

# **Boko Haram: Shekau's Demise — Halcyon or Nadir for Sub-Saharan Africa's Fight Against Terrorism?**

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**Abstract:** In Sub-Saharan Africa, no terrorist group has been as lethal as Boko Haram, under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau. Barely more than a decade, since the group's inception, the entire Sub-Saharan Africa has been engulfed by deadly activities of the dreaded terrorist group. From evidence, more than 40,000 people have been killed, over 2 million people have been displaced, scores of forced migrants have been scattered across West Africa, properties worth billions of dollars have been destroyed, and governance in the sub-region has, essentially, been ineffective since 2009, when the group launched its violent campaign. Although there were responses both at the local front and regional front to hold back the menace of Boko Haram, these efforts were repeatedly met with repression under Shekau. However, on June 7th, 2021, there was a turn of events, as Abu Musab Al-Banawi, leader of the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP), confirmed the death of Shekau arising from a confrontation with this rival group. The question posed by this atypical occurrence is, 'can we convincingly say Shekau's death means the end of the road for terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa?' This article argues the opposite. Rejigging the memory of Mohammed Yusuf's extermination by the police, Shekau's influence, and the dominance of the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP), as the radical points of departure, the paper sees Shekau's death as an alleyway for dynamic terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Keywords:** Shekau, Halcyon, Nadir, Lethal, Terrorism, Sub-Saharan, Africa.

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## **Introduction**

Abubakar Shekau, alias 'Darul Tawheed', succeeded Mohammed Yusuf, the erstwhile spiritual leader of the deadliest African terrorist group, Boko Haram, in July 2009. As the supreme leader, he masterminded various attacks in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad, and other neighboring countries.

These deadly attacks led to the deaths of asymmetrical civilians, members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), and personnel of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). The trends and operations culminating to attacks, which were superintended by Shekau, lasted more than a decade. This made the terrorist group, under Shekau, to be the toughest assignment the Nigerian Armed Forces, Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) had to face within that time.

In 2005, Patrick Chabal alleged that “conflict seems to be a hallmark of African societies” (Chabal, 2005, p. 1). Certainly, a range of violent conflicts have ravaged the West of Sub-Saharan Africa both in the past, and in recent times, making it the subcontinent’s textbook of conflicts. These conflicts have unleashed a subterranean blow on the continent’s human and natural resources. Notable among such conflicts include, the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970), the Chadian Civil War (2005–2010), the February 18 violent coup d’état in the Niger Republic, and the Cameroonian Civil War, otherwise called the ‘Ambazonia War’ (2017–present). However, since Nigeria, Chad, and Niger Republics survived the civil wars and the violent coup d’état that followed, there has not been another violence that has shaken the entire West Africa Region like the Boko Haram insurgency.

No doubt, the Islamic jihadist group has wreaked havoc on Nigeria and neighboring countries; loss of life has become a regular occurrence in these regions; and focused governance has become a fairytale. Governments’ policies and programs have, constantly, been distracted by this terrorist group’s actions. Thurston (2010) once avers that Boko Haram does not only pose an existential threat to the states where it has ravaged, but also it has disrupted governance and caused humanitarian emergency around Lake Chad. Exactly a decade after the foregoing derisory situation was reported, it is evident that the figures of people killed since 2009 have risen to above 100,000, and 2.4 million have been displaced (Maza *et al.*, 2020). Thus, the terror rendition of the insurgent group in Sub-Saharan Africa has emerged as one of the greatest threats to human security in Africa and the Lake Chad region (Oyewole, 2015).

Still in the rigmarole of defacing the terrorist group, precisely in May 2021, various Nigerian media outlets aired the news of the death of the warlord and tied it to a major confrontation with the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP), a rival and secessionist group that had ties with Shekau’s Boko Haram until 2016. Stemming from the news of his death, there was widespread jubilation by Nigerians, especially in the war-torn North-East region and in the neighboring republics of Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. The public fete was grossly affixed to the implication that Shekau’s death had signaled the end of the conflict and terrorism in Nigeria and other Sub-Saharan African countries. Keeping in mind that ‘a tree does not make a forest’, and that counting one’s egg before it hatches, as well as the public fanfare that followed Shekau’s death, accounted for a lot of unanswered questions: What is the region’s springboard for Boko Haram

like? How did the ideology and extermination of Shekau's predecessor fuel terrorism in the region? Will Shekau's death be a source of strength or weakness for terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa? This paper seeks to answer these riddles, as well as many others.

