



SAR Consultancy



Security Information Bulletin: Nigeria

IN THIS ISSUE

Summary of Security Situation

By our Senior Analyst

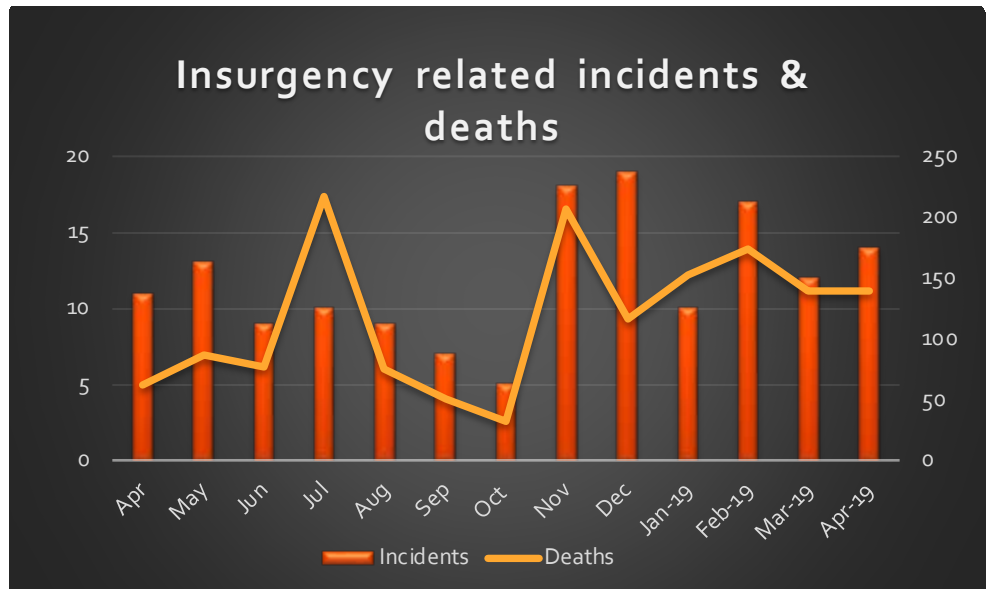
The Security Situation in Nigeria is multi-dimensional and complex. It is influenced, for the most part, by perceived political, economic and social injustice, which results in a high level of violence throughout the country. This violence is exhibited in differing dimensions and to differing degrees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

April 2019 – Similar to last month, April continues to illustrate that violence in the middle belt has now surpassed deaths in the North East, March 2019 is that month. While the deaths reduced in Zamfara State, they increased in states such as Katsina. While it is unclear if these are linked, the possibility of displacement should not be ignored as this could have a significant impact going forward if not properly understood. Furthermore, once gain the activities in the North East are showing interesting patterns and trends, which seem to contradict or at least raise concerns about reports that Boko Haram are on the back foot. Additionally, claims that Islamic State are conducting more activities in the North East require great assessment. Within this backdrop, it is highly recommended that more analysis is carried out of the situation as it evolves because in the absence of this, many key factors may go missed. In the meantime, those travelling to or through Nigeria conduct a thorough security review and prepare a detailed security plan.

North East Nigeria & Boko Haram

Incidents involving Boko Haram produced some interesting insights this month. For one, April saw a return to the MO of suicide bombs, which had considerably reduced over recent months. April saw incidents in Jere and Monguno, both in Borno State and one in Diffa, Niger. Nearly ten civilians were reportedly killed in these incidents, three security personnel and at least six suspected members of Boko Haram, whom were killed when they detonated their devices. The group were also blamed for attacks on civilians, reportedly killing over fifty five people in three separate incidents in Borno and Adamawa, Nigeria and in Cameroon.



Another interesting aspect of attacks this month was the groups continued commitment to directly challenge the military. The group reportedly attacked the military in Damaturu, Yobe State. However, military reports claimed they repelled the attack, killing approximately twenty suspected militants in the incident. In a similar incident in Borno State, the group reportedly attacked the military in Kukawa, which was once again followed by reports from the media that they repelled the attack, killing over fifty suspected militants. The group were also said to have attacked a military base in Biu, Borno State. While in Cameroon, the group were blamed for the death of one soldier and three civilians in Kofia.

