

## WILL AMNESTY FOR BOKO HARAM STOP THE VIOLENCE?

By Dorina Bekoe

Satellite images released on May 1, 2013, show the aftermath of clashes between Boko Haram and Nigeria's security forces: the village of Baga, in northern Nigeria, was left nearly burnt to the ground. Images show that 2,275 homes were destroyed. According to some reports, more than 180 are dead, although the government claims that 37 people died, the BBC [reported](#). The violence that took place on April 16–17 in Baga is the latest in the ongoing battle that Boko Haram is waging against the state—a conflict that has killed approximately [3,000](#) people thus far. The Baga violence occurred just a day before President Goodluck Jonathan set up a 25-member Amnesty [Commission](#) (formally [inaugurated](#) on April 24) to make recommendations on whether amnesty should be offered to Boko Haram members in exchange for dialogue and disarmament. [more...](#)



Nigeria troops man a checkpoint in Maiduguri, Nigeria, Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2011. (AP Photo/Sunday Alamba).

---

Dr. Dorina Bekoe, a Research Staff Member at the Institute for Defense Analyses, is a specialist in African politics.

---

## PUNISHING CORRUPTION IN SENEGAL: JUSTICE OR RETRIBUTION?

By Stephanie M. Burchard

On Thursday, May 2, 2013, Karim Wade, the detained son of ex-Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, responded to his April 15 [arrest](#) on serious corruption charges by filing a nearly \$400,000 [lawsuit](#) in the ECOWAS Court of Justice. It accuses the Senegalese government of human rights abuses. It will likely be a fruitless endeavor, but it is yet another indicator of the lack of regard Karim has for the state and its processes. Karim, the so-called super-minister (popularly, “Minister of Earth and sky”) in the presidency of his father, Abdoulaye Wade, from 2000 to 2012, simultaneously held multiple ministerial portfolios that placed him in charge of some of Senegal's largest infrastructure projects. It is alleged that Karim amassed his estimated \$1.4 billion personal fortune in part through illegal business dealings. His arrest resurrects memories of past government corruption in Senegal; it also illustrates the challenges of engineering peaceful transitions of power in fragile African political systems. [more...](#)



Karim Wade waves to supporters on his way to court. Source: Associated Press.

---

Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard is a Research Staff Member in the Africa program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

---

The opinions expressed in these commentaries are those of the authors and should not be viewed as representing the official position of the Institute for Defense Analyses or its sponsors.

Links to web sites are for informational purposes only and not an endorsement.

To subscribe or unsubscribe to this mailing list, please email [AfricaWatch@ida.org](mailto:AfricaWatch@ida.org).

# WILL AMNESTY FOR BOKO HARAM STOP THE VIOLENCE?

By Dorina Bekoe

Satellite images released on May 1, 2013, show the aftermath of clashes between Boko Haram and Nigeria's security forces: the village of Baga, in northern Nigeria, was left nearly burnt to the ground. Images show that 2,275 homes were destroyed. According to some reports, more than 180 are dead, although the government claims that 37 people died, the BBC [reported](#). The violence that took place on April 16–17 in Baga is the latest in the ongoing battle that Boko Haram is waging against the state—a conflict that has killed approximately [3,000](#) people thus far. The Baga violence occurred just a day before President Goodluck Jonathan set up a 25-member Amnesty [Commission](#) (formally [inaugurated](#) on April 24) to make recommendations on whether amnesty should be offered to Boko Haram members in exchange for dialogue and disarmament.



Nigeria troops man a checkpoint in Maiduguri, Nigeria, Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2011. (AP Photo/Sunday Alamba).

The Amnesty Commission marks a dramatic U-turn in Nigeria's policy on Boko Haram. In March, President Jonathan rejected a similar [proposition](#) by Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar, the Sultan of Sokoto, and other Muslim leaders to encourage Boko Haram members to lay down their arms. In particular, President Jonathan said that amnesty would only take place if Boko Haram would show a willingness to negotiate [directly](#).

Would Boko Haram accept amnesty? Many have declared the government's Amnesty Commission a [failure](#), even before it has started its work. Indeed, it will face many challenges. [Mark Freeman](#), executive director of the Barcelona-based Institute for Integrated Transitions, points out that combatants are more likely to turn in weapons if they do not fear legal or punitive repercussions. But this assumes that a group (1) has demands that may be negotiable and (2) may be ready to offer compromises in return for peace. Boko Haram's official objective to bring Shari'a to all of Nigeria and Nigerians already seems nonnegotiable for it and the government: Shari'a exists in 12 of Nigeria's 36 states, but there are exceptions for Christians. A second difficulty for an amnesty program is Boko Haram's quick rejection of it, insisting that it had not done anything that required amnesty. Rather, Boko Haram claims that the Nigerian government should be asking for [amnesty](#). Finally, as [Jennifer Giroux](#), a senior researcher at the Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich [points out](#), the more conservative Ansaru faction, which splintered from Boko Haram, could complicate the negotiations. If Boko Haram lays down its arms, how will it respond? Will additional negotiations have to take place?

