



Home Office

Country Information and Guidance

Nigeria: Fear of Boko Haram

Version 1.0

June 2015

Preface

This document provides guidance to Home Office decision makers on handling claims based on – as well as country of origin information (COI) about – Boko Haram and/or the security situation in Nigeria. This includes whether claims are likely to justify the granting of asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave and whether – in the event of a claim being refused – it is likely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under s94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers must consider claims on an individual basis, taking into account the case specific facts and all relevant evidence, including: the guidance contained with this document; the available COI; any applicable caselaw; and the Home Office casework guidance in relation to relevant policies.

Country Information

The COI within this document has been compiled from a wide range of external information sources (usually) published in English. Consideration has been given to the relevance, reliability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, transparency and traceability of the information and wherever possible attempts have been made to corroborate the information used across independent sources, to ensure accuracy. All sources cited have been referenced in footnotes. It has been researched and presented with reference to the Common EU [European Union] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information (COI), dated April 2008, and the European Asylum Support Office’s research guidelines, Country of Origin Information report methodology, dated July 2012.

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to make recommendations to him about the content of the Home Office’s COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office’s COI material. Information about the IAGCI’s work and a list of the COI documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector’s website at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>

It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy.

IAGCI may be contacted at:

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration,

5th Floor, Globe House, 89 Eccleston Square, London, SW1V 1PN.

Email: chiefinspectorukba@icinspector.gsi.gov.uk

Website: <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews>

Contents

Guidance	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Consideration of Issues	4
3. Policy Summary	9
Country Information	10
4. Background to Boko Haram.....	10
5. Tactics and Levels of Violence	13
6. Areas Controlled by Boko Haram	21
7. State (and Regional) Actions	26
8. Humanitarian Situation in northeast Nigeria.....	33
Version Control and Contacts	37

Guidance

Updated: 15 June 2015

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of Claim

- 1.1.1 Fear of persecution by members of Boko Haram (also known as Islamic State in West Africa but referred to as Boko Haram throughout this document) because of a person's actual or perceived political/religious opposition to the group, and/or because of a person's gender.
- 1.1.2 That the security and/or humanitarian situation in Nigeria presents a real risk which threatens life or person such that removal would be in breach of Article 15(c) of European Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 ('the Qualification Directive').

[Back to Contents](#)

1.2 Summary of Issues to Consider

- 1.2.1 Is the person's account a credible one?
- 1.2.2 Are actual or perceived opponents to Boko Haram at risk of persecution?
- 1.2.3 Are those at risk able to seek effective protection?
- 1.2.4 Is there indiscriminate violence in Nigeria which is at such a level that substantial grounds exist for believing that the person, solely by being present there, faces a real risk of serious harm which threatens their life or person?
- 1.2.5 Are those at risk able to internally relocate within Nigeria?

[Back to Contents](#)

2. Consideration of Issues

2.1 Is the person's account a credible one?

- 2.1.1 Decision makers must consider whether the material facts relating to the person's account of their experiences in Nigeria are of sufficient detail and specificity, based on their individual profile, internally consistent (e.g. oral testimony, written statements) as well as being externally consistent with generally known facts and the [country information](#) and other evidence to a reasonable degree and plausible. Decision makers should take into account the possible underlying factors as to why a person may be inconsistent or unable to provide details of material facts.
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must, in particular, establish where the person originates from and where they are likely to return to as these will be key factors in assessing the risk they may face on return.

For further information on these and assessing credibility more generally, see section 5 of the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

2.2 [Are actual or perceived opponents of Boko Haram at risk of persecution?](#)

2.2.1 The militant Sunni Islamist group commonly known as Boko Haram, which emerged in the early 2000s, is Nigeria's primary security concern. The group advocates a strict interpretation of Islamic law for Nigeria and against Western influence in Africa, and wishes to expel the political community of northern Nigeria which it sees as being controlled by corrupt and false Muslims. It emerged as a significant terrorist threat in 2009 and has since committed numerous deadly attacks featuring improvised explosive devices (IEDs), car bombs, periodic suicide attacks, small arm attacks and arson, as well as human rights abuses. It is estimated that over 5,500 people were killed in Boko Haram attacks in 2014, a further 2,000 abducted and that the group may have killed more than 10,000 people since its emergence. In the first three months of 2015, Boko Haram fighters killed at least 1,500 civilians. It appears to be well organised and possesses sophisticated weaponry financed through robbery, extortion and ransom as well as stolen from the police stations and military bases it has overrun.

See [Overview, Aims/Objectives and Emergence](#) in country information

2.2.2 Boko Haram has called for an uprising against secular authority and a war against Christianity. Despite this public rhetoric it has not exclusively, or even primarily, targeted Christians but focused its attacks against those it perceives to be in opposition to its ideology: “unbelievers” or those perceived to support the authorities. It has particularly targeted state and federal targets, such as police stations but also schools, bus stations, banks, detention facilities, churches, mosques, markets, bars and villages. The group has also assassinated local political leaders, civil servants, Civilian Joint Task Force members, traditional leaders, health workers and moderate Muslim clerics as well as teachers and children in targeted attacks on schools. During hit and run assaults it has been reported to either shoot all men of fighting age, or target those it believes have links with the government or the military. It has also launched more strategic attacks on key infrastructure (e.g. bridges, fuel depots), seizing and holding territory as well as frequently taking retribution against communities who it sees as cooperating with Nigerian forces. It also made frequent use of suicide bombers, particularly women and children, often targeting areas where people gather, such as markets and places of worship, and thousands of people were killed during 2014. Forced recruitment, including of children, abduction and kidnapping are common ploys, both as methods of obtaining money through ransom, but also to obtain young women and girls to sell or use as servants and sex slaves. These women will often be abandoned or killed when the militants have to leave an area in a hurry.

See [Tactics and levels of violence](#) in country information

2.2.3 As a result of the violence and clashes between the Boko Haram and the government's armed forces, over a million people have been internally displaced from within northern Nigeria and Nigerian refugee figures in neighbouring countries continue to rise, estimated at 168,000 -200,000 in April 2015.

- 2.2.4 Boko Haram primarily operates in the north eastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe where it has taken control of large areas of territory, though the state managed to push back the group in the first quarter of 2015 reclaiming a number of cities and towns. This revealed mass graves and further evident signs of slaughter by Boko Haram and there are reports that Boko Haram fighters who were retreating from the advance of the joint forces murdered their so-called “wives” – in fact, women and girls held in slavery– and other captives as Government troops advanced. The group has launched occasional attacks in the states of Bauchi, Kano, Kaduna, Taraba and in Abuja and Lagos.
- 2.2.5 Christians, state officials, including members of the security forces, political and traditional leaders, Civilian Joint Task Force members, health workers and moderate Muslim clerics, those perceived to oppose Boko Haram (particularly if suspected of assisting the security forces), and women and children, living in areas controlled by Boko Haram – parts of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states – are likely to be at risk of serious harm because of actual or perceived views and/or their gender.
- 2.2.6 In areas outside of the control of Boko Haram – the large majority of Nigeria – while there have been reports of sporadic bombings, there is no other evidence to indicate that the group has systematically targeted persons who oppose or are perceived as opposing its ideology. The security situation remains fluid and decision makers should consider up to date country information to determine which areas are controlled or contested by Boko Haram.

See [Areas controlled by Boko Haram](#) in country information.

[Back to Contents](#)

2.4 [Are those at risk able to seek effective protection?](#)

- 2.4.1 In areas controlled by Boko Haram, state protection will not be available.
- 2.4.2 The Nigerian army and security forces have largely proved to be inadequate in dealing with the threat posed by Boko Haram, although during March and April 2015 the army claimed that most areas controlled by Boko Haram were recaptured. However Boko Haram has not been defeated and the security forces continue to fight the group, aiming to reclaim territories it previously held or had influence in. It is reported that Boko Haram can be expected to retreat into its hideouts and switch back to fighting a guerrilla campaign. Recent suicide attacks reflect the group’s capacity to engage in irregular warfare and use terrorism as its primary weapon. Decision makers should consider up to date country information to determine which areas are controlled or contested by Boko Haram.
- 2.4.3 In general in areas controlled by the state a person who is at risk from Boko Haram may be able to access protection but this will depend on the particular facts of their case, the profile of the person, where they are seeking protection, and taking into account relevant information about the intention and capabilities of Boko Haram. Given the weaknesses in the state security and judicial systems, effective protection may not be available, particularly in areas where Boko Haram is currently active or has influence.

For further information on assessing the availability state protection, see the country information and guidance on [Nigeria: Background information including actors of protection and internal relocation](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.5 **Is there indiscriminate violence in Nigeria which is at such a level that substantial grounds exist for believing that the person, solely by being present there, faces a real risk of harm which threatens their life or person (Article 15c)?**

2.5.1 An assessment of protection needs under Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive (QD) should only take place if the person is unable to establish a need for refugee protection or humanitarian protection.

2.5.2 Article 15(c) of the QD applies only to civilians, who must be genuine non-combatants and not those who are party to the conflict. This could include former combatants who have genuinely and permanently renounced armed activity.

2.5.3 Boko Haram has focussed its attacks on state and federal targets, such as police stations and detention facilities but also attacked schools, bus stations, banks, churches, mosques, markets, bars and villages. It has bombed civilian targets across Nigeria though the majority have been in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, raided towns and villages in the north-east and from July 2014 began to capture major towns. By February 2015, it controlled the majority of Borno state, as well as northern Adamawa state and eastern Yobe state.

2.5.4 Boko Haram has used improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including car bombs, and suicide bombers to kill civilians at markets, transport hubs, schools and other public institutions. The group repeatedly attacked cities in the north-east, but also struck targets in cities across Nigeria. In responding to Boko Haram, the security forces have at times used excessive force, torched homes and villages, committed extra-judicial killings, tortured and detained thousands of people in inhumane conditions, many of whom may have died in custody.

2.5.5 Since February 2015 a counter-offensive by the Nigerian military, with support from Cameroon, Chad and Niger, has forced Boko Haram from some major towns and released many civilians from its rule. The army claimed that by April 2015, it had regained most of the territory captured by Boko Haram. Decision makers should consult up to date country information to determine which areas are controlled or contested by Boko Haram and the levels and nature of violence.

