

SAR Consultancy

(Security Analysis & Research)

SECURITY INFORMATION BULLETIN

NIGERIA

August 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 and region to region. This level of unrest and complexity provides the environment for more opportunistic types of criminal and militant 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.

August 2016 saw signs of an emerging split in Boko Haram. Most likely between those who want to remain with the status quo and those who want to exert more active allegiance to IS. It will take time to see how this plays out, and there may be interesting times ahead. Furthermore, despite continued claims by the Nigerian military that Boko Haram are significantly weakened, announcements of intelligence that attacks by the group are being planned for Abuja may more accurately illustrate that the group still retain intent and ability, despite any reduction in strength. Incidents this month continue to illustrate the risk from the group in the North East, but if reports are correct of movement within the group to Bauchi, Kano and Kaduna, their area of operations may soon shift. These claims are worth greater examination because if this shift occurs the risk is likely to be high given that many internationals and local service providers are very active in these areas. On a different note, violence related to criminality and communal clashes remained high this month, as did the risk of kidnap. The deteriorating economic conditions is also likely to impact the level of criminality. Petty criminality is likely to increase as many people become more financially desperate.



North East Nigeria & Boko Haram

Much of the discussion about Boko Haram this month related to allegations supposedly made by Islamic State that the group's leader, Abubakar Shekau had been replaced by a new leader, namely, Abu Musab al Barnwai (in picture: picture sourced from Countering Extremism Project website). As expected, it did not take long for Shekau, or the person purporting to be him, to denounce this claim. This resulted in much discourse of an emerging split between Boko Haram and ISWAP. The Nigerian military met this discourse with contempt suggesting that a split within Boko Haram was a further indication that the group was weakening, whilst continuing to emphasise that the group's capabilities have been degraded to the extent that they are unlikely to re-group and launch more attacks. They further highlighted the weakening of the group when a military spokesperson claimed that Shekau, or the person purporting to be him, was 'fatally wounding' in an airstrike in Sambisa forest. That said, such a claim must be taken with caution given that a number of similar claims have been made in the past, with little or no accuracy. Furthermore, such comments of weakness and demise do not marry with claims made by the military that there is 'credible information' to suggest that the group may target locations in Abuja and other cities across the country. This disparity in assessments is worrying and is worth monitoring to ensure the level of risk is assessed accurately.



Another interesting announcement from the military this month related to assetations that due to military advances in the North East, some Boko Haram members had been pushed to Bauchi, Kano and Kaduna. If correct, this could result in a shift in the key area of operation of the group. This is highly credible given that the group have illustrated in the past their ability to navigate through and conduct operations in these areas. Specific reports of military advancement this month included claims that the military repelled an attack by Boko Haram at Kangarwa, Kukawa LGA in Borno State, killing at least 16 suspected Boko Haram members in the operation. They were also said to have repelled an attack on the out skirts of Sambisa forest, in which a number of suspected Boko Haram operatives were reportedly killed. In addition, the military reportedly released scores of people who were allegedly being

held captive in Monguno by Boko Haram. Three suspected members were reportedly killed in this operation.

During the month, it was also reported that the military killed 300 suspected Boko Haram in an air strike in Abadam, Borno. While this sounds like a major success, it begs the question, if Boko Haram can still gather in numbers approximating 300 at one time, do they not have the capacity to conduct attacks of a more significant scale than village attacks, if so desired? If so, this may refute allegations made by the military of a weakened group. Furthermore, and despite these advances and claims, reports still emerge of suspected Boko Haram operatives conducting attacks. This month saw reports that they attacked a convoy of vehicles travelling from Gamboru, Ngala LGA to Maiduguri. It was said that some of the vehicles in the convoy contained Nigerian Immigration officials. Approximately five traders were killed, whilst also travelling in the convoy. In addition, a village near Chibok, Bubriyu, was reportedly attacked this month in which at least ten people were killed and thirteen kidnapped. As in similar attacks, many houses were burned down and supplies stolen. A similar styled incident was also reported from Shawa village, Askira Uba, LGA. It is unclear if anyone was killed in this attack.

