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Country Report on Terrorism 2015 - Chapter 2 - Nigeria

Overview: Boko Haram continued to carry out kidnappings, killings, bombings, and attacks on civilian and military targets in northern Nigeria, resulting in thousands of deaths, injuries, and significant destruction of property in 2015. The states where attacks occurred most frequently were in Nigeria's northeast, particularly Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states. Attacks were also launched in Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Niger, Plateau, and Taraba states; and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Nigeria and its neighboring countries continued their military counter-offensive, forcing the terrorist group to abandon territories it had once controlled. In March 2015, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL); ISIL subsequently accepted Boko Haram's pledge. While Nigeria and regional partners have made progress in driving Boko Haram from much of the territory it held in northern Nigeria, the group kept control over some territory and maintained its ability to carry out asymmetric attacks. Boko Haram increased its use of suicide bombings against civilian targets, including places of worship, markets, and bus stations. Throughout the year, suspected Boko Haram members killed Nigerian security officials and civilians of both the Islamic and Christian faiths.

The Nigerian government took a number of steps to increase counter-Boko Haram efforts in 2015. Nigeria worked with other Boko Haram-affected neighbors to form and lead the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) that facilitated collaboration and coordination on counter-Boko Haram efforts. In cooperation with regional partners, Nigeria regained control over much of the territory in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states that had been captured by Boko Haram. Upon taking office in May, President Muhammadu Buhari ordered the military command relocated to the newly created Maiduguri Command and Control Center in Borno State. President Buhari gave the armed forces a deadline of the end of December to complete the conventional campaign against Boko Haram, although the Nigerian government acknowledged that this ultimatum was ambitious and asymmetric attacks would likely continue.

Over the course of the year, members of the Nigerian military reported they increasingly received the resources needed to carry out counter-Boko Haram operations once Buhari took office and made significant changes to military leadership. The state of emergency that provided the Government of Nigeria additional authorities to prosecute a military campaign against the Boko Haram insurgency expired in November 2014, but this did not have a notable negative impact on counter-Boko Haram operations. The Nigerian military, with help from its Lake Chad Region partners, freed thousands of people who had been living in villages under Boko Haram control. Despite reports of multiple attempts at negotiations with Boko Haram, there was no progress in freeing the girls abducted by Boko Haram from Chibok in April 2014. By December, Boko Haram was increasingly confined to the Sambisa Forest area of southern Borno State, as the Nigerian military attempted to isolate Boko Haram while preparing to clear Boko Haram camps in the area.

The Nigerian government began to facilitate the return of internally displaced persons to their home communities, although often without providing adequate security. With international partners, the Nigerian government set up several institutions to coordinate the reconstruction of Boko Haram-affected areas in the Northeast. However, by the end of 2015 there was no evidence of a coordinated plan to restore civilian security in recaptured territories.

2015 Terrorist Incidents: Although Boko Haram suffered setbacks in 2015, it withstood and adapted to the military offensive, and in just a few months managed a resurgence by returning to its previous practice of conducting asymmetric attacks on civilians, significantly escalating the number of suicide attacks in the region. In the span of two days in July, for example, Boko Haram attacked a mosque in Kano (Kano State) and a university in Zaria (Kaduna), and mounted mass-casualty attacks in Jos (Plateau), which included a suicide car bomb at a church, a suicide attack at a popular restaurant, and a rocket attack at a mosque. These three cities had previously been targeted by Boko Haram; they are outside of the majority ethnic-Kanuri parts of northeast Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin region where Boko Haram's influence is strongest. There were more than 1,240 persons killed by terrorist attacks in Nigeria in 2015. Some of the more notable attacks are listed below:

- On February 24 at a Kano bus station in Kano State, 34 persons were killed by three suicide bombers.
- On March 6 in Maiduguri in Borno State, the Baga Fish market, mosque, and bus terminal were attacked with 54 persons killed.
- On July 5 in Jos in Plateau State, 51 were killed in a bombing of a mosque.
- On November 30 in Maigumeri LGA in Borno State, Boko Haram killed seven civilians and a soldier in Bam and Gajigana villages. They also abducted an unspecified number of teenage girls.
- Also on November 30 in Kano, Kano State, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing on a Shiite Muslim procession that killed 22 people.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Nigeria's criminal law explicitly criminalizes terrorism, and the National Assembly has enacted the Terrorism Prevention (Amendment) Act of 2013 as Nigeria's major counterterrorism legislation. In May 2015, the Administration of Criminal Justice Act came into force; it regulates the procedure of all criminal investigations and trials (including terrorism cases) in the federal courts.

Several Nigerian government agencies performed counterterrorism functions, including the Department of State Security (DSS), the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), and the Ministry of Justice. The Nigerian military had primary responsibility for combating terrorism in northeast Nigeria. While the counterterrorism activities of these agencies and ministry were ostensibly coordinated by the Office of the National Security Advisor (ONSA), the level of interagency cooperation and information sharing was limited.