### **Springboard for Boko Haram Formation**

As a moniker, Boko Haram is rooted in the Arabic name *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad* (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad). The Islamic Jihadist group began to gather abecedarian members and its momentum started to show sometime around year 2000. The group was firmly formed around the charismatic preaching of Mohammed Yusuf, who attracted hundreds of thousands of followers across Northern Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad (Oyewole, 2015). As part of what gave the group ample reception in the region, its launch-pad was nurtured, fertilized, and lent a helping hand by the Sub-Saharan African countries' history of severe poverty and unfortunate governance, also characterized by the stop-and-start experience between the military and civilian governments. Also connected to this is isolation of successive governments from the people they governed (Campbell, 2014).

### **Mohammed Yusuf's Ideology and Extermination**

Yusuf, obviously, was the symbol and vanguard of *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad* (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad). He was born in the year 1970 in Yobe State, a neighboring state to Borno State. He relocated to Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State. By the turn of the century, Yusuf began preaching and gained prominence among adherents to the point that he became a household name on the lips of the masses in and around Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, in Nigeria. This was soon evident as he was co-opted into the state's Sharia law implementation body, not only as a virile member, but also as an advocate/ambassador, whose role was championing the cause and seeing to the actualization of Islamic jurisprudence. Apparently, part of what gave him an edge over other Islamic clerics was his verse knowledge of the Quran, buoyed by his Arabic education, oratory rendition, and radical ability to draw multitudes to him. This played a huge part in his enthronement, as the new leader, in 2002, when he was chosen to lead the Islamic sect when the pioneer leader, Abubakar Lawan, embarked on studies in Saudi Arabia.

The *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad* leader's ideology was often articulated in fiery sermons railed against the Nigerian state's corruption and propagation of Western education and democracy. He also bemoaned the backwardness of the Northeast region of Nigeria. However, the stand against democracy and Western education formed the two main pillars of his ideology. The latter was much more explicit and overt in Boko Haram than in other jihadist movements (Afzal, 2020). In one of the rhetorical and conspicuous quotations attributed to Yusuf, he said, "the system

represented by the *yanboko* is unjust, secular, and has no divine origin. It is therefore un-Islamic, which in turn accounts for its ineptitude and corruption” (Isa, 2010, p. 332). These were the dynamics the sect under Yusuf was hell-bent on altering. It was obvious that Yusuf took advantage of the attitude toward religion, democracy, and education that already existed in the North. Yusuf did not ‘spark this up swell in religious fervor, but he has somehow harnessed a zeitgeist’ (Walker, 2016, p. 158).

Yusuf’s initial followers were largely secondary school students and primary school pupils who were attracted to the rhetorical teachings and sermons delivered regularly in Yusuf’s Mosque. Sooner or later, they all abandoned their studies to team up with the bandwagon. As his adherents grew, so his influence and authority increased. There were proven reports that mosques and madrassas were hot spots for Boko Haram recruitment. For instance, Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile’s (2019) interviews of 119 former Boko Haram fighters confirmed that over a quarter of them were said to have been introduced to the group through mosques (14%) or madrassas (13%). Apart from these means, the Islamic movement members were also drawn from various backgrounds, including unemployed graduates, the *alimajirai* (downtrodden) children, and the browbeaten youths. The recruitment network also cuts across other neighboring countries; it drew (and still draws) members from Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Sudan (Onuoha, 2014).