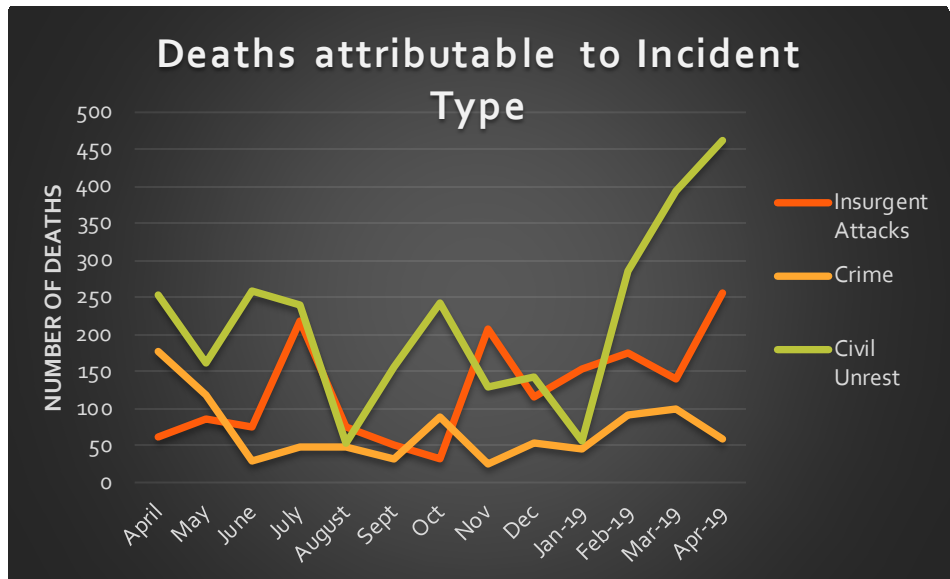
In other incidents, reported as military operations, the Nigerian Air Force reportedly killed over fifteen in a number of air operations in Gwoza and Kukawa. While the military reportedly killed over thirty militants in Borno State. Interestingly Chadian soldiers reportedly killed over sixty suspected militants in Chad in the middle of the month. The month of April also witnessed Nigeria, or at least the North East and the actions of Boko Haram take on an increased role in the actions of Islamic State. The month saw the group reportedly claim at least three incidents in Nigeria, all involving attacks on the military. Over ninety soldiers were reportedly killed in incidents claimed by Islamic State during the month. However, as in similar incidents where claims have suggested such high death tolls, many refute these claims.

Assessment & Forecast: Once again Boko Haram continued to illustrate that they continue to have the capacity and commitment to attack the military, despite reportedly increased military operations in the region. Secondly, the group still appear to confidently draw on their range of MO to conduct attacks throughout the region. This was most noticeable this month by the returned use of suicide attacks, which had significantly reduced. Furthermore, they continue to show their desire to target multiple actors, such as military, police, loggers, and normal civilians when required. April also showed that the group still have the capacity to congregate and attack in large groups, evident both in attacks and also in the numbers of casualties reportedly in some of the military operations. Despite reports of significant loss of life within the group due to (reported) successful military operations, the group do not appear to have a huge issue with recruiting willing individuals to mitigate such losses. This is concerning for a number of reasons. For one it may illustrate that the grievances pushing people to join the group remain in high enough numbers to motivate joining. Secondly, one would be remiss not to ask, if this apparent limitless resource of willing participants is in fact accurate. Would it be too far to stretch the imagination that reports of successful military operations are in fact not made up of actual members rather just suspects or in some cases, villagers who just happen to live in Boko Haram controlled and used territories? So many questions still go unanswered with regard to this group and the drivers to violence. Or it might be more accurate to say, some important questions remain unasked with regard to this group, despite the level of violence, the loss of life, and the timeframe in which this group have been active. However, in this backdrop and given continued incidents, 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*