In 2015, the Nigerian government participated in or hosted several multilateral efforts. The Nigerian government participated in U.S. counterterrorism capacity-building programs under the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program, including the training of NPF members in the detection and handling of IEDs, which increased the NPF's awareness and capacity to protect and preserve evidence from crime scenes of suspected terrorist acts. Through the Global Security Contingency Fund Counter-Boko Haram program, Nigerian police, customs officials, and immigration officers participated in interagency rural border patrol training to build the law enforcement sector's ability to use all agencies to tackle rural border security challenges in an effective manner. The Nigerian government worked with the FBI to investigate specific terrorism matters, predominantly through its DSS. The Nigerian government provided IED components to the FBI for analysis at the Terrorist Device Analysis Center; and ONSA, DSS, the Nigerian Army, the Nigerian Emergency Management Agency, and NPF explosive ordnance and post-blast personnel, worked with FBI special agents and special agent bomb technicians. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and NPF also received crime-scene training relevant to counterterrorism investigations.

Border security responsibilities are shared among NPF, DSS, Customs, Immigration, and the military. Coordination among agencies is often determined at a local level. Cooperation and information sharing in the Northeast increased between the Immigration Service and the Nigerian Army. The Government of Nigeria instituted the collection of biometric data for passport applications of all Nigerian citizens. Screening at the ports of entry of major airports in Nigeria, including in Abuja, Kano, and Port Harcourt, continued to improve in 2015, with Passenger Name Records being collected in advance for commercial flights. The capacity of security forces to control land and maritime borders remained a challenge.

Nigerian implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 2178, 2199, and the UN 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime continued to evolve as the Buhari administration has made national security a priority.

Significant law enforcement actions against terrorists and terrorist groups in 2015 included:

- Aminu Ogwuche, the alleged planner of the April 14, 2014 Nyanya motor park bombing, was arrested in Sudan and extradited to Nigeria.

- The case against Nigerians Abdullahi Mustapha Berende and Saidi Adewumi, charged under Section 5 (1) 8 of the Terrorism Prevention Act of 2013 with terrorist recruitment remained pending at the end of 2015. A six-count charge by the Government of Nigeria stated the subjects traveled to Iran and rendered support to an Iran-based terrorist organization via provision of matériel and terrorism training on the use of firearms and other weapons. The two were said to have collected the sum of US \$4000 and US \$20,000 from the terrorist group to source and train terrorist-minded Nigerian English speakers.

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 databases; corruption; misallocation of resources; the slow pace of the judicial system, including a lack of 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).

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Nigeria is a member of the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. The Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) is a member of the Egmont Group. However, the autonomy of the NFIU is still undecided, as the legislation that would grant the NFIU independence from the EFCC has not been signed into law by the end of 2015. In addition, the EFCC – the agency whose remit includes all financial crime investigations and which houses the financial investigative expertise – is often excluded from participating in terrorism investigations, and is thus unable to fully contribute. The Nigerian government froze and confiscated terrorist assets as designated by U.S. Executive Orders and by UNSCRs; however, delays sometimes occurred. The Nigerian government did not monitor non-profit organizations to prevent misuse and terrorism financing. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm>

Countering Violent Extremism: In an effort to better equip local communities with the means to prevent and counter violent extremism, Nigeria agreed to serve as an initial pilot country for the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). GCERF requires beneficiary countries to establish a multi-stakeholder “country support mechanism” that brings together government agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector to enable communities to develop localized CVE responses. Nigeria also agreed to serve as a pilot country for the Global Counterterrorism Forum-endorsed International CT/CVE Clearinghouse Mechanism, which is being developed as a means to help countries and donors optimize civilian counterterrorism and CVE capacity-building programs. CVE efforts continued to be hindered by the security forces’ harsh treatment of civilians, lack of trust between security services and communities, and lack of economic opportunities in the northeast.

An English language program to promote leadership, tolerance, and civic engagement was implemented to provide training of trainers – teachers and students – in Kano and Jos. English language clubs were also used to expand the teaching and themes of the program to youth in these states.

Dandal Kura, a shortwave radio program targeting northeastern Nigeria, continued to provide access to credible information for its listeners. *Dandal Kura*, which also uses a combination of high-tech and low-tech tools – including SMS, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, and a website – to reach and interact with its audience, has developed a tremendous following since it went live in January 2015.

International and Regional Cooperation: Nigeria concluded its term as an elected member of the UN Security Council on December 31, 2015. Throughout 2015, Nigeria participated in presidential and ministerial-level meetings to address insecurity in northeastern Nigeria. Dialogue between Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria focused on strengthening regional cooperation, both bilaterally and under the auspices of the Multi-National Joint Task Force.

In September, President Buhari led a delegation to participate in the UN General Assembly and the Leader’s Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism hosted by President Obama in New York. Nigeria sought greater cooperation and coordination with neighboring countries to counter the effects of Boko Haram, yet has resisted taking control of the regional response. Nigeria is a member of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and the GCTF, and is also a participant in President Obama’s Security Governance Initiative.