The movement enjoyed a certain level of political face in its activities before 2009. It was well established that a pact existed between the leader (Yusuf) and the then governor of Borno State, Ali Modu Sheriff, to allow Yusuf to conduct his religious activities, with the assurance of realization of Sharia in Borno as long as he returned the favor by convincing his adherents to massively vote for Alimodu Sheriff in the 2003 Governorship Election. However, the pact between the two became kaput right after Sheriff was elected as governor of the state. Yusuf seemed to have renegotiated the guarantee of a stronger Sharia, while Sheriff wanted his help in the reelection bid. Eventually, when the tide turned against Boko Haram and Sheriff realized he no longer needed Yusuf and his Boko Haram followers, he directed ‘Operation Flush’ to target them. As a result, Mohammed Yusuf and 700 of his followers were killed in 2009. Thus, he was succeeded by Abubakar Shekau whose leadership provided that Yusuf’s dispensation was less radical compared to his successor. Events after attested that “the group became radically more deadly after that, taking on its current incarnation” (Afzal, 2020). His decade-long, bizarre terrorist activities will be revealed in the following section.

### **Shekau’s Reign of Terror**

Events that brought Abubakar Shekau to the glare of publicity were the killings of several members of the group and the factional leader of Boko Haram, Mohammed Ali, in a confrontation with the Nigerian Army in 2002, at Kanama town in the Yunusari

Local Government Area of Yobe State, next to the Niger Republic, and the killing of more than 700 adherents, along with the extermination of the revered leader of the Islamic movement, Mohammed Yusuf, at the hands of the Nigerian Police in 2009. This led the group to regroup in order to avenge the gruesome killings of its revered leader. Thus, in 2010, the sect's reprisal mission was made known, hovering on avenging the so-called atrocious killing of the group's charismatic leader and the arbitrary arrest and extrajudicial execution of other steadfast members spearheaded by the Nigerian police in the latter part of 2009.

As mapped out in the sect's stratagem, first was the adoption of Yusuf's hardline top deputy, Abubakar Shekau as its new spiritual leader and the redefinition of its tactics that involved perfecting the traditional hit-and-run attack strategy, and adding new, flexible violent tactics (Onuoha, 2014). The leadership of Abubakar Shekau for over a decade cannot be rivaled. This can be weighed from the levels of recruitment, funding, motivation, and radicalization of members of the sect, using every available opportunity. Besides, Shekau was direct in approach, as he constantly released videos, leaflets, audios, and messages claiming responsibility for attacks; he also made direct threats of his intention to carry further attacks on a particular target or area. In 2012, he was heard in a video clowning saying that 'I enjoy killing... the way I enjoy slaughtering chickens and rams' (BBC News, 2021).

Under the hardnosed Shekau, notable attacks were successfully coordinated in the epicenter of Boko Haram's violence (Nigeria) and other Sub-Saharan African nations, including the 7 September 2010 attack on the Federal Prison in Bauchi State, where over 721 inmates and 150 members of the group were freed. On June 16, 2011, the group launched an attack on the Nigeria Police Force Headquarters in Abuja with a suicide bomber who drove a car bomb the building killing six people. Two months later, on August 26, 2011, another car bomb explosion was staged at the United Nations building in Abuja, killing 21 people, and injuring over 60 others. On January 20, 2012, 178 people were killed by a bomb blast and shooting spree, targeting police stations in Kano. On August 11, 2013, Boko Haram killed 44 worshipers inside a mosque in Konduga, Borno State. On February 26, 2014, the insurgents killed 59 boys at the Federal Government College in Buni Yadi, Yobe State. On April 14–15, 2014, almost 276 female students were kidnapped from the Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok in Borno State. In January 2015, Boko Haram seized the Nigerian Military Base, Baga, a town in Borno State. On February 19, 2018, 110 schoolgirls were abducted from the Government Technical Girls College, Dapchi, Yobe State.

The insurgency group extended their attacks to other neighboring countries. On March 22, 2019, 23 Chadian soldiers were brutally murdered by Boko Haram. On March 23, 2020, the sect attacked Chadian troops stationed in Bohoma, killing 98 Chadian soldiers and injuring scores. On December 24, 2020, Boko Haram attacked four islands

on the border lake between Chad and Cameroon, killing 27 people and kidnapping 12 others (UNOCHA, 2020). In June 2019, Boko Haram attacked an area called Darak, killing 21 Cameroonian soldiers and 16 civilians, while in the Mozogo, far North region of Cameroon, on January 8, 2021, 14 civilians, including 8 children, were killed by the insurgents; they shot at residents and looted hundreds of homes in that region. The incessant attacks by the Islamic terrorist group in Cameroon led to many people fleeing their homes for safety. In the same vein, the Boko Haram violence in Cameroon has led to a major humanitarian crisis, forcing over 322,000 people away from their homes since 2014, including 12,500 in December 2020 (Human Right Watch, 2021).

