



European Asylum Support Office

EASO Country of Origin Information Report

Nigeria Security Situation



November 2018

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Nigerian Snipers lay in the prone position conducting an operation “Silent Kill” demonstration during African Land Force Summit in Abuja, Nigeria, Apr. 17, 2018

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Czech Republic, Department for Asylum and Migration Policy, International and European Affairs Unit

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Nnamdi Obasi, Senior Advisor on Nigeria, International Crisis Group

It must be noted that the review carried out by the mentioned departments, experts or organisations contributes to the overall quality of the report, but does not necessarily imply their formal endorsement of the final report, which is the full responsibility of EASO.

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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the EASO COI Report Methodology (2012).¹ The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced. To the extent possible and unless otherwise stated, all information presented, except for undisputed or obvious facts, has been cross-checked.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

'Refugee', 'risk' and similar terminology are used as a generic terminology and not as legally defined in the EU Asylum Acquis and the Geneva Convention.

Neither EASO nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

The target users are asylum caseworkers, COI researchers, policymakers, and decision-making authorities.

The drafting process (including reviewing) for this report was finalised on 17 October 2018. Any event taking place after this period is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the [Methodology](#) section of the introduction.

¹ The EASO methodology is largely based on the Common EU Guidelines for processing Country of Origin Information (COI), 2008, and can be downloaded from the EASO website: [url](#)

Glossary and Abbreviations

ABA	Adaka Boro Avengers
ACCORD	Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
AIG	Assistant Inspector General
COI	Country of Origin Information
COAS	Chief of Army Staff
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
CNC	Central Naval Command
CSW	Christian Solidarity Worldwide
CTU	Counter Terrorism Unit
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIA	Defence Intelligence Agency
DSS	Department of State Services (also known as SSS)
DW	Deutsche Welle
<i>Eid el Kabir</i>	Islamic holiday commemorating the willingness of Ibrahim to follow Allah's command to sacrifice his son
ENC	Eastern Naval Command
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FOC	Flag Officers Commanding
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IGP	Inspector General of Police
IMN	Islamic Movement in Nigeria
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPOB	Indigenous People of Biafra
ISIS-WA	Islamic State-West Africa
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
JAS	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad
JTF	Joint Task Force
LGA	Local Government Area
LOG COMD	Logistics Command
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force

MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MAFO	Movement Against Fulani Occupation
MOPOL	Mobile Police: a paramilitary police force
NAF	Nigerian Air Force
NAN	News Agency of Nigeria
NASOC	Nigerian Army Special Operations Command
NAVTRAC	Naval Training Command
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NDA	Niger Delta Avengers
NDAC	Naval Doctrine and Assessment Centre
NDGJM	Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate
NDPVP	Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force
NDSF	Niger Delta Strike Force
NIA	National Intelligence Agency
NN	Nigerian Navy
NND	Nigerian Naval Dockyard
NNHL	Nigerian Navy Holdings Limited
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
NNSY	Nigerian Naval Shipyard
NOD	Naval Ordnance Depot
NSCDC	Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps
NPF	National Police Force
NSO	National Security Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OCHA	(United Nations) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OPWS	Operation Whirl Stroke
PANDEF	Pan Niger Delta Forum
PAP	Presidential Amnesty Programme
PMF	Police Mobile Force
PSC	Police Service Commission
PSD	Protection Status Determination
QD	Qualification Directive
RIVNESCA	Rivers State Neighbourhood Safety Corps Agency
SEMA	State Emergency Management Agency
SPU	Special Protection Unit
SSS	State Security Service (also known as DSS)

TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USCIRF	US Commission on International Religious Freedom
WISPI	World Internal Security and Police Index International
WNC	Western Naval Command

Introduction

This report was drafted by Country of Origin Information (COI) specialists from the COI unit listed under the [Acknowledgements](#) section.

The report aims to provide information on the security situation in Nigeria, which is relevant for international protection status determination, refugee status and subsidiary protection. The terms of reference can be found in [Annex 3](#).

Methodology

Defining the terms of reference

For the assessment of the need for refugee protection and subsidiary protection, especially taking into account Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive (QD), the following are key elements:

- a real risk of serious harm;
- an internal or international armed conflict;
- indiscriminate violence;
- the term civilian; and
- a serious and individual threat to life or person.

Based on various sources consulted by EASO², these key elements can be broken down into topics and/or indicators. Examples include: parties to the conflict; intensity level of the violence; nature of the violence; regional spreading of the violence; targets of the violence; risk of collateral damage; use of arms and tactics; possibility to reach areas – security of transport (roads and airports); and indirect effects of the violence/conflict.

Based upon a study of all the mentioned sources, a list of elements and indicators was drafted, which served as a basis for the terms of reference (see [Annex 3](#)). In order to make a well-informed assessment of the fear of persecution or risk of serious harm, information is needed on these security-related elements and indicators on a regional, zonal or state level.

Members of the EASO COI Specialist Network on West Africa and of the EASO Country Guidance Network gave input on the terms of reference that were finalised during a preparatory meeting in March 2018 taking all the inputs into account.

The reference period for the security events from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) database is from 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018. This period is mostly followed when presenting examples of the incidents in the regional chapters, except where very significant events or developments outside the reference period occurred. As a result of the quality control process (see below) some additional information was included in response to feedback received during the respective reviews, until 17 October 2018.

² The elements, topics and indicators were identified by various sources that have a different position in the legal hierarchy and provide different levels of detail: The Qualification Directive (Recitals and articles); Case law from the Court of Justice of the EU in Luxembourg; National State Practice (National legislation; National case law; National policy and first instance decision practice); Case law from the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg; Opinions of experts, academics and specialised organisations; See the following EASO publications: EASO, Article 15(c) Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU) A judicial analysis, December 2014, [url](#); The Implementation of Article 15(c) QD in EU Member States, July 2015, [url](#).

Collecting information

The information is a result of desk research of public, specialised paper-based and electronic sources until 30 September 2018.

For data on violent incidents, the datasets from the organisation Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) have been used. ACLED collects information about incidents of violence and protests in developing states, including Nigeria. In a database, ACLED indicates the kind of violence, the actors, the location, the course of events and the number of fatalities (deaths). ACLED collects its information from local media sources such as Sahara Reporters, Vanguard, Premium Times, This Day, as well as from international media sources such as Agence France Presse (AFP) and Associated Press (AP). The database is publicly available and is continuously updated.³ Additional sources have been researched to the extent possible to corroborate the ACLED findings.

It should be borne in mind that ACLED data may not always be accurate. In Boko Haram areas or frontline areas inaccessible to regular media reporting, there may be underreporting of incidents, whereas, in areas with large media coverage and presence of NGOs and national armed forces, overreporting may occur.

According to ACLED's codebook (in which their methodology is explained), for incidents where the original source has reported that several or many were killed, ACLED codes the number of fatalities as 10.⁴ This method has a significant impact on overall numbers of fatalities reported.

ACLED registers civilian deaths under the category 'violence against civilians', defined as follows:

'deliberate violent acts perpetrated by an organized political group such as a rebel, militia or government force against unarmed non-combatants. These conflict events harm or kill civilians, and are the sole act in which civilians are an actor (...). "Violence against civilians" also includes inflicting significant harm (e.g. bombing, shooting, torture, rape, mutilation etc) or accosting victims (e.g. kidnapping and disappearances). It does not include incidents in which people are not physically harmed (e.g. looting or burning, destruction of sacred spaces, and forced displacement).'⁵

Fatalities are counted only once. For example, in ACLED's Codebook it is stated:

'If summarized fatalities are reported, but events occur across several days or in multiple locations simultaneously, the total number is divided and that fraction is recorded for each day of the event (if over 1). If an odd number, the proportion of fatalities is divided by assigning the first day the additional fatality and distributed as evenly as possible. No information for number of harmed people is recorded in any other space besides the notes column, if available.'⁶

In this report, the ACLED data are regarded merely as estimates and indications of trends in violence.

In [Annex 1](#), an overview of violent incidents and the corresponding fatalities is presented in the period 1 October 2017 until 30 September 2018. In addition, the table presents two subsets of data: on violent incidents and fatalities that are the results of violence categorised

³ Raleigh, Clionadh, Andrew Linke, Håvard Hegre and Joakim Karlsen. 2010. Introducing ACLED-Armed Conflict Location and Event Data, *Journal of Peace Research* 47(5), pp. 651-660; ACLED, *Realtime Data (2017-2018)*, n.d. [url](#)

⁴ ACLED, *Codebook*, 2017 [url](#), p. 20

⁵ ACLED, *Codebook*, 2017 [url](#), p. 20

⁶ ACLED, *Codebook*, 2017 [url](#), p. 20

by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, and on incidents and fatalities that are the result of ‘remote violence’ (violence in which the actor is not present, such as car bombs, improvised explosive devices (IEDs)).

Quality control (peer and external review)

In order to ensure that the authors respected the EASO COI Report Methodology, a review was carried out by COI specialists from the countries and organisations listed as reviewers in the [Acknowledgements](#) section. In addition, a review of the report was carried out by Nnamdi Obasi, Senior Advisor on Nigeria with International Crisis Group. All comments made by the reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report. EASO performed the final quality review and editing of the text.

Content of the report

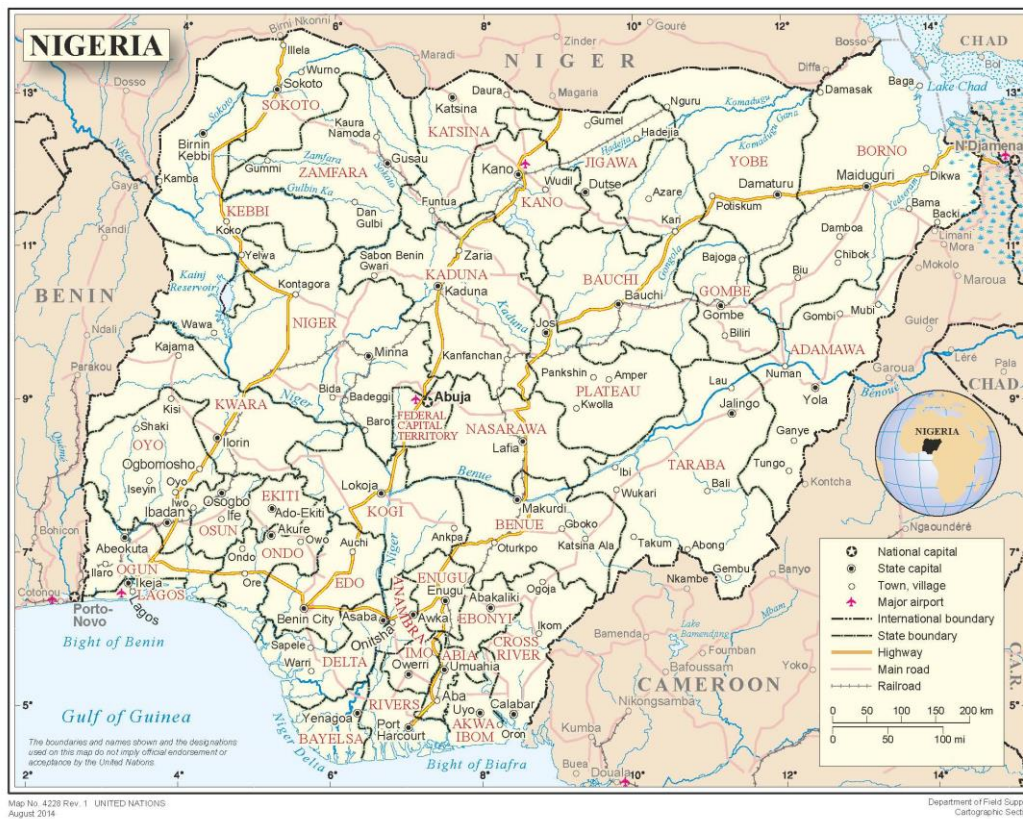
This report provides information on elements and indicators that may help in assessing the need for international protection of Nigerian applicants.

The first chapter gives a general description of the security situation in Nigeria, armed confrontations and military operations and an overview of actors in the various conflicts. This is then elaborated for the main conflicts in more detail in the second chapter. A general description at the level of the geopolitical zone contains information on the geography and population, and on the background of the conflict, including the actors active in the conflict. This is followed by a description of recent trends in the security situation, with regard to the above-mentioned indicators: the nature of the violence, frequency, tactics and targets, locations and number of fatalities. Also the impact of the violence on the state’s ability to secure law and order, and the impact on the population are discussed.

Simultaneously to this report on the security situation in Nigeria, EASO also published reports on [Actors of Protection](#), [Targeting of individuals](#), and [Key Socio-economic Indicators](#) in Nigeria. All reports were published in November 2018 and publicly available on the EASO COI portal.⁷ Where relevant, in this report reference to these reports have been included for further reading and more detailed information.

⁷ EASO, COI report Nigeria, Actors of Protection, November 2018, [url](#); EASO, COI report Nigeria, Key-socio-economic indicators, November 2018, [url](#); EASO, COI report Nigeria, Targeting of individuals, November 2018, [url](#)

Map



Map 1: © United Nations⁸

⁸ UN, Map No 4228, August 2014, [url](#)

1. General introduction to Nigeria

Nigeria is a federal presidential republic. It is divided into 36 states, and Abuja, which has the status of Federal Capital Territory (FCT).⁹ The 36 states and the FCT are grouped into six geopolitical zones (see map below):

- North Central (7 states): Niger, Kogi, Benue, Plateau, Na(s)sarawa, Kwara and FCT
- North East (6 states): Bauchi, Borno, Taraba, Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe
- North West (7 states): Zamfara, Sokoto, Kaduna, Kebbi, Katsina, Kano and Jigawa
- South East (5 states): Enugu, Imo, Ebonyi, Abia and Anambra
- South South (6 states): Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Edo, Rivers, Cross River and Delta
- South West (6 states): Oyo, Ekiti, Osun, Ondo, Lagos and Ogun



Map 2: @DFAT 2018¹⁰

⁹ CIA, The World Factbook – Nigeria, last updated 18 September 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report Nigeria, 9 March 2018, [url](#), p. 2

Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa, with an estimated population of 193 million people (data 2016).¹¹ The country has a population growth rate of 2.61%. The total area is 923,768 km², and the population density is 212/km².¹²

Nigeria is a highly diverse country with regards to ethnic groups and languages. There are more than 250 ethnic groups of which the largest groups are: Hausa/Fulani 29 %, Yoruba 21 %, Igbo (Ibo) 18 %, Ijaw 10 %, Kanuri 4 %, Ibibio 3.5 %, Tiv 2.5 %¹³, Edo/Bini 2 %¹⁴.

The main languages (of the 519 living languages in the country) spoken include English, Pidgin-English, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani, Ijaw.¹⁵

In the north, the main ethnic groups are Hausa and Fulani, and several other groups such as Kanuri (in the north-east). The Middle Belt has many smaller, different but related groups. Nigeria's south is divided into a Yoruba-speaking area in the west and an Igbo-speaking area in the east. The main group in the Niger Delta are the Ijaw although there are several other smaller ethnic groups.¹⁶ See the map above with the six zones and the main ethnic groups.

The religious adherence of the population is nearly equally divided between Christians and (Sunni) Muslims. According to a 2010 survey, the percentages of Muslims and Christians were 48.8 % respectively 49.3 % of the population, while 1.9 % was mainly composed of 'either practitioners of indigenous religions or no affiliations'¹⁷.

The economy largely relies on agriculture, trade, and oil production.¹⁸

¹¹ Nigeria, NBS, Population of Nigeria 2016, available at: [url](#)

¹² World Population Review, Nigeria population 2018 (estimate), n.d., [url](#)

¹³ CIA Factbook – Nigeria, last updated 18 September 2018, [url](#); Worldatlas, Largest Ethnic Groups in Nigeria, 25 April 2017, [url](#)

¹⁴ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Edo People, 29 August 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵ Ethnologue, Nigeria, Languages, [url](#)

¹⁶ Minority Rights Group International, Nigeria, updated January 2018, [url](#)

¹⁷ Pew Research Centre, Global Religious Futures Projects – Nigeria, 2010, [url](#). The CIA Factbook gives the following percentages: Muslim 50 %, Christian 40 %, indigenous beliefs 10 %. CIA Factbook – Nigeria, last updated 18 September 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸ CIA Factbook – Nigeria, last updated 18 September 2018, [url](#). For more information, see EASO, COI report Nigeria, Key-socio-economic indicators, November 2018, [url](#)

2. General description of the security situation

There are several indicators for the security situation in Nigeria. In the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2017, Nigeria is ranked the 3rd country in the world according to number of deaths from terrorist attacks, although the country saw a reduction in deaths with 3 100 less killed by terrorism in 2016 than in 2015. This was mainly due to an 80 % reduction in the number of people killed by the radical Islamist group, Boko Haram. The decrease in number of fatalities can be attributed to the sustained operations by the Nigerian military, supported by interventions by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)¹⁹ in the Lake Chad region, as well as the split within Boko Haram itself. In the Global Peace Index 2017, Nigeria did not make any progress; like the previous year, it still ranked 149th out of 163 countries.²⁰

Another important indicator is the Fragile States Index 2017. Although Nigeria remained in the 13th place in comparison with the previous year, the country was among the top 20 (13th) most improved countries in 2017.²¹ Also, a report produced by Nigeria Watch confirms that fatal violence has declined in the north-east since 2015.²²

In spite of the noted improvements, the situation is still regarded as alarming; in particular the escalating violence between pastoralists and farmers. International Crisis Group (in short: Crisis Group) assesses: 'Since September 2017, at least 1,500 people have been killed, over 1,300 of them from January to June 2018, roughly six times the number of civilians killed by Boko Haram over the same period.'²³

Another big concern is the inadequate capacity of security forces. In July 2017, the Speaker of House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara, stated that Nigeria is effectively permanently in a state of emergency, as its armed forces are deployed in more than 28 states of the federation. According to him, the armed forces have virtually taken over the routine police work in peace time.²⁴ In November 2017, the World Internal Security and Police Index International (WISPI) rated the Nigeria police force as the 'worst', in terms of its ability to handle internal security challenges, out of 127 countries assessed.²⁵ Crisis Group assesses that the government's deployment of more police and soldiers to states affected by conflicts other than Boko Haram insurgency, like the escalating farmer-herder violence, will further stretch resources that could otherwise have been concentrated on countering the aforementioned insurgency.²⁶

2.1 Overview of current conflicts in Nigeria

The security situation in Nigeria is affected by the following long-standing major conflicts:

1. The Boko Haram conflict in the North East zone²⁷;
2. The conflict between pastoralist and farmers in the North Central zone or so-called Middle Belt;
3. The oil-related conflict in the Niger Delta; and

¹⁹ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2017, 15 November 2017, [url](#), pp. 3, 4, 17

²⁰ IEP Global Peace Index, 1 June 2017, [url](#), p. 11

²¹ FFP, Fragile State Index, 10 May 2017, [url](#), pp. 10, 35

²² Nigeria Watch, 10 Myths about violence in Nigeria, 2018, [url](#), p. 4

²³ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiraling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 1

²⁴ This Day, Nigeria in State of Emergency, Says Dogara, 4 July 2017, [url](#)

²⁵ IPSA, World Internal Security and Police Index 2016; [url](#)

²⁶ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiraling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 18

²⁷ Nigeria is officially divided into six geopolitical zones, created during the regime of General Sani Abacha in 1996. For an overview of these six zones see EASO, EASO COI Report – Nigeria Country Focus, 5 June 2017, [url](#), p.

4. The escalating violence in Zamfara State related to cattle rustling and banditry.

These conflicts, which have significant impact on the population in the area, will be discussed in detail in respectively Sections [3.1](#), [3.2.](#), [3.3](#) and [3.4](#).

Besides these major conflicts, there are other manifestations of violence that create insecurity in the country:

1. The tension between the military and the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) in Kaduna State;
2. The tension between the government and Igbo groups for an independent Biafra.

These tensions will be briefly discussed at the end of this report in Section [3.5](#).

2.2 Armed confrontations in the territory of Nigeria

Although the Nigerian government announced several times since December 2015 that Boko Haram had been ‘technically defeated’ and no longer hold any territory²⁸, reports show that some areas are still under control by different factions of the group. Residents in some parts of Borno and Yobe, cited by Deutsche Welle (DW), claim that the Boko Haram faction led by Abu Mus’ab al Barnawi, ISIS-WA, (for a description of the different factions of Boko Haram see Section [2.3.7](#)), still holds a territory ‘spanning an estimated 100 miles (160 kilometres)’.²⁹ A map produced by the US development agency in February 2018 shows that ISIS-WA territory extends more than 100 miles into Nigeria’s north-eastern states of Borno and Yobe.³⁰ The BBC reported that it is unclear which of the two factions is dominant within Boko Haram, but both operate across the Lake Chad Basin region. Whereas the faction led by Abubakar Shekau, JAS, seems to be most active in the north-east towards Cameroon, ISIS-WA’s area of operation seems to be closer to the border with Niger.³¹

The map below, published in a report by Institute for Security Studies (ISS), highlighting the locations of attacks by violent extremist groups in Lake Chad Basin from August 2016 to April 2018, shows that ISIS-WA is more active near the border with Niger, further south to areas north and west of Damboa and in Yobe State around Buni Yadi. JAS is more active near the border with Cameroon and is present in south and central Borno State, particularly around the Sambisa Forest.³²

²⁸CBS News, Boko Haram is crushed, Nigeria's president declares, 24 December 2016, [url](#); Daily Trust, Boko Haram Kills 1,100 since being ‘technically defeated’, 3 December 2017, [url](#); DW, Boko Haram Islamists still control parts of northeastern Nigeria, 19 May 2018 ; [url](#); Vanguard, Boko Haram no longer holds our territory, Nigeria tells UN, 8 May 2018, [url](#)

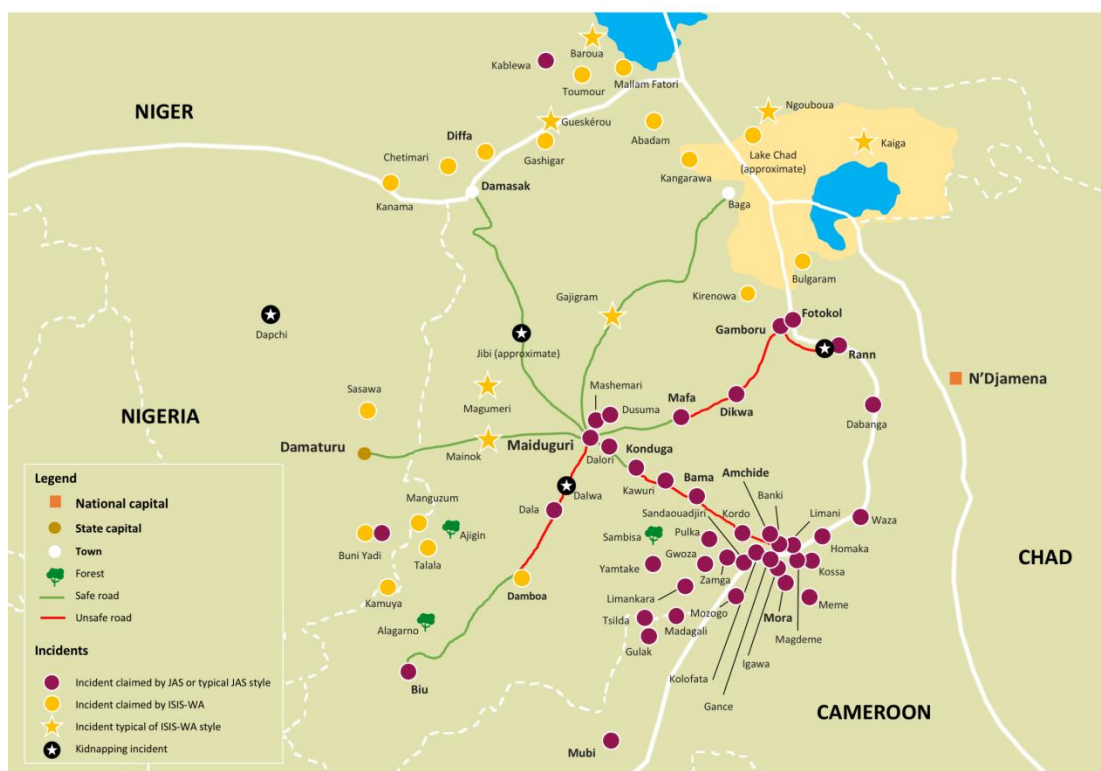
²⁹ DW, Boko Haram Islamists still control parts of northeastern Nigeria, 19 May 2018, [url](#)

³⁰ Reuters, Islamic State ally stakes out territory around Lake Chad, 29 April 2018, [url](#)

³¹ BBC, Islamic State and the kidnap of Nigerian schoolgirls from Dapchi, 29 March 2018, [url](#)

³² Mahmood, O.S. & Ani, N.C., Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram, 6 July 2018, [url](#), pp. 22-23

Location of attacks by violent extremist groups in Lake Chad Basin: August 2016 – April 2018



Disclaimer: Locations and features approximate, map not representative of quantity and only denotes identifiable locations.

