presents-a-new-statement-and-video-message-from-al-qaidah-in-the-islamic-maghrib-to-the-german-government-if-they-release-umm-sayf-allah-al-an%E1%B9%A3ari-then-we-will-re/> .

[66] In the fourth kidnapping, Ansaru killed seven hostages in Sambisa Forest in March 2013 and claimed the British were trying to rescue them, although such claims may have been false. "New statement from Jama'at Anṣār al-Muslimīn Fi Bilād al-Sūdān's Abū Yūsuf al-Anṣārī: "Killing the Christian Prisoners As A Result of the Joint Nigerian-British Military Operation," 9 March 2013; URL: <http://jihadology.net/2013/03/09/new-statement-from-jamaat-an%E1%B9%A3ar-al-muslimin-fi-bilad-al-sudans-abu-yusuf-al-an%E1%B9%A3ari-killing-the-christian-prisoners-as-a-result-of-the-joint-nigerian-british/> .

[67] "The Brigades of Tawhid in Nigeria," *Arrahmah.com*, 22 August 2009; "Periodical Review July 2010 – No. 2," ICT's *Jihadi Websites Monitoring Group*, August 2010.

[68] "Catholic Church Bombing: I know the perpetrators – Kabiru Sokoto," *Vanguard*, 11 May 2011; URL: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/05/catholic-church-bombing-i-know-the-perpetrators-kabiru-sokoto/> ; . Ben Charles Obi, Kabiru Sokoto Phone Calls, *Insider Weekly* [Lagos], 6 February 2012.

[69] "Kabiru Sokoto names Boko Haram's leaders," *The Nation*, 14 February 2012; URL: <http://www.nairaland.com/870504/kabiru-sokoto-names-boko-harams> .

[70] "How Nur, Shekau Run Boko Haram," *Vanguard*, 3 September 2011. URL: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/09/how-nur-shekau-run-boko-haram/>

[71] Shaykh Abu Al-Hasan Rashid, "Documents of Advice And Sharia Instruction To The Fighters In Nigeria," (released in April 2017 but dated to before Bin Laden's death in May 2011); URL: <https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/shaykh-abucc84-al-hcca3asan-rashicc84d-22sharicc84ah-advice-and-guidance-for-the-mujacc84hidicc84n-of-nigeria22.pdf> .

[72] The statement was called "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Condolence, Support and Comfort for our Brothers and People in Nigeria" and it was issued on 20 August 2009. "North Africa Qaeda Offers to Help Nigerian Muslims," *Reuters*, 1 February 2010; URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/ozatp-nigeria-qaeda-muslims-20100201-idAFJOE6100EE20100201> .

[73] Theophilus Abba, "Police capture Madalla Christmas Day bomber," *DailyTrust*, 15 January 2012; URL: <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/others/police-capture-madalla-christmas-day-bomber/91792.html> .

[74] "How N41m tore Boko Haram apart –Qaqa," *Vanguard*, 14 February 2012.; URL: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/02/how-n41m-tore-boko-haram-apart-qaqa/> .

[75] Alexander Thurston, "Boko Haram and ISIS: Be Careful with Evidence," *Sahelblog*, 27 May 2015; URL: <https://sahelblog.wordpress.com/2015/05/27/boko-haram-and-isis-be-careful-with-evidence> . Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (2016) *A Sectarian Jihad in Nigeria: The Case of Boko Haram, Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol. 27, No. 5, pp. 878 - 895.

[76] This also explains why Shekau's messaging from the time of Ansaru's formation in May 2011 until Shekau's reconciliation with Khalid al-Barnawi in November 2012 was, as Thurston notes, focused mostly on Nigerian politics. However, after Shekau's November 30, 2012 video "Glad Tidings to the Soldiers of Islamic State in Mali" and before Ansaru's formation in May 2011 Shekau's focus was on international jihadist themes, including in the release of Shekau's second written statement by AQIM's al-Andalus media agency in October 2010. "Glad Tidings, O Soldiers of Allah," Ana al-Muslim Network, 1 December 2012; URL: [https://videos.files.wordpress.com/nUniRM5n/shaykh-abc5ab-bakrshekau-22oh-soldiers-of-god-you-are-mortals22\\_dvd.mp4](https://videos.files.wordpress.com/nUniRM5n/shaykh-abc5ab-bakrshekau-22oh-soldiers-of-god-you-are-mortals22_dvd.mp4) . Omar Mahmoud, "More than propaganda: a review of Boko Haram's public messages," *Institute for Security Studies (ISS)*, March 2017; URL: <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/war20.pdf> . Abdulbasit Kassim and Michael Nwankpa, "The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State," London: Hurst (forthcoming 2018).

