



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

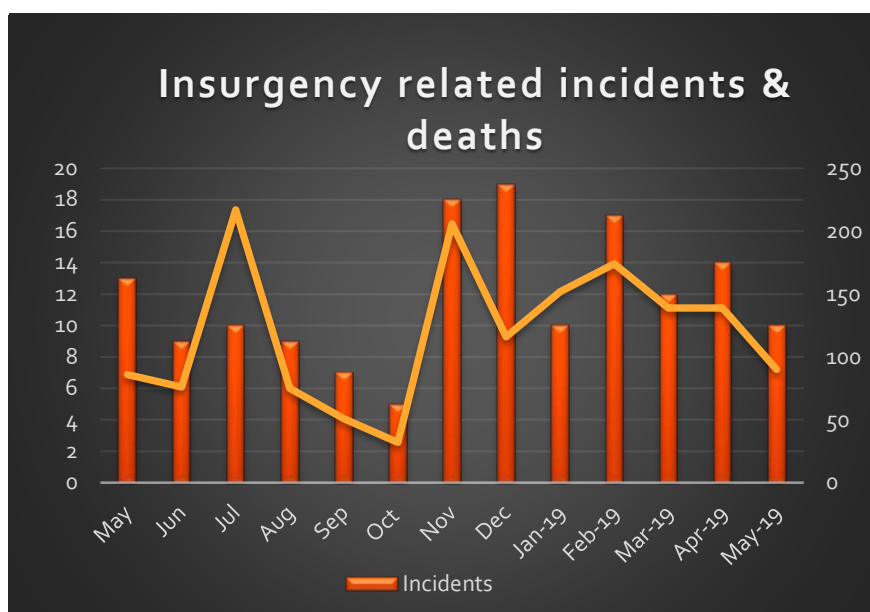
interference. This interplay of actors makes it difficult to determine the perpetrator and the victim in many cases. Nigeria is a country with specific needs, both development and increasingly, humanitarian, therefore access for international and domestic NGOs and developmental organisations is a must.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

May 2019 – Unlike April, May witnessed a reduction in the number of deaths in the middle belt and in the North East. However, in regard to the middle belt, the number of deaths was still high, just falling from an unusually high number over the last two months. Nearly 200 were killed in the middle belt this month, which is considerably more than was killed in the North East. Given this continued pattern, it is important that this is researched in more detail. Last month's claims that Islamic State are conducting more activities in the North East seems to be supported by a video released this month, which showed footage of the group's activities in the Lake Chad region. It is difficult not to wonder if the group are releasing the video to show success for Islamic State in the Sahel given their loss of territory elsewhere. Within this backdrop, more analysis is also required, especially as the situation evolves. 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

May started with military operations against Boko Haram militants. Over twenty were reportedly killed in Damboa and a further seven in Ngala. However, despite the number of casualties, the group continued their activities both against the military and civilians. For example, reports emerged that suspected Boko Haram militants had killed fifteen soldiers in Magumeri when the group reportedly attacked a military base. This was followed quickly by reports of a clash between both groups in Jere, which reportedly resulted in the deaths of four soldiers and seven civilians. In another clash between the military and suspected militant, over ten soldiers and four militants were reportedly killed. Furthermore an IED believed to have been planted by militants reportedly detonated in Damboa, claiming the lives of at least three soldiers. Whilst at the end of the month,

Boko Haram reportedly attacked a military base in Gubio. They, or at least the faction associated with Islamic State, claimed that they had killed twenty soldiers in the incident. However, the military said that only three soldiers had been killed, and six injured. Nonetheless, they did acknowledge that six were still missing. The incident was also referenced in a video released by the group shortly afterwards. It included footage reportedly showing attacks in the Lake Chad region between November and January and footage illustrating the execution of nine people. It is unclear when or where they occurred. It is also said to have included an armoured vehicle, reportedly acquired during the attack in Gubio. The group's capacity and desire to attack the military was also evident in Niger, where the group were blamed for the deaths of nearly thirty Nigerien soldiers. Similarly, they were blamed for planting an IED that detonated resulting in the deaths of four Chadian soldiers and one journalist in Ngounboua, Chad. As in similar months, the group also continued to target civilians, reportedly killing four and abducting five in an incident in Maiduguri. They were also blamed for the deaths of seven civilians in Jere, and a further five in Madagali, Adamawa. However, civilian deaths do seem to be a lot lower than military deaths this month.

