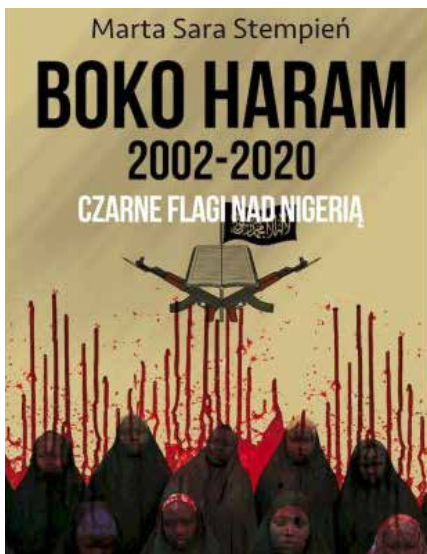


KRZYSZTOF IZAK

**Book review: Marta Sara Stempień,
Boko Haram 2002–2020. Czarne flagi nad Nigerią¹**



May 2021 saw the death of Abu Bakr Shekau, the charismatic leader of Boko Haram (in English: Western education is forbidden), one of the bloodiest terrorist organisations, second only to the Islamic State in terms of the number of people killed in the second decade of the 21st century. Shekau died - according to one version - as a result of wounds sustained in combat with the rival group Islamic State in West Africa Province, ISWAP, also known as Wilajet Gharb Ifriqijja. According to another version, he blew himself up

¹ M.S. Stempień, *Boko Haram 2002–2020. Czarne flagi nad Nigerią* (Eng. Boko Haram 2002–2020. Black flags over Nigeria), Warszawa–Siedlce 2020, Rytm, 206 pp.

using a shahid belt, which is why his corpse was not found. At the time, opinions were confirmed that Boko Haram members would move to ISWAP, with which the organisation merged in 2015. Later, however, through ideological differences, their paths diverged, and eventually there was a conflict that ended with the death of the Boko Haram leader. The proper name of this organisation is: Association of Sunni People for Missionary Activities and Jihad (Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati wal-Jihad in Hausa written in Arabic or Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna li ad-Dawa wa al-Jihad in Arabic). Its activity seems to have ceased, as there is no new information about its criminal activities. The organisation used to openly admit to it as part of its propaganda strategy. The scale of ISWAP activity has also decreased significantly, which does not mean that it is safer in Nigeria. The activity of various groups and organisations has shifted from the north-east of Nigeria (Borno, Yobe, Adamawa states), the motherland of both groups, to the west and south of the country. Statistically, the situation is as follows: in 2021, more than 2 600 civilians were killed in the north of Nigeria in attacks carried out by groups other than Boko Haram and ISWAP, significantly more than were killed by these two organisations in the same period and three times more than in 2020. In contrast, 2968 people were killed in Nigeria in the first quarter of 2022. 86 per cent of these deaths were recorded in the northern part of the country.

Let this digression serve as an introduction to the review of Marta Sara Stempień's publication, which is a monograph on the most criminal organisation of Islamic extremists in Nigeria's history. The author, as one can read in the biographical note, is an assistant professor at the Institute of Security Sciences at the Siedlce University of Life Sciences and Humanities and deputy editor-in-chief of the scientific journal "Die Securitate et Defensione. On Security and Defence". In addition to her peer-reviewed monograph, she has published books such as *Islamic State: the new face of terrorism* (2018) and, together with Malina Kaszuba, *Middle East: still on fire* (2019).

The monograph *Boko Haram...* consists of five chapters of varying substantive value. They fulfil the stated purpose, define the problem and the research hypothesis formulated in the introduction, but in the reviewer's opinion, it would be appropriate to speak here of theses based on well-documented facts rather than the research hypothesis².

² As the author indicated, the purpose of the monograph is to try to determine the evolution of the Boko Haram terrorist structure. The main research problem was contained in the answer to the question: what are the consequences for Nigeria, including security,

There is a lack of even distribution of emphasis in many places. Serious issues are downplayed and less important matters receive more attention. Furthermore, mental shortcuts cause the reader to miss the most important issues. These criticisms relate primarily to Chapter 1, entitled *Nigeria*, which includes in separate subsections information on the historical and geopolitical background, the country's population, the development of Salafism in northern Nigeria, the idea of liberal democracy, and the political and economic situation. The chapter totals 33 pages. The author has given a disproportionate and selective treatment to the issues it addresses. The most important issue, Islam, is dealt with in less than six pages (pp. 26-31), while the economic situation is dealt with in eight pages (pp. 43-51). Unfortunately, there was no information on the Sokoto Caliphate, which had a huge impact on the formation of Islam in Nigeria in the early 19th century, and on the contemporary influence of Hezbollah. The former is only mentioned by the author on pages 56, 84 and 143-144. On page 144 she writes: *There were twenty caliphs in power from the time of Usman dan Fodio until the British conquest in the early 20th century.* This is not in line with Nigeria's history and contemporary times, as the twentieth caliph and Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Saad Abubakar, has been in office (purely representative, but highly respected) since 2006 to the present day. Writing in Chapter 1 about the Biafran War (1967-1970), the author mentioned, among other things, the states involved in the conflict: *The world powers of the time were involved in the war. Britain and the Soviet Union supported the Nigerian government. Biafra, on the other hand, received support from France and Israel* (p. 22). This is incomplete because the government forces were also supported by the United States, and Biafra by Portugal and the Vatican. It is worth adding that the Biafran air force was commanded by Jan Zumbach, former commander of 303 Squadron. Also missing is the important information that Biafran separatism is still active in south-eastern Nigeria. It is mainly represented by the Indigenous People of Biafra, an organisation accused by the authorities of terrorist activities. It fights primarily for the interests of the Ibo (Igbo) people. The author uses both these two names and the incorrect term Ikbo, but does not clarify that they refer to the same ethnic group. This may create a misconception in the reader that two

of Boko Haram activity? Stempień also adopted the following research hypothesis: Boko Haram in recent years has become an important representative group of the Salafist community and a significant military force in Nigeria.

different communities are being referred to. A similar problem applies to the Fulani, a pastoralist nomadic Muslim people living throughout the Sahel. They are also known by the names: Fulbeje, Peul or Bororo.

In describing the political situation in Nigeria after independence, the author mentions that Gen Olusegun Obasanjo, president and one of the leaders of the first military junta, transferred power to civilian hands in 1979. What was missing, however, was the important observation that this change of power was accompanied by a major reduction in the armed forces. Thousands of soldiers left the army at that time and were left with their weapons. This became the cause of an incredible increase in banditry and terror in Nigeria, especially on the streets of Lagos, the former capital.

The author's cursory treatment of the issue of Islamic development in Nigeria is very evident in the work. This leaves one feeling quite unsatisfied. The memory of events in West Africa in the nineteenth century, when various religious leaders declared jihad, is still alive in the Islamic tradition and religion of many African countries, including Nigeria.

There is a very glaring lack of reference in the work to the excellent monograph by Stanisław Piłaszewicz, *The Power of the Book and the Sword of Truth*³. The author most likely did not use it, as she did not mention this title in the bibliography. She also devoted little space to the problem of Salafism in northern Nigeria and Muslim radicalism, but drew attention to the activities of the bloody Maitatsine sect and mentioned the Ombatse cult. In the case of the latter, however, a few sentences should have been devoted to bringing the reader closer to the issue, if only because of its bloody nature linked to the traditional beliefs of the Eggon community in central Nigeria.

On p. 31 the statement appears: *The role of the so-called Fulani militant group, which is more widely unknown in the world, has also increased in recent years.* One cannot agree with this. No such armed group exists in Africa; the author is referring to the fighters of the aforementioned Fulani people. In her justification, it should be noted that in describing the activities of this 'group', she relied on information published by the Institute for Economics and Peace in its Global Terrorism Index (GTI) for 2014. According to the GTI, Fulani militants were then the fourth most dangerous terrorist group behind Boko Haram, the Islamic State and the Taliban. The GTI thus

³ S. Piłaszewicz, *Potęga Księgi i Miecza Prawdy. Religia, cywilizacja i kultura islamu w Afryce Zachodniej*, Warszawa 1994.