### **Responses from the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTf)**

In 2015, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was established by the African Union (AU) with its headquartered in Ndjamena, Chad. Although it has been in existence since 1998 under the umbrella of the Lake Chad River Basin Commission (LCBC), it was revised and endorsed on January 29th to deploy 10,000 soldiers (Nigeria: 3,250; Chad: 3,000; Cameroon: 950; Benin: 750; and Niger: 750) (Cold-Ravnskilde & Plambech, 2015). At the launch of the operation, a little over 8,000 troops were drafted from the Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria armed forces. The regional military alliance was set up to jointly patrol their borders and counter the excesses and attacks of the Boko Haram jihadists across the Lake Chad Basin. This multinational security architecture received technical, financial, and strategic assistance from international organizations such as the European Union (EU), the French Government, the United Kingdom, and the United States, which buoyed their operations against the terrorist group in the Lake Chad axis.

Nonetheless, the activities of the MNJTF have been met with mixed reactions. To a large extent, the joint operation has yielded significant progress in combating Boko Haram and its Siamese twin, Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP). Their working together has ensured that troops from various countries learn from one another. Apart from this, ideas and modern practices required for cross-border security are promoted, and tactical coordination is strengthened. In short, it has helped in decimating Boko Haram's spread along the Lake Chad Basin. A significant impact was recorded in 2015; the group was dealt with, which resulted to its split into more than two factions. Between June and November 2016, the MNJTF recorded several consecutive victories in the battle against Boko Haram around Lake Chad and in Borno State through a special operation known as *Operation Gama Aiki* (*finish the work* in Hausa dialect). This military operation included simultaneous collaboration in all four sectors (Baga in Nigeria, Baga-Sola in Chad, Dipafa in Niger and Mura in Cameroon) (Doukham, 2020). Success was recorded in November 2016 by the Baga-Sola 2 Battalion, based in western Chad. The attack resulted in the surrender of at least 240 Boko Haram fighters. Between February and

May 2016, operations in the 2nd sector, based at Mura, in Cameroon, neutralized many Boko Haram fighters. The force secured the release of hostages, destroyed some of the organization's training camps, and seized many weapons (Doukham, 2020).

Despite the successes recorded against the dreaded Boko Haram group, the MNJTF strides have been momentary and tweaked as the Jihadist factions have consistently weathered offensives. Their resilience is owed partly to their ability to escape to other areas and partly, to the inability of the states themselves, particularly Nigeria, to follow military operations with efforts to rebuild and improve conditions for the residents in recaptured areas. For instance, in March 2020, a militant assault on a base on Lake Chad was one of the conflict's bloodiest, which led to the killing of about 90 Chadian troops (International Crisis Group, 2020).

In 2013, the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), a group populated by youth emerged with the enthusiasm to defend their communities against the onslaught constantly launched by the terrorist group in Borno and other states in North-East Nigeria. CJTF commonly known as *Yan Gora*, a local initiative, reacted to the security challenges posed by Boko Haram in North-East Nigeria. It was a 'child of necessity,' compelled by the menace of Boko Haram, attacking innocent citizens of Borno State, and the incapacity of the Nigerian military forces to deal with the threats in the early days of the insurgency (Bamidele, 2020). The civilian JTF emerged and volunteered to assist the Special and Joint Task Force in the counterterrorism campaign. The civilian JTF was made up of both the young and old civilians armed with mundane weapons such as bows and arrows, swords, clubs and daggers that operate under the supervision of civilian JTF sector commanders. The civilian JTF began as a community effort and later, it became part of the joint effort with the main security forces to help fight Boko Haram (Bamidele, 2016). The efforts of the CJTF was effective to a point, as the Nigerian military ultimately came to rely on it for intelligence gathering in some areas, and manning checkpoints in other areas (USIP, 2018).

