



# SAR Consultancy



## Security Information Bulletin: Nigeria

IN THIS ISSUE

## Summary of Security Situation

by our Senior Analyst

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 herdsmen, cultists, and ordinary criminals, notwithstanding the allegations of security force involvement and alleged political

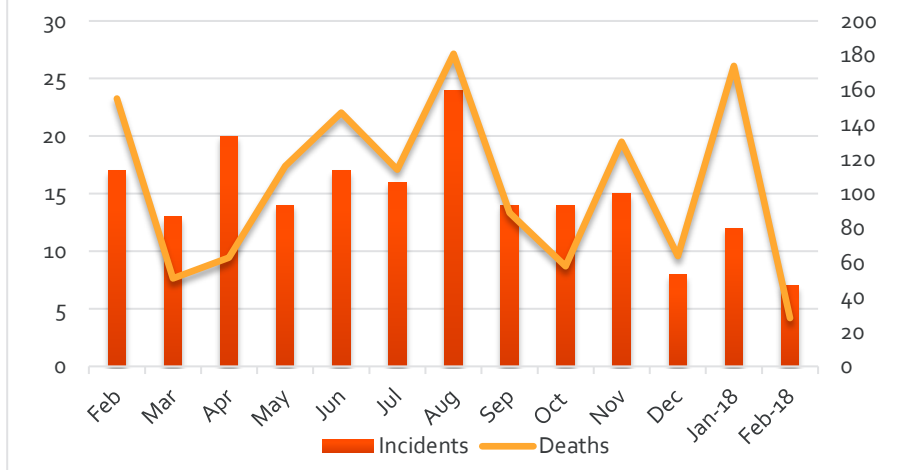
interference. This interplay of actors makes it difficult to determine the perpetrator and the victim in many cases. Nigeria is a country with specific needs, both development and increasingly, humanitarian, therefore access for international and domestic NGOs and developmental organisations is a must. 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.

*Feb 2018 – If ever people wanted evidence that Boko Haram still remain a considerable threat to the North east of Nigeria, February 2018 was that. A number of incidents this month illustrate the group's capacity and enduring commitment to challenge the government in deeds, as opposed to words. This is very worrying because the government have reportedly invested considerable money, resources and personnel into tackling Boko Haram, and despite some gains in 2015/2016, the group appear to have regained considerable advantage. Not only would this suggest that the government need to do more, but it would also suggest it needs to do something different. Once again, SAR highlights that there is no military solution to this insurgency. Furthermore, it is unlikely they would have the capacity even if there was a military solution as the resources are required throughout the country to manage a myriad of other challenges.*

## North East Nigeria & Boko Haram

Incidents attributed to Boko Haram during February continued to take on multiple MO and targeted a range of victims. The group appeared to continue its victimisation of locals at the village level, but interesting such attacks were not only curtailed to remote villages. For example, the group were said to have attacked Koffa village, which is on the outskirts of Maiduguri. At least three people were reportedly killed and many others injured in the incident. Two people were said to have also been killed in Konduga, Borno. However, the group did not only attack civilian targets. They were blamed for an attack on a military vehicle along the Biu-Damboa Road. Two soldiers were reportedly killed in the incident and a number of others injured. Such incidents continue to show the group are not afraid of attacking military targets.

### Insurgency related incidents & deaths Feb 2017 - Feb 2018



There was no let up on suicide attacks either. The police reportedly prevented a suspected suicide attack by two female suicide bombers in Dikwa, during the early part of the month. However, a second attack was more successful in Konduga, when three suicide bombers detonated their devices killing themselves and about 20 others. While, a few days later a suspected suicide bomber was shot whilst detonating his device in Maiduguri. No others were killed in this incident. An interesting MO often used by the group also re-emerged this month, that of kidnap. Over twenty people were reportedly taken in Damboa, Borno and days later, a more serious incident was reported in Yobe State in which around 111 girls were reportedly abducted from a school in Dapchi. Interestingly, despite this incident sharing many similarities with the Chibok girls kidnap, this incident did not seem to garner much media coverage. In fact, early reports that the girls had been recovered seemed to nearly kill the story completely, until such reports were denied by families of the girls taken. In saying that, even with confirmation that the girls have yet to be found, the media attention seems somewhat limited.

