



**NIGERIA ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ARABIC
AND ISLAMIC STUDIES (NATAIS)**

DERADICALISATION STRATEGIES OF ARABIC AND ISLAMIC STUDIES

36TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

OF
NIGERIA ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ARABIC AND
ISLAMIC STUDIES (NATAIS)

Held at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

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Abdul-Fatah K. Makinde, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief



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Deradicalisation – What Role for Islamic Studies?

Professor Is-haq O. Oloyede

قُلْ يٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَآبِ لَا تَغْلُواْ فِى دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ ٱلْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُواْ أَهْوَآءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّواْ
مِن قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّواْ كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّواْ عَنْ سَوَآءِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ ﴿٧٧﴾

Say: "O people of the Scripture! Exceed not in your religion the bounds (of what is proper), trespassing beyond the truth, nor follow the vain desires of people who went astray in times gone by- who misled many and strayed (themselves) from way (Q5:77).

"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." (UNESCO)

Ladies and gentlemen, whenever I receive invitations to participate in a conference and deliver either the keynote or what is sometimes referred to as the lead paper, I always seize such moments to ponder the whole enterprise known as scholarship. I always find myself pondering the necessity not only for this kind of gathering, this conference, that workshop or that seminar. I am always humbled that, such occasions like this, gesture to more solemn realities of our life than we are prepared to contemplate- that our gathering at conferences like this, which is no doubt, that of intellectuals and ornaments of the society, is ironically equally a gathering of men and women who are, from another perspective, somehow inferior even to the birds, the fishes and the trees in discharging basic normal routine. Whereas, our conurbation and congregation at occasions like this, are meant to pool ideas together on how we might solve urgent problems of life and answer pertinent questions of existence, ours is nonetheless inferior to that of birds who do not have to attend flight schools in order for them to fly; ours is inferior to rivers and the ocean which are not in need of colleges where they could learn how to flow; nor is it superior to the fishes in rivers and oceans which are not in need of swimming conferences. What a creature humans are; what assemblage this is – they always organize conferences and seminars in order to solve problems they have created by themselves and for themselves; we are all gathered here simply because we are all affected by those who are infected with the virus of radicalization.

In other words, when the invitation to this conference got to me and I discovered that the theme reads "deradicalization- the role of Islamic studies", I immediately found myself in a labyrinth-in the circle and spiral of questions and ideas where my status and stature, where my profession and specialization becomes both the problem and the solution. Ladies and gentlemen, the theme of this year's conference is like a key that opens the Pandora box. The subject of interest is deradicalization;

the object of interests are Muslim youth across climes and times while the field of interest is Islamic studies. But the urgent question the Islamophobic, the anti-Islam and anti-Muslim critic would ask is this- how can Islamic studies be the solution to the problem it foisted on to the world in the first instance? How could we imagine a solution from the 'house' of Islam to the problem of radicalization since Islam in itself, they would argue, is the problem, or the source of the problem?

While you are pondering the above, let me complicate the setting with the other question, the question that concerns you and me - is it not because we have failed to reach out to the larger society with our learning and scholarship that others have succeeded in radicalising the youth? Put differently, is radicalization not a product of failure of professors and doctorate degree holders in Islamic studies whose learning and scholarship are of little value and not impactful enough as to prevent the emergence of violent elements within Muslim communities in parts of Nigeria; elements who hold that the perpetration of unwarranted violence and the destruction of lives and property are the best means of attaining martyrdom? Does it not crackle your minds and rattle your intellection that that an *ibtidaiyyah* or *idaadiyyah* certificate holder should command more followers and respect among the mass of Muslim faithfuls than a scholar in the field who is celebrated all over the world for his erudition?