In the seeming interminable war against insurgency in the Northeast region of Nigeria, the CJTF has, indeed, played a prominent role. Hassan claims that "the civilian JTF structures make up about 60 percent of all counterterrorism mercenaries, and that they support the government's special military Joint Task Force (JTF) in combating terrorism" (Hassan, 2014). The CJTF, working as an alternative counterterrorism outfit, has been successful in fulfilling its commission. However, success here is, partly, attributed to the fact that they speak the same language and understand the terrain better than anyone else. The group has continued to dislodge Boko Haram activities in the region, helping to recover towns and villages under Boko Haram siege, rescuing women in the Northeast, and helping to identify Boko Haram members who are shielded by some local people (Bamidele, 2016).



## **Shekau's Demise:**

### **Weakness or Strength for Terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa?**

On June 7th, 2021, news filters, like whirlwind covering the thin air, circulated that the daredevil terrorist leader, Abubakar Shekau, had, at last, been killed. Unsurprisingly, the news was initially dispelled, or trivialized because there had been quite a few rumors of Shekau's death aired by both the Nigerian Army and media outlets in the past, only for Shekau to re-emerge, and dismiss the claims, and consequently, affirm his continued existence in a tomfoolery manner. He even issued more threats against the military, the Nigerian government and the neighboring Sub-Saharan African countries. True to his words, such threats were turned into attacks at the time promised. Conversely, the latest seeming rumor of Shekau's death became real when Bakura Modu, alias 'Sahaba', the new leader of Boko Haram jihadists and the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP), a breakaway faction led by Abu Musab Al-Banawi, separately confirmed his death, as resulting from a major fight between Shekau's Boko Haram and Al-Banawi's ISWAP.

Bakura Modu's and Abu Musab Al-Banawi's statements put to rest every other tale enveloping the death of Shekau. However, one question that pops up in this is, can it be concluded that the war against terrorism posed by the Boko Haram and other factions has been won due to the unexpected end of Shekau the warlord? Believing that Abubakar Shekau's death spells the end of terrorism that has traumatized the Sub-Saharan Africa Province is ending is nothing but a wrap of oneself in airbag of 'self-deception' that re-buff or downsize the relevance, significance and magnitude of opposing evidence and coherent argument. The paradox has earlier been expressed that, 'it is unclear what Shekau's death will mean for Boko Haram' as a caveat, but it is unlikely to spell the end of jihadism in West Africa. Substantial and experiential facts have established that after the unjust extermination of Shekau's forerunner (Mohammed Yusuf), extremism was not only triggered but terrorism was taken to an entirely new level in Nigeria and other Sub-Sahara African countries.

Also, there is nothing to suggest that there will not be a reincarnation of such episodic attacks witnessed immediately after the death of Yusuf. Judging from the address delivered by Bakura Modu, which confirmed Shekau's death, where he urged the followers to be persistent and not be distracted by the death of their historic commander, Abubakar Shekau. In his words:

"Decapitating the enemy will help you spread your jihad... Do not let what is happening to you these days weaken your resolve to continue fighting the jihad, because Allah has not abandoned your efforts" (The Guardian, 2021).

Although Shekau's death mean so much to Boko Haram in terms of his fearsome leadership which he provided. It is apparent that Boko Haram remnants (fighters) are more



likely to pose serious threats because many of them have been disbanded and forced to operate as bandits living and operating among people. The new trend could even spell more doom than before when the terrorist group's abode is attacked. Because of the fact that the group has been transformed into a dangerously faceless and formless sect as a result of the death of their charismatic leader, any offensive operation fathomed against them will have to be undertaken with maximum thought. The attendant justification is that the sect will become very difficult to deface, as they coexist with the civilian populace. Apart from the fact that the sinister groups may adopt guerrilla warfare strategy, the possibility of a merger with other terrorist groups in the sub-region or further factions evolving from the beleaguered group could not be ruled out. Then again, it has also been emphasized that Shekau's fighters could decide to join forces with other extremist groups in the West Africa region or create a stronger faction. This would be potentially disastrous for the already embattled Northeast of Nigeria as it could lead to more infighting between the different groups, with civilians caught in the middle.