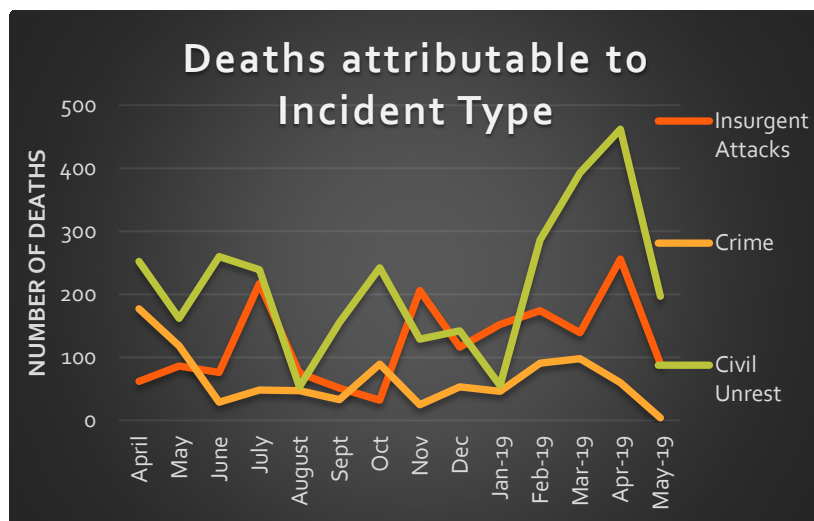


Assessment & Forecast: A very interesting dimension of Boko Haram attacks this month relate to their attacks against the military. The group seemed to have increased their targeting of military installations in a number of parts of Borno State. They have conducted such attacks in the past, but the consistency of attack, coupled with the reduction in attacks against the general population, seems to illustrate a new pattern. This is interesting, especially in light of military reports of successfully killing scores of suspected militants, in ground and air attacks. It would appear that the group don't seem to be dissuaded by such operations but such operations and that they have what appears to be an unending supply of willing militants, who share the same commitment to the cause. But as mentioned last month, such reports of mass casualty coupled with what appear to be a constant supply of militants highlight or at least suggest a necessity to question whether those reportedly killed could in fact be made up of actual members rather than just suspects or in some cases, villagers who just happen to live in Boko Haram controlled and used territories? Another interesting dimension to these attacks, is that they seem to be a mechanism which the group use to replenish their supplies of weapons and ammunition, and where possible their vehicles. This was evident in the recent video released by the faction, allegedly aligned to Islamic State, which clearly illustrates their stockpiles of weapons and ammunition. This raises another interesting issue; the perceived increase in propaganda being released by Boko Haram via Islamic State channels. While it may just be part of Islamic State's method to mitigate negativity about loss of territory in Iraq and Syria by illustrating their prowess in the Sahel, to progress this strategy they may want to increase their activities through further orchestrated operations against the military, to regain territory. This might also include increased attacks on international targets, within or near Nigeria, or on Federal or State targets. 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*

Unlike previous months, May witnessed a reduction in deaths across all incident types, which is warmly received. However, it should be noted that in the context of insurgent attacks and violence in the middle belt, the deaths both reduced from their highest level in the last twelve months, returning both to figures more in line with the monthly average, which is not as positive. The possibility for this reduction is in line with what has been expected over the last few months, given these unusual highs. Without negating the work that the military and security forces both have achieved in the North East and the middle belt, this reduction is likely to be influenced by a combination of factors. It

will be interesting to see if this reduction is maintained next month, *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

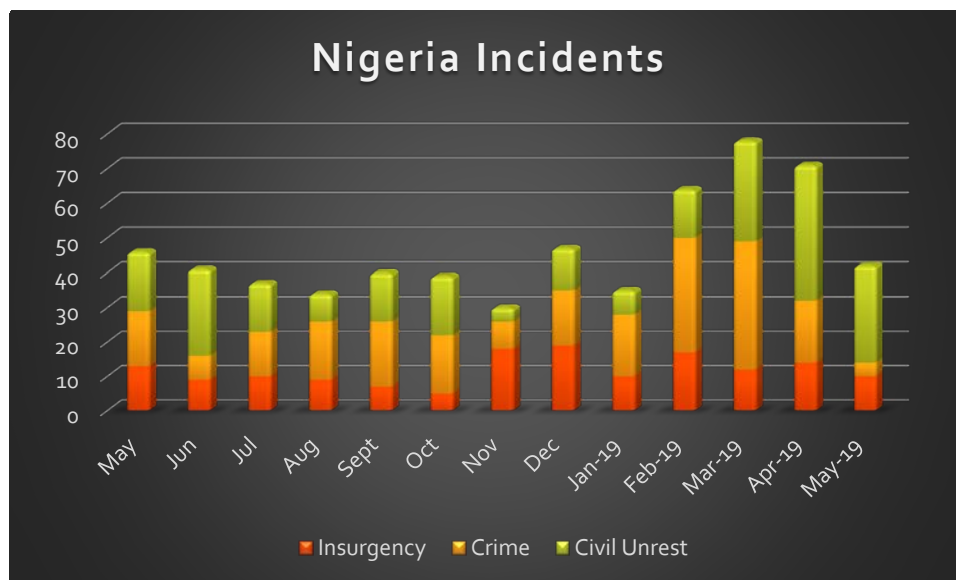
Violence continued in the middle belt, and as in similar months, Zamfara seems particularly hard hit. For example, a group of gunmen reportedly killed over thirty in Maru for no clear reason. A week later, a further six were reportedly killed in Shinkakfi and over twenty in Kaura-Namoda. Despite the military operations, which reportedly resulted in the deaths of over forty gunmen, the gunmen do not seem to be dissuaded from their activities. Incidents also continued in Kaduna State, but there appears to be a slight reduction in the number of people killed. Further north, the pattern of incidents in Katsina State that emerged over the last number of months continued throughout May, despite assurances that the police would increase activities. Around thirty five people were reportedly killed in incidents in Batsari and Kankara areas of the state, illustrating the ability of the group to attack, retreat and attack again without fear of arrest or capture. Furthermore east incidents also continued. For example, Taraba State appeared to be highly targeted this month. Nearly thirty people were reportedly killed across six or seven incidents. Wukari area appear to be targeted a number of times, as did Jalingo, illustrating a similar pattern of confidence within the groups, as would appear to be place in Katsina. Over twenty people were also said to have been killed in Plateau State, in two separate incidents, six of whom were reportedly to have been from the one family. Civilians were also killed in Nassarawa State, in Adamawa State and in Benue State. This pattern continues to illustrate that no state in the middle belt is immune from this violence.

