Twitter Thread by David Hundeyin



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When I worked on a report on the origins of violence in the north last year was when I lost all sympathy. They actively incubated a monster that is beyond being tamed now.

I'm going to reveal something in this thread that I guarantee most of you have never heard of before.

Are you aware that those in charge of northern Nigeria's political Islam establishment spent decades pacifying their horrendously poor constituents by promising them the land belonging to northern Christians once Sharia was implemented?

Let me give you a background.

Due to monogamous marriage which limits their population expansion, northern Christian land inheritance is largely linear, i.e the number of descendants fighting to inherit land from the father is limited, which gives them economic leverage in an area where land is the only asset

Northern muslims on the other hand, have extremely diluted inheritance because the patriarch can have 4 wives and 17 children, 8 of whom might be male. Simply put, there is not enough land to go round which leads to extreme wealth disparity within Muslim areas.

This is why Sharia was championed by northern political actors and enthusiastically welcomed by northern proles - it was a bone for politicians like Yerima to throw to the masses, and the masses genuinely believed that land belonging to the 'arne' would be distributed to them.

Sharia came, and the promised expropriation and redistribution didn't materialise.

Bear in mind that young northern men, contrary to popular belief, actually want more from life than poverty and ruin. The promise of taking over arne property was a REAL source of hope for them.

Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, a charismatic preacher in Maiduguri saw this groundswell of resentment and took advantage of it, cultivating his Salafist group into a political force in Borno state.

Boko Haram as at 2007 actually nominated a commissioner to the Borno state cabinet.

The disagreement came when Governor Ali Modu Sheriff refused to follow through on his (politically expedient) promises to Boko Haram, including seizing land belonging to arne and distributing it to economically disenfranchised young Muslim men.

Yusuf went rogue and in July 2009, the Nigeria Police Force got involved the only way it knows how to, extrajudicially executing him in full view of everybody outside the Maiduguri police HQ.

Yusuf's deputy, Abubakar Shekau then took over.

And the rest is history.

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Some governors embraced Sharia; others moved reluctantly.[37] In Borno State, where Maiduguri is the capital, Governor Mala Kachalla hesitated on Sharia implementation, which contributed to his defeat in the 2003 elections.[38] Intra-Muslim contestation over Sharia allowed Salafis to forge new political alliances—in Yusuf's case, a partnership with Borno's new Governor Ali Modu Sheriff. Radicals like Yusuf also argued that Sharia codes were insufficient, and that only a fully Islamic system could safeguard public morality. Yusuf served on Kachalla's Sharia implementation committee, but later expressed disgust with it.[39] Yusuf's disciple Buji Foi became Sheriff's Commissioner of Religious Affairs, but Yusuf and Sheriff soon fell out.

Yusuf's career began to zigzag. In 2003, breakaway followers established a base, perhaps a jihadi training camp, near Kannama, Yobe. The Kannama group, which the media labeled the "Nigerian Taliban," clashed with villagers and police and was crushed in

In 2009, tensions between Yusuf and the authorities escalated into confrontations. In June, Boko Haram clashed with Sheriff's highway security unit, "Operation Flush." In a sermon, Yusuf denounced Sheriff and the Nigerian state.[43] In July, Boko Haram launched an uprising that touched five Northern states before authorities suppressed it. Over 1,100 people died, including Yusuf, who was killed while in police custody.[44]

In the aftermath of the 2009 revolt, Boko Haram became an underground military organization with a new official leader, Abubakar Shekau. Born in the late 1960s or early 1970s, Shekau preached alongside Yusuf.[45] Shekau has translated Yusuf's theological positions into simple slogans that present audiences with an all-or-nothing choice between Islam and democracy. He has been the face of Boko Haram's violent campaign against the Nigerian state, Muslim and Christian civilians, and Nigeria's neighbors.