treated the Fulani as an organisation rather than as a people where men, as in most pastoralist peoples, become fighters when necessary, but that does not mean they are terrorists. The Fulani and related Tukuler population totals more than 40 million people living from the Atlantic coast to Sudan and the Central African Republic. They speak the Fulde language and are renowned for their puritanism, neophyte zealotry and belief in ethnic and linguistic superiority. The organisations they have established are well known. These include Ansar al-Islam in Burkina Faso, closely linked to the Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wa al-Muslimin (Islamic and Muslim Support Group)⁴, Al-Jabhat li Tahrir al-Macina (the Macina Liberation Front), also known as Katiba Macina (Macina Battalion) or Retour, Reclamation et Réhabilitation, 3R (Return, Reclamation, Repair), a movement controlling an area in the Central African Republic along the border with Cameroon. The Fulani were and are also present in the Jama'at at-Tawhid wa al-Jihad fi Gharbi Ifrikija (Group of Unity and Jihad in West Africa) or Ad-Dawla al-Islamijja fi as-Sahra al-Kabira (Islamic State in the Greater Sahara). The GTI report lacks information on these organisations, especially Ansar al-Islam and Katiba Macina, which is perhaps due to an oversight. The former is responsible for massacres of people in the north and east of Burkina Faso and the flight from their homes of 1.9 million people. Its leaders, brothers Ibrahim Malam Dicko and Jafar Dicko, have since the organisation's inception in 2016 referred to the emirate of Djelgaudji, the historic Fulani kingdom in the north of Burkina Faso. The Macina Liberation Front was founded in 2015 by the Fulani charismatic preacher Amadu Kuffa, known for his criticism of the Malian authorities. Such rhetoric in turn alluded to the emirate of Macina. The grouping is notorious for its attacks on the villages of farmers of the Bambara and Dogon peoples in Mali's Mopti region. The latter formed the armed militia Dan Na Ambassagu (Hunters who trust in God) to defend the inhabitants. In March 2019, in retaliation for numerous attacks, its members invaded the Fulani-inhabited village of Ogosso and killed 160 people, including the village leader and his grandchildren. The massacre caused shock across the state and forced the government to resign in April 2019.

⁴ The organization formed in March 2017 by: Tanzim al-Qaeda bi Bilad al-Maghrib al-Islami (Al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb Countries) operating in the Sahel zone, Ansar Dine (Supporters/Defenders of Religion), Al-Murabitun (Guardians) and Al-Jabhat li Tahrir al-Macina (Macina Liberation Front).

In the final subsection entitled: *Economic situation* there is confusion in the dates and events cited, especially on pages 46-47. In this section, the author has also addressed the issue of the jihadists taking control of food production in north-eastern Nigeria and charging levies on food products. It seems that a discussion of this topic should have been included in the fourth subsection *Financing activities* of Chapter 2. It is entitled: *The organisational structure of Boko Haram* and contains a lot of interesting information and presents a large body of knowledge by the author, but even there one notices misspelled names of organisations or not very accurate terms. In the lede to this chapter, Stempień reports: *In 2012, a group called the Front for the Defence of Muslims in Black Africa, known as Ansaru and less commonly referred to as Al-Qaeda in Lands Beyond the Sahel, broke away from Boko Haram* (p. 52). The named organisation was called the Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan (Association for the Defence of Muslims in the Black Lands). The full name is not given until p. 59, but 'Ansari' was erroneously used instead of the noun 'Ansarul', similarly 'Ahlus' instead of 'Ahlis' or 'Afriqiya' instead of 'Ifriqija'. The structure of the chapter itself was also not well thought out. The subsequent subsections *Genesis and evolution of Boko Haram*, *What Boko Haram means* and *Organisational structure and authority* have been filled with content in such a way that many events are repeated and the chronological and factual order has been largely disrupted, giving the impression of chaos. It is difficult to sort out the succession of events and how the relationships linking the main actors were arranged during the periods in question. The author distinguished five periods in the evolution of Boko Haram: 1970-1990, 2001-2009, 2010-2013, 2013-2015 and the post-2015 period. In contrast, she listed other phases of Boko Haram's evolution in Chapter 4. on p. 119: the Kanama phase (2003-2005), the dawah phase (2005-2009), and the reorganisation phase (since 2009). It seems that it would have been more correct to merge these two chapters, especially since it is in Chapter 2 that the author writes about Kanama in Yobe State, where the first camp of Islamic extremists dubbed 'Afghanistan' was established and where members of the group were referred to as the Nigerian Taliban.