See [Areas controlled by Boko Haram](#) in country information

2.5.6 The security situation in north-east Nigeria is fragile and fluid, and the conflict has resulted in many thousands of casualties and displaced over a million people. However, in general, given the levels of casualties against the size of the population; that the conflict is largely asymmetric in nature (as opposed to open conflict between the parties) and confined to the north-east states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe; that the government has regained control of the majority of the territory captured by Boko Haram in the north-

east (and retains control elsewhere in the country); the situation has not deteriorated to the extent that substantial grounds exist for believing that any civilian, solely by being present in north-east Nigeria, faces a real risk of harm which threatens their life or person.

See [Tactics and casualties](#) in country information

- 2.5.9 Even where there is no general Article 15(c) risk, decision makers must consider whether there are particular factors relevant to the person's individual circumstances which might nevertheless place them at risk. Such factors might include – but not limited to - the person's age, gender, health, disability etc.
- 2.5.10 In areas outside of the control of Boko Haram – the large majority of Nigeria - while there have sporadic bombings the levels of violence due to internal armed conflict are very low and therefore Article 15(c) is not in issue. Decision makers must therefore go on to consider whether internal relocation is appropriate.

See [Elgafaji v. Staatssecretaris van Justitie, C-465/07, European Union: European Court of Justice, 17 February 2009](#)

2.6 Are those at risk able to internally relocate within Nigeria?

- 2.6.1 In general internal relocation is likely to be a viable option but only if the risk is not present in the place of relocation and it would be reasonable/not unduly harsh to expect that individual to do so.
- 2.6.2 Nigeria is Africa's most populous country with a population of over 177 million. It consists of 36 states and is over 900,000 sq km (about four times the size of the UK). Boko Haram controls parts of the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe in the north-east of Nigeria and is currently being challenged in these areas by the security forces. The focus and majority of its attacks have been in these states, although it has also undertaken sporadic bombings in other parts of the country including Abuja. However its influence outside of the north-east appears limited.
- 2.6.3 In considering whether or not a person may internally relocate, decision makers must take into account the particular individual circumstances of the person (and any dependants), the nature of the threat and how far it would extend, and whether or not it would be safe and reasonable to expect the person to relocate.
- 2.6.4 Decision makers need to consider the ability of the persecutor to pursue the person in the proposed site of relocation, and whether effective protection is available in that area. Decision makers must also consider factors such as the age, gender, health, ethnicity, religion, financial circumstances and support network of the person, as well as the security, human rights and socio-economic conditions in the proposed area of relocation, including their ability to sustain themselves and their dependants. Women, especially single women with no support network, are likely to be vulnerable and may be faced with destitution in the absence of civil society (e.g. NGO's) to provide practical support.

For further information on considering internal relocation, see the country information and guidance on [Nigeria: Background information including](#)

actors of protection and internal relocation; and section 8.2 of the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

3. Policy Summary

- **Boko Haram operates primarily in three north eastern states of Nigeria, namely Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. People living in these areas who oppose or are perceived as opposing the group or of supporting the authorities and/or women and girls, are likely to face persecution on a Refugee Convention ground.**
- **In general a person will not be at risk of persecution from Boko Haram in areas outside of the group's control.**
- **In areas under the control of Boko Haram, or those contested by the security forces and the armed group, the security situation has not deteriorated to such an extent that it has reached a level that in general a removal to these states would be in breach of Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive. However decision makers should consider whether there are particular factors relevant to the person's individual circumstances which might nevertheless place them at enhanced risk.**
- **In areas outside of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, while there have been sporadic attacks, including bombings by Boko Haram, the levels of violence are not such to breach the threshold of Article 15(c).**
- **The security situation in the north-east of Nigeria is fluid and decision makers should, therefore, consider the latest country situation at the time of decision.**
- **Due to the large population, size of the country and general ease of movement, internal relocation is in general a viable option, but the reasonableness of each case must be considered on its own merits.**
- **Where a man's claim falls to be refused, it must be considered for certification under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 as Nigeria is listed as a designated state (in respect of men only).**
- **Where a woman's claim falls to be refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.**

For further information on making asylum decisions, see section 9 of the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#) the [Asylum Instruction on Discretionary Leave](#) and [Gender Issues in the Asylum Claim](#).

For further information on certification, see the [Asylum Instruction on Non-Suspensive Appeals: Certification Under Section 94 of the NIA Act 2002](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

Country Information

Updated: 15 June 2015

4. Background to Boko Haram

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 The militant Islamist group commonly known as Boko Haram is currently Nigeria's biggest security concern, amid an escalated campaign of attacks against government, religious and civilian targets.⁽¹⁾
- 4.1.2 Boko Haram, which means 'Western civilisation is forbidden', is part of a movement whose primary aim has been to establish an Islamic state based on Shari'a (Islamic law), with a secondary aim being the wider imposition of Islamic rule beyond Nigeria.⁽²⁾
- 4.1.3 BBC News Africa indicated on 24 April 2015 that Boko Haram may now also be known as the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP).⁽³⁾
- 4.1.4 Jane's described the organisation in more detail:
- 'Name: Jama'atu Ahlu-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad, or Group of the Followers of the Prophet for Propagation and Holy Struggle. More commonly known as Boko Haram.
 - Scope: Domestic.
 - Orientation: Sunni Islamic.
 - Objective: Revolutionary.
 - Status: Active since emerging in 2003.
 - Leader: Imam Abubakar bin Mohammed alias Abubakar Shekau.
Summary: ...Primarily concentrated in the northern states of Yobe, Kano, Bauchi, Borno, and Kaduna, Boko Haram poses a limited but periodic threat to local order, carrying out sporadic attacks against local communities and representatives of the federal government, particularly police officers'⁽⁴⁾
- 4.1.5 Amnesty International stated in January 2015 that 'The exact number of Boko Haram troops is unknown but it is estimated to be at least 15,000 – although it is likely to be much higher.'⁽⁵⁾ However, the US State Department report on Terrorism, 2013, released April 2014, stated: 'Membership

¹ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – West Africa, Nigeria (Security) updated 25 February 2015. Subscription site, accessed 31 March 2015

² Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – West Africa, Nigeria (Security) updated 25 February 2015. Subscription site, accessed 31 March 2015

³ BBC News Africa, Analysis: Islamic State strengthens ties with Boko Haram, 24 April 2015. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-32435614> Accessed 11 May 2015

⁴ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – West Africa, Nigeria (Non-state armed groups) updated 25 February 2015. Subscription site, accessed 31 March 2015

⁵ Amnesty International, Boko Haram at a glance, 29 January 2015. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/articles/news/2015/01/boko-haram-glance/> Accessed 8 April 2015

estimates range from the hundreds to a few thousand.’⁶ The BBC News noted on 4 May 2015, ‘It has a fighting force of thousands of men - CIA officials had estimated around 9,000.’⁽⁷⁾

4.1.6 The US Congressional Research Service March 2015 report ‘Nigeria’s 2015 Elections and the Boko Haram Crisis’ noted:

‘Its leadership has appeared at times to be inspired by the Islamic State; it has modified its logo to incorporate the Islamic State flag, used its anthem in a video, and voiced support for both the Islamic State and Al Qaeda (AQ) in public messages. As of January 2015, U.S. officials did not consider the group to be an AQ affiliate. On March 7, 2015, Boko Haram released an audio message on Twitter from its leader, Abubakar Shekau, in which he pledges allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi. The practical implications of that pledge, and the extent to which, if at all, the two groups have direct links, are unclear.’⁽⁸⁾

4.2 Emergence

4.2.1 The US Congressional Research Service’s June 2014 report ‘Nigeria’s Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions’ looked at the emergence of the group:

‘Boko Haram emerged in the early 2000s as a small Sunni Islamic sect advocating a strict interpretation and implementation of Islamic law for Nigeria...While the sect’s leadership did not initially call for violence, its followers engaged in periodic skirmishes with police during its formative years. At that time the group’s activities were limited in scope and contained within several highly impoverished states in the predominately Muslim northeast. In July 2009, at least 700 people were killed during an effort by Nigerian security forces to suppress the group. In the course of that violence, the group’s leader, Mohammed Yusuf, a charismatic young cleric who had studied in Saudi Arabia, was killed in police custody. The group subsequently appeared to dissipate, but re-emerged a year later under new leadership, orchestrating a large prison break in September 2010 that freed hundreds, including its own members. Some Boko Haram militants may have fled to insurgent training camps in the Sahel in 2009-2010. The group has built ties with transnational extremist groups in the region, which have reportedly provided training and increasingly sophisticated weaponry.’⁽⁹⁾

4.3 Aims/Objectives

⁶ US State Department, Country Reports on Terrorism 2013, Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Boko Haram (page 276), 30 April 2014. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/225886.pdf> Accessed 11 May 2015

⁷ BBC News, Who are Nigeria’s Boko Haram Islamists? 4 May 2015 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13809501> Accessed 11 May 2015

⁸ The Congressional Research Service, Nigeria’s 2015 Elections and the Boko Haram Crisis, 8 March 2015 <http://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/row/R43881.pdf> Accessed 31 March 2015

⁹ The Congressional Research Service, Nigeria’s Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions, 10 June 2014 What is Boko Haram? p.1-2 <https://fas.org/sqp/crs/row/R43558.pdf> Accessed 7 April 2015

4.3.1 The [US] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, in a background report of May 2014, described the group's specific goals:

- 'Boko Haram wishes to expel the political community of northern Nigeria which they believe has been seized by corrupt and false Muslims and to establish a fundamentalist interpretation of Sharia (Islamic law) across all of Nigeria.
- The group also advocates against Western influence in Africa and has allied with several militant organizations to fight government forces in Mali and Nigeria.
- As evidenced by the increasing number of attacks against educational targets, Boko Haram also seeks to rid Nigeria of any Western education, including schools for girls.'⁽¹⁰⁾

4.3.2 The US Congressional Research Service March 2015 report 'Nigeria's 2015 Elections and the Boko Haram Crisis' noted:

'Boko Haram has grown increasingly active and deadly in its attacks against state and civilian targets in Nigeria since 2010, calling for an uprising against secular authority and a war against Christianity. The group draws on a narrative of vengeance for state abuses to elicit recruits and sympathizers, and appears to have increased its ranks through forced recruitment and jailbreaks...After years of calling for the creation of an Islamic caliphate in Nigeria, the group now appears intent on establishing one by force.'⁽¹¹⁾

4.4 Political Activity

4.4.1 The May 2014 National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism report considered that:

'Boko Haram does not engage in any form of nonviolent or conventional political activity, although it does denounce all forms of government that do not adhere to an Islamic system. There have been minimal communications between government officials and Boko Haram regarding ceasefires, but they are unlikely to succeed as neither side will accept the others' terms and Boko Haram is ideologically opposed to any rule of other than its interpretation of Sharia.'⁽¹²⁾

