

SAR Consultancy

(Security Analysis & Research)

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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.

May 2016 witnessed reports of successful military offensives by the Nigerian military against Boko Haram in the North East. Nonetheless, the group continued to illustrate its capacity to conduct attacks against soft targets, but also against more protected targets in Maiduguri. That said, it is the increased militant activity in the Niger Delta region that is hitting the headlines in Nigeria and further afield. Attacks on oil facilities are significantly impacting the production levels in the country. Furthermore, threats by the Niger Delta Avengers and the Niger Delta Liberation Force to stop oil production pose a fresh challenges to the Nigerian government from both a security and economic perspective. As a result, increased reports of kidnapping, piracy and continued communal clashes appear to pale into insignificances given these two major challenges. Nonetheless, these types of incidents are likely to continue to increase, given the growing demands for military in the North East and the Niger Delta region.



North East Nigeria & Boko Haram

The Nigerian military launched 'Operation Crackdown' during the month of May on Sambisa Forest in a concerted effort to disrupt the activities of Boko Haram. This operation resulted in a number of significant successes, most notably the discovery of bomb making facilities and logistic camps within the forest. Another reported success this month on foot of the recent crackdown related to the alleged rescue of one of the Chibok schoolgirls kidnapped in 2014 by suspected Boko Haram insurgents. That said, reports are somewhat unclear as to whether the girl escaped, was found by a member of the CJTF or rescued by the military. Irrespective of how she made good her escape, it is a positive indication that there is hope for the families of the other girls. A second school girl was also said to have been released days later but the authenticity of this claim has yet to be confirmed. In addition, the military also reported claims of arresting and killing suspected Boko Haram operatives while regaining territory throughout Borno state.

However, despite these increased efforts, Boko Haram have continued to conduct attacks, albeit largely against soft targets, such as villages, vehicles, mosques, etc. For example, reports claimed that communities were attacked in Jere LGA by suspected Boko Haram operatives, in which approximately 13 people were killed. In Sulaimanti, the outskirts of Maiduguri, a suspected Boko Haram operative was reported to have detonated a suicide bomb, killing himself and injuring others. The next day, another suicide bomber had more success when he killed himself and five others outside the State Secretariat in Maiduguri. Attacks within the city of Maiduguri had greatly reduced over recent months, but this incident clearly illustrates a retained capacity to conduct attacks within an area perceived to be highly secured. Furthermore, the group, albeit greatly disrupted, do not appear to be afraid to conduct intermittent attacks against the military, with reports this month that operatives attacked troops attempting to conduct clearance operations near the Sambisa forest. In addition, Boko Haram reportedly killed on soldier and four civilians in Biu with an explosive device.

The risk to returning IDPs became all too real this month. As increased numbers of IDPs return, so to do reports of deaths. Seven returnee IDPs were reportedly killed by a landmine in Gujba LGA, Yobe state this month, which was alleged to have been planted by Boko Haram operatives as they fled. Those killed were said to have been working on farmland when the explosion occurred. The incident highlights the continued danger of landmines as IDPs return to their farmlands.

Discussions between Nigeria and Cameroon continued this month in an effort to enhance regional cooperation against Boko Haram. The reason behind these talks is due, in part, to the increased number of attacks by Boko Haram in Cameroon over



recent months. This month, Cameroon troops reportedly killed one suspected suicide bomber, and prevented a second from killing anyone else when she detonated her device and died. In more recent weeks, successful joint operations between both countries military have been reported especially in the area of the Mandara Mountains. Reports also claimed that a large number of women and children were released from the capture of Boko Haram in Cameroon. Reports of captives released also emerged from Sambisa forest. Niger experienced attacks this month, with Boko Haram suspected of conducting an attack in Bosso Niger, in which six people were reportedly killed. An incident early in June, in which 30+ people were reportedly killed, illustrates clearly their continued capacity in the region.

