# BEYOND VICTIMISATION: EXPLORING NARRATIVES ON NORTHERN NIGERIAN WOMEN IN THE CONTEXT OF BOKO HARAM

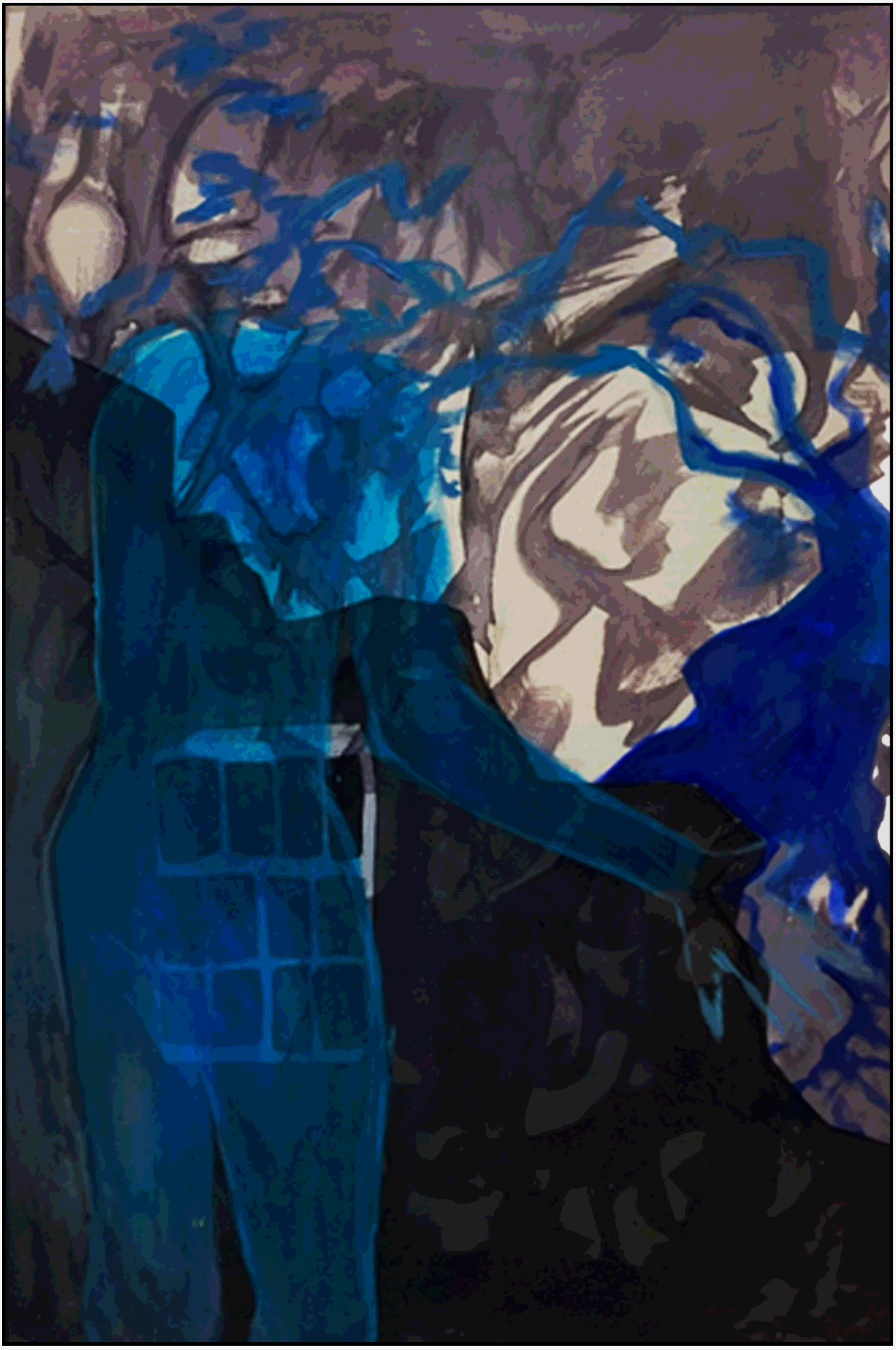
BY ANNA BRAUN

**KING'S COLLEGE LONDON**

This essay examines the portrayal of northern Nigerian women in the context of Boko Haram and the related conflict, arguing that they have been predominantly framed through a narrative of victimisation, overshadowing their agency and diverse experiences. It first explores the historiography of northern Nigerian women before Boko Haram, highlighting their marginalisation in both historical and international discourse. It discusses how the limited accounts, shaped by colonial and Western perspectives, depicted these women primarily as oppressed and in need of external intervention, thus solidifying a restricted, homogenised portrayal of their experiences. The essay then focuses on the 2014 Chibok Girls' kidnapping, which brought global attention to northern Nigerian women and reinforced their portrayal as victims. This perception was intensified by Boko Haram's use of women as suicide bombers and the human rights violations committed by all sides of the conflict, further reinforcing the view of women as passive victims trapped in a cycle of violence. Finally, the essay highlights limited but important sources that discuss northern Nigerian women's agency, including their voluntary association with Boko Haram and active roles in counterinsurgency and peacebuilding efforts, challenging the dominant narrative. By exploring these examples, this essay underscores the multifaceted roles these women have played in the conflict and emphasises the importance of incorporating their agency into discussions to move beyond reductionist portrayals and fully appreciate their diverse experiences and contributions to conflict dynamics.

EDITED BY ROSE BATES, COPY EDITED BY RUTH WATERSON,
REVIEWED BY ANTONIA JUELICH

ART BY DAISY MARSH



Since 2009, the north-eastern region of Nigeria has been greatly impacted by the violence and instability caused by the Islamist terrorist group Boko Haram, which has led to thousands of deaths and widespread displacement, posing the largest threat to the security and stability of the country since the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970[1] . Among its most notorious acts was the attack on a secondary school on April 14, 2014 in Chibok, Borno State, where 276 schoolgirls were abducted from their dormitory[2]. Although the group had been active for years, significantly affecting the region and its people, it was the Chibok Girls' kidnapping that sparked outrage and drew attention to the lives and struggles of the people in the region, more significantly women[3]. This essay examines the extent to which northern Nigerian women have been framed in NGO reporting and news media predominantly through a narrative of victimisation, and argues that such portrayals have overshadowed, but not entirely excluded, discussions of their agency.

The historiography of northern Nigerian women before Boko Haram is first explored, emphasising the limited interest in and sources about them beyond a few accounts of their marginalisation and victimisation. Then, the solidification of victimisation as the dominant narrative is shown through the Chibok Girls' kidnapping and the ensuing international scrutiny, with the main focus being placed on their victimhood. Finally, various ways in which northern Nigerian women have demonstrated their agency, along with the limited reporting of these actions, are examined, illustrating that despite the scarcity of coverage, these accounts of agency add significant nuance to the dominant narrative.

