



SAR Consultancy



Security Information Bulletin: Nigeria

IN THIS ISSUE

Summary of Security Situation

By our Senior Analyst

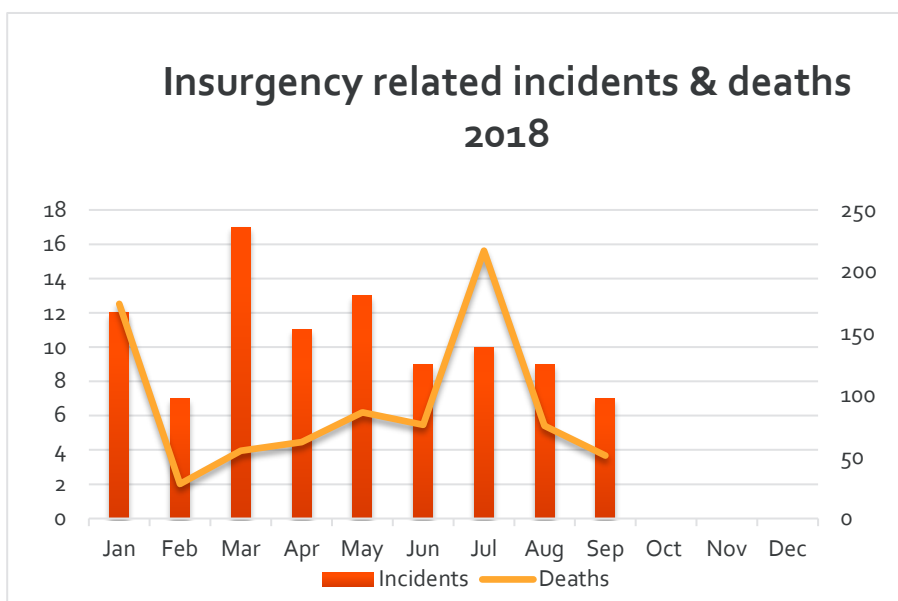
The Security Situation in Nigeria is multi-dimensional and complex. It is influenced, for the most part, by perceived political, economic and social injustice, which results in a high level of violence throughout the country. This violence is exhibited in differing dimensions and to differing degrees 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.

September 2018 – This month's incidents illustrate that the North East militancy can no longer be viewed as the most serious security challenge in Nigeria at present. This accolade goes to the violence in Middle Belt. An interesting dimension to this violence relates to its distribution, as it is clearly evident that some areas are more susceptible than others. It would be interesting to research why this is the case. That said, the North East still presents significant challenges to the Nigerian Government. Boko Haram continue to operate at a level, in many areas, commensurate with high risk zones. Interestingly, this month also saw a significant number of abductions in Kaduna State, which illustrates the risk travelling through or in the state. Within this backdrop, it is highly recommended that anyone travelling to or through Nigeria conduct a thorough security review. A second reason for this is that insecurity is likely to be amplified in advance of the Presidential elections. As a result, the security situation throughout Nigeria are closely monitored.

North East Nigeria & Boko Haram

Reports throughout September from the Nigerian military consistently claimed successful operations against Boko Haram, with significant loss of life on the side of the group. For example, over forty suspected militants were reportedly killed by the military in Kukawa, while around twenty militants were reportedly killed in Gwoza, Borno in both air and land operations. In fact, air operations in Borno State throughout the month reportedly resulted in the deaths of over seventy five militants, with land operations claiming over 100 lives. These operations also targeted vehicles and assets of the group. The group also reportedly suffered heavy casualties in Mobbar in two or three military operations. Unlike the aforementioned military operations, these incidents were reportedly the result of altercations between the two groups.



Such incidents illustrate that the group are not retreating in the face of such operations, rather continuing to conduct attacks. For example they were said to have killed two people and abducted around twenty-five in Gwoza, Borno. They were also blamed for the deaths of five people in Guzamala, ten in Nganzai and Konduga, all in Borno State. In Maiduguri, they were said to be responsible for attacking and killing five Nigerian soldiers in Maiduguri, Borno and for attacking on a civilian convoy in Dikwa. Unlike previous months, there were not many reports of suicide attacks in September, but this should not be viewed as an indication that such attacks are gone away. The past has shown that Boko Haram adopt their tactics as they see fit.