Forecast: *Albeit reports continue of military successes, recent attacks in the outskirts of Maiduguri and the one in the city are all indicative that the threat from Boko Haram is omnipresent. Although it is clear that Boko Haram have been greatly disrupted, it would appear premature to assess that they no longer have the capacity to conduct attacks on high profile targets. Furthermore, as increased numbers of IDPs return, the residual risk of Boko Haram's prior territorial control is all too apparent. Given the current level of military resources required to contain and disrupt Boko Haram, it is unlikely the military will have the capacity to demine and sterilise all areas. As a result, the threat of unexploded ordinance is likely to continue into the medium term. Furthermore, given the number of incidents in the region of late, Boko Haram are likely to continue to pose a risk in the region as well as Nigeria.*

Middle Belt Clashes

Middle belt violence continued this month, with significant loss of life. Reports that at least 20 herdsmen were killed, alongside 83 cattle, by gunmen emerged from Nasarawa State. It is alleged that the gunmen travelled from Agatu in Benue State to conduct a reprisal for earlier attacks conducted on their villages by suspected Fulani herdsmen. In Taraba state, 12 people were reportedly killed by suspected herdsmen in Gassol LGA, whilst a number of houses were burnt down in the village. In Kaduna, it was alleged that Fulani herdsmen were reported to have killed the traditional ruler of Fadan Karshi community, Sanga LGA. While three others were reportedly killed in Jem'a LGA when suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked Ninte village. Herdsmen were also blamed for the death of seven in Konshisha, Benue state at the end of the month.

The impact of these incidents has resulted in many communities in the middle belt living in fear. Increasingly communities are raising concerns about their inability to further develop agriculture in the region due to the perceived risk from herdsmen. Conversely, herdsmen raise concerns that they are no longer able to move their animals and access grazing like they have for generations. The associated fear, tensions and frustrations of all parties is unlikely to be alleviated in the medium term and a strong military response will not solve the problem either. As a result, communities are increasingly calling on the government to help restore order in the region.

A number of other clashes that occurred this month elsewhere in Nigeria are also worth noting. For example, in Maru LGA, Zamfara state 20 cattle rustlers were reported killed in an operation consisting of the police, army and DSS officers.

While three people were reportedly killed in Aba following clashes at a market involving traders and members of the Hausa community. It is alleged that this is the result of increased tensions between Igbo and Hausa communities.

Forecast: *These incidents clearly illustrate a continued risk in the middle belt region, and in other areas of the country, from communal clashes and violence. This is unlikely to dissipate in the short and medium term. As a result, such attacks could pose a risk to the international or donor community if in the wrong place at the wrong time. Furthermore, and 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 are in the same area in which agricultural development will occur in the future. If left unchallenged, communal clashes have the potential to negatively impact development and agricultural projects in this area.*

Niger Delta Regions

May witnessed increasing evidence of a renewed militancy in the Niger Delta region, in the form of violence and pipeline attacks. A number of attacks were reported this month on Chevron oil facilities, amongst others. While, four policemen and three soldiers were also reportedly killed, in two separate



incidents, by gunmen near Yenagoa, Bayelsa state, the southern region of the Niger Delta. Nigerian troops were also said to have killed four pirates in Ogbia, Bayelsa state, while militants were also reported to have attacked an oil pipeline in Southern Ijaw. This rise in violence, attacks on oil facilities and alleged threats by militants has resulted in increased fear and tensions in the region.

The increase in incidents have, for the most part, been attributed to or claimed by Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) and/or the Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force (NDLF). The NDA was established in 2016 and since then has conducted a number of attacks on oil facilities. These attacks are seriously impacting the level of oil production in the region, as many facilities have been closed as a result. The NDLF, reportedly based in Bayelsa, have allegedly claimed affiliation to the NDA.

