

2016/1/5: Boko Haram, or rather Islamic State in West Africa

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Whereas the military gains of terrain in Iraq and Syria by the caliphate of horrors "Islamic State" (IS) were getting wide media attention, the caliphate of the Nigerian Boko Haram ("occidental education/breeding/civilization are peccant/forbidden") which had been proclaimed in the late summer of 2014, and which is considered to have been renamed in "Islamic State in West Africa" or West-African Province („Wilayat Gharb Ifriqiyah") in the end of April 2015, got much less attention. For a short time only the Jihad militia with another self-nomer (from September 2010 onwards) „Jam'at Ahl al-Sunnah li Da'wah wa-l-Jihd" (in English: "Community of Sunnites for the Call to Islam and Jihad") was in the headlines. In April 2014 its fighters had kidnapped 276 Christian schoolgirls from a national girls' school in the town of Chibok. The attack of the editorial office of the satire magazine „Charlie Hebdo" in January 2015, controlled by Al Qaida from the Arabian peninsula, however, demonstrated again that one of the most violent and successful Jihad organisations still gets too little attention. While the international community as well as leading western politicians declared their solidarity with the victims of the attacks in Paris, only a few papers reported about the nearly contemporaneous attack of the towns of Baga and Doron Baga in the Borno State by the Nigerian Jihadists, where about 2.000 people lost their lives. Detailed satellite images show devastations of disastrous dimensions. To sum up it has to be stated that numerous challenges caused by Jihadism in Nigeria and others have been sparked off by initial (military) overreaction and inconsistent reactions of the state. The depicted political, economic, military, geographical and other enablers were either not at all or only extremely weakly tackled by the government. All told, one can conclude that the Boko Haram network will continue to be successful. The nominated President Muhammadu Buhari seems to be aware of the serious situation and tries to make the military successes permanent. One of his first measures was evacuating the military headquarters from Abuja to Maiduguri, into the "epicentre" of the operation. He promised to support the MJTF with 100 Mio. US\$, and the USA promised another 5 Mio. US\$ as well. Thus, the cooperation appears to improve. The replacement of the entire army management in the middle of July 2015 proves that Buhari intends to completely reorganise his armed forces. Additionally, the new commanders are supposed to intensify the cooperation with the armies of Chad and Niger. On the other hand, however, the Jihad troops display enormous resilience and are flexible as to tactics. As a result to the announcement of evacuating the military headquarters, the Jihadists attacked military and the civil population in Maiduguri. On 15th June suicide assassinations two took place in the capital of Chad. If the Jihadists enhance the pressure on the neighbouring states, they will be threatened by a "war on two fronts", and its result will be uncertain. The reinforcement of the IS in Libya makes one presume that the cross-border cooperation of the Jihadists is intensified. Thus, it is still too early to talk about a lasting success in the fight against Boko Haram & Co.