Map 3: @/ISS. Location of attacks by violent extremist groups in Lake Chad Basin: August 2016-April 2018³³

In the first half year of 2018, the Nigerian armed forces, supported by the [Multinational Joint Task Force \(MNJTF\)](#), pushed Boko Haram out of several areas of the north-east.³⁴

2.2.1 Military operations

In 2017 and 2018, several security operations were launched, while others already underway were continued by Nigerian security forces. Below is a short overview of the main operations that are relevant within the scope of this report.

Operation Safe Haven

Operation Safe Haven was established in 2010 and is continuing in Plateau, Kogi, Benue, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Bauchi and Kwara States. The main objective of the operation is to maintain peace and security in the region by tackling pastoralist/farmers clashes, cattle rustling, and other criminal activities.³⁵

Operation Lafiya Dole

Operation Lafiya Dole, which means 'peace by all means' in the Hausa language, was announced in July 2015 and replaced Operation Zaman Lamiya. The operation was set up to

³³ Mahmood, O.S. & Ani, N.C., Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram, 6 July 2018, [url](#), pp. 22-23

³⁴ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, (S/2018/649), 29 June 2018 [url](#), p. 5

³⁵ Sahara Reporters, Soldiers Arrest 21 'Involved' In Plateau Killings And Reprisals, 3 July 2018, [url](#); This Day, With 10 Major Security Operations Across the Country, Military Stretched Too Thin, 11 September 2016, [url](#); Vanguard, Accessing military operations around Nigeria, 1 December 2017, [url](#)

counter the insurgency in the north-eastern part of the country.³⁶ Since 2015, the operation has been expanded to specialised operations, such as:

- Operation Crackdown' to clear remnants of Boko Haram from Sambisa Forest;
- Operation Gama Aiki to clear remnants of Boko Haram from the northern part of Borno State;
- Operation Safe Corridor to de-radicalise and rehabilitate repentant Boko Haram fighters;³⁷
- Operation Last Hold to clear Boko Haram from the area around Lake Chad and facilitate the return of IDPs to their ancestral homes. The operation has been working in conjunction with The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and is still ongoing.³⁸

Operation Delta Safe

Operation Delta Safe was launched in the Niger Delta in June 2016, replacing Operation Pulo Shield. Its objective is to improve security in the region, safeguard oil facilities, and crush militancy and pipeline vandalism in the Niger Delta.³⁹ Early May 2018, the Operation confirmed the killings of four high-profile militants from the region.⁴⁰

Operation Chikin Gudu

The little-known Operation Chikin Gudu was conducted in July 2017 in Marte LGA, Borno State. It was a clearance operation against militants.⁴¹

Operation Python Dance II

As a follow up of Operation Python Dance I, which was conducted by the Nigerian army from 27 November till 27 December 2016, Operation Python Dance II was intended to check illegal bunkering, armed robbery, kidnapping, banditry, communal clashes, amongst other forms of criminal activities in the south-east states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The exercise started on 15 September 2017 and ended on 14 October 2017.⁴² According to the Nigerian army, 106 suspected armed robbers, kidnappers and cult members were arrested during the operation. A total of 26 assorted guns were also recovered during the exercise.⁴³

Operation Crocodile Smile II

Operation Crocodile Smile II was conducted by the Nigerian army from 7 till 28 October 2017⁴⁴, in the South West and Niger Delta states: Akwa Ibom, Lagos, Ondo, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, and Cross River. The operation was held in cooperation with other security agencies such as the Nigerian Police and the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), to curtail prevailing security challenges like illegal oil bunkering, pipeline vandalism,

³⁶ Pulse.ng, Army boss launches 'Operation Lafiya Dole', 20 July 2015, [url](#); Vanguard, Army chief in Maiduguri; changes code to Operation Lafiya Dole, 21 July 2015, [url](#)

³⁷ This Day, With 10 Major Security Operations Across the Country, Military Stretched Too Thin, 11 September 2016, [url](#); Vanguard, Accessing military operations around Nigeria, 1 December 2017, [url](#)

³⁸ The Guardian, Troops kill five terrorists, arrest alleged fuel suppliers in Borno, Yobe, 16 July 2018, [url](#); Vanguard, Army chief in Maiduguri; changes code to Operation Lafiya Dole, 21 July 2015, [url](#)

³⁹ This Day, Militancy: Operation Delta Safe Finally Kicks off, 30 June 2016, [url](#); This Day, With 10 Major Security Operations Across the Country, Military Stretched Too Thin, 11 September 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁰ Sahara Reporters, Troops 'Kill' Four Top Niger Delta Militants, 3 May 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹ Mahmood, O.S. et al., Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region, July 2018, [url](#), p. 13

⁴² Vanguard, Operation python dance II: Abia govt slams 3-day curfew, soldiers apologise, 13 September 2017, [url](#); Vanguard, Operation Python Dance II: One week after, 23 September 2017, [url](#)

⁴³ Punch, 106 criminals arrested, 26 guns recovered in 'Python Dance' –Army, 17 October 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁴ Daily Posts, Operation Crocodile Smile II: Army lists successes as exercise ends, 8 November 2017, [url](#)

cultism, kidnapping and militancy.⁴⁵ Operation Crocodile II was a follow-up of Operation Crocodile I, which was conducted in August 2016.⁴⁶

Operation Last Hold

On 1 May 2018, the Nigerian army launched a four-month-long operation in Borno North District called Operation Last Hold. The operation was conducted as part of the Operation Lafiya Dole. It was intended to ensure the destruction of Boko Haram camps and strong points in the Nigerian side of Lake Chad Basin and enable the rescue of hostages still held by the insurgents.⁴⁷

The operation also aimed to facilitate the return of IDPs to their communities and to restore fishing, farming and other socio-economic activities in the Lake Chad Basin.⁴⁸ To this aim, it facilitated the clearance of seaweeds and other obstacles obstructing the movement of boats and people across Lake Chad waterways.⁴⁹

Operation Ruwan Wuta I, II, III and IV

The first Operation Ruwan Wuta was launched in September 2017⁵⁰, followed by Operation Ruwan Wuta II in October 2017⁵¹, Operation Ruwan Wuta III in December 2017⁵², and finally Operation Ruwan Wuta IV in February 2018.⁵³ All the operations were executed by the Nigerian air force in order to repel remnants of Boko Haram out of Sambisa Forest and the Lake Chad region.⁵⁴

Operation Deep Punch II

Operation Deep Punch II was launched in October 2017 as successor of Operation Deep Punch I. The operation has been conducted in south-central Borno to clear remnants of Boko Haram out of Sambisa Forest.⁵⁵ In this operation Nigerian and Cameroonian troops were working together.⁵⁶ According to the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt Gen Tukur Buratai, the operation led to the fall of Sambisa Forest.⁵⁷

⁴⁵ Daily Trust, Operations Crocodile Smile II successful – Buratai, 31 October 2017, [url](#); Premium Times, Nigerian Army commences “Exercise Crocodile Smile II” in Niger Delta-Official, 10 October 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁶ Jamestown Foundation, Nigeria Expands Its ‘War on Terrorism’ to the Niger Delta, Terrorism Monitor, 16 September 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁷ Press Briefing by the Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen T. Y. Buratai on the Planned Conduct of Operation Last Hold from 1 May – 31 August 2018, Abuja, 21 April 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁸ Mahmood, O.S. et al., Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region, July 2018, [url](#), p. 14; The Guardian, Operation Last Hold: Dikko charges troops to brace up for task ahead, 1 June 2018, [url](#); This Day, Nigeria: Military Launches Operation Last Hold in Final Push Against Boko Haram, 16 May 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁹ Press Briefing by the Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen T. Y. Buratai on the Planned Conduct of Operation Last Hold from 1 May – 31 August 2018, Abuja, 21 April 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁰ The Guardian, NAF commences operation Ruwan Wuta in Northeast, 9 September 2017, [url](#)

⁵¹ Daily Trust, Air Force launch Operation Ruwan Wuta II, 25 October 2017, [url](#)

⁵² The Guardian, NAF commences operation Ruwan Wuta III, bombs Boko Haram hideouts, 16 December 2017, [url](#)

⁵³ Vanguard, NAF launches Operation ‘RUWAN WUTA IV’ against Boko Haram insurgents, 14 February 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁴ Mahmood, O.S. et al., Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region, July 2018, [url](#), pp. 12-13; Vanguard, NAF launches Operation ‘RUWAN WUTA IV’ against Boko Haram insurgents, 14 February 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁵ Mahmood, O.S. et al., Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region, July 2018, [url](#), pp. 12-13

⁵⁶ Gsell, A. & Nowak, M., Handmade and Deadly: Craft Production of Small Arms in Nigeria, Small Arms Survey, June 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁵⁷ The Guardian, ‘Operation Deep Punch 2’ led to the fall of Sambisa forest, says Buratai, 18 March 2018, [url](#)

Operation Cat Race

Operation Cat Race, also called Operation Ayem Akpatuma in the Tiv language⁵⁸, ran from 15 February to 31 March 2018.⁵⁹ The operation was conceived as a training exercise which was then to tackle armed banditry, kidnapping and cattle rustling in the states of Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Niger and Kogi. The operation was conducted in conjunction with other security agencies such as the Department of State Services, the Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps.⁶⁰ The operation was extended in Benue, Taraba and Kogi and ended on 14 May 2018.⁶¹

Operation Whirl Stroke I and II

On 8 May 2018 the military launched Operation Whirl Stroke 1, as follow-up to Operation Cat Race, to curb the violence between armed herdsmen and militia groups in Benue, Nasarawa and Taraba States.⁶² The operation consists of all the military services, police and Department of State Services (DSS).⁶³ A similar operation, called Operation Whirl Stroke 2 is deployed in Zamfara and Kaduna States.⁶⁴

2.2.2 Impact of the violence on the population

A general overview of the number of violent incidents and fatalities in the period 1 October 2017 till 30 September 2018 is presented in [Annex 1](#). A comparison in these figures between the various regions discussed in this report can be found in [Section 3.6](#).

The population of the north-east of Nigeria has suffered from the violence, leading to mass displacement, tens of thousands deaths, destruction of many villages, schools, hospitals and other infrastructure.⁶⁵ Boko Haram is responsible for the death of approximately 17 000 people since May 2011. Another 14 645 persons have died as a result of clashes between Boko Haram and Nigerian military and other state actors.⁶⁶ However, in the first half of 2018, the number of fatalities related to Boko Haram was estimated at 'over 200'.⁶⁷ After losing much of their territory Boko Haram changed their tactics from organised, large-scale attacks to more sporadic attacks such as suicide bombings.⁶⁸

In 2017 and 2018, many incidents of violence were reported involving herders and farming communities in the Middle Belt states (for more detailed information, see [Section 3.2.1](#)) as well as in the southern states of Edo, Ebonyi and Kogi. These incidents resulted in numerous casualties, population displacement and destruction of property, particularly between January and June 2018.⁶⁹

⁵⁸ Leadership, Army Launches Operation 'Cat Race' In Benue Valley, 8 February 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁹ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 21

⁶⁰ Leadership, Army Launches Operation 'Cat Race' In Benue Valley, 8 February 2018, [url](#)

⁶¹ Pulse.ng, Army ends Exercise Ayem Akpatuma in Benue, Taraba, Kogi, 15 May 2018, [url](#)

⁶² International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 21

⁶³ The Nation, Army starts 'Whirl Stroke' against armed herdsmen, militia groups, 19 May 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁴ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 21

⁶⁵ ACAPS, Humanitarian Overview: An Analysis of Key Crisis into 2018, 30 November 2017, [url](#), pp. 30-31; Premium Times, Boko Haram destroyed one million houses, 5,000 classrooms, N1.9 trillion properties in Borno – Official, 8 August 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁶ CFR, Nigeria Security Tracker, 30 April 2018, [url](#). For more information, see EASO, COI report Nigeria, Actors of Protection, November 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁷ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 1

⁶⁸ ACAPS, Humanitarian Overview: An Analysis of Key Crisis into 2018, 30 November 2017, [url](#), p. 30

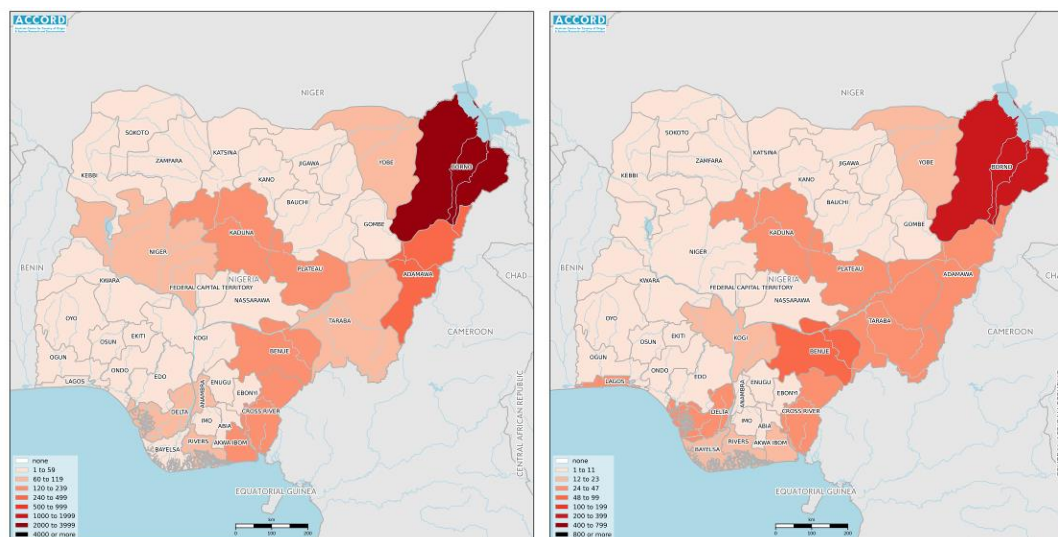
⁶⁹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, (S/2018/649), 29 June 2018 [url](#), p.4

Crisis Group notes that since the violence escalated in January 2018, about 300 000 people fled their homes and more than 1 300 people have been killed. The farmer-herder conflict has claimed 'more than 6 times more civilian lives than the Boko Haram insurgency'.⁷⁰

In contrast with the two other regions, the level of armed violence in the Niger Delta remained low, largely due to the continuing [amnesty programme](#).⁷¹ The number of violent incidents even decreased in the period 1 January 2018 to 30 September 2018.⁷² Although the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) ended the ceasefire in November 2017⁷³, and in January 2018 announced they were starting a fresh round of attacks on the country's oil installations⁷⁴, no major incidents against civilians between January 2018 and June 2018 were found in the sources consulted.

Regarding the number of fatalities per 100 000 people in 2017, according to data recorded by ACLED, Borno was by far the most dangerous of Nigeria's 36 states, followed by Taraba, Cross River, Plateau and Adamawa.⁷⁵

A series of maps made by ACCORD on the basis of ACLED data shows the trends in numbers of incidents and fatalities over the year 2017 and the first two quarters of 2018:



Maps 4, 5: Nigeria January-December 2017:

Nr of incidents (at least 1 fatality)

Nr of reported fatalities⁷⁶

⁷⁰ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 1

⁷¹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (S/2017/1104), 26 December 2017, [url](#), p. 4

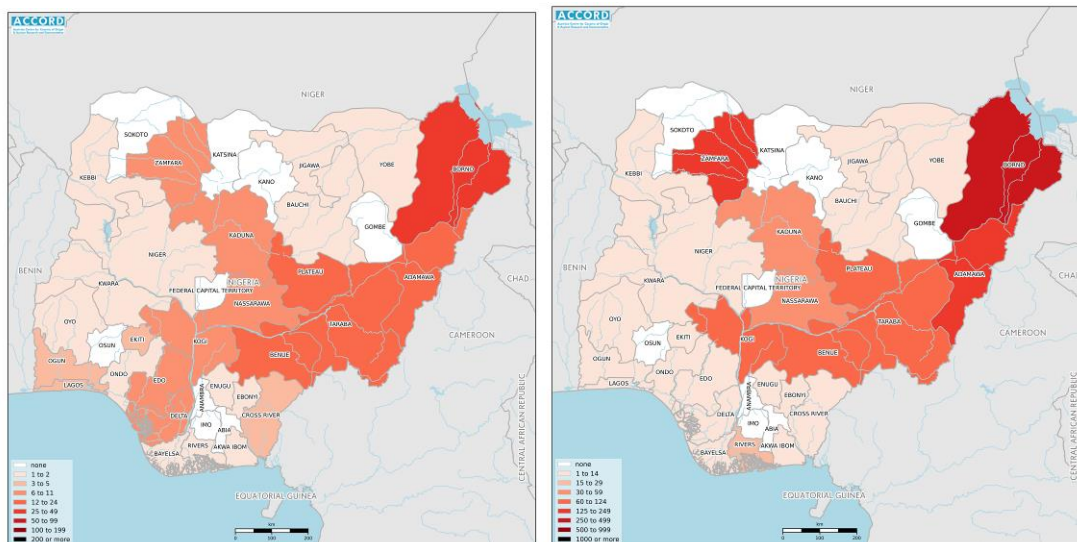
⁷² UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, (S/2018/649), 29 June 2018, [url](#), p.4

⁷³ The Economist Intelligence Unit, Niger Delta militants end their ceasefire, 6 November 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁴ Sahara Reporters, Niger Delta Avengers To Resume Massive Attack Oil Facilities, Demand Restructuring, 17 January 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁵ ACLED, Real Time data (1 July 2017- 30 June 2018), [url](#)

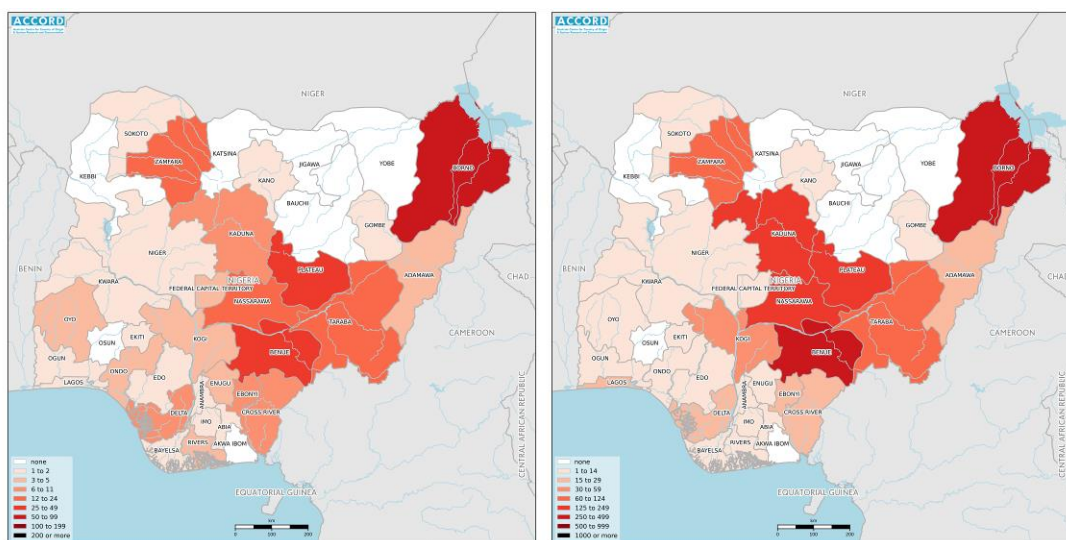
⁷⁶ ACCORD, Update on conflict-related incidents according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (covering 2017), 18 June 2018, [url](#)



Maps 6, 7: Nigeria 1st Quarter 2018:

Nr of incidents (at least 1 fatality)

Nr of reported fatalities⁷⁷



Maps 8, 9: Nigeria 2nd Quarter 2018:

Nr of incidents (at least 1 fatality)

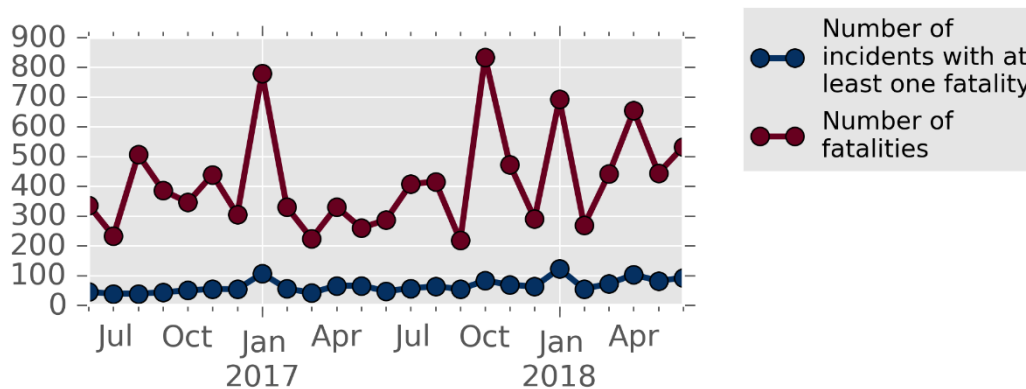
Nr of reported fatalities⁷⁸

The below graph gives an overview of the numbers of incidents and fatalities all over Nigeria over the period 1 July 2017 to April 2018.⁷⁹ The fluctuation in the number of fatalities is strong whereas the number of incidents is fairly stable.

⁷⁷ ACCORD, Update on conflict-related incidents according to ACLED (covering 1st quarter 2018), [url](#)

⁷⁸ ACCORD, Nigeria, Second Quarter 2018: Update on incidents according to ACLED, 5 September 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁹ ACCORD, Nigeria, Second Quarter 2018: Update on incidents according to ACLED, 5 September 2018, [url](#)



Graph 1: no of incidents and fatalities July 2017 till April 2018⁸⁰

Road security

Roads in the north-east are often subject to kidnapping and robbery, mainly by Boko Haram.⁸¹ In March 2018, the UN suspended road travels in Maiduguri LGA (Borno) and Damaturu LGA (Yobe), due to threats of abduction by Boko Haram.⁸² The Nigerian army announced in June 2018 that four roads in Borno State had been cleared and reopened for the public.⁸³ See further [2.1.8](#).

Not only the north-eastern region is insecure to travel by road, the Birnin-Gwari Kaduna highway is a notorious road in Kaduna State where several violent incidents took place such as kidnapping.⁸⁴ See further [2.2.8](#).

In general, travelling by road is not without danger in Nigeria. In January 2018, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) reported 4 410 deaths by road accidents in 2017.⁸⁵ From October 2017 to March 2018, at least 2 598 Nigerians died in road accidents, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).⁸⁶

2.3 Actors in the conflicts

In this report, the actors in the main conflicts are discussed briefly.

More detailed information on the military and police and other state actors is provided in [EASO COI report Nigeria, State Actors of Protection](#), November 2018.

More information on actors, including organisational structure, modus operandi, human rights violations, and profiles of persons targeted by these actors is provided in [EASO COI report Nigeria, Targeting individuals](#), November 2018.

