

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	581
Land:	Nigeria
Kilde:	US Department of State
Titel:	Country Report on Terrorism 2020 - Chapter 5 - Boko Haram (BH)
Udgivet:	16. december 2021
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	8. februar 2022

Country Report on Terrorism 2020 - Chapter 5 - Boko Haram (BH)

Boko Haram

Aka Nigerian Taliban; Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad; Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad; People Committed to the Prophet's Teachings for Propagation and Jihad; Sunni Group for Preaching and Jihad

Description: Boko Haram (BH) was designated as an FTO on November 14, 2013. The Nigeria-based group is responsible for numerous attacks in northern and northeastern regions of the country as well as in the Lake Chad Basin in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger that have killed thousands of people since 2009.

In 2015, BH pledged allegiance to ISIS in an audiotape message. ISIS accepted the pledge, and BH began calling itself ISIS-West Africa. In 2016, ISIS announced that Abu Musab al-Barnawi was to replace Abubakar Shekau as the new leader of the group. Infighting then led BH to split. Shekau maintains a group of followers and affiliates concentrated primarily in the Sambisa Forest; this faction is known as Boko Haram, while al-Barnawi's group is now separated and designated as ISIS-West Africa.

Activities: BH crosses porous Lake Chad-region borders to target civilians and military personnel in northeast Nigeria, the Far North Region of Cameroon, and parts of Chad and Niger. The group continued to evade pressure from Lake Chad country forces, including through the regional Multinational Joint Task Force.

In 2014, BH kidnapped 276 female students from a secondary school in Chibok, Borno State. BH has continued to abduct women and girls in the northern region of Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, some of whom are subjected to domestic servitude, other forms of forced labor, and sexual servitude, including through forced marriages to its members.

During 2017 and 2018, BH increased its forced abduction of women and girls and ordered them to carry out suicide attacks on civilians, including the 2017 attack against the University of Maiduguri in Borno State and twin attacks against a mosque and market in Adamawa State, Nigeria, in 2018, killing 86. During 2019, BH reportedly killed at least 275 people, mostly civilians, and displaced thousands in the Far North Region of Cameroon.

In February, suspected BH fighters attacked trucks carrying passengers along a military checkpoint in Nigeria, killing at least 30 people. In March, BH launched an attack in Boma, Chad, that killed at least 92 Chadian soldiers. In June, suspected BH militants attacked a village in northeast Nigeria that killed at least 81 people. BH was alleged to be responsible for a November attack on a village in northeast Nigeria that killed at least 110 people. In December, BH claimed responsibility for the abduction of more than 330 students from an all-boys school in Nigeria's northern Katsina State.

Strength: BH is estimated to have several thousand fighters.

Location/Area of Operation: Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria

Funding and External Aid: BH largely self-finances through criminal activities such as looting, extortion, kidnapping-for-ransom, and bank robberies.

ecoi.net summary:

Brief description of the Boko Haram (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2020)



Countries:

Cameroon, Chad, Niger,
Nigeria

Source:

USDOS – US Department of
State

Original link:

[https://www.state.gov/reports/
country-reports-on-terrorism-
2020/#BH](https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2020/#BH)

Document type:

Periodical Report

Language:

English

Published:

16 December 2021

Document ID:

2065670

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ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