Forecast: *This month has been very interesting for a number of different perspectives with regard to Boko Haram and the Nigeria military. Despite reports of military advancement, Boko Haram continue to illustrate its retained capacity and commitment to conduct operations. Some of the reports, such as the claim of the deaths of 300 members and the threat of attacks in the FCT, alleged made by the military, appear to, if examined from different perspectives, seem to support this. The discourse about the potential split in Boko Haram is also of huge interest. The situation is likely to take some time to play out before real credibility can be given to such claims. While things may not change significantly if there is no split, a split is unlikely to cause the demise of the group as forecasted by some. In fact, both elements are likely to pose a challenge from a security perspective for the medium to long term. That said, if one group wants to display their allegiance to IS more formally, a secondary pattern of incidents on high profile international targets in Nigeria are likely to emerge. If this last scenario is correct the security situation in Nigeria is likely to deteriorate further and in a manner that is less geographically restricted and more high profile target driven. Only time will tell how this will play out, but until then the security situation in the North East of Nigeria will remain a serious issue, especially outside Maiduguri. Continued attacks on convoys also illustrates this point.*

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Chibok Girls

This month saw reports of the release of a video allegedly showing a number of the Chibok girls. It is being reported by some media that Boko Haram reportedly released the video to open negotiations with the Nigerian Government for the release of the girls in exchange for some of their commanders. It is unclear if there has been any progression on this. Despite this, if the video is found to be authentic it may provide comfort to some of the families of the girls that their daughters are still alive.

Lake Chad Region

Suspected Boko Haram related incidents were not only confined to the North East of Nigeria this month. Like previous months, incidents have been reported in Cameroon. At least four people were reportedly killed by suspected Boko Haram members in Waza, Cameroon. While a suicide bomber reportedly killed himself and three others when he detonated his explosives in Mora, Cameroon. However, the multinational JTF also reported successes, claiming that they killed over twenty five suspected Boko Haram members in Fokotol, Cameroon.

Communal Clashes

Communal clashes between suspected Fulani herdsmen and local farmers continued this month. Reports claim that between fifteen and thirty people were reportedly killed in clashes between both groups in Demsa LGA, Adamawa LGA. Kaduna State also saw violence related to both groups. Eleven people were reportedly killed when suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked three villages in Jema'a LGA. A

number of houses were also set on fire during the incident. In a second and third incident in the same LGA a short while later, nine people were reportedly killed by suspected herdsmen. It has been suggested that this increased level of violence in the LGA may be revenge for previous incidents between both groups. A couple were also reportedly killed by suspected herdsmen in Sanga LGA, also in Kaduna.

In separate incidents, not suspected to involve herdsmen, violent clashes reportedly resulted in the deaths of five people in Kwara State this month when violence is said to have broken out between two communities in Ifelodun LGA. Whilst eight people were reportedly killed in Zamfara State by a mob over accusations of blasphemy. The media reported that at least eight people were burnt to death after a student of the Polytechnic in Talata Mafara was alleged to have committed blasphemy against the prophet.

Two interesting incidents of violence were reported from Bosso, Niger State this month. It is claimed that Nigerian military clashed with civilians in one case, and armed bandits in another. The exact number of those killed is unclear in the first incident, but it was reported that soldiers and civilians were reportedly killed. Eleven soldiers and eight bandits in the other.

Forecast: *These incidents clearly illustrate the level of violence and potential for clashes in communities throughout Nigeria. While the risk of violence between herdsmen and farmers has been evident for years, this month's incidents also illustrate the potential for violence between different communities in an area and between civilians and the security forces. Whilst such attacks don't pose a direct risk to the international or donor community for the most*

part, if staff are in the wrong place at the wrong time they may be at risk. SAR Consultancy recommends that all operations conducted in the field, regardless of the level of risk, are done so with advice and support from locals to ensure there is a high degree of situational awareness of tensions on the ground.