2.3.1 Nigerian armed forces

The Nigerian armed forces comprise three branches: Nigerian army, Nigerian navy, and Nigerian air force.⁸⁷ In October 2013, the website DefenceWeb reported the total force strength of the Nigerian Armed Forces as 210 000 (army 100 000, air force 13 000, navy 15 000

⁸⁰ ACCORD, Nigeria, Second Quarter 2018: Update on incidents according to ACLED, 5 September 2018, [url](#)

⁸¹ Sahara Reporters, Boko Haram Terrorists Carry Out Fresh Abduction Of Dozens Of Travelers On Maiduguri-Damboa Road, 17 February 2018, [url](#)

⁸² UNHCR, Nigeria – Situation Update, March 2018, [url](#)

⁸³ Two female bombers die in Borno military market blasts, 22 June 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁴ Reuters, At least 100 people kidnapped along road in northern Nigeria, 15 May 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁵ The Nation, Road accidents: FRSC records 4,410 deaths in 2017, 22 January 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁶ Premium Times, Nigeria records 2,598 deaths from road accidents in six months, 23 May 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁷ Martin, G., Kruger, A., Nigerian Armed Forces, DefenceWeb, 7 October 2013, [url](#)

and paramilitary 82 000)⁸⁸ as of October 2013.⁸⁹ In 2016, the World Bank Group assessed the total armed forces personnel at 200 000.⁹⁰ More recent information is provided by Global Firepower, which reports the total military personnel as 181 000 (124 000 are qualified as active personnel and 57 000 as reserve personnel).⁹¹

The OECD reported that ‘despite its continued military operations against Boko Haram, Nigeria’s military expenditures fell in 2017 for the fourth consecutive year.’ Nevertheless, the country is the fourth largest military spender in Sub-Saharan Africa after Sudan, South Africa and Angola, and by far the biggest military power in West Africa. The total expenditures in 2017 was 1 621 million US dollars.⁹² Nigeria is also the 3rd largest weapons importer in Africa, the top one in Sub-Saharan Africa, and its arms import grew by 42 % between 2008-2012 and 2013-2017, according to SIPRI.⁹³

The three services are administered and coordinated by a Defence Headquarters. The Defence Headquarters is headed by a Chief of Defence Staff, who is the country’s apex military officer.⁹⁴

The Nigerian army is the land branch of the armed forces and by far the largest of the three branches.⁹⁵ Hierarchically, the army is organised into the army headquarters, divisions, brigades, battalions, regiments, companies, platoons and sections. A division consists of 7 000 - 22 000 troops and is commanded by a major general.⁹⁶ In total, there are eight divisions:⁹⁷

- 1 Mechanized Division, headquarters is located in Kaduna, Kaduna State;
- 2 Mechanized Division, headquarters is located in Ibadan, Oyo State;
- 3 Armoured Division, headquarters is located in Jos, Plateau State;
- 6 Amphibious Division, headquarters is located in Port Harcourt, Rivers State;
- 7 Infantry Division, headquarters is located in Maiduguri, Borno State;
- 8 Division, headquarters is located in Sokoto, Sokoto State;
- 81 Division, headquarters is located in Lagos, Lagos State;
- 82 Composite Division, headquarters in Enugu, Enugu State.

In addition, there are also the Guards Brigade, the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and the Nigerian Army Special Operations Command (NASOC).⁹⁸

The Nigerian army has repeatedly been accused of human rights violations in its counter-insurgency operations.⁹⁹ Other notable incidents involving serious human rights violations were the crackdowns on members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) in December 2015 (in which more than 350 men, women and children were killed, and on members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) for which fatalities remain unknown.¹⁰⁰

⁸⁸ The source does not specify which services can be considered as paramilitary.

⁸⁹ Martin, G., Kruger, A., Nigerian Armed Forces, DefenceWeb, 7 October 2013, [url](#)

⁹⁰ World Bank, Armed forces personnel, total, n.d., World Bank, [url](#)

⁹¹ The source does not specify who exactly can be considered as reserve personnel. Global Fire Power, 2018 Nigeria Military Strength, n.d., [url](#)

⁹² OECD/SWAC, Maps & Facts: Military Expenditures in West Africa 2017, Newsletter N°. 71, July 2018, [url](#)

⁹³ SIPRI, Trends in International Arms Transfers, March 2018, [url](#), p. 7

⁹⁴ Nigeria, Defence Headquarters, Office of the Chief of Defence Staff, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁵ Martin, G., Kruger, A., Nigerian Armed Forces, DefenceWeb, 7 October 2013, [url](#)

⁹⁶ Global Security, Nigerian Army Order of Battle, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁷ Nigerian Army, Formations, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁸ Nigerian Army, Formations, n.d., [url](#); Global Security, Nigerian Army Order of Battle, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁹ See, for instance, Amnesty International, Stars on their Shoulders, Blood on their Hands: War Crimes Committed by the Nigerian Military, 2 June 2015, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰ AI, Nigeria: Unearthing the truth: Unlawful killings and mass cover-up in Zaria, 22 April 2016 [url](#); AI, Nigeria: At least 150 peaceful pro-Biafra activists killed in chilling crackdown, 24 November 2016 [url](#)

The second branch of the armed forces is the Nigerian Navy (NN). According to its website, the Naval Headquarters is the administrative and policy-making organ of the Nigerian Navy and commanded by the Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS). The CNS has eight staff branches: Policy and Plans, Training and Operations, Administration, Naval Engineering, Logistics, Accounts and Budget, Naval Safety and Standards, and the Office of the Navy Secretary. There are five commands headed by Flag Officers Commanding (FOCs) and five autonomous units. There are three operational commands: 'Western, Eastern and Central Naval Commands (WNC, ENC and CNC) which are responsible for the protection and policing of the nation's maritime environment; as well as a Naval Training Command (NAVTRAC) and Logistics Command (LOG COMD). The autonomous units are the Nigerian Naval Dockyard (NND), Nigerian Naval Shipyard (NNSY), the Naval Ordnance Depot (NOD), Nigerian Navy Holdings Limited (NNHL) and Naval Doctrine and Assessment Centre (NDAC).'¹⁰¹

The naval command is top-heavy. The Navy is described by Global Security as 'the most corrupt of the services', with 'six times as many general officers and flag officers' in the Nigerian Navy as there are operational ships.¹⁰²

The third branch of the armed forces is the Nigerian Air Force (NAF). The Air Force Headquarters is commanded by the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS). It has six operational commands (Logistics Command, Ground Training Command, Air Training Command, Mobility Command, Special Operation Command, and Tactical Air Command) and ten staff branches: Medical Service, Accounts and Budget, Communication Information Systems, Training and Operations, Air Secretary, Standards and Evaluation, Administration, Logistics, Aircraft Engineering, and Policy and Plan. Furthermore, there are several direct reporting units.¹⁰³

2.3.2 Nigeria Police Force

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is the principal law enforcement agency in the country. The Nigerian constitution prohibits state and local governments from forming their own forces.¹⁰⁴ State governors may request federal police for local emergency actions¹⁰⁵, but state police commissioners take directives for major operations from the Inspector General of Police in Abuja. According to Interpol, the strength of the NPF is more than 350 000 men and women.¹⁰⁶ Another source reported 371 800 officers¹⁰⁷, while the Inspector General of Police (IGP) himself, Mr Ibrahim Idris, mentioned the number of 300 000 while addressing commanders of Police Mobile Force (PMF), Special Protection Unit (SPU) and Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) at a meeting in Abuja in March 2018.¹⁰⁸ The same IGP had earlier revealed that the NPF was overstretched and far below the United Nations' 1:400 police-population ratio.¹⁰⁹

According to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), 'the NPF suffers from low capacity and insufficient training. In addition, the centrally controlled nature of the NPF ensures resources and changes in operating procedures are slow to reach all corners of the country.'¹¹⁰

¹⁰¹ Nigerian Navy, Structure, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰² Global Security, Nigerian Navy, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰³ Nigerian Air Force, Organsiation, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ Australia, DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria, 9 March 2018, [url](#), p. 29

¹⁰⁵ ACAPS, Nigeria Country Profile – Security Forces, 2 May 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ Interpol, the Nigeria Police Force, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ Australia, DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria, 9 March 2018, [url](#), p. 29

¹⁰⁸ Sahara Reporters, Police IGPs And The Politics Of Withdrawal Of Police Personnel From VIPs, Politicians, 20 March 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ Daily Trust, Despite Buhari's order, police still attached to dignitaries, 23 April 2017, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ Australia, DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria, 9 March 2018, [url](#), p. 29

The NPF was initially overseen by three government agencies: the Nigerian Police Council, the Police Service Commission (PSC), and the Ministry of Police Affairs.¹¹¹ However, the latter was scrapped, following the Buhari administration's reorganisation of the federal executive in 2015.¹¹²

Within the Police Force, three different structures can be identified: Command (Authority) Structure, Administration Structure and Organisation Structure.¹¹³

Command (Authority) structure

In accordance with Section 215 of the 1999 Constitution and Section 6 of the Police Act 1990, the Police Force is commanded by an Inspector General of Police who is directly appointed by the president. Following the IGP are three tiers of command, namely the Deputy Inspector General, Assistant Inspector General and Commissioner of Police. Though not specially mentioned in the constitution, Section 7(1) of the Police Act provides that the Deputy Inspector General of Police is the second in Command of the Force and shall so act for him in the Inspector-General's absence.¹¹⁴ Third in line is the Office of the Assistant Inspector-General and he shall act for the Inspector-General of Police in the event of the absence of the Inspector-General of Police and Deputy Inspector-General of Police. Fourth in command is a Commissioner of Police who is in charge of contingents of the Police Force stationed in a state.¹¹⁵

Apart from the top four ranks mentioned above, the NPF has 11 other ranks which, hierarchically, are as follows: Deputy Commissioner of Police, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Chief Superintendent of Police, Superintendent of Police, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Inspector of Police, Sergeant Major, Sergeant, Corporal and Constable.¹¹⁶

Administrative structure

The Nigeria Police is administratively structured and divided into nine departments with each department charged with specific duties. The departments are as follows: Finance and Administration, Operations, Logistics and Supply, Investigation, Training, Research and Planning; Information and Communication, Force Intelligence Bureau and Force Secretary.¹¹⁷

Organisational structure

The police force is structured in line with the geopolitical structure of the country, with provisions for supervisory formations. From the top down, the organisational structure of the police force comprises the following: Force Headquarters, Zonal Headquarters, State Command Headquarters, Divisional Police Headquarters, Police Station, Police Post and Village Police Post.¹¹⁸

There are 12 Zonal Commands across the country, each headed by an Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of Police. The 12 Zonal Commands are as follows:¹¹⁹

¹¹¹ Australia, DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria, 9 March 2018, p. 30 [url](#)

¹¹² The Eagle Online, Buhari to name 25 substantive ministers, scrap five ministries, 10 November 2015, [url](#)

¹¹³ Nigeria Police Force, The Structure of the Nigeria Police Force, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁴ Nigeria Police Force, The Structure of the Nigeria Police Force, n.d., [url](#); Federal Republic of Nigeria, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ Nigeria Police Force, The Structure of the Nigeria Police Force, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁶ Nigeria Police Force, The Structure of the Nigeria Police Force, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁷ Nigeria Police Force, The Structure of the Nigeria Police Force, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁸ Nigeria Police Force, The Structure of the Nigeria Police Force, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁹ Nigeria Police Force, Zone, n.d., [url](#); Open Society Institute, Criminal Force: Torture, Abuse and Extrajudicial Killings by the Nigeria Police Force, May 2010 [url](#), p. 39

- Zone 1: Kano, Katsina, and Jigawa States, with headquarters in Kano
- Zone 2: Lagos and Ogun States, with headquarters in Lagos
- Zone 3: Adamawa, Gombe, and Taraba States with headquarters in Yola (Adamawa State)
- Zone 4: Benue, Nasarawa, and Plateau States, with headquarters in Makurdi (Benue State)
- Zone 5: Bayelsa, Delta, and Edo States, with headquarters in Benin (Edo State)
- Zone 6: Cross River, Ebonyi, Rivers, and Akwa Ibom States, with headquarters in Calabar (Cross River State)
- Zone 7: Federal Capital Territory, Kaduna, and Niger States, with headquarters in Abuja (Federal Capital Territory)
- Zone 8: Ekiti, Kogi, and Kwara States, with headquarters in Lokoja (Kogi State)
- Zone 9: Abia, Anambra, Enugu, and Imo States, with headquarters in Umuahia (Umuahia)
- Zone 10: Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara States, with headquarters in Sokoto (Sokoto State)
- Zone 11: Ondo, Osun, and Oyo States, with headquarters in Oshogbo (Osun State)
- Zone 12: Bauchi, Borno, and Yobe States, with headquarters in Bauchi (Bauchi State)

The NPF has several specialised units, such as the Border Patrol, Bombs Disposal Squad, Ports Authority Police, and the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS).¹²⁰

One particular unit, known as Nigerian Mobile Force (MOPOL), sometimes called anti-riot police, was established not only to counter civil disturbances but sometimes to act as a paramilitary strike force.¹²¹ There are presently 12 MOPOL commands and 52 police squads, which are spread amongst 36 state commands and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).¹²²

2.3.3 National Intelligence

In June 1986, then President Ibrahim Babangida, through Decree Number 19, dissolved the National Security Organization (NSO) and re-structured Nigeria's security services into three separate entities under the Office of the Co-ordinator of National Security. These new entities were the Department of State Services (DSS), National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA).¹²³

The Department of State Services

The Department of State Services (DSS), also known and addressed as the Department of State Security as well as State Security services (SSS)¹²⁴, is Nigeria's domestic intelligence agency, primarily responsible for gathering intelligence within the country and for the protection of senior government officials, particularly the President and state governors. Headed by a

¹²⁰ Criminal Force: Torture, Abuse and Extrajudicial Killings by the Nigeria Police Force, May 2010 [url](#), p.40

¹²¹ Nigeria Police Force, The Structure of the Nigeria Police Force, n.d., [url](#); Open Society Institute, Criminal Force: Torture, Abuse and Extrajudicial Killings by the Nigeria Police Force, May 2010, [url](#), pp. 39-40; Omeni, A., Counter-Insurgency in Nigeria: The Military and Operations against Boko Haram, 2011-2017, 2018

¹²² Africa Research, Analysis towards Effective Policing in Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

¹²³ Ministry of Defence, Defence Intelligence Agency, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁴ Premium Times, FACT-CHECK: How Nigeria's secret police, SSS, is violating the law and illegally parading itself as DSS, 26 August 2016, [url](#)

director general under the control of the National Security Adviser, the DSS operates as a department within the Presidency.¹²⁵

The National Intelligence Agency

The NIA focuses on external threats to national interests. In other words, the agency is responsible for foreign intelligence. It is also involved in counterintelligence operations.¹²⁶

The Defence Intelligence Agency

The goal of the DIA is to provide an efficient system of obtaining military intelligence for the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence.¹²⁷ As distinct from the NIA, its Intelligence gathering and operations are more military-focused.¹²⁸

2.3.4 Multi-National Joint Task Force

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was first formed in 1994 by the administration of General Sani Abacha to deal with the rebels from Nigeria's northern borders. In 1998, MNJTF became multinational by incorporating military units from Chad and Niger in 1998, and was further upgraded in 2012 to deal solely with the Boko Haram. In 2015 the MNJTF was expanded by including Benin. Around that time, the total number of troops was 8 700.¹²⁹ Nigeria and Chad respectively contributed 3 250 and 3 000 men, including a Chadian Special Forces unit. 950 men came from Cameroon, 750 from Niger and the remaining 750 from Benin.¹³⁰ More recently, several sources estimate the total number of troops to be roughly 10 000. All troops are nominally under the command of a Nigerian general.¹³¹

MNTJF is organised into four sectors: Sector 1, with the command located in Mora (Cameroon); Sector 2, located in the town of Baga-Sola (Chad); Sector 3, based in Baga (Nigeria); and Sector 4, based in the town of Diffa (south-east of Niger).¹³²

2.3.5 Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps

Nigeria Security and Civil Defence corps (NSCDC) is a paramilitary institution that was established in 1967 by the federal government. The main goal of this agency is to protect the population against threats and any form of attack or disaster.¹³³ In April 2017, the Ministry of Interior announced that 3 000 people will be drawn from officers and men of the NSCDC in the process of establishing a new Corps to be known as Agro Rangers, who will protect farmers and secure farm investments throughout the country.¹³⁴ The NSCDC has also deployed 5 000 people to protect the Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) camps in the north-east.¹³⁵

¹²⁵ Lagos State Security Fund, State Security Fund, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁶ Encyclopedia.com, Nigeria, Intelligence and Security, n.d.; Ministry of Defence, Defence Intelligence Agency, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁷ DIA, Defence Intelligence Agency, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁸ Ministry of Defence, Defence Intelligence Agency, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁹ Albert, I.O., 'Rethinking the Functionality of the Multinational Joint Task Force in Managing the Boko Haram Crisis in the Lake Chad Basin', [url](#), pp. 123-125

¹³⁰ BBC, Boko Haram: Can regional force beat Nigeria's militant Islamists?, 3 March 2015, [url](#)

¹³¹ Africa Center for Strategic Studies, The G5 Sahel Joint Force Gains Traction, 9 February 2018, [url](#); VOA, Regional Task Force Battles Boko Haram, 14 March 2017, [url](#)

¹³² ISS, West Africa Report - Assessing the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram, September 2016, [url](#), p. 3

¹³³ Website NSCDC, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁴ AgroNigeria, Farmers' security: FG to deploy 3,000 Agro Rangers Corps to farms and ranches, 27 April 2017, [url](#); Ministry of Interior, Agro-rangers to Protect Agric Investments – Dambazau (Press Release) , 11 April 2017, [url](#)

¹³⁵ Premium Times, FACTSHEET: What the Buhari administration has achieved in two years – Presidency, 30 May 2017, [url](#)

2.3.6 Civilian Joint Task Force

The Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) or the so-called *yan gora* ('youth with sticks') was set up in 2013 to identify and apprehend Boko Haram insurgents. The CJTF comprises predominately young male civilians who were not given arms initially, but armed themselves with sticks and machetes.¹³⁶ However, after realising the potential of the CJTF, the Nigerian army supported some members of CJTF by providing the arms and basic military training.¹³⁷

CJTF has its own internal hierarchy in which each community CTJF unit reports to a district command. However, CTJF is geographically modelled on the military; districts correspond to the army's zonal commands. As a result, checkpoints throughout the region are often jointly managed with the military.¹³⁸

It is difficult to get reliable numbers of CJTF troops due to irregular recruitment and demobilisation¹³⁹, but Crisis Group reports that CTJF claims to number about 26 000 in Borno State alone.¹⁴⁰ A similar figure was mentioned by The Economist.¹⁴¹ Currently, they are present in 22 out of the 27 local government areas in Borno State.¹⁴²

2.3.7 Boko Haram, ISIS-WA and JAS

Boko Haram at its founding, around 2002, was largely a non-violent religious sect. Although it had clashed with security forces in 2003 and 2004, it was only after the extra-judicial killing of the sect's founding leader, Mohamed Yusuf, in July 2009 that Boko Haram began to carry out more violent attacks, including targeted killings and suicide bombings, under the regime of a more radical leader, Abubakar Shekau.¹⁴³

As a result of the brutal tactics, in particular the group's indiscriminate killing of Muslim civilians, a group calling itself *Jama'at Ansar al Muslimin fi balad al Sudan* (Group of Supporters for Muslims in Black Lands), commonly known as Ansaru, broke away in early 2012.¹⁴⁴ Ansaru is closely aligned with al-Qaeda and one of its leaders, Khalid al-Barnawi, is believed to have previously trained with al-Qaeda's regional affiliate, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).¹⁴⁵ Mamman Nur, who is believed to be the key leader of the group, also has links to AQIM.¹⁴⁶ For a discussion on the alleged links of Boko Haram with Al Qaeda, see the [next section](#).

Although initially Boko Haram expressed support for Al Qaida in 2010, Abubakar Shekau pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in March 2015.¹⁴⁷ One and half

¹³⁶ Hassan, I., & Pieri, Z., The Rise and Risks of Nigeria's Civilian Joint Task Force, May 2018, [url](#), pp. 74-78

¹³⁷ Cropley, E., 'On Boko Haram front line, Nigerian vigilantes amass victories and power', Reuters, 15 June 2017, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Watchmen of Lake Chad: Vigilante Groups Fighting Boko Haram, Crisis Group Africa Report N°244, 23 February 2017, [url](#)

¹³⁸ IRIN, Nigeria wakes up to its growing vigilante problem, 9 May 2017, [url](#)

¹³⁹ International Crisis Group, Double-edged Sword: Vigilantes in African Counter-insurgencies, 7 September 2017, Africa Report N°251, [url](#), p. 19

¹⁴⁰ International Crisis Group, Watchmen of Lake Chad: Vigilante Groups Fighting Boko Haram 23 February 2017, Africa Report N°252,, [url](#), p. ii

¹⁴¹ The Economist, The volunteers who helped beat back Boko Haram are becoming a problem, 29 September 2016, [url](#)

¹⁴² Mahmood, O.S. et al., Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region, July 2018, [url](#), p. 18

¹⁴³ Afeno, S.O., Killings by the security forces in Nigeria: Mapping and trend analysis (2006-2014), 2014, [url](#), p. 22; Critical Threats, Backgrounder: Boko Haram in Nigeria, 16 November 2017, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁴⁴ Critical Threats, Backgrounder: Boko Haram in Nigeria, 16 November 2017, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁴⁵ Counter Extremism project, Boko Haram, n.d., [url](#), p. 3; Critical Threats, Backgrounder: Boko Haram in Nigeria, 16 November 2017, [url](#), p. 2-3,

¹⁴⁶ International Business Times, Could Ansaru leader Mamman Nur be the man behind Boko Haram split?, 12 August 2016, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷ Onuoha, F.C. & Oyewole, S., Anatomy of Boko Haram: The Rise and Decline of a Violent Group in Nigeria, Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, 22 April 2018, [url](#), p. 3

year later, after Shekau had pledged allegiance to the ISIS leader, a major schism emerged in August 2016, when ISIS acknowledged Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi, 22-year-old son of Boko Haram founder Yusuf, as the new leader. As a result, the group split up in two factions: one loyal to Shekau, the other to Barnawi.¹⁴⁸ The faction loyal to Shekau is known as *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* (JAS), while the one loyal to Barnawi is known as the Islamic State in West Africa (ISIS-WA).¹⁴⁹

On 21 August 2018, the 'factional leader of the Boko Haram loyal to Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) Mamman Nur has been killed by his fighters who rebelled against him.' Nur is described as 'the brain behind the ties between Boko Haram and the Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi led Islamic State' who had led the rebellion against Shekau in 2014. Abu Musab al-Barnawi is, according to sources to the Daily Trust, a mere 'shadow leader because of his father'. According to one source, 'the commanders became disenchanted with Nur's style of leadership; they saw him as not as rough as Shekau. The breakaway faction which moved to shores of Lake Chad region in Northern Borno was later recognised by Al-Baghdadi.'¹⁵⁰

Sources say that ISIS-WA is less extreme than JAS.¹⁵¹ While ISIS-WA is trying to 'win the hearts and minds' of the local population, JAS has a stricter attitude towards the local (muslim) population. Anyone who is not willing to support JAS is viewed as a government collaborator, and should therefore be attacked.¹⁵²

It is unclear which of the two factions is dominant within Boko Haram, as there is very little information on their relative strengths and weaknesses. Reuters reports that the strength of ISWA is estimated at 3 500-5 000 fighters, double that of Shekau's faction.¹⁵³ However, another source says Shekau's faction is still believed to be the larger one.¹⁵⁴

At the peak of the insurgency in early January 2015, Boko Haram controlled about 20 000 square miles of territory in Nigeria - an area the size of Belgium. After the group starting losing control of their territory, their large-scale attacks were diminishing as well.¹⁵⁵

Boko Haram as perpetrator alone has been responsible for the death of approximately 17 000 people since May 2011. Another 14 645 died as a result of clashes between Boko Haram and state actors.¹⁵⁶ The GTI ranked Boko Haram the world's deadliest terrorist group in 2014. In that year, Boko Haram's attacks were responsible for 6 644 deaths against the 6 073 deaths attributed to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria in that particular year.¹⁵⁷ In 2017, the GTI ranked Boko Haram the world's third deadliest terrorist group.¹⁵⁸

¹⁴⁸ Counter Extremism project, Boko Haram, n.d., [url](#), p. 3; Critical Threats, Backgrounder: Boko Haram in Nigeria, 16 November 2017, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁴⁹ Mahmood, O.S., Despite its divisions, Boko Haram is no weaker, 5 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰ Daily Trust, Factional Boko Haram leader Mamman Nur killed by own fighters, 14 September 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵¹ Reuters, Islamic State ally stakes out territory around Lake Chad, 29 April 2018, [url](#); VOA, Dapchi Girls' Release Could Stir Up Religious Tensions in Nigeria, 24 March 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵² Mahmood, O.S. & Ani, N.C., Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram, 6 July 2018, [url](#), pp. 3, 28

¹⁵³ Reuters, Islamic State ally stakes out territory around Lake Chad, 29 April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ VOA, Dapchi Girls' Release Could Stir Up Religious Tensions in Nigeria, 24 March 2018, [url](#); BBC News, Islamic State and the kidnap of Nigerian schoolgirls from Dapchi, 29 March 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ Onuoha, F.C. & Oyewole, S., Anatomy of Boko Haram: The Rise and Decline of a Violent Group in Nigeria, AI Jazeera Centre for Studies, 22 April 2018, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁵⁶ CFR, Nigeria Security Tracker, 30 April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2015, 17 November 2015, [url](#), p. 4.

