**RETHINKING OUR COUNTER INSURGENCY STRATEGY**

**TEXT OFF PRESS CONFERENCE ADDRESSED ON FRIDAY 23, AUGUST BY Y. Z, YA’U, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE UNFORTUNATE ATTACKS ON GUBIO AND MAGUMERI IN BORNO STATE**

I like to on behalf of the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) welcome you to this press conference onthe simultaneous and coordinated Attacks on Gubio and Magumeri Local Governments by Boko Haram Insurgents.

In the evening of Wednesday 21stAugust, Boko Haram Insurgents launched a simultaneous and coordinated attacks on both Gubio and MagumeriLocal Governments of Borno State. The attackscoming a week following an earlier one on Gubio has witnessed massive destruction in the community. So far, fatality figures are not yet clear. the attacks lasted till morning hours of Thursday. The destruction and killings are serious setback to the efforts at resettling, reconstruction and rebuilding of these communities that have been ravaged by the insurgency for almost 10 years now. It has now pushed back many more hundred people to new displaced, some of themfor the second or third time.

Coming at the height of the farming season, it also means thatthese attackswouldhave serious impact on food security in the region. This can exacerbate the already humanitarian disaster that is rooted in the region.

CITAD is shocked and worried that inthe last couple of weeks attacks by Boko Haram have become more frequent, more brazen and very destructive. We express our condolence to the families of all those who lost their loved ones and wish speedy recovery for those who have sustained injuries in the attacks.

Theseincidences raised a serious question on the efficacy of our counter insurgency strategy. Rather than driving and squeezing out the insurgents, it appears they are daily gaining grounds and coming more atrocious against our people.

We note that the insurgents took advantage of the fact that both Gobio and Magumeri have no military presence or cover to protect the communities form attacks by the insurgents, in otherwords, the communities are an open target for these attacks. In fact, entire stretch between Maiduguri to Damasak, at the border with Niger republic, spanning over 160 kilometres, had been left without military presence and may be vulnerable to attacks. The remnant of military fled Gubio following the first attack on the military brigades that was stationed there.

While we commend the patriotism and gallantry of our soldiers, we call on the government to: as a matter of urgently:

1. Review and fine tune the National Counter Insurgency Strategy as to make it an effective tool to end the insurgency and secure our citizens and the territories they live. As it is the insurgents seems to be gaining strength
2. Should investigate and find immediate solution to the growing influence of the allure of war economy in which top military brassare benefiting and becoming more interested in exploiting such an economy for their personalaggrandizement than in savinglives and ending the conflict. It known that in some communities, soldiers have taken over control of major economic activities such as fishing. There are even allegations of appropriation of cattle herds of villagers by some of the military leaders.
3. Government must ensure that our troops are well equippedandsupported with high quality of intelligence. Given the high handedness of the military, they are not likely to get the best from the communities
4. Should investigate the allegations of the nonpayment of allowances of soldiers. There have been reports about these and such situation is capable of damping the morels of soldiers.
5. Investigate cases of militaryhigh handedness on community membersand abuse of rights and dignity of ordinary citizens. For instance, in March 2019, few weeks before the forceful displacements of over 5,000 people from Jakana to IDP camps in Maiduguri, villages in Kukawa had their market burnt to the ground by soldiers because people that were linked to the fighters were reportedly patronizing the markets.
6. Compliment military strategy with efforts that will engage communities and enhancingtheircommunity resilience to not only repel but also make it difficult for the insurgents to launch an attack on them
7. Finally, we call for the immediate restoration of military cover in the two local governments