

# SAR Consultancy

(Security Analysis & Research)

## SECURITY INFORMATION BULLETIN NIGERIA

July 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.

**July 2016** continued to see advances by the military in the North East of Nigeria, but despite this, Boko Haram continued to conduct or attempt attacks on soft targets, such as IDP camps, Mosques and villages. They also conducted attacks on harder targets such as military camps and a convoy. While some of these attacks were repelled, they still illustrate the continued capacity and resolve within Boko Haram to continue their activities. These are likely to continue in short, medium and long term, given the apparent numbers of willing fighters. Similar to last month, violence in the Niger Delta continued to make headlines this month. These attacks are having a significant impact on the economy of Nigeria, with oil production levels at a 30 year low. This deteriorating economic situation is likely to impact criminality, which may play out in increased incidents of abduction throughout the country. Furthermore, petty criminality is likely to increase as many people become more financially desperate.



## North East Nigeria & Boko Haram

Similar to previous months, the Nigerian military continue to make claims about successful operations and positive advances in the North East. A culmination of much of this work has resulted in the reopening of the road between Maiduguri-Mafa-Dikwa-Gamboru, providing greater access to areas which have been inaccessible for over two years due to the ongoing insurgency. The military also reported that they recaptured Damasak town this month, along with some other villages close to the Niger border. This development is deemed significant given its proximity to Niger and that Damasak is said to have been an important location from where Boko Haram planned and conducted attacks both in Nigeria and across the border in Niger. These advances are enabling, in part, increased access to development agencies throughout certain areas of Borno state. This access has magnified the scale of the humanitarian crisis being experienced there by many. The UN has made several warnings this month of severe malnutrition in parts of Borno.

Reports of successful military operations also continued this month. The military reportedly averted a number of attacks, including a suicide bomb attack on an IDP camp in Mongonu. It was suggested that three females were planning to attack the camp, but detonated their explosives prematurely due to military intervention. The military also reportedly repelled a suspected Boko Haram attack on a military camp in Kala Balge LGA, Borno state. Seven civilians were reportedly killed in the incident. Military reports claim that they killed at least 16 militants in the process. Two soldiers were said to have lost their lives in the incident. The military also reported that they repelled an attack by suspected Boko Haram insurgents in Kangaruwa, Abadam LGA, Borno state and in Kukawa LGA, Borno state. At least 42 suspected insurgents were reportedly killed in Kukawa LGA, which a number of women and children were rescued. It has also been claimed that a number of troops were unaccounted for after the incident. While these incidents illustrate positive advances on behalf of the military, they also illustrate the continued number of insurgents active in Borno state.

The number of suspected insurgent related incidents during the month also provided credibility that Boko Haram remain capable of conducting attacks, both from the perspective of capacity and numbers, resulting in them still being a formidable force. For example, a suicide bomber reportedly attacked a mosque in Damboa, reportedly killing between six and ten in the attack. A second bomber was said to have detonated his device outside of the mosque as he could not gain entry. The group were also blamed for the deaths of three people in Maiduguri. At the end of the

month, a UN convoy was attacked in Kawuri village, Konduga LGA when it was reportedly travelling from Maiduguri to Bama. No one claimed responsibility for the attack, but Boko Haram involvement is suspected. This resulted in a temporary suspension of UN humanitarian assistance in the North East. The attack on the convoy happened whilst being escorted by the Nigerian military.



Suspected Boko Haram attacks also continued in the region. Reports claimed that insurgents attacked a multinational joint task force base in Cameroon. The groups were also said to have attacked a number of villages in the area too. Some analysts argue that an apparent increase in attacks in the region may be symbolic of the push back being experienced by the group in Nigeria. There may be some credibility in this assessment but continued attacks in Nigeria illustrate a retained capacity within the group to commit attacks in Nigeria despite the military advances. History has shown that the group often strategically use locations in the region to rest, recuperate and regroup so this should be watched closely. The rainy season is likely to be further enabling the insurgents to regroup given that it restricts the military's access and movement in certain parts of the state.

**Forecast:** *Successful military operations and positive advancements continued this month, but despite this, Boko Haram have clearly illustrated its retained capacity to conduct operations both on soft targets such as villages and mosques, but also on military camps and military convoys. The attack on the UN convoy is significant, especially given that it was supported by a military escort at the time. Some argue that this may have made it a higher target, a point that is likely to receive further discussion by humanitarian providers in the area. Furthermore, such an incident illustrates that despite announcements of road openings, road travel in Borno and surrounding states is not without its risks. In addition, it illustrates that's Boko Haram still poses a significant risk to those working, living and travelling in the North East of Nigeria despite military advances.*

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## Middle Belt Clashes

Communal clashes continued this month, with reports of a number of incidents throughout the middle belt, especially in Benue state. Eight people were reportedly killed in a violent clash in Okpokwu, earlier this month, while five herdsmen were reportedly killed in Logo, LGA. A number of days later, suspected Fulani herdsmen were blamed for the alleged deaths of scores of people in Logo and Ukum LGAs, in attacks on a number of villages, possibly reprisal attacks. Near the end of the month, reports claimed that suspected Fulani herdsmen also killed ten people and injured others whilst they were heading to their farms in Logo LGA. Approximately four people were said to have been killed in reprisal attacks in Barakuta, Bosso LGA, between suspected herdsmen and local farmers. Property and houses were damaged in the incident. Suspected Fulani herdsmen were also blamed for the death of a traditional ruler in Sha village, Bokkos LGA, Plateau state. The death reportedly triggered unrest in the village, with reports that four people were killed. This resulted in the imposition of a 24hr curfew.