¹⁵⁸ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2017, 15 November 2017, [url](#), p. 16

Boko Haram financing and links with Al-Qaeda

While some sources state that substantial funding and arms comes from international extremist groups like Al Qaeda and AQIM,¹⁵⁹ Alex Thurston recently stated that de-classified documents produced by the CIA uncovered one single transfer of € 200,000 from AQIM to Boko Haram, in early 2010; the researcher adds that, despite significant, this sum does not explain the whole financing of Boko Haram and indicates that the group's financing comes rather from a mix of activities, including including bank robberies, kidnappings for ransom (namely outside Nigeria, in Cameroon), and extortion.¹⁶⁰

Among scholars and observers of Boko Haram, there has been skepticism regarding how 'deep' Boko Haram's alliance with al Qaeda and the Islamic State actually go. While Jacob Zenn has argued that there are tight links between these groups, others, including Adam Higazi, Brandon Kendhammer, Kyari Mohammed, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Alex Thurston, have challenged this. They contrarily argue that Boko Haram is not 'a mere extension of the global jihadist movement', but actually influenced by 'local political factors, security force abuses, and the internal logics of insurgencies'.¹⁶¹

The scholars, in an article titled 'A Response to Jacob Zenn on Boko Haram and al-Qa'ida' stress that 'the narrative that Boko Haram was a close collaborator of *al-Qa'ida* has dangerous implications for policymaking' and 'are not suitable for responding to Boko Haram'. Further, they add that 'treating Boko Haram largely through the lens of counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency could hurt many more innocent people and exacerbate a grievous humanitarian emergency'.¹⁶²

2.3.8 Niger Delta Avengers

Although there are many militant groups in the Niger Delta, including remnants of the previously highly active Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)¹⁶³, one group, the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), was notably active in 2017 and early 2018. A coalition of militant groups, the Joint Revolutionary Council, threatened in May 2018 to resume hostilities if the federal government failed to address the problems in the region.¹⁶⁴ However, the ACLED database does not record significant incidents between January and September 2018. See Section [3.3.4](#).

Early 2016, violence erupted again when a new group called The Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) started a wave of attacks on oil producing facilities.¹⁶⁵ The group distanced itself from the aforementioned MEND. According to NDA, commanders of MEND had never cared about the Niger Delta and grown rich from amnesty payments without distributing the money to foot soldiers of the rebellion. Nevertheless, there are several indications that the NDA is composed

¹⁵⁹ Independent, Paying for terrorism: Where does Boko Haram gets its money from?, 6 June 2014, [url](#); Counter Extremism Project, Boko Haram, [2017], [url](#); Global Financial Integrity, Stopping Boko Haram by Curtailing Illicit Finance, 11 June 2014, [url](#); FATF, Terrorist Financing In West And Central Africa, October 2016, [url](#), pp. 10-18

¹⁶⁰ CSIS, Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement, A discussion with the author, Dr. Alexander Thurston, 14 February 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ Higazi, Adam, et al., A Response to Jacob Zenn on Boko Haram and al-Qa'ida, June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶² Higazi, Adam, et al., A Response to Jacob Zenn on Boko Haram and al-Qa'ida, June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶³ See for a more detailed overview of groups active in the Niger Delta, EASO COI report Nigeria, Targeting of individuals, November 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴ The Guardian, Niger Delta militants threaten fresh hostilities, accuse FG of neglect, 30 May 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵ The Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report Nigeria, 7 December 2017, [url](#), p. 22

of many former MEND fighters.¹⁶⁶ NDA is active in the following states: Rivers, Ondo, Delta, Bayelsa, Cross River and Akwa Ibom.¹⁶⁷

In 2016 the group took credit for at least 45 attacks¹⁶⁸, which reduced Nigeria's crude output by 700 000 barrels per day, to the lowest level in almost three decades. In August 2016, NDA announced a ceasefire and there has been no major attack by any group in the region since January 2017. In November 2017, the group announced an immediate end to their ceasefire, saying the federal government had not been sincere with its peace talks and promises.¹⁶⁹ On 17 January 2018 the group announced a fresh round of attacks on the country's oil installations and facilities.¹⁷⁰ A few hours after the announcement was published on their website, militants abducted five oil workers near the Ajoki community, which borders Edo and Delta States.¹⁷¹ Since then, no other major incidents have been found in the consulted sources.

For more information on incidents in the Niger Delta, see Section [3.3.4](#).

2.3.9 Farmer-herder conflicts

In 2015, the Institute for Economics and Peace in its Global Terrorism Index (GTI) ranked 'Fulani extremists'¹⁷² as the 4th most deadly militant group in the world. The violence committed by these militants is the product of conflicts with local farmers, other ethnic militias and criminal organisations such as cattle-rustling gangs. According to the GTI report 2017, 'there are 33 known groups on either side of the farmer-pastoralist conflict in Nigeria.' The report mentions 'the Fulani as the largest single identity group'.¹⁷³ However, this is criticised by Crisis Group which notes that the Fulani are an ethnic group of whom some are members of militia.¹⁷⁴ The GTI report also notes that the number of Fulani extremists is just 'a small subset [who], engage in attacks.' The report further remarks that 'there is confusion as to whether there is any communication or coordination between attackers'.¹⁷⁵ No information could be found in the consulted sources on the structure and numbers of Fulani militias.

The Fulani have been in conflict with the Tiv of Benue state.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, there are militias or so-called community vigilantes among ethnic groups like the Tarok in Plateau state, the Eggon in Nasarawa State and the Junkun in Taraba State.¹⁷⁷ In the latter state, also a relatively unknown militia called the Nyandan is active.¹⁷⁸ In Plateau State also violence has been reported with militia from the Irigwe ethnic group.¹⁷⁹ Another local militia composed of the Bachama is active in Adamawa State.¹⁸⁰

¹⁶⁶ Jamestown Foundation, 'The Niger Delta: Will Restarting Amnesty Payments Ease the Conflict?', 14 October 2016, Terrorism Monitor, Volume 14, Issue 20, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷ Pulse.ng, Why militant group just promised Nigeria a "doomed year", 18 January 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ Pulse.ng, Why militant group just promised Nigeria a "doomed year", 18 January 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹ The Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report Nigeria, 7 December 2017, [url](#), p. 22

¹⁷⁰ NDA, Happy Doomed Year Nigeria; Get Ready for Operation Bringing Down FPSO, 17 January 2018, [url](#); Sahara Reporters, Niger Delta Avengers To Resume Massive Attack Oil Facilities, Demand Restructuring, 17 January 2018, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ The Sun, Militants abduct 5 oil workers in Niger Delta, 20 January 2018, [url](#)

¹⁷² IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2017, 15 November 2017, [url](#), p. 24

¹⁷³ IEP, Global Terrorism Index report 2015, 17 November 2015, [url](#), p. 39

¹⁷⁴ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ IEP, Global Terrorism Index report 2015, 17 November 2015, [url](#), pp. 24, 76

¹⁷⁶ ACLED, Conflict Trends (No. 63) - Real-Time Analysis of African Political Violence, November 2017, p. 7, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷ Nwanza, C., The resurgence of pastoral conflicts in Plateau State, 15 November 2017, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ Daily Trust, Gunmen kill 14 in Fulani villages in Taraba, 6 July 2018, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹ ACLED, Conflict Trends (No. 63) - Real-Time Analysis of African Political Violence, November 2017, p. 7, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰ SBM Intelligence, It is getting worse: The deepening pastoral conflict, 27 November 2017, [url](#)

Most militia, like those of the Fulani and Tarok ethnic groups have access to military grade weaponry.¹⁸¹ There are several collaborations among different militias to carry out attacks on Fulani communities. Tarok militias have collaborated with the Junkun militia in Taraba State¹⁸² and with Eggon militia in Nasarawa State.¹⁸³

Farmer-pastoralist violence continues and, with almost daily reports of killings in the reporting period of 1 October 2017-30 September 2018, has shown no signs of lower intensity.¹⁸⁴

ACLED reported in June 2018 that 988 civilians have been killed by Fulani militia since the beginning of the year.¹⁸⁵ Crisis group mentions more than 1 300 deaths in the first half of 2018.¹⁸⁶ According to the Christian organisation CSW, Fulani militia were responsible of at least 106 attacks on communities in central Nigeria in the first quarter of 2018, claiming 1061 lives in Adamawa, Benue, southern Kaduna, Kogi, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba.¹⁸⁷

Crisis Group notes in August 2018: 'Herder-farmer attacks decreased amid sustained military deployment, but violence continued.'¹⁸⁸

¹⁸¹ SBM Intelligence, The Pastoral Conflict takes a deadlier turn, 5 January 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸² SBM Intelligence, A critical look at the Southern Kaduna crisis, 7 February 2017, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁸³ Nwanza, C., The resurgence of pastoral conflicts in Plateau State, 15 November 2017, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ ACLED, The Fulani Crisis & the Threat to Civilians, 5 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷ CSW, Nigeria sees 106 attacks by Herder Militia in Central states, 25 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸ International Crisis Group, Latest updates, August 2018, [url](#)

3. Security situation per zone or region

In this chapter, the security situation is described during the reporting period of 1 October 2017-30 September 2018. This includes:

- the nature of violent incidents,
- the actors involved,
- the areas of control (or influence)
- the impact on the local population, including access to food.

In this chapter the situation in the North East zone, the North Central zone, the Niger Delta, and Zamfara State will be described. In the last section, a summary of several other manifestations of violence is discussed.

3.1 North East Zone

3.1.1 General description of the region

The North East Zone comprises six states (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe) and covers close to one third (280 419 km²) of Nigeria's land area (909 890 km²). The zone shares international borders with Chad, Cameroon and Niger.¹⁸⁹ According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) the population of the North East Zone is estimated at 26.3 million people which is 13.6 % of Nigeria's total population (estimated at 193 million people (data 2016)).¹⁹⁰ The region counts 205 ethnic minorities, of which the Kanuri and the Hausa-Fulani are the main groups.¹⁹¹ The zone can be considered as predominately Muslim¹⁹², but there is a substantial Christian minority.¹⁹³

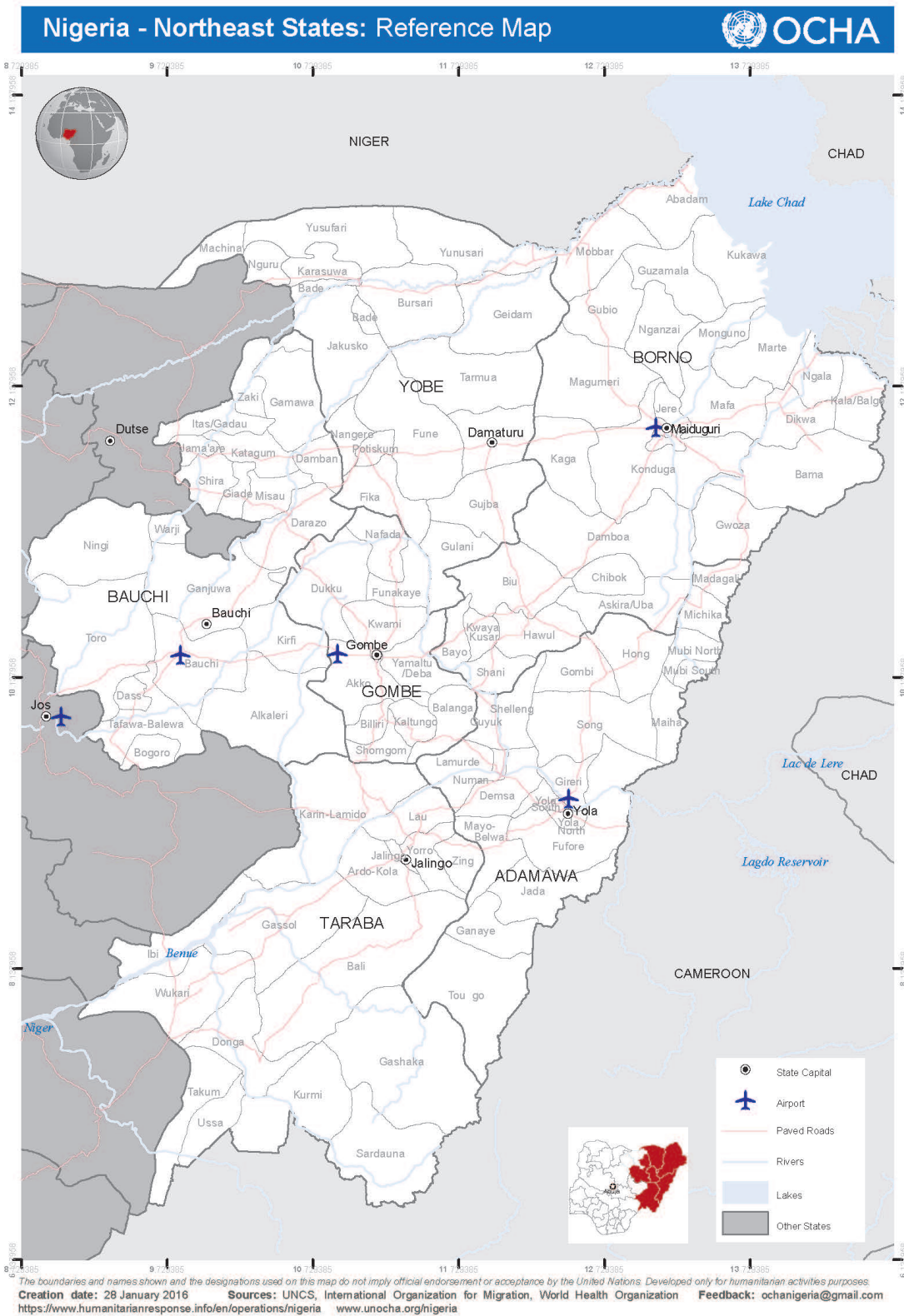
¹⁸⁹ Abdul-Aziz M. Nyako. "Concept Note North East Development Commission", May 2015, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁹⁰ NBS, Population of Nigeria 2016, available at: [url](#)

¹⁹¹ ACAPS, Nigeria Country Profile – Ethnic or tribal Groups, latest update 2 May 2018, [url](#); Kwaja, C., "Nigeria's Pernicious Drivers of Ethno-religious Conflict", July 2011, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁹² Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa, April 2010, [url](#), p. ii

¹⁹³ International Crisis Group, Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict, Africa Report N° 168, 20 December 2010, [url](#), p.i



Map 10: Nigeria: North-East states. Map provided courtesy of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ UN OCHA, map Nigeria: North-East states – Reference map, 28 January 2016, [url](#)

3.1.2 Background to the conflict

The rise of the Boko Haram conflict dates back to the early 2000s when a small group appeared in North East Nigeria, initially referred to as the Nigerian Taliban or Yusufiyya (after its radical founder and leader Muhammed Yusuf), rejecting all secular authority and seeking to create a strict Islamic state, which it believes would address the ills of society, including ‘unbelief’, corruption and ‘bad governance’.¹⁹⁵ The group turned increasingly violent after the extra judicial killing by the police of Mohamed Yusuf, in July 2009, which brought it under the regime of Yusuf’s successor, the more radical leader, Abubabakar Shekau.¹⁹⁶ Under his rule, the organisation is held responsible for the killing of more than 20 000 people since May 2011. Furthermore, the conflict created an estimated 2.3 million displaced people in the Lake Chad Basin, including an estimated 208 509 Nigerian refugees in neighbouring countries of Cameroon, Chad and Niger.¹⁹⁷

In April 2014, Boko Haram drew worldwide attention when it abducted around 270 schoolgirls from a government secondary school in the town of Chibok in Borno State. Although 60 girls escaped soon afterwards and others have been released after mediation, around 100 were reportedly still in captivity as of May 2018.¹⁹⁸ Almost four years after the Chibok abduction, another 110 schoolgirls were abducted in the town of Dapchi in Yobe state on 19 February 2018. Within five weeks almost all the girls were released except five who didn’t survive the ordeal and one other - a Christian who refused to convert to Islam - is still being held.¹⁹⁹

At the peak of the insurgency in early January 2015, Boko Haram controlled 11 of the 27 local government areas (LGAs) of Borno state, with a total area of about 20 000 square miles - an area the size of Belgium. More than 20 towns, including Baga, Gwoza and Bama, were under control of the group, with a total population exceeding 1.7 million people, according to the official 2006 census.²⁰⁰

In August 2016, ISIS recognised Abu Musab al-Barnawi, the 22-year-old son of Boko Haram founder Mohamed Yusuf, as the new leader. As a result, the group split up in two warring factions due to the fact that Abubakar Shekau refused to surrender his leadership. The faction led by Barnawi is called Islamic State-West Africa (ISIS-WA), while the faction led by Shekau is called *Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad* (JAS).²⁰¹ The latter faction can be translated as ‘People Committed to the Prophet’s Teaching and Jihad’.²⁰²

More information on Boko Haram’s objectives and structure, modus operandi, human rights violations and situation of persons targeted by BH is provided in [EASO COI report Nigeria, Targeting individuals](#), November 2018.

¹⁹⁵ International Crisis Group, Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict, 20 December 2010, [url](#); and International Crisis Group, Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency, Africa Report N°216, 3 April 2014, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶ Mahmood, O.S. & Ani, N.C., Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram, 6 July 2018, [url](#), p.6

¹⁹⁷ CFR, Global Conflict Tracker, 11 April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸ Independent, Why the Chibok girls returned by Boko Haram are still not entirely free, 1 May 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹ BBC, Nigeria Dapchi abductions: Schoolgirls finally home, 25 March 2018, [url](#); Africanews.com, Nigeria’s military rescues 76 schoolgirls, says parents, gov’t officials, 21 March 2018, [url](#)

²⁰⁰ Onuoha, F.C. & Oyewole, S., Anatomy of Boko Haram: The Rise and Decline of a Violent Group in Nigeria, Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, 22 April 2018, [url](#), p. 5; The Telegraph, Nigerian army retakes control of key Boko Haram town, 16 November 2014, [url](#)

The Telegraph, Boko Haram is now a mini-Islamic State, with its own territory, 10 January 2015, [url](#)

²⁰¹ Mahmood, O.S. & Ani, N.C., Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram, 6 July 2018, [url](#), p. 3. Unfortunately most sources do not make a distinction between those two factions. In that case the group will be referred as Boko Haram as umbrella term.

²⁰² BBC, Who are Nigeria’s Boko Haram Islamist group?, 24 November 2016, [url](#); TRAC, Boko Haram (Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad - JAS), n.d., [url](#)

3.1.3 Actors in the conflict

The main actors in the North East Zone are the [Nigerian army](#), the [Multi-National Joint Task Force \(MNJTF\)](#), the [Civilian Joint Task Force](#), and [Boko Haram and aligned factions](#).

3.1.4 Recent security trends

During the period 1 October 2017-30 September 2018, ACLED²⁰³ registered around 546 security incidents in the six states, which resulted in approximately 3 315 fatalities.²⁰⁴ It should be noted that several incidents with an unknown number of fatalities (often referred to as 'scores', 'several', 'many', or 'large number') were registered, and as explained in the Introduction, such incidents are counted as 10 fatalities.²⁰⁵ Table 1 presents the number of security incidents per state and the number of estimated deaths. The table also gives the number of incidents and fatalities of incidents categorised as 'violence against civilians'.

Table 1. Incidents of violence and fatalities by state, North East zone, October 2017 – 30 September 2018

STATE	Totals		Violence against civilians	
	Nr Incidents	Nr Fatalities	Nr incidents	Nr Fatalities
Adamawa	90	522	54	351
Bauchi	7	4	1	0
Borno	351	2422	70	512
Gombe	4	2	2	1
Taraba	73	301	51	259
Yobe	21	64	5	7
Totals	546	3315	183	1130

Source: ACLED²⁰⁶

According to this table, Borno State counts by far the highest number of registered incidents and fatalities. In contrast, very few incidents in Bauchi and Gombe were registered. Out of the 546 incidents, there were 183 security incidents which can be classified as 'violence against civilians', resulting in 1 130 fatalities. Most of these incidents and fatalities occurred in Borno State, where 70 incidents were recorded as violence against civilians, resulting in 512 fatalities. The incidents classified otherwise mainly concerned clashes between Boko Haram and military forces.²⁰⁷

According to Nigeria Watch, the fatalities in Taraba State were mainly the result of inter-communal clashes.²⁰⁸

²⁰³ For more explanation about this source of information, refer to the Introduction of this report.

²⁰⁴ ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

²⁰⁵ ACLED, Codebook, 2017, [url](#), p. 20

²⁰⁶ ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

²⁰⁷ ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

²⁰⁸ Nigeria Watch, Seventh Report on Violence in, n.d., [url](#), p. 13

An overview of major incidents

On 27 July 2017, more than 50 people, including 15 members of the CJTF, were killed in a Boko Haram ambush on a convoy of specialists from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in the Magumeri area of Borno State.²⁰⁹

On 15 August 2017, at least 27 people were killed and 83 people injured by a multiple bomb attack. A woman bomber blew herself up at a market in Konduga town near Maiduguri, while two other suicide bombers also blew themselves up at the gates to a nearby IDP camp.²¹⁰

On 1 September 2017, the air force ‘neutralised hundreds’ of Boko Haram fighters in Sambisa forest. It was believed that Boko Haram fighters in the targeted location were planning to disrupt *Eid el Kabir*²¹¹ celebrations.²¹²

On 19 October 2017, in another airstrike on the Durwawa settlement, near Urga in the Konduga area of Borno State, one of the wives of Boko Haram factional leader Abubakar Shekau was alleged to have been killed.²¹³

Two days later, the air force again carried out attacks. During these operations, 350 Boko Haram members were killed in remote areas of northern Borno State. Another 61 Boko Haram fighters were also killed by the army.²¹⁴

On 20 November 2017, at least 30 people, mostly women and children, were killed when farmers from the Bachama ethnic group stormed four settlements of Fulani herders, Kikan, Kodomun, Shafaran and Ketowal, in Numan LGA.²¹⁵

On 21 November 2017, at least 50 people were killed when a suicide bomber blew himself up during early morning prayers in a mosque in Mubi, Adamawa State. The attack was blamed on Boko Haram.²¹⁶

On 2 December 2017, alleged Boko Haram suicide bombers killed 13 people in an attack on a market in a place called Biu, Borno State. During the attack, 53 people were also injured and two bombers killed.²¹⁷

On 4 December 2017, the Nigerian air force responded to an attack on eight villages in Adamawa State by armed herdsman. The attack was retaliation for the massacre in Kikan on 20 November 2017 (see above). Amnesty International counted in total 86 fatalities, but could not establish how much of the death was either a direct result of the air attacks or the attack by herdsman.²¹⁸

In December 2017, approximately 50 people were killed in villages around Mafa, Borno State, when Boko Haram fighters laid ambushes at various locations.²¹⁹

²⁰⁹ Al-Jazeera, Boko Haram attack on Nigeria oil team killed over 50, 28 July 2017, [url](#); DW, Boko Haram attack in Nigeria leaves dozens dead, 28 July 2018, [url](#)

²¹⁰ Vanguard, Suicide bombers kill 27, wound 83 in Borno refugee camp, 15 August 2017, [url](#)

²¹¹ Islamic holiday commemorating the willingness of Ibrahim to follow Allah’s command to sacrifice his son.

