

# SAR Consultancy

(Security Analysis & Research)

## SECURITY INFORMATION BULLETIN NIGERIA

March 2016



### Summary of Security Situation in Nigeria

The Security Situation in Nigeria is multi-dimensional and complex. It is influenced, for the most part, by perceived political, economic and social injustice, which results in a high level of violence throughout the country. This violence is exhibited in differing dimensions and to differing degrees from state to state, or region to region. This level of unrest and complexity provides the environment for more opportunistic types of criminal and militant type activities to take place. Deconstructing the relationships between all these factors and influencers is very difficult and contributes to the complexity that surrounds the security situation in Nigeria. Another dimension which adds to this complexity is the diversity with regard to the actors at play throughout the country. Violence is perpetrated by a wide range of groups, such as insurgents, militants, nomadic herdsman, cultists, and ordinary criminals, notwithstanding the allegations of security force involvement and alleged political interference. This interplay of actors makes it difficult to determine the perpetrator and the victim in many cases.

Nigeria is a country with specific needs, both development and increasingly, humanitarian, therefore access for international and domestic NGOs and developmental organisations is a must. It is a country with a potential for great growth in a wide number of commercial areas; as a result it is an attractive country to commercial organisations. These access requirements, coupled with the security environment, results in a need for up to date and thorough analysis of the security situation across the country on a regular basis. Forecasting the likely evolution of the security situation for the short and medium term can be difficult, due in part to the influence of underlying elements of a political, economic and social nature, which impact differently throughout the country. Nonetheless, the presence of existing trends and patterns can assist greatly in strengthening the credibility of forecasts.

**March 2016** witnessed a continued offensive by the Nigerian military against Boko Haram in the North East. However, the presence of mines was throughout territories previously controlled by the group is hindering the military in their endeavours to clear and regain ground. Despite this offensive, Boko Haram continued to respond with attacks, a pattern likely to continue in the month ahead. Two videos were released this month allegedly by Shekau and the second by ISWAP, both have yet to be verified. If the second is correct, it would appear the group are not willing to accept military or presidential assertions that the group have been defeated. On a separate note, violence continued in the middle belt, relatively unabated. Furthermore, the country has seen an apparent rise in criminality, with Kaduna and Rivers states hit badly.



## North East Nigeria & Boko Haram

March witnessed a continued offensive by the Nigerian military with regard to Boko Haram in the North East. At least every second day, if not more frequently, the media reported that the military had repelled Boko Haram militants, had regained territory and had attacked Boko Haram camps throughout Borno. Significant locations often targeted by Boko Haram were amongst the locations mentioned, Alagarno, Biu, Bama, Damboa, Gwoza, Gudumbari, Kala Balge amongst many others. Although it is difficult to verify these reports, if true they would suggest a continuation of the militaries sustained efforts at weakening the group.

Interestingly, this month also saw reports of suspected Boko Haram insurgents handing themselves in, alongside many women and children, to the military in Gwoza due to alleged starvation. Although this has yet to be independently verified, there is enough evidence to suggest that food shortages in the state are having serious impact on the population, which is highly likely to be impacting Boko Haram too. In fact, reports from Cameroon suggest that Boko Haram militants after attacking villages are stripping them of their cattle, goats and food stuff due to shortages. Such reports are not new, but may be indicative of the group's limited food resources, which may also indicate that the military are successfully cutting off their food supplies. Notwithstanding these achievements on behalf of the military, Boko Haram continue to conduct attacks, a pattern likely to continue in the short, medium and long term. Such incidents may include attacks on isolated villages, road side attacks and attacks on vulnerable individuals. Additionally, it is highly likely the group will continue to display their capabilities in conducting suicide attacks in urban centres and attacks on IDP camps. One such attack was witnessed this month, with reports that two female suicide bombers attacked a mosque in Umarari, which is situated on the outskirts of Maiduguri, killing at least 27 people. Incidents of this nature are indicative that the group can continue to conduct high casualty attacks. However, some analysts argue that their ability to conduct a multi-centered attack has been significantly reduced.

March also saw reports of a suspected Boko Haram attacks in Gujba LGA, Yobe State, a state and LGA not unaccustomed to such attacks, but relatively quiet of late. Reports claim that a suspected suicide bomber, killed himself whilst wounding at least 3 soldiers and 2 others in Katarko town. Attacks in Yobe State are not new, but if they continue and increase, such a trend may be indicative of the group being pushed back by the military in Borno State. An incident in Adamawa in which 16

females were reportedly abducted may also be indicative of the groups' displacement.

Another interesting but worrying factor being reported from the North East relates to the use of landmines by Boko Haram. Not only is this a security risk, it is also slowing down the military activities with regard to regaining territory. Furthermore, where people are returning, it is making activities such as farming difficult. Three people were reportedly killed and 7 injured when their vehicle hit a IED at Huyum village this month.



