



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.

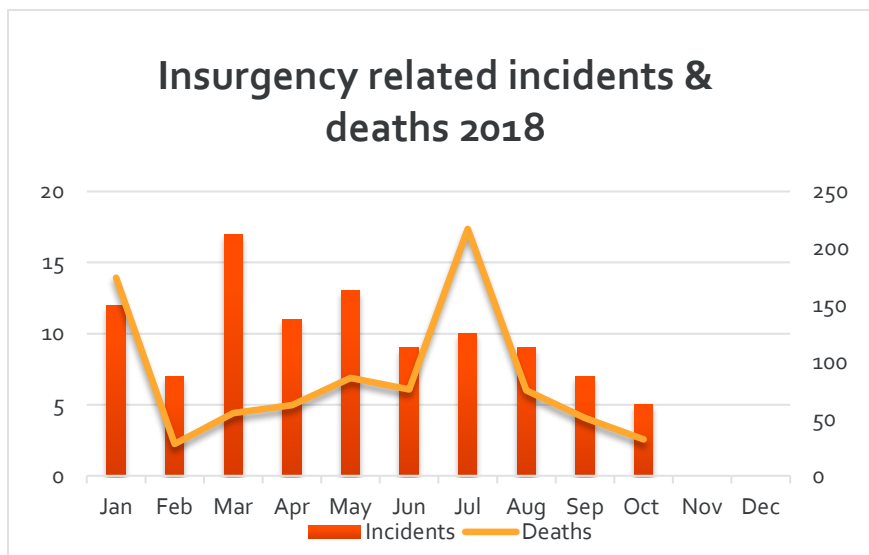
October 2018 – Similar to last month, the middle belt seems to be the most serious security challenge in Nigeria at present. This accolade is attributable both in relation to the number of incidents and the number of casualties. Additionally, the geographical reach, the range of drivers, and the number of actors all contribute to making it a very challenging security situation to respond to. That said, the North East still presents significant challenges to the Nigerian Government. Boko Haram continue to operate at a level that requires considerable resources to respond to, and despite a reduction in incidents, they still pose a considerable risk. 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

October saw a significant level of military intervention throughout Borno State. If reports are to be believed, the military killed over two hundred suspected militants during the month, whilst losing around twenty troops in the process. These operations included air and land responses. There was an interesting dimension to some of the reports of military success this month. At least of two incidents involved direct clashes between the military and militants. But more interesting still was the alleged number of militants killed in both incidents. In one, over seventy militants were reportedly killed and in a second, over forty. If correct, these incidents clearly illustrate that Boko Haram still retain the capacity to come together in large numbers and that they are still willing to challenge the military when required. For example,

the second of these incidents reportedly occurred when members of Boko Haram reportedly attacked a military base in Mobbar near the end of the month. Interestingly, this came after two previous incidents where the military reportedly killed over fifty suspected militants. However, if this version of events is to be believed, the militants did not appear to be deterred from attempting to attack a military base. Furthermore, in the first incident mentioned, while the group appear to have lost a high number of militants, the military reportedly also lost a considerable number of troops. The death toll is estimated to be nearly twenty. Once again, the incident serves to illustrate a capacity within Boko Haram to respond even after considerable loss of life. Despite a considerable level of military intervention throughout October, Boko Haram did not retreat completely. In fact, the groups still seem to be able to reach Maiduguri, where they were allegedly responsible for over ten deaths of civilians. Furthermore, they still seem to have relative free reign around Konduga, allegedly being responsible for over twenty lives in the Konduga area of the State. Additionally, they seem to be able to access Chibok, have reported killing two in this area.

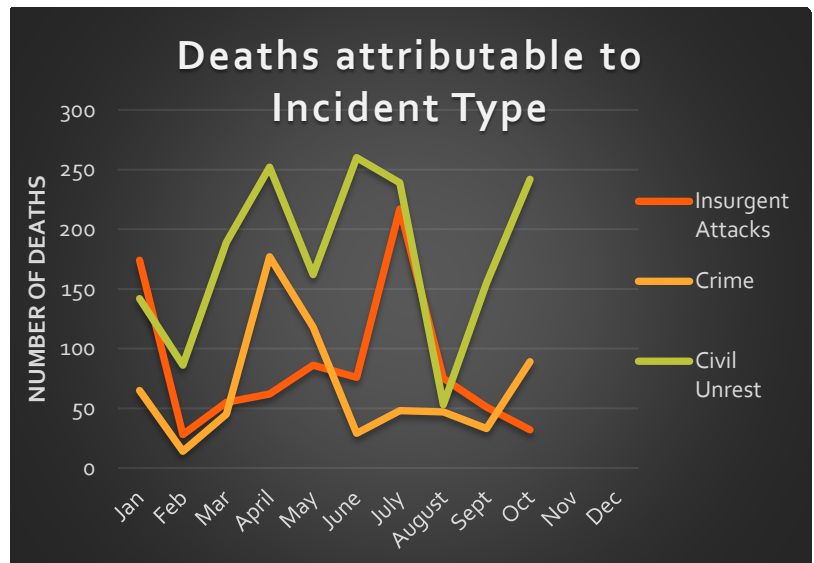
Another serious incident that occurred during the month of October was the killing of an International Committee of the Red Cross worker by militants. In September, reports emerged of the death of one of the ICRC workers who was being held by these suspects, since March. This happened despite efforts to secure the release of three women. However, after these details emerged, the ICRC once again appealed for the safe release of the second ICRC worker and for another health-care worker also being held. Sadly, in October, similar reports emerged in relation to the death of the second ICRC worker. Such incidents are worrying, given that so many people depend on the support provided by such workers within the state, with many of these organisations trying very hard to navigate tensions and hostilities to deliver care to those who need it.