And yet, there is hope that the call for amnesty may at least weaken Boko Haram. Boko Haram should not be assumed to be a monolithic entity. People join for a variety of reasons, as Jacob Zenn points out in a recent [post](#). Certainly, some may join because they share the same ideology, which may not be negotiable. But others may join for financial reasons, because of kinship with existing members, or out of frustration with existing Christian-Muslim tensions. These grievances may have political or policy solutions. With this in mind, the Amnesty Commission may do well to keep in mind the heterogeneity of Boko Haram and develop different incentives to defuse the variety of grievances held by its members.

Restitution to victims and security sector reform will be key to the eventual resolution of this conflict. Mindful of the suffering endured by victims, the Amnesty Commission is to also consider providing support to the victims of Boko Haram's violence. Such support could prevent planting the seeds for future conflict, if the commission proposes meaningful restitution for their losses. Equally important, the commission must develop a robust plan for the reform of Nigeria's security forces, which, as shown by the Baga violence, have also played a role in the displacement and destruction experienced in the north.

---

Dr. Dorina Bekoe, a Research Staff Member at the Institute for Defense Analyses, is a specialist in African politics.

---

The opinions expressed in these commentaries are those of the authors and should not be viewed as representing the official position of the Institute for Defense Analyses or its sponsors. Links to web sites are for informational purposes only and not an endorsement.

# PUNISHING CORRUPTION IN SENEGAL: JUSTICE OR RETRIBUTION?

By Stephanie M. Burchard

On Thursday, May 2, 2013, Karim Wade, the detained son of ex-Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, responded to his April 15 [arrest](#) on serious corruption charges by filing a nearly \$400,000 [lawsuit](#) in the ECOWAS Court of Justice. It accuses the Senegalese government of human rights abuses. It will likely be a fruitless endeavor, but it is yet another indicator of the lack of regard Karim has for the state and its processes. Karim, the so-called super-minister (popularly, “Minister of Earth and sky”) in the presidency of his father, Abdoulaye Wade, from 2000 to 2012, simultaneously held multiple ministerial portfolios that placed him in charge of some of Senegal’s largest infrastructure projects. It is alleged that Karim amassed his estimated \$1.4 billion personal fortune in part through illegal business dealings. His arrest resurrects memories of past government corruption in Senegal; it also illustrates the challenges of engineering peaceful transitions of power in fragile African political systems.



Karim Wade waves to supporters on his way to court.  
Source: Associated Press.

Until his defeat in the second round of Senegal’s 2012 presidential election, Abdoulaye Wade was seemingly grooming his son as his successor—going so far as an aborted attempt to create the position of vice president specifically for Karim. Wade came to power in 2000 after losing the previous four presidential contests. He defeated incumbent Abdou Diouf, Senegal’s second president, who had been in office since 1981. Diouf graciously accepted defeat, and many believed that this peaceful turnover of political power indicated the strengthening and consolidating of Senegalese democracy. Unfortunately, once in office Wade became increasingly [autocratic](#) and personalistic, and he developed a cavalier attitude toward political institutions and the public budget. In one move roundly criticized in Senegal, he spent more than \$27 million on a [160-foot-tall bronze statue](#). Wade’s regime was also notoriously liberal with its issuance of [kickbacks and severance packages](#).

In his bid for a controversial third term as president, Wade was bested by Macky Sall, who won with more than 66 percent of the vote to Wade’s 34 percent. Sall’s lopsided victory underscored Wade’s growing unpopularity. One of Sall’s campaign promises was to tackle corruption, and he has been pursuing an anticorruption agenda since his inauguration in April 2012. Karim Wade is not the only member of the former government currently under indictment for [corruption](#), but he has the highest profile. In general, any attempt to root out corruption in Africa should be championed, but it is unclear exactly what motivates Sall. Some in the opposition are claiming that Karim’s arrest is [retribution](#). During Abdoulaye Wade’s 12 years in office, Sall served as prime minister from 2004 to 2007 until he and the elder Wade had a falling out, reportedly over the younger Wade and his political ambitions. Once a close ally to Abdoulaye, Sall was [accused of fraud in 2009](#), but the charges were quickly dropped due to lack of evidence.

At issue is how to pursue justice in an unbiased fashion, one that denies politicians impunity for state predation without creating disincentives for leaving office. If politicians anticipate retribution after their tenure in office, their relinquishing power becomes significantly less likely. Africa’s recent history is replete with examples of politicians refusing to peacefully leave office (Laurent Gbagbo in Côte d’Ivoire, Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe). Further complicating matters, Sall is in the difficult position of balancing the demands for justice and fairness against a regime (and family) that tried to effectively end his political career. If Sall and the recently recommissioned Anti-Corruption Court do not ensure transparency and impartiality in the prosecution of politicians from the previous regime, they risk sending the message that the justice system can be used to settle political scores. In so doing, it increases the likelihood that Sall will himself face a political vendetta when his time in office expires. In short, it creates incentives for Sall (or any politician) to stay in power indefinitely.

The best way to prevent this scenario would be to prosecute potential offenders equally, not selectively. To assuage concerns that Sall's prosecution of his predecessor's regime is politically motivated, it has been suggested that Sall volunteer to have his personal finances audited. Under Senegalese law a sitting president cannot be [investigated](#). By voluntarily accepting an audit, Sall would surely go a long way toward promoting the peaceful succession of power and protecting the fragility of Senegalese democracy. Allowing the judicial process to be tainted by political manipulation could undermine democratic consolidation in what some consider to be a West African success story.

---

Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard is a Research Staff Member in the Africa program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

---