

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	801
Land:	Nigeria
Kilde:	US Department of State
Titel:	Country Report on Terrorism 2023 - Chapter 1 – Nigeria
Udgivet:	12. december 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	1. april 2025



Document #2118983

USDOS – US Department of State (Author)

Country Report on Terrorism 2023 - Chapter 1 - Nigeria

Overview: ISIS-West Africa (ISIS-WA), Boko Haram (BH), and Ansaru continued attacks against Nigerian government and security forces and civilians across the country's northern and central regions, resulting in deaths, injuries, abductions, and the destruction of property. BH attacks did not appear to discriminate between civilians and government officials, whereas ISIS-WA generally concentrated its attacks on government and security forces and expanded efforts to implement shadow governance structures. BH and ISIS-WA continued to fight each other; BH was degraded significantly, while ISIS-WA expanded its geographic presence.

The Nigerian Air Force's extensive use of a U.S.-provided A-29 Super Tucanos aircraft against BH and ISIS-WA limited Boko Haram's and ISIS-WA's abilities to conduct large-scale attacks in the Northeast. However, BH and ISIS-WA exploited the military's absence outside of "super camps" by abducting civilians and aid workers, attacking humanitarian operations hubs, and controlling security along many of the major roads. The difficult security environment exacerbated conditions for civilians and severely constrained relief operations in northeast Nigeria.

Nigeria worked with neighboring countries under the Multinational Joint Task Force to counter terrorist activity in the region. ISIS-WA continued to enjoy a large degree of freedom of movement throughout Borno State and eastern Yobe State. BH and ISIS-WA terrorist actions contributed to the internal displacement of an estimated two million people in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States and to the external displacement of more than 340,000 Nigerian refugees to neighboring countries, principally Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. The Borno State governor intensified his focus on closing all IDP camps in Borno and returning IDPs to their

ancestral homes. The governor has implemented this plan on a limited basis, and the impact has yet to be fully realized.

Attacks and kidnappings in the Northwest by criminal gangs, colloquially known as bandits, reportedly caused more civilian deaths in 2023 than did BH and ISIS-WA attacks in the Northeast. Nigeria's designation of these groups as terrorists under domestic law the previous year allowed increased use of the military, including airstrikes, in the Northwest. The Northwest saw an increase in ISIS-WA recruiting in 2023, according to NGO reporting. The Indigenous People of Biafra, proscribed by the Nigerian government as a terrorist group, reportedly conducted violent attacks in the Southeast.

2023 Terrorist Incidents: ISIS-WA and BH carried out hundreds of attacks in Nigeria using small arms, captured military equipment, IEDs, ambushes, and kidnappings. The following list details a sample of incidents that occurred in 2023:

- On March 1 in Chiloye village, Borno, ISIS-WA attacