



# SAR Consultancy



## Security Information Bulletin: Nigeria

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## Summary of Security Situation

by our Senior Analyst

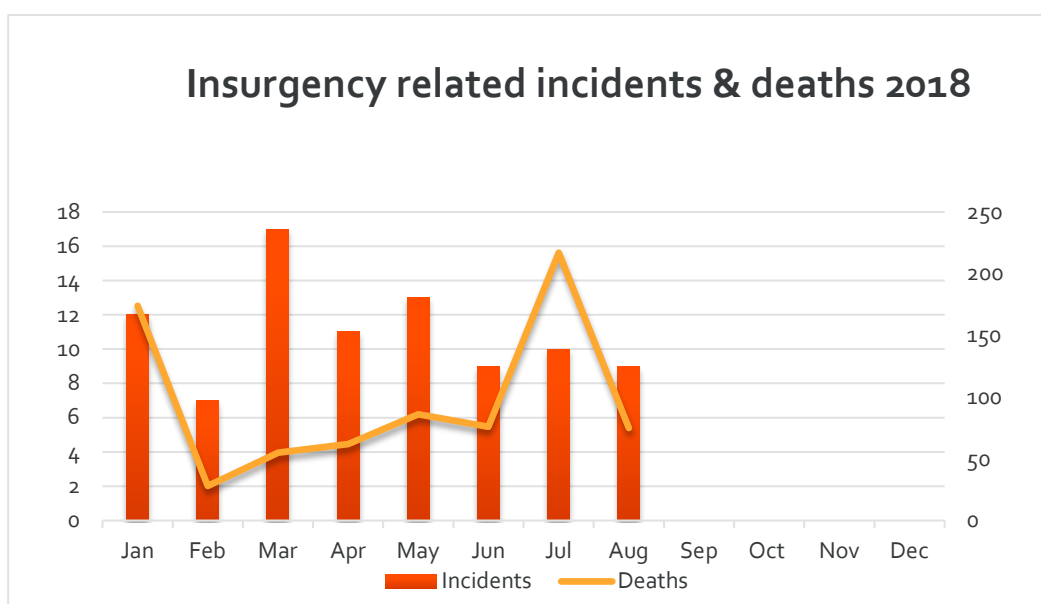
The Security Situation in Nigeria is multi-dimensional and complex. It is influenced, for the most part, by perceived political, economic and social injustice, which results in a high level of violence throughout the country. This violence is exhibited in differing dimensions and to differing degrees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

**August 2018** – Incidents in August continue to illustrate the violent nature of crime in Nigeria. Incidents in the North East continue to call into question assertions by the government that IDPs are safe to return home. This is further questionable given that the military seem unable to defend themselves completely against the group, illustrated by the number of military deaths reported this month. Incidents in the middle belt, despite seeing a reduction this month are still a case of concern. While this month saw significant military operations, the number of people killed raises the question as to whether such deadly force is needed and are innocent people being caught in the cross fire. Within this backdrop, it is also worrying to hear of renewed threats by militant groups in the Niger Delta region, given an already stretched security apparatus. All these factors are likely to be amplified in advance of the Presidential elections. Therefore, SAR recommends the security situation throughout Nigeria are closely monitored.

## North East Nigeria & Boko Haram

August started with reports that the Nigerian military killed a number of Boko Haram militants in Monguno, Borno. Evidence for many of the military's continued success against the group. A number of days later similar reports emerged. In sustained operations the military also reportedly killed suspected militants in Konduga, Guzamala, Jere, Bama, Kukawa and Dikwa. However, such operations should not be viewed as indicative of the group's demise, as they still do not appear to be significantly deterred by the military's operations against them.



Throughout the month, Boko Haram were blamed for attacks on civilians. Over ten people were killed in Maiduguri in two separate incidents and a further twenty people, or more, in Guzamala, Borno. Some media reports claim that they have sources who put the death toll in Guzamala at over fifty. These discrepancies in death tolls are not rare. It is very difficult to get accurate statistics of this nature from the field. Boko Haram also attempted a number of suicide attacks this month. The group were also said to have lost five of their members who allegedly killed themselves in attempted suicide attacks in Maiduguri throughout the month. No civilians were reportedly killed in these incidents.

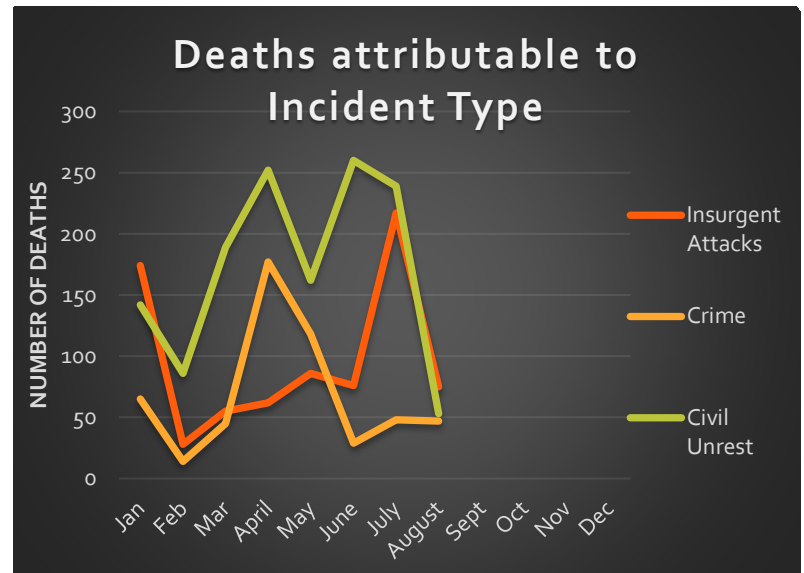
The group were also blamed for the deaths of at least twenty soldiers in Mobbar at the end of the month. The military denied such claims, reporting that they had repelled the attack. However, reports from the field indicate that the death toll is likely to have been higher. Similar to previous attacks of this nature, the group reportedly arrived to the town, where they were said to have attacked the military base. This incident came about two weeks after at least 15 soldiers and officials from NEMA, the Nigerian disaster agency, were killed by suspected Boko Haram militants in an ambush in Damasak. These incidents continue to illustrate that the group do not appear to be deterred by the military advances.

**Assessment & Forecast:** A number of interesting factors emerge when looking at the incidents in the North East throughout August. For one, the incidents continue to illustrate that calls for IDPs to return home are somewhat premature. If the military cannot repel militants, how can villagers be expected to do so. Furthermore, if the group are not deterred by the military operations, having civilians return to some relatively remote locations, is only likely to provide Boko Haram and other militant groups with increased targets. This is said given that the group do not appear to be significantly undermined. In fact, one could easily argue that the group appear to have a constant supply of weapons, fighters and funding. Without understanding the routes and origins of such elements, the group will not be easy to contain now and into the future. Another interestingly element that needs to be closely monitored are the attacks on the military. Last month, we highlighted that the number of serious incidents had reduced, but given recent attacks on the military in August, and also in early September, prior to print, they clearly indicate the group continue to have the capacity, capabilities and commitment to target military infrastructures. This is significant. That said, it is acknowledged that such attacks may not be all about capacity within Boko Haram, it may indicate challenges within the military themselves. It is clear that they are over stretched. Such attacks may be indicative that Boko Haram have identified these vulnerabilities and are capitalising on such weaknesses. What is clear, once again, this month is that this insurgency will not be contained by military advances alone. It requires a much more complex alternative delivered at a number of levels. It is now time, for some brave politicians, military officials and others in power to take a step back and critically question their approach to date, and look to alternatives that may help or support them in their goal. Without a more holistic response, this insurgency is likely to continue. In the meantime and given the apparent increase in attacks on the military, SAR recommends that anyone considering to travel to or through the North East conduct a detailed risk assessment 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 decrease in deaths associated with Boko Haram. However, it should be noted that such figures do not include lives lost in military operations. These operations resulted in significant loss of lives in Borno, Zamfara and Benue States. For example, over 120 herdsmen and militants were reportedly killed in Zamfara and Benue State by the military during the month. While over fifty suspected members of Boko Haram were reportedly killed by the military in operations. That said, reductions across all incident types are positive.

