



**One Hundred Twelfth Congress**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Homeland Security**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 13, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Clinton  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, Northwest  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton,

We write to you today to urge the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism to initiate an investigation and compile an administrative record in order to determine whether Nigerian Islamist sect Boko Haram should be designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in accordance with Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), as amended. We are deeply concerned about Boko Haram and its growing involvement in terror attacks against innocent civilians and international organizations in Nigeria and its growing operational connections to al-Qaeda and its worldwide affiliates.

On August 26, 2011 a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) was detonated outside the United Nations (UN) headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria killing 23 people and injuring dozens more. The bombing was the deadliest attack directed against UN personnel since the truck bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad in 2003 that killed 22 people.

Responsibility for the bombing was quickly claimed by Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, better known as the shadowy Islamist insurgent group Boko Haram. Until this brutal operation, most of the group's attacks had been confined to the remote northeastern section of Nigeria on the threshold of the Sahara desert. In that area, the Nigerian government has been subjected to near daily bomb and gun attacks at the hands of Boko Haram, which have resulted in the deaths of more than 150 people already this year.

Until now it appeared that Boko Haram was engaged in a domestic terror campaign aimed at installing strict Islamic law throughout Nigeria. However, the UN attack marks a significant escalation of Boko Haram's intent and capability and may indicate that the group is increasingly adopting the methods and goals of global jihadi terrorists. According to a recent report in the *New York Times*, in the past two years Boko Haram has met and trained with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and has begun waging an international propaganda campaign that includes conference calls with reporters — another indicator of its growing sophistication and goal of recognition outside Nigeria as a transnational terrorist organization.

U.S. military officials have expressed increasing concern about links between Boko Haram and established Islamist terrorist groups operating in the region. U.S. Army General Carter Ham,

Commander of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) told the *Associated Press* on April 17<sup>th</sup> that multiple unnamed sources indicated that Boko Haram had made contact with AQIM operatives and with the Somali terrorist group al-Shabaab: "I think it would be the most dangerous thing to happen not only to the Africans, but to us as well. What is most worrying at present is, at least in my view, a clearly stated intent by Boko Haram and by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb to coordinate and synchronize their efforts." A partnership between Boko Haram, AQIM and al-Shabaab would mean the group's reach would extend thousands of miles across the African continent and widen its operating environment and target set.

In addition to the terror activities engaged in by Boko Haram in Nigeria and the group's operational relationships with two other State Department designated FTOs, Boko Haram also poses an economic risk to the United States. Nigeria is the fourth-largest exporter of oil to the United States, accounting for roughly 8% of U.S. oil imports. Boko Haram has attacked Nigerian oil facilities in the past and a sustained threat to the ability of Nigeria to guarantee that oil supply would have a highly negative effect on both countries' economies and the global economic recovery. The economic interests of our constituents would undoubtedly be affected by a stop or decrease in the supply of oil from Nigeria.

According to open source reporting, agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) are in Abuja assisting Nigerian officials in the investigation. As such, we believe the FBI, and all other agencies in the United States Intelligence Community, must have all the available tools necessary to address this emerging terror group in its nascent stage before it metastasizes into a group capable of threatening the United States, such as al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Designating Boko Haram a Foreign Terrorist Organization will help ensure that happens. Joy Ogwu, Nigeria's Ambassador to the United Nations, called the attack a "transnational crime" and has urged renewed efforts to fight terrorism in her country. FTO designations by the State Department play a critical role in our ability to fight terrorist groups and are an effective means of curtailing support for terrorist activities. We believe it is absolutely crucial that an administrative record on Boko Haram be initiated immediately to determine whether FTO designation is warranted.

We look forward to working with you on this emerging terrorist threat to U.S. homeland security and U.S. interests abroad. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at 202.226.8417

Sincerely,



PATRICK L. MEEHAN  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence



JACKIE SPEIER  
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Eric Holder, Attorney General of the United States  
The Honorable Timothy Geithner, Secretary of the Treasury  
The Honorable Robert S. Mueller III, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation