



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

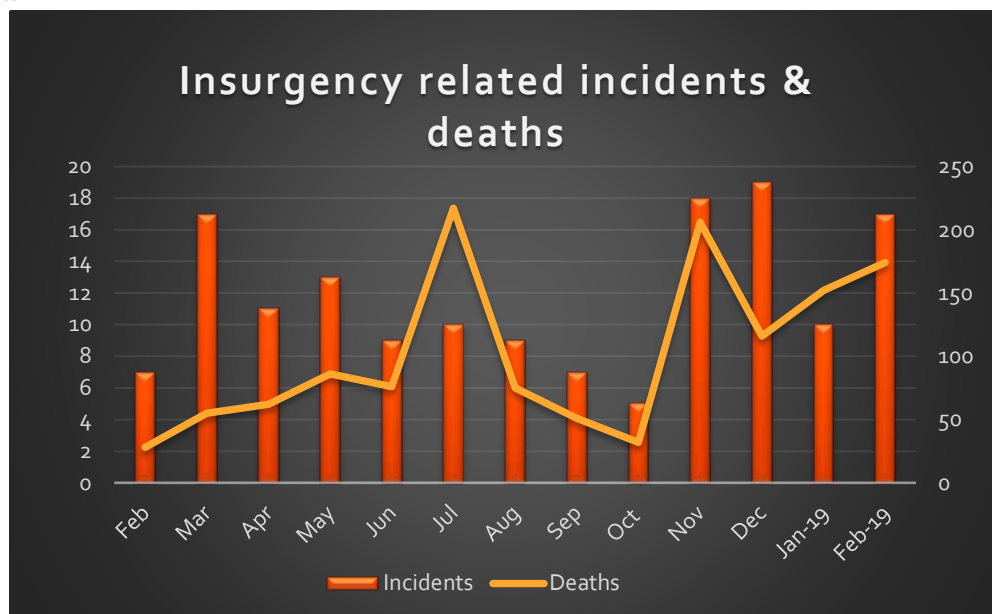
interference. This interplay of actors makes it difficult to determine the perpetrator and the victim in many cases. Nigeria is a country with specific needs, both development and increasingly, humanitarian, therefore access for international and domestic NGOs and developmental organisations is a must. 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.

February 2019 – While there were high hopes that the Presidential Elections would be violence free, unfortunately this was not the case. The postponement did little to quell the violence, with many states experiencing loss of life due to violence associated with election activities. However, this violence was not the only violence in the country hitting the headlines this month. Once again, the violence in Zamfara and Kaduna both resulted in the deaths of over 100 respectfully, violence that largely goes unexplained. Insurgency related violence also experienced a slight increase this month, but not too dissimilar with previous patterns. These patterns of event during February continue to serve to illustrate the continued risk in Nigeria, throughout the country. Within this backdrop, it is highly recommended that anyone travelling to or through Nigeria conduct a thorough security review and prepare a detailed security plan, because security forces are already stretched in many parts of the country.

North East Nigeria & Boko Haram

Incidents throughout February continued to illustrate the threat Boko Haram presents in Nigeria and also the greater Lake Chad region. For example, the group were blamed for the deaths of ten civilians and seven soldiers in Niger, and for the deaths of five civilians in Chad. While soldiers in Niger, reportedly killed around five suspected militants in one incident. The group also continued to demonstrate their ability to attack outside of Borno State. For example, they abducted five in Gubja, Yobe State. Furthermore, they were blamed for another incident in Yobe where the deaths of five soldiers and five civilians in a clash, which reportedly also resulted in the loss of five of their members. The

military also reported that they killed approximately twenty suspected militants in an incident in Yunusari, which is also in Yobe State. Incidents during the month also demonstrated their continued reach into Adamawa State, more specifically in the area of Madagali, an area synonymous with such attacks. This month saw reports that the group reportedly killed around ten civilians and one soldier, in the course of a number of incidents. The military responded and killed over ten suspected militants but lost another soldier and one civilian in the operation.