The author devotes much space to the concept of takfir, or exclusion from the ummah. Muhammad al-Maghili (1440-1505) is considered to be its founder. His teachings were used by Usman dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto Sultanate in 1809. Today, many Muslim terrorist organisations use this concept to exclude from the ummah those Muslims who do not

share their views and do not wish to join them. Among them were Boko Haram and the Islamic State. The main idea preached by Ustaz Mohammad Yusuf, founder of the former, was to overthrow the Nigerian government and impose a literal interpretation of the Koran. The movement was called Yusufiya after his name. An important event in the history of Boko Haram was the rejection of the Western education system as destructive of belief in one God and the acceptance of the one correct truth that the author of all phenomena and things is God. In 2009, members of the organisation staged an uprising in the city of Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, to overthrow the government and declare the state a caliphate. Street fighting spread from Maiduguri not only across the state, but also to neighbouring Yobe and further afield - Bauchi and Kano. The beginning of the unrest can be seen as July 2009, when the Boko Haram militia attacked a police station in Bauchi town. Subsequently, Islamic extremists carried out violent attacks in other cities in northern Nigeria. Targets of the attacks included police stations, prisons, government buildings, local administration facilities and churches. In September 2009, more than 700 prisoners were freed during an attack on the federal prison in Bauchi. There has been an escalation of conflict between Muslims and Christians. More than 700 people were killed in Boko Haram attacks and many families abandoned their belongings and fled their homes. The government has deployed military forces to pacify the extremists and protect the population. In Maiduguri, approximately 500 people were killed as a result of the fighting. Police demolished a Boko Haram mosque where extremists were resisting. Hundreds of followers were arrested, including Yusuf. A few days later, his corpse was found on one of the streets in Maiduguri. Police said he had died while trying to escape. The authorities announced that the Boko Haram movement had been destroyed once and for all, which turned out not to be true.

Following Yusuf's death, leadership of the organisation was assumed by Shekau. Since 2010, there has been progressive armed activity and escalating violence by Boko Haram. The organisation is recruiting more and more excluded young people living on the margins of society. On 6 June 2011, a Boko Haram militant carried out an attack on the police headquarters in Abuja. This was the first suicide attack in Nigeria in which a booby-trapped car was used. The attack was in response to the Nigerian police chief's stay in Maiduguri, which called for the group's eradication. In 2012, some of its members, led by Khalid al-Barnawi alias Abu Ussamata

al-Ansary (arrested in early April 2016), left Boko Haram. The reason for the break-up was the secessionists' opposition to the murder of Muslims. The latter considered, according to the concept of takfir, as infidels and deviants from the faith, deserved only death, according to Shekau. Mass murders were the order of the day. Al-Barnawi's organisation adopted the aforementioned name: Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan, relocated its base to neighbouring Cameroon and established cooperation with Tanzim al-Qaeda bi Bilad al-Maghrib al-Islami (Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb). On p. 60, the author reports another split in Boko Haram, which occurred in mid-2015. At that time (...) *Mamman Nur and Abu Musab al-Barnawi, son of Mohammed Yusuf, split from Boko Haram and took an oath of allegiance to the Islamic State, proclaiming the West Africa Province (Wilayat Gharb Afriqiya - WGA)*. She elaborates on this thesis on p. 74. However, it was the Shekau that accepted the supremacy of the Islamic State in early 2015, officially changing the name of their organisation to the Islamic State's West Africa Province. It should not be forgotten that the headquarters in Iraq wanted to take control of Boko Haram and sought to weaken Shekau's position. This was due to his opposition to Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's plans to expand Boko Haram's activities beyond Niger and Cameroon under the idea of global jihad and to entrust the leadership of the group to a collegiate body (*the Majlis Ash-Shura*). It would include the self-appointed caliph Mamman Nur and Abubakar Adam Kambara, which would deprive Shekau of his one-man command of Boko Haram. Reducing his influence was also served by Al-Baghdadi's ordered division of Boko Haram fighters into three groupings, which were dislocated to northern Cameroon, the Lake Chad area and eastern Niger. Shekau would be tasked with coordinating these activities, mainly in northern Nigeria. Disagreements between the leaders over the territorial scope of operations and powers led to Shekau's refusal to fully submit to the Islamic State's central command, which removed him from his position as conductor of the West African Province in August 2016. Shekau broke from his subordination to the central command in Iraq, retaining leadership over Boko Haram fighters loyal to him. In contrast, Abu Musab al-Barnawi (who died in August 2021) became the leader of the West African Province. The dispute between the two organisations escalated into an armed confrontation. It resulted in the death of Shekau in May 2021.

In subsection four, Stempień writes about the financing of Boko Haram's activities, and in subsection five about the ideological foundations

of the organisation. In the reviewer's opinion, it would have been better to swap them in places, and to weave into subsection five parts of the text from subsection three (*Organisational structure and authority*), a large part of which is also devoted to the ideological foundations of the organisation. The last subsection, on the other hand, deals with Boko Haram's media apparatus and propaganda.