Ladies and gentlemen, the above questions and many more beckoned to me and engaged my attention the moment I received invitation to this conference. In other words, I am acutely aware that this conference is holding at a time, pursuant to issues that are latent in the above questions, when Islam and Muslims continue to be in the eye of the storm. Ladies and gentlemen, aside from the image of Muslims suffering from natural disasters and civil wars that we see on a daily basis in the electronic media, Islam continues to enjoy negative patronage of the fifth realm of the estate, the media, both local and international. The latter continues to give prime-time-coverage to those who hide under the canopy of Islam and deploy verses of the Qur'ān as justification for their egregious and atrocious acts of violence. In fact, it has become fashionable to hear broadcast journalists, public analysts and over-night 'consultants' on Islam and Muslim affairs refer to these groups as "Islamic" terrorists. Any attempt to contest this narrative and rhetoric often flies in the face when it is juxtaposed with the self-label which some of these groups carry about town. It is fast becoming a lost battle for well-meaning scholars and ordinary Muslims to insist that no two types of Islam exist; that there can be no division of Islam into 'Tolerant' Islam and 'Violent' Islam; that it is puerile to divide Muslims into 'moderate' Muslims and 'extremist' Muslims.

Thus, the theme of this year's conference is very apposite indeed. Equally worthy of gratitude, is your invitation to me to deliver this lead paper. I should therefore be thankful to the organizers for the time and efforts they have put into making today's event a reality. I am extremely grateful to you for this invitation.

Let me proceed therefore with what this lecture hopes to achieve. I propose to offer insights into the dialectics in the whole idea of de-radicalization; I intend to give a

brief account of where we are now and why deradicalization has become a categorical imperative for the Ummah. I situate all of these against global streams in which struggle against insurgency has become good business. In closing, I offer some suggestions that may be worthy of consideration as we all struggle to rein in this hydra-headed problem known as radicalization.

Birth of Terror, Producing the Radicals, the "Shekaus"

Ladies and gentlemen, hardly is there a Muslim community anywhere in the world today that is free either of the incidences of radicalization or its impacts. In other words, to every Muslim community today, at least in Nigeria, its own radicals; to every mosque its own Shekau. But exactly what is radicalization and how do we make sense of the so-called Islamic radicalization?

Like all fetishized concepts in the contemporary period, the construct radicalization has produced at least three other constructs all of which take their referential framework from the former. In other words, no discourse about radicalization would be complete without reference to de-radicalization, anti-radicalization and counter-radicalization. I could even complicate the field further by adding under-radicalization and over-radicalization. The word radicalization refers to "the social and psychological process of increasing commitment to extremist political or religious ideology" [European Union, 2007]. It is 'a process characterized by increasing commitment to, and use of violent means and strategies in political conflicts. (Donatella Della Porta and Gary LaFree, START. 2012). Clutterbuck seems to have given more clarity on the subject when he says:

"radicalization" can be used to describe a process whereby individuals (and even groups) develop, over time, a mindset that can—under the right circumstances and opportunities—increase the risk that he or she will engage in violent extremism or terrorism. ... (it) is understood to be a complex, dynamic, and non-linear process of change in the mindset of an individual that leads over time to a significant alteration in world-view, perception of external events, and his/her internal understanding of them. As these changes occur, they can be reflected in the individual's behavior, which can ultimately—in certain individuals—escalate to the point of engaging in violence, violent extremism, or terrorism. (Lindsay Clutterbuck, 2015)

It is clear from the above that radicalization is a process where groups or individuals hold contrasting opinions on issues in whose case they believe their contrasting opinions ought to be established in place of the already existing norm. In addition, few of such individuals believe their opinions could only be established through violent means and methods in which case their radicalization reflects violence. Clutterbuck once again contributed to the discourse when he asserts:

...not all individuals who are radicalized go on to take part in terrorist attacks or become violent extremists. They may ultimately hold political, ideological, or religious views with which many others may

disagree, perhaps to the point of finding them distasteful or even unacceptable. However, they are entitled to hold these views, and indeed—as long as they act lawfully—to express them as well. As long as this remains the extent of their "radicalism," there is a well-founded expectation that under normal circumstances, Western states will not take actions against them, coercive or otherwise. (ibid)