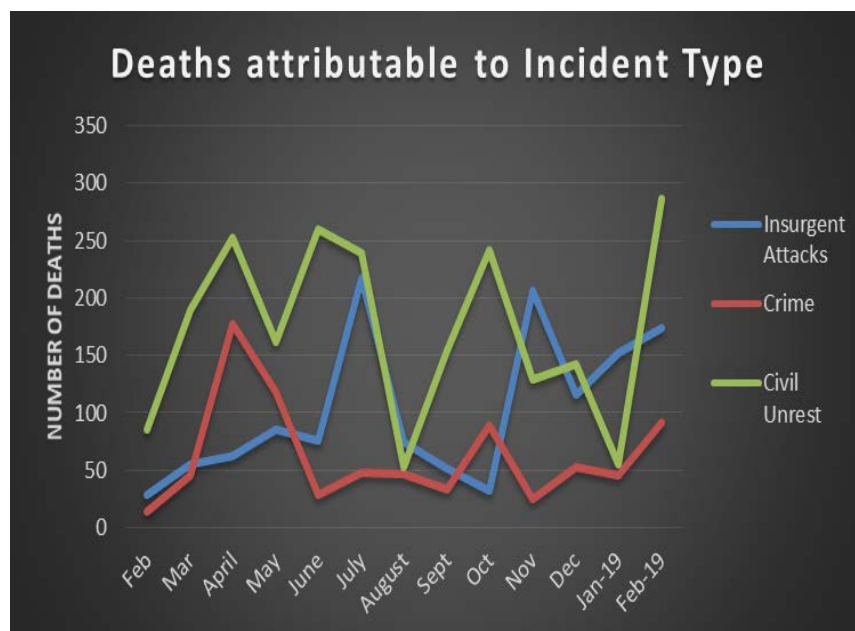


This range of operations on the part of suspected members of Boko Haram does not appear to have reduced their activities and capacity in Borno State. This was evident by the attack on the Governor of Borno's convoy, which was blamed on the group. A policeman and two politicians were reportedly killed in the incident. A few days later, media reports claimed that ISIS claimed this attack. Their statement also claimed that forty two people were killed. However, this is disputed. The group were also blamed for attacks in Jere, Gwoza, and Maiduguri throughout the country. Approximately two people were said to have been killed in these incidents, and a further ten were abducted, while four suspected militants were also said to have lost their lives, alongside one soldier. The group were also blamed for direct attacks on security forces. Three soldiers were said to have been killed at a military base in Mafa and a further six in Magumeri, Borno. Ten other soldiers were reportedly killed alongside the same number of militants in clashes in Nganzai and Bama. While a further ten were said to have been killed in Tdmari. Conversely, the military reported that they killed four suspected militants in Adadam. While the Air Force reportedly killed sixty suspected militants in operations in Jere, Gwoza, Mobbar and Kukawa throughout the month.

Assessment & Forecast: The attacks on the Governor's convoy and the military this month continue to illustrate the capability within Boko Haram to challenge high profile targets. Furthermore, their geographical reach illustrates the scale of their activities both within Nigeria and the greater Lake Chad region. That said, time and time again, we at SAR question why the group don't expand their operations outside these areas, like they did in the past, whether it be in Kano, Kaduna or Abuja for example. Is this a conscious decision on their part or is the current area of operations a demonstration of their capacity of their reach? Only time will tell. Another interesting factor that emerged this month relates to Boko Haram and its allegiance to Islamic State. Reports during February suggest that this could be changing slightly. While this may take time to play out in relation to their attack tactics, targets and motivations, it will be interesting to see if this has any direct impact. In the meantime it is unlikely that attacks will diminish in the short term. Vigilance is recommended. Those travelling to or through the areas should try to tap into timely, reliable and robust information from the field. Furthermore, 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*

February clearly presented some considerable challenges to the security forces because of the elections and related violence. The result of violence associated with elections resulted in a spike in the number of deaths, which can be seen in the category 'crime'. However, the most striking aspect of this graph relate to the deaths in the middle belt. Once again we see a sharp spike this month. Additionally, the number of deaths associated with the ongoing insurgency also increased slightly, but largely at the rate experienced in January. Once again, the graph presented here shows significant flux in all forms of incidents in the last twelve months. It will be interesting to monitor these this year to see if seasonal patterns are identifiable in all or any of these three areas. *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

Violence in the middle belt is certainly not dissipating, despite reports of increased security resources being allocated to the region, with some reporting that Zamfara State is the worst affected. This assertion appears credible this month, with reports suggesting that over one hundred people were killed during the month in Zamfara State, and over forty abducted. For example, gunmen reportedly killed fifteen and kidnapped seven in the Gusau area of the State, while a further ten were reportedly killed in Bukkuyum. The state also witnessed reports that over sixty five, made up of aggressors and CJTF, were killed in a clash in Chafe. While in Anka reports suggest that over forty people were abducted and around fifteen killed in one incident. It is also alleged that soldiers killed five gunmen in this incident. This incident was followed a day later with reports that gunmen killed over thirty more in an incident in the Shinkafi area of the state. That said, Kaduna also experienced a high rate of deaths. For example, over sixty people were reportedly killed in the Kajura area of Kaduna State. Twenty two children were reportedly killed in this attack. This attack came a few hours before the Presidential elections were meant to take place. Interestingly, a week later and a few days after the elections did take place, Kajura was targeted again. On this occasion reports suggest that between thirty and forty people were killed. It is difficult to determine, or at least it is not being reported what specifically may have motivated either attack. Benue also experienced a number of incidents this month, but thankfully not at the scale as those in Zamfara or Kaduna. Around ten people were reportedly killed in incidents, conducted by unknown gunmen. Reports also suggest that a similar number of gunmen were killed by soldiers. These incidents occurred in areas of the state known for such incidents, such as Guma, Agatu and Makurdi. Neighbouring states were also impacted. For example, around ten people were said to have been killed and a further fifteen kidnapped in Shiroro, Niger State, six civilians and a soldier in Katsina State, and five civilians in Taraba. Once again, little details are available that illustrate what may have motivated these attacks.