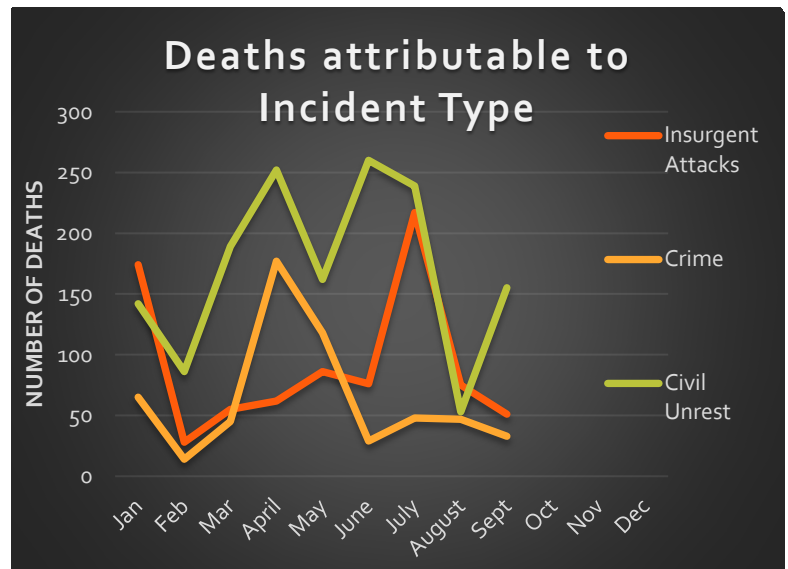
September also saw reports that a senior Boko Haram figure was killed by members of his own group during the month. He was named as Mamman Nur, an alleged leader of one of the factions of the group. Some reports claim that his death was due to an internal dispute in the group, relating to a perceived willingness by Nur to negotiate with the Nigerian Government. However, this or his death have yet to be adequately confirmed and given the number of times people have reported the death and demise of Shekau, people are likely to be wary about believing such claims in their entirety.

Assessment & Forecast: A slight reduction in the number of attacks and casualties, while welcome in the North East, should not be taken as reason to be lulled into a false sense of security that things are improving significantly. Such assessments are still a little premature. Boko Haram have shown time and time again that such patterns are not indicative of their demise. For example, February witnesses the lowest number of incidents and deaths this year to date but was followed by a month with the highest number of incidents. That said, one interesting and potentially positive factor that emerged this month relates to the apparent reduction in suicide attacks. This may be a tactical response to military advances to this MO, as the security forces have improved their response to such attacks. However, the reduction could also be due to a number of other reasons, such as a loss of expertise in making the devices, loss of willing participants to wear and execute the devices, and/or lack of access to component parts. It is too difficult to determine which may be the most credible at this time, but if this patterns continues, it will be important to look more closely at this, as it could provide valuable insights into the group and their current status. In fact, this is the type of analysis that needs to be conducted frequently to ensure responses are in line with the group's activities. Given military advances in this area, any momentum within the group to try to respond and regroup needs to be monitored closely. While such analysis is required at the operational level, a similar response should be taken by groups and organisations working in and travelling through the region. Although it is acknowledged that information can be hard to obtain, sharing information amongst organisations, where possible, may help increase perspective on the matter. Furthermore, such knowledge will help to better inform security management plans and responses, whilst also helping to identifying vulnerabilities and risks. As a result, SAR recommends that anyone considering to travel to or through the North East conduct a detailed risk assessment, informed by shared knowledge, that considers the dynamic conditions of the region at present, including a contingency plan for evacuation and/or extraction with limited or any military assistance.

Loss of Life*

This month saw a continued decrease in the number of deaths associated with Boko Haram. However, these figures do not include over 200 lives lost in military operations. Conversely, this month saw a significant increase in the casualty rate in the middle belt. That said, it has yet to return to the high rates witnessed between April and July. Interestingly the violence crime rate remained relatively stable for another month, with relatively little fluctuation experienced since June.

**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.*



Middle Belt Violence

Incidents in the middle belt continued to dominate the security agenda in Nigeria this month. Similar to previous months significant hotspots emerge. For example, Plateau State witnessed at least ten incidents. Community based violence reportedly claimed over ten lives in Jos South at the start of the month. This was followed by the deaths of five herdsmen two weeks later, reportedly committed by unknown gunmen. While the month ended with the deaths of a further eight, one of whom was a student, also in Jos South. Jos North also fell victim. A police officer was reportedly beheaded in one incident, while in two separate incidents over fifteen civilians were reportedly killed, ten by unknown gunmen and five allegedly by Nigerian soldiers. Elsewhere in Barkin Ladi, also in Plateau State, nearly ten people were killed by unknown gunmen.

Benue State was also targeted extensively, but unlike Plateau State, much of the death toll was attributed to the military, who were blamed for the deaths of over twenty five civilians in at least three separate incidents. These incidents occurred in Guma, Kukawa and Guzamala LGAs. Interestingly, it was reportedly that a number of those killed in one of these incident were members of Boko Haram. It is difficult to obtain information to substantiate this claim. While it would not be beyond possibility it remains unclear as to why this judgement was made. Later in the month a further twenty people were reportedly killed in Ukum and Okpokwu areas of Benue State. However, this time they were reportedly killed by unknown gunmen.

Taraba State, another state familiar with this type of violence, witnessed at number of incidents in September. For example, three policemen were reportedly killed, alongside two civilians in Lau. This was followed days later by the deaths of a further three people, also in Lau. While, the following week police reportedly killed three suspected robbers in Bali. Other similar incidents were reported in

Kaduna and Nasarawa. These incidents reportedly claimed the lives of over twenty five people. That said, one of the most serious incident was reported in Adamawa. Gunmen reportedly killed over fifty people and kidnapped over twenty in Numan. Another incident of note occurred in Zamfara State. Over ten people were reportedly killed, with many others injured when gunmen attacked at community hall, where people were gathered to watch a movie.