\*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

As in previous months, violence in the middle belt was distributed throughout the region, with some states hit more heavily than others. For example, over ten people were killed in Plateau State in three unrelated incidents in Bassa, Jos East and Barkin Ladi. While in Taraba State, over ten people were killed in two separate, but likely related incidents, in Lau. This loss of life occurred over 48 hours. Then in Benue State, at least four incidents were reported. The first was an incident between gunmen and locals, in which over ten people were killed in Katsina-Ala. In another incident in Katsina-Ala, soldiers reportedly killed fifteen herdsmen. While in Guma LGA, a soldier was reportedly killed by herdsmen in Guma LGA. Reports from another incident in Benue State, claimed that nine people were killed when an armed group stormed a community. Interestingly, the assailants were reported dressed in military fatigues and were heavily armed. These may not have been military, nor are they likely to be herdsmen, but some militant groups were fatigues. The month also witnessed increased military responses in Zamfara State. The military reportedly killed scores in operations in Zurmi, Birnin, Magai/Kiyaw, and Anka, during August, and they were also blamed for the deaths of over forty in Guma, Benue.

Interestingly, the International Crisis Group (ICG) reported in July 2018, that 1,300 people have been killed in the violence in the middle belt since the start of 2018, making it more deadly than the Boko Haram insurgency. For those watching this region, reports of attacks are not new. However, there has been a change in the nature and style of attacks in many areas. Spontaneous clashes between farmers and herdsmen, evolved over time into targeted attacks by armed militia. However, since late 2017, early 2018, such attacks seem to have evolved further to planned, strategic attacks, more frequent and violent in nature.

**Forecast:** Incidents in the middle belt this month, while continuing to occur, did not continue in the same direction as previous month's trends and patterns. For one, the number of lives lost decreased considerably. However, given the death toll was so high, such a reduction was likely to occur at some stage. Furthermore, given the increased level of intervention by the military, the militants are likely to be deterred, even if only in the short term. Given this, it will be interesting to see if these operations continue to deter the militants. However, given previous patterns and trends, it is highly likely that militants just move their operations slightly to avoid the military, or that they take on the military; and/or we see a bit of both. It is highly unlikely that these incidents will just stop. As a result, the next few months will show how these operations impact the nature and impact of middle belt violence. A second factor that should not go unnoticed this month, is the report of ICG, it is clear from their figures that the level of violence in the middle belt is more deadly than the North East at present. However, it should be reminded that the nature of this violence is different and therefore requires a different response than that delivered in the North East. That said, it too needs a holistic approach designed within the context of the middle belt violence, and one that is underpinned by a deep understanding of the issues at hand. For those travelling through and in the region, SAR recommends to conduct regular risk assessments for the region, given that such violence is likely to shift to neighbouring states if military operations continue in Zamfara and Benue States. Furthermore, given that the military operations are likely to continue, travellers need to be aware of where and when such operations are occurring.

## Criminality, Cultist activity & Violence

Violent crime in the South of Nigeria continued throughout August. Similar to previous months much of this violence was targeted at the police. For example, robbers reportedly killed one police man and eight others in Akoko-Edo, Edo. Three robbers were also reportedly killed in the same incident. A similar incident occurred in Owan West, also Edo State a few days later. One police man and one civilian were reportedly killed. A police man was also killed in Bomadi, Delta and in Lagos, a police man was reportedly killed by a mob. Conversely, four robbers were reportedly killed by police in Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom and a further three criminal suspects were burnt to death in Calabar, Cross River. Another significant target this month, was politicians. An APC chieftain was killed by gunmen who also killed two others in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti. While in Bayelsa, three people died in a clash between APC and PDP in Brass and in Okpe, Delta State, an ex-councillor was killed. Violence associated with politics and elections is not new in Nigeria, and is common throughout the country, as can be seen in these three examples. This is likely to continue and potentially rise in advance of the Presidential elections. Another common type of violence this month was cultist clashes. A clash in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State resulted in four deaths, while a clash

in Imo, resulted in one. Throughout the rest of the region, gunmen reportedly killed five in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State, and one in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State. While much of this violence is synonymous with the South South of Nigeria. It occurs elsewhere throughout the country. For example, gunmen reportedly killed a Catholic priest in Gwagwalada, FCT. While in Kogi State, two people were also killed during the bye-election in Lokoja, Kogi.