Much better than the first two chapters is Part 3 of the monograph: *Victims of Boko Haram*. It is written in a clear and structured manner, and the various subsections are filled with interesting content. Noteworthy among others is the inclusion of information that in 2014, Boko Haram and the Islamic State were responsible for more than half of the fatalities in terrorist attacks. In the same year, however, the Nigerian organisation overtook the Islamic State in terms of fatalities. The ratio was 6644 to 6073 deaths. It is estimated that from its inception until the end of 2020 Boko Haram is responsible for the deaths of around 40 000 people, mostly civilians. Sexual violence by members of the organisation, to which the author devoted a separate subsection, was linked to the kidnapping of schoolgirls from schools and boarding schools. Women and girls were forced into marriages. They were also a reward for new fighters joining the ranks of the organisation. This phenomenon, which is so prevalent in the Islamic State within Iraq, came to prominence in April 2014, when Boko Haram abducted 276 schoolgirls aged between 12 and 17 from a school in the town of Chibok in Borno State, as described in a separate subsection. This incident provoked an international response, but was no exception. A few months later, jihadists kidnapped 300 schoolchildren and another 100 women and children in the town of Damasak, an incident that the media had already kept quiet about. The fact is that the kidnapping of the girls in Chibok made the eyes of the world look at Nigeria with concern. A 'Return our girls' campaign swept through social media, with even US First Lady Michelle Obama joining in. This was meant to put pressure on Nigerian forces. However, despite the promises of African politicians and the passage of eight years since that incident, the fate of more than 100 girls, now women, is unknown. Freedom was regained by those who managed to escape on their own. One of them, with a child, was found on 14 June 2022 by a squad of Nigerian armed forces patrolling near the village of Ngoshe in Borno State. Stempień reports that the total number of abductions during the conflict is not known, but it is estimated that between 500 and 2 000 women and children have been abducted since 2012. These estimates are,

however, highly underestimated, as according to Amnesty International, from early 2014 to April 2015 alone. Boko Haram has abducted at least 2,000 women and children. The women are used as sex slaves, kitchen helpers, as bargaining chips in negotiations to secure the release of prisoners and for terrorist attacks. It should be noted that the practice of kidnapping schoolchildren from schools and boarding schools is still being carried out by other bandit groups operating in the northern states of Nigeria, outside the area of Boko Haram activity. On 6 April 2022, the Nigerian authorities labelled these gangs as terrorist groups that deserve the same treatment as Boko Haram. President Muhammadu Buhari named two organisations: Yan Bindiga (Members of Bindiga) and Yan Ta'adda (Members of Ta'adda). They kidnap people for ransom.

The following five subsections characterise the major terrorist attacks from 2016 to 2020. Complementing the information on each year are clear tables listing terrorist attacks that killed more than 20 people, detailing the date, location and manner of the attack, as well as the number of fatalities. The final subsection looks at Boko Haram activity in 2020 and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the organisation's activities.

Chapter 4 is entitled *Military evolution*. Its separation as a separate section results in a duplication of information contained in the previous chapters. Avoiding these repetitions would have resulted in much ambiguity and fragmentation of the narrative structure. However, they detract from the scientific value of the book, although they certainly contribute to the reader's consolidation of knowledge. This remark applies in particular to subchapter one: *Political-military strategy*. In the reviewer's opinion, it would have been more beneficial to discuss the issues contained therein in subchapter one of chapter 2: *The origins and evolution of Boko Haram*. The same comment applies to subchapter two: *Methods and tools of action* and in part also the others. Thus, it can be concluded that the construction of the book has not been well thought out. However, it should be noted that the information contained in this section is of great cognitive value. They fully reveal Boko Haram's tactics and methods of operation, which in many cases may have been surprisingly innovative in relation to the Islamic State's strategy.

Women and children played a huge role in the carrying out of terrorist attacks by Boko Haram. Although the use of female suicide bombers by the Nigerian organisation was no novelty, the scale of this practice is unmatched by any other terrorist group. This is illustrated by the graph

on p. 130, which shows that Boko Haram women were responsible for as much as 48 per cent of suicide terrorist attacks worldwide from 1985 to 2018. This scale is even more appealing when one considers that the first suicide attack was carried out by Boko Haram in 2011.