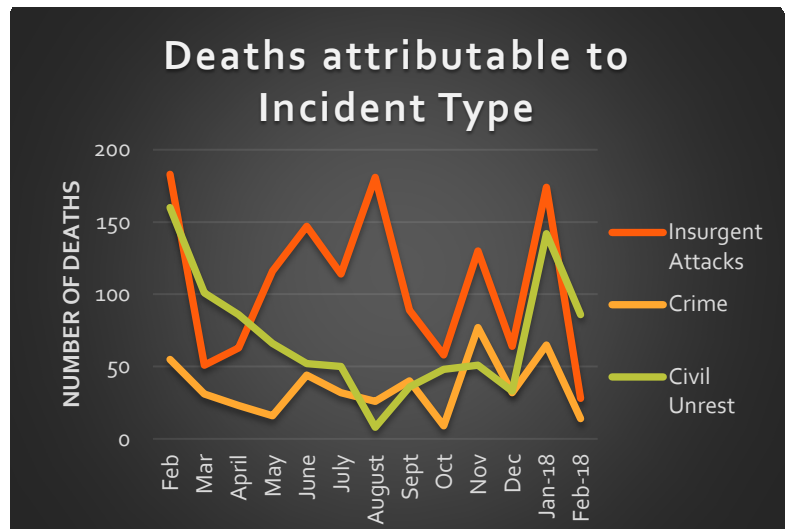
The military continued to report positive advancements throughout the month. One particular operation reportedly led to the destruction of a large scale Boko Haram IED factory in Sambisa Forest. The military also reportedly captured several suspected insurgents in the operation. Two weeks later, a second operation in Sambisa forest reportedly resulted in the deaths of five militants and the arrest of a top commander of the group. The military also claimed to have killed ten militants in Gwoza, Borno State and around five in Gubio, Yobe State. Interestingly, a few days later a further five militants were reportedly killed in Gwoza.

**Assessment & Forecast:** Shekua released a video during the month, in which he reportedly threatened more violence and attacks against both civilian and military targets. He also refuted claims that the group had been forced out of Sambisa Forest by the military. Military operations in the forest after the video indicate that the military have not got the situation there under control, supporting Shekua's point that the group still retain presence in the forest. These discrepancies while often appearing to be trivial, can have the tendency to undermine the credibility of military spokespersons, whilst also empowering Shekua and the group when they can refute such claims. On a positive note, the month saw reports that three University of Maiduguri lecturers and ten women, all allegedly kidnapped by Boko Haram over the last year were released after a series of negotiations facilitated by the ICRC. While this is a positive for all those concerned, further abductions this month may indicate that the group while willing to negotiate the release of their hostages, they do so to obtain certain favours and privileges, rather than to illustrate any commitment to refraining from such incidents. In fact, such incidents may illustrate that they are happy to keep these lines of communication open given the rewards, and therefore motivating them to retain a supply of abductees. If this is correctly, it is likely to create a vicious circle of abduction and release for the medium term. As a result, this should be monitored by all concerned, especially the by ICRC given their role, given that such interventions may be increasing risk for future events.

## Loss of Life\*

February saw a considerable reduction of both incidents and deaths during the month. However, that said, the type and nature of incidents illustrates that this reduction should not be viewed as a positive, as a number of incidents of a serious and worrying nature continue to occur. For example, the kidnap of 111 girls in Yobe State and twenty or more travellers in Borno State illustrate the continued reach and risk of Boko Haram. Additionally, incidents in the middle belt are also showing a worrying pattern and one which requires further examination.