**Forecast:** *These incidents illustrate a continued risk in the middle belt region, and in other areas of the country, from communal clashes. Despite some special security operations in affected areas, these incidents do not appear to be receiving the necessary intervention to bring them to a conclusion. Whilst such attacks don't pose a direct risk to the international or donor community, if staff are in the wrong place at the wrong time they may be at risk. 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.*



## SAR Consultancy

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## Niger Delta Regions

Militants continued to attack oil facilities throughout the month. Some of the incidents were claimed by the Niger Delta Avengers, but some went unclaimed.



Niger Delta Avengers reportedly claimed their involvement in attacks on a pipeline in Warri, two lines near Batan flow station and facilities near Abiteye flow station early in the month. Incidents which went unclaimed included an alleged attack on a pipeline owned by the Nigerian Agip Oil Company in Brass LGA, Bayelsa state, one in Sagamu, Ogun state, one on a NNPC pipeline in Nsit Ibom LGA, Akwa Ibom state and a second in Batan, allegedly owned by Shell. Suspected Niger Delta militants were also blamed for an attack on a village in Alimosho LGA, Lagos state which left an unknown number dead.

**Forecast:** *These incidents illustrate the insecurity in the Niger Delta region, which is having a serious impact on oil production in the region. Oil production is at a 30 year low, which is significantly impacting the economy. 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. For those, living and working in this region, there is a need to be situationally aware at all times.*

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## Cattle Rustling

Due to an apparent increase in armed incidents of cattle rustling in the North West of Nigeria, President Buhari has reportedly ordered that a special military taskforce be deployed to the North West, in states including Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger. Recent military operations appear to have increased on foot of this announcement, with reports that at least eleven suspected cattle rustlers were killed in an incident with soldiers when they raided the hideout of rustlers in Maru LGA, Zamfara. It should be noted that incidents are not only confined to the North West, with suspected cattle rustlers blamed for the deaths of three people and for causing injuring to a further three when they attacked Thambo village, Girej LGA, Adamawa state. Cattle were also stolen from the village as were other foodstuffs. This problem is not a new phenomenon. It has been going on for a number of years, one which appears to be seasonal in nature given the patterns and trends of attacks. As a result, while it is likely to continue, given previous trends it is likely to reduce in the medium term, until next year.

## Criminality, Cultist activity & Violence

Seven people were reported killed in Yukuur, Cross River state. While Cultists were blamed for the deaths of eleven in Sagamu, Ogun and two in Lokoja, Kogi state during the month. Ongoing violence throughout Nigeria illustrates the risk for those travelling or living in the country. While much of the violence is isolated amongst certain groups, being in the wrong place at the wrong time may make one more vulnerable. As a result, any travel or movements in the country should be well planned and risk assessed.

## Abduction & Kidnap

Reports of kidnappings continued throughout Nigeria this month. July started with reports that the Deputy High Commissioner of Sierra Leone was kidnapped between Abuja and Jaji. His release was reported a number of days later. It is still unclear who carried out the abduction or if a ransom was paid. However, abductions in this area are not uncommon, with many conducted for money. Further south, a Lagos monarch was reportedly kidnapped in his home state this month. That said, the police are reporting increased operations against these kidnapping gangs and individuals responsible. For example, police reportedly arrested members of a gang in Kogi state, suspected of involvement in kidnapping, while four police officers and two kidnappers were reported killed in a gun fight in Ikwere, Rivers state.

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*This month saw the release of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into last December's alleged killing of more than 300 members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria in Zaria Kaduna state by the Army. The commission blamed the military, Police and State Security Services for failing in their responsibilities. The question now arises if those responsible will be charged.*

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## Piracy

Despite a fall in piracy and armed robbery at sea, Nigeria was described by the International Maritime Bureau as the world's piracy and kidnapping hotspot in one of their recent reports. This is possibly due to an increase in kidnappings for ransom, a MO more frequently used in Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea of late. Incidents in the Gulf of Guinea accounted for seven of the ten world's kidnapping incidents at sea.

Furthermore, the report suggests that Nigerian attacks are often the most violent, accounting for eight of the nine vessels fired upon at sea.

## Factors worth monitoring

- Increased attacks in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, and also in the region on military targets but more likely against softer targets. Given the attacks on the UN convoy, other humanitarian agencies should be cautious if they are using military escorts.
- Increased chance of kidnapping on routes between Abuja and Kaduna.
- Increased risk of attacks on oil facilities but also on offices of oil companies and employees.
- As the economy deteriorates further, crime is likely to increase, as may burglaries, robberies and kidnapping for ransom.

**Note:** *At time of release, reports were emerging of an alleged leadership change in Boko Haram. Report suggest that IS announced that Abu Musab al-Barnawi will replace Abubakar Shekau. Could this be a game changer? Does it illustrate a split in the ranks? SAR will address this in a separate bulletin.*

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*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](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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