While Abubakar Shekau has achieved renown, a certain Abu-ibaji has become popular in southwest Nigeria. Whereas the necessity for the establishment of the so-called 'Islamic' state or caliphate circumscribed the formation of the Jamā'at Ahl - Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād, commonly known as Boko Haram, that of Abu Ibeji in Ibadan, Southwest Nigeria, was simply based on an overarching reading of Islamic history and a very slippery interpretation of the construct-Salafiyyah. Whereas the Boko Haram sought to achieve its aims and objectives through resort to force, violence, kidnap and destruction of lives and property, the Salafi trend in Yorubaland has largely remained pacifist but destructive of such fundamental values in Islam as respect for constituted authorities, adoration of parents, unity of the *Ummah* etc. In other words, no matter where they are located, these radicals and radicalizing elements usually deploy same method of recruitment into their operation. Their *modus operandi* are usually the same. They rely on deceit, promise of paradise for the new-recruits, demonization and *takfir* of everybody else except themselves. All radical groups in our world today reject what they erroneously refer to as 'Western education'. Little do they know that the West could not have reached the heights it has reached today were it not for Islamic civilization.

In other words, radicalization is an effect. The question therefore arises- what are its causes? Analyses and studies of the phenomenon at the global level have led to the production of a highly eclectic corpora of publications in which various reasons for the trend have been adduced. Thus scholars have posited that among many factors or conditions that account for radicalization relative deprivation (Gurr, 1970), Western occupations and support for oppressive regimes particularly in Muslim lands (e.g., Pape, 2006) could be suggested. Identity politics, (Choudhury, 2007), poor political and socio-economic integration (Buijs, Demant & Hamdy, 2006) and feelings of humiliation on the part of the radicalized (Stern 1999, 2003;9 Juergensmeyer, 2000; Richardson, 2006) have also been identified as causes of the phenomenon.

But my little knowledge of Arabic and Islamic studies and my experience as an expert in global cultural politics in the last four decades, compel a deeper contemplation of the whole idea of radicalization. This becomes all the more urgent whenever reference is made by non-Muslim critics and scholars of global terrorism to, in their opinion, 'Islamic' radicalization. I always ask- what is Islamic in Islamic radicalization. What is Islamic in Islamic extremism? What is Islamic in the so-called Islamic terrorism? You would begin to appreciate the global politics behind these labels when you realize that over eighty percent of acts of violence and unwanton destruction of lives and properties all around the world are actually being perpetrated by non-Muslim state and non-state agents across the world. You would

understand the dynamics in global politics the more as soon as you come face to face with the fact that in Uganda, in Central African Republic, in Philippines, even in Israel the religion of perpetrators of evil and violence is usually not invoked as labels or warrants for the former. In other words, hardly would you hear of Christian radicalization; hardly would you hear of Christian terrorism, hardly would a mention ever be made of Christian extremism even at a time Christians are engaged in acts of terror and violence all around the world. Terrorism and radicalization experts would never ever hold Christianity responsible for the foibles and failures of the Christian. On the contrary, Islam is usually pleaded as reason whenever a Muslim decides to go gaga. Our religion is always held responsible for our iniquities.

Now, if the import of the above discussion is the necessity to free Islam from the phenomenon of radicalization or terrorism, then we must endeavour, as experts in Arabic and Islamic studies, to locate the reasons why young Muslims fall into this error. One of such therefore might be acute lack of knowledge; or acute ignorance that masquerades under knowledge and learning. From the northeast to the southwest, it can hardly be controverted that leaders of these radicalized groups have less than thorough knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, which they often plead as basis for their atrocities. The group's familiarity with the intricacies involved in the study and understanding of *Hadīth* and *Usūl al-Fiqh* are equally largely below par. Since they do not have the necessary grounding in Islamic law, leaders of these groups do not adhere to the rules of deducing juridical decisions nor do they combine the religious directives together. Rather, they substitute the true intent of a text with an erroneous one; they take the Qur'ān and *ahādīth* out of their contexts and delink same from their references.

But that again might not be as fundamental as the abundance of independent preachers in our communities today; those I would also refer to as *da'wah* workers without 'visas', *da'wah* workers without *ijāzah*. These groups of young men have seized the *da'wah* space by the jugular. They issue *fatwa* at will; they appoint and address themselves as *Imām* at will; they call themselves *Shaykhs*; they take over the responsibilities of parents in marrying out their daughters; they forbid education to Muslim girls; they distribute paradise to their followers and consign everyone else to hell as if they are custodians of paradise and hell.