**Forecast:** April is likely to continue in the same vein as March with reports of military advances closely followed by reports of insurgent attacks. If reports of military success are true, attacks by Boko Haram are likely to be seen in more remote villages, coupled with roadside IEDs, and attacks on vulnerable targets. However, the possibility of suicide attacks in urban areas should not be ruled out. Furthermore, it is likely that the group may shift their area of operation to include Adamawa and Yobe, and even Bauchi and Gombe with respect to urban attacks, given that they have proven in the past to be able to effectively conduct operations in these areas. Those work, living or visiting these areas should be mindful of a possible increased risk in the short and medium term. In addition, with the approach of the rainy season, the military may be unable to progress further with their operations in remote parts of the state. This may enable insurgents to regain ground and positions, given that they have shown their resilience before to come back from what looks like defeat or their demise on previous occasions. The group are well known from withdrawing when under attacks to later re-emerge.

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## Alleged Video of Shekau & of ISWAP

A video was released during the month purporting to show Shekau acknowledge Boko Haram's defeat. However, the authenticity of this video has yet to be verified. Many analysts and observers have expressed caution with the video given its poor quality. Furthermore, given Shekau's previous statements the content of the message appears questionable. As a result, many have been careful not to draw conclusions from the video or the message. Some have argued that the video may have been created to try to flush out Shekau enticing him to react and deny the authenticity of the report. If this was the intention, some may see the more recent video allegedly released by ISWAP as a success, given that the commentator on the video refute the earlier video's message and claims that ISWAP have not been defeated or not entered into any negotiations. That said, there are a number of interesting factors about the second video. The first relates to the quality, which is more in line with previous videos and significantly better than the one said to be Shekau. However, Shekau has rarely responded so quickly to refute claims made about the group, rather waiting before responding, if he did at all. Furthermore, although the commentator proclaims that Shekau is still alive, he does not appear to speak on the video. Could this be a sign that Shekau, or the person last purporting to be him, is no longer alive? In addition, the continued use of the label ISWAP and the allegiance to ISIS's leader in the video illustrates a continued loyalty to the ISIS, yet there has not been any operational or tactical illustration of this allegiance. When or will this ever come?

## Vigilantes in the North East and Lake Chad Region

Many analysts and observers have highlighted the possible risk associated with the growing use of vigilantes in the North East, if not managed properly, especially referencing the growth of the civil JTF in Borno. While benefits of these groups are acknowledged, there are numerous concerns with the activities of such groups. Adamawa fell foul to what can happen between such groups, with reports that at least 7 people were killed and 19 injured in clashes between two groups of vigilantes. Nonetheless, the existence of these groups is likely to continue, with reports of their increased use in Cameroon. Vigilante groups are reportedly been used along the border with Nigeria in an effort to deter Boko Haram insurgents from crossing the border into Cameroon

## Increased Boko Haram activity in Niger

Four suicide bombers reportedly killed themselves alongside a Nigerien military commander in Diffa, Niger. Furthermore, at the end of the month, reports claimed that 6 Nigerian soldiers were killed in an ambush by suspected Boko Haram militants. This

attack was said to have occurred about 20 kilometres from Diffa, near the border with Nigeria. Reports this month also claim that Diffa is still a significant recruitment ground for the group.

The Monthly Assessment aims to examine the prevalent patterns and trends emerging, evolving, and/or continuing during the previous month. The data used to compile the report is largely open source material, with the addition of 'field information' where possible. As a result, the data used may not represent the total number of security related incidents that have occurred throughout the country, but does represent a comprehensive review of all available information.

## Alleged Boko Haram activity & criminality Taraba State

Taraba hit the media for a number of reasons this month. Although a state not unaccustomed to violence, it had been relatively calm of late. However, this month saw reports that a retired Director of the State Security Service was kidnapped by unknown gunmen from his home in Baisa town, Kurmi LGA. This incident came only a few weeks after the alleged kidnap of the mother of the state deputy governor. This apparent increase in criminality was coupled with claims of Boko Haram activity in the state. Senator Emmanuel Bwacha from North East Taraba was reported in the media as saying that Boko Haram had killed approximately 2000 people in the state since December 2015, claiming that they had done so disguised as Fulani herdsmen.

Such claims of Boko Haram masquerading as herdsmen are becoming increasingly common, not only in Taraba but also in the middle belt, of late. While some reports may have a level of credibility, there needs to be more investigation to substantiate the scale and scope of such claims if they are true. Given the level of such violence in Taraba and throughout the middle belt, which would appear to be left relatively unmanaged, such claims may help certain groups justify the limited success in tackling the problem. That said, viewing them under the same guise as the Boko Haram insurgency may be counterproductive and may impede a proper understanding of middle belt conflict into the future. The middle belt conflict, although violent, would appear to be fundamentally different to the conflict in the North East and needs to be dealt with as such to ensure responses implemented are effective for the problem at hand.