4.5 Financing

¹⁰ The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, Background report: Boko Haram Recent Attacks May 2014 https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/STARTBackgroundReport_BokoHaramRecentAttacks_May2014_0.pdf Accessed 31 March 2015

¹¹ The Congressional Research Service, Nigeria's 2015 Elections and the Boko Haram Crisis, 8 March 2015 <http://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/row/R43881.pdf> Accessed 31 March 2015

¹² The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, Background report: Boko Haram Recent Attacks May 2014 https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/STARTBackgroundReport_BokoHaramRecentAttacks_May2014_0.pdf Accessed 31 March 2015

4.5.1 The same report noted with regards to its financing:

'Boko Haram receives funding through several avenues including abductions, robberies, donations, extortion and financing through its network of alliances with other terrorist organizations. Boko Haram has most likely received funding from Al-Qa'ida in the Land of Islamic Maghreb (AQLIM, or AQIM). With the help of AQLIM, Boko Haram has reportedly been able to secure additional donations from organizations based in Great Britain and Saudi Arabia. Boko Haram also engages in kidnapping for ransom and bank robberies.'⁽¹³⁾

[Back to Contents](#)

5. Tactics and Levels of Violence

5.1 Tactics and casualties

5.1.1 The US Congressional Research Service's June 2014 report 'Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions' noted that their attacks since 2011 have 'featured improvised explosive devices (IEDs), car bombs, and, periodically, suicide attacks, but fighters also continue to inflict a heavy toll using small arms and arson.'⁽¹⁴⁾

5.1.2 The US Congressional Research Service's report, 'Nigeria's 2015 Elections and the Boko Haram Crisis' noted that 'In July 2014, Boko Haram shifted from a tactical focus on asymmetric attacks against government and civilian targets, toward a more strategic approach in which it has also targeted key infrastructure like bridges and fuel depots, and mounted a conventional offensive to seize and hold territory.'⁽¹⁵⁾

5.1.3 The US Congressional Research Service's report, 'Nigeria's 2015 Elections and the Boko Haram Crisis' looked at the methods used by Boko Haram: 'Boko Haram attracted increased international attention in 2014. Its April abduction of some 270 school girls from Chibok, a town in Borno, sparked both a domestic and international outcry and the Twitter campaign #BringBackOurGirls. While some of the girls escaped, the majority have yet to be returned to their families. In early June, Boko Haram deployed its first known female suicide bomber, in the northeast state of Gombe. Weeks later, the group conducted its first known attack in southern Nigeria, using another female suicide bomber to target a fuel depot in Lagos. It has continued to target markets, bus stations, schools, banks, detention facilities and other government facilities, among other locations. In November [2014], the group

¹³ The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, Background report: Boko Haram Recent Attacks May 2014 https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/STARTBackgroundReport_BokoHaramRecentAttacks_May2014_0.pdf Accessed 31 March 2015

¹⁴ The Congressional Research Service, Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions, 10 June 2014 What is Boko Haram? P.1-2 <https://fas.org/sqp/crs/row/R43558.pdf> Accessed 7 April 2015

¹⁵ The Congressional Research Service, Nigeria's 2015 Elections and the Boko Haram Crisis, 8 March 2015 <http://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/row/R43881.pdf> Accessed 31 March 2015

hit the central mosque in Kano, northern Nigeria's largest city, killing more than 120 and wounding almost 400.'

'The group's tactics and strategy evolved in 2014, with an upsurge of violence that included the increasing deployment of women and children as weapons as well as large-scale incursions to take territory. Some of its attacks, including the January 2015 raid on Baga and surrounding settlements in far northeast Borno, which may be its deadliest attack yet, appear to be retribution against communities seen to cooperate with Nigerian forces, including through vigilante groups.'⁽¹⁶⁾

- 5.1.4 The BBC reported in January 2015 about the massacre in the towns of Baga and Doron Baga. Precise details are unclear but scores of men, women and children were killed when Boko Haram militants launched a fierce attack and razed large parts of the towns to the ground. Claims vary from 150 up to 2,000 people killed.⁽¹⁷⁾ Chatham House commented that taking Baga - a small town in Nigeria's Borno State, 'closes a gap in its map, fulfils a strategic purpose with its proximity to the border with Chad, where it is reported to have set up camps on islands in Lake Chad, and further bolsters its resources and sense of confidence with a win over a multinational military force'.⁽¹⁸⁾
- 5.1.5 The Telegraph noted, in a report of 10 January 2015, that, 'As people bustled through the Saturday market in the Nigerian city of Maiduguri, a device borne by a ten year-old girl exploded near the entrance. A witness said the girl probably had no idea that a bomb had been strapped to her body.'⁽¹⁹⁾
- 5.1.6 Amnesty International, in a report of 29 January 2015 noted:
- 'Over the past few years, Boko Haram has carried out murderous assaults on an almost daily basis. In 2014 there was an escalation in attacks with at least 230 raids and bombings in which at least 4,000 civilians were killed. The real number is likely to be higher.
- 'While the majority of raids were in Borno and Yobe states, there were also attacks in Abuja, Adamawa, Kaduna and Kano states and in Cameroon.
- 'During hit-and-run assaults, Boko Haram fighters drive into a community on motorcycles and in cars and trucks. They go from house to house, ordering the residents to assemble. They either shoot all the men of fighting age, or just target those they believe have links with the government or the military. Often they abduct unmarried women and girls, as they did in April 2014

¹⁶ The Congressional Research Service, Nigeria's 2015 Elections and the Boko Haram Crisis, 8 March 2015 <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43881.pdf> Accessed 31 March 2015

¹⁷ BBC News, Boko Haram attack: What happened in Baga? 2 February 2015 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-30987043> Accessed 1 April 2015

¹⁸ Chatham House, Boko Haram Massacre: Seven Questions Worth Asking, 14 January 2015. <http://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/16649> Accessed 1 April 2015

¹⁹ Telegraph, Boko Haram is now a mini-Islamic State, with its own territory, 10 January 2015 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/11337722/Boko-Haram-is-now-a-mini-Islamic-State-with-its-own-territory.html> Accessed 1 April 2015

when they kidnapped 276 schoolgirls from Chibok Government Girls Secondary School. The vast majority are still missing.

'Boko Haram has also burned or seriously damaged school buildings and killed teachers and children in targeted attacks on schools in the north east. Many schools were forced to close as a result of these attacks.

'In occupied towns, they sometimes confine civilians to particular houses and insist that anyone who wishes to travel obtains their permission. Amnesty International has received reports that Boko Haram has used torture to enforce its rules, has forced women and girls into marriage with its members, and recruited and used child soldiers.'⁽²⁰⁾

5.1.7 The BBC News reported on 26 January 2015:

'The group is said to be split into numerous factions, which operate largely autonomously across northern and central Nigeria.

'The International Crisis Group (ICG) think-tank estimates there are six of them - the most organised and ruthless one is in Borno state, where Boko Haram has captured large swathes of territory.

'It first sends hundreds of foot-soldiers into a town or village. Often overwhelmed due to inadequate supplies, the Nigerian army flees, paving the way for elite militant fighters to enter and conquer the territory...villagers are forced to join en masse or risk being slaughtered. It is also relying on criminals and thugs, "paying them for attacks, sometimes with a share of the spoils" according to the ICG ...When Boko Haram raids towns, it often loots banks. In 2012, the Nigerian military accused Boko Haram of extorting money from businessmen, politicians and government officials, and threatening them with abduction if they fail to pay up...Boko Haram has overrun many police stations and military bases in Nigeria, giving it a huge arsenal - including armoured personnel carriers, pickup trucks, rocket-propelled grenades and assault rifles.'⁽²¹⁾

5.1.8 The Congressional Research Report of March 2015 observed that

'By some estimates, more than 5,500 people were killed in Boko Haram attacks in 2014, and Boko Haram attacks have already claimed hundreds of lives in early 2015. In total, the group may have killed more than 10,000 people since its emergence in the early 2000s. More than 1 million Nigerians have been displaced internally by the violence, and Nigerian refugee figures in neighboring countries continue to rise. State Department officials have suggested that the planned elections may be a factor in the increased tempo of Boko Haram attacks, as the group seeks to manipulate political

²⁰ Amnesty International, Boko Haram at a glance, 29 January 2015. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/articles/news/2015/01/boko-haram-glance/> Accessed 8 April 2015

²¹ BBC, Boko Haram crisis: How have Nigeria's militants become so strong? 29 January 2015 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-30933860> Accessed 8 April 2015

sensitivities and undermine the credibility of the state as the polls approach.¹⁽²²⁾

5.1.9 Amnesty reported in April 2015:

'The armed group has killed thousands of people, abducted at least 2,000 and forced more than a million to flee their homes ... In 2014 Boko Haram killed more than 4,000 people, although the true figure is almost certainly higher. In the first three months of 2015, Boko Haram fighters killed at least 1,500 civilians. The group bombed civilian targets across Nigeria, raided towns and villages in the north-east and from July 2014 began to capture major towns. By February 2015, it controlled the majority of Borno state, as well as northern Adamawa state and eastern Yobe state. In August 2014, Abubakar Shekau, the group's leader, proclaimed this territory to be a caliphate. Tens of thousands of civilians were subjected to Boko Haram's brutal rule.

'In February 2015 a counter-offensive by the Nigerian military, with support from Cameroon, Chad and Niger, forced Boko Haram from some major towns and released many civilians from Boko Haram's rule. It is too early to judge whether this has weakened Boko Haram's ability to threaten the lives and property of civilians in the north-east.¹⁽²³⁾

5.1.10 The same report observed in April 2015 that:

'Boko Haram used improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including car bombs, and suicide bombers to kill civilians at markets, transport hubs, schools and other public institutions. They repeatedly attacked cities in the north-east, but also struck targets in cities across Nigeria. In 46 bomb attacks between January 2014 and March 2015, the group killed at least 817 people.

'Boko Haram's raids on towns and villages in north-east Nigeria terrorized civilians and disrupted ordinary people's livelihoods. Some attacks were carried out by just two or three gunmen on a motorcycle, some by hundreds of fighters supported by tanks and anti-aircraft weapons mounted on flat-bed trucks. The fighters shot civilians in the streets and in their homes. They stole from people's houses, shops and markets, burned these buildings and left.

'They frequently abducted civilians. In some attacks, Boko Haram gunmen quietly entered villages or towns and assassinated specific individuals identified in advance. In others, Boko Haram assembled civilians and preached to them, instructing them not to be loyal to the government and to follow Boko Haram's version of Islam. Boko Haram sometimes gave civilians a choice: to be killed or join the group. More frequently, fighters simply shot civilians or cut their throats.