Forecast: Middle belt violence continued unabated this month, with a very limited apparent in security response. Zamfara and Kaduna continued to be hotspots of activities with high rates of violence reported, resulting in over one hundred deaths in each state. That said, there appears to be few credible explanations about what is motivating such incidents, and as importantly, few credible responses being applied to this violence. That said, the incidents do provide interesting insights into the aggressors within these states, despite many not fully understanding who they are or what their motivation is. For example, the number, type and MO of many of these incidents suggest serious capacity within the gunmen. The ability to kill so many people and abduct others would tend to suggest a degree of organisation, significant numbers and determination by the aggressors. This would suggest a group are active both in Kaduna and Zamfara. That is not to say it is the same group in both states. To determine this, further information would be required. A small number of Nigerian analysts are doing excellent work to try to identify the actors and dynamics at play in the middle belt. This information is being closely monitored, in order to better understand the situation on the ground, so we can better advise on security responses that should be taken when travelling to or through this area of the country.

Criminality, Cultist activity & Violence

Routine violence continued throughout the month. For example, gunmen reportedly killed an aide to the Governor in Delta State, while in Rivers State, gunmen reportedly killed nearly ten people, including one police officer in the middle of the month. It is unclear what motivated many of these incidents. Despite being stretched in relation to the elections, the security forces reportedly killed two suspected gunmen in Bayelsa. They were also accused of killing five in Biafra's Imo State and abducting two in Abia State. Reports suggested that the IPOB members were returning home from a rally when their friends were allegedly attacked, resulting in allegations of police brutality. Such frustrations are likely to continue and may result in motivating further violence. *Note: As shown last month, the above image illustrates the range of groups active throughout Nigeria. It was sourced from [Boko-biafra-nigeria-insecurity-2019-elections](#). It serves as an interesting reminder of the range of violent actors at play within Nigeria and the complexity of understanding violence and violent actors in the country.*

