

Boko Haram are not representing ISLAM

Boko Haram, created in 2002 in Maiduguri, the capital of the northeastern state of Borno, by Islamist cleric Mohammed Yusuf, who led a group of radical Islamist youth in the 1990s. The group then aimed to establish a fully Islamic state in Nigeria, including the implementation of criminal Sharia courts across the country. Yusuf was a trained Salafist (an adherent of a school of thought often associated with jihad), and was strongly influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah, a fourteenth-century legal scholar who preached Islamic fundamentalism and is an important figure for radical groups in the Middle East.

The sect calls itself Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad, or "people committed to the propagation of the jihad." It is widely known as Boko Haram, which is colloquially translated as "Western education is sin" for the groups' rejection of Western concepts such as evolution and the big bang theory. Since the group started its offensive, it has followed the doctrine that Western education is haram - prohibited and against the teachings of Islam. Targeting schools has become a Boko Haram trademark.

The movement was started by an Islamic cleric that is the only connection that one can establish of the group has with Islam. They are striking their own people to curb the spreading western culture especially the education that is being introduced in the region. Their aim has always been to establish Sharia law in the region but considering the recent actions of Boko Haram they aim to uproot the government and bring down the influenced organizations to dust. Mohammed Yusuf criticized northern Muslims for participating in what he saw as an illegitimate, non-Islamic state and preached a doctrine of withdrawal. But violent clashes between Christians and Muslims and harsh government treatment, including pervasive police brutality, encouraged the group to radicalize. Boko Haram's hundreds of followers, also called Yusuffiya, consist largely of impoverished northern Islamic students and clerics, as well as professionals, many of whom are unemployed.

The organization is not religious but believes in fostering fear in the minds of the people of the Nigeria and the world eventually. The group has split into two factions: one that is focused on local grumble and another that is seeking regional expansion. Boko haram has shown evidentiary links with Al-Qaeda. Before the UN bombing in August 2011, the Nigerian government started to look at solutions similar to its quelling of unrest in the Niger Delta, including negotiation and amnesty. But experts say such a solution is unlikely for a group like Boko Haram, because its grievances are more diverse and less material than others. The lack of clear leadership of Boko Haram also hindered peace talks.

Boko haram that has maintained its view of abolishing western or secular education kidnapped 270 girls as a sign of protest of the same. The group is more inclined towards spreading terrorism than establishing an Islamic state. The group has been targeting the Christians in the region for the past that supported western education. Boko Haram attacks have claimed thousands of lives in Nigeria and other parts. It has also carried attacks on Mosques claiming innocent lives. The apparent ideology of Boko Haram is not related to any religion but to terrorize people.

The philosophy and ideology of Boko Haram is strange to Islam. Boko Haram's activities are alien to the teachings of Islam as brought and taught by the Prophet Muhammad. Many eminent Islamic leaders have condemned the acts carried out by Boko Haram in killing innocent people and doing so under the name of Islam. No religious leaders have accepted Boko Haram as an Islamist group as the only connection between them is of the founder. They have targeted Muslims and Christians they have attacked people beyond religion. The Prophet emphasized the importance of education be it Islamic education or western education as an obligation on all Muslims which they must learn from the cradle to the grave. If Boko Haram practices Islam why would they deter education in the generations?

Another ideology which Boko Haram is said to have stood for is to force the religion of Islam on everyone. This ideology is equally contrary to the basic teachings of Islam as preached by the prophet of Islam wherein it is clearly stated that there is no compulsion in religion and that the truth is clearly distinct from the falsehood. If the philosophy of Boko Haram is to impose Islam on everyone, they must be made to understand that their criminal task is for something else and not that of Islam because Islam allows freedom of worship and that is to say everyone is entitled to his or her religion.

The colossal group of about 1.8 billion Muslims on earth today, and a handful of twisted extremists have hijacked the whole faith, steering the public discourse on Islam today. Every inhumane and ghastly crime they perpetrate leaves a mark on the face of Islam, spread across the international stage in global headlines for all to see, "Boko Haram--Islamic Militants." That's how they're described and viewed.

Muslims around the world having been saying for the past as they have both deplored Boko Haram's savagery and stated that Boko Haram's actions are in no way sanctioned or supported by Islamic principles. Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, chairman of the Cordoba Initiative, added that these militants use the "banner of Islam" to further their own political agenda with zero regard for the principles of the faith. He further added "These terrorists use the name of Islam to support their political agenda because it's a powerful, emotional tool to recruit and inspire followers." These terrorists slaughter more Muslims than people of any other faith—by far. A State Department (2013) report found that more than 90 percent of the victims of these types of terrorists have been Muslims.

Boko Haram represents no religion they are radical terrorists and interested in manifesting fear amongst the members of its state. The members of Boko Haram certainly consider themselves Muslims but their actions make them traitors to their faith. They should be moreover referred as criminals or terrorists instead of being termed as an "Islamist Group". Nigeria is an incredibly resilient nation. It has experienced civil war, religious extremism, ethnic violence and several other crises since independence from Britain in 1960. The international agencies now should not ignore the condition and take necessary steps to curb the terrorist acts going on.