These groups present a fresh challenge to the Nigerian Government given the increased level of violence in the region combined with the seriousness of their threats. For example, it is alleged that the NDLF have threatened to target the presidential villa, government ministries, the parliament, the military and offices of the major oil producers. That said, the NDA has stated that they will not kill soldiers unless provoked, as their cause is against the oil industry and not the innocent. However, the NDLF has threatened to bring down any military helicopter deployed to the region, albeit they too have said their aim is not to shed the blood of the innocent. Furthermore, they have threatened to launch missile attacks on commercial flights if any flight operations take place on or after the 7th of June 2016. That said, the group claim that they have both the capability and the training to do just that.

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Like Boko Haram both groups have taken to publically announce their activities, motivations and aims, whilst also challenging the military rhetoric, calling into question a number of military statements about their actions and motivations, and with respect to claims of military advances against them. Furthermore, feelings of marginalisation are also reported to be a significant contributory factors to the group's activities.

In response to this increase in violence, the government are taking action to establish a joint task force to tackle these growing tensions. Furthermore, they are reportedly increasing the number of military deployed to the regions. Despite this, the violence is unlikely to reduce significantly in the short and medium term. Tensions and motivations seem high and deep routed feelings of marginalisation and distaste against the elite appear deep routed.

Forecast: *While it is still unclear as to whether the NDA or the NDLF have the capacity to carry out their threats, the cancellation of the President's proposed visit to the region may indicate that the government are not willing to take the risk. Furthermore, given recent incidents where commercial airlines were brought down using surface to air missiles and on board explosives it is not beyond the realms of possibility that this could happen in Nigeria if the necessary equipment is available to these groups. As a result the situation in the Niger Delta should be closely monitored for the foreseeable future. Albeit largely contained in the Niger Delta region at the moment, this could easily spread to Abuja, Lagos or Port Harcourt if either group want to demonstrate their capacity to further deliver on their threats.*

Abduction & Kidnap

Reports of increased criminality continue this month, especially with regard to an increase in abduction and kidnapping, which is said to be increasing in Kogi, Kaduna, Benue and southern parts of Kano states. For example, two APC representatives were reportedly kidnapped in Lokaja and two judges from Idah. Concerns about the increased risk were raised by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), especially in the north central region. In addition, it was noted that the NHRC has been petitioned by the Igbo community over the kidnap of 17 members of one community in Benue state between 2013 and 2016. That said, kidnappings are not restricted to the north, two sisters were reported abducted for ransom in Kajola, Ondo state this month.

Violence in Southern states

Reports continued from southern states of violence between cults and gangs and security forces or other officials. For example, reports of cult clashes emerged again this month, with claims that over twenty people were reportedly killed in four separate incidents in Rivers state. Gunmen reportedly killed seven policemen also in Rivers state, in two unrelated incidents. Whilst six people were reported killed during clashes between customs officials and customs in Egbado South, Ogun state.

Ramadan

Some countries experience an increase in militant activity during Ramadan. Many analyst have expressed concern of an increased threat from ISIS, and subsequently Boko Haram/ISWAP as a result. These risks should not be ruled out. Furthermore, from a practical point of view, working days can be shorter, services, including flights, can be delayed,

and general tensions can be heightened. As a result, those visiting or residing in countries where Ramadan is widely observed should be mindful and respectful during this time.

Piracy

Reports this month claim that piracy in the first four months of 2016 along the Nigeria coastline is up 21% on peak levels in 2008. Off the shore of Bayelsa state was reported as high risk. Interestingly, the military reported that they averted three pirate attacks on vessels over two days in Bayelsa state in early May. It was noted that this increased risk was due to a change in perception that kidnapping the crews for ransom was more lucrative than off shore robbery. As a result, while tankers and oilfield support vessels are a key target, all vessels in these waters should be mindful of the increased risk and take adequate precautions.

Factors worth monitoring

- Increased attacks in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, and also in the region on military targets but more likely against softer targets.
- Increased risk of attacks on oil facilities but also on offices of oil companies and employees.
- Increased kidnapping in the North Central region, especially for middle ranking Nigerians,

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.