Again, upon greater reflection, I discovered that the trend I pictured above reflects a general and deeper malaise in our society today. Ours is now a society where people fraudulently claim what they are not and no questions are asked. People call themselves Drs today without passing through any university and nobody is arraigned in courts of law for impersonation; there are individuals in our cities today who have not or have never been to the four walls of the university who now refer to themselves as professors. Yet no question is being asked. Whenever a young boy wakes up and begins to refer to himself as *Shaykh* and we fail to stop dishonesty, we are unwittingly courting radicalization.

Again, the above may not be as fundamental as the proliferation of sects and societies within the *Ummah*. Like every other thing in our society today, formation of societies and organizations have become free for all. Every passing day, new Muslim organizations and groups are being registered. As Christians go about with their campaign to plant a church on every street in Nigeria, some Muslim youths are not tiring in forming new groups and associations. But we all know that Islam is unlike Christianity in terms of ethical requirements of establishing places of worship.

Yet, dear eminent colleagues, our pursuit of factors that often lead to radicalization would be incomplete if we fail to account for what terrorism and deradicalization experts refer to as the "N" factor. According to Kruglanski and others the 'need' factor for radicalization lies in the argument that "our beliefs are based on our motives. We do not necessarily see what is out there. Often we see what we want to see and believe what we want to believe. Valid arguments, however "strong," are not necessarily convincing if they run counter to our needs. The need to hold radical attitudes is typically based on the need to feel significant, that one matters, that one is deserving of respect". Thus one probable driver for radicalization is not exclusively enthusiasm for the faith or lack of adequate knowledge of what the religion demands of its adherents but the empty urge to be, to mean, to emerge; the quest for "personal significance" (Kruglanski et al, 2014), even if that pushes him to violence.

In other words, the Arabs did not just come up with the axiom which says 'fariq tasud'- create disunity, you will become popular. The axiom emerged out of experience. Thus, it is common nowadays for young men who want to become popular to embarrass those who are older than their fathers. This partly explains why leaders of these radicalized groups find pleasure impugning authority and profaning the sacred. What better way to satisfy the atrocious 'need' to be popular, even in hell, than a son who declared that the Islam of his father is inferior to his; than a man who declared that he, not the Sultan, is more suitable for the position of the Sultanate? The 'need' to be known, to be reckoned with as the leader of the *Ummah*, the Imām; the need to live a life of comfort, to have beautiful women as consorts, are usually an unaccounted factor for radicalization. Not a few British citizens left the UK to join ISIS when the group first established its reign of terror in-between Iraq and Syria; they were promised what UK could not provide or guarantee- a paradise here on earth. Thus, they plunged headlong into their self-destruction; they destroyed cities in order to inherit villages.

Yet there were others who became radicalized not by choice but by chance. They found themselves in the hands of the workers of the network, the network of radicalization. As I mentioned above, they were told stories of the 'paradise' already founded by the terror states here on earth. Such is the story of the young boy who left the comforts of his parent's home in Lagos sometime in 2015. He told his father he was going for *'Itikāf*. It was not the first time he would go out all alone. The young boy had demonstrated an uncanny competence and flair for integrity. His words was his watch. Thus there was no way his parents would know they would

not be seeing him soon, and probably never again. Days after that year's Ramadan, days which had become elongated for his parents because of the feelings of grief and agony on the disappearance of the beloved child, his father received a call that his son had gone to Syria to join the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL). Nobody knew he had fallen into the trap set up by the terror networks for innocent young Muslims. Nobody knew his journey to the land of no return had already been finalized. The above represents some of the reasons we are confronted by the challenges of radicalization today. The identified causes are internal to Muslims, we are aware of external causes which include planned strategies by some non-Muslims to infiltrate Islam and misrepresent it. This has been a subject of another publication of mine. (Oloyede, I.O. 2014). Now what have been its effects?

Effects of Radicalization

It should be evident from the above that nothing positive results from radicalization, neither for the radicalized nor for the Muslim *Ummah*. Or could this be positive- the negative representation of Islam and Muslims in local and international media; or the widening geography of Islamophobia which often occur each time acts of insurgency are perpetrated by these radicalized elements? Whenever a Muslim is arrested for doing what Islam forbids, every other Muslim becomes criminals. Muslim women in hijab become subject of attacks. Your beard and mine become the butt of flaks and criticisms.