Forecast: *Incidents in the middle belt this month, clearly show that this region could and should challenge the North East for the title of most serious security challenges in Nigeria. The level of violence, the number of casualties and the geographical range of incidents illustrate the seriousness of this violence. Similar to previous months, September also witnessed a high number of interventions by the military, resulting in a high number of casualties. Last month, it was noted that such operations may deter militants, but incidents this month seem to illustrate that any deterrent value has not been significant enough to see any major reduction in incidents. In fact, it appears that such groups may have just moved their operations slightly to avoid military intervention. Another interesting factor this month in the same region was the number of abductions, especially in Kaduna State. It is hard to assess whether such incidents are connected directly or indirectly. It would not be beyond the realms of possibility that they are, but just as credible would be that other armed groups are maximising opportunities by redirecting police and security forces to ongoing clashes. Much more research into this is required in the region to fully understand what exactly is influencing this level of violence. In the past, it seemed credible to suggest that much of the violence was due to clashes over land, water and grazing, yet this seems to be less relevant today. SAR recommends to conduct regular risk assessments for the region, given that such violence is likely to continue..*

Criminality, Cultist activity & Violence

Deaths attributed to violence were also reported in the South of Nigeria this month. Nowhere appears to be immune from such violence, despite it displaying slightly differently in different areas. For example, cultist violence reportedly claimed the lives of two people in Etsako West and a further two in Oredo, Edo State. A week later a further ten students were said to have also been killed in a cultist clash. While Abia and Akwa Ibom witnessed political violence. At least ten people were reportedly killed at an APC meeting in Osisioma, while one person was killed also at an APC in Akwa Ibom. In light of previous patterns, political violence is likely to increase in advance of the presidential elections in 2019, while this is likely throughout the country the South is probably at a higher risk.

Piracy

This month witnessed a serious piracy incident recorded off the coast of Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The boat, a Swiss flagged vessel, was reportedly attacked when it was travelling from Lagos to Rivers State. At least twelve people were abducted from the boat, seven of whom were reportedly from the Philippines. The other five were said to have been from Slovenia, Ukraine, Romania, Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina. A few days later, it was reportedly that contact had been made with the hostages of these individuals and that they were all still together.

U4 Anti-Corruption Report on the Nigerian Maritime Sector that may be of interest, co-authored by our Senior Analyst, Sheelagh Brady.

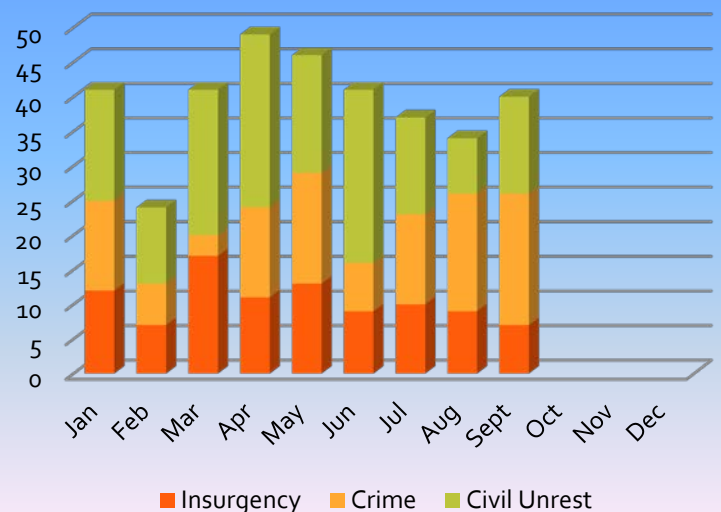
Capacity building for the Nigerian Navy: Eyes wide shut on corruption? International support to the Nigerian maritime security sector must address corruption. If it does not, such support can worsen corruption and facilitate crime such as smuggling, piracy and oil theft.

<https://www.u4.no/publications/capacity-building-for-the-nigerian-navy-eyes-wide-shut-on-corruption>

Kidnap and Abduction

September was no different than previous months, with respect to abductions. One key hotspot for such incidents was Kaduna State. Over fifteen miners were reportedly abducted from Birnin Gwari, while three lecturers were taken from Makafari, also Kaduna State. Four others were also taken in the middle of the month from Birnin Gwari. While, the military reported to have killed six kidnapers and four others in Chikun, Kaduna State during the month. Zamfara State also reported the abduction of seven in Bungudu, Zamfara. This is unlikely to have a significant impact on the numbers given to current scale of the problem. The number of abduction incidents is worrying and should be given careful consideration by anyone travelling to or through this state.

Nigeria 2018 Incidents



Niger Delta Region

September saw the Nigerian Navy warn suspected oil thieves and other criminals in the Niger Delta to refrain from violence or face the law. This warning was followed by advice to them to enter into productive ventures available to them. The military also took this as an opportunity to report their progress in this area. That said, from past experience it is clear to see that things can change at pace in this region, so any peace should not be taken for granted.

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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 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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