



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

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Information on indiscriminate violence arising from inter religious/fundamentalists' conflicts including available state protection

A report published by *Voice of America* in July 2014 notes:

“Five years into an insurgency, Nigeria is reeling. Carnage and mayhem that was once limited to the poor, largely Muslim northeast has spread elsewhere. Boko Haram now openly challenges the government, its campaign to impose its fundamentalist view of Islam intensifying. Daily shootings are common in many places in the country; the capital, Abuja, has been hit repeatedly by car and suicide bombings, most recently on June 25. More than 2,000 people have been killed this year alone, according to rights groups, and an estimated 250,000 Nigerians have been driven from their homes in three northeastern states” (Voice of America (6 August 2014) *In The Home of Peace, A Siege of Fear - Boko Haram: A VOA Special Report*).

This report also states:

“As local military and police units were increasingly outgunned and ill-equipped, the Nigerian government established the Joint Military Task Force called JTF, aimed at taking the fight directly to Boko Haram. The task force deployed thousands of police officers and military soldiers to places around Borno to set up checkpoints, conduct sweeps and make arrests. A new army unit – called the 7th Division— was set up last year, deployed specifically to Borno. There are growing doubts, however, that the country's security agencies are capable of overcoming entrenched corruption and leadership problems to stem the violence” (ibid).

In July 2014 the *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* states that:

“Not only have the bolstered security forces failed to gain a decisive advantage, but they have also failed to greatly reduce Boko Haram's freedom to act or ability to continue developing its armed campaign” (Combating Terrorism Center at West Point (30 July 2014) *Boko Haram, the Chibok Abductions and Nigeria's Counterterrorism Strategy*).

After commenting on a recent attack in Lagos, an article published by the *Jamestown Foundation* in July 2014 points out that:

“As a result of the attack in Lagos, there are now three active zones of operation for Boko Haram: The border region between Borno State and northern Cameroon, where Boko Haram maintains a safe haven to train militants, hold hostages-for-ransom and launch attacks; The Middle Belt, where Boko Haram is carrying out nearly weekly bombings of churches, malls and government facilities; and Southern Nigeria, where a network of militants is emerging that likely includes Muslims from southern Nigerian ethnic groups” (Jamestown Foundation (25 July 2014) *Boko Haram Opens New Fronts in Lagos and Nigeria's Middle Belt; Terrorism Monitor Volume: 12 Issue: 15*).

An article published in July 2014 by *Reuters* commenting on Boko Haram states:

“The insurgents, who are fighting to carve out an Islamic state in Nigeria, have repeatedly targeted civilians, mostly in remote northeastern Borno state” (Reuters (23 July 2014) *Suicide bombs in Nigeria's Kaduna kill 82, ex-leader Buhari targeted*).

Agence France Presse note in a report issued in July 2014 that:

“Islamist gunmen have in recent months attacked civilians at will across the remote northeast, the group's historic stronghold, but 2014 has also seen major unrest in key urban centres. The capital Abuja has been hit by three separate bombings, while a double car bombing in the key central city of Jos killed at least 118 people in May. Jonathan, facing unprecedented pressure to contain the bloodshed, has asked parliament to approve a \$1 billion foreign loan to upgrade the security services. Some analysts have described the request as a tacit acknowledgement by the president that his military is overmatched by Boko Haram who are blamed for killing more than 10,000 people since 2009” (Agence France Presse (23 July 2014) *42 dead in Nigeria attacks targeting ex-dictator, cleric*).

A report published in July 2014 by *Agence France Presse* states:

“Boko Haram has relentlessly targeted civilians across the northeast, killing more than 2,000 already this year, and staged brazen attacks on the security forces” (Agence France Presse (21 July 2014) *15,000 people displaced after Boko Haram raid in northeast Nigeria*).

In July 2014 a document released by *Agence France Presse* notes:

“Boko Haram gunmen killed many people in an attack in the restive northeast, throwing explosives into residential homes and shooting dead civilians who tried to surrender, an official and witnesses said Friday. Residents in the town of Damboa said they were left completely defenceless after the security forces pulled out of the area following a militant attack two weeks ago” (Agence France Presse (18 July 2014) *Boko Haram Islamists 'kill many' in northeast attack*).

This report also notes that:

“Boko Haram, a militant Islamist group in Nigeria blamed for slaughtering more than 2,000 civilians already this year, has increasingly targeted remote northeastern communities, razing entire villages while firing indiscriminately on the population” (ibid).

Human Rights Watch in July 2014 points out that:

“The Islamist insurgency Boko Haram in Nigeria killed at least 2,053 civilians in an estimated 95 attacks during the first half of 2014...The killings and other abuses were part of widespread attacks on civilians in over 70 towns and villages in northeastern Nigeria, in the federal capital, Abuja, and elsewhere that are apparent crimes against humanity” (Human Rights Watch (15 July 2014) *Nigeria: Boko Haram Kills 2,053 Civilians in 6 Months*).

This report also notes:

“There has been a dramatic increase during 2014 in the numbers of casualties from bomb blasts, including several apparent suicide bombings. Since January, at least 432 people have been reported killed in 14 blasts in crowded marketplaces, a brothel, a technical college, and, on two occasions, places where people were watching soccer matches” (ibid).

This document also states:

“...Boko Haram forces appeared to deliberately target civilians” (ibid).

It is also stated in this document that:

“In many of the attacks Boko Haram gunmen fired on civilians, such as people gathered in busy marketplaces, places of worship, and residential neighborhoods” (ibid).

A document issued in July 2014 by the *European Parliament* commenting on Boko Haram notes that::

“...the group is indiscriminately targeting both Muslim and Christian civilians...” (European Parliament (July 2014) *Insecurity in context: The rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria*, p.8).