²² The Congressional Research Service, Nigeria's 2015 Elections and the Boko Haram Crisis, Overview, 8 March 2015 <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43881.pdf> Accessed 31 March 2015

²³ Amnesty International, 'Our job is to shoot, slaughter and kill': Boko Haram's reign of terror in north east Nigeria, Executive summary, 13 April 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/1360/2015/en/>, accessed on 23 April 2015

'Communities such as Kayamla in Borno state were raided repeatedly by Boko Haram and thousands of residents were forced to flee to the relative safety of Maiduguri as a result. On 5 May 2014, Boko Haram killed nearly 400 people in a raid on Gamborou, Ngala Local Government Authority (LGA), Borno state.

'When Boko Haram fighters took control of towns and villages, they arrived in large numbers and first targeted the military or police presence. After forcing soldiers to abandon their barracks, Boko Haram fighters would capture arms and ammunition left behind. Then they proceeded to target civilians, shooting them as they tried to flee or searching out men of fighting age in their homes and executing them. Often the gunmen divided their forces during attacks, with one group going from house to house to collect valuables and set houses on fire, one looting shops, one killing people and one abducting residents or preventing them from fleeing.'⁽²⁴⁾

- 5.1.11 A UN Security Council press release of 30 March 2015 noted that according to Assistant Secretary-General Kyung Wha-Kang of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'more than 7,300 civilians had been killed by Boko Haram since the beginning of 2014 in the three 'state of emergency' States, including 1,000 people this year alone.'⁽²⁵⁾ See [map at 7.33](#) which depicts the north-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe.

5.2 Targets

- 5.2.1 Amnesty International, in a report of 29 January 2015 noted:

'Anyone seen as supporting the authorities is a possible target, especially civil servants, politicians and traditional leaders. Communities that formed Civilian Joint Task Force groups, which are pro-government armed groups, are at greater risk of being deliberately targeted by Boko Haram.

'Boko Haram forces have targeted both Muslims and Christians although most attacks have not been based on the religion of the victims. Boko Haram began as a movement opposed to the authority of the secular government. Over time, they began to target anyone associated with the government, who they view as "unbelievers", regardless of their religion. They have also specifically targeted Islamic leaders who do not support the group.'⁽²⁶⁾

- 5.2.2 The US Congressional Research Service's June 2014 report 'Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions' looked at the group's victims:

'Boko Haram's leaders have called in their public rhetoric for an uprising against secular authority and a war against Christianity. Attacks attributed to the group have not exclusively, or even primarily, targeted Christians, who

²⁴ Amnesty International, 'Our job is to shoot, slaughter and kill': Boko Haram's reign of terror in north east Nigeria, Executive summary, 13 April 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/1360/2015/en/>, accessed on 23 April 2015

²⁵ UN News Service, Boko Haram 'weakened' but still committing 'horrendous' acts, says UN regional envoy, 30 March 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/55227ffa.html> Accessed 13 April 2015

²⁶ Amnesty International, Boko Haram at a glance, 29 January 2015. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/articles/news/2015/01/boko-haram-glance/> Accessed 8 April 2015

are a minority in the north, and the group has yet to conduct attacks against the majority-Christian southern part of the country. Religious figures and institutions comprised an estimated 10% of the group's targets from 2009 to 2013, but its assaults on churches have nevertheless fuelled existing religious tensions in Nigeria. These attacks, which often occur on Sundays or religious holidays, presumably to achieve maximum effect, have in some cases sparked deadly reprisal attacks by Christians against Muslim civilians. The church bombings, along with the recent spate of kidnappings and other high-profile civilian attacks, appear to be part of a deliberate effort to foment instability, possibly seeking to discredit and delegitimize the national government by exposing the weakness of its security apparatus and justice mechanisms and, potentially, to ignite a religious war.

'Boko Haram's attacks have increased substantially in frequency, reach, and lethality since 2010, occurring almost daily in parts of northeast Nigeria, and periodically beyond... Boko Haram initially focused primarily on state and federal targets, such as police stations, but it has also targeted civilians in schools, churches, mosques, markets, bars, and villages. Cell phone towers and media outlets have also been attacked, likely for both tactical and ideological reasons. The group has assassinated local political leaders and moderate Muslim clerics. Its deadliest attacks include a coordinated series of bombings in Kano, northern Nigeria's largest city, that killed more than 180 people in January 2012; an attack on the village of Benisheikh in September 2013 that killed more than 160 civilians; and an assault on another northeastern village, Gamboro, that may have killed more than 300 people in early May 2014.

'In August 2011, a Boko Haram suicide bomber attacked a U.N. building in capital, Abuja, killing more than 20 people and injuring over 80. It was the group's first lethal attack on a foreign target. It was also the group's first clearly intentional suicide bombing. Boko Haram spokesmen claimed in press reports that the U.N. attack was retribution for the state's harsh security response against its members, referencing U.S. and international "collaboration" with the Nigerian security forces.'⁽²⁷⁾

5.2.3 In a March 2015 report on Conflict-related sexual violence, the UN Secretary-General noted:

'In Borno State, Boko Haram has abducted women and girls, often forcing them into marriages that entail repeated rape. These marriages are sometimes proposed as a form of "protection" from rape by other members of the group. Abducted girls who refuse marriage or sexual contact within marriage have faced violence and death threats. Forced marriage, enslavement and the "sale" of kidnapped women and girls are central to Boko Haram's modus operandi and ideology.'⁽²⁸⁾

²⁷ The Congressional Research Service, Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions, 10 June 2014 What is the impact of Boko Haram violence and who are its victims? p.3-4 <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43558.pdf> Accessed 31 March 2015

²⁸ UN Secretary-General, Conflict-related sexual violence, 23 March 2015, paragraph 80 http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1429094254_n1508136.pdf Accessed 15 May 2015

5.2.4 In an April 2015 report Amnesty International noted that:

'In January 2015, Boko Haram took control of Baga, Kukawa LGA, Borno state. ... Some specific individuals or categories of civilians were deliberately targeted. Boko Haram fighters killed politicians, civil servants, teachers, health workers and traditional leaders because of their relationship with secular authority. Boko Haram called them "unbelievers". Christians living in the north-east were included in this category, but so were Islamic religious figures, from the leaders of sects to local Imams, if they publicly opposed Boko Haram or failed to follow the group's teachings. At times, Boko Haram gave such individuals the option of converting, whether Christian or Muslim, instead of being killed. Many towns and cities formed state-sponsored militias, known as Civilian Joint Task Forces (Civilian JTF), to combat Boko Haram. Boko Haram subjected these communities to particularly violent treatment. In such locations, and in communities suspected of giving information to the security forces, Boko Haram killed any men of fighting age – regardless of whether they were members of the Civilian JTF or not. During raids, Boko Haram abducted civilians, separating out unmarried women and girls, as well as men of fighting age and boys. They were taken to Boko Haram's camps in Sambisa forest or to remote communities under Boko Haram control'.⁽²⁹⁾

5.2.5 Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said at a special meeting of the Human Rights Council on 1 April 2015:

'The appalling atrocities committed by the Boko Haram insurgency had created a critical human rights situation in northern Nigeria and the Lake Chad region. Since 2009 when the Boko Haram group began massive violence, at least 15,000 individuals had been killed. Women and girls had been particularly targeted and subjected to horrific abuse, including sexual enslavement. Villages and towns had been looted and destroyed. Boko Haram had a specific animus against schools and had destroyed at least 300 schools, killed numerous students and abducted hundreds of schoolgirls. More than a million people were displaced in Nigeria, and at least 168,000 had fled to neighbouring countries. It was thus essential that the authorities and the international community step up their efforts to respond adequately to the needs of victims. Since the farms of northern Nigeria provided produce across the Sahel, the actions of Boko Haram had given rise to a sharp increase in prices of basic foods across the region.

'What was initially a localized crisis was fast growing to very disturbing regional dimensions. In Nigeria, Boko Haram had been operating across broad swathes of territory in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states. The current dry season had also intensified its incursions into neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger, spreading bloodshed and desolation even more widely. In recent weeks, military offensives by Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger had

²⁹ Amnesty International, 'Our job is to shoot, slaughter and kill': Boko Haram's reign of terror in north east Nigeria, Executive summary p.5, 15 May 2015
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/1360/2015/en/> Accessed 15 May 2015

led to the recapture of several towns in northeast Nigeria. This had brought to light gruesome scenes of mass graves and further evident signs of slaughter by Boko Haram. The High Commissioner's Office had also received multiple reports that Boko Haram fighters who were retreating from the advance of the joint forces murdered their so-called "wives" – in fact, women and girls held in slavery – and other captives as Government troops advanced.'⁽³⁰⁾

5.2.6 The same report continued:

'The growing ethnic and sectarian dimensions of the conflict were also worrying. Christian communities were targeted, but the majority of the victims of Boko Haram were Muslims. As Boko Haram's original leader was from the Kanuri ethnic group, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had received reports that Kanuris were now considered suspect by some military personnel, resulting in arbitrary arrests and abuse. Accordingly, there was a high risk of escalating ethnic and religious violence, which could only be stopped by principled leadership and clear instructions to military personnel, with appropriate accountability.'⁽³¹⁾

5.2.7 The BBC News reported on 27 March 2015:

'When [the north-eastern town of] Gwoza was captured by the jihadists last August [2014] thousands of residents were trapped and terrified on the mountain slopes with no food. They were badly let down - the military fled, leaving the jihadists to help themselves to the armoury...

'One resident told [the BBC] the jihadists recently assembled all the elderly residents and informed them that, as they were unable to defend themselves from a military attack, they would be helped on their way to paradise. They were slaughtered in Gwoza's abattoir.'⁽³²⁾

5.2.8 The [US] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, in a background report of May 2014 reports with regards to target types that 'Boko Haram most commonly targets private citizens and property (25% of attacks), police (22% of attacks), government targets (11%), religious figures and institutions (10% of attacks), and the military (9% of attacks). Boko Haram's major attacks on churches and religious figures have at times been followed by rioting and retaliatory attacks against Muslim targets, exacerbating religious polarization of the Nigerian population.'⁽³³⁾

³⁰ UNHRC, Special Session In Light Of Terrorist Attacks And Human Rights Abuses By Boko Haram, 1 April 2015
[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/B766F6C9A67EB84DC1257E1A003FBF81?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/B766F6C9A67EB84DC1257E1A003FBF81?OpenDocument) Accessed 7 April 2015

³¹ UNHRC, Special Session In Light Of Terrorist Attacks And Human Rights Abuses By Boko Haram, 1 April 2015
[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/B766F6C9A67EB84DC1257E1A003FBF81?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/B766F6C9A67EB84DC1257E1A003FBF81?OpenDocument) Accessed 7 April 2015

³² BBC News, Boko Haram HQ Gwoza in Nigeria 'retaken, 27 March 2015.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-32087211> Accessed 13 April 2015

³³ The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, Background report: Boko Haram Recent Attacks May 2014, Boko Haram targets

6. Areas Controlled by Boko Haram

The situation is very fluid and this section contains information on territory that has been controlled by Boko Haram and recently liberated by the security forces. It should be read in conjunction with [State \(and Regional\) Actions](#).