The historiography of northern Nigerian women and their representation in international media prior to Boko Haram, and more particularly the Chibok Girls kidnappings, has been significantly limited. This scarcity stems in part from their minimal presence in primary sources and the limited number of sources they have produced themselves. Contributing to this is the broader neglect of women's and gender history in Africa, which was compounded by the academic marginalisation of women in the male-dominated field of African scholarship until the 1980s when a new area of scholarship on women's history was institutionalised.[4] However, as Aderinto highlights in his discussion of the historiography of Nigerian women, even when women in Nigeria became a subject of study, northern Nigerian women were largely excluded[5]. One rare but significant account from a woman discussing her experiences and life in northern Nigeria is *Baba of Karo: A Woman of the Muslim Hausa* [6]. This source is particularly valuable because it offers a direct account of events and experiences from the perspective of a northern Nigerian woman, in contrast to the sparse accounts about them found in colonial and foreign official documents. An example of such sources is the 1936-1937 annual report of the Church Missionary Society, which reports solely on their traditional household roles and lack of education[7]. Documents such as the Church Missionary Society report shaped narratives about northern Nigerian women, often depicting them in contrast to Western women. They primarily portrayed them as marginalised, emphasising their victimisation and framing them as in need of foreign intervention. This narrative, which emphasised the victimisation of northern Nigerian women, continued to develop into the 21st Century. This evolution was particularly marked after the implementation of Shari'a criminal law in twelve states in 2000 which stressed ideas of public morality and punishment for specific offenses, including *zina*: 'any form of consensual sexual relations between a man and a woman who are not married to one another'[8]. The implementation of punishment for such offenses, particularly where women were concerned, drew significant exposure from the international community. Indeed, reports and articles from NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and media outlets such as CNN highlighted these cases[9]. Furthermore, a 2004 Human Rights Watch Report on the implementation of Shari'a law and potential human rights violations noted that international attention was sparked by the 2001 condemnation of a woman to death by stoning for adultery[10] . As Edwin argues, such cases, along with events such as the protests by Islamic conservative groups against Nigeria hosting the Miss World pageant in 2004, citing fears of corrupting women's modesty, were central to renewed media and international interest in Islam in Nigeria, as they aligned with Western narratives about Islam and fit into a 'pattern of the all-too-familiar stance that Islam is oppressive and violent, particularly to Muslim women'[11]. International discourse on northern Nigerian women in the early 2000s was largely shaped by their stigmatisation as both women