²¹² The Guardian, Air Force jets kill Boko Haram terrorists in Sambisa, 3 September 2017, [url](#); Vanguard, War on terror: Airforce neutralises hundreds of Boko Haram fighters in Sambisa forest, 3 September 2017, [url](#)

²¹³ Vanguard, We may have killed Shekau’s wife in air raid —NAF, 26 October 2017, [url](#); Sahara Reporters, Wife of Boko Haram Leader, Shekau, Killed In Military Strike, 25 October 2017, [url](#)

²¹⁴ Daily Trust, 411 Boko Haram insurgents, 9 soldiers killed in Borno, 23 October 2017, [url](#)

²¹⁵ The Guardian, At least 30 killed in herdsman clash, 22 November 2017, [url](#); USCRIF, Annual report on religious freedom - Nigeria, April 2018, [url](#), p. 55

²¹⁶ Premium Times, UPDATED: Mubi attack: Death toll rises to 50, 21 November 2017, [url](#)

²¹⁷ Reuters, Suspected Boko Haram suicide bombers kill at least 13 in Nigeria: officials, 2 December 2017, [url](#)

²¹⁸ Al, Nigeria: Analysis of the air force raid in Adamawa state, 30 January 2018, [url](#), p. 1

²¹⁹ Daily Trust, Scores killed in Boko Haram attacks in Borno, Yobe, 31 December 2017, [url](#)

Early January 2018, Nigerian troops conducting Operation Deep Punch in the north-east of Borno State, killed at least 107 Boko Haram fighters in various encounters. About 57 of them were killed in Metele, Borno State.²²⁰

On 16 January 2018, suspected Boko Haram suicide bombers killed 12 people at a market in the Muna Garage area on the outskirts of Maiduguri. Muna Garage is the site of a camp for IDPs. Besides the 12 victims, 48 others were injured.²²¹

Early February 2018, the Nigerian army reported that its troops killed 186 Boko Haram fighters and rescued 3 475 people from captivity.²²²

On 16 February 2018, at least 21 people (18 civilians and 3 suicide bombers) were killed when multiple Boko Haram bombers attacked a crowded fish market in Konduga LGA of Borno State.²²³

On 19 February 2018, 110 schoolgirls were kidnapped by militants in the town of Dapchi, Yobe State. One month later, almost all the girls were released.²²⁴

On 1 May 2018, explosions in and around a mosque killed 86 people in Mubi, Adamawa State.²²⁵

On 5 June 2018, the Nigerian army, supported by the CTJF in Operation Lafiya Dole, rescued 148 people kept captive in some parts of Borno State and used by Boko Haram as forced labourers and sex slaves. They comprised 15 men, 58 women and 75 children.²²⁶

On 16 June 2018, two suicide attackers blew themselves up in Damboa, Borno State, while people were celebrating the *Eid al-Fitr* holiday, marking the end of Ramadan. Shortly after the incident, rockets were fired at the sites of the attacks where helpers and onlookers had gathered. Residents reported that at least 31 people died in the attack attributed to Boko Haram. Official sources say that at least 20 people lost their lives in the assault.²²⁷

On 7 August 2018, Boko Haram fighters attacked Munduri village, 13km north of Maiduguri, Borno. Seven civilians, amongst whom the village chief and his wife, were caught and executed (beheaded). Subsequently, the village was set on fire. According to the Vanguard,

‘Boko Haram has intensified its armed campaign in recent weeks, including against military targets in which dozens of troops are believed to have been either killed or missing. The rebels have split into two groups, and it was not immediately clear which was behind the latest attack. A faction loyal to Abubakar Shekau is notorious for indiscriminate killings of civilians while the Abu Mus’ab Al-Barnawi faction — which is affiliated to the so-called Islamic State — largely focuses on attacking the military.’²²⁸

On 19 August 2018, Boko Haram attacked the Mailari village in Guzamala, Borno, and killed (at least) 19 people. According to Reuters, ‘The strike is the latest blow to Nigeria’s efforts to defeat insurgencies by the Nigerian Islamist Boko Haram group and Islamic State in West

²²⁰ Premium Times, Nigerian troops kill 107 Boko Haram terrorists — Army, 9 January 2018, [url](#)

²²¹ Reuters, Suspected Boko Haram suicide bombers kill 12, injure 48, 17 January 2018, [url](#)

²²² Vanguard, Troops kill 186 insurgents, rescue 3,745 people in North-East – official, 14 February 2018 [url](#)

²²³ Sahara Reporters, 21 Killed, 70 Wounded As Boko Haram Suicide Bombers Attack Fish Market In Borno, 17 February 2018, [url](#)

²²⁴ BBC News, Nigeria Dapchi abductions: Schoolgirls finally home, 25 March 2018, [url](#)

²²⁵ Al-Jazeera, Nigeria mosque attack death toll rises to 86, 2 May 2018, [url](#); Reuters, Mosque blasts kill at least 27 in northeast Nigeria, 1 May 2018, [url](#)

²²⁶ This Day, Troops Rescue 148 Hostages Used as Boko Haram Sex Slaves, Labourers, 5 June 2018, [url](#)

²²⁷ Punch, Boko Haram attacks Damboa, kills 31, injures 48, 18 June 2018, [url](#)

²²⁸ Vanguard, Boko Haram kills seven villagers in Borno, 7 August 2018, [url](#)

Africa (ISWA). In recent months, the military has suffered its heaviest defeats in years, commanders have been repeatedly replaced, and special forces soldiers have mutinied.²²⁹

On 14 September 2018, Boko Haram fighters attacked a military base in Damasak, Borno State, resulting in heavy gunfire and ‘many’ militants killed. The Nigerian Air Force had deployed jet fighters and helicopter gunships to ‘pound the terrorists’. The army did not disclose reports of fatalities amongst its troops. The army commander added: ‘Consequently, the Nigerian army wishes to state that the fight against Boko Haram terrorists in the North-eastern parts of the country is yielding positive result. The Nigerian army therefore advised members of the public, particularly residents of the affected areas, to go about their legitimate businesses.’²³⁰

On 20 September 2018, Boko Haram fighters raided and burnt two villages Kalari Abdiye and Amarwa, 20 km from Maiduguri, Borno State. Nine people were killed and nine injured.²³¹

3.1.5 Tactics and targets

After losing control of territory (see Section 2.3.7), Boko Haram changed their tactics from organised, large-scale attacks to less predictable attacks such as suicide bombings.²³²

First, it should be noted that there is a difference between tactics used by JAS which prefers a more indiscriminate attack profile, and those by ISIS-WA which prefers to engage security forces directly.²³³ While JAS subscribes to a particularly brutal brand of violence that pays little or no attention to building relationships with civilian populations²³⁴, ISIS-WA is trying to get local backing and protecting locals from JAS.²³⁵ Another difference is that ISIS-WA’s leaders are low-profile and do not appear in videos, nor do they claim responsibility for attacks like Shekau does.²³⁶ ISIS-WA is also believed to avoid using Muslim girls to carry out suicide attacks, while JAS has become notorious for doing so.²³⁷

An analysis by ISS, of where and how the attacks took place, suggests that JAS was responsible for most of the 2017 attacks. On the other hand, attacks executed by JAS are less deadly in comparison to the less frequent attacks from ISIS-WA.²³⁸ Another difference between the Shekau-led JAS and ISIS-WA is on use of child suicide bombers. Whereas the Shekau group does not hesitate to use children, ISIS-WA opposes such operations.²³⁹

In August 2017, a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report expressed grave concern about a sharp increase in the use of women and children as human bombs. The report showed that since the beginning of that year, four times more children had already been used in attacks than in 2016. Of the 83 children, 55 were girls, most often under 15 years old; 27 were boys, and one was a baby strapped to a girl.²⁴⁰ USCIRF also reported an increase of suicide bombings carried out by women and children in 2017,²⁴¹ an indicator that Boko

²²⁹ Reuters, At least 19 killed by Islamists in northeast Nigeria – survivor, 20 August 2018, [url](#)

²³⁰ This Day, Damasak Attack: NAF Fighter Jets in Overnight Bombardment of Boko Haram’s Locations, 14 September 2018, [url](#)

²³¹ Vanguard, Boko Haram kills nine, burns villages in Borno, 20 September 2018, [url](#)

²³² ACAPS, Humanitarian Overview: An Analysis of Key Crisis into 2018, 30 November 2017, [url](#), p. 30

²³³ Mahmood, O.S., Boko Haram in 2016: a highly adaptable foe, 7 February 2017, [url](#)

²³⁴ ISS, Policy Brief 109 - How Boko Haram specifically targets displaced people, November 2017, p.4, [url](#)

²³⁵ Reuters, Islamic State ally stakes out territory around Lake Chad, 29 April 2018, [url](#); Vanguard, Boko Haram kills seven villagers in Borno, 7 August 2018, [url](#)

²³⁶ VOA, Dapchi Girls’ Release Could Stir Up Religious Tensions in Nigeria, 24 March 2018, [url](#)

²³⁷ VOA, Dapchi Girls’ Release Could Stir Up Religious Tensions in Nigeria, 24 March 2018, [url](#)

²³⁸ Mahmood, O.S., Despite its divisions, Boko Haram is no weaker, 5 June 2018, [url](#)

²³⁹ BBC News, Islamic State and the kidnap of Nigerian schoolgirls from Dapchi, 29 March 2018, [url](#)

²⁴⁰ UNICEF, Use of children as ‘human bombs’ rising in northeast Nigeria, 22 August 2017, [url](#)

²⁴¹ USCIRF, Annual report on religious freedom - Nigeria, April 2018, [url](#), p. 55

Haram are becoming increasingly indiscriminate.²⁴² A UN Security Council report concluded that Boko Haram was still forcing civilians, including children, to undertake suicide attacks. For the whole of 2017, there were 146 documented cases of children used as carriers of person-borne improvised explosive devices.²⁴³

Another tactic used by Boko Haram is the kidnapping of people, especially children. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also reported that since 2013, Boko Haram had kidnapped more than 1 000 children, including the 276 girls seized at Chibok in 2014.²⁴⁴

The Nigerian military responded mainly by operations like Deep Punch, Chikin Gudu, Ruwan Wuta, and Last Hold. Ground forces have been a major aspect of these operations, but the use of air power has also been an important aspect. For example, the series of operations called *Ruwan Wuta*, which means Rain of Fire.²⁴⁵

On 8 May 2018, the Nigerian army announced that, after a week-long battle with Boko Haram in which 50 militants were killed, 1000 hostages were freed in Borno State. Those people held captive were 'mainly women and children, as well as some young men who had been forced to become Boko Haram fighters'.²⁴⁶

The armed conflict in the north-east also led to conflict-related sexual violence, such as rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriage. Especially women and girls in IDP camps who survived are very vulnerable. In May 2018, an Amnesty International report stated that both women and girls were being sexually exploited by members of the Nigerian army and CTJF. In order to obtain enough food to survive and keep their families alive, women and girls become the 'girlfriend' or 'wife' of the soldiers or members of CTJF.²⁴⁷ The military responded by denying the allegations and led some journalists to the IDP camps. During the visit, no cases of sexual harassment were discovered.²⁴⁸

Boko Haram continues to carry out small-scale suicide bombings against predominately civilian targets in rural villages and IDP camps in Borno State.²⁴⁹

Data published by the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) shows a significant rise in attacks on displaced people, including IDPs and refugees; there were four attacks in 2015, ten in 2016 and 15 in the first nine months of 2017.²⁵⁰

In April 2018, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that in the previous months many civilians and military personnel were killed and wounded by improvised explosive devices buried on roads, paths and farmlands in Borno and Yobe states.²⁵¹

²⁴² ACAPS, Humanitarian Overview: An Analysis of Key Crisis into 2018, 30 November 2017, [url](#), p. 31

²⁴³ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict,(A/72/865-S/2018/465), 16 May 2018, [url](#), pp. 2, 31

²⁴⁴ UNICEF, More than 1,000 children in northeastern Nigeria abducted by Boko Haram since 2013, 13 April 2018, [url](#),

²⁴⁵ Mahmood, O.S. et al., Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region, July 2018, [url](#)

²⁴⁶ CNN, Nigerian army says it has freed 1,000 Boko Haram captives, 8 May 2018, [url](#)

²⁴⁷ Al, 'They Betrayed us': Women Who Survived Boko Haram, Starved and Detained in Nigeria, 24 May 2018, [url](#), p.55

²⁴⁸ Sahara Reporters, 'Raped' Female IDPs Narrate How Soldiers Forced Them To Tell The Media 'Everything is Fine', 5 June 2018, [url](#)

²⁴⁹ ACLED, Conflict Trends (No. 63) - Real-Time Analysis of African Political Violence, November 2017, p. 4,7

²⁵⁰ ISS, Policy Brief 109 - How Boko Haram specifically targets displaced people, November 2017

²⁵¹ UN OCHA, West and Central Africa: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (13 - 19 March 2018), 19 March 2018, [url](#)

3.1.6 Impact of violence on state ability to secure law and order

In Borno State, about 700 public buildings were destroyed by the conflict. The vast majority of public servants have not yet returned to conflict-affected areas.²⁵² Furthermore, Deutsche Welle reported, in February 2018, that Nigeria's government was not able to protect schools from Boko Haram's attacks after the kidnapping of 110 schoolgirls in Dapchi (see Section 3.1.3). An International Crisis Group report on 12 April 2018 noted that the government had not implemented the Safe Schools Initiative seriously and also lacked sufficient police, military and other security personnel to safeguard civilian communities.²⁵³ Besides the fact that the police is basically under-staffed, 'almost half of the number available are protecting VIPs such as politicians, businessmen and other wealthy individuals.'²⁵⁴ The gap in state presence has made the reliance on vigilantes necessary, almost inevitable.²⁵⁵

On the other hand, in areas which are under control of [ISIS-WA](#), residents claim that the faction led by Barnawi mount roadblocks and conduct stop-and-search processes like the military does. They also collect taxes in return for protection.²⁵⁶

3.1.7 Conflict-induced internal displacement

Boko Haram's indiscriminate attacks forced millions of people to flee within Nigeria or across its northern and eastern borders into neighbouring Niger, Cameroon and Chad.²⁵⁷

International Organization for Migration (IOM) data show a total of 1 926 748 displaced individuals in the six states most affected by the conflict in North East Nigeria as of 24 August 2018. This implies an increase by 8 240 IDPs compared to the situation in June 2018.²⁵⁸

Table 2: Number of IDPs in North East Nigeria as of 24 August 2018

State	Number of IDP individuals	Change compared to June 2018
ADAMAWA	183 570	4 593
BAUCHI	62 687	1 422
BORNO	1 441 635	1 682
GOMBE	34 057	-483
TARABA	67 211	100
YOBE	137 588	926
Total	1 926 748	8 240

Source: IOM²⁵⁹

The largest IDP populations are located in Borno (about 1.4 million, constituting 75% of all IDPs), Adamawa (about 9 %) and Yobe (about 7 %). The increase in IDP numbers is due to

²⁵² UN OCHA, 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview - Nigeria, November 2017, p. 4, [url](#)

²⁵³ International Crisis Group, Preventing Boko Haram Abductions of Schoolchildren in Nigeria, 12 April 2018, [url](#)

²⁵⁴ DW, Nigeria fails to protect schools from Boko Haram's attacks, 25 February 2018, [url](#)

²⁵⁵ Mahmood, O.S. et al., Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region, July 2018, [url](#), p. 3

²⁵⁶ DW, Boko Haram Islamists still control parts of northeastern Nigeria, 19 May 2018, [url](#)

²⁵⁷ IDMC/NRC, City of Challenge and Opportunity: Employment and livelihoods for internally displaced people in Maiduguri, Borno State, February 2018, p.2 [url](#)

²⁵⁸ IOM, Nigeria — Displacement Report 24 (August 2018), 5 September 2018, [url](#)

²⁵⁹ IOM, Nigeria — Displacement Report 24 (August 2018), 5 September 2018, [url](#)

arrivals of people from inaccessible locations, fleeing military operations as well as refugees returning from Cameroon.²⁶⁰

About 94 % of the displacements were due to insurgency, followed by community clashes (6 %). 79 % of the IDPs are women and children. 54 % are female, 46 % are male. 27% of the IDP population are children under 5 years. 60 % of IDPs live in host communities and 40 % in camps, with the exception of Borno, which has an almost equal share of IDPs living in camps and host communities.²⁶¹

As of 24 August 2018, IOM reported that a total of 1 580 093 returnees (nearly all former IDPs) were recorded in the three states Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. This is an increase by more than 30 000 or 2% since June 2018.²⁶²

The number of displacements is still increasing, mostly due to ongoing military operations and fear of attacks by armed groups in several localities in Nigeria's north-east. For example, between 21 and 27 May 2018, about 4 500 people were displaced due to military operations in Borno State. As a result, more people have joined the IDP camps of Bama, Gwoza and Ngala.²⁶³

Early July 2018, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that over 35 000 IDPs, mainly farmers, returned to their ancestral homes from various camps in Borno North in the previous two weeks. The return was facilitated by the army as part of '[Operation Last Hold](#)' to provide security during the planting season.²⁶⁴

Some of the large-scale displacements have resulted in family separations and an acute lack of access to basic services.²⁶⁵ A study conducted by IDMC/NRC shows that the access to employment is one of the main challenges for IDPs in Maiduguri.²⁶⁶

3.1.8 Further impact of the violence on the civilian population

'The conflict in the northeast has significantly damaged or destroyed key infrastructure, particularly education and health facilities.'²⁶⁷ About 1 million houses and public structures were destroyed.²⁶⁸

In September 2017, UNICEF reported that since the conflict started in north-eastern Nigeria, nearly seven years ago, at least 2 295 teachers had been killed and more than 1 400 schools destroyed in the north-east. Most of these schools have not reopened because of extensive damage or ongoing insecurity. In Borno State, less than half of schools opened for the 2017-2018 academic year.²⁶⁹ In August 2017, a Borno State government official said Boko Haram destroyed over 5 000 classrooms in Borno State.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁰ IOM, Nigeria — Displacement Report 24 (August 2018), 5 September 2018, [url](#)

²⁶¹ IOM, Nigeria — Displacement Report 24 (August 2018), 5 September 2018, [url](#)

²⁶² IOM, Nigeria — Displacement Report 24 (August 2018), 5 September 2018, [url](#)

²⁶³ UN OCHA, Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre: Aperçu humanitaire hebdomadaire (29 mai – 4 juin 2018), 4 June 2018, [url](#)

²⁶⁴ Premium Times, Over 35,000 IDPs return to communities in Borno North – Buratai, 8 July 2018, [url](#)

²⁶⁵ UN OCHA, North-East Nigeria: Humanitarian Security Update, April 2018, 19 May 2018, [url](#), p. 5

²⁶⁶ IDMC/NRC, City of Challenge and Opportunity: Employment and livelihoods for internally displaced people in Maiduguri, Borno State, February 2018, [url](#), p.2

²⁶⁷ ACAPS, Humanitarian Overview: An Analysis of Key Crisis into 2018, 30 November 2017, [url](#), p. 31

²⁶⁸ Premium Times, Boko Haram destroyed one million houses, 5,000 classrooms, N1.9 trillion properties in Borno – Official, 8 August 2017, [url](#)

²⁶⁹ UNICEF, More than 1,000 children in northeastern Nigeria abducted by Boko Haram since 2013, 13 April 2018, [url](#)

²⁷⁰ Premium Times, Boko Haram destroyed one million houses, 5,000 classrooms, 8 August 2017, [url](#)

The health sector has also been affected by the conflict. The UNFPA reported in August 2017 that more than 40 % of health facilities were either destroyed or badly damaged, and many doctors and nurses were forced to flee North East Nigeria.²⁷¹ In January 2018, half of the 755 health facilities in Borno State were reported functional; an improvement from the 288 reported to be functioning in September 2017.²⁷²

Furthermore, in Borno fighting destroyed 30 % of houses, water sources, roads and bridges in the area, and badly affected the agriculture sector and other economic activities.²⁷³ Insurgency has also had economic effects. For example, due to counterinsurgency operations ‘farmers are only allowed to work land within a certain distance of their villages, and are only allowed to plant low-lying crops to prevent insurgents from hiding in them.’²⁷⁴

In 2013, a state of emergency was proclaimed in Yobe, Adamawa and Borno, which includes restrictions on movements and curfews.²⁷⁵ These restrictions affect trade and livelihoods by means of banning local trades like cattle and fish, and restrictions on movement of certain items, like foodstuff, fertilizers and fuel, as well as transportation by motorcycle.²⁷⁶ In August 2017 OCHA reported that the military lifted the three-year-long interdiction for fishermen in the region.²⁷⁷ Recently, the transportation of charcoal into Maiduguri has also been banned, on the assumption that Boko Haram benefits from the trade. This latest ban affects many civilians directly, due to the fact that fetching firewood and making charcoal are common income-generating activities in the region.²⁷⁸

Market activity is affected by Boko Haram’s activities and the military’s counter-insurgency operations. One of the main conclusions of a paper published by OECD was that ‘there is a direct, observable relationship between the timing of Boko Haram activities and market activity decline.’²⁷⁹ Although the conclusion in the paper was based on market activities examined in the period from late 2014 through end of 2016, several markets has been attacked by Boko Haram in 2017 and 2018 (see Section 3.1.4 for incidents).

According to UNICEF, Boko Haram destroyed 75 % of the water and sanitation infrastructure, and some 3.6 million people have no access to safe water in North East Nigeria.²⁸⁰

However, not all the destruction was the work of Boko Haram. According to US DoS, ‘press reporting indicated that the army was responsible for burning villages in areas where Boko Haram was suspected to have been operational and possibly supported by the local population.’²⁸¹

²⁷¹ UNFPA, Alarming shortage of health personnel in conflict-affected Nigeria, 29 August 2017, [url](#)

²⁷² Health Sector Nigeria, Health Sector Dashboard (Jan -Aug 2017), 25 September 2017, [url](#); UNICEF, Humanitarian Action for Children – Nigeria 2018, [url](#)

²⁷³ International Crisis Group, Instruments of Pain (IV): The Food Crisis in NorthEast Nigeria, 18 May 2017 [url](#), p. 4

²⁷⁴ IDMC/NRC, City of Challenge and Opportunity: Employment and livelihoods for internally displaced people in Maiduguri, Borno State, February 2018, [url](#), p. 2

²⁷⁵ Mahmood, O.S. et al, Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region, July 2018, [url](#), p. 16

²⁷⁶ International Crisis Group, Instruments of Pain (IV): The Food Crisis in NorthEast Nigeria, 18 May 2017, p. 4 [url](#); Mahmood, O.S. et al., Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region, July 2018, [url](#), p. 16

²⁷⁷ UN OCHA, West and Central Africa: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (1 - 7 August 2017), 8 August 2018, [url](#)

²⁷⁸ Mahmood, O.S. et al., Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region, July 2018, [url](#) p. 17

²⁷⁹ Van Den Hoek, J. Agricultural market activity and Boko Haram attacks in northeastern Nigeria, September 2017, [url](#)

²⁸⁰ Vanguard, Boko Haram destroyed 75% water, sanitation infrastructure in Northeast – UNICEF, 30 August 2017, [url](#)

²⁸¹ US DoS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Nigeria, 22 April 2018, p. 16, [url](#)

AI reported in January 2018 that during air raids and the attack by armed herdsmen early December 2017, some 3 000 homes were destroyed across the five villages in Adamawa State.²⁸²

The conflict has also had a significant impact on food security.²⁸³ As already mentioned earlier in this paragraph, agricultural and market activities are limited by the conflict. In February 2018, OCHA reported that because of the ongoing violence and insecurity, about 3.7 million people were food insecure and 448 000 children under the age of five were severely malnourished in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states.²⁸⁴

Besides malnourishment, children are still vulnerable to be recruited by either Boko Haram or CTJF. Although the total number of verified cases decreased by almost 50 % in 2017, in comparison to the previous year, Boko Haram still recruited 1 051 children, while CTJF recruited 41 children for support roles.²⁸⁵

Road security

As mentioned in Section [2.2.2](#), kidnapping and robbery often occur, making the roads in the north-east unsafe. For example, on 17 February 2018, Boko Haram not only kidnapped dozens of travellers on the Maiduguri-Damboia Road, but also took at least six trucks loaded with food items.²⁸⁶ In March 2018, the UN suspended road travels in Maiduguri LGA (Borno) and Damaturu LGA (Yobe), after Boko Haram threatened to abduct UN personnel.²⁸⁷

In June 2018, the military announced that following improvements in security, four roads in Borno State, covering a total distance of 534 kilometres, had been cleared by troops, while another road, the 54-kilometer Dikwa-Gambouru/Ngala border road, was yet to be cleared.²⁸⁸ Earlier, on 24 March 2018, the Nigerian army had reopened the Maiduguri-Bama-Banki road, after four years of its closure due to insecurity.²⁸⁹ Nevertheless, Boko Haram remains capable of setting up ambushes and staging attacks along the re-opened routes.²⁹⁰