6.1.1 Jane's considered in February 2015 the security threat posed:

'Risk of Boko Haram attacks in the north and the Middle Belt [area dividing the country's mainly Muslim north from its mostly Christian south⁽³⁴⁾] is severe as the group increasingly focuses on territorial gains. Boko Haram is gradually encircling the main north-eastern city of Maiduguri, the birthplace of the group, and twice launched a concerted assault on the city towards the end of January 2015. The group has been building on a new policy of holding on to territory after attacking population centres, starting with the occupation of Damboa in July 2014 and swiftly proceeding to the takeover of several more large towns in Borno, but also Yobe and Adamawa, the two other states subject to a state of emergency...

'Beyond the three north-eastern states, Boko Haram has expanded its area of operations to intensify its campaign of violence in states such as Abuja, Bauchi, Kano, Kaduna, Taraba, and gradually in Lagos. On 18 August 2014, security operatives reported the arrest of a suspected suicide bomber near the international airport in Lagos. In two notorious attacks in November 2014, a suicide bomber killed 47 pupils at a school in Potiskum, Yobe State, and then a co-ordinated attack by two suicide bombers and up to 15 gunmen on the main mosque in Kano led to the deaths of approximately 120 people.'⁽³⁵⁾

6.1.2 As of January 2015, the group had taken complete control of and occupied around 15 local government areas in north-eastern Nigeria. In addition, they have partial control in more than 15 local government areas.⁽³⁶⁾

6.1.3 In a March 2015 report the Congressional Research Service noted that:

'Estimates on the amount of territory held by Boko Haram vary, but press reports suggest that by early 2015 the Nigerian government may have lost between 40%-70% of Borno state and some territory in neighboring Yobe and Adamawa states, including border areas near Cameroon. Nigerian forces have countered large-scale assaults on the state capitals of Maiduguri

https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/STARTBackgroundReport_BokoHaramRecentAttacks_May2014_0.pdf Accessed 31 March 2015

³⁴ Aljazeera, Nigeria tightens curfew on 'Middle Belt' area, 9 July 2012.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/07/20127818729748795.html> Accessed 11 April 2015

³⁵ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – West Africa, Nigeria (Security) updated 25 February 2015. Subscription site, accessed 31 March 2015

³⁶ Amnesty International, Boko Haram at a glance, 29 January 2015.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/articles/news/2015/01/boko-haram-glance/> Accessed 8 April 2015

and Damaturu, but such efforts have reportedly left rural areas largely undefended. Reuters calculated in mid-January 2015 that Boko Haram held 30,000 square km of territory...while the London-based Telegraph put the figure at 20,000 square km a week prior. U.S. officials have not publically corroborated either estimate. ⁽³⁷⁾

6.1.4 The Telegraph noted, in a report of 10 January 2015 that 'Boko Haram controls about 20,000 square miles of territory and is fast becoming a terrorist state razing villages and killing innocent victims.'⁽³⁸⁾

6.1.5 The report went on to state:

'Within this domain, the black flag of jihad flies over scores of towns and villages scattered across the neighbouring states of Borno and Yobe...Boko Haram's fighters have now achieved mastery over 11 local government areas with a total population exceeding 1.7 million people, according to the official 2006 census.

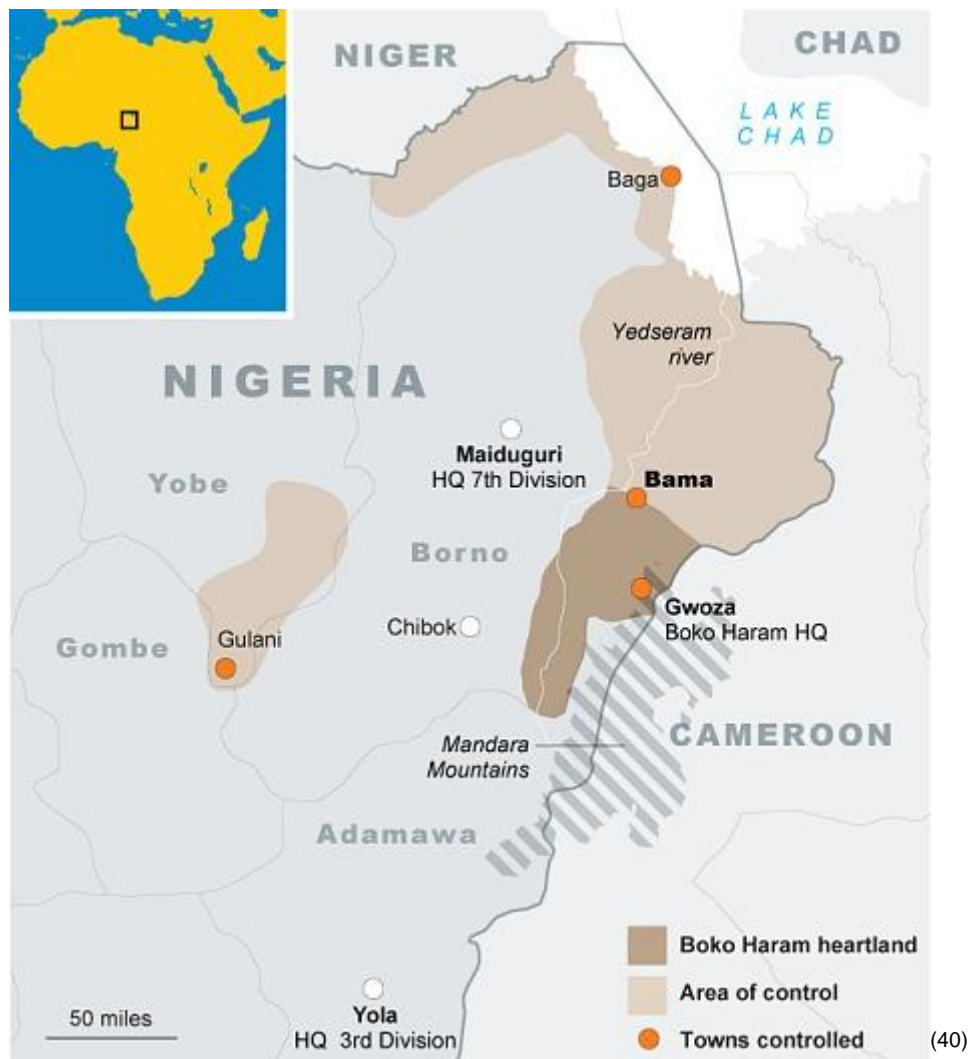
'Once, the movement's fighters would launch hit-and-run attacks on defenceless villages. Now, Boko Haram's realm stretches from the Mandara Mountains on the eastern border with Cameroon to Lake Chad in the north and the Yedseram river in the west.'⁽³⁹⁾

37

The Congressional Research Service, Nigeria's 2015 Elections and the Boko Haram Crisis, 8 March 2015 <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43881.pdf> Accessed 31 March 2015

³⁸ Telegraph, Boko Haram is now a mini-Islamic State, with its own territory, 10 January 2015 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/11337722/Boko-Haram-is-now-a-mini-Islamic-State-with-its-own-territory.html> Accessed 1 April 2015

³⁹ Telegraph, Boko Haram is now a mini-Islamic State, with its own territory, 10 January 2015 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/11337722/Boko-Haram-is-now-a-mini-Islamic-State-with-its-own-territory.html> Accessed 1 April 2015



Map showing areas of Boko Haram control at 10 January 2015

6.1.6 A post of 24 March 2015 by John Campbell for the Council for Foreign Relations stated:

‘Since postponing the national elections from February 14 to March 28 [2015], the Abuja government has apparently recovered most of the territory in northeast Nigeria that had been lost to Boko Haram. Of the major towns once captured, only Gwoza appears to remain under Boko Haram’s control...

‘The Abuja government, in effect, is saying that it has made the defeat of Boko Haram a major priority and greatly increased the resources devoted to it. (President Jonathan had acknowledged that his government has paid

⁴⁰ Telegraph, Boko Haram is now a mini-Islamic State, with its own territory, 10 January 2015 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/11337722/Boko-Haram-is-now-a-mini-Islamic-State-with-its-own-territory.html> Accessed 1 April 2015

insufficient attention to this violent Islamist movement.) Little has been said by the Nigerian government about the role of militaries from Chad and Niger that have been operating in northern Nigeria against Boko Haram. Abuja flatly denies that South African, Ukrainian, and Georgian mercenaries are involved in combat, though it acknowledges the presence of foreign “technical advisors.”

‘However, the New York Times and the Voice of America have reported a substantial mercenary presence. Additionally, the New York Times reports that Chadian troops retook the once-important town of Damasak from Boko Haram, but that no Nigerian troops were present. It also reports that Chadian officials are complaining about the lack of Nigerian military engagement and coordination. Furthermore, Chadian soldiers are worried that the territory will be re-occupied by Boko Haram when they withdraw, due to the absence of the Nigerian military.’⁽⁴¹⁾ About 500 children aged 11 and under are missing from a Nigerian town recaptured from militants, a former resident of Damasak has told the BBC. A trader in the north-eastern town told Reuters news agency that Boko Haram fighters took the children with them when they fled.⁽⁴²⁾

- 6.1.7 The BBC News reported on 27 March 2015 that the Nigerian army claimed it had retaken the north-eastern town of Gwoza, believed to be the Boko Haram’s headquarters, and that the insurgents had now been driven from virtually all the territory they had held. The BBC’s Will Ross analysed the situation:

‘Gwoza’s location made an ideal base: The nearby Mandara Mountains offered protection and the jihadists could flee into Cameroon until the military there stepped up patrols. There is a complex system of caves and tunnels, some of which burrow hundreds of metres into the mountainside. Recent rumours suggest the Boko Haram leader may have been hiding there...