and Muslims, further framed by Western discourse on the 'savagery sanctioned by Islam'[12]. This constructed a narrative centred on their victimisation and collectivised the perception of the women as oppressed and marginalised, while ignoring the demographic diversity of the region and the women's varied experiences. Thus, accounts of northern Nigerian women in historical sources and international discourse before Boko Haram were generally sparse and restricted, and in the few instances they were discussed, the focus was primarily on their oppression and marginalisation in society, whether through colonial narratives or in international headlines. Consequently, this limited a nuanced understanding of their experiences and solidified a dominant narrative of victimisation.

The year 2014 marked a turning point in Boko Haram's use of women in their insurgency, with the kidnapping of the Chibok Girls and the subsequent deployment of young girls and women as suicide bombers driving widespread international attention and reinforcing the victimisation narrative. The Chibok Girls held significant symbolic meaning, particularly because they were abducted from a governmentally sponsored secondary school, and most of them were Christians. Smith discusses this symbolism as crucial to capturing Western attention and sympathies, noting that the girls embodied ideals highly valued in the West: women striving to break free from tradition and backwardness by pursuing education[13]. This was further intensified by pejorative Western views of gender and Islam, which were compounded by Boko Haram's claim that they had converted the girls to Islam[14]. Also, the #BringBackOurGirls campaign brought the Chibok Girls to global prominence, gaining widespread support on social media and endorsements from prominent figures, including the US First Lady at the time Michelle Obama[15]. Two years later, she referenced their kidnapping in a World Bank speech to emphasise the broader challenges to girls' access to education worldwide[16]. They therefore became a symbol of the oppression of girls, not only in Nigeria but globally, reinforcing the dominant narrative of their victimisation. The significance of this symbolism was striking because, although Boko Haram had previously attacked schools and abducted women, these factors were what shocked and drew widespread condemnation from the international community[17]. Indeed, it is important to note that Boko Haram initially started abducting women in retaliation to the imprisonment by the government and the Nigerian military of some of Boko Haram's wives and had already recognised the benefits of using women as a bargaining tool[18]. However, Zenn and Pearson argued in an article published just before the Chibok Girls' kidnapping that gender-based violence and the instrumental use of women by the group was an 'under-researched aspect of Boko Haram's activities', contrasting with the scrutiny it received after April 2014[19]. Following this, Boko Haram recognised that the victimisation of girls was also a powerful tool for drawing international attention, which contributed to the group's decision to escalate the use of girls and women as suicide bombers in June 2014[20]. Indeed, a report by Warner and Matfess on the demographic profile of Boko Haram's suicide bombings highlighted the group's awareness of the shock value of using women to elicit both local and international outrage[21]. Agbaje similarly argued that the group acknowledged the 'propaganda value of women and significance of the use of innocent girls'[22]. Boko Haram's shift in tactics therefore highlights the extent to which the victimisation narrative had become dominant, further reinforcing it by adding more instances of exploitation. Since 2014, numerous reports and studies have documented not only the abuses against women perpetrated by Boko Haram but also broader violations by multiple actors involved in the conflict against the group, including the Nigerian military and a community-based vigilante group called the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)[23]. This surge in reports has directly correlated with the intensification of the conflict among all parties between 2013-2015, which also saw a significant increase in human rights violations and violence against civilians.[24] As discussed by Hassan and Pieri, the activities of the CJTF and their direct connection to civilians increased violence and causalities, as Boko Haram deliberately targeted civilians to deter them from collaborating with, joining, or supporting the CJTF[25]. Additionally, the CJTF also started perpetrating human rights violations against civilians, including women[26]. As a result, northern Nigerian women have often been depicted as trapped in an unending cycle of violence. While this was true for many, it is crucial to acknowledge, as Nagarajan points out, that their experiences during the conflict varied significantly depending on their location, as conflict dynamics and the impact of Boko Haram differed across