Forecast: Despite a slight reduction in deaths associated with violence in the middle belt this month, which is very positive, some important points should still be acknowledged. Firstly, the number of deaths associated with violence in the middle belt continues to be higher than those associated with violence relating to Boko Haram. Secondly, military interventions, while reducing the impact of certain groups in some areas, appears to be having a displacement effect elsewhere. For example, as mentioned last month it would appear that this has certainly taken place in Katsina where the last number of months has experienced an increase in incidents month on month. It really would be interesting to research this in more detail to see if military responses in Zamfara and Kaduna are resulting in a shift of incidents further north. In addition, it would be interesting to also investigate the key actors, their motivations, their numbers, etc. and to inform more evidence based responses. To date, military responses alone appear ineffective. For example, it was reported that over forty gunmen were killed during May in military operations, yet despite these deaths and recently reported casualties it does not appear to be having a significant impact on the level of violence, with the exception of possible displacement to neighbouring states, as mentioned above. As a result, the required response to this violence is unlikely to be found security response alone, more consideration needs to be given to engagement at the local level to ensure this loss of life does not continue. 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.**

Kidnap and Abduction

Abductions continued during the month of May, with two distinctive patterns, one north and one south. The first in the middle belt, largely involving multiple victims. For example, gunmen reportedly abducted six girls from a school in Zurmi, Zamfara State. A further eight people were taken from Maru, also in Zamfara State. In this second incident, two others were reportedly killed. Whilst in Katsina State, gunmen reportedly kidnapped three, from Danmusa. These three incidents appear to be linked to the continued violence in

the middle belt region. It is largely unclear what motivated these incidents, as reports of ransom demands are often not made public, if they are even made. This is in contrast to other incidents in the region, which seem to have been motivated by ransom and/or influence. For example the permanent secretary in the Taraba State Ministry of Water Resources, was reportedly taken from Jalingo. This incident came a week after the Deputy Registrar of Taraba State University was reportedly abducted. Further south, five oil workers were reportedly abducted by gunmen in Akuku-Toru, Rivers. It was reported that gunmen attacked a site owned by an indigenous oil company, before taking the men away by boat. The nature of these incidents is such, that the perpetrators are most likely motivated by ransom. Similarly, in Edo State an orthopaedic surgeon, was also abducted. A ransom was reportedly paid, but one that was considerably lower than what had been originally requested.



Some interesting aspects to keep in mind when travelling:

- (i) Although not evident during May, a large number of abductions are 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. Training for drivers might help mitigate this risk.
- (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 May. For example, in Edo State, reports emerged that a lecturer at Igbinedion University was killed by gunmen. The police suspected that they were kidnappers. However, it should be noted that a more positive picture emerges than in previous months. For example, in Ogun State, the police reported success in their operations against a cult group. They reported arrested three suspected members when they stormed one of their hideouts, which was suspected to have been used to initiate new members. Successful police operations were also reported in Lagos, Bayelsa and across other southern states.

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

While the waters off Nigeria were relatively calm this month, the Gulf of Guinea was not. An incident reportedly occurred off the coast of Equatorial Guinea, where a heavy lift vessel was reportedly attacked by Nigerian pirates, a group expected of attacking another boat earlier the same day. Naval personnel from Equatorial Guinea and Spain reportedly responded successfully, apprehending ten pirates. A week or so later, a chemical tanker was hijacked as it was anchored off Lome in the middle of the month. The Togo Navy responded to the call and intercepted the ship 25 nautical miles from the anchorage, forcing it to return. Of the eight pirates on board, two were reportedly Togolese and six from Nigeria. They were all handed over to Togolese authorities. What strikes as interesting in these two cases, is that Nigerian pirates were reportedly involved in both cases. Could the calm in Nigeria waters be due to pirate pushing further afield?

Niger Delta

Similar to April, very little violence in the Niger Delta was reported during the month of May. 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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