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USIP Boko Haram Documentary Screening

BBG CEO and Director John F. Lansing

John F. Lansing,
BBG CEO & Director

Thank you, Pablo, for your kind introduction. I am very excited to be here.

*Following an introduction
by Pablo Maldonado, COO
of Creative Associates
International*

I want to take a moment to thank the people involved in producing this documentary:

- VOA Senior Executive Producer Beth Mendelson for conceptualizing and creating this moving and thought-provoking film;
- Supervising Editor Tom Detzel, who leads VOA's Investigative Unit, for being diligent and asking the hard questions;
- And last but not least, VOA Senior Correspondent and Producer Ibrahim Alfa Ahmed who risked his and his family's safety to bring this story to the world.

Ibrahim's dedication and passion for his work is unrivaled, and it shows in his ability to obtain these videos. And despite threats against his life, Ibrahim returns to Nigeria to fact-check video accounts. We are all in his debt.

And thank you to the VOA Hausa team and everyone involved in helping us get this important information out to the world. It was truly a team effort.

Boko Haram is wreaking devastation and terror in Nigeria and the neighboring region. Communities live in fear and chaos.

These are the communities VOA journalists work in and belong to. They are a voice for their brethren and a bridge between cultures.



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VOA journalists know the real ruin and heartache that innocent women, children, and families live through every day, and they work obsessively hard to share those stories.

The trust that inspired someone to give these tapes to a VOA journalist reaffirms the network's one-of-kind role in telling the hard to reach stories; the little-known stories; and the underreported stories.

This gripping documentary not only highlights Boko Haram's origins, history, and devastating impact, it also counters the terrorist group's narrative and exposes its brutal treatment of Muslims, as well as others; reaches beyond the violence to show how Nigerians are recovering from the war, and fighting back; and highlights the courage of everyday Nigerians committed to peace, family, and community.

As an agency charged with informing, engaging, and connecting people around the world in support of freedom and democracy, these are the breakthrough moments we strive for.

In these moments, we can provide an unbiased report of little-known information to our audiences, alert the public to exploitation or abuse of trust, and spotlight the hope and heroism of everyday citizens.

BBG employs thousands of hard-working journalists around the world who put their heart and soul into reporting the news and telling objective and compelling stories every day.

It's their calling, and they do it without reservation. They provide accurate, unbiased news and information that fills a void in many parts of the world.

I'm constantly awestruck by the grit and resourcefulness of my colleagues, and I am so very proud to represent the agency.

Unfortunately, the Boko Haram challenge continues. But I can assure you that the BBG will also continue to counter



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violent extremism in Nigeria and elsewhere by covering and sharing local news with regional and global audiences.

Thank you for attending this evening's event, and I hope this documentary is as illuminating for you as it was for me.

And with that, it's time now for the debut of Voice of America's *Boko Haram: A Journey from Evil*.