states[27]. However, the near-exclusive focus of these reports on their victimisation has resulted in a singular, oversimplified portrayal of their experiences which has overlooked these differences. This pattern is also discussed by Clark in the context of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, who argued that the collectivising phenomenon of NGO reports on sexual violence towards women neglected individuality, grouping all women into a 'homogenous unity'[28]. Furthermore, as Ayiera argues, much of the research, policy, and advocacy surrounding women in conflict has mainly focused on addressing sexual violence, exposing such abuses, and 'wielding international political will to condemn sexual violence in conflict situations'[29]. The attention given by NGOs and other bodies to the victimisation of northern Nigerian women and girls can therefore be framed within the wider global focus on women's victimisation and marginalisation in conflict situations. Thus, the extensive emphasis on their victimisation in reports underscores how their experiences have predominantly been portrayed in terms of oppression and exploitation, shaping the prevailing narrative in both public opinion and discourse around them.

Finally, although largely overlooked, northern Nigerian women's agency has been examined in a small number of studies and reports, particularly in relation to their voluntary involvement with Boko Haram or participation in counterinsurgency and peacebuilding efforts, offering a more nuanced perspective on their experiences. An important contribution to this discourse is Matfess's book Women and the War on Boko Haram cases, which examines women's agency within Boko Haram, including instances of voluntary association[30]. Women who joined the group voluntarily were motivated by a variety of reasons, such as gaining access to Islamic education and medical care provided by the group, improving living conditions and social status as commanders' wives, or, in some cases, seeking revenge against security forces by volunteering as suicide bombers[31]. This challenges conventional perceptions of women's roles in conflicts. As Henty and Eggleston argue, the idea of women joining a terrorist organisation voluntarily is difficult for many to accept because it disrupts traditional gender assumptions that portray women as inherently peaceful in conflict settings[32]. Matfess also acknowledges that 'the lines of consent, coercion, autonomy, and oppression are blurred by the structural violence that women face in Nigeria', highlighting that their victimisation and position within the patriarchal society also, to some extent, shape their decisions to join the group[33]. This was further emphasised by a psychologist working directly with women rescued from Boko Haram as part of a deradicalisation program, who noted that Boko Haram's recruitment strategy was powerful because it offered some women more freedom and advantages than they typically had access to in the region, particularly when married to commanders or when joining voluntarily[34]. This also prompted some women to return to the group after having been rescued, preferring their status within Boko Haram to the one they returned to in society[35]. However, while it is important to frame their actions within this broader structural context and set of constraints, an excessive focus on these factors risks overshadowing their will and decision-making, which become particularly evident in their ability to navigate such challenging environments and make choices for their own benefit[36]. Moreover, while some women voluntarily joined Boko Haram, others actively resisted the insurgency by participating in counterinsurgency efforts, further underscoring how they have actively shaped their own experiences, even though these contributions are not often discussed. Some examples include a 2016 International Crisis Group report, which highlighted the 122 women who had joined the CJTF in Borno State at the time, as well as an article published by Punch that detailed the vital roles women played in the CJTF, particularly in gathering intelligence, and their motivation for joining[37]. Additionally, some media outlets covered the story of Aisha Gombi, known as 'Queen Hunter', who led a group tracking Boko Haram members[38]. Their motivations for joining counterinsurgency efforts ranged from seeking vengeance against Boko Haram for the loss of family members, volunteering to work at checkpoints and search women's bodies to prevent men from doing so, to a more general desire to directly contribute to restoring peace in the region, emphasising their personal decision-making and independent agency[39]. Through their efforts and by challenging common perceptions of women as non-violent and passive in conflict, they managed to gather crucial intelligence and take actions that have directly helped thwart Boko Haram attacks[40]. These examples illustrate how women have played an

important role in countering the insurgency, seizing opportunities to assume roles traditionally attributed to men, and directly impacting the dynamics of the conflict. Similarly, only a limited number of sources have addressed women's engagement in women and peace organisations, with notable examples including a 2020 report by the Chr. Michelsen Institute[41]. This report emphasises how, despite being politically marginalised and excluded from formal peacebuilding processes, women independently took action to address violence and restore peace in their communities[42]. Amnesty International also briefly discussed the 'Knifar movement', an activist group of displaced women advocating for their husbands' release from detention and accountability for abuses they endured, such as starvation and sexual violence[43]. They successfully submitted a list of names to various bodies investigating military abuses, attracted domestic media attention to their cause, and, according to Amnesty, the release of hundreds of men from detention in November 2021 was a 'testament to campaign power' of the Knifar movement, highlighting their pivotal role in securing the men's release[44]. Despite the challenging environment and limited opportunities due to both the conflict and structural constraints in the region, women have asserted their agency by striving to improve their own lives, assisting other women, and supporting their communities, thereby taking on active roles in the conflict. Thus, while the agency of northern Nigerian women in the context of Boko Haram has received less attention than their victimisation, these examples underscore some of the various and important roles women have played in the conflict, offering a more nuanced understanding of their experiences and challenging the predominant narrative that portrays them solely as victims.