‘Eyewitnesses say that after the military assault, people could be seen heading over the mountain by torchlight - Boko Haram fighters on the run.’⁽⁴³⁾

- 6.1.8 The BBC News also noted on 4 May 2015:

‘...by March 2015, Boko Haram had lost all the towns under its control as a regional coalition - made up of troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger - was formed to fight it.

‘Once again, Boko Haram retreated to the Sambisa forest, where the Nigerian military pursued it, freeing hundreds of captives...And while many

⁴¹ Council on foreign Relations, Nigeria Retakes Territory from Boko Haram, 24 March 2015 <http://blogs.cfr.org/campbell/2015/03/24/nigeria-retakes-territory-from-boko-haram/> Accessed 14 March 2015

⁴² BBC, Boko Haram crisis: ‘About 500’ Nigerian children missing, 24 March 2015 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32044695> Accessed 15 May 2015

⁴³ BBC News, Boko Haram HQ Gwoza in Nigeria ‘retaken’, 27 March 2015. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-32087211> Accessed 13 April 2015

fighters have been killed and weapons seized, some analysts say it is too early to write off Boko Haram.’⁽⁴⁴⁾

6.1.9 Reporting on the territorial gains, the Nigeria Security Network reported in March 2015 that:

‘Despite the recapturing of territory, Boko Haram has not been defeated. The insurgency does not need to operate like a conventional army, which can be expelled from territory in a series of pitched battles. Instead, it has the capacity to quickly melt away into the countryside and avoid large-scale confrontation. Its decision to engage in large-scale, open combat last year reflected its military advantage over the Nigerian army. Now with foreign advisors, multinational forces, and better Nigerian military assets to contend with, Boko Haram can be expected to retreat into its hideouts and switch back to fighting the guerrilla campaign it was engaged in up until the middle of 2014. The use of suicide bomb attacks in recent weeks, including in Maiduguri, reflects the group’s capacity to engage in irregular warfare and use terrorism as its primary weapon.’⁽⁴⁵⁾

6.1.10 In April 2015 Agence France Presse reported that:

‘Boko Haram still poses a threat to civilians, despite a military crackdown, officials and experts said ... after hundreds of bodies were found in a liberated northeast Nigerian town. The grim discovery in Damasak, near Lake Chad in the far north of Borno state, came as the local government looked at the feasibility of returning thousands of people who fled the violence. Decomposing bodies were found in houses, on the streets and in a dried up river, some of them covered in desert sand, although it was unclear when the killings took place. The deaths, the level of destruction in the town, which was retaken in early March, and a separate attack that killed 21 displaced people in Yobe state, underlined the continuing risks posed by the Islamists. ... Bulama Mali Gubio, from the Borno Elders Forum civil society group, also called for tighter security before the displaced can return, including a permanent presence of troops. ... "Every time soldiers retake a town from Boko Haram the insurgents flee into the bush and lurk around. Once they understand the troops have withdrawn they resurface," he added.’⁽⁴⁶⁾

6.1.11 On 25 April 2015 Agence France Presse reported that ‘Suspected Boko Haram insurgents have forced hundreds of soldiers to flee Marte, a border town along the shores of the Lake Chad, a local official and witnesses said Friday. "The terrorists, numbering over 2,000, appeared from various directions on Thursday and engaged the soldiers in Kirenowa town and

⁴⁴ BBC News, Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists? 4 May 2015 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13809501> Accessed 11 May 2015

⁴⁵ Nigeria Security Network, The End of Boko Haram? March 2015 <https://nigeriasecuritynetwork.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/the-end-of-boko-haram-nsn-special-report.pdf> Accessed 15 May 2015

⁴⁶ Agence France Presse, Civilians still targets for Boko Haram despite military success, 28 April 2015 <http://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/civilians-still-targets-boko-haram-despite-military-success> Accessed 15 May 2015

adjoining communities in Marte," said Imamu Habeeb, a local community leader.... This is the third time Boko Haram has seized control of Marte in restive Borno state, a key battleground of their six-year insurgency, which has killed more than 13,000 and left 1.5 million homeless. The city is among several retaken in recent weeks by Nigeria's military, which has launched an offensive against the Islamists as part of a regional operation supported by Chad, Cameroon and Niger. But Boko Haram have been fighting back, and Nigerian troops were also forced to retreat from Boko Haram's Sambisa Forest stronghold this week after a landmine blast killed one soldier and three vigilantes.⁽⁴⁷⁾

See also [State \(and regional\) actions](#)

To view graphs, maps and timelines giving details of areas of violence and control see the following links:

[Council on Foreign Relations: Nigeria Security Tracker.](#)⁽⁴⁸⁾

[Conflict Map.org: Nigeria – Boko Haram](#)⁽⁴⁹⁾

[The Economist: The blight of Boko Haram](#)⁽⁵⁰⁾

For up to date information on Boko Haram in Nigeria see

[BBC World News, Africa](#)⁵¹

[Back to Contents](#)

7. State (and Regional) Actions

7.1.1 The US State Department 2013 terrorism report, published April 2014, noted:

'Among the problems that deterred or hindered more effective law enforcement and border security by the Nigerian government were: a lack of coordination and cooperation between Nigerian security agencies; a lack of biometrics collection systems and the requisite data bases; corruption; misallocation of resources; the slow pace of the judicial system, including a lack of a timely arraignment of suspected terrorist detainees; and lack of sufficient training for prosecutors and judges to understand and carry out the Terrorism (Prevention) Act of 2011 (as amended).'⁽⁵²⁾

7.1.2 According to an April 2014 International Crisis Group report:

⁴⁷ Agence France Presse, Boko Haram retakes NE town from Nigerian army: witnesses, 25 April 2015 <http://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/boko-haram-retakes-ne-town-nigerian-army-witnesses> Accessed 15 May 2015

⁴⁸ Council on Foreign Relations, Nigeria Security Tracker, <http://www.cfr.org/nigeria/nigeria-security-tracker/p29483> Accessed 11 May 2015

⁴⁹ Conflictmag.org: Nigeria – Boko Haram http://www.conflictmap.org/conflict/boko_haram Accessed 11 May 201

⁵⁰ The Economist, The blight of Boko Haram, 19 January 2015. <http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2015/01/daily-chart-10> Accessed 11 May 2015

⁵¹ BBC World News Arica, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/africa> Accessed 15 June 2015

⁵² US State Department, Country Reports on Terrorism 2013, 30 April 2014, Nigeria p.38. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/225886.pdf> Accessed 7 April 2015

'The police force is ill-equipped to address the Boko Haram threat and enjoys little public confidence. It has been grossly underfunded – less than 5 per cent of the budget – since military rule ended in 1999 and needs reform. The 2012 budget allotted 1.6 million naira (\$10,000) per soldier but only 870,000 naira (\$5,400) per police officer. At current levels, police colleges "can only turn out demoralised, frustrated and dehumanised policemen". Many residents accused police of selling informants' identities to Boko Haram. Given the urgency of the situation, the police are in no fit state to answer the Boko Haram challenge, but to truly achieve stability in the long term, Nigeria will need to address the shambolic state of law enforcement and carry out systematic police reform.'⁽⁵³⁾

7.1.3 The US Congressional Research Service's June 2014 report 'Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions' considered how the Nigerian government was responding:

'Since Boko Haram's resurgence in 2010, the Nigerian government has struggled to respond to the growing threat posed by the group, and its expanding impact on the civilian population in the northeast. Nigerian security forces have been deployed in counterterrorism operations in the most affected states since 2011—their offensives against the group had some notable successes in 2012 and early 2013, temporarily reducing attacks, but the past year has been the deadliest for civilians in the group's history. Some local communities formed informant networks and vigilante groups in 2013 to protect themselves, in part due to reportedly ineffective responses by security forces. In Borno, these groups have reportedly worked with the state government and security forces to rout Boko Haram cells. Press reports suggest that the groups, who collectively call themselves the "Civilian Joint Task Force" or Civilian-JTF, have had some positive impact on security in the Borno state capital of Maiduguri in the past year, but Boko Haram attacks in rural areas, which are sometimes claimed as retaliation against locals for their cooperation with security forces, have been increasingly lethal. By many accounts, these civilian groups have sought to work with the Nigerian military to reduce the possibility of indiscriminate abuses against innocent civilians in the context of counterterrorism operations.'⁽⁵⁴⁾

7.1.4 The report continued:

'Soldiers, particularly in the northeast, reportedly suffer from low morale, struggling to keep pace with a foe that is reportedly increasingly well-armed and trained. By many accounts troops are not adequately resourced or equipped to counter an insurgency, despite a security budget totalling almost

⁵³ International Crisis Group (ICG), Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency, 3 April 2014, 2. Boosting the capacities of the military and other security agencies p.32 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/nigeria/216-curbing-violence-in-nigeria-ii-the-boko-haram-insurgency.pdf> Accessed 15 May 2015

⁵⁴ The Congressional Research Service, Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions, 10 June 2014 How is the Nigerian Government responding? p.9 <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43558.pdf> Accessed 7 April 2015

\$5.8 billion. In the assessment of DOD (US Department of Defence) officials, Nigerian funding for the military is “skimmed off the top,” and Nigerian troops are “showing signs of real fear,” and becoming “afraid to even engage.”⁽⁵⁵⁾

7.1.5 The International Crisis Group, in a report of 31 January 2015, gave three reasons in an attempt to explain Nigeria’s failure to contain Boko Haram:

‘First, weak political leadership. Jonathan’s [Goodluck Jonathan – president until elections at the end of March 2015] advisers claim he has long been restrained in fighting Boko Haram because he considers it a domestic crisis, needing subtle management. In reality, however, the president was often poorly informed, never grasped the gravity of the threat and failed to provide consistent and coherent policy guidance to drive an effective counterinsurgency.

‘Second, weak security institutions. Authorities maintain that the military is handicapped on several fronts. It is not trained to fight an insurgency, is stretched thin by deployments in 32 of the country’s 36 states and a counterinsurgency theater that spans 150,000 square kilometers and lacks vehicles and helicopters to operate in the rugged terrain along the Nigeria-Cameroon border. All these are true, but the affliction runs deeper.

‘Corruption in procurement and administration, poor maintenance of acquired assets, human rights violations that alienate local support, low morale among troops demoralized by inadequate support and heavy casualties and sabotage by Boko Haram sympathizers have all undercut the military’s ability. Internal discontents have spiraled into mutinies. Sixty-six soldiers have been sentenced to death for mutiny and refusing orders to fight since September 2014. The desertion rate is high.