3.2 North Central Zone (including Kaduna)

3.2.1 General description of the region

The North Central Zone comprises six states (Niger, Kogi, Plateau, Benue, Kwara, and Nasawara) and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The zone is sometimes also referred as the Middle Belt.²⁹¹ There is a wide ethnic diversity in the North Central region, with significant

²⁸² AI, Nigeria: Analysis of the air force raid in Adamawa state, 30 January 2018, [url](#), p. 1

²⁸³ ACAPS, Humanitarian Overview: An Analysis of Key Crisis into 2018, 30 November 2017, [url](#), p. 31

²⁸⁴ UN OCHA, West and Central Africa: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (6 - 12 February 2018), 12 February 2018, [url](#)

²⁸⁵ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict,(A/72/865-S/2018/465), 16 May 2018, [url](#), p. 31

²⁸⁶ Sahara Reporters, Boko Haram Terrorists Carry Out Fresh Abduction Of Dozens Of Travelers On Maiduguri-Damboia Road, 17 February 2018, [url](#)

²⁸⁷ UNHCR, Nigeria – Situation Update, March 2018, [url](#)

²⁸⁸ Two female bombers die in Borno military market blasts, 22 June 2018, [url](#)

²⁸⁹ IOM, Nigeria Flash Report - Reopening of Maiduguri-Bama-Banki Road, 3 April 2018, [url](#)

²⁹⁰ Mahmood, O.S. et al., Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region, July 2018, [url](#), p. 12

²⁹¹ The 'Middle Belt' is the geographical belt of the South of Northern Nigeria and the North of Southern Nigeria. Besides the six states of the North-Central and FCT, Adamawa, Taraba and the southern parts of Kaduna and Bauchi, are also considered as part of the 'Middle Belt'. It should be noted that depending on the source the definition of the Middle Belt can vary. For more detailed information on the 'Middle Belt' see Emmanuel, J.C, & Tari, V.A., 'The Myth and Reality of Middle Belt Geo-Politics in Nigeria: A Discourse', in: Journal of Culture, Society and Development 10, 2015, [url](#)

concentrations of Hausa-Fulani.²⁹² The region can be considered as predominately Christian, with sizeable Muslim minorities.²⁹³

Due to the fact that the security trend of Kaduna State is similar to the states in the North Central Zone, the former will also be included in this section. The population for Kaduna State alone is 8.3 million²⁹⁴, and is made up of many ethnic groups.²⁹⁵

According to the National Bureau of Statistics the population of the North Central Zone (including Kaduna) is estimated at 29.3 million people which is 15.1 % of Nigeria's total population (estimated at 193 million (data 2016)).²⁹⁶

3.2.2 Background to the pastoralist-herders conflict

Historically, relations between pastoralist and farming communities had been generally harmonious. Both groups used to live in a symbiotic relationship: pastoralist cattle would fertilise farmers' land in exchange for grazing rights. But ecological factors like climate change and desertification, rapid population growth, encroachment of designated grazing reserves, blockage of grazing routes, changes in both crop farming and pastoralism, created tensions over recent decades.²⁹⁷

In 2015, the GTI ranked the 'Fulani extremists'²⁹⁸ as the 4th deadly militant group in the world.²⁹⁹ However, as noted above, the GTI report also remarks that the number of Fulani extremists is just 'a small subset [who], engage in attacks'.³⁰⁰ The Global Terrorism Index 2017 reported that 'Fulani extremists undertook more attacks and were responsible for more deaths than Boko Haram in 2016'.³⁰¹

Crisis Group notes that since the violence escalated in January 2018, about 300 000 people fled their homes and more than 1 300 people have been killed. The farmer-herder conflict has claimed 'more than 6 times more civilian lives than the Boko Haram insurgency'.³⁰² According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), the militants killed more men, women and children in 2015, 2016 and 2017 than Boko Haram.³⁰³

According to Dr Roudabeh Kishi, Director of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), three dimensions of the conflict can be distinguished: ethnic (Fulani vs other Nigerian ethnicities), religious (Muslim herders vs Christian south), and cultural (nomadic vs sedentary).³⁰⁴

As most pastoralists are Fulani Muslims and many farming communities are largely Christian, the conflict has acquired ethnic and religious ramifications. The actual core of the conflict is

²⁹² Kwaja, C., "Nigeria's Pernicious Drivers of Ethno-religious Conflict", July 2011, [url](#); p. 3

²⁹³ Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa, April 2010, [url](#), p. ii

²⁹⁴ National Bureau of Statistics, Population of Nigeria, 2016, [url](#)

²⁹⁵ Oyewole, A., Historical dictionary of Nigeria, 2000, p. 288

²⁹⁶ NBS, Population of Nigeria 2016, available at: [url](#)

²⁹⁷ International Crisis Group, Herders against Farmers: Nigeria's Expanding Deadly Conflict, 19 September 2017, [url](#), p.i ; Vanguard, Nigerian herdsmen crisis: what's at stake?, 11 January 2018, [url](#)

²⁹⁸ This characterisation of 'Fulani extremists' as a single group is criticised by Crisis Group, as there is no evidence that Fulani assailants act as a single group. Furthermore, not all killings can be attributed to Fulani assailants. International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#)

²⁹⁹ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2015, 17 November 2016, [url](#), p. 38

³⁰⁰ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#). The GTI report also notes that 'there is confusion as to whether there is any communication or coordination between attackers.' IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2017, 15 November 2017, [url](#), pp. 24, 76

³⁰¹ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2017, [url](#), p. 24

³⁰² International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 1

³⁰³ CSW, Nigeria sees 106 attacks by Herder Militia in Central states, 25 June 2018, [url](#)

³⁰⁴ ISS/Allison, S., Herdsmen crisis underscores Nigeria's complex security threats, 28 May 2018, [url](#)

the access to economic resources.³⁰⁵ Nevertheless, a report published by Christian interest groups World Watch and Open Doors, alleges that the violence executed by Fulani herdsmen against Christians in Benue is religiously motivated.³⁰⁶ Furthermore, the ethnic and religious tensions can also be traced back to the divide between indigenes and settlers.³⁰⁷

A complicating factor is, as an article in the New York Times explains, that Fulani herders are often used as a 'scapegoat'. According to the police, at least some of the attacks attributed to pastoralists have been carried out by 'criminals and militias' armed with AK-47s, adding that 'herders have not traditionally carried such weapons'.³⁰⁸

In the first half of 2018, the violence was concentrated in Plateau, Benue and Nasarawa states in the North Central zone, and in Adamawa and Taraba states in the North East zone.³⁰⁹ However, some incidents were also reported in other states, including Delta, Edo, Ekiti, Kaduna and Kogi states.³¹⁰

As the Boko Haram insurgency has receded, the conflict between nomadic herders and sedentary agrarian communities increased in frequency, intensity, complexity and geographic scope.³¹¹ As mentioned above, the conflict caused 1300 death in the first six months of 2018, six times the number of people killed by Boko Haram. According to Crisis Group, three factors are responsible for the escalation: the poor government's poor response to distress calls and failure to punish past perpetrators; the rise of ethnic militias emboldened by the climate of impunity; and aggravated tensions in herder-farmer relations following new laws banning open grazing in Benue and Taraba states.³¹²

The conflicts between farmers and herders have affected more than 20 states across the country, but in particular Adamawa, Plateau and Taraba³¹³, Nasarawa and Benue.³¹⁴ See map by SBM Intelligence below.

³⁰⁵ New York Times, Nigeria's Farmers and Herders Fight a Deadly Battle for Scarce Resources, 25 June 2018, [url](#); Quartz Africa, A widening conflict between herdsmen and farmers is redefining Nigeria's geopolitics, 12 February 2018, [url](#)

³⁰⁶ World Watch/Open Doors, Nigeria: Benue State under the shadow of "herdsmen terrorism" (2014 – 2016) (with update: 1 January – 31 August 2017), [url](#), p. 42

³⁰⁷ ARC, Nigeria: The situation of Indigenes and Settlers, 19 January 2018, p.24, [url](#). See also EASO COI report Nigeria, Targeting of individuals, November 2018, [url](#)

³⁰⁸ New York Times, Nigeria's farmers and herders Fight a Deadly Battle for Scarce Resources, 25 June 2018, [url](#)

³⁰⁹ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 1

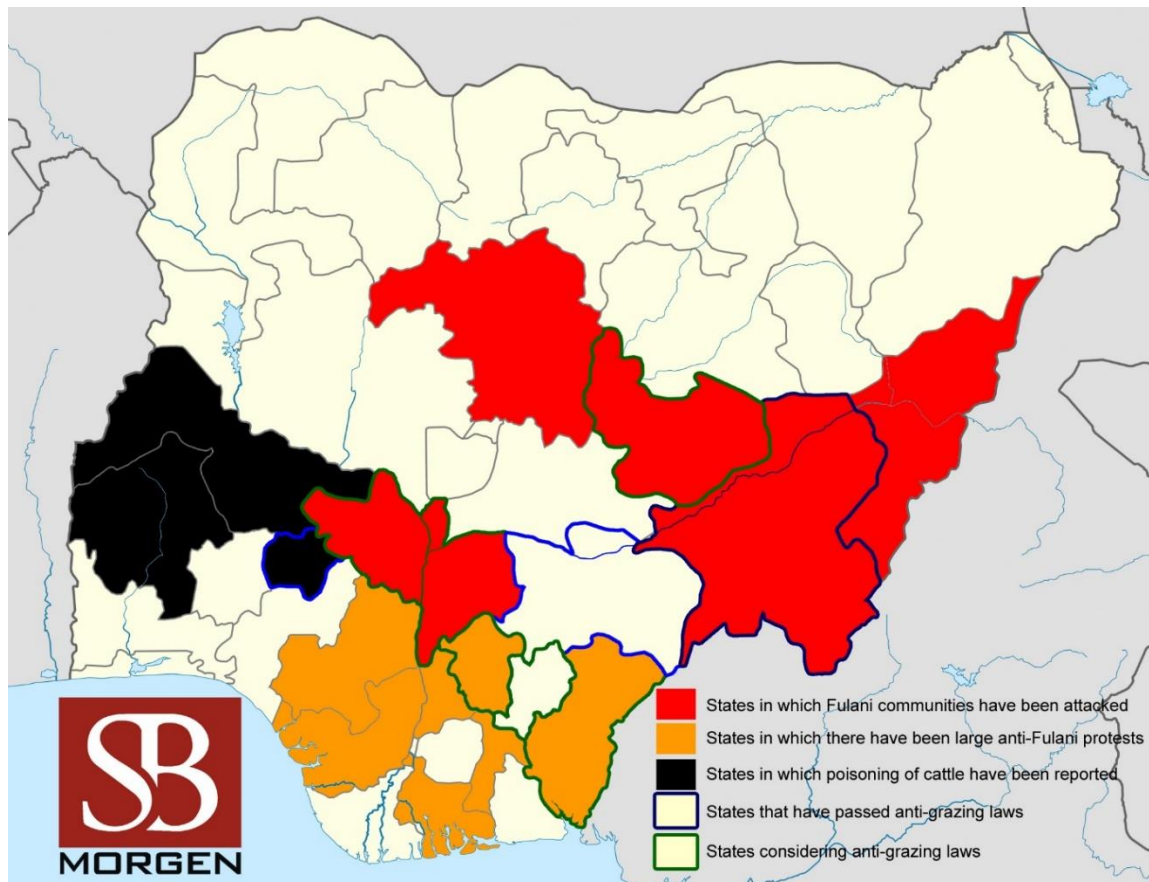
³¹⁰ Vanguard, FG rolls out 6-point plan to solve farmers-herders crisis, 20 June 2018, [url](#)

³¹¹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, (S/2018/649), 29 June 2018, [url](#), p. 1

³¹² International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 4

³¹³ Nigeria Watch, Seventh report on violence in Nigeria, 2017, [url](#), p. 3

³¹⁴ Olayoku, Philip A., Trends and patterns of cattle grazing and rural violence in Nigeria (2006-2014), IFRA-Nigeria working papers series, n°3, 28 November 2014, [url](#), p. 4



Map 11: © SBM Intel, The situation of the Pastoral Conflict in Nigeria as at the end of 2017³¹⁵

Seeking to stop the conflict, the federal government, in January 2018, announced a new plan to establish ‘cattle colonies’ across the countries, secured by agro rangers.³¹⁶ That plan was strongly opposed by many state governments and citizens groups in the south and Middle Belt, who viewed it as only benefitting the predominantly Fulani herders at the detriment of all others.³¹⁷

In June 2018, the federal government again presented a six-point plan to permanently end the conflict. The plan is named ‘The National Livestock Transformation Plan’ and built on six key pillars: economic investment, conflict resolution, law and order, humanitarian relief, information education and strategic communication; and cross-cutting issues. It aims at a phased transition from open grazing to ranching over the ten-year period 2018 – 2027.³¹⁸

3.2.3 Actors in the conflict

The main actors in the conflicts in the region are the [Nigerian army](#) and several other groups including herders, farmers, ethnic militias, cattle rustling gangs and other criminal organisations, see Section [2.3.9](#).

³¹⁵ SBM Intelligence, The Pastoral Conflict takes a deadlier turn, 5 January 2018, [url](#)

³¹⁶ Daily Trust, “Cattle colonies: How FG plans to end farmers-herders clash”, 28 January 2018, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 23

³¹⁷ The Punch, “Cattle colonies: Southern states shun FG’s request for land”, 23 January 2018, [url](#); The Guardian, “Southern, Middle Belt groups meet in Enugu, reject cattle colonies”, 25 January 2018, [url](#)

³¹⁸ Quartz Africa, A widening conflict between herders and farmers is redefining Nigeria’s geopolitics, 12 February 2018, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#)

3.2.4 Recent security trends

During the period of 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018, ACLED registered around 632 violent incidents, which resulted in approximately 1860 people killed. It should be noted that several incidents with an unknown number of fatalities (often referred to as ‘scores’, ‘several’, ‘many’, or ‘large number’) were registered, and as explained in the Introduction, such incidents are counted as 10 fatalities. Table 3 presents the number of security incidents per state and the number of deaths. The table also gives the number of incidents and fatalities of incidents categorised as ‘violence against civilians’.³¹⁹

Table 3. Incidents of violence and fatalities by state, North Central zone, October 2017 – 30 September 2018

STATE	Totals		Violence against civilians	
	Nr Incidents	Nr Fatalities	Nr incidents	Nr Fatalities
Abuja (Fed. Cap. Terr.)	129	14	2	1
Benue	145	611	92	499
Kogi	34	116	22	102
Kwara	23	7	4	3
Kaduna	77	222	35	181
Nasarawa	80	301	57	251
Niger	7	6	2	3
Plateau	137	583	109	502
Totals	632	1860	323	1542

Source: ACLED³²⁰

According to this table, Benue recorded the highest number of fatalities, and Plateau the second highest. FCT has also a high number of incidents, but counted only 14 fatalities. ACLED data show that 121 out of 129 incidents in FCT can be classified as riots/protests, which are normally less lethal than other incidents.³²¹

Out of the total 632 incidents with 1 860 fatalities, the North Central Zone (including Kaduna) counted 323 security incidents which can be classified as ‘violence against civilians’, resulting in 1542 fatalities. The states with the highest number of such violent incidents are Plateau and Benue, with respectively 502 and 499 fatalities.³²²

Overview of major incidents

On 17 July 2017, Fulani youths attacked a Kadara village of Ungwan Uka, in retaliation for the vigilante killing of a suspected Fulani criminal in Banono a week earlier. Five deaths were reported. In turn, Kadara youths mobilized the following day and attacked a Fulani settlement twice, killing 22.³²³

³¹⁹ ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

³²⁰ ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

³²¹ ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

³²² ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

³²³ This Day, 37 Reportedly Killed in Fresh Farmers, Herdsmen Clash in Kaduna, 19 July 2017, [url](#)

According to Stephanos Foundation, no fewer than 75 people were killed while 23 others were injured following attacks by suspected Fulani herdsmen in Irigwe Kingdom, Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State, between 8 September and 17 October 2017.³²⁴

On 15 October 2017, 29 people were massacred in a classroom that was supposed to be under military watch at Miango in Bassa LGA of Plateau State.³²⁵

On 5 March 2018, 24 people were killed in a Fulani attack in an Idoma-speaking village, Omusu, in Okpokwu LGA, Benue State. Among the fatalities were 14 women and two children.³²⁶

Between 13 and 15 March 2018, Fulani herdsmen attacked several communities in Dekina and Omala LGAs in Kogi State, killing 50 people.³²⁷

On 11 April 2018, in total 67 people were killed during attacks by suspected herdsmen in military uniform in Ukum LGA, Benue State.³²⁸

On 24 April 2018, suspected herdsmen stormed St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Ukpok-Mbalom Parish, Gwer East LGA, Benue State, killing 19 people - two priests and 17 congregants. The assailants also set ablaze over 80 houses and destroyed foodstuff.³²⁹

On the same day, armed herdsmen launched a coordinated attack on three communities in Guma LGA, Benue State, killing at least 39 persons, injuring scores and razing over 160 houses, huts and farmlands.³³⁰

On 5 May 2018, Fulani militants attacked Gwaska village in Birnin Gwari LGA of Kaduna State, killing 71 people and razing the entire village.³³¹

On 19 May 2018, 35 Fulani herdsmen were killed by troops of ‘[Operation Whirl Stroke](#)’ (OPWS). One soldier lost his life and two others were wounded during the operation.³³²

On 23 and 24 June 2018, between 100 and 200 people were killed by suspected herdsmen in several villages in Plateau State.³³³ The Christian aid and advocacy group, Stefanos Foundation, reported 233 killed and more than 11 000 displaced.³³⁴

On 10 August 2018, gunmen killed nine people in the Tse-Ujoh community in Ikyurav-Tiev, Katsina-Ala LGA, Benue State. According to a witness, ‘the attackers stormed the community in a commando manner, shooting indiscriminately’, some entering houses and killing people.³³⁵

³²⁴ Sahara Reporters, Herdsmen Attacks: 75 Killed, 13726 Displaced In Plateau, 27 October 2017, [url](#)

³²⁵ Sahara Reporters, Herdsmen Attacks: 75 Killed, 13726 Displaced In Plateau, 27 October 2017, [url](#)

³²⁶ Daily Trust, 24 killed in fresh Benue violence, 7 March 2018, [url](#)

³²⁷ Sahara Reporters, Suspected Herdsmen Invade Kogi Communities, Kill 25, 15 March 2018, [url](#); The Guardian, Kogi attack: Natives square up to herdsmen, 17 March 2018, [url](#)

³²⁸ The Guardian, Benue attack: Death toll rises to 67, 14 April 2018, [url](#)

³²⁹ The Guardian, Suspected herdsmen kill two Catholic priests, 17 others, 25 April 2018, [url](#)

³³⁰ Vanguard, Again, herdsmen launch coordinated attacks on Benue communities, kill 39, 25 April 2018, [url](#)

³³¹ ACLED, Regional Overview – Africa, 14 May 2018, [url](#)

³³² Vanguard, Troops kill 35 herdsmen in Benue, 21 May 2018, [url](#)

³³³ Sahara Reporters, ‘We Lost 300 Cows’ — Miyetti Allah Confirms Plateau Killings Were Retaliatory, 25 June 2018, [url](#). The local leader of the cattle breeder association had been erroneously quoted by Premium Times that the attacks were a retaliation of the hundreds of cows being killed. Premium Times: Nigeria: The Untold Killings That May Have Triggered Plateau Massacre, 25 June 2018, [url](#). The leader vehemently denied this statement in Premium Times, We did not describe Plateau killings as retaliatory – Miyetti Allah, 29 June 2018, [url](#), leading to the sacking of the reporter who wrote the first article.

³³⁴ Punch, Plateau attacks: IDP figure hits 11,515, death toll 233 – Report, 9 July 2018, [url](#)

³³⁵ Punch, Plateau attacks: IDP figure hits 11,515, death toll 233 – Report, 9 July 2018, [url](#)

³³⁵ Punch, Gunmen kill nine people in Benue, Police, Ortom say, 10 August 2018, [url](#)

On 2 September 2018, gunmen attacked Lopandet Dwei in Du district of Jos South, resulting in 11 confirmed fatalities. The source did not provide information on the identity of the perpetrators.³³⁶

On 21 September 2018, gunmen, suspected members of the militia group Terwase Akwaza, also known as Gana, strangled five men to death during an attack on Tse Vue in Ukum LGA, Benue State. No further information is available.³³⁷

On 27 September 2018, armed men attacked the city of Jos, firing at civilians indiscriminately. Nine people were killed and several others were injured.³³⁸

3.2.5 Tactics and targets

The nature of the violence – by militias at both sides of the conflict - has evolved from spontaneous responses to trespasses and provocations, to pre-meditated and well-organised scorched earth attacks, often taking communities by surprise at night and burning down farms and villages. Killings have become more indiscriminate targeting entire communities, and assault weapons are increasingly in use and sometimes the assailants attack dressed in military uniforms. Also the attacking groups are mobilising in larger numbers and are sometimes now challenging security forces, obstructing them from intervening to stop violence and in some cases kill police and troops.³³⁹

Christian interest groups like World Watch/Open Doors believe that the violence executed by Fulani herdsmen against Christians in Benue is religiously motivated. In their report on violence in Benue State, it was concluded that the killing of Christians, the destruction of their properties, the burning of churches, and gender-based atrocities against Christian women and children is a planned persecution by Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen.³⁴⁰ In its annual report 2018, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) also mentioned that ‘there were increased reports of concerns of an ethnic cleansing campaign against Christian communities, with various media sources and organizations characterizing the perpetrators as coming from a single Fulani militant group.’³⁴¹

3.2.6 Impact of violence on state ability to secure law and order

Due to the limited capacity of the NPF, it has inadequate ability to control communal or other inter-group violence in the Middle Belt states.³⁴² As a result, the government has had to deploy the military, in [operations](#) such as ‘Operation Safe Haven’, ‘Operation Cat Race’ and ‘Operation Whirl Strike’, to restore order.³⁴³

The violence has also impact on local security arrangements. The insufficient state ability to provide security has prompted communities and ethnic groups to increasingly resort to self-help groups, either in the form of vigilantes and militias or ethnic pressure groups. For instance, in March 2016, the indigenous groups in Benue State founded the Movement

³³⁶ Vanguard, Police confirm killing of 11 in Jos, 3 September 2018, [url](#)

³³⁷ Punch, Gunmen kill five in Benue, 22 September 2018, [url](#)

³³⁸ Xinhua, Gunmen kill at least 9 in central Nigeria attack, 29 September 2018, [url](#)

³³⁹ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 5

³⁴⁰ World Watch/Open Doors, Nigeria: Benue State under the shadow of “herdsmen terrorism” (2014 – 2016) (with update: 1 January – 31 August 2017), [url](#), p. 42

³⁴¹ USCIRF, Annual report on religious freedom - Nigeria, April 2018, [url](#), pp. 54-55

³⁴² Australia, DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria, 9 March 2018, [url](#), p. 29

³⁴³ USCIRF, Annual report on religious freedom - Nigeria, April 2018, [url](#), p. 55

Against Fulani Occupation (MAFO)³⁴⁴ to address the conflict, following suspicions that the federal government had sided with the Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen.³⁴⁵

USCIRF reported that all parties in the conflict, including Christians and Muslims, did not feel protected by security services. Impunity for attackers and the absence of police action are the main frustrations.³⁴⁶

In order to curb the violence, in 2017 Benue passed a law which makes open grazing by herders a crime. The displacement of some herder communities, particularly as a result of the anti-grazing law in Benue State increased pressure on grazing resources at their destinations and also increased trespasses and damage to farms, resulting in greater friction and violence with farming communities.³⁴⁷ For example, the displacement of thousands of herders from Benue State to Nasarawa State, where they could not find enough fodder for their herds, led to an increase in violence in parts of the state.³⁴⁸

3.2.7 Conflict-induced internal displacement

The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has increased: between January 2015 and February 2017, at least 62 000 people were displaced in Kaduna, Benue and Plateau states.³⁴⁹ According to the Stephanos Foundation, about 13 726 persons were displaced from the two communities in Irigwe Kingdom, Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State, after attackers burnt 489 houses between 8 September 2017 and 17 October 2017.³⁵⁰

On 15 January 2018, OCHA reported that since 1 January 2018, 80 000 people had been displaced in Benue State, as a result of violence arising from herder-farmer disputes.³⁵¹ On 15 February 2018, it further reported that at least 130 000 people had been displaced in Benue, Nasarawa, Kaduna and Taraba states.³⁵² According to Human Rights Watch in June 2018, 169 922 people have been displaced by the conflict in Benue State, of whom 102 000 children 'have been forced out of school'.³⁵³

Besides those displaced by herder-farmer violence, Benue State also registered 3 105 refugees from Cameroon as of end of April 2018.³⁵⁴ For more on Cameroonian refugees see Section [3.3.7](#).