In conclusion, the portrayal of northern Nigerian women in the context of the Boko Haram conflict has often been dominated by a narrative of victimisation, obscuring the multifaceted roles they have played in the conflict. While this essay does not seek to diminish their experiences of suffering and violence, it underscores the importance of acknowledging their agency, which they have demonstrated in various ways. The limited but significant studies highlighting these roles reveal the necessity to move beyond reductive narratives that tend to homogenise women's experiences into a singular, oversimplified perspective. Although violence against women remains crucial to report, recognising the complexity of women's experiences in conflict settings is equally important. This broader approach challenges traditional narratives that focus solely on their victimhood, ensuring that women's resilience, agency, and contributions to conflict dynamics are fully appreciated within wider historiographical debates.

**Footnotes**

**1.** Tosin Osasona, "Victims or Vanguards of Terror: Use of Girls as Suicide Bombers by Boko Haram," *Congent Social Sciences* 8, no. 1 (2022): 4; Daniel E. Tonwe and Surulola Eke, "State Fragility and Violent Uprisings in Nigeria: The Case of Boko Haram," *African Security Review* 22, no. 4 (2013): 233.

**2.** Human Rights Watch. 'Those Terrible Weeks in Their Camps': Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girls in Northeast Nigeria, October 27, 2014, 1, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/nigeria1014web.pdf.

**3.** Temitope B. Oriola, "'Unwilling Cocoons': Boko Haram's War Against Women," Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 40, no. 2 (2017): 111-112.

**4.** Saheed Aderinto, "Of Historical Visibility and Epistemology: History and Historians of Nigerian Women," in *Third Wave of Historical Scholarship on Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Ayodeji Olukoju*, ed. Saheed Aderinto and Paul Osifodunrin (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 128.

**5.** Ibid

**6.** Mary Felice Smith, Baba of Karo: A Woman of the Muslim Hausa (Yale University Press, 1981).

**7.** Church Missionary Society, Annual Report of the Church Missionary Society for the Year, 1936-7 (1937), 16.

**8.** Ikenga K.E. Oraegbunam, "Sharia Criminal Law and State Secularity Principle in Nigeria: Implications of Section 10 of 1999 Constitution (As Amended)," Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization 28 (2014): 39; Charmaine Pereira and Jibrin Ibrahim, "On the Bodies of Women: The Common Ground between Islam and Christianity in Nigeria," Third World Quarterly 31, no. 6 (2010): 928-936.

**9.** Human Rights Watch, "Nigeria: Woman Sentenced to Death Under Sharia," October 23, 2001, https://www.hrw.org/news/2001/10/23/nigeria-woman-sentenced-death-under-sharia; CNN, "Woman Sentenced to Stoning Freed," November 10, 2004, https://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/africa/09/25/nigeria.stoning/.

**10.** Human Rights Watch, 'Political Shari'a'? Human Rights and Islamic Law in Northern Nigeria, September 21, 2004, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/nigeria0904.pdf.

**11.** Shirin Edwin, "Introduction Conjugation Feminisms: African, Islamic as African-Islamic Discourse," Privately Empowered: Expressing Feminism in Islam in Northern Nigerian Fiction (2016): 2.

**12.** Ibid.

**13.** Daniel Jordan Smith, "What Happened to the Chibok Girls?, Gender, Islam, and Boko Haram," *Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* 13 (2015): 163.

**14.** Ibid; Daily Post, 'APC Condemns Forced Conversion of Chibok girls to Islam,' May 14, 2014, https://dailypost.ng/2014/05/14/apc-condemns-forced-conversion-chibok-girls-islam/.