“Unfortunately, we have a lot of cowards ... people who use every excuse in this world not to fight,” Nigeria’s national security adviser, Sambo Dasuki, said at a briefing in Chatham House in London on Jan. 23. His statement and admissions of other weaknesses in the army are an indictment of the government, which refuses to enact necessary security reforms, leaving a once formidable army a flawed fighting force.

‘Finally, Nigeria’s counterinsurgency strategy has been hobbled by regional mistrust and frequent disagreements. A multinational force agreed upon by Nigeria and its neighbors in July exists only on paper. Nigeria continues to insist on a force “under the auspices of the Lake Chad Basin Commission,” while neighboring countries prefer a force authorized by the United Nations or African Union.’⁽⁵⁶⁾

7.1.6 In an October 2014 report, ‘Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girls in Northeast Nigeria’, Human Rights Watch reported that ‘Residents of

⁵⁵ The Congressional Research Service, Nigeria’s Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions, 10 June 2014 How is the Nigerian Government responding? p.9 <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43558.pdf> Accessed 7 April 2015

⁵⁶ International Crisis Group. Nigeria’s faltering response emboldens Boko Haram, 31 January 2015 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/west-africa/nigeria/op-eds/obasi-nigerias-faltering-response-emboldens-boko-haram.aspx> Accessed 7 April 2015

villages and towns ravaged by Boko Haram attacks told Human Rights Watch that the government failed both to prevent attacks where women and girls were abducted, and to protect the victims in imminent danger. In addition, they reported that adequate medical and psychological support for injured and traumatized women and girls has been gravely lacking for the victims and their families.⁵⁷

7.1.7 Similarly, in an April 2015 report Amnesty International noted that:

‘Despite the heavy deployment of troops in the north-east and the intensity of Boko Haram attacks on civilians, Nigeria’s security forces have repeatedly failed to protect the civilian population from attacks. Ahead of many attacks, the group sent warning messages to the residents – either by letters to the local chiefs or by verbally warning individuals – hours or days in advance. Yet requests for troops to be sent, or for the existing military presence to be reinforced, received no response. Amnesty International has documented incidents in numerous communities where troops failed to turn up despite repeated requests for assistance or only arrived after Boko Haram had left.’⁵⁸

7.1.8 A February 2015 Human Rights Watch report noted:

‘On February 7, 2015, regional governments, backed by the African Union (AU), created an 8,750-member Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), consisting of security forces from Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin to respond to Boko Haram. The Nigerian armed group’s attacks on civilians in the past year alone have resulted in thousands of deaths in Nigeria, and its lethal attacks in neighboring Cameroon and Niger are escalating...

‘Regional governments are finalizing the operational mandate for the mission against Boko Haram. They are expected to seek a United Nations Security Council mandate, which could also include logistical support from other countries. In the meantime, thousands of soldiers, as well as jets and helicopter gunships from Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria are already fighting both in their own countries and on other fronts.’⁵⁹

7.1.9 For the first time since Nigeria became a democracy the opposition candidate won the presidential election on 28 March 2015. General Muhammadu Bahri of the All Progress Congress beat President Goodluck Jonathan by 2.5 million votes. In a televised speech, General Bahri said: ‘In tackling the insurgency, we have a tough and urgent job to do. Boko Haram

⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp" Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girls in Northeast Nigeria, 27 October 2014, III. Government Response <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2014/10/27/those-terrible-weeks-their-camp-0> Accessed 15 May 2015

⁵⁸ Amnesty International, 'Our job is to shoot, slaughter and kill': Boko Haram's reign of terror in north east Nigeria, 15 May 2015 Executive summary p.6, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/1360/2015/en/>, accessed on 23 April 2015

⁵⁹ HRW, West Africa: Regional Boko Haram Offensive. 11 February 2015 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/02/11/west-africa-regional-boko-haram-offensive> Accessed 7 April 2015

will soon know the strength of our collective will. We should spare no effort until we defeat terrorism.’⁽⁶⁰⁾

See also [Areas controlled by Boko Haram](#)

7.2 Abuses Carried Out by Security Forces in responding to Boko Haram

7.2.1 The June 2014 report US Congressional Research Service, noted:

‘Nigerian security forces have been accused of committing serious human rights abuses in the context of their operations against Boko Haram. The State Department’s 2013 human rights report documents numerous “arbitrary or unlawful killings” by security forces, including “summary executions, assaults, torture, and other abuses” under the auspices of security operations in the northeast. By some accounts, these abuses are not isolated incidents but part of a set of informal rules of engagement that are condoned by the government. Amnesty International has reported that thousands of people suspected of links to Boko Haram have been extra-judicially executed or unlawfully killed by security forces, and thousands of suspects have died in military or police custody. Allegations of torture by the Nigerian security forces in the context of counterterrorism operations in the northeast have become increasingly common...Nigerian officials have acknowledged some abuses by security forces in the context of the fight against Boko Haram, but few security personnel have been prosecuted’⁽⁶¹⁾

7.2.2 Human Rights Watch, in a news release of 11 February 2015, stated, ‘The Nigerian security forces are of particular concern. In the course of responding to Boko Haram since 2009, they have used excessive force, torched homes and villages, and tortured and detained thousands of suspects in inhumane conditions. Many of the people they have detained died in custody or were killed.’⁽⁶²⁾ It also reports that ‘Local vigilante groups assisting Nigerian security forces to apprehend the militants and repel attacks were allegedly implicated in the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and ill-treatment and unlawful killing of Boko Haram suspects.’⁽⁶³⁾

7.2.3 According to Human Rights Watch research:

‘Nigerian security forces failed to take all feasible precautions to protect the civilian population in their military operations against Boko Haram. In December, Nigerian security forces attacked and burned down the village of Mundu near a Boko Haram base in Bauchi State, witnesses told Human Rights Watch, leaving 5 civilians dead and 70 families homeless. Villagers

⁶⁰ BBC, Nigeria elections: Winner Buhari issues Boko Haram vow, 1 April 2015
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-32150234> Accessed 13 April 2015

⁶¹ The Congressional Research Service, Nigeria’s Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions, 10 June 2014 What are the major factors constraining further U.S. assistance to Nigerian security forces in their operations against Boko Haram? p. 14-15 <https://fas.org/sqp/crs/row/R43558.pdf> Accessed 15 May 2015

⁶² HRW, West Africa: Regional Boko Haram Offensive. 11 February 2015
<http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/02/11/west-africa-regional-boko-haram-offensive> Accessed 7 April 2015

⁶³ Human Rights Watch, World Report 2015 - Nigeria, 29 January 2015
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/nigeria?page=3> Accessed 15 May 2015

told Human Rights Watch that Boko Haram was not present in the village when it was attacked. “The soldiers were shouting in what sounded like English, which most of us did not understand,” the village leader told Human Rights Watch. “We all began running when the soldiers started shooting and setting fire to our homes and other buildings. We returned two days later to find five bodies.” The dead included an 80-year-old blind man burned in his home, a homeless woman with mental disabilities, two visitors attending a wedding in the village, and a 20-year-old man, all of whom were shot. According to media reports, between September and March, Nigerian military authorities charged and tried 307 soldiers who had been on operations in the north for “cowardice,” mutiny, and other military offenses, sentencing 70 of them to death. Human Rights Watch opposes the death penalty in all circumstances because of its inherent cruelty. No military personnel have faced prosecution for human rights abuses against civilians in the northeast.⁶⁴

7.2.4 In its 2014/2015 annual report Amnesty International noted:

‘In responding to Boko Haram, Nigerian security forces committed grave human rights violations and acts which constitute crimes under international law. Arbitrary arrests by the military continued in northeast Nigeria. The military was known to enter communities, forcing the men to sit down outside in front of an informant in order to identify suspected Boko Haram members. Those singled out were detained by the military. In November the Nigerian military released at least 167 detainees from custody, a small portion of those arrested. Detainees were denied access to the outside world, including lawyers, courts and families, and were held outside the protection of the law. Detainees were usually not informed of the reason for their arrest; their families were not given information about their fate or whereabouts. By the end of the year few, if any, of those detained by the military were brought before a court or permitted to challenge the lawfulness of their detention. Many of those detained appeared to have been subjected to torture or other ill-treatment, as part of interrogations or as punishment. Detainees continued to die in military detention facilities as a result of torture or extremely harsh detention conditions ... Nigerian security forces repeatedly carried out extrajudicial executions, often following the “screening” of suspects. For example, on 23 July 2013 the Nigerian armed forces and the “Civilian” JTF entered Bama central market and told all adult men in the vicinity to gather in one area and take off their clothes. The men were put into two groups – one group of around 35 men were designated, seemingly at random, as Boko Haram members and another group of up to 300 deemed to be innocent. A video showed the alleged Boko Haram members lying down side by side on the ground, being beaten with sticks and machetes by members of the military and “Civilian” JTF. Eyewitnesses confirmed that the 35 captives were loaded onto a single military vehicle and taken away to the local military barracks in Bama. On the afternoon of 29 July, military personnel took the men out of the barracks and brought them to their communities, where they

⁶⁴ Human Rights Watch: Nigeria: At Least 1,000 Civilians Dead Since January, 26 March 2015

shot them dead, several at a time, before dumping their bodies. All 35 captives were killed.’⁽⁶⁵⁾

7.2.5 Amnesty International in a news release of 5 August 2014 spoke of:

‘Gruesome video footage, images and testimonies gathered by Amnesty International provide fresh evidence of war crimes, including extrajudicial executions, and other serious human rights violations being carried out in north-eastern Nigeria as the fight by the military against Boko Haram and other armed groups intensifies.

‘The footage...includes horrific images of detainees having their throats slit one by one and dumped in mass graves by men who appear to be members of the Nigerian military and the “Civilian Joint Task Force” (CJTF), state-sponsored militias.’⁽⁶⁶⁾

7.2.6 IRIN reported in March 2015 that ‘The Nigerian Police Force is not only failing to pay all the financial benefits owed to the families of their officers killed in action against Boko Haram militants, but in some cases sexual favours and kickbacks have been demanded of the widows in return for the dues they did receive, according to new research in the northern city of Kano’s police command.’⁽⁶⁷⁾

7.3 State of Emergency (now rescinded)

7.3.1 Amnesty International in their ‘Annual Report, Nigeria 2014/2015’ noted, ‘The state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, the states most affected by violence, was extended in May but not renewed in November (2014).’⁽⁶⁸⁾

7.3.2 The Premium Times reported on 20 November 2014:

‘The House of Representatives has rejected further extension of emergency rule in the three troubled states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states...