Radicalisation has drawn Muslims backward in the field of education as it has done in the field of politics. For example, education has now been divided into two- Eastern and Western. I have not read of an instance in Islamic history where knowledge could validly be racialized or dichotomized. What I know is this- that Allah is the owner of the east and the west; that when the Almighty instructed the Prophet to read- Iqra- what to be read had no boundaries; what he was asked to read is the whole world. Thus, notion of an education that is Western and the other Eastern is therefore slippery and invalid. What a Muslim is required to do is follow the Qur'an whenever he comes across new knowledge. Allah teaches us to pray to Him thus:

لَهُمْ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ مِّنَ النَّارِ وَمِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ يُخَوِّفُ إِلَهُ عِبَادِهِ ۖ

يَعْبَادِ فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ أَجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ أَن يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ ﴿٦٧﴾

But those who have avoided Taghut, lest they worship it, and turned back to Allah - for them are good tidings. So give good tidings to my servants;

Those who listen to the speech and follow the best of it; those are the ones that Allah has guided, and those are people of understanding (Q39: 16-17).

But what radicalization does is to prevent Muslim youth from listening to the speech let alone have the opportunity to take the best of it. Those undergoing radicalization are usually not given the option to think, to question, to ponder. In the underground of radicalization, it is not only education that is *haram*, politics and political participation are equally forbidden. Whenever a group declares a Muslim a *Mushrik* just because he accepted an offer to participate in governance, the *fitnah* foretold by the Prophet enters into reality.

Ladies and gentlemen, radicalization also does one other thing to the *Ummah*- it pulls it back into the abyss of *Jahiliyyah* through sexual objectification of Muslim women; through the erosion of their right to freedom of choice, the right to affirm their agency and subjectivity. When a Muslim woman is told to make a choice between her *niqāb* and her education by her husband, discerning minds would know that the *Ummah* is going down the abyss.

Apart from making that which is lawful unlawful, radicalization also creates *wājib* out of *mandub*- its makes compulsory what Islamic law and jurisprudence ordinarily deems to be permissible. Or how else might we make sense of the notion held by the radicalized groups that the usage of cutlery is an innovation (*bid'ah*) at this age, in the 21st century; that the usage of cutlery would prevent Muslims from practicing the *Sunnah* of licking their fingers after meals. I ask- does the *Sunnah* require the licking of fingers even after taking a meal consisting of rice and beans for example? Are cutlery not part of the blessings of the Almighty to humanity referenced in Q57:25?

Ladies and gentlemen, let me round-off this section with this - hardly could there be disagreement that no other acts of violence has led to the death of innocent Nigerians and the destruction of properties than the on-going insurgency in parts of the country. According to Governor Kashim Shetimah of Borno State who speaks on this situation. He says:

The Boko Haram insurgency has led to deaths of almost 100,000 persons, going by the estimates of our community leaders over the years. Two million, one hundred and fourteen thousand (2,114,000) persons have become internally displaced as at December of 2016; with five hundred and thirty seven thousand, eight hundred and fifteen (537,815) in separate camps; 158,201 are at official camps that consists of six centres with two transit camps at Muna and Customs House, both in Maiduguri. There are 379,614 IDP'S at 15 satellite camps comprising Ngala, Monguno, Bama, Banki, Pulka, Gwoza, Sabon Gari and other

locations in the State. 73,404 persons were forced to become refugees in neighbouring countries with Niger having 11,402 and Cameroon having 62,002.

Governor Shetima says further:

We have an official record of 52,311 orphans who are separated and unaccompanied. We have 54,911 widows who have lost their husbands to the insurgency and about 9,012 have returned back to various communities of Ngala, Monguno, Damboa, Gwoza and Dikwa, (Premium Times Saturday, September 1, 2018).