## Kidnap and Abduction

Kidnappings continued throughout the country. Two soldiers, one police man, and one other were reportedly abducted in Abua/Odual, Rivers. A further four women were also taken from Ikwerre LGA, Rivers State. These incidents comes in the wake of two other similar incidents in Rivers State. In Kaduna State, four police men were kidnapped in Igabi. In the same area of Kaduna state, a Baptist pastor was killed and his wife abducted, while in earlier in the month an Islamic preacher and two others were abducted. Media reports suggest a ransom has been demanded in this incident but this has yet to be confirmed by the police. In Cross River State, a person was abducted in Calabar. Such incidents continue to illustrate the risk of kidnap throughout the country.



## SAR Consultancy

*Providing peace of mind in changing security environments*

### 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 next audit; you have a duty of care to your employees to ensure your security infrastructure is fit for purpose.*

## Piracy

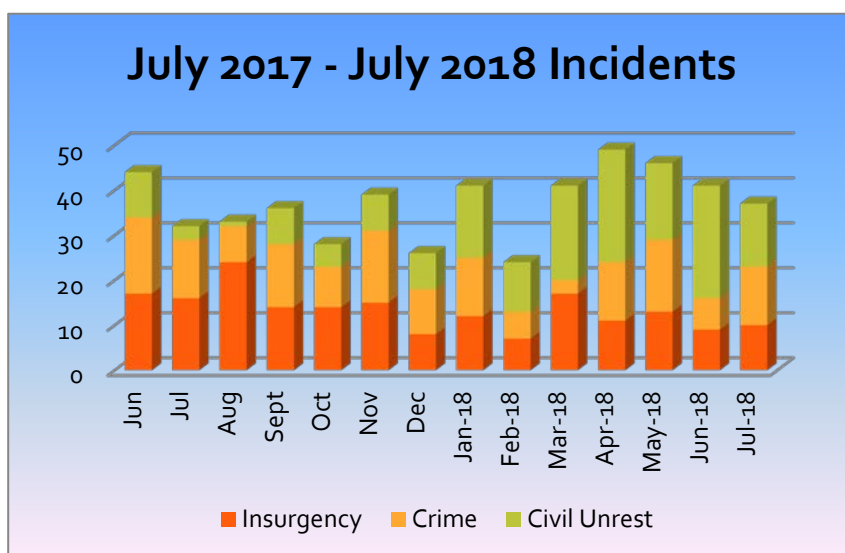
The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) showed an increase in global piracy in the first six months of 2018 on the same period in 2017. The number rose from 87 to 107. The number of hostages also increased on the same period last year, from 63 to 102. The report, for the second quarter running, placed Nigeria in number one slot for the highest number of recorded attacks against vessels, ahead of nations such as Indonesia, Bangladesh, Venezuela and Benin Republic. This increase was also echoed in the Gulf of Guinea region. The number of incidents rose from 16 in the first half of 2017 to 46 in 2018, 31 of which were in Nigeria's territorial waters alone.

### 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>

## Niger Delta Region

Given the level of insecurity in the North East and Middle Belt within Nigeria, one may be mistaken to take your eyes off the Niger Delta Region, an area of the country synonymous with violence, but relatively quiet of late. However, as is well known, things can change rapidly in this region, any peace is tentative. This month is no different. The month was relatively peacefully, but near the end of it, according to the media, the Coalition of Niger Delta Agitators threatened to resume attacks in the Niger Delta if the country is not restructured. Such threats are not rare, but should not be ignored. The Nigerian Authorities do not need a resumption of violence in this area, given commitments elsewhere. The group's message also condemned alleged actions of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) which saw the freezing of the Akwa Ibom state government account. The group appeared to take this as a sign that the national government were attempting to hinder the state government work. Such actions in light of the upcoming Presidential elections are likely to be interpreted as political power playing, regardless of how justified they are, which could be used to motivate violence in response. Given these risks, this should be closely monitored.



**SAR**  
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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](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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