**15.** Innocent Chiluwa and Presley Ifukor, "'War Against our Children': Stance and Evaluation in #BringBackOurGirls Campaign Discourse on Twitter and Facebook," Discourse and Society 26, no. 3 (2015): 268; Michelle Obama (@FLOTUS44), "Our prayers are with the missing Nigerian girls and their families. It's time to #BringBackOurGirls," Twitter, May 7, 2014, https://twitter.com/FLOTUS44/status/464148654354628608?s=20.

**16.** World Bank Live, "Let Girls Learn, Featuring Michelle Obama," April 13, 2016, https://live.worldbank.org/let-girls-learn-featuring-michelle-obama.

**17.** Smith, "What Happened to the Chibok Girls?," 161; Amnesty International, 'Keep Away from Schools or We'll Kill You': Right to Education under Attack in Nigeria, October 4, 2013, https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/afr440192013en.pdf; Jacob Zenn and Elizabeth Pearson, "Women, Gender and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram," Journal of Terrorism Research 5, no. 1 (2014): 47.

**18.** Ibid., 47.

**19.** Ibid., 46.

**20.** Funmilayo Idowu Agbaje, "The Objectified Female Body and the Boko Haram Insurgency in Northeast Nigeria: Insights from IDP Camps in Abuja," African Security Review 29, no. 1 (2020): 12.

**21.** Jason Warner and Hilary Matfess, Exploding Stereotypes: The Unexpected Operational and Demographic Characteristics of Boko Haram's Suicide Bombers (2017), 30, https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Exploding-Stereotypes-1.pdf.

**22.** Agbaje, "The Objectified Female Body and the Boko Haram Insurgency in Northeast Nigeria," 12.

**23.** As examples: Human Rights Watch, 'Those Terrible Weeks in Their Camps'; Amnesty International, 'Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill': Boko Haram's Reign of Terror in North-East Nigeria, April 13, 2015, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/1360/2015/en/ ; Amnesty International, 'They Betrayed Us': Women Who Survived Boko Haram Raped, Starved and Detained in Nigeria,' May 23, 2018, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/8415/2018/en/.

**24.** Idayat Hassan and Zacharias Pieri, "The Rise and Risks of Nigeria's Civilian Joint Task Force: Implications for Post-Conflict Recovery in Northeastern Nigeria," in Boko Haram Beyond the Headlines: Analyses of Africa's Enduring Insurgency, ed. Jacob Zenn (Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 2018), 81-83.

**25.** Ibid., 81.

**26.** Ibid., 82-83.

**27.** Chitra Nagarajan, Gender Assessment of Northeast Nigeria, June 2017, 7, https://www.academia.edu/35870632/Gender_Assessment_of_Northeast_Nigeria.

**28.** Janine Natalya Clark, "Helping or Harming? NGOs and Victims/-Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina," Journal of Human Rights 18, no. 2 (2019): 246-265.

**29.** Eve Ayiera, "Sexual Violence in Conflict: A Problematic International Discourse," Feminist Africa 14 (2010): 10.

**30.** Hilary Matfess, Women and the War on Boko Haram: Wives, Weapons, Witnesses (Zed Books, 2017).

**31.** Ibid., 103-134; International Crisis Group, Returning from the Land of Jihad: The Fate of Women Associated with Boko Haram, May 21, 2019, 4, https://www.crisisgroup.org/sites/default/files/275-returning-from-the-land-of-jihad_0.pdf.

**32.** Pip Henty and Beth Eggleston, "Mothers, Mercenaries and Mediators: Women Providing Answers to the Questions We Forgot to Ask," Security Challenges 14, no. 2 (2018): 112.

**33.** Matfess, Women and the War on Boko Haram, 103.

**34.** Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, "The Women Rescued from Boko Haram Who Are Returning to Their Captors," The New Yorker, December 20, 2018, https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/the-women-rescued-from-boko-haram-who-are-returning-to-their-captors.

**35.** Ibid.

**36.** Matfess, Women and the War on Boko Haram, 103.

**37.** International Crisis Group, Nigeria: Women and the Boko Haram Insurgency, December 5, 2016, 11, https://www.crisisgroup.org/sites/default/files/242-nigeria-women-and-the-boko-haram%20Insurgency.pdf; Punch, "Female Fighters Who Risk Their Lives Battling Boko Haram," October 16, 2016, https://punchng.com/female-fighters-risk-lives-battling-boko-haram/.

**38.** Rosie Collyer, "Meet Aisha, a Former Antelope Hunter Who Now Tracks Boko Haram," The Guardian, February 8, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/08/antelope-hunter-boko-haram-nigeria.