As at the 1st of September 2018, a total of thirty Nigeria soldiers were said to have lost their lives in the seemingly unending war of attrition between the latter and the Boko Haram insurgents in the north east. In other words, after close to a decade of the so-called global war on terror, the need to change strategy in countering violent extremism is now being felt more than ever before. The necessity to explore ways and means to counteract incidences of radicalization through de-radicalization has of recent gained traction. It is to the latter, I now turn my attention.

De-Radicalisation- Taming Rogue Shaykhs and their Followers

Is deradicalization possible? If yes, how might experts in Islamic studies become critical stakeholders in the field? Jessica Stern asked a different question about a decade ago. She said: "Is it possible to deradicalize terrorists and their potential recruits? (J. Stern 2010). While affirming the possibility of radicalized elements being weaned of their addiction, she cited Saudi Arabia which has had a highly successful deradicalization programme in place since 2004 as example. Previously, radicalized Saudi youths who have had stints in the programme have been reintegrated back into the mainstream Saudi society much more successfully than ordinary criminals. Similar programmes have been launched by various governments in the Middle East, Europe and Southeast Asia.

But what is "deradicalization"? This refers to methods and techniques used to undermine and reverse a completed radicalization process, thereby, reducing the potential risk to society from terrorism. The notion of deradicalization would not be functional until the construct "counter-radicalization" is invoked. The latter describes methods often deployed to stop or control radicalization as it is occurring. This is different from "anti-radicalization" which describes methods to deter and prevent radicalization from occurring in the first place. Thus, whatever suggestions an august gathering like this would want to propose to combat radicalization, such must show fidelity to the triad of concepts hinted at in this presentation. Thus, the suggestions I offered below on de-radicalization are relevant to both counter-radicalization and anti-radicalization. Since this is all about Islamic studies' perspective, I proceed by reminding you all of an instance in Islamic history.

The *Khawārij* as a Model

The *Khawārij* (also Kharijites) refers to the first group in Islamic history that became radicalized. Theirs was a group of soldiers that seceded from the camp of

the then *Khalīfah* of the Muslim *Ummah*, Ali bn Abī Tālib. Their secession was as a result of their dissatisfaction with the decision of Ali to accept arbitration on the disagreement between him and Mu'awiyah who had set himself up as a rival to the *Khalīfah*. The *Khawārij* later decamped from Ali's army chanting 'lā-hukmu ilā lillāh' – 'only Allah can arbitrate'. It was not long thereafter that the group became a fanatical one and started killing and assassinating Muslims who did not subscribe to their creed. They tagged Ali bn Abī Tālib, the then Muslims' leader as a *Kāfir* (unbeliever) and concluded that he had strayed from the path of Islam by accepting arbitration.

What lessons are in the above for us? It includes the fact that radicalization is usually the first step to violent extremism and terrorism; that all radicalized groups that became violent usually see their fellow Muslim brethren as their number one enemies. Not willing to fight against his fellow Muslims, Ali decided to send a mediator to the group. He sent Abdullah bn Abbas to them. Ibn Abbas therefore asked for the points of reservations that they had against Ali. They listed three issues. These were:

- That the *Khalīfah* accepted human arbitration on Mu'awiyah's mutiny. This according to the group was against Qur'ān 6:57. This portion of the Qur'ān says it is only Allah that can arbitrate over Muslims' affairs.
- That the *Khalīfah* did not take the womenfolk of his opponents captives or take any booty in the just concluded battle of Siffin
- And that he agreed that the title *Amīr-ul- Muminīn* be removed from his name while the arbitration document was being prepared.

Having listened to their grievances against the *Khalīfah*, Ibn Abbas went ahead to counter them one by one. He said:

- That Qur'ān 5:95 and 4:35 authorize human arbitration
- That the battle that the *Khawārij* referred to was fought between two Muslim parties and one in which 'Ā'ishah, the wife of the Prophet, was in the opposition. Who among the *Sahabah* dare take the wife of the Prophet as a captive, Ibn Abbas wondered.
- That the Prophet himself erased his honorific title, 'messenger of Allah' during the treaty of Hudaibiyyah when the Quraysh unbelievers demanded that such a phrase should be erased from their pact with the Muslims. The decision to remove messenger of Allah from the treaty of Hudaibiyyah, Ibn Abbas argued further, did not change the fact that the Prophet was Allah's messenger.

