

**UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE**

**Faculty of Political Science**

**Belgrade, April 2021**

At the meeting of the Department of Journalism and Communication, held on 10 September 2020, the Master Thesis Defense Commission (hereby the Commission) for the candidate Sulaiman Sani Abdulazeez was formed with the following members: prof. dr Nemanja Džuverović, dr Marko Nedeljković and prof. dr Siniša Atlagić. The Council for the Second and Third Cycle of Studies has accepted the proposal made by the Department.

Having read the master thesis, the Commission is submitting the following

**REPORT**

Sulaiman Sani Abdulazeez's thesis „Covering Boko Haram: Representations of Nigeria and its fight against the insurgents in the Western media 2009-2020 “ as part of the Regional Master's Program in Peace Studies taught at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade, is completed under mentorship of prof. Siniša Atlagić. The thesis 63 pages long consists of Introduction, four chapters (The Roots and Growth of Boko Haram, Portrayal of Nigeria in the Western Media, How Western Media report on Boko Haram, Nigerian Socioeconomics and Economic Roots of Boko Haram), Conclusion and List of references.

The paper analyzes the reporting of the Western media on the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria from two angles. The first consists of "spectacular" events, which attracted the attention of the Western media, focusing on the abduction of schoolgirls in Chibok, in the northeast of the country, and the actions of women "suicide bombers". Another angle from which the Western media report on the activities of this organization is related to its charismatic founder Muhammad Yusuf and his successor Abubakar Shehau, often portrayed as a pathological "face of terror". The author also points out the divisions within the organization. Also, Boko Haram itself is portrayed in the Western media as a global "face of terror" and the fact that the activities of this organization are often the only news from Nigeria in the Western media seems to reinforce

negative stereotypes and attitudes in a complex, multi-religious and multilingual country, one of the most ethnically heterogeneous in the world.

The author especially emphasizes the fact that the media opted for "passive reporting", which corresponds to Boko Haram itself, which counts on the attention brought by "spectacular actions". Access issues, ranging from physical danger to journalists to the cost of reporting from such an isolated and insecure environment, such as the parts of Nigeria where Boko Haram is active, are key and illustrate some of the reasons why social media content has replaced field reporting when it comes not only about processes but also about events that attract huge attention of the world public.

Overall, the paper offers a quality analysis of the complex causes of the insurgency in northeast Nigeria and the factors that contributed to it becoming extremely violent. The paper has certain weaknesses. Some important and excellent conclusions were made impressionistically, without giving specific examples or making a more demanding qualitative or quantitative analysis of the content of selected Western media. However, a comprehensive insight into the paper shows that the author is a top expert on the topic and that he followed how it was reported about Boko Haram in both local and Western and global media. Keeping this in mind, the abovementioned weakness has not affected the quality of the conclusions. The paper gives an excellent presentation of the factors that are missing in the image of Boko Haram and the roots of its appearance and growth in the Western media. The paper provides an excellent overview of the situation in Nigeria, the largest sub-Saharan economy and the most populous country in the region.

In Belgrade,  
18th of April 2021

The Commission:

prof. dr Nemanja Džuverović

dr Marko Nedeljković

prof. dr Siniša Atlagić





У Београду,  
10. фебруара 2020.

Комисија:

Проф. др Милан Јовановић, председник

Доц. др Душан Вучићевић, члан

Проф. др Синиша Атлагић, ментор