

## Special Incident Bulletin

### **The Presidential Elections due in Nigeria in February 2015 is brought to the fore as President Goodluck Johnathan formally declares his intent to run**

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President Goodluck Johnathan came to power in February 2010 in Nigeria, when the then President of Nigeria, President Umaru Yar'Adua, took ill and was unable to govern the country. He was then the Vice President of Nigeria. After the death of President Yar'Adua, President Goodluck Johnathan was sworn in as the President of Nigeria and as Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Army. In 2011, he was formally elected as President. His tenure in office has not been without its share of controversy and criticism, which is likely to continue in advance of the 2015 Presidential Elections. A key area of criticism of the President's tenure has related to security, more specifically in regards to how the Nigeria Government has attempted to tackle Boko Haram, the Government's response to the kidnapping of over 200 girls in Chibok, and with regard to corruption allegations levelled against the Nigerian Army over recent years. Given President Goodluck Johnathan's announcement of his intent to run again as the Presidential candidate, and the ongoing security situation in Nigeria at present, these criticisms are likely to continue and to be magnified in the run up to the Presidential Elections in February 2015.

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#### **What might be expected from a security perspective in advance of the President Elections?**

A number of assertions are likely to be made by the Nigerian Authorities over the next few weeks and months, in an attempt to deflect or reduce criticism of the President, his administration and Government, especially as they may relate to security. Many of these assertions are not new but are likely to be reiterated strongly over future weeks. Further to that, rival candidates and opposition parties are likely to use the security issue as a huge criticism of the President's current term in office, as well as his re-election campaign. These assertions are likely to include, but may not be limited to the following:

- Boko Haram are a regional insurgent group and therefore a regional response strategy is required. Allegations have already been made that Boko Haram are strongly aligned to AQIM. While links to AQIM are possible, proving such links have been difficult, and while regional links can be demonstrated, the activities of Boko Haram have largely been curtailed to the North of Nigeria, and more specifically the east of the country.
- The international community need to do more to assist the Nigeria Authorities to enable them to tackle Boko Haram effectively. Already, the media are reporting that the Nigeria Authorities are heavily critical of the USA for not being willing to supply them with weapons, which they believe would assist them in the fight against Boko Haram.
- There is likely to be promises of new approaches, most probably a mixture of military, political, economic and social. However, these are unlikely to achieve significant impacts over a three month period given the nature and extent of the insurgency in the North of Nigeria. Already, the President has promised to further equip the armed forces, and to deploy Special Forces to high risk locations. Many would argue that this is a

little too late, given the apparent worsening situation in North East of Nigeria, and the lack of significant results by the military offensive to date, even with the designation of three states of emergency in the North East.

- In addition, given the recent allegations of corruption within the Nigerian Army, especially with regard to the misappropriation and spending of funds, any further funding of the military is likely to be met with such criticisms. This is said to have undermined relationships within the military, as some soldiers have reported that they are not being paid.
- There is likely to be at least one more declaration of a ceasefire, and there may be further assertions that Shekau has been arrested or killed. Similar to previous occasions these are most likely to be shown to be false or misleading, with little or no credibility or substance.
- There is likely to be an increase in incidents in the North of Nigeria, both in the East and the West. A number of which will be conducted by Boko Haram, and or its affiliates, but a proportion of incidents will be attributed to them, but more likely will have been committed by others for political reasons. Previously elections have shown an increase in violent crime before, during and after elections, directly and indirectly related to political power plays. Targets of these incidents could be political in nature, or incidents could be targeted at random targets in an attempt to intimidate and influence voters or to illustrate, further, a deteriorating security situation.
- Given previous behaviour in Nigeria over recent years and election period, it is likely that allegations will occur in greater numbers of individuals being linked to Boko Haram as members, sympathisers and/or funders. While some may have some level of credibility, proving same is likely to be difficult.

### What might be expected from Boko Haram and Shekau?

Boko Haram are likely to continue their operations unabated during the run up to the elections.

They may target local politicians who are canvassing in their areas.

Shekau is likely to make continued statements and reference the illegitimacy of the elections and the Nigerian Government, for that matter, highlighting his growing Caliphate.

### What does SAR Consultancy Offer?

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### What will this mean for working and traveling within the North of Nigeria?

Travel to the North of Nigeria from now until after the 2015 Presidential Elections still remains feasible, if proper security preparations are conducted prior to travel. It is likely that increased security measures will be put in place as the elections become closer and/or, as political conferences and gatherings take place. If possible such events should be avoided, where possible; recent similar events have shown that they can be targeted and result in loss of life.