In July 2014 a publication by the *Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect* points out that:

“Civilians in Nigeria are at a high risk of mass atrocity crimes as the frequency and geographical spread of attacks have increased during 2014. As Boko Haram continues to target Christians, moderate Muslims, government officials, pro-government vigilantes, students and teachers, there has also been a growing pattern of indiscriminate attacks against civilians” (*Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect* (15 July 2014) *Nigeria*).

An article published by *Reuters* in July 2014 notes:

“As long as violence perpetrated by Islamist militants was more or less contained in Nigeria's remote northeast, the attitude of many citizens and expatriates in the more prosperous south was a shrug of the shoulders. But growing evidence that Boko Haram, or other violent groups or individuals inspired by it, are radiating attacks from their northeastern heartlands across Africa's most populous country has many Nigerians feeling that nowhere is safe” (Reuters (14 July 2014) *INSIGHT-In Nigeria, Boko Haram-style violence radiates southwards*).

In July 2014 a report published by *Janes*'s states:

“Although attacks on security forces have continued in tandem, a significant shift in targeting preference has occurred since mid-2013, with the use of violence against the local civilian population a defining characteristic of Boko Haram's current insurgency” (Janes (1 July 2014) *Strengthening grip - Nigeria battles against growing Boko Haram insurgency*).

This article also notes:

“As Boko Haram expands its range of operations, the Nigerian military appears completely unable to stem the tide, despite President Jonathan declaring "total war" on Boko Haram in the wake of the Chibok abductions and subsequent international assistance. Several Nigerian newspapers carried reports on 3 June that 10 Nigerian generals and five other senior officers had been found guilty at court martial of supplying arms and information to Boko Haram, although this was flatly denied by the Ministry of Defence. Morale among ordinary soldiers deployed to such a dangerous environment as the northeast is at rock bottom: soldiers in the 7th Division based at Maiduguri mutinied on 14 May and fired at the vehicle of their divisional commander, who they blamed for the death of 12 men in an ambush after being ordered to travel back at night from Chibok. Militants have continued to carry out almost daily slaughters in isolated communities, according to Nigerian media sources, apparently able to act with virtual impunity. Despite the headline pledges of assistance from France, Israel, the UK, and the US, this has largely been limited to US-run surveillance and reconnaissance flights, and the dispatch of experts in counter-terrorism, intelligence gathering, and hostage negotiation. The burden of countering the insurgents rests firmly on the limited capabilities of the Nigerian armed forces” (ibid).

In June 2014 *BBC News* commenting on Boko Haram points out that:

“...where the insurgents are operating they are killing, looting and torching entire villages often with little or no resistance” (BBC News (12 June 2014) *Nigeria's Boko Haram crisis reaches deadliest phase*).

This document also states that:

“...there are also complaints of being totally let down by the military in the worst-affected areas” (ibid).

A publication issued in June 2014 by the *Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre*

“The group’s use of suicide attacks, bombings and raids have spread to most northern states and south towards Abuja, and its targets have become almost exclusively civilians. It has looted villages, killed and kidnapped residents, used forced conscription and abducted women and girls” (Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (5 June 2014) *Nigeria: Fleeing Boko Haram's relentless terror*, p.1).

In May 2014 the *United Nations News Service* commenting on a recent Boko Haram attack points out that:

“Yesterday's bombings have reportedly been blamed on the militant group known as Boko Haram, which is responsible for the abduction of the school girls. The group, whose name stands for "Western education is a sin," has been carrying out targeted attacks in recent years against schools, police, religious leaders, politicians, public and international institutions, indiscriminately killing civilians, including dozens of children” (United Nations News Service (21 May 2014) *UN officials strongly condemn double bombings in Nigeria*).

A report released in May 2014 by *BBC News* notes that:

“...after 12 months of state of emergency powers being in force, in the past few weeks Boko Haram has attacked several military bases” (BBC News (14 May 2014) *Why Nigeria has not defeated Boko Haram*).

This article also states, commenting on the military, that:

“...lack modern equipment, training and motivation” (ibid).

Commenting on attacks, an article by *Reuters* in April 2014 notes the:

“...inability of the Nigerian security forces to protect civilians against Boko Haram” (Reuters (24 April 2014) *Nigerian leaders unite against Boko Haram*).

In April 2014 a paper released by the *International Crisis Group* points out that:

“Senior security officials are first to admit, however, that their agencies are ill-prepared for today’s challenges, especially terrorism” (International Crisis Group (3 April 2014) *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, p.31).

This report also states:

“The police force is ill-equipped to address the Boko Haram threat and enjoys little public confidence” (ibid, p.32).

This document also notes:

“Boko Haram’s attacks have undermined public safety across the region and scarred its economy and development. Thousands of lives have been lost during the insurgency. The attacks increased during the first three months of 2014, with almost daily killings, bombings, thefts and destruction of schools, homes and businesses” (ibid, p.40).

In March 2014 a publication by *Amnesty International* notes:

“Amnesty International is extremely concerned that Nigerian security forces and the Islamist armed group Boko Haram are committing serious violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and human rights abuses amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. There have been hundreds of unlawful killings, including scores of extrajudicial executions, and deliberate attacks on civilians” (Amnesty International (31 March 2014) *Nigeria: More than 1,500 killed in armed conflict in North-Eastern Nigeria in early 2014*, p.4).

This document also states:

“Since the beginning of 2014, attacks by suspected Boko Haram members have intensified, resulting in the deaths of more than 700 people, mainly civilians not directly participating in hostilities” (ibid, p.31).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Amnesty International
BBC News
Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
Google
Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
International Crisis Group
IRIN News
Lexis Nexis
Minority Rights Group International
Online Newspapers
Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
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Reuters
United Kingdom Home Office
United States Department of State
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