Assessment & Forecast: A continued decline was recorded in both lives lost to terrorism and insurgence related incidents and the number of related attacks this month. However, as previously mentioned, a number of factors emerged this month that could illustrate that this decrease, although positive, may not be purely indicative of the demise of the group. The first is the number of deaths of suspected members. This number, nearly 200, is consistent with lives lost last month. If correct, this indicates that Boko Haram still appear to be supported by large groups of people. This assessment is further asserted given the numbers of insurgents killed in single incidents. For example, this month saw claims that 76 suspected insurgents were killed in altercations with the military. This serves to illustrate the ability of the group to gather in large numbers, a group still not deterred of challenging the military directly. This was further evidenced when the group attempted to attack a military base in Mobbar, Borno State. Despite, the considerable loss of life over the last few months, they still do not seem to be deterred from attacking hard targets. However, similar to last month and on a positive note, the number of suicide attack reports has greatly reduced. Should this continue, it may be indicative of a change of tactics or more likely a reduction in capacity, which could be a lack of access to explosives, willing or forced participants, and or a lack of expertise? More analysis in this areas will be required. 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 identify 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*

Similar to last month, October saw a continued decrease in the number of deaths associated with Boko Haram. However, reports continued in the same trend in respect to lives lost in military operations. Nearly 200 suspected members of Boko Haram were reportedly killed in military operations, similar to last month. Moreover, October a significant spike in casualties. However, even if the deaths associated with the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) protests were removed from these figures, the number would still have increased significantly. Unlike last month, lives lost to violent crime saw a slight increase on the last four months. *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 of violence continued in the middle belt during October, with Plateau, Kaduna and Benue States the worst hit. In Plateau State, for example, over forty people were reportedly killed during the month in over five separate incidents. Although less in number, incidents in Kaduna State reportedly claimed considerably more lives. In fact, over eighty lives were said to have been lost in incidents in Kaduna during the month. Similar incidents were reported in Adamawa and Taraba States. Over twenty were said to have been killed in one incident in Adamawa and a further five in another, while an incident in Taraba State reportedly claimed the lives of three. Interestingly, unlike previous months, all these deaths were reportedly the result of violence between perpetrators and local communities. However, this was not the case in Benue State, where over twenty people were reportedly killed. Over ten of which were allegedly members of a gang and who were reportedly killed by Nigerian troops.

If anyone thought the violence associated with the imprisonment of Sheikh el-Zakzaky had gone away, they're mistaken. Between the 27 and 30 of October, proved such people wrong. Clashes broke out on the 27 October in Abuja between Nigerian security forces and protesters from the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and continued over a few days. Exact figures as to the death toll differ considerably, which some report that five members of the IMN were killed, and others alleging that it was at least forty were killed. The military reportedly alleged that some IMN protesters had been carrying petrol bombs and other weapons. It was alleged that the IMN members were participating in the Arbaeen Symbolic Trek, an annual commemoration practiced by Shias to mark the fortieth day of the murder of Imam Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. However, it was alleged that the protesters took an alternative route to that which was approved by the

security forces and were also calling for the release of el-Zakzaky, who has been in government custody since 2015. When soldiers responded it was alleged that the protesters started throwing rocks at the soldiers, who responded with live ammunition. It is not difficult to question where such use of force against a group could back fire and drive the IMN to a similar path as Boko Haram since 2009 and the use of violence against Mohammed Yusuf while in prison and while el-Zakzaky does not reportedly condone violence, his followers may feel little alternative if such suppression continues.