Niger Delta Regions

This month saw the Nigerian Government resume cash payments to Niger Delta militant, in what was hoped to result in a reduction of attacks in the region. Despite



this, a number of attacks were reported. A number of incidents occurred in Arepo communities, which were later claimed by Niger Delta Avengers (NDA). It is also believed that the group were responsible for the death of three soldiers in Nembe, Bayelsa state.

Earlier in the month an attack was conducted on a pipeline in Isoko South, Delta state. A new group, namely the Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate (NDGJM) reportedly claimed the attack. It was reported that their motivation was due to the perception that the government's dialogue plans are concentrated on Ijaw militant groups at the expense of others in the region.

Military operations continued in the region during the month, with reports that the military bombed four

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militant camps, killing over 110 suspected militants.

Forecast: *Despite claims of dialogue and ceasefires, attacks continue which are having a continued impact on the level of crude oil production. They also continue to illustrate the insecurity in the region. SAR Consultancy forecasts that these attacks will continue both in the medium and long term if rapid intervention in a meaningful manner is not conducted. The response cannot solely be security based, or a revival of previous of amnesty payments. A deeper, more equitable, socially responsible response is required to ensure all parties concerned feel part of the deal.*

Criminality, Cultist activity & Violence

Violence associated with armed criminality continued this month. Gunmen reportedly killed a university lecturer in Gboko, Benue State. Whilst, further south, seven people were reportedly killed in Imo State by armed gunmen and four killed in Lagos. This month also saw reports of an attempted jail break in Ebonyi State in which two prison officers and seventeen inmates were killed. While two police officers were reportedly killed in Plateau State, when armed criminals attacked a bullion van. *Much of this violence is targeted but some of it is associated with being in the wrong place at the wrong time. SAR advises all those travelling to or living in Nigeria to regularly review your security to ensure a level of preparedness at all times.*

Abduction & Kidnap

Reports of kidnapping continued during August of both nationals and internationals. Early in the month two civilians were reportedly kidnapped in Rivers State. In the same incident, three police men were

killed. In Nasarawa State, two Chinese men, working as miners, were reportedly abducted when travelling by road to Abuja. While a member of the National Assembly and one from the State Assembly were reportedly kidnapped in Kaduna State this month. On a positive note, the District Head of Tama who was abducted last month was reportedly rescued by Bauchi police. Six suspects were arrested in connection with the incident. *This apparent rise in abductions over the last few months may be due to deteriorating economic conditions in the country. As a result, no one is immune and therefore SAR recommends that all those travelling in Nigeria should take necessary precautions at all times.*

As noted last month, the Judicial Commission of Inquiry announced its findings on the clashes and death of allegedly 300 people that occurred in Zaria in December. The Commission blamed the military, police and State Security Services for failing in their responsibilities. This month saw the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) reject the report alleging that the Government of Nigeria had been biased in dealing with issues involving the group.

Piracy

Reports related to piracy continued this month. On a positive note, it was reported that the Nigerian navy foiled an attack on a British-flagged freighter and rescued the crew in an encounter off the coast of Rivers State. The growing risk of attack in these waters is allegedly been felt by the hauliers who are said to be paying additional insurance premiums.

Factors worth monitoring

- SAR's Special Bulletin on the potential leadership challenges within Boko Haram is available from our website www.sarconint.com
- Possible attacks in Bauchi, Kaduna and Kano by Boko Haram if reports of them shifting location are correct.
- There has not been a high level of reporting of incidents from Yobe State of late, an area which many also see as a safe haven for the group. Despite this the risk remains high.
- For those of you interested in understanding the situation in the North East, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Mr. Chaloka Beyani, end of mission statement is well worth a read. He visited Nigeria between 23 and 26 August 2016. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20427&LangID=E>
- Increased chance of kidnapping on routes between Abuja and Kaduna.
- As the economy deteriorates further, crime is likely to increase, as may burglaries, robberies and kidnapping for ransom.

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 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.