*\*As with incident numbers, it is acknowledged that exact death rates in the aftermath of incidents in Nigeria are hard to assess, the graphs included provide only an indication of the trends.*



## Communal Clashes

Incidents attributed to clashes between herdsmen, farmers and villagers continued throughout the middle belt this month, with few states experiencing no attacks. Adamawa saw some of the most serious attacks this month. Ten people were reportedly killed in Song, when five villages were attacked. While a number of days later, a further six people were reportedly killed in Shelleng. Near the end of the month, the most serious of reported incidents in Adamawa State occurred in Demsa LGA, in which at least twenty people were reportedly killed. Once again this incident was said to have been the result of a clash between herdsmen and farmers, without any significant evidence to support such claims. Benue state also continued its pattern of incidents. That said, the victims of this violence were not only villagers, farmers and herdsmen in Benue this month. Two policemen were ambushed and are thought to have been killed in Guma, Benue, alongside four civilians. While two civil defence personnel were also reportedly killed in a separate incident. A further three people were also killed in Logo LGA, Benue.

Kaduna also witnessed a number of serious incidents this month. A serious outbreak of violence in Kajuru LGA reportedly resulted in damage to over 1000 homes and an unconfirmed number of people dead. It could be as many as ten. It is unclear as to the exact cause of the clash, but police reportedly said, it may have been linked to an incident that occurred a few weeks prior, however the specifics are unclear. Attacks also occurred in Plateau, Nassarawa, Kogi and Kwara states, all of which were attributed to herdsmen farmer clashes. Again limited evidence was supplied to support such claims.

Eight people were reportedly killed in Baaki village, Obi LGA, Nassarawa State, while three people were reportedly ambushed and killed in Zangwra village, near a checkpoint in Bassa LGA, Plateau State. A farmer was reportedly killed on his farm in Uferance Emekuku Ankpa LGA, Kogi State and two people were reportedly killed in Offa, Kwara State.

In a separate incident in Zamfara, a serious incident of a violent nature reportedly claimed the lives of over 40 people. Unknown gunmen were blamed for this incident in Birane village, Zurmi LGA. The police reportedly said that the incident was the result of a conflict between hunters, local vigilantes and bandits. Albeit this was a very violent incident and as a result requires proper investigation to ensure the right people are held accountable, it may also provide insight into other incidents throughout the middle belt. It is highly unlikely all the incidents mentioned above are the result of

**Forecast:** *It is difficult to determine if there has been an increase in attacks, or if more attention is being placed on them hence an apparent increase, sufficed to saw the death toll associated with such incidents, irrespective of who is responsible, has seen a significant rise and is enough that it requires immediately attention. It still remains evident that Fulani herdsmen are being labelled as both the suspects and provocateurs in many of these incidents, but it is unclear if this is actually the case. This incident in Zamfara, if investigated properly may provide some insight into other groups that could be responsible for such attacks. It seems entirely plausible that other groups may be using this ongoing conflict between farmers and herdsmen to hide behind. Either way, without knowing the true nature of this conflict it will be difficult to address it. In the interim, the existing cleavages between herdsmen and farmers are likely to deepen further which will only make the situation more difficult. From a safety and security point of view, SAR would continue to recommend caution when travelling through or working in the affected areas, while much of this violence is localised, tensions are rising and one may find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time.*

herdsmen farmer clashes and therefore the findings of this investigation may help us understand these incidents.

## Criminality, Cultist activity & Violence



Cultist activity continued this month, localised in the south east of the country in Rivers, Anamabra and Akwa Ibom this month. Five people were reportedly killed in Ikwerre, Rivers, and a further five in Ihiala, Anambra. Three were also killed in Etim Ekpo, Akwa Ibom. It is unclear as to exactly what motivated such incidents, but sufficed to say they are very violent and often claim multiple lives.

**Forecast:** *Violent crime is common throughout Nigeria, but its nature and type differ throughout the country. Much of it localised so one should remain informed of local developments and take precautions to avoid it if at all possible. Secondly, security responses are likely to differ throughout the country. Therefore, SAR recommends that this geographical variance should be taken into consideration when conducting security risk assessments and related management plans.*

## Niger Delta Region

This month saw continued commitment by the Niger delta avengers to enter into negotiations with the government. That said, there is always a risk in this region, which can be seen by the abduction of two contractors this month. Therefore, SAR recommends that people not take this apparent peace as an indication that it is business as usual in the region.