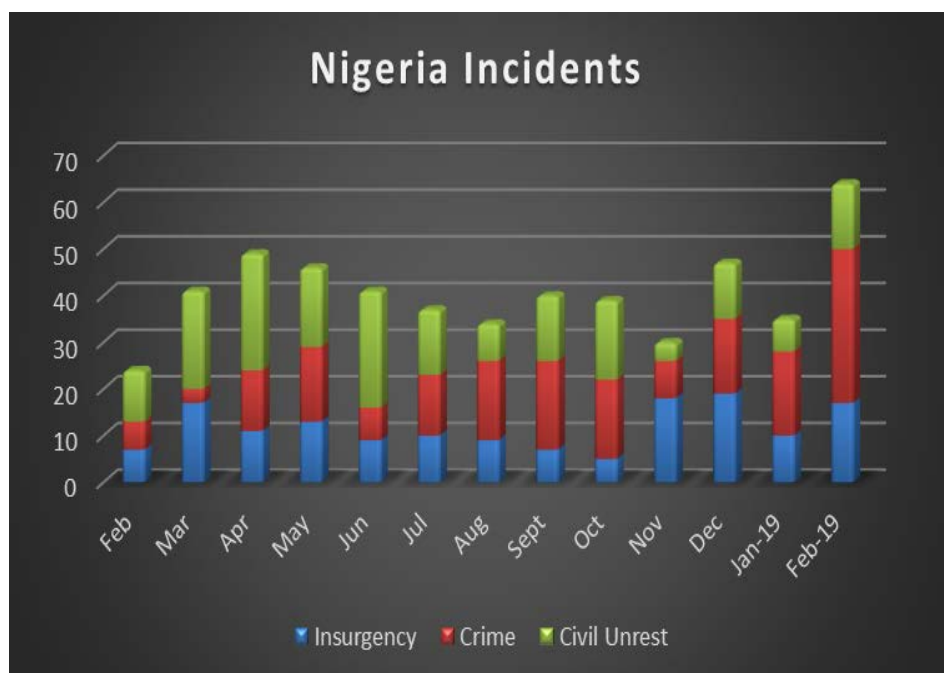


Kidnap and Abduction

As noted in the other sections, abductions continue to occur throughout the country, with no apparent reduction. Interestingly, this month witnessed a number of large scale kidnap incidents, or at least incidents where more than five people were taken. For example, ten corps members were reportedly taken from in Akwa Ibom. While eleven people were said to have been abducted in the Emuoha area of Rivers State. Further north in Sokoto State, over fifteen people were said to have been killed and a further six abducted from the Rabah area of the state. That said, single abduction incidents also continued to occur. For example, media reports claim that the Deputy Commissioner of Police in Bayelsa State was abducted from the Brass area of the state, whilst in Enugu State a man was killed and a cleric abducted in Udi, and two university workers were reportedly taken from Osun State. No one seems immune to these attacks, so precautions should be taken to mitigate such risks.

Niger Delta Region

The Niger Delta is a complex environment, which can escalate to violence quickly. As a result, many are concerned that the re-election of President Buhari could result in a period of uncertainty and unrest in the region. Such concerns are not without some credibility given that some of the armed militant groups operating in the region, such as the Delta Avengers, stated that they would cripple the economy if President Buhari was re-elected. They suggested that the opposition candidate Atiku Abubakar would have had a more positive impact on the region, in line with their alleged demands for equitable and fair principles of federalism, had he been elected. Furthermore, they are not afraid to take things into their own hand, allegedly conducting attacks on pipeline back in 2016. However, others suggest that this is more speculative than a likely reality, given that no substantial attacks have been carried since 2017. Nonetheless, given the dynamics in the region the possibility of violence should not be ruled out.



Piracy

According to the International Chamber of Commerce's International Maritime Bureau's (IMB) latest annual piracy report, incidents of Piracy increased globally in 2018, from 180 in 2017 to 201 in 2018. Furthermore, they noted a rise in attacks against ships and crews around West Africa. They noted that "*The Gulf of Guinea remains increasingly dangerous for seafarers. Reports of attacks in waters between the Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of Congo more than doubled in 2018, accounting for all six hijackings worldwide, 13 of the 18 ships fired upon, 130 of the 141 hostages taken globally, and 78 of 83 seafarers kidnapped for ransom*" ([IMB link](#)). More specifically, with regard to Nigeria, they noted that in the last three months of 2018 alone forty one kidnappings were recorded in waters off Nigeria. Interestingly, they also stated "*how armed criminals are reaching further out to sea and targeting a wider variety of ships: bulk carriers, container vessels and general cargo vessels in addition to local attacks on tankers, oil industry support vessels and fishing vessels*" ([IMB link](#)). It will be interesting to see if this pattern continues into 2019, or if action will be taken.

President Elections 2019

Nigeria's President Elections were due to be held on 16 February 2019, but in the early hours of the morning, the Electoral Commission made the decision to postpone them by a week. This also impacted the parliamentary elections, which were also pushed forward by a week. The decision to postpone these elections was reportedly based on a determination that free, fair and credible elections could not be guaranteed. This decision was met with reservations and frustrations on a range of levels, some becoming violent. That said, the run up to the elections was not violence free either. A number of electoral commission offices had been set on fire and election material taken. Furthermore, over thirty five deaths were reported in Bayelsa, Kano Zamfara, Oyo, Rivers, Cross Rivers, Kwara, Kogi, Ebonyi, Delta, Benue and Ondo States. These deaths appear to have been targeted against APC and PDP, plus targeted against officials of the Electoral Commission, no group seemed immune. For example, three were reported killed at a rally in Yola, Adamawa State due to a clash between APC and PDP supporters, while an official of the Electoral Commission was allegedly kidnapped in Katsina State. Interestingly, security forces were also targeted. A soldier and six civilians were reportedly killed in election-related violence in Rivers State, while a policeman was said to have been killed in Ogun during his work in relation to the elections. They also responded to such incidents, with soldiers allegedly killing two suspected gunmen in Imo State and another two in Akwa Ibom. Three people were reportedly killed at President Buhari's victory celebrations in Lagos State. While further north, three civilians were reportedly killed by soldiers in celebrations in Numan, Adamawa State. Appointing a new President did little to quell the violence. While both sets of elections are over now, the risk of violence continues to linger given that many are unhappy with the results and may be willing to use violence to express their frustrations in response. This should be considered within security plans for a number of weeks.



Providing peace of mind in dynamic 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 it 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 to discuss your 2019 audit; you have a duty of care to your employees to ensure your security infrastructure is fit for purpose.