



SPEED NOTE | VIOLENCE

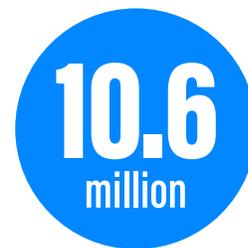
SEPTEMBER 2020

ESCALATING VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Nigeria has long faced varied security challenges that continue to threaten its peace and security. These challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulted in deepening existing structural inequalities. The nation continues to be a potent ground for the perpetration of various acts of violence. From ethnic conflicts to religious conflicts and terrorist attacks, it seems to be a never-ending trend. Boko Haram insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria, increasing banditry violence in the northwest and continuous farmer-herder conflict in the middle belt have all led to an on-going crisis. The constant violent confrontation in these parts of the country left scores of innocent people dead, and many more displaced.

According to the UN on August 13, 2020, approximately 10.6 million Nigerians need humanitarian assistance in the northeast due to insecurity, representing up to 50% increase in the number of people in need compared to 2019. Essentially, 4 out of 5 of the 13 million people in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe state will need assistance. The continuous violent attacks by Boko Haram militants in many villages is the leading cause of the rising number of people

According to UN Report on 13 August 2020



Nigerians in need of Humanitarian Assistance



Increase Compared to 2019



of 13 million people in Adamawa, Borno, Yobe Require assistance



In Displacement Camps

that require assistance, and the pandemic has further compounded this. Many farmers and their families have had to flee their homes. For example, in Katsina state, at least 33,130

people are now in displacement camps, and others have migrated to urban areas. Thousands, who depend on farming for their livelihoods are afraid to go to their fields.

ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE

As with many countries in the world, Nigeria too will be conducting a few elections amidst the pandemic. Unfortunately, election-related violence has always been a feature in the Nigerian electoral process, due to high-stakes, winner-takes-all, do-or-die nature of its elections. Often, politicians exploit ethnic and religious divisions for personal gains. The election environment is characterised by clashes between political parties, coercion, bribery and community tension that result in violent attacks and reprisal attacks.

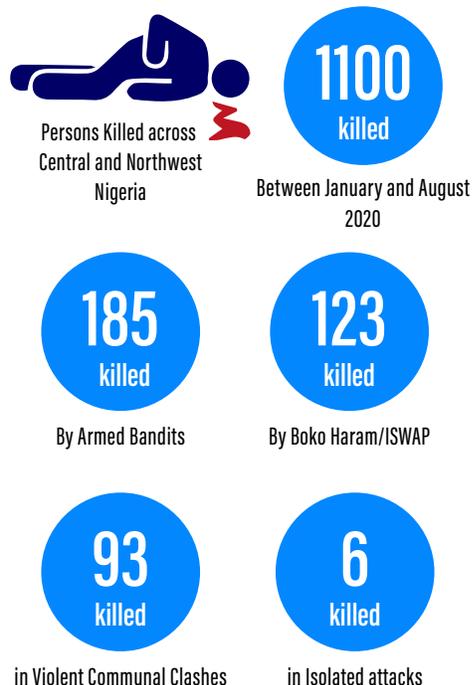
Already, there have been reported cases of violence and intimidation in Edo and Ondo states ahead of gubernatorial elections, which are to hold on September 19 and October 10 respectively. In Edo state, the Vice-Chairman, Ovia South-West Local Government Area of Edo State, Mr Fred Aimienwanwu, alleged a threat to his life and family over his refusal to defect from the All Progressives Congress to join the People's Democratic Party. A similar case occurred on August 25, when suspected gunmen allegedly sent by the APC attacked the private residence of the chairman of Owan East local government area, Andrew Osigwe. The local government areas within the state are not also left out as they have been

embroiled in numerous violent crisis. On July 20, political thugs attacked the residence of the Commissioner for Youth, Damian Lawani, in Udaba Ekphei Community, Etsako Central Local Government Area (LGA) of the state . Political parties have also raised alarms over the destruction and removal of outdoor billboards and campaign posters. Several allegations have also been made by the Edo state chapter of the APC, accusing the state Governor, Godwin Obaseki, of recruiting alleged thugs and cultists to unleash violence in the state.

Similarly, in Ondo state, at least five separate attacks and clashes have been recorded in the build-up to the election . The violence has mostly been between members of the All Progressives Congress and opposition parties. On August 18, not less than 26 armed thugs attacked the secretariat of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) at Idanre Local Government Area of the State. They descended on the members of the SDP with axes and other dangerous weapons. At least seven persons were wounded during the attacks, which lasted for several hours at the party's secretariat.

INTER-COMMUNAL, RELIGIOUS AND TERRORIST ATTACKS

Along with the recent violence surrounding the elections, there have been continuous violent attacks across central and northwest Nigeria, killing more than 1,100 persons between January and August 2020. The attacks are often propagated by terrorists, armed groups of cattle rustlers or in the process of settling disputes between herders or farmers for access to land. Suspected armed bandits killed one hundred eighty-five (185) people, Boko Haram/ISWAP killed 123, over 93 people were in violent communal clashes, six people died in isolated attacks due to extrajudicial killings. Most recently, ISWAP militants attacked Kukawa town on August 18, where over 1,200 IDPs had just returned, causing ten fatalities and the abduction of several hundred returnees.