Far more controversial is the use of children to carry out suicide attacks. In 2015, 44 children were forced to do so in Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad, compared to 'only' four the year before. The total number of suicide attacks in these three countries and in Niger carried out by Boko Haram and the Black Muslim Defenders Association rose from 32 in 2014 to 151 in 2015. To add to this striking statistic, it should be mentioned that 83 children, including 55 girls, were blown up between 1 January 2017 and 16 August 2017 alone. Most of them were less than 15 years old. To one of them, an infant was additionally attached with tape to distract the police. The terrorists usually attached an explosive device to the child and then left it in some crowded public place. The bomb was then detonated remotely. In several cases, the children managed to escape to police patrols, who removed the explosives from them and secured them. In March 2015, a teenage girl who managed to foil the bombing said she was one of the students kidnapped from the school in Chibok. Boko Haram is the first organisation in the world where a higher percentage of the attackers are children and women. Besides, the organisation's activities, like no other, have also had disastrous effects on education. Boko Haram has completely destroyed more than 900 schools and led to the closure of twice that number. More than 600 teachers and school staff were killed and 19 000 were forced to flee.

The fourth subsection discusses Boko Haram's links with other groups, including its relationship with the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb, as well as with the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (Arabic: Jama'at at-Tawhid wa al-Jihad fi Gharbi Ifrikija, known as MUJAO from the French name *Mouvement pour l'Unité et le Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest*), which was formed in Mali in October 2011 as a result of the secession of some fighters from Al-Qaeda. They were led by Muhammad Kheiru alias Abu Kumkum. In August 2013, MUJAO merged with the organisation *Katibat al-Mulassamin* (Masked Battalion), also known as *Muwakaun bi ad-Dima* (Signed in Blood), led by the notorious Mokhtar Belmokhtar, to form the organisation *Al-Murabitun* (Guardians).

In the fifth subsection, *Links to the Islamic State and the establishment of an African caliphate*, the author revisits the issue of the emergence

of the Islamic State's West African Province, listing, among other factors, factors that may lead to divisions within the jihadist movement, as was the case with Boko Haram. Since 2016, Boko Haram and the West African Province have engaged in a bloody, terrorist rivalry, committing increasingly vicious and senseless killings. The victims were ordinary residents of towns and villages. It seems that the religiously radicalised perpetrators killed them for entertainment because they believed they were acting in the name of Allah. It is Allah in their view who dispenses justice on Earth. For example, on 9 June 2016, the Boko Haram group murdered 81 people in Gubio. On the same day, a local faction of the Islamic State killed 69 villagers in Felo, in retaliation for the military's earlier thwarting of a cattle theft from the village. Both villages are located in Borno State in north-eastern Nigeria. Many more similar examples can be found. However, over time, the rivalry turned into an open conflict between these organisations, in which the Islamic State emerged victorious. A reading of this subsection leads one to conclude that one could merge some of the content it contains with Chapter 2, entitled *Methods and tools of action*. Such a remark is all the more justified as it is only here that the author defines the phenomenon of jihadism and writes about the jihad waged in the early 19th century by Usman dan Fodio and the Sultanate of Sokoto.

The last section characterises the activities of Boko Haram in Cameroon, Niger and Chad. It is worth noting that the borders of these countries and Nigeria converge on Lake Chad. On its shores, fishing villages were attacked, buildings burned, people killed and abducted. According to the author, there has been no attack carried out by Boko Haram in Chad in which at least 20 people were killed (p. 147). Meanwhile, Table 12 on p. 115, which lists terrorist attacks carried out by the organisation in the first half of 2020, with a death toll of more than 20 people under the date of 23 March, lists an attack on a military base in Chad in which 98 soldiers were killed. On page 114, the author devotes only two sentences to this incident. It deserves a little more coverage also because, when discussing human rights violations and war crimes on p. 170, she devotes a little more space to the deaths of 44 people who died in prison. They were arrested in March 2020 after the 'Wrath of Boma' operation. However, the author does not elaborate on this, so the reader is left in the dark as to which operation Stempień had in mind. The reviewer feels obliged to complete this thread.