The number of fatalities reported during the month of March continued for the most part like last month, with increases in deaths associated with insurgent attacks and civil unrest. The only group to see a slight reduction was crime related incidents. However, this reduction was foreseen given that a large portion of the violence over the last few months has been linked to the elections. That said, it is clearly evident from the graph that the increase both in insurgent and civil unrest related deaths that the increase was significant, clearly illustrating a worsening situation, especially in the middle belt. Interestingly, we

asserted last month that it might be fair to assume that the deaths would decrease given that the increase in incidents in May was so high but this did not occur. It will be interesting to see what happens next month, will last year's pattern of a reduction in May be experienced this year. *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 continued through April. Zamfara State was once again a hotspot of activity. The month had only started when reports emerged that fifty people has been killed by gunmen in Kaura Namoda. Two weeks later, gunmen were blamed for the deaths of over fifteen in Tsafe. However, as explained last month, the military appeared to increase its efforts in the state, with reports that approximately 150 gunmen were killed in clashes and operations during the month. Kaduna State also continued to report incidents. Nearly thirty people were reportedly killed in four incidents, with one claiming at least twenty lives. In a separate incident, gunmen and police seemed to clash, resulting in the deaths of two police officers, three gunmen and three civilians. Similarly, Benue State also continued to experience high rates of violence this month. Approximately, forty five civilians were reportedly killed in incidents, with two incidents responsible for over ten deaths each. The military were also active in Benue State this month, with reports that they killed five gunmen in one incident. Another interesting state emerged this month as a contender for the most violent state, and that is Katsina State. Over ninety people were reportedly killed in five incidents, throughout the state. Sectarian violence was also reported in Taraba State, with approximately forty people killed in a small number of incidents. Similarly, over twenty people were reportedly killed in Kogi State, five in Plateau State, over fifteen in Nassarawa and Adamawa State respectively. While in a very different incident, a Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) official is reported to have deliberately driven

Forecast: The military do appear to have taken increased steps to control the level of violence in Zamfara State during the month of April, with significant reports of operations as mentioned above and a slight decrease in the number of deaths in Zamfara State at least. That said, the death toll reported in these incidents is still significantly interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, a number of these incidents recorded scores of deaths in a single incident. Such reports would suggest a large number of groups are active in Zamfara State across multiple locations. Secondly but more positively, given the scale of deaths reported and if one believes that these are all gunmen, one would expect to see a significant decrease in incidents in the short and medium term. However, given previous patterns and trends, this remains to be seen. Thirdly, the number and nature of incidents elsewhere in the middle belt might suggest that the reduction in incidents is due to displacement rather than a cessation of activities. This may be what is being seen in Katsina State. The nature of incidents in Katsina State are very interesting this month for a number of reasons. Firstly, they appear to be very violent, with all but one claiming over ten lives. Secondly, it would be interesting to assess whether Katsina is being targeted due to military action in Zamfara State. More information would be needed to make this assertion but it would be interesting analysis. The incidents in Kaduna State are also interesting, when viewed in conjunction with the piece on kidnappings. While some of this violent crime looks targeted, other incidents show that a portion of it is indiscriminate. **All in all, the middle belt continues to be a high risk area for violence.**

his car into an Easter procession in Gombe, killing eight members of the Gombe Boys' Brigade. It was further reported that the man was later killed himself.

Kidnap and Abduction

Kidnappings continued unabated throughout Nigeria during April, especially in known hotspots such as Kaduna and Rivers State. For example, over thirty five commuters were reportedly abducted along the Kaduna Abuja highway, a known hotspot for kidnap over recent times. Twenty

people, approximately, were also reportedly abducted in Birnin-Gwari, Kaduna. Days later, a very different MO was used to abduct four people from a hotel in Kajuru, Kaduna. Two others, a British female and one other were killed during this incidents. While in Rivers State, at least four incidents were reported. Four people from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) were abducted in Abua/Odual, Rivers. Two Shell staff were abducted from Emuoha. In this incident, two police escorts were reportedly killed. The same day, media reports suggest that approximately thirty people were reportedly kidnapped from a bus, a similar MO to recent incidents in Rivers State. Two days later, a further four local oil workers were reportedly abducted, also in Rivers State. While a Scottish and Canadian oil worker were also taken from a rig in the Niger Delta Region of the country. Other incidents reportedly occurred in Lagos State, in which eight people were reportedly taken, and three in Taraba State. Four travellers were also reportedly taken from Ethiopie East, Delta State. In Abuja, the board chairman of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UEBC) and his daughter were reportedly taken, while his driver was said to have been killed. Near the end of the month, two Chinese construction workers working of a road project were kidnapped in Ohaozara, Ebonyi. Media reports suggest that the two were later released.