By Allah's will, Ibn Abbas's argument was sound enough that nothing less than two thousand soldiers of the *Khawārij* recanted and retracted their stance against Ali b. Abī Tālib. This incident represents an archetype in Islamic history even as it is highly useful for the three different processes mentioned above namely deradicalization, counter-radicalization and anti-radicalization. The incident

features elements that are necessary in any de-radicalization, counter-radicalization and anti-radicalization. Such include dialogue with the radicalized, knowledge of Islam (history, law and Jurisprudence), eloquence of deradicalization/counter-radicalization experts, knowledge (of valences that feed radicalization), empathy (while interfacing with the radicalized) and firm refutation (of the whole idea of radicalization). For example, Ibn Abbas' intervention was laced with all the elements mentioned here. Consider his introductory statement below:

I have come to you from the Companions of the Prophet, the *Muhājirūn* and the *Ansār*, and from the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, among whom the Qur'ān was revealed and who have more knowledge of its interpretation than you. None of them is among you, so I need to convey to you what they are saying and to convey to them what you are saying.

This shows a de-radicalization expert who has knowledge not only of actors in the field of radicalization but also of the tools by which the deradicalization process could be achieved.

The following activities may equally be useful in the three processes of deradicalization, **"counter-radicalization"** and **"anti-radicalization"**. These may include:

- i. creation of a platform where consensus on the evil effects of terrorism and violent extremism on the image of Islam and the Muslims could be built particularly among the youths;
- ii. creation of a platform for a re-interpretation of discourses of violence vis-a-vis the current ones in circulation among the insurgent groups;
- iii. increase the capacities of the participants in confronting the challenges of violent extremism today;
- iv. provide a platform where experiences in radicalization and anti-radicalization could be shared leveraged upon;
- v. provide an opportunity to develop near-accurate data on existing mosques and Muslim organizations in the country;
- vi. attend to push factors for radicalization such as lack of good governance;
- vii. introduce vocational training programmes and create job opportunities for the youths;
- viii. Launch social security programmes that would assist youth fulfill personal ambitions including that of getting married-ISIS lured UK citizens to Iraq based on, among others, promise of beautiful women and life in a paradise. In other words, providing radicalized youths with alternative means to personal significance may mitigate their inclination to attain it via violent extremism; it may "soften" their resistance to moderate theological arguments. It may open extremists' minds to the message that the "sacred

- values" of Islam (Ginges & Atran, 2009), far from being served by violent jihad, are actually trampled and desecrated by radicalism and terrorism;
- ix. Sponsor and fund the establishment of social networks and circles where the youth could share and interact with counsellors and others and share 'realities' of life with them. This is in recognition of the fact that radicalization occurs in a social context; it is shaped by the group dynamics of social interaction, the impact of family and friends and the charisma of influential leaders.
 - x. As experts in Islamic studies, we need to move out of the academy to make our learning more impactful; and
 - xi. Need for a well written "proposal by NATAIS on an in-depth study of Radicalisation in Nigeria". This will entail personal interaction with the arrested Boko haram members.

Conclusion

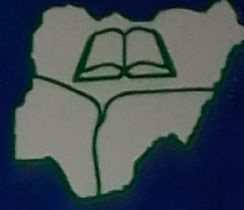
What I have tried to do in this presentation is complicate existing notions of radicalization. I have shown the politics that undergird global war on terror, the causes and effects of radicalization. I have equally endeavoured to show, while deploying tools from Islamic studies, the methodologies and approaches that may be more productive in the on-going efforts against radicalization. Perhaps the most engaging issue that we shall continue to ponder as experts in Arabic and Islamic Studies is how shall we make our field more impactful than it is presently particularly in the whole task of counter- and anti-radicalization. This is urgent and a never ending challenge. There has never been a time when the world has been free of radicals; we should not equally tire to rise up to show the true light of guidance whenever the world becomes challenged as it is presently with reference to the scourge.

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المؤتمر الوطني

السادس والثلاثون

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المنعقد بجامعة أحمد بلو، زاريا- ولاية كدونا

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