On the night of 22-23 March 2020, jihadists attacked a Chadian army base in Boma located on an island in Lake Chad. The siege lasted about

seven hours. 98 soldiers of the Chadian army, considered the most battle-hardened in the Sahel zone, were killed and 47 wounded. The attackers also attacked arriving reinforcements. They destroyed 24 vehicles, including armoured cars, and captured large quantities of weaponry, which they loaded onto speedboats and fled to Nigeria. It was one of Boko Haram's most spectacular attacks, inflicting the single greatest casualties on Chad's army in the 21st century. Chadian President Idriss Déby arrived on the scene and announced a retaliatory operation codenamed 'Wrath of Boma'. It lasted from 31 March to 8 April. At the time, Chadian soldiers drove Boko Haram militants from islands in Lake Chad, destroyed its numerous bunkers and entered the Nigerian province of Borno, where they freed several Nigerian soldiers held by the terrorists in the village of Magumeri. It was reported that around 1 000 Islamic extremists were killed. Fifty-eight jihadists were arrested and taken to a prison in the capital N'Djamena. There they were placed in a single cell. They were denied food and water for three days. On 18 April, it was revealed that 44 prisoners were found dead. This was an extrajudicial execution carried out by Chadian security forces.

At the end of the chapter, the author draws the conclusion that, given the areas of Islamic State activity, attacks in Niger, Burkina Faso or Mali should be attributed to the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, while those in the Lake Chad region should be attributed to the Islamic State in the West African Province. However, this is a gross oversimplification, as part of Lake Chad belongs to Niger. Other terrorist organisations are also active in some of these states, and bandit groups have furthermore been organised in north-western Nigeria. The Diffa region in south-eastern Niger, on the border with Nigeria, was attacked by Nigerian armed groups that could not be identified. Attacks in the region were attributed to Boko Haram or the Islamic State. However, the author's prediction of the intensification of activities and militarisation of the Boko Haram faction subordinate to the Islamic State headquarters came true. In 2021, West Africa Province defeated the 'mother' faction of Boko Haram and took over a central role in the jihadist movement in Nigeria.

The final chapter, *Countering the expansion of Boko Haram*, consists of four subchapters. The first two deal with counter-terrorism activities by Nigeria's armed forces and allies. The author draws attention to the initial downplaying of Boko Haram's activities by the Federal Government of Nigeria, which led to the loss of control over three provinces - Borno, Yobe and Adamawa - and its ability to act as a security guarantor. The legal

basis for the fight against terrorism was supposed to be the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2011, but it was only two years later that a state of emergency was declared in the aforementioned states and President Goodluck Jonathan gave notice of an offensive against Boko Haram. It was conducted in a low-key manner. Successes in one place were accompanied by spectacular failures in others. Although it succeeded in pushing the militants out of some towns, the rural areas were under their control, not to mention the Sambisa forest and the mountainous region of Gwoza and the Mandara massif, where the organisation had deployed permanent bases that still function practically today, but were taken over by the West African Province in 2021. The central states of Nigeria, not excluding the capital Abuja, where the police headquarters was attacked, were threatened by terrorist attacks. The armed forces were accused of human rights violations, including numerous arrests of innocent people, torture and extrajudicial executions of real and alleged Boko Haram members. Pacifications of entire villages suspected of favouring the organisation were the order of the day. Many residents fled from the jihadists and the army.

Stempień gives figures for arrests and crimes committed by the armed forces. They also compromised with the abduction of 276 schoolgirls from a school in Chibok, mentioned earlier. The incident itself was not a challenge to the authority of the security forces, but the inability to find and recapture the abducted girls was. The next president, Muhammadu Buhari, a retired general who went into the 2015 elections with the slogan of eradicating the jihadist insurgency in the north-east of the country within one year, failed to deliver on his promise. Instead, civilian institutions teamed up with the army to form the Civilian Joint Task Force. Volunteers trained and armed by the army, however, suffered heavy losses in clashes with militants, although there were some victorious battles of anti-jihadist militias. The author writes about the initiatives of the international community in fighting Boko Haram, including the activities of the Multinational Joint Task Force, which brought together the military forces of Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad, supported by the US, France and the UK. What it did not mention were the mercenaries recruited by the South African security company Pilgrim Africa. The owners of Pilgrim offered the Nigerian government to come in early 2015 with their own troops, weapons, South African armoured vehicles and post-Soviet Mi-24 helicopters, piloted by experienced crews from Ukraine. According to the Nigerian press, the mercenaries, officially hired to train the government's military, have

been cushioning them in the war against the jihadists. They fought at night, equipped with state-of-the-art night-vision equipment. In the morning, they would retreat to bases, allowing themselves to be replaced as liberators by Nigerian soldiers. Nigerian authorities announced that they had recaptured about 40 villages from Boko Haram, but made no mention of mercenary assistance.