‘Mr. Zakari [the Chairman of the House Committee on Media and Public Affairs] said the house resolved that the Federal Government should rely on the provisions of the constitution to deploy military personnel to further combat insurgency in the affected region.’⁽⁶⁹⁾

⁶⁵ Amnesty International, Amnesty International Report 2014/15 - Nigeria, 25 February 2015 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/nigeria/report-nigeria/> Accessed 15 May 2015

⁶⁶ Amnesty International, Nigeria: Gruesome footage implicates military in war crimes, 5 August 2014 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/articles/news/2014/08/nigeria-gruesome-footage-implicates-military-war-crimes/> Accessed 15 April 2015

⁶⁷ IRIN, Nigerian police neglect widows of cops slain by Boko Haram – study, 12 March 2015 <http://www.irinnews.org/report/101224/nigerian-police-neglect-widows-of-cops-slain-by-boko-haram-study> Accessed 15 May 2015

⁶⁸ Amnesty International, Amnesty International Report 2014/15 - Nigeria, 25 February 2015 <http://www.refworld.org/docid/54f07db6c.html> Accessed 31 March 2015

⁶⁹ The Premium times, House of Reps rejects extension of emergency rule in Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, 30 November 2014. <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/171569-house-reps-rejects-extension-emergency-rule-adamawa-borno-yobe.html> Accessed 31 March 2015

7.3.3 Deutsche Welle map of 13 May 2014 showing north-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe.⁽⁷⁰⁾



[Back to Contents](#)

8. Humanitarian Situation in northeast Nigeria

8.1.1 The US Congressional Research Service's June 2014 report 'Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions' noted that 'Boko Haram attacks against soft targets, and associated fighting between militants and security forces, have extracted a heavy toll on Nigeria's northeast. Few relief agencies are present in the remote area, given the risk of attack or kidnapping, and thousands of displaced people have little access to food, clean water, or healthcare. The conflict has also disrupted farming, limited the transit of basic goods to local markets, and deterred investment.'⁽⁷¹⁾

8.1.2 A UN Security Council press release of 30 March 2015 noted that according to Assistant Secretary-General Kyung Wha-Kang of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs:

'As many as three million people in northern Nigeria would not be able to meet their basic food needs after July 2015 without humanitarian aid and the work of Federal and State authorities was not enough to meet those needs.

"The humanitarian situation in north-east Nigeria and in the conflict-affected areas in neighbouring countries remains dire," said Ms. Kang. "The conflict

⁷⁰ Deutsche Welle, Boko Haram's attacks place heavy burden on neighbours, 13 May 2014. <http://www.dw.de/boko-harams-attacks-place-heavy-burden-on-neighbors/a-17632693> Accessed 8 April 2015

⁷¹ The Congressional Research Service, Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions, 10 June 2014 What is the impact of Boko Haram violence and who are its victims? p.4 <https://fas.org/sqp/crs/row/R43558.pdf> Accessed 15 May 2015

continues to have a devastating impact on women, children and young people, as well as on many others who have been traumatized by violence. Additional funding to address the acute humanitarian needs of those affected by the conflict is urgently needed."⁽⁷²⁾

8.1.3 John Ging, Operations Director for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in a press release of 19 March 2015, stated:

'Mr. Ging confirmed that more than 1 million people had already been displaced by the fighting and an estimated 6,300 civilians had been killed while countless others had suffered atrocities and violations of human rights law. Ninety per cent of those displaced, he continued, had been integrated into host communities, further burdening their services. In Yola alone, the city had doubled in population from 300,000 to 600,000 due to the influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

'Meanwhile, the crisis was also having a dire impact on food security in the immediate region and across the Sahel, Mr. Ging said.

"With the rainy season just two months away, and host communities' resources rapidly diminishing, we must urgently mobilize assistance to help people in need, in support of the local communities and organizations who have done so much already."

'Mr. Ging explained that the Sahel region remained "dependent" on Nigeria's food production, receiving half of its cereals from the conflict-ridden country. Now, with agriculture disrupted by violence, the longer-term consequences of the crisis were growing in severity.'⁽⁷³⁾

8.1.4 The European Commission in its 'Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection January 2015 factsheet on Nigeria' stated with regards to persons displaced by Boko Haram's violent campaign in the North-East of Nigeria:

'Aid for the refugees and for the internally displaced (IDPs) remains insufficient. Most IDPs live in precarious conditions with little or no assistance. Urgent action is needed to significantly strengthen the humanitarian response to cover the basic needs of the most vulnerable among the displaced, particularly those in informal settlements.

'Access to the people in need is difficult, due to the remoteness of the affected areas and the volatility of the situation. The European Commission is supporting various agencies and non-governmental organisations, both in Nigeria and in neighbouring countries, while advocating for an increased humanitarian presence on the ground.

'The conflict is exacerbating northern Nigeria's food and nutrition crisis. Agriculture and trade have been significantly disrupted. Many health facilities

⁷² UN News Service, Boko Haram 'weakened' but still committing 'horrendous' acts, says UN regional envoy, 30 March 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/55227ffa4.html> Accessed 13 April 2015

⁷³ UN News Service, UN officials say suffering in Nigeria 'immense,' warn of regional humanitarian crisis, 19 March 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/550c14df4.html> Accessed 13 April 2015

have shut down and thousands of malnourished children are not getting the treatment they need to survive. The European Commission continues to fund emergency food assistance and the community management of malnutrition.⁷⁴

8.1.5 A UN Security Council press release of 30 March 2015 noted:

"Though weakened, the group [Boko Haram] continues to commit horrendous acts against civilians, including against women and children," said Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA). "Boko Haram's recent allegiance to the Islamic State for Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), whether for publicity reasons or to tap into ISIL's support, is also of concern as it gives a clear signal that Boko Haram's agenda goes well beyond Nigeria."

'Mr. Chambas, who was joined in the Council by Assistant Secretary-General Kyung Wha-Kang of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, outlined reports of the abduction, abuse, recruiting, maiming and killing of children, saying schools in the country's north-east and in areas of Cameroon and Niger targeted by Boko Haram no longer safe places of learning, with many attacked, looted, and destroyed.

"In 2014, the group also commenced using young girls as suicide bombers for attacks in populated urban areas," he said. "We have also observed an alarming trend of children being used by the group as human shields."⁷⁵

8.1.6 A UNICEF report of April 2015 noted:

'More than 1.5 million people have fled their homes due to the violence. This includes 1.2 million displaced inside Nigeria and around 200,000 who have crossed into neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger after their villages were attacked or threatened. The number of children forced from their homes has more than doubled in the past year, reaching 800,000 children. The vast majority of the displaced – more than 880,000 – are staying with host communities with little access to humanitarian support, putting additional strains on already stretched health, education and social services. ... According to statistics from UNESCO, the number of children of primary age not attending school in Nigeria has increased from 8 million in 2007 to 10.5 million– the highest figure in the world. Nearly 60 per cent of these children are in the north of the country. As the conflict continues, this staggering number is likely to increase further. The conflict has made it extremely difficult for many children in Nigeria and the region to access school. ... In communities that are hosting displaced or refugee populations

⁷⁴ European Commission, Nigeria ECHO factsheet, January 2015
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/nigeria_en.pdf Accessed 13 April 2015

⁷⁵ UN News Service, Boko Haram 'weakened' but still committing 'horrendous' acts, says UN regional envoy, 30 March 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/55227ffa4.html> Accessed 13 April 2015

in Nigeria and surrounding countries, schools are overcrowded and struggle to accommodate the large influx of newcomers.’⁽⁷⁶⁾

- 8.1.7 Reporting on the situation for IDPs, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre notes in April 2015 that ‘Roughly 13 per cent of IDPs do not have the option of staying in host communities, and find themselves living in “displacement sites”, either government-run camps in cities, official or informal camps or transit centres. Over 40 such sites in Adamawa, Borno and Taraba states host more than 150,000 IDPs. Women and children interviewed in over half of these sites say they do not feel safe. This fear has been corroborated by reports that unregistered girls are subject to rape and trafficking in displacement sites. In April 2015, an undercover journalist was offered to buy two young girls in a displacement site in Yola, Adamawa for \$500. IDPs are also often unable to meet their most basic needs, with sometimes erratic food distributions and only minimal access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. Despite miserable conditions in displacement sites, IDPs still live in fear of having to evacuate them. Some have already been asked by host communities to leave; one group of IDPs living in Abuja for the past two years was recently given a three-week ultimatum to vacate the premises. In early April, the Nigerian government set up a committee tasked with creating a plan to relocate IDPs and close the camps.’⁽⁷⁷⁾

For further information see:

[Financial Times, Boko Haram insurgency creates humanitarian crisis in Nigeria](#)⁽⁷⁸⁾, 1 January 2015

[OCHA \(United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs\) Nigeria: Humanitarian Reports and Humanitarian Dashboards](#)⁽⁷⁹⁾

[UNHCR map, Impact of Boko Haram violence in Nigeria over 2014 and January 2015](#)⁽⁸⁰⁾

[The Inter-Agency Regional Refugee Response Plan 2015: Nigeria](#)⁽⁸¹⁾

[Back to Contents](#)

⁷⁶ UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), Missing Childhoods: The impact of armed conflict on children in Nigeria and beyond , April 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/552cc6114.html>

⁷⁷ Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (NRC/IDMC), Boko Haram's terror ripples through the region, 16 April 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5534b9874.html>

⁷⁸ Financial Times, Boko Haram insurgency creates humanitarian crisis in Nigeria, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/96cf4c9c-9044-11e4-8f09-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3Zq8mNoqG> 1 January 2015. Accessed 11 May 2015

⁷⁹ OCHA Humanitarian Reports and Human Dashboards Nigeria, regularly updated <http://www.unocha.org/nigeria> Accessed 11 May 2015

⁸⁰ UNHCR map, Impact of Boko Haram violence in Nigeria over 2014 and January 2015, 20 January 2015 http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1422449206_b-acaps-briefing-note-nigeria-boko-haram-insurgency-map.pdf

⁸¹ UNHCR, Inter-Agency Regional Refugee Response Plan 2015, Nigeria, 9 April 2015 <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/150407NigeriaInterAgencyRRRPsmall.pdf> Accessed 11 May 2015

Version Control and Contacts

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email [the Guidance, Rules and Forms Team](#).

Clearance

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was cleared:

- version **1.0**
- valid from **15 June 2015**
- this version approved by **Sally Weston, Deputy Director, Head of Legal Strategy**.
- approved on: **9 June 2015**

Changes from last version of this guidance

First version in updated template.

[Back to Contents](#)