Forecast: Incidents in the middle belt throughout October continue to illustrate the risk to civilians in that area of Nigeria. Based on the death toll and the number of incidents, this violence continues to present a greater threat than the violence in the North East at present. Furthermore, given that these attacks appear to be conducted by different groups across a number of different states, it presents a more serious security challenge to security forces. That said and although there has been an increase in coverage of the violence both within Nigeria and internationally, it still does not seem to be gaining the level of attention it requires. Furthermore, unlike other months, there seemed to be a significant reduction of military interventions during October. As noted last month, such operations did not appear to be deterring incidents, so maybe this was noticed by security forces and they are trying a new approach. Only time will tell. A further challenge this month, this month, was the violence associated with the IMN. While the violence associated with these protests will more than likely subside now for a while, it is highly unlikely it is gone for good. Whilst El-Zakzaky is in prison, tensions are likely to remain high. As a result, and given the level of violence in the region, SAR recommends to conduct regular risk assessments for the region, given that such violence is likely to continue.

Criminality, Cultist activity & Violence

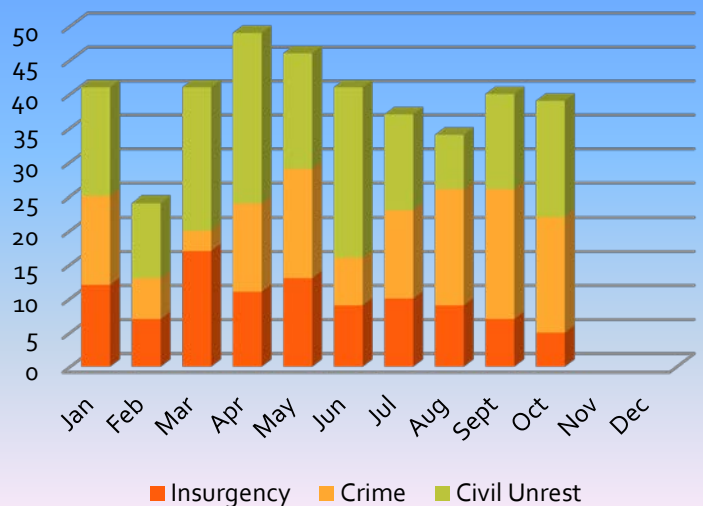
Similar to previous patterns and trends, violence in the South of Nigeria took on a number of different guises. The first discernable pattern relates to political violence. For example, one person was reportedly killed during the APC primaries in Mbaitoli, Imo State, three in Oshimili South, Delta State and one on Epe, Lagos. While another person was reportedly killed when APC factions clashed in Ezza South, Ebonyi. Such violence is not uncommon, and if past patterns are something to go by, such violence is likely to continue if not escalate in advance of the Presidential elections in 2019. Violence associated with cults was also present this month. A cultist clash reported claimed the lives of around 20 in Oredo, Edo State. A small number of non-cult members were reportedly killed in the clash. A civilian was also reportedly killed in Ogbia, Bayelsa State, in another cultist clash, with two cult members also said to have been killed. In a third incident in Emohua, Rivers State, cult members reported killed a Rivers monarch and two others. It is unclear what motivated these attacks against this specific target. Sectarian violence was also reported in the South this month. Five people reportedly lost their lives in Ebonyi, Ebonyi State and nine in Udu, Delta. While a further eight were reportedly killed in a clash between two rival groups on Lagos Island, Lagos.

Kidnap and Abduction

Kidnappings continued throughout the month of October. No part of the country appeared immune. For example, down south five Catholic nuns were reportedly abducted in Ika South, Delta. This was reportedly followed a few days later by claims that gunmen abducted a senior police officer and two businessmen in Asaba, Delta State. This was followed by report that

gunmen abducted ten in Akuku-Toru, Rivers and seven in Ohaji/Egbema, Imo State. Albeit these two incidents reportedly happened on the same day, it is not thought that they are related. Similar patterns were reported in the middle belt. Reports emerged that kidnappers abducted one person in Jos North, Plateau State, also reportedly killing a soldier in the incident. Abductions were also reported in Guma, Benue State where three people were reportedly taken and another three were reported kidnapped from Lau, Taraba. These incidents were followed days later, with reports that gunmen kidnapped a traditional ruler and his wife, in Kachia, Kaduna, killing another person in the process. While other reports claim that over fifteen people were reportedly abducted in Zamfara State during October.

Nigeria 2018 Incidents



Piracy

On a positive note, it was reported near the end of October that the twelve crew members, of MV Glarus, that had been abducted of Bonny Island on the 22nd of September were released. It is unclear as to how their freedom was secured, but this is not usual, given the sensitivities of negotiations. Interestingly, this release was followed very quickly by reports of another two

incidents in Nigerian waters. For example, over ten crew members were reported kidnapped off a Liberia flagged boat, of Bonny Island, Rivers. Two days later, a second incident was reported in which over eight people were reported take from another boat in Nigerian waters. Such incidents continue to illustrate the risk of piracy off the coast of Nigeria.

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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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