**Comment:** *Such violence is likely to continue if left unaddressed. Blurring the lines between the North East insurgency and middle belt conflicts is unlikely to have anything but negative effects. While it is credible that Boko Haram may conduct operations in Taraba and in the middle belt at times knowing their previous trends and patterns, there is a need for far greater evidence before the blame for many of these 2000 deaths in Taraba can be laid at their door. Notwithstanding that, and irrespective of who killed these individuals the death of 2000 people in three months in one state is significantly worrying and needs proper investigation.*

## Communal Clashes – Middle Belt

Communal clashes continued unabated this month in the middle belt, especially in Benue State. Reports claimed that 10 people were killed in Logo, Benue State in two incidents, with six people were reportedly killed in an incident in Tarla. In addition, 15 people reportedly lost their lives in Buruku. As the death toll rises, and retaliatory attacks take place, the issue of communal violence in the middle belt appears to be taking a higher position at the political level. March saw elders from Benue State were reported in the media as calling on the President to declare Fulani herdsmen alleged invasion of the state and related violence as an insurgency. This has yet to be declared.

**Forecast:** *Similar to last month, if these attacks are left relatively unaddressed, such incidents are likely to continue indefinitely and although these incidents are largely contained within the communities in which they occur, they can still pose a risk to the international or donor community if in the wrong place at the wrong time. Notwithstanding the deaths and loss of property, the impact of these attacks is highly likely to become more significant in the medium to long term given that the locations of many of these attacks is the same area in which agricultural development will occur in the future. If left unchallenged, communal clashes have the potential to*

*negatively impact development programmes and projects in this area, especially those relating to the growth of the agricultural industry.*



**SAR Consultancy**

***Providing peace of mind in a changing security environment***

### SECURITY AUDIT & REVIEW

Security Management is critical in today's challenging environment, regardless of industry or scale of organisation. But is having a security management plan in place enough?

We, at SAR, think the presence of a security management plan is not enough. All organisations, regardless of industry or scale require a regular systematic assessment of existing security infrastructure.

*Contact us to discuss your 2016 audit; you have a duty of care to your employees to ensure your security infrastructure is fit for purpose. **Don't wait for an incident to influence a review.***

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## Criminality in Kaduna

Reports of increased kidnapping around Kaduna appear to be on the rise of late. Three clerics were abducted from a church along the Kaduna-Abuja expressway by unknown gunmen. Media reports claim that two of the pastors were later released, while one lost his life during the ordeal. At the end of the month, the Nigerian Army announced that a Colonel was kidnapped in Kaduna. He was named as Colonel Samaila Inusa. He was later found dead in Ayaita village off the Eastern Bye Pass on the Kaduna-Abuja expressway. The motive behind these abductions is still unknown. If this trend continues it is likely to increase risk of travel to and around this area. Those visiting, living or working in the area should ensure they review their security plans to ensure they are mitigating the risk as effectively as possible.

**Comment:** Some had suggested that the Islamic Movement of Nigeria may have been responsible for the abduction of Colonel Inusa as revenge for the attack in Zaria. However, such claims were quickly refuted, with the group denying any responsibility. The group went on to commit that the group, under the leadership of Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky would never engage in crime to meet their objectives.

## Violence in Rivers State

March saw witness to increased violence in Rivers State. Reports claim that gunmen beheaded an APC chieftain and killed two members of this family. Later in the month, political and electoral violence claimed the lives of at least 8 people. While separate reports claim that a Nigerian Army Major and three soldiers were killed in an ambush by suspected militants also

in Rivers State. There were also reports that five crew members were abducted from a tankers off the coast of Rivers State on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March. Eight armed men were reported to have boarded the vessel. Such incidents are likely to continue given the deteriorating economic situation.

## Depreciation of the Naira

The Naira crisis still continues to cause concern in Nigeria. The level of depreciation has not been helped by the continued low oil prices. To date the President has resisted in devaluing the currency, reportedly noting that a weak currency is indicative of a weak state. However, the impact of depreciation is being felt by many, especially those struggling to make ends meet. This is likely to exacerbate increasing unrest in some parts of the population.

## Nigerian National Oil Company

Media reports claim that the NNPC is to be restructured into a number of standalone units. The aim of the restructuring is to make it more profitable and transparent. Such reports come alongside that the NNPC failed to pay over \$16billion to the government due to fraud.

## The fight against Corruption

March witnessed a continuation in the fight against corruption, with charges preferred against a former Chief of Defense staff. Retired Air Chief Marshall Alex Badeh was charged with ten counts of fraud, criminal breach of trust and money laundering, after

having been arrested last month on suspicion of diverting 3.97 billion naira (€17.9) from the air force in 2013. Similar reports are likely to continue given the commitment to tackling corruption by the President.

## Factors worth monitoring for month ahead

- Continued attacks in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, possible more in IDP camps and possibly in Gombi and Bauchi.
- Lack of access to food supplies is likely to cause an increase in humanitarian need. Reports are already suggesting IDPs that previously went to villages and towns are moving to camps because of food shortages.
- Increased criminality throughout the country, but especially in Kaduna and Rivers. Residential communities around the FTC and ring road are also likely to be targeted.

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*SAR Consultancy would like to thank you for taking the time to read this bulletin. We hope you found it interesting. Please do not hesitate to contact us [info@sarconint.com](mailto:info@sarconint.com) to discuss any part in greater detail or to discuss how we may be able to help reduce your exposure to any of the risks mentioned within. Furthermore we are very happy to receive feedback on your thoughts regarding the bulletin. Hope to see you again next month.*

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