BOKO HARAM ATTACKS

For more than a decade, Boko Haram has been the largest Islamist militant group in Nigeria and has launched deadly attacks all across the country. These attacks have led to the death of over 37,500 people and the displacement of approximately 2.5 million people within the nation. Between January and June, at least 608 civilians were killed in about 245 incidents in Kaduna, Zamfara, Katsina, Kebbi and Niger states with over 50 different attacks carried out. In June and August, the terrorists invaded numerous communities in Borno State, killing scores of farmers and herders and rustling hundreds of their domestic animals. Responding to recent attacks, governors of the six states in the Northeast called on the government to address labour deficit in the Nigerian Army by deploying high quality military equipment to the region for a holistic approach to the Boko Haram war.

Activities of the Boko Haram Sect



WHAT IS HAPPENING IN KADUNA STATE?

Residents of southern Kaduna are experiencing a particularly difficult time due to upsurge in violence in the state. Amidst the socio-economic challenges posed by COVID-19, that has led to famine and isolation; the state continues to witness incessant killings, abductions and displacement. There have been 83 different cases of attack this year that resulted in the death of 511 people. In July, more than 100 people were killed during 11 coordinated attacks in Chikun, Kaura and Zangon-Kataf Local Government Areas of the state.

Violent conflict in southern Kaduna is longstanding and has taken different dimensions over the years. The tension between various ethnic and cultural groups have made the region more susceptible to violent conflict. Also, the socio-political aspect of the conflict, where citizens have felt marginalised in terms of education, employment and political appointments have increased the tensions. The attacks have varied between LGAs. Kaura, Kafanchan and Zango-Kataf LGAs witnessed recurring violent from 2016 -2017, while violent attacks have been more prominent in Sanga and Kajuru LGAs from 2018 till date.

Adara communities in Kajuru LGA has been the centre for recent recurring attacks. Hundreds of people have died, while others displaced due to alleged frequent Fulani militias attacks. The Adara communities have described these attacks as systematic



Caused by 83
different Cases of
attacks



during 11 attacks
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and Zango-Kataf
LGA's

genocides aimed at forcing locals out of their homes, for militants to take over their lands and move in with their families. Others claimed that the attacks are a result of the on-going conflict between farmers and herders. Farmers on one hand have accused herders of destroying their farmland and produce while the herders accused farmers of cattle rustling and theft. The competition between the two groups for scarce resources and environmental factors, particularly, grazing field accounts for over 50% of the conflict .

However, the trends and dynamics of the conflict have evolved. In an environment of state fragility, economic inequalities, and insecurity, communities have organised themselves into militias to defend their livelihoods, villages, and families. The affected communities prefer to take law into their own hands, resulting in a cycle of violent reprisal

attacks. The resort to vigilantism has had devastating consequences, and the absence of effective security agencies in remote areas has led to the prevalence of rural banditry. Now, the conflict over access to farmland and cattle routes have become widespread and metamorphosed into rural banditry, vigilantism, and other forms of criminalities that have become the drivers of conflicts that seem to defy existing solutions.

Between 5th-6th of August, a total of 33 people were killed in attacks on several communities of Zangon Kataf LGA, by suspected Fulani herdsmen. The attacks are a part of a campaign of violence targeting communities in southern Kaduna and have been on-going since January. It is characterised by murder, looting, rape, abductions for ransom and forced displacement.

The latest in the spate of repeated attacks by armed bandits in Kaduna state occurred on August 24, 2020. In the early hours of the day, Gunmen on 20 motorcycles stormed Prince Academy, a school, located at Damba-Kasaya village in Chikun Local Government Area of the state, killed a man and abducted seven students and a teacher. The gunmen arrived well-armed, on motorcycles and began shooting sporadically before going into the school to pick the students. Opposition by the community members eventually resulted in the release of three of the abducted students. However, the gunmen escaped with the teacher and four students. They raided deserted homes, stole money and

burnt down some houses while the residents fled before fleeing the community.



**in attacks on
Zangon-Kataf LGA
Between 5th-6th
August**



**7 students and 1
teacher in
Chikun LGA
On 24th August
2020**

WHY HAVE THE ATTACKS PERSISTED?

The government have deployed several security agents such as armed policemen, and the Nigerian army to these communities. In fact, Kaduna is home to some of the country's top military and army divisions, yet the violent attacks persist. First, the attacks can be attributed to the complex and multi-dimensional nature of the conflicts. As a result of the multiple ethnic, cultural and religious group, it has become increasingly difficult to develop a single solution to address these conflicts. Most times, the government often generalise the attacks as communal clashes, hence, develop mechanisms to address the attack as such. However, the multiple dimensions that these conflicts will most likely require different methods or approaches to solving them.

Second, rural and remote areas in the country are usually ungoverned and lack security presence. Such vacuums have created opportunities for extremist and criminal groups to operate. Bandits take over these remote areas where state presence is very minimal, seize the opportunity to roam freely and prey on unprotected citizens along highways and rural roads. In addition, it will be difficult to deploy adequate security to these regions because the country is critically under-policed. There is approximately only one police officer to 666 Nigerian and a total of 301,737 police officers in the country. The military base with about 6000 officers and 150,000 soldiers is also grossly understaffed. Training and employment of more suitable



1 ↔ 666
Police Nigerians

301,737
Police Officers In Country

At the Military Base



6000
Officers



150,000
Soldiers

police officers, at the community level, can serve as a monumental step in addressing these conflicts.

Lastly, the lack of accountability. The absence of penalty or consequences for arrested perpetrators has caused more attacks to reoccur. Injured victims or families of dead victims often take part in reprisal attacks whenever they feel that the government has failed to punish perpetrators or justice has not been served adequately leading to an endless cycle of reprisal attacks. It is imperative to ensure that victims and their families are properly compensated and given adequate assistance to enable them to

function properly after attacks. It is equally important to strengthen and transform the justice system to prosecute perpetrators of violent activities effectively.

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