Subsection three addresses, among other things, the problem of deradicalisation of militants. The Nigerian authorities have for many years taken advantage of amnesties, leniency and agreements with various insurgent groups. In 2015, a controversial programme was created for 'repentant' lower-ranking Boko Haram deserters. A reintegration plan called Operation Safe Corridor, initiated by the army and facilitating desertion, was also launched. Other projects for the rehabilitation and reintegration of 'repentant' fighters and girls and women kidnapped by Boko Haram who have regained their freedom but have been excluded by their family or village community by having children with the fighters have also been launched.

Boko Haram's activities have led to a humanitarian crisis in Nigeria, to which the last subsection is devoted. This crisis has been compounded by, among other things, human rights violations and war crimes. The author provides statistics from Amnesty International's research and information contained in the Global Peace Index. In the context of documented war crimes, she mentions the deaths of 44 temporary detainees in N'Djamena prison. These were Boko Haram fighters captured by Chadian armed forces during the aforementioned Wrath of Boma operation. The terrorist activities of Boko Haram, the Islamic State and counter-terrorism operations have caused several million people to flee their homes and be displaced in north-eastern Nigeria and neighbouring countries. In many camps, displaced people have faced starvation and lack of access to hygiene and basic medical care. The scale of the destruction wrought by Boko Haram has been unimaginable, as satellite images have shown that many villages have been burnt to the ground. Their inhabitants were killed and those who survived fled or were displaced early. The crisis over Boko Haram's activities has been exacerbated by the security forces. Their operations to break up the jihadists often led to extrajudicial executions. The victims were captured militants or people suspected of belonging to the organisation. The military also destroyed villages that had coercively or voluntarily supported the extremists.

In conclusion, the author briefly summarised the issues raised in the book and presented her conclusions. She confirmed the hypothesis adopted in the introduction that the expansion of Boko Haram has significantly contributed to the deepening destabilisation of Nigeria. However, it is worth noting that this is the case in any country where major terrorist organisations operate. From African countries, by way of example, we can mention: Somali, Mozambique, Congo, Mali or Burkina Faso. Stempień stated, among other things, that as part of the research process, she was able to show the evolution of Boko Haram and to point out possible directions for the further activities of this organisation. As she rightly pointed out earlier, it has been dominated by the Islamic State in West Africa. In contrast, one cannot agree with the conclusion that the armed struggle against the jihadists is important but secondary, because (...) *the priority should be to 'invest' in the non-military aspects of the fight against the jihadists, i.e. deradicalisation, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. One of the main challenges will be to convince Nigerians to trust such initiatives.* In the reviewer's view, only military action against terrorist organisations and the physical elimination of leaders should be the priority, rather than "pushing jihadists out of occupied areas", as the author states. The experience of many countries shows that deradicalisation of Islamist militants yields little results. It is very difficult to verify whether a person has actually moderated his views and whether his repentance is sincere. It is also not easy to predict the subsequent behaviour of such people. Very often they only pretend to change their behaviour in order to divert the attention of the security services.

The French have openly admitted that they are helpless in the face of the radicalisation of Muslim youth. In 2017, the French Senate published a report on government programmes to deradicalise Muslims. It unequivocally stated that they had been a complete failure. Also in the opinion presented by the French prosecutor's office on the occasion of the announcement of the sentences for the attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015, there can be no illusions about the possibility of rehabilitation and deradicalisation of Islamic extremists. Fanatics rarely abandon their ideology during stay in prison. However, imprisonment is the only acceptable way to protect society from those who pit so-called divine justice against justice, and by murdering, inflict what they believe to be just punishments.

The reviewed publication is accompanied by photographs, maps, charts and tables. At the end of the book there is an extensive bibliography divided into: dictionaries and encyclopaedias, compact studies, articles, legal acts, netography. The monograph is supplemented by a list of illustrations and tables and indexes: of names and geographical names. Marta Sara Stempień's study is a valuable study of Boko Haram. In the text, the author of the review mentions, among other things, inaccuracies in the translation of some terms. However, these do not affect the content of the work. A bigger shortcoming, however, is starting a given thread in one section only to continue it in the next chapter. This forces the reader to return to the material already read in order to take a holistic view of the issue addressed, such as the history of Islam in Nigeria or the evolution of Boko Haram. Nevertheless, the reviewer strongly encourages the reader to read this publication, which is important from the point of view of the terrorist threat in Africa and illustrates difficulties and failures of counter-terrorism operations.

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