**39.** International Crisis Group, Nigeria: Women and the Boko Haram Insurgency, 11; Punch, "Female Fighters Who Risk Their Lives Battling Boko Haram."

**40.** Hassan and Pieri, "The Rise and Risks of Nigeria's Civilian Joint Task Force: Implications for Post-Conflict Recovery in Northeastern Nigeria," 78.

**41.** Chr. Michelsen Institute, Women's Informal Peacebuilding in North East Nigeria, August 2020, https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/7296-womens-informal-peacebuilding-in-north-east-nigeria.pdf.

**42.** Ibid.

**43.** Amnesty International, *They Took our Husbands and Forced Us to be their Girlfriends: Women in North-East Nigeria Starved and Raped by those Claiming to Rescue Them*, November 23, 2018, 8, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/9122/2018/en/.

**44.** Ibid.; Amnesty International, "Nigeria: Mass Prisoner Release from Unlawful Military Detention is Testament to Campaign Power of 'Knifar Women'," November 25, 2021, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/11/nigeria-mass-prisoner-release-from-unlawful-military-detention-is-testament-to-campaign-power-of-knifar-women/.

**Bibliography**


Aderinto, Saheed. "Of Historical Visibility and Epistemology: History and Historians of Nigerian Women." In *Third Wave of Historical Scholarship on Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Ayodeji Olukoju*, edited by Saheed Aderinto and Paul Osifodunrin. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012.

Agbaje, Funmilayo Idowu. "The Objectified Female Body and the Boko Haram Insurgency in Northeast Nigeria: Insights from IDP Camps in Abuja." *African Security Review* 29, no. 1 (2020): 3-19.

Amnesty International. *'Keep Away from Schools or We'll Kill You': Right to Education under Attack in Nigeria*. October 4, 2013. https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/afr440192013en.pdf.

Amnesty International. "Nigeria: Mass Prisoner Release from Unlawful Military Detention is Testament to Campaign Power of 'Knifar Women'." November 25, 2021. https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/11/nigeria-mass-prisoner-release-from-unlawful-military-detention-is-testament-to-campaign-power-of-knifar-women/.

Amnesty International. '*Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill': Boko Haram's Reign of Terror in North-East Nigeria.* April 13, 2015. https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/1360/2015/en/.

Amnesty International. *'They Betrayed Us': Women Who Survived Boko Haram Raped, Starved and Detained in Nigeria.'* May 23, 2018. https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/8415/2018/en/.

Amnesty International. *They Took our Husbands and Forced Us to Be Their Girlfriends: Women in North-East Nigeria Starved and Raped by Those Claiming to Rescue Them*. November 23, 2018. https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/9122/2018/en/.

Ayiera, Eve. "Sexual Violence in Conflict: A Problematic International Discourse." *Feminist Africa* 14 (2010): 7-20.

British Council Nigeria. *Gender in Nigeria Report 2012: Improving the Lives of Girls and Women in Nigeria*. 2012. https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british-council-gender-nigeria2012.pdf.

Collyer, Rosie. "Meet Aisha, a Former Antelope Hunter Who Now Tracks Boko Haram." *The Guardian*, February 8, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/08/antelope-hunter-boko-haram-nigeria.

Chiluwa, Innocent, and Presley Ifukor. "'War Against our Children': Stance and Evaluation in #BringBackOurGirls Campaign Discourse on Twitter and Facebook." *Discourse and Society* 26, no. 3 (2015): 267-296.

Chr. Michelsen Institute. *Women's Informal Peacebuilding in North East Nigeria*. August 2020. https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/7296-womens-informal-peacebuilding-in-north-east-nigeria.pdf.

Church Missionary Society. Annual Report of the Church Missionary Society for the Year, 1936-7. 1937.

Clark, Janine Natalya. "Helping or Harming? NGOs and Victims/-Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina." Journal of Human Rights 18, no. 2 (2019): 246-265.

CNN. "Woman Sentenced to Stoning Freed." November 10, 2004. https://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/africa/09/25/nigeria.stoning/.

Daily Post. 'APC Condemns Forced Conversion of Chibok Girls to Islam.' May 14, 2014. https://dailypost.ng/2014/05/14/apc-condemns-forced-conversion-chibok-girls-islam/.

Edwin, Shirin. "Introduction Conjugation Feminisms: African, Islamic as African-Islamic Discourse." *Privately Empowered: Expressing Feminism in Islam in Northern Nigerian Fiction* (2016): 1-34.