In early July 2018, the Plateau State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) reported that 38 051 people displaced by the attacks on villages and reprisal violence on 23 and 24 June 2018 (see Section [3.2.4](#)). The IDPs were camped at 31 locations in Barkin Ladi, Riyom, Mangu, Bokkos and Jos South LGAs.³⁵⁵

³⁴⁴ MAFO is an organization formed by two major ethnic groups in Benue state (Tiv and Idoma) to challenge 'Fulani occupation' of the state. In 2016, MAFO took the Federal government of Nigeria to the ECOWAS court, demanding compensation for the losses suffered by communities impacted by herder-farmer violence. For more information see: Vanguard, Benue killings: ECOWAS Court adjourn case till Nov. 9, 10 Oktober 2016, [url](#)

³⁴⁵ World Watch/Open Doors, Nigeria: Benue State under the shadow of "herdsmen terrorism" (2014 – 2016) (with update: 1 January – 31 August 2017), p. 81, [url](#)

³⁴⁶ USCIRF, Annual report on religious freedom - Nigeria, April 2018, [url](#), p. 54

³⁴⁷ USCIRF, Annual report on religious freedom - Nigeria, April 2018, [url](#), p. 55

³⁴⁸ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 13

³⁴⁹ International Crisis Group, Herders against Farmers: Nigeria's Expanding Deadly Conflict, Africa Report No. 252, 19 September 2017, [url](#), p. 7

³⁵⁰ Sahara Reporters, Herdsmen Attacks: 75 Killed, 13726 Displaced In Plateau, 27 October 2017, [url](#)

³⁵¹ UN OCHA, West and Central Africa: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (9 - 15 January 2018), 15 January 2018, [url](#)

³⁵² UN OCHA, West and Central Africa: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (30 January - 5 February 2018), 5 February 2018, [url](#)

³⁵³ HRW, Nigeria: Rising Toll of Middle-Belt Violence, 28 June 2018, [url](#)

³⁵⁴ UNHCR, Cameroon situation (NIGERIA) – Flash Updates, 23 April – 4 May 2018, [url](#)

³⁵⁵ Premium Times, Killings: Over 38,000 IDPs in 31 camps in Plateau — SEMA, 9 July 2018, [url](#)

3.2.8 Further impact of the violence on the civilian population

In early February 2018, OCHA reported that 10 000 children could not access schools due to attacks on villages in parts of Benue State. Some schools were also closed as their premises were being used as shelter for the IDPs.³⁵⁶

In March 2018, the executive secretary of National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) reported that 12 out of 24 nomadic schools³⁵⁷ in Benue State alone have shut down and moved to Nasarawa because of violence related to disputes between herders and farming communities.³⁵⁸

In April 2018, OCHA reported that due to violence involving herders and farmers, around 300 000 children had been forced out of schools in Benue State. Several primary schools had either been burnt or were occupied by armed herders. It also noted that in some localities, schools were being used as IDP camps.³⁵⁹

The spike in herder-farmer violence in 2018, particularly in Benue, also resulted in the destruction of vast amounts of crops and rural livelihoods.³⁶⁰ There were fears that the destruction of farm lands and crops could lead to poor crop production, possibly resulting to hunger and starvation for those who depend largely on agricultural produce from the affected communities.³⁶¹

On 7 June 2018, the authorities in Benue State announced that at least 35 primary schools had been closed in Obi Local Government Area due to attacks on Tiv communities, which had resulted in the destruction of some schools.³⁶²

Due to large-scale displacement and insecurity in parts of Adamawa, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba states, people are hindered to farm or herd. As a result, food prices are rising. The large-scale displacement also resulted in overcrowded IDP camps, lacking safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. As a result, IDPs, especially women and children, were vulnerable to several diseases.³⁶³

Road security

The Birnin-Gwari Kaduna highway in Kaduna State is subject to frequent violent incidents, mainly ambushes, combined with abduction and kidnapping for ransom.³⁶⁴ In May 2018, at least 100 people have reportedly been kidnapped along this road.³⁶⁵

³⁵⁶ UN OCHA, West and Central Africa: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (17- 23 April 2018), 23 April 2018, [url](#)

³⁵⁷ Nomadic schools are especially developed to provide education to the nomadic pastoralists, migrant fisher folks and migrant farmers. For more detailed information see: National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE), [website], n.d., [url](#)

³⁵⁸ Punch, Farmers/herdsmen clashes forced Benue to shut 12 schools – NCNE, 7 March 2018, [url](#)

³⁵⁹ UN OCHA, West and Central Africa: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (17- 23 April 2018), 23 April 2018, [url](#)

³⁶⁰ Australia, DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria, 9 March 2018, [url](#), p. 13

³⁶¹ Ezeogu, U.A. & Ichaba, A.A., An Eye for an Eye Vis-À-Vis the Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers' Vendetta in Nigeria: A Case for Social Reconciliation, February 2018, [url](#), p. 3

³⁶² This Day, 35 Primary Schools Shut in Nasarawa over Herdsmen Attacks, 8 June 2018, [url](#)

³⁶³ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. i

³⁶⁴ New Telegraph, Birnin Gwari: Nigeria's deadliest road, 22 June 2018, [url](#)

³⁶⁵ Reuters, At least 100 people kidnapped along road in northern Nigeria, 15 May 2018, [url](#)

3.3 Niger Delta

3.3.1 General description of the region

The Niger Delta comprises six states from the South South Zone (Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, Akwa Ibom, Edo and Cross River) plus Abia, Imo (South East Zone) and Ondo (South West Zone).

South South is the heart of Nigeria's oil industry, accounting for 80 % of the nation's oil production.³⁶⁶ Together all the nine states are referred to, administratively, as the Niger Delta. Ethnically, the region is highly heterogeneous with over 40 groups that speak more than 100 languages and dialects.³⁶⁷ According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the population of the Niger Delta (including Abia, Imo and Ondo states) is estimated at 42.6 million people, which is 22 % of Nigeria's total population (estimated at 193 million people (data 2016)).³⁶⁸ The region is predominately Christian.³⁶⁹

3.3.2 Background to the conflict

The roots of the current conflict in the Niger Delta can be traced to the region's history of economic exploitation, environmental pollution and political marginalization that left the local population hardly benefitting from the region's immense petroleum resources. In the 2000s, the region saw the emergence of several armed groups like the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and Niger Delta Strike Force (NDSF), which mobilised to fight for the region's rights, but were also involved in criminal activities like ransom kidnapping and oil bunkering. The activities of these armed groups caused a lot of unrest in the region, seriously disrupting oil and gas industry operations.³⁷⁰ In order to curb the violence, the federal government deployed a military Joint Task Force (JTF) to the region in 2003. The JTF, which is still operational by the time of writing this report³⁷¹, is led by the army but also includes units and assets from the navy, the paramilitary mobile police (MOPOL), and the regular police force.³⁷² In the years 2008-2009, it conducted massive military operations against militant groups in Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta states.³⁷³

The year 2009 was a turning point in the conflict as the federal government initiated the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP). Under this programme, militants who surrendered their arms were to be granted unconditional amnesty, and subsequently compensated financially or rehabilitated through higher formal education and by technical skills training.³⁷⁴ Around 30 000 people enrolled in the PAP as ex-militants, and surrendered about 2700 weapons. For their upkeep, pending rehabilitation, the ex-militants received a stipend of 65 000 Naira, equivalent to about 180 US dollars, per month. The programme was initially planned for five years, but was as of March 2018 still in effect.³⁷⁵

³⁶⁶ AOAV, The Violent Road, 12 December 2013, [url](#), p. 73

³⁶⁷ PIND Foundation, Analysis of Conflict Trends in the Niger Delta, n.d., [url](#)

³⁶⁸ NBS, Population of Nigeria 2016, available at: [url](#)

³⁶⁹ Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa, April 2010, [url](#), p. ii

³⁷⁰ Asunji, J.B., Understanding the Armed Groups in the Niger Delta, 2009, [url](#), p. 3

³⁷¹ Nigerian Tribune, Navy, JTF are part of illegal bunkering, oil theft in Niger Delta —IYC, 2 June 2018, [url](#)

³⁷² Hazen, J.M. & Horner, J., Small arms, armed violence and insecurity in Nigeria, 2007, [url](#), p. 28

³⁷³ IRIN, Thousands flee violence, hundreds suspected dead, 22 May 2009, [url](#)

³⁷⁴ AOAV, The Violent Road, 12 December 2013, [url](#), p. 75

³⁷⁵ Golden-Timsar, R., Amnesty And New Violence In The Niger Delta, Forbes, 20 March 2018, [url](#)

For years the programme was quite successful in calming the region³⁷⁶, but violence erupted again in early 2016, when new groups like the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), Red Scorpions, Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force (JNDLF), Niger Delta Red Squad (NDRS), Adaka Boro Avengers (ABA) and Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate (NDGJM) emerged.³⁷⁷ These groups consist partly of ex-militants who were no longer satisfied with their stipends under the amnesty programme, and also by others who had become convinced that the only way to attract government's attention and concessions was by a resort to armed violence.³⁷⁸

After negotiations with the federal government and the announcement of the resumption of amnesty payments, the NDA announced a ceasefire on 20 August 2016.³⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the group carried out some attacks in October and November 2016.³⁸⁰ Since November 2016, when the government accepted a 16-point catalogue of demands presented by the Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF), militant groups have repeatedly threatened to launch attacks but there has been no major attack by NDA or any other group in the Niger Delta.³⁸¹ There are continuing reports of armed groups kidnapping expatriates, such as the five oil workers abducted in Ajoki community, Delta State, on 17 January 2018.³⁸²

3.3.3 Actors in the conflict

The main actors in the region are the Joint Task Force (JTF)³⁸³, [Nigeria Police Force](#) (NPF), and the [Niger Delta Avengers](#) (NDA).

3.3.4 Recent security trends

During the reporting period of 1 October 2017-30 September 2018, ACLED registered around 350 security incidents, which resulted in approximately 332 persons killed.³⁸⁴ It should be noted that several incidents with an unknown number of fatalities (often referred to as 'scores', 'several', 'many', or 'large number') were registered, and as explained in the Introduction, such incidents are counted as 10 fatalities. Table 4 presents the number of security incidents and number of deaths per state. The table also gives the number of incidents and fatalities of incidents categorised as 'violence against civilians'.

³⁷⁶ Leadership, Army Launches Operation 'Cat Race' In Benue Valley, 8 February 2018, [url](#); Sahara Reporters, Army Puts An End To Its 'Cat Race' In Benue, Taraba, Kogi, 15 May 2018, [url](#)

³⁷⁷ Premium Times, 18 new armed groups spring up in Nigeria, 18 October 2016, [url](#)

³⁷⁸ ACCORD, Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region: A collective non-violent approach, 17 September 2017, [url](#); Golden-Timsar, R., Amnesty And New Violence In The Niger Delta, Forbes, 20 March 2018, [url](#); Jamestown Foundation, The Niger Delta: Will restarting Amnesty payments Ease the conflict?, October 2016, [url](#), p. 14

³⁷⁹ Jamestown Foundation., 'The Niger Delta: Will Restarting Amnesty Payments Ease the Conflict?', in: Terrorism Monitor 14 (20), 14 October 2016 [url](#)

³⁸⁰ Reuters, Nigeria's 'Delta Avengers' militants end oil hub ceasefire, 3 November 2017, [url](#)

³⁸¹ The Economist Intelligence Unit, Niger Delta militants end their ceasefire, 6 November 2017, [url](#)

³⁸² Sun, Militants abduct 5 oil workers in Niger Delta, 20 January 2018, [url](#)

³⁸³ A special force which was founded in 2003 is the so-called Joint Task Force (JTF). Originally planned as an interim measure to create order in the Niger Delta, the JTF is still present in the region. The JTF is led by the army, but also includes officers from the navy, the paramilitary mobile police (MOPOL), and the regular police force. The main responsibility of the JTF is to maintain the security in the region, including responding to kidnappings. Jamestown Foundation, Nigeria Expands Its 'War on Terrorism' to the Niger Delta, 16 September 2016, Terrorism Monitor, Volume 14, Issue 18, [url](#)

³⁸⁴ ACLED, Real Time data (1 July 2017- 30 June 2018), [url](#)

Table 4. Incidents of violence and fatalities by state, Niger Delta, October 2017 – 30 September 2018

STATE	Totals		Violence against civilians	
	Nr Incidents	Nr Fatalities	Nr incidents	Nr Fatalities
Abia	17	38	5	17
Akwa Ibom	24	50	9	16
Bayelsa	37	39	16	20
Cross River	41	52	12	26
Delta	72	54	28	30
Edo	41	21	13	14
Imo	21	6	4	3
Ondo	54	14	16	9
Rivers	43	58	13	52
Totals	350	332	116	187

Source: ACLED ³⁸⁵

According to this table, Rivers State recorded the highest number of fatalities from violent incidents, although Delta State had the most incidents. Furthermore, the region counted 116 security incidents that could be classified as violence against civilians, resulting in 187 fatalities, the highest number occurring in Rivers.³⁸⁶

An overview of the major incidents

Although not within the scope of the reporting period of 1 October 2017-30 September 2018, it is worth mentioning a series of major clashes between 27 and 29 June 2017 over the use of farmland, between the Wanikade and Wanihem communities in Yala LGA of Cross River State. These clashes resulted in about 150 people killed, 14 000 people displaced and 1 233 houses destroyed.³⁸⁷

On 27 July 2017, 18 people were reportedly killed in a clash over a long-running land dispute between Ogbe-Ijoh and Aladja communities in Delta State.³⁸⁸

On 9 October 2017, between 10 and 15 people were reported dead after unidentified gunmen opened fire on a group of traders at a market in Obio/Akpor LGA, Rivers State.³⁸⁹

On 1 January 2018, 21 people were killed after attending a church service in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area (ONELGA), River State. The Director-General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) blamed the incident on the fight for supremacy among rival cult groups in the area.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁵ ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

³⁸⁶ ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

³⁸⁷ Daily Trust, 150 killed in 3-day communal clash in C/River — SEMA, 4 July 2017, [url](#); Premium Times, Osinbajo orders security reinforcement in Cross River communities where 150 were killed in violence, 7 July 2017, [url](#)

³⁸⁸ The Guardian, Many injured, six houses razed as communities clash in Delta, 28 July 2017, [url](#)

³⁸⁹ This Day, Gunmen Kill 15 in Rivers Community, 10 October 2017, [url](#); Vanguard, Just in: Gunmen invade Port Harcourt market, kill 10, 9 October 2017, [url](#)

³⁹⁰ Premium Times, New Year tragedy: Gunmen kill '21' Rivers residents returning from church, 1 January 2018, [url](#)

On 18 April 2018, a communal clash between the Isu community in Arochukwu LGA of Abia State and their neighbours from Utuma in Biase LGA of Cross River left at least 10 people reported dead.³⁹¹

On 3 May 2018, 30 fishermen were killed in a communal clash between Oku Iboku community in Itu LGA of Akwa Ibom State and a community in Cross River State.³⁹²

On 3 May 2018, JTF confirmed the killings of four high-profile militants from the Niger Delta states.³⁹³

On 26 July 2018, unknown gunmen killed the chairman of the APC chairman in Ideato LGA, Imo state. There were no more violent incidents against civilians, resulting in fatalities, recorded between 1 July and 30 September 2018.³⁹⁴

3.3.5 Tactics and targets

The sources consulted in this chapter do not show clear trends in tactics used by the several groups which are involved in the conflicts in the Niger Delta.

3.3.6 Impact of violence on state ability to secure law and order

As mentioned in Section [2.3.2](#), and also reported by Human Rights Watch in the past³⁹⁵, a large proportion of the police officers deployed to the region are hired as personal guards by the wealthy and privileged, undermining their capacity to ensure public safety and respond to security incidents. Oil companies in the region continually rely heavily on MOPOLs to secure their (private) operations.³⁹⁶ While the national police headquarters in Abuja repeatedly announced that police officers would be withdrawn from their 'additional jobs'³⁹⁷ to concentrate on their core mandate, it is not clear these announcements have been effected as significant numbers of police personnel are still visibly serving private security interests. According to an Assistant Inspector-General of Police (AIG), based in Zone 5 (Bayelsa, Delta and Edo states), only 20 % of policemen are engaged in protecting lives and ensuring peace, while 'the remaining 80 per cent just busy providing personal security to some "prominent people" on guard duties.'³⁹⁸

Similar to the other two regions law enforcement agencies in the Niger Delta were unable to prevent communal violence.³⁹⁹ As a result, military forces continued to operate as part of joint security operations and exercises, notably under [Operation Crocodile Smile](#) and [Operation Python Dance](#). The recruitment and training of 10 000 youths from Niger Delta as surveillance and security personnel for surveillance of oil pipelines in the region⁴⁰⁰, provides further indication that the police force was not able to perform its task adequately in the region. In Rivers State, in early 2018, the government established a Rivers State Neighbourhood Safety

³⁹¹ Vanguard, 10 feared dead in Abia, Cross River communal clash, 25 April 2018, [url](#)

³⁹² Independent, 30 Fishermen Feared Killed In A/Ibom, C/River Communities' Clash, 3 May 2018, [url](#)

³⁹³ Sahara Reporters, Troops 'Kill' Four Top Niger Delta Militants, 3 May 2018, [url](#)

³⁹⁴ ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

³⁹⁵ HRW, "Everyone's in on the Game": Corruption and Human Rights Abuses by the Nigeria Police Force, 17 August 2010, [url](#), pp. 2-3

³⁹⁶ Kimani, H., Security for the highest bidder, 31 October 2009, [url](#)

³⁹⁷ Channels Television, Police Withdraws Mobile Security Aides To Individuals, 25 June 2016, [url](#); Sahara Reporters, Police IGP's And The Politics Of Withdrawal Of Police Personnel From VIPs, Politicians, 20 March 2018, [url](#)

³⁹⁸ Premium Times, 80% of Nigerian police officers provide personal security for 'prominent people', AIG laments, 8 February 2018, [url](#)

³⁹⁹ US DoS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Nigeria, 22 April 2018, [url](#), p. 10

⁴⁰⁰ Daily Trust, FG trains 10,000 youths on pipeline surveillance, 25 October 2017, [url](#)

Corps Agency (RIVNESCA) ‘to encourage and consolidate an effective security synergy between the security agencies and communities.’⁴⁰¹

3.3.7 Conflict-induced internal displacement

Although the Niger Delta does not have a significant number of IDPs in comparison with the other two regions (see Sections 3.1.7 and 3.2.7), the region has also recorded a few incidents resulting in significant displacements. As described [before](#), 14 000 people were displaced by communal clashes in Yala LGA, Cross River State.⁴⁰²

Besides the IDPs generated by communal clashes, some states also saw an influx of refugees from Cameroon. These were Anglophone Cameroonians who began fleeing their country since October 2017 due to the unrest in their area. In March 2018, UNHCR reported that over 20 000 refugees, four-fifth of them women and children had crossed into Nigeria.⁴⁰³ In early May 2018, it was reported that 17 003 Cameroonian refugees had been registered in Cross River State and 179 in Akwa Ibom State.⁴⁰⁴

3.4 Zamfara State

3.4.1 General description of the region

Zamfara State in the North West Zone has an estimated 4.5 million people, which is 2.3 % of Nigeria’s total population (estimated at 193 million people (data 2016)).⁴⁰⁵ The largest population groups are Hausa and Fulani (together about 29 %)⁴⁰⁶, and smaller local ethnic groups such as Dakarkari, Kambari, Gungawa, Dandawa, Dukkawa, Kaje, Kataf, Gwari. The region is predominantly Muslim with small pockets of Christians.⁴⁰⁷

3.4.2 Background to the conflict

While in the 1980s to 2000s (after the introduction of Sharia criminal law) several ethno-religious conflicts between Muslims and Christians were fought, mainly in Kano, Sokoto and Kaduna⁴⁰⁸, the current conflict is different, according to Crisis Group. In the Zamfara State, occasionally spilling over to neighbouring Sokoto and Katsina states, an increasingly deadly conflict evolves between cattle rustlers and other bandits on one hand, and communities, vigilantes and government forces on the other.⁴⁰⁹

This conflict is, according to human rights organisations, separate from the herder-farmer violence in the Middle Belt, because it is largely driven by cattle rustling and banditry as purely criminal activities, not a dispute for resources by two legitimate groups. The violence ‘is fundamentally about the government’s abdication of its responsibility to protect its citizens’,

⁴⁰¹ Daily Trust, Wike inaugurates Rivers State Neighbourhood Safety Corps Agency, 17 April 2018. [url](#). Also see RIVNESCA, Welcome, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁰² Daily Trust, 150 killed in 3-day communal clash in C/River — SEMA, 4 July 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁰³ UN News, Cameroonians pour into Nigeria, stretching scant resources – UN refugee agency, 20 March 2018 [url](#)

⁴⁰⁴ UNHCR, Cameroon situation (NIGERIA) – Flash Updates, 23 April – 4 May 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁵ NBS, Population of Nigeria 2016, available at: [url](#)

⁴⁰⁶ According to the Worldatlas, the Hausa form 25.1 % of the Nigerian population, while the Fulani are 3.9 % of the total population, together they represent 29% of the entire Nigerian population. Worldatlas, Largest Ethnic Groups in Nigeria, 25 April 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁷ Sulaiman Khalid, Ethno-religious conflicts in North-Western Nigeria; myth and reality, 2000, [url](#); AOA/ NWGAW, The Violent Road: Nigeria’s North West, 12 December 2013, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁸ AOA/ NWGAW, Action on Armed Violence/ National Working Group on Armed Violence, The Violent Road: Nigeria’s North West, 12 December 2013, [url](#); Sulaiman Khalid, Ethno-religious conflicts in North-Western Nigeria; myth and reality, 2000, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁹ IRIN, Zamfara: Nigeria’s wild northwest, 13 September 2018. [url](#)

and the long-standing lawlessness, according to the independent news agency IRIN. The north-western zone has a long history of banditry with so little control by police that bandits can impose their authority by 'fast justice' without appeal.⁴¹⁰ Moreover, the violence takes place within an almost all-Muslim context, so the Christian-Muslim divide is practically absent.⁴¹¹

The conflict started as a result of 'unresolved clashes' between Hausa farmers and Fulani herders over access to land and water. Gradually, it evolved into a 'lucrative illicit economy of banditry and cattle-rustling' and kidnapping for ransom.⁴¹²

Although the conflict has precolonial roots⁴¹³, the first major attack after independence happened in Yar Galadima in 2014, killing 200 people. In two years 'hundreds' of people were killed and thousands displaced, and between January and July 2018, there were 371 deaths, according to AI.⁴¹⁴

Sources describe a pattern of 'bandits' calling villagers, warning them to pay large sums of money (such as USD 1 400) or else they will be kidnapped or killed. Relatives are called to extract money while the kidnapped persons are being tortured.⁴¹⁵ The attacks take place mainly in the rural areas and prevent the villagers from going farming. AI blames the state government's failure to protect the population against bandits, even after the population received warning letters ahead of attacks.⁴¹⁶

Cattle rustling is 'an entrenched and thriving business' and makes a lot of quick money, as the demand for beef in the southern cities is still growing. The stolen cattle is hidden in the forests at Zamfara's border regions with Kaduna and Niger until it is sold for slaughter.⁴¹⁷

The violence is spreading towards other states which is, according to an AI Jazeera article, related to weak and understaffed security forces, 'Nigeria's law enforcement agencies are understaffed and with its army stretched thin by other conflicts, the cattle-rustler crisis has continued unabated mostly in Zamfara but also Kaduna, Katsina, Niger and, recently, Sokoto states.'⁴¹⁸

3.4.3 Actors in the conflict

The violence is perpetrated by bandits targeting rural village communities for ransom and to steal their cattle. According to IRIN, several bandits started as local vigilantes, deployed by the authorities in order to step in where the federal police failed. In Zamfara, these vigilantes were given 'motorbikes, uniforms, and locally made single-shot hunting rifles, but little other support to meet the rising tide of banditry.' As payment often was delayed and ammunition was lacking, 'part of the vigilante became part of the bandits'.⁴¹⁹

However, the identity and ethnic or geographical origin of the bandits is not exactly known. The cattle rustlers were initially Fulani, then Hausa and nowadays, according to an IRIN

⁴¹⁰ IRIN, Zamfara: Nigeria's wild northwest, 13 September 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹¹ AI, Nigeria: Thousands living in fear as Zamfara armed bandits ramp up attacks, 31 July 2018, [url](#); Aljazeera, Deadly cattle raids in Zamfara: Nigeria's 'Ignored' Crisis, 20 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹² IRIN, Zamfara: Nigeria's wild northwest, 13 September 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹³ IRIN, Zamfara: Nigeria's wild northwest, 13 September 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹⁴ AI, Nigeria: Thousands living in fear as Zamfara armed bandits ramp up attacks, 31 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹⁵ IRIN, Zamfara: Nigeria's wild northwest, 13 September 2018, [url](#); AI, Nigeria: Thousands living in fear as Zamfara armed bandits ramp up attacks, 31 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹⁶ AI, Nigeria: Thousands living in fear as Zamfara armed bandits ramp up attacks, 31 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹⁷ IRIN, Zamfara: Nigeria's wild northwest, 13 September 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹⁸ Aljazeera, Deadly cattle raids in Zamfara: Nigeria's 'Ignored' Crisis, 20 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹⁹ IRIN, Zamfara: Nigeria's wild northwest, 13 September 2018, [url](#)

interlocutor, ‘every criminal in Nigeria has come to Zamfara’.⁴²⁰ Another source reports the assailants come from Niger.⁴²¹

3.4.4 Recent security trends

According to ACLED data, in the reporting period 1 October 2017-30 September 2018, 52 incidents were reported in Zamfara State, resulting in 412 fatalities. It should be noted that several incidents with an unknown number of fatalities (often referred to as ‘scores’, ‘several’, ‘many’, or ‘large number’) were registered, and as explained in the Introduction, such incidents are counted as 10 fatalities. Table 5 presents the number of security incidents per state and the number of deaths. The table also gives the number of incidents and fatalities of incidents categorised as ‘violence against civilians’.⁴²²

Between 1 October 2017 and 15 February 2018, only one incident was recorded with in total five fatalities. The most violent incidents, with high numbers of fatalities, recorded in the database took place between 15 February 2018 and 1 September 2018.⁴²³

Table 5. Incidents of violence and fatalities in Zamfara, October 2017 – 30 September 2018

State	Totals		Violence against civilians	
	Nr Incidents	Nr Fatalities	Nr incidents	Nr Fatalities
ZAMFARA	52	412	27	308

Source: ACLED⁴²⁴

Overview of major incidents

On 28 March 2018, more than 30 people had been killed in attacks by gunmen in Bawan Daji, Anka LGA.⁴²⁵

On 5 April 2018, the army killed 21 ‘bandits’ in Tungan Daji in Anka LGA. Two soldiers were killed as well. ACLED adds that it ‘is not known if the perpetrators were of the same group that attacked civilians in Bawon-Daji on 28 March 2018.’⁴²⁶ This last incident is categorised as ‘Battle-No change of territory’ by ‘Military forces’. After the attack on Bawon-Daji, the Nigerian Air Force deployed Special Forces in Zamfara State on 4 April 2018.⁴²⁷

The other major incidents below are categorised by ACLED as ‘Violence against civilians’ by ‘unidentified armed group’.