Ticking the clock's hand to the gazebo of the dominant Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) reinforced on the front foot of the exchange that consumed Abubakar Shekau, ISWAP leader Abu Musab Al-Barnawi confirmed that Shekau 'killed himself instantly by detonating an explosive... he preferred to be humiliated in the afterlife than get humiliated on earth' (BBC News, 2021). With this testimonial, it is clear that Shekau's death was neither orchestrated by CJTF nor MJNTF forces, or a combination of the two, but that he chose the path of suicide to save himself from the shame that would have been his lot had he surrendered or been captured alive by ISWAP forces led by his protégé, Abu Musab Al-Banawi. The act rekindles the insinuation that he could not be killed by any individual except Allah. Though he was not killed by the ISWAP, it cannot be totally ignored that he was hunted down by the group, which made him go the way of suicide. Going by this, one can easily affirm the dominance of ISWAP as the most lethal terrorist group in Sub-Saharan Africa. The group has become increasingly high-flying in the region and has carried out several victorious attacks against the civilian populace, the Nigerian military, the CJTF, and the MNJTF. To further prove the group's dominance and credential as the sole controller of terroristic activities in the region, on August 30, 2021, ISWAP fighters, in large numbers reportedly dislodged government forces in Rann, the Administrative Headquarters of Kala-Balge Local Government Area of Borno State in Northeast Nigeria. According to reports from fleeing members of the community:

"Many humanitarian workers have taken to the bush moving towards the Cameroon border trying to find their way out and avoiding the militants. They burnt down the military base and some vehicles. The soldiers abandoned their bases following more superior firepower from the insurgents. For now, we do not know what is going on in Rann as we are able to find escape route along with some security operatives" (TVC News Nigeria, 2021).

Recently, a good number of Boko Haram members have not only been seen teaming up forces with ISWAP, but also have been bequeathing ISWAP with the treasury, weapons, and ammunition in Shekau's armory, as both groups have basically become the potent forces to be reckoned with, when it comes to terror campaigns in Sub-Saharan Africa. Indicatively, this will mean fewer violent clashes between the two groups, and more attacks on Sub-Saharan African countries, as such a merger would only solidify terrorism. Again, it would mean that the ostensible Islamic State's hoof marks in West Africa would get a considerable boost; the region is further positioned for devastating attacks from the deadlier ISWAP group.

## **Conclusion**

The demise of Shekau, the Boniface of Sambisa Forest and the Grand Mayor of Lake Chad Basin for well over a decade, has attracted unrestricted fete from various quarters. His demise was considered by many as a huge relief for the quartet, Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad that are ominously affected by the activities of the much-dreaded Boko Haram group. Public judgment was influenced by the intensity of terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa in the era of Shekau. Not only that, his hunt took a whopping decennial period to come to fruition albeit from an unexpected source. This led to asking if there can be a conclusion, that is, an end to terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa. My rejoinder to the ensuing puzzle has drifted towards pessimism rather than sanguinity. This is premised on the caveat that 'ISWAP's rise and Boko Haram's decline is no cause for celebration but concern'. It is not unanticipated that this sort of response will attract queries like why?

From every available index, the death of Shekau means that the stencil for Sub-Saharan Africa's terrorism has been amplified, as history jugs our memory to 2009, when the erstwhile spiritual leader of the sect, Mohammed Yusuf, was unjustly killed by the Nigerian police. Unknowingly to them, the rock-hard foundation of terrorism was laid, which culminated to brutality and wanton killings. Shekau assumed the mantle of leadership and constantly delivered masterstrokes in and around the Lake Chad basin, drawing the attention of international communities to the world-shattering activities of the terrorist group (Boko Haram).

Again, looking at the circumstances that led to the death of Shekau, it is obvious that it was the result of war over superiority, rather than a mainstream fight with the multi-national forces. As such, this has placed power in the hands of ISWAP, a more connected and coordinated faction that has its tentacles well represented in nearly all the West African sub-region. Again, judging from the ties the group has with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), it could be said that the stage is set for more terrorist activities in Sub-Saharan African countries.

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