**Forecast:** *Given these continued frustration, coupled with previous statements about a possible resumption in hostilities, SAR, recommends that anyone travelling to the region take all necessary security measures to remain safe and to keep proactive interest in the changing nature of events at this time.*



## SAR Consultancy

*Providing peace of mind in changing security environments*

*As 2018 begins, are you confident in your level of preparedness*

Most professional organisations working in Nigeria take security very seriously, either by providing an in-house security service or by contracting security services from a third party.

However, how many of you have tested your level of preparedness and your security architecture in place.

- How confident are you that it would withstand an attack?
- How confident are your staff that they know how to respond?

We, at SAR, can conduct this assessment for you, and can test in a controlled manner exactly how prepared you are. SAR provides an objective independent assessment service. Don't wait for an incident to realise things don't work as planned.

*Contact us at SAR to discuss your 2017 audit; you have a duty of care to your employees to ensure your security infrastructure is fit for purpose.*

## Piracy

The Gulf of Guinea continued to experience piracy or attempted piracy related incidents. For example, a group of five attempted to board an anchored tanker in Contonou, Benin. Two guards were injured in the incident and the master and one other were held hostage for a period of time, but later released. A gang also tried to board a container vessel near Bonny Island, Nigeria, but the crew increased speed and were able to prevent the gang from boarding. A second similar incident occurred in the same area, but it was also averted. Two similar incidents also occurred in Brass, Nigeria during the month. No one was injured in any of these four incidents in Nigeria. However, they all serve to illustrate the continued risk in Nigeria and Gulf of Guinean waters.

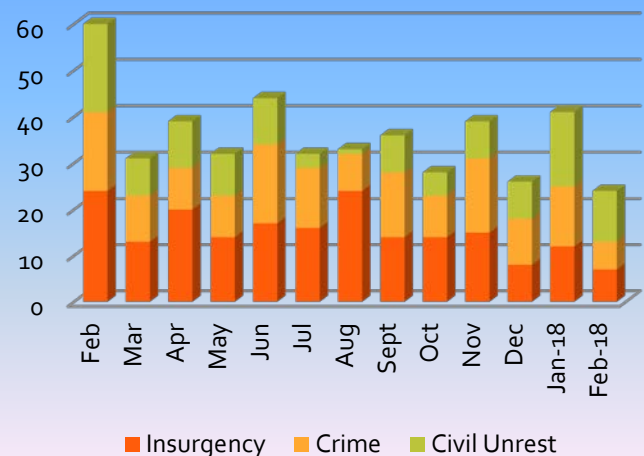
### Abduction & Kidnap

Abductions also continued during the month. Two contractors from the Niger Delta Development Commission were said to have been taken in Ogbia, Bayelsa. Reports from Cross River suggest that there is a targeted campaign against traders, with five said to have been abducted over a three week period. A lawyer was abducted from Ondo State, after which a demand for 2 million naira ransom was made. It is unclear if this was paid. Further north, a PDP chieftain was reportedly abducted in Ikara, Kaduna.

*On the 1<sup>st</sup> of March Boko Haram are suspected of attacking an IDP camp in Rann, Borno State. This is not the first time the group have attacked such a camp. Three aid workers were reportedly killed in the incident and many others wounded. The local military barracks was also said to have been attacked. Reports suggest that the militants were heavily armed and had superior gunfire. Rann has been victim to such devastation before. Back in 2017, over 100 people were killed when the military mistakenly dropped a bomb near the camp.*

**Forecast:** *Reports of abductions continue throughout Nigeria, with the most serious this month reported in the North East. Unfortunately this is not the first by the group or of school children, but it is the sheer number girls taken in one incident that makes it remarkable, especially after the Chibok abductions. For the families and loved ones involved in other incidents, the seriousness of their own incidents should not be underplayed either, while incidents of this nature are not uncommon the response can be much more low key, with a lot of responsibility on the part of their families to come up with the ransom and to negotiate release. Given that security responses and support can be different, especially if internationals are not involved, SAR recommends that organisation be very prepared in the event of an incidents of this nature, as no one or location is immune from such incidents.*

### Nigeria Feb - Feb 2018 Incidents



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Consultancy  
Ireland

*We would like to thank you for taking the time to read this bulletin. We hope you found it interesting & informative.*

*Please do not hesitate to contact us at [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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