On 15 February 2018, gunmen, described only as ‘bandits’ killed about 41 persons at Birane village, Zurmi LGA (Zamfara State), ‘after intercepting a vehicle conveying bridesmaids and traders to the community market.’ They killed all on board and then went on to the market, where they fired indiscriminately. According to an eye-witness, 41 were dead in total.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁰ IRIN, Zamfara: Nigeria’s wild northwest, 13 September 2018, [url](#)

⁴²¹ Aljazeera, Deadly cattle raids in Zamfara: Nigeria’s ‘Ignored’ Crisis, 20 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴²² ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

⁴²³ ACLED, Real Time data (1 July 2017- 30 June 2018), [url](#)

⁴²⁴ ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

⁴²⁵ Daily Trust, Army kills 21 bandits in Zamfara, 6 April 2018, [url](#)

⁴²⁶ Daily Trust, Army kills 21 bandits in Zamfara, 6 April 2018, [url](#); ACLED, Real Time data (1 July 2017- 30 June 2018), [url](#)

⁴²⁷ Al, Nigeria: Thousands living in fear as Zamfara armed bandits ramp up attacks, 31 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴²⁸ Vanguard, Gunmen kill 41 traders, bridesmaid in Zamfara, 16 February 2018, [url](#)

On 27 and 28 March 2018, 63 civilians were reportedly killed over two days of attacks by gunmen 'believed to be cattle rustlers' in Bawon-Daji, Anka LGA.⁴²⁹

On 11 April 2018, gunmen attacked Kuru-kuru and Jarkuka village in Anka LGA. 26 people were killed.⁴³⁰

On 19 or 20 April, 'suspected cattle thieves' attacked Kabaro and Danmani villages, killing 27.⁴³¹ According to a resident of Kabaro, the shooting occurred after villagers had caught and executed one of the bandits earlier. The gunmen got angry and came back to lay siege on and kill the community.⁴³²

Between 1 and 2 May 2018, local militia from Fankashi village and cattle thieves fought a gun battle in Fankashi in Maru LGA. 13 people were reportedly killed over two days.⁴³³

In June 2018, bandits 'took over' three districts in Zurmi LGA, in total 18 villages and towns.⁴³⁴

On 27 July 2018, 18 villages in Zumi LGA, Zamfara State, were attacked, killing at least 42 people. The next day, 15 people were kidnapped in another LGA. That day, a thousand troops were deployed to Zamfara to provide security. According to AI's interlocutors, this was the third time since November 2017 that military troops were deployed in response to attacks but this has not led to more protection of remote communities.⁴³⁵

On 12 September 2018, an armed group attacked a village hall in the village of Badarawa, north-western Zamfara state, where people were watching a movie. Eleven people were killed and more than 20 injured. It is not clear why the village was attacked.⁴³⁶

3.4.5 Tactics and targets

The main tactics used in the violence are attacking remote villages and killing villagers, stealing cattle, kidnapping villagers for ransom.

3.4.6 Impact of the violence on state ability to secure law and order

According to several sources, the state is generally unable to protect the population and to arrest and prosecute the assailants. It only managed to kill a notorious cattle rustling and kidnapping gang leader, Buharin Daji of Fulani origin. This happened in March 2018 but has reportedly not contributed to peace to the region.⁴³⁷

Throughout the first half of 2018, insecurity related to incidents of cattle rustling and rural banditry continued in the north-west, although intensified military operations killed many 'bandits'.⁴³⁸

⁴²⁹ ACLED, Real Time data (1 July 2017- 30 June 2018), [url](#); This Day, Gunmen Kill 69 in Zamfara, Southern Kaduna, 30 March 2018, [url](#)

⁴³⁰ ACLED, Real Time data (1 July 2017- 30 June 2018), [url](#); International Crisis Group, Latest updates, April 2018, [url](#)

⁴³¹ ACLED, Real Time data (1 July 2017- 30 June 2018), [url](#); International Crisis Group, Latest updates, April 2018, [url](#); Daily Trust, How Zamfara lost 138 lives to banditry in 3 months, 22 April 2018, [url](#)

⁴³² Daily Trust, How Zamfara lost 138 lives to banditry in 3 months, 22 April 2018, [url](#)

⁴³³ Vanguard, Breaking: 13 killed as cattle rustlers attack Zamfara village, 3 May 2018, [url](#)

⁴³⁴ IRIN, Zamfara: Nigeria's wild northwest, 13 September 2018, [url](#)

⁴³⁵ AI, Nigeria: Thousands living in fear as Zamfara armed bandits ramp up attacks, 31 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴³⁶ BBC, Nigeria gunmen kill cinema-goers in Zamfara, 13 September 2018, [url](#)

⁴³⁷ IRIN, Zamfara: Nigeria's wild northwest, 13 September 2018, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Deadly cattle raids in Zamfara: Nigeria's 'Ignored' Crisis, 20 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴³⁸ International Crisis Group, Latest updates, August 2018, [url](#)

3.4.7 Conflict-induced internal displacement

According to Amnesty International, ‘thousands of people have been displaced’ by the conflict. After the above mentioned attack on 27 July 2018 on 18 villages in Zurmi LGA, ‘at least 18,000 residents of the affected villages who were displaced over the weekend are now taking refuge at various locations in the local government headquarters.’⁴³⁹

3.4.8 Further impact of the violence on the population

From January 2018 until 31 July 2018, at least 371 persons have been killed in the violence in Zamfara State, according to Amnesty International.⁴⁴⁰

The ongoing banditry in Zamfara has reportedly claimed over 3 000 lives since 2011, the destruction of over 2 000 homes and 500 cars, and the kidnapping of more than 500 people for ransom. The Zamfara State government said it spent some 17 billion Naira in that period on fighting the problem.⁴⁴¹

3.5. Other manifestations of violence

3.5.1 Kaduna State: IMN

In Kaduna State, North West Zone, tension is amounting between the military and the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN), a Shia Muslim group in predominantly Sunni northern Nigeria. Its leader, Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky, called for an ‘Islamic revolution’ in the 1980s. After its members blocked the army chief, Lt Gen Tukur Buratai, from using a public road in the northern city of Zaria in Kaduna State in December 2015, soldiers opened fire on protesters and supporters of IMN. Over the following two days more than 350 civilians and one soldier were killed.⁴⁴² An official inquiry into the Nigerian Army's response to the above-mentioned clashes between 12 and 14 December 2015 has concluded that the army's response was "disproportionate". The report of the Kaduna State Judicial Commission of Inquiry, released on 31 July 2016, found that ‘349 members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) were killed during the clashes’. Human Rights Watch writes that this confirms their earlier findings that ‘more than 300 IMN members were killed by soldiers in a heavy-handed, unjustifiable use of lethal force.’⁴⁴³

After the December 2015 clashes, the government detained the group's injured leader, Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky and his wife Malama Zeenah Ibrahim, sparking protests from followers in Abuja and some other cities in the north of the country.⁴⁴⁴ Both were held in detention by the Department of State Services (DSS) without charges for over two years, despite an order from the Federal High Court in Abuja ruling their release within 45 days of 2 December 2016.⁴⁴⁵

On 15 May 2018, the Kaduna State government arraigned El-Zakzaky and his wife at the Kaduna State high court, charging them on eight counts including unlawful assembly, criminal conspiracy and culpable homicide (causing the death of a soldier) which is punishable by

⁴³⁹ AI, Nigeria: Thousands living in fear as Zamfara armed bandits ramp up attacks, 31 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁰ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, (S/2018/649), 29 June 2018, [url](#), p. 5; AI, Nigeria: Thousands living in fear as Zamfara armed bandits ramp up attacks, 31 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁴¹ Daily Trust, 3,000 killed, N17bn lost to bandits in Zamfara, 19 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁴² For more information on IMN, see EASO, Country of Origin Information Report –Nigeria, 5 June 2017, [url](#); International Crisis Group, New Risks in Nigeria's Shiite Fault Line, 16 December 2015, [url](#)

⁴⁴³ HRW, Dispatches: Nigerian Military Used Excessive Force Against Shia Group, 1 August 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁴ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, (S/2018/649), 29 June 2018 [url](#), p. 4

⁴⁴⁵ Sahara Reporters, Falana Urges Shiites To Keep Protesting Until El-Zakzaky Regains Freedom, 16 April 2018, [url](#); USCIRF, Annual Report 2018, April 2018, [url](#), p. 54

death.⁴⁴⁶ Throughout the reporting period of 1 October 2017-30 September 2018, members and supporters staged protests in Abuja, Kaduna, and some other cities, demanding their release.⁴⁴⁷ Deaths were recorded in clashes between police and protesters⁴⁴⁸ and many protesters are still held in detention. The Kaduna State government declared IMN unlawful already in October 2016.⁴⁴⁹

3.5.2 South East Nigeria: Biafra

Another notable escalating tension is manifest in South East Nigeria with increasing violence between the government and Igbo groups agitating for an independent republic of Biafra (the territory of which would mainly be the Igbo-populated states Ebonyi, Enugu, Anambra, Imo, Abia⁴⁵⁰). Since 1970, the Igbo have been striving for an independent republic of Biafra, and increasingly so since the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) was founded in 1999⁴⁵¹ and banned in 2001.⁴⁵² Another, very active secessionist group grew out of MASSOB: the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).⁴⁵³ IPOB was founded in 2014.⁴⁵⁴

Between August 2015 and August 2016, Nigerian security forces led by the army conducted a repressive campaign, extrajudicially killing at least 150 pro-Biafra agitators.⁴⁵⁵ In September 2017, security forces cracked down on and arrested over 100 IPOB members in Abia State.⁴⁵⁶ About 15 people were reportedly killed in this security operation, while the army invaded the home of the IPOB leader – who disappeared in the turmoil.⁴⁵⁷

After this action, the military declared IPOB a terrorist organisation.⁴⁵⁸ This decision was endorsed by the Nigerian government but rejected by many Nigerians and international observers.⁴⁵⁹ On 20 September 2017, the Federal High Court in Abuja gave legal backing by granting an order filed by the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and declared the

⁴⁴⁶ Premium Times, Shiite leader El-Zakzaky brought to court, charged with murder, 15 May 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁷ Sahara Reporters, Shiite Members Vow To Continue Massive 'Free El-Zakzaky' Protest, 5 April 2018, [url](#); USCIRF, Annual Report 2018, April 2018, [url](#), p. 54

⁴⁴⁸ Sahara Reporters, At Least Three Shi'tes, One Policeman Killed As Kaduna Court Continues Trial Of El-Zakzaky, Wife, 21 June 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁹ IBT, Kaduna state in Nigeria bans Shia organisation IMN calling it unlawful society, 8 October 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁰ International Crisis Group, Nigeria's Biafra Separatist Upsurge, 4 December 2015, [url](#)

⁴⁵¹ Canada: IRB, Nigeria: Situation and treatment of members of the MASSOB, (2013-July 2016), 20 July 2016, NGA105577.E, [url](#). For background, see International Crisis Group, Nigeria's Biafra Separatist Upsurge, 4 December 2015, [url](#); and African Arguments, Nigeria: How to solve a problem like Biafra, 29 May 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁵² Canada: IRB, Nigeria: Treatment of members of the MASSOB; (June 2002-July 2004), 13 July 2004, NGA42750.FE, available at: [url](#)

⁴⁵³ Tayo, S., Mbah, F., Calls for Biafran Independence Return to South East Nigeria, 9 November 2017, [url](#); see also Canada: IRB, Nigeria: Situation and treatment of members of the MASSOB, (2013-July 2016), 20 July 2016, NGA105577.E, [url](#), and Canada, IRB, Nigeria: The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), (2014-October 2016), NGA105658.E, 10 November 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁴ BBC, Biafran leader Nnamdi Kanu: The man behind Nigeria's separatists, 5 May 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁵ AI, Nigeria: At least 150 peaceful pro-Biafra activists killed in chilling crackdown, 24 November 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁶ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (S/2017/1104), 26 December 2017, [url](#), p. 4. For detailed information on MASSOB and IPOB, see EASO COI report Nigeria, Targeting of individuals, November 2018, [url](#). For IPOB organisation and treatment of members, see Canada, IRB, Nigeria: The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), (2014-October 2016), NGA105658.E, 10 November 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁷ The Guardian, Many feared killed as soldiers lay siege to Nnamdi Kanu's home, 13 September 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁸ Daily Trust, Military declares ipob terrorist organization, 16 September 2017, [url](#); Sahara Reporters,

BREAKING: Nigerian Military Declares IPOB Terrorist Organization, 15 September 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁹ Chatham House, Calls for Biafran Independence Return to South East Nigeria, 9 November 2017, [url](#)

activities of IPOB as ‘acts of terrorism and illegality’.⁴⁶⁰ Many IPOB and MASSOB members are in detention.⁴⁶¹

According to ACLED data, in the reporting period 1 October 2017-30 September 2018, 52 incidents were reported in South East zone, resulting in 412 fatalities. It should be noted that several incidents with an unknown number of fatalities (often referred to as ‘scores’, ‘several’, ‘many’, or ‘large number’) were registered, and as explained in the Introduction, such incidents are counted as 10 fatalities. Table 6 presents the number of security incidents per state and the number of deaths. The table also gives the number of incidents and fatalities of incidents categorised as ‘violence against civilians’. In Enugu state the highest number of violent incidents took place.⁴⁶²

**Table 6. Incidents of violence and fatalities in South East Nigeria, ‘Biafra’,
1 October 2017 – 30 September 2018**

Zone	Totals		Violence against civilians	
	Nr Incidents	Nr Fatalities	Nr incidents	Nr Fatalities
Abia	17	38	5	17
Anambra	35	8	8	5
Ebonyi	23	42	7	15
Enugu	44	16	13	14
Imo	21	6	4	3
Total	140	110	37	54

Source: ACLED⁴⁶³

The topics of IMN and Biafra are discussed in more detail in [EASO COI report Nigeria, Targeting individuals](#), November 2018.

3.5.3 Violent crime

Apart from the above mentioned regional conflicts, an increasing level of violence and firearms proliferation is noted across the country, particularly manifesting in ransom kidnapping along highways, armed robbery and other forms of violent crime.⁴⁶⁴ This violence constitutes serious security and public safety concerns in Nigeria.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁰ Sahara Reporters, Nigerian Court Proscribes IPOB, Declares It Terrorist Organization, 20 September 2017 [url](#)

⁴⁶¹ Daily Post, “Biafra: IPOB leader, Ezeanachukwu demands release of detained members, offers self”, 25 February 2018, [url](#); Premium Times, “Biafra: Why we arrested peaceful MASSOB protesters – Police”, 23 May 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁶² ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

⁴⁶³ ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

⁴⁶⁴ US DoS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2017 – Nigeria, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁵ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, (S/2018/649), 29 June 2018 [url](#), p. 4; US DoS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2017 – Nigeria, [url](#)

Annex 1 Incidents and fatalities 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2018

The table below shows the number of incidents and the number of fatalities per state (based on ACLED data⁴⁶⁶) in the period 1 October 2017 until 30 September 2018, compared to the total population (data 2016⁴⁶⁷). The table shows three sets of data:

1) Total number of violent incidents and fatalities.

Of these totals, two sub-sets are presented:

2) Incidents that are categorised as 'violence against civilians' and the fatalities

3) Remote violence (e.g. car bombs, IEDs)

**Table 7. Comparison of incidents of violence and fatalities by state,
1 October 2017 – 30 September 2018**

STATE	Population	Total violent incidents		Violence against civilians		Remote violence	
		Nr Incidents	Nr Fatalities	Nr incidents	Nr Fatalities	Nr Incidents	Nr Fatalities
Abia	3,727,347	17	38	5	17	2	0
Adamawa	4,248,436	90	522	54	351	8	50
Akwa Ibom	5,482,177	24	50	9	16	0	0
Anambra	5,527,809	35	8	8	5	0	0
Bauchi	6,537,314	7	4	1	0	0	0
Bayelsa	2,277,961	37	39	16	20	0	0
Benue	5,741,815	145	611	92	499	0	0
Borno	5,860,183	351	2422	70	512	46	721
Cross River	3,866,269	41	52	12	26	0	0
Delta	5,663,362	72	54	28	30	0	0
Ebonyi	2,880,383	23	42	7	15	0	0
Edo	4,235,595	41	21	13	14	0	0
Ekiti	3,270,798	52	16	16	13	0	0
Enugu	4,411,119	44	16	13	14	3	0
Abuja (Fed. Cap.Terr.)	3,564,126	129	14	2	1	0	0
Gombe	3,256,962	4	2	2	1	0	0
Imo	5,408,756	21	6	4	3	0	0

⁴⁶⁶ ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

⁴⁶⁷ Nigeria, NBS (National Bureau of Statistics), Population of Nigeria 2016, available at: [url](#)

Jigawa	5,828,163	5	3	2	1	0	0
Kaduna	8,252,366	77	222	35	181	0	0
Kano	13,076,892	13	4	1	1	0	0
Katsina	7,831,319	6	4	3	4	1	0
Kebbi	4,440,050	9	14	3	3	0	0
Kogi	4,473,490	34	116	22	102	0	0
Kwara	3,192,893	23	7	4	3	0	0
Lagos	12,550,598	77	23	7	4	0	0
Nasarawa	2,523,395	80	301	57	251	0	0
Niger	5,556,247	7	6	2	3	0	0
Ogun	5,217,716	26	11	5	5	0	0
Ondo	4,671,695	54	14	16	9	0	0
Osun	4,705,589	21	0	4	0	0	0
Oyo	7,840,864	46	15	6	7	0	0
Plateau	4,200,442	137	583	109	502	0	0
Rivers	7,303,924	43	58	13	52	1	0
Sokoto	4,998,090	15	36	12	24	0	0
Taraba	3,066,834	73	301	51	259	0	0
Yobe	3,294,137	21	64	5	7	2	20
Zamfara	4,515,427	52	412	27	308	7	40
Total	193,500,543	1952	6111	736	3263	70	831

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Annex 3: Terms of Reference

Introduction on Nigeria

Administrative division: the 6 geopolitical zones and general information

Security situation

1. General description of the security situation since June 2017

1.1. Overview of current conflicts in Nigeria

1.1.1. Background to the current/most recent conflicts (before June 2017)

1.2. Armed confrontations in the territory of Nigeria

Parties

Geographical scope (which areas does the conflict affect, including road security)

Security trends (quantitative (e.g. number of incidents and casualties) and qualitative (methods and tactics used))

1.3. Actors in the conflict

1.3.1. State's armed forces

Army

Police (only if they are actors in the conflict)

National intelligence

Special forces/counter-terrorism

Structure and command

Tasks in relation to the conflicts

Methods and tactics (in relation to engagement in the conflict)

Presence/control (geographical) and capacity

Attributed civilian casualties

1.3.2. Boko Haram

1.3.3. Militias in Niger Delta

1.3.4. Inter- and intra-ethnic conflicts (incl. Indigenes-settlers/farmers-herders)

2. Description of the security situation per zone (where applicable; only zones where a conflict is)

The general reference period is *1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018*. (this period was later changed into: 1 October 2017-30 September 2018). If relevant, background information and significant incidents which predate this period may also be included.

For the more detailed description of the security situation per zone, the following aspects need to be addressed:

- 2.1. General description of the region (terrain, urban areas, population)
- 2.2. Actors in the conflict active in the region and areas of control
- 2.3. Recent security trends
 - Number and kind of incidents*
 - Number of civilian casualties (deaths and injured)*
- 2.4. Tactics used (such as:
 - Bombings by air, artillery and mortars, air raids*
 - Massive bombings, explosives, suicide attacks, IED, RCIED, VOIED, VBIED, BBIED, mines*
 - Landmines and booby traps*
 - Shootings, direct confrontations/ground battles, snipers*
 - Death squads and executions*
 - Guerrilla attacks/asymmetric warfare/multiple and complex attacks*
 - Surprise attacks/sweeps/raids*
 - Siege, terre brûlée*
 - Sexual violence as a war strategy*
 - Lootings*
 - Criminal activities related to the conflict (e.g. in case of breakdown of law and order)*
 - Expulsion, forced stay/civilian shields*
- 2.5. Targets - *If info available - such as:*
 - Civilian targets and population, military targets, government infrastructure, humanitarian organisations – impact on urban areas and dwellings, crowded/public places, markets/shops, schools, places of worship, places of recreation, hospitals, cultural property, roads and transport systems, airfields*
 - NB: targets can also be discussed under tactics 2.4.*
- 2.6. Impact of violence on state ability to secure law & order (incl state failure) (*this is about presence of gov.institutions in conflict areas*)
 - 2.6.1. General criminality
 - 2.6.2. Government institutions
 - 2.6.3. Judiciary *very brief, crosslink to State actors of protection*
 - Detention (prison conditions) very brief, crosslink to State actors of protection*
- 2.7. Conflict-induced internal displacement
 - IDPs and migration from the area*
 - IDPs and returnees to the area*
- 2.8. Other impact of the violence on the civilian population (general) *if needed – in the conflict areas*
 - Freedom of movement*
 - Impact on available infrastructure*

Children/women (*if there is specific impact, other than sexual violence as a tactic in armed conflict*)

Access to health care

Access to (basic) education (link to Boko Haram in Targeted Profiles)