Hassan, Idayat, and Zacharias Pieri. "The Rise and Risks of Nigeria's Civilian Joint Task Force: Implications for Post-Conflict Recovery in Northeastern Nigeria." In *Boko Haram Beyond the Headlines: Analyses of Africa's Enduring Insurgency*, edited by Jacob Zenn. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 2018.

Henty, Pip, and Beth Eggleston. "Mothers, Mercenaries and Mediators: Women Providing Answers to the Questions We Forgot to Ask." *Security Challenges* 14, no. 2 (2018): 106-123.

Human Rights Watch. "Nigeria: Woman Sentenced to Death Under Sharia." October 23, 2001. https://www.hrw.org/news/2001/10/23/nigeria-woman-sentenced-death-under-sharia;

Human Rights Watch. *'Political Shari'a'? Human Rights and Islamic Law in Northern Nigeria.* September 21, 2004. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/nigeria0904.pdf.

Human Rights Watch. *'Those Terrible Weeks in Their Camps': Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girls in Northeast Nigeria.* October 27, 2014. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/nigeria1014web.pdf.

International Crisis Group. *Nigeria: Women and the Boko Haram Insurgency.* December 5, 2016. https://www.crisisgroup.org/sites/default/files/242-nigeria-women-and-the-boko-haram%20Insurgency.pdf.

International Crisis Group. *Returning from the Land of Jihad: The Fate of Women Associated with Boko Haram*. May 21, 2019. https://www.crisisgroup.org/sites/default/files/275-returning-from-the-land-of-jihad_0.pdf.

Matfess, Hilary. *Women and the War on Boko Haram: Wives, Weapons, Witnesses.* Zed Books, 2017.

Nagarajan, Chitra. *Gender Assessment of Northeast Nigeria*. June 2017. https://www.academia.edu/35870632/Gender_Assessment_of_Northeast_Nigeria.

Nwaubani, Adaobi Tricia. "The Women Rescued from Boko Haram Who Are Returning to Their Captors." *The New Yorker*, December 20, 2018. https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/the-women-rescued-from-boko-haram-who-are-returning-to-their-captors.

Obama, Michelle (@FLOTUS44). "Our prayers are with the missing Nigerian girls and their families. It's time to #BringBackOurGirls." Twitter, May 7, 2014. https://twitter.com/FLOTUS44/status/464148654354628608?s=20.

Oraegbunam, Ikenga K.E. "Sharia Criminal Law and State Secularity Principle in Nigeria: Implications of Section 10 of 1999 Constitution (As Amended)." *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization* 28 (2014): 39-52.

Oriola, Temitope B. "'Unwilling Cocoons': Boko Haram's War Against Women." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 40, no. 2 (2017): 99-121.

Osasona, Tosin. "Victims or Vanguards of Terror: Use of Girls as Suicide Bombers by Boko Haram." *Congent Social Sciences* 8, no. 1 (2022): 1-12.

Pereira, Charmaine, and Jibrin Ibrahim. "On the Bodies of Women: The Common Ground between Islam and Christianity in Nigeria." *Third World Quarterly* 31, no. 6 (2010): 921-937.

Punch. "Female Fighters Who Risk Their Lives Battling Boko Haram." October 16, 2016, https://punchng.com/female-fighters-risk-lives-battling-boko-haram/.

Smith, Daniel Jordan. "What Happened to the Chibok Girls? ', Gender, Islam, and Boko Haram." *Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* 13 (2015): 159-165.

Smith, Mary Felice. *Baba of Karo: A Woman of the Muslim Hausa.* Yale University Press, 1981.

Tonwe, Daniel E., and Surulola Eke. "State Fragility and Violent Uprisings in Nigeria: The Case of Boko Haram." *African Security Review* 22, no. 4 (2013): 232-243.

Warner, Jason, and Hilary Matfess. *Exploding Stereotypes: The Unexpected Operational and Demographic Characteristics of Boko Haram's Suicide Bombers.* 2017. https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Exploding-Stereotypes-1.pdf.

World Bank Live. "Let Girls Learn, Featuring Michelle Obama." April 13, 2016. https://live.worldbank.org/let-girls-learn-featuring-michelle-obama.

Zenn, Jacob, and Elizabeth Pearson. "Women, Gender and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram." *Journal of Terrorism Research* 5, no. 1 (2014): 46-57.