

Rebecca Roth
Yes on HB 2357

See how good men with
guns are able to defeat
bad men with guns —
and free women and
children.

White mercenaries have Boko Haram on run

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They're Nigeria's unlikely saviors – most being white, in their 50s and 60s and combat veterans of the former South African apartheid regime.

But, tainted resumes notwithstanding, they've been getting the job done in northern Nigeria, hitting the Islamist terror group Boko Haram hard enough to send the jihadists into retreat, liberating dozens of villages and freeing hundreds of women and girls held as slaves and "bush wives" during a six-year-long reign of terror, reported the London Telegraph.

Boko Haram recently pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS. In recent years, Boko Haram has slaughtered entire villages, burned countless churches and targeted Christians and moderate Muslims for death. It received global attention last year for abducting nearly 300 Nigerian schoolgirls.

The squad of mostly-white bush-warfare experts is employed by Specialized Tasks, Training, Equipment and Protection, a private army run by Colonel Eeben Barlow, a former commander in the South African Defense Force, where he defended the regime against insurrection and fought border wars 30 years ago in neighboring Angola and Namibia.

Barlow's firm was hired by Nigeria outgoing President Goodluck Jonathan in January, as the failure of his administration to stop Boko Haram or free the kidnapped schoolgirls became major campaign issues ahead of the March election.

As WND has reported, despite first lady Michelle Obama's much-publicized Twitter campaign to #BringBackOurGirls, President Obama withheld weapons and intelligence support from Nigeria in its fight against the Islamists because Jonathan's administration stood by the nation's laws criminalizing homosexual acts and strictly forbidding same-sex marriage.

Jonathan was defeated in the March election by retired Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, who ruled as dictator there from 1983 until 1985, when he was removed through a coup. Buhari's campaign was run by the political firm founded by key Obama strategist David Axelrod.

Buhari previously vowed to institute Shariah law in the Muslim-dominated parts of the country if elected.

"There are laws on the books of Nigeria, adopted by a sovereign nation through its normal processes, that they consider to be untoward, unacceptable, homophobic, whatever you want to call it, toward people who are lesbians, gays, transgenders, bisexuals and so on," said Security Policy President Frank Gaffney.

According to the Jonathan campaign, Buhari made a secret agreement with Washington to repeal those laws if he was elected.

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But even as his Muslim opponent was bringing in outside help from Washington to win the election, Jonathan was bringing in Barlow's STTEP team to turn the tide on Boko Haram.

"The campaign gathered good momentum and wrested much of the initiative from the enemy," Barlow, 62, told a seminar last week at the Royal Danish Defense College. "It was not uncommon for the strike force to be met by thousands of cheering locals once the enemy had been driven from an area."

He added: "Yes, many of us are no longer 20-year-olds. But with our age has come a knowledge of conflicts and wars in Africa that our younger generation employees have yet to learn, and a steady hand when things get rough."

"Another Man's War": A gun-toting preacher, a rebel army led by a madman – and entire villages slaughtered just because they were in the way.

It is believed Barlow brought 100 fighters into Nigeria, including black troops who have served in elite South African units and some who once fought against him as communist guerrillas.

Initially Barlow planned only to train a team in Nigeria to free the kidnapped schoolgirls, but ongoing massacres by Boko Haram changed the mission to one of training Nigeria's army in "unconventional mobile warfare."

Barlow introduced "relentless pursuit," a tactic that mimicked Boko Haram's hit-and-run strikes. Employing jungle trackers to determine the likely escape routes of the terrorists, Barlow helicoptered his strike force to intercept the enemy and cut them off, eventually exhausting them.

"Good trackers can tell the age of a track as well as indicate if the enemy is carrying heavy loads, the types of weapons he has, if the enemy is moving hurriedly, what he is eating, and so forth," said Barlow.

Barlow disputes the Nigerian government's claim that his men have served only as "technical advisers," noting he had been "given 'kill blocks' to the front and flanks of the strike force and could conduct missions in those areas."

So, why do so many South Africans go to Nigeria to fight, especially given the fact they face prosecution in their home country for doing so?

"Very often it's a money issue – they haven't done well and they need to make some," Jakkie Cilliers, executive director of the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria, told the London Guardian last month. "It's not ideological, and it's not the gung-ho image one has from the film 'Blood Diamond.' This is the only skill these guys have. Most of them are in their late 50s or early 60s and trying to make a late bit of income before they're past it. In five years' time it won't be an issue."

Cilliers described the feedback he heard on a recent Afrikaans radio program during which three or four mercenaries phoned in. "They said things like: 'I'm trying to help my kids. My lifestyle is quite crappy. I'm trying to put the grandkids through school.'"

Tom Wolmarans, an apartheid-era policeman, said: "There's no work for white people in South Africa. Are they going up for money? Yes, it has a role to play because they must make a living. That's all they can do; they are trained to do it. Some of them were laid off to early retirement. People with a hell of a lot of experience. Good soldiers."

Pilot Crause Steyl, 50, flew mercenaries into war zones decades ago. "The South African mercenaries are giving Boko Haram a hiding," he said. "These guys are in their 50s, but for a pilot or tank driver it doesn't really matter. There's going to be no Boko Haram. It boggles the mind that Britain and America promised to help Nigeria but never did."

"But the South African government doesn't want them to exist. They wish them off the planet. When they come back from Nigeria, it will try to prosecute them and put them in jail. Because the color of these men is white, it makes laws that stop them earning money off shore. How wrong can you be? There is now reverse racism and it's difficult for white people to get a job."

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