Some interesting aspects to keep in mind when travelling:

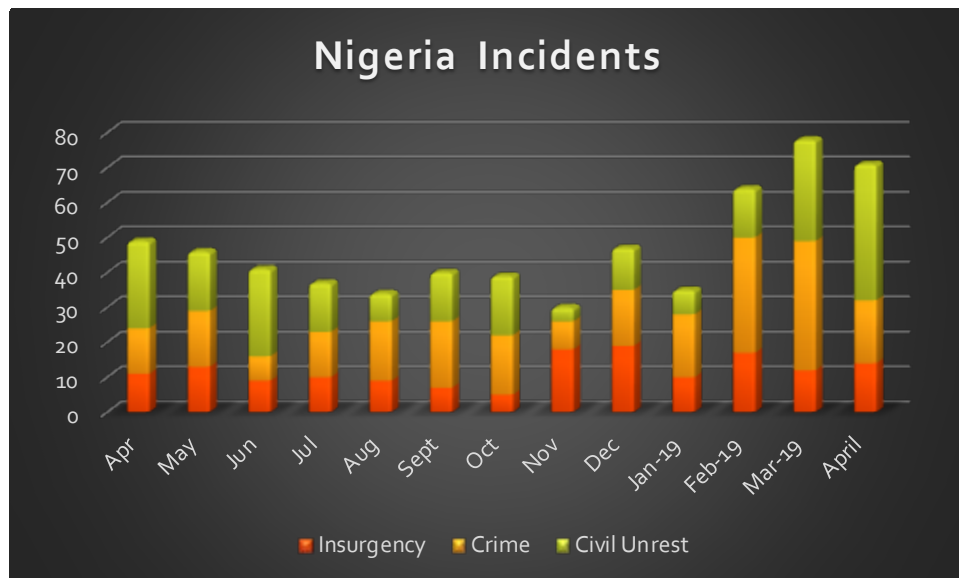
- (i) A large number of these incident were targeted at commuters, be it direct attacks on buses, or on high risk routes.
- (ii) Where people were abducted, their escorts or drivers were largely killed
- (iii) Kaduna and Rivers are high risk states at the moment, but complacency elsewhere is dangerous given this month's incidents.

Criminality, Cultist activity & Violence

Violent crime continued elsewhere in Nigeria throughout April. Interestingly, a number of incidents in the South of the country were attributed to herdsmen, while this is not new, the number of incidents with this attribution in one month is not common. For example, over ten people were reportedly killed by herdsmen in two separate incidents in Anambra West, Anambra State during the month. A further five people were reportedly killed by herdsmen in Delta State and two in Ekiti State. Sectarian violence was also blamed for the deaths of over fifteen people in Ebonyi. While an incident in Rivers State reportedly resulted in the deaths of three police, a local chief and two gunmen in an incident near the end of the month.

Some interesting aspects to keep in mind when travelling:

- (i) Violent Crime in common throughout the country. No state is immune.
- (ii) Armed clashes between gunmen and police are relatively common in certain areas, with civilians often getting caught in the cross fire.




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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 independently 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?
- How confident are you that your approach would stand up to independent assessment?
- Will you wait until you are attacked to find out?

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.

Contact us to discuss your audit? Don't wait for an incident to realise things don't work as planned.

Email us at info@sarconint.com to arrange a chat.

Piracy

The Nigerian authorities conducted a number of operations during the month of April, one of which was targeted at private maritime security contractors (PMSCs) and was part of the annual Junction Rain exercise. Nine people were reportedly arrested in the operation, detained on suspicion of having illegal firearms in their possession. However, the employer of those arrested reportedly said that all firearms were legally held, and the boat was outside Nigerian jurisdiction when the operation occurred. In a separate incident in April, a crew of the Spanish Navy reported rescued a Nigerian merchant vessel which had been hijacked by suspected pirates a few days earlier. A tanker was also reportedly targeted during the month, at Bonny River Inner Anchorage, Nigeria, but the attack was repelled. Six crew members of a Palau flagged tanker were not as lucky. It was reported that they were kidnapped when gunmen boarded their boat, off Bonny Island.

Niger Delta

Very little violence in the Niger Delta was reported during the month of April. This is positive for those working in the region, and also for those involved in trying to increase the number of barrels. However as production grows, an increase in violence may be seen. As a result, this area should be closely monitored for those work in or intending to travel to this area.

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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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