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Country Report on Terrorism 2018 - Chapter 1 - Nigeria

Overview: Boko Haram (BH) and ISIS-West Africa (ISIS-WA) continued to conduct attacks against government and security forces in the northeast, which resulted in deaths, injuries, abductions, and the capture and destruction of property. BH attacks did not appear to discriminate between civilians and government officials, whereas ISIS-WA tended to generally focus on government and security forces, while trying to cultivate stronger ties with local communities, including by providing limited social services.

Nigeria continued to work with other affected neighbors under the Multinational Joint Task Force to counter-BH and ISIS-WA and regain control over territory. By the end of 2018 however, BH and ISIS-WA enjoyed nearly complete freedom of movement throughout northern Borno State and eastern Yobe State. Human rights groups documented numerous allegations of human rights violations by Nigerian security forces during counterterrorism operations.

To date, terrorist actions by BH and ISIS-WA have contributed to the internal displacement of nearly two million persons in the states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe, and the external displacement of more than 200,000 Nigerian refugees to neighboring countries, principally Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. According to the “Bring Back Our Girls” campaign, of the 276 students abducted by BH in Chibok in 2014, 112 students remained missing at the end of 2018.

Nigeria is a member of the GCTF and a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.

The Department of Defense continued to coordinate efforts with the Nigerian military at the Nigerian Defense Intelligence Agency, the Joint Combined Fusion Cell, and the Joint Coordination Planning Committee.

2018 Terrorist Incidents: BH and ISIS-WA carried out more than 600 to 700 attacks in Nigeria using small arms, captured military equipment, suicide bombers, IEDs, VBIEDs, ambushes, and kidnappings. The following list details only a fraction of the incidents that occurred:

- On February 19, suspected ISIS-WA militants conducted a night raid on the Government Girls Science Technical College in Dapchi, a town in Yobe State. The insurgents kidnapped around 110 students. Reports suggest at least five students were killed during the attack. On March 21, 106 children were released,

including 104 Dapchi school girls (one additional girl and one boy were also released). One student is still being held by insurgents, reportedly because she refuses to convert to Islam.

- On May 1, twin suicide bombings in Mubi, Adamawa State – one in a mosque and another in a market – killed at least 27 and injured around 60 people.
- On June 16, two suspected BH suicide bombers attacked Damboa, Borno State, killing at least 31 people and injuring more than 40 others. Media reports noted the attacks targeted those celebrating the Eid al-Fitr holiday.
- On July 17, suspected ISIS-WA militants attacked a Nigerian military base in Jill, Borno State – the first in a series of more than a dozen ISIS-WA overruns of Nigerian military installations through the end of 2018. The Nigerian army confirmed the attack, but did not confirm the number of casualties. Press reported as many as 600 soldiers unaccounted for.
- Between December 26 and 29, ISIS-WA conducted a series of attacks against the army barracks and navy base in Baga, Borno State. According to press reporting, civilians were not targeted, just military equipment. ISIS-WA forces remained in the town of Baga through the end of 2018.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: There were no significant changes to Nigeria’s counterterrorism legal framework in 2018. The National Assembly was expected to introduce the Terrorism Prohibition and Prevention Bill of 2017 in December. However, following objections from the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission to some of the draft bill’s provisions, it was returned to the National Assembly in February 2018 for re-drafting and is still being considered. Human rights organizations alleged that the Terrorism Prohibition and Prevention Bill is overly broad and violates Nigeria’s constitution and international human rights obligations.

The Office of the National Security Advisor is responsible for coordinating all security and enforcement agencies, including the Department of State Security (DSS), Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC), Ministry of Justice, and Nigeria Police Force (NPF), which maintains a Counterterrorism Unit and Terrorist Investigation Branch.

The government continued hearings first started in October 2017, of 1,669-suspected supporters of BH and ISIS-WA. Hearings were held in front of civilian judges for suspects detained at the Kainji military facility, and the Government of Nigeria expressed its intent to hold hearings for 651-suspected BH and ISIS-WA supporters detained at Giwa Barracks in Maiduguri, Borno State. Three rounds of hearings reportedly resulted in 366 convictions for terrorism-related offenses. Four hundred twenty-one suspects were relocated to Abuja to await trial, and 882 cases were dismissed because the government had insufficient evidence to bring charges, however, the individuals reportedly remained in detention. Suspects awaiting trial in Abuja were largely those who pleaded not guilty. Two individuals, Haruna Yahaya and Banzana Yusuf, were convicted and jailed for involvement in the Chibok kidnapping; Yahaya was convicted in February and sentenced to 15 years, while Yusuf was convicted in July and sentenced to 20 years. In December, police reported arresting Umar Abdulmalik in connection with a 2015 bombing that killed 15 people in Abuja. Police said Abdulmalik confessed to carrying

out several crimes including the bombing. Human rights groups alleged that terrorist suspects detained by the military were denied their rights to legal representation, due process, and to be heard by a judicial authority.

Border security responsibilities are shared among the NPF, DSS, NSCDC, Customs, Immigration, and the Nigerian military. Coordination among agencies was limited.

The Nigerian government continued to participate in U.S. capacity-building programs, work with the FBI to investigate specific terrorism matters, predominantly through the DSS, and provide IED components to the FBI for analysis at the Terrorist Device Analysis Center. The NSCDC and NPF also received crime scene training relevant to counterterrorism investigations.

The Nigerian government actively cooperated with the United States and other international partners to prevent further acts of terrorism in Nigeria, and to assist with counterterrorism investigations, including disruptions, information sharing, and interviews.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Nigeria is a member of the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), a FATF-style regional body. Nigeria’s FIU, the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit, was readmitted to the Egmont Group in September following President Buhari signing into law the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Agency Bill, which made Nigeria’s FIU operationally autonomous – a requirement the Egmont Group places on all of its members.

For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes* (<https://www.state.gov/2019-international-narcotics-control-strategy-report/>).

Countering Violent Extremism: The government continued its disarmament, de-radicalization, and reintegration initiative, Operation Safe Corridor, aimed at identifying and reintegrating former low-threat supporters of terrorist organizations. By year’s end, at least 95 individuals completed the program. The U.S. Embassy’s Public Affairs Section (PAS) also sends Nigerian government officials and civil society members to the United States for CVE-focused exchanges. PAS helps manage several major CVE messaging platforms supported by the Department of State’s Global Engagement Center and Bureau of African Affairs that broadcast on radio, shortwave, and television.

International and Regional Cooperation: Nigeria continued high-level participation in regional security and counterterrorism conferences. In November, Nigeria hosted the Aqaba Conference on countering terrorism and radicalization in West Africa. In December, Nigerian authorities in Abuja participated in a crisis response exercise with the United Kingdom focused on responding to an active shooter or terrorist attack. Nigeria is a member of TSCTP. Nigeria is also a member of the Security Governance

Initiative, a joint endeavor between the United States and six African partners that offers a comprehensive approach to improving security sector governance and capacity to address threats.

Nigeria is a member of the GCTF and co-chairs the GCTF’s Criminal Justice and Rule of Law (CJ-ROL) Working Group with Switzerland. In June, Nigeria hosted a GCTF expert meeting on evidence collection and co-chaired the CJ-ROL Working Group Plenary meeting. Nigeria was a pilot country of the International Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism Capacity-Building Clearinghouse Mechanism, an online database under the GCTF to identify and de-conflict gaps in counterterrorism and CVE programming. Nigeria is also an International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ) Board Member.

ecoi.net summary:

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