[77] Jacob Zenn, "A Biography of Boko Haram and the Baya`a to al-Baghdadi" *CTC Sentinel*, 8:3 (March 2015); URL: <https://ctc.usma.edu/posts/a-biography-of-boko-haram-and-the-baya-to-al-baghdadi> . Jacob Zenn, "Leadership Analysis of Boko Haram and Ansaru in Nigeria," *CTC Sentinel*, 7:2 (February 2014); URL: <https://ctc.usma.edu/posts/leadership-analysis-of-boko-haram-and-ansaru-in-nigeria>

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[78] Alexander Thurston, “Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement,” Princeton University Press (forthcoming January 2018); pp. 177.

[79] Ibid; pp. 183.

[80] Abu Mundhir al-Shinqiti, “Question-and-Answer with Abu-al-Mundhir al-Shinqiti: Question Number 7618: Is it Permissible to Target a Regime-Sponsored School That Recruits its Students to the Army After They Complete Their Studies?” *Minbar al-Tawhid wal-Jihad*, 18 July 2013. “Ansar al-Muslimeen Leader Criticizes Boko Haram, Greet al-Ansar al-Muslimeen Condemns Massacre in Baga, Calls for Revenge Qaeda Officials in Eid al-Adha Speech,” SITE Institute, 3 May 2013. “Ansar al-Muslimeen Denies Targeting Civilians, Calls for Revolution,” SITE Institute, 13 May 2013.

[81] Ahmed Salkida, “What Does Boko Haram Want?,” *Storify*, 1 November 2014; URL: <https://storify.com/jeremyweate/whatdoesbhwant> .

[82] Alexander Thurston, “Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement,” Princeton: Princeton University Press (forthcoming January 2018), pp. 15.

[83] “No Al-Qaeda, Taliban in Country – Sultan,” *Leadership*, 15 November 2007; URL: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200711150531.html> .

[84] Ousmane Kane, “Islamic Inroads in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Harvard International Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Summer 2007), pp. 64 - 67.

[85] In contrast, Canadian diplomat Robert Fowler, who was kidnapped by AQIM in Niger in 2008 and saw a courier from Kano, Nigeria among his captors, wrote in 2012 that “There seems to be a reluctance to believe that [al-Shabab, AQIM and Boko Haram] are all part of the same jihadi movement. Many want to believe that Boko Haram is different, somehow less dangerous than al-Qaida’s other African affiliates. While I understand the reluctance to acknowledge that al-Qaida might have won a solid foothold in Africa’s most populous and important country, again, I know that to be the case.” Robert Fowler, “My 130 days in the hands of al-Qaeda’s African ‘monsters’, by former hostage,” *The Telegraph*, 10 March 2012; URL: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/9136201/My-130-days-in-the-hands-of-al-Qaedas-African-monsters-by-former-hostage.html> . For a similar perspective from 2005, see Stephen Schwartz, “Islamic Extremism on the Rise in Nigeria,” *Terrorism Monitor*, 21 October 2005; URL: <https://jamestown.org/program/islamic-extremism-on-the-rise-in-nigeria/> . Alex Thurston, “A Kidnapping in Northern Nigeria [Updated],” *Sahelblog*, 16 May 2011; URL: <https://sahelblog.wordpress.com/2011/05/16/a-kidnapping-in-northern-nigeria/> .

[86] Abdalla Uba Adamu, “Enter the Dragon: Shari’a, Popular Culture and Film Censorship in Northern Nigeria,” November 2004.

[87] Alexander Thurston, “Nigeria’s Mainstream Salafis between Boko Haram and the State,” *Islamic Africa*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (July 2015), pp. 109 - 134.

[88] Abdul Raufu Mustapha also pointed to two arguments that were supposedly “embellishing” and “contradictory”, such as that, first, “Boko Haram operated as al-Qaida’s representative in Nigeria” and, second, that “no al-Qaida affiliate has recognized Shekau or Boko Haram as one of their own.” However, Boko Haram’s attempted and successful attacks from as early as 2003 with Ibrahim Harun show that it is neither an “embellishment” nor “contradictory” to argue that Boko Haram was at least a “representative” of al-Qaida’s interests in Nigeria even though Droukdel only privately recognized in correspondences with Shekau in 2009 that AQIM had a “union” with Boko Haram. Boko Haram “represented” al-Qaida’s interests in, among other ways, Shekau’s claim of the attack on the UN building in Abuja in 2011 (even though Ansaru-aligned militants may have actually masterminded the attack) and in the demand of the kidnapers in the jointly claimed Ansaru and Boko Haram kidnapping of a French family in northern Cameroon in February 2013 for France to halt its military intervention in Mali. Thurston has also argued without providing any examples that analysis of al-Qaida’s significant impact on Boko Haram relies on a “highly selective use of evidence.” However, this article, for example, relied on diverse evidence in Hausa, Arabic, English and French languages, including primary source oral and written correspondences and biographies of jihadi leaders and court transcripts, unique attack data sets, analysis of jihadi video content, news reports from 2004, this author’s fieldwork in Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Mali, Mauritania and Algeria and interviews with and reports from Boko Haram “insiders”. Abdul Raufu Mustapha, “Understanding Boko Haram,” in *Sects & Social Disorder: Muslim Identities & Conflict in Northern Nigeria*, Ed. by A. R. Mustapha, pp. 147- 198. Oxford: James Currey, 2014. Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (2016) *A Sectarian Jihad in Nigeria: The Case of Boko Haram, Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol. 27, No. 5, pp. 878 - 895. Alexander Thurston, “Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement,” Princeton: Princeton University Press (forthcoming January 2018), pp. 263.

[89] These three insiders are all highly guarded about sharing their sources publicly, including Fulan Nasrallah; a longtime journalist with contacts to Boko Haram leaders, Ahmed Salkida; and an alleged ISWAP member who has released images of dead fighters



and their biographies on Facebook, Datty Salafi. Muhammed's Yusuf lawyer, Barrister Zanna Mustapha, has stated that Mahamat Daud was a Francophone Boko Haram member who facilitated Boko Haram members' travel to northern Mali to fight with the AQIM-allied Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA) in 2012. However, according to Zanna, Daud was resentful about Shekau being named the leader of ISWAP in 2015. Ahmed Salkida, "What Does Boko Haram Want?" 1 November 2014; URL: <https://storify.com/jeremyweate/whatdoesbhwant>. Facebook account of "Datti Assalafiy" 28 August 2016"; URL: "Clash of the titans- Idris Ahmed and SK usman clash over BH, Assalafiy," *knottedpost.com*, 30 August 2017; URL: <http://tabloids.knottedpost.com/news/clash-of-the-titans-idris-ahmed-and-sk-usman-clash-over-bh-assalafiy/>. "Update on the Unlawful Arrest and Detention of Datti Assalafiy," *cupstv.com*, 15 August 2017; URL: <https://cupstv.wordpress.com/2017/08/15/update-on-the-unlawful-arrest-and-detention-of-datti-assalafiy/>. "Can Senegal Bear The Costs Of A War With Boko Haram?," Fulansitrep, 24 November 201; URL: <https://fulansitrep.wordpress.com/2015/11/24/can-senegal-bear-the-costs-of-a-war-with-boko-haram/>.

[90] Alexander Thurston, "Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement," Princeton: Princeton University Press (forthcoming January 2018), pp. 189.

[91] Research supporting this "meta-narrative", for instance, has been sponsored by Georgetown's Saudi-funded "Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding" and the Brookings Institution's Qatar-funded "Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World". Alexander Thurston, "Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement," Princeton University Press (forthcoming January 2018), Pp. 9 - 10.

[92] "The Volatility of Salafi Political Theology, the War on Terror and the Genesis of Boko Haram", *Diritto e Questioni Pubbliche*, 15(2), pp., pp. 174-201, 2015. Andrea Brigaglia, "A Contribution to the History of the Wahhabi Da'wa in West Africa: The Career and the Murder of Sheikh Ja'far Mahmoud Adam (Daura, ca. 1961/1962-Kano 2007)," *Islamic Africa* Vol.3, No.1 (Spring 2012) pp. 1 - 23.

[93] Shekau, for instance, referenced Boko Haram's founding at the Afghanistan camp in 2002 in his speech "Hadhihi Aqidutna" in Spring 2009. The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State," London: Hurst (forthcoming 2018). Abdulbasit Kassim, "Who Is a Muslim?": Mubi Mosque Attack, Masjid ad-Dirār, and the Historical Attempt at Defining a Muslim in the 19th, 20th and 21st Century Hausaland and Bornu," *jihadology.net*, 21 November 2017; URL: <http://jihadology.net/2017/11/21/guest-post-who-is-a-muslim-mubi-mosque-attack-masjid-ad-%E1%B8%8Dirar-and-the-historical-attempt-at-defining-a-muslim-in-the-19th-20th-and-21st-century-hausaland-and-bornu/>.

[94] Randolph H. Pherson, Alan R. Schwartz, Elizabeth Manak, "Anticipating Rare Events: The Role of ACH and Other Structured Analytic Techniques," *Pherson Associates*, 2008; URL: [http://www.pherson.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/05.-Anticipating-Rare-Events-The-Role-of-ACH-and-Other-SATs\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.pherson.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/05.-Anticipating-Rare-Events-The-Role-of-ACH-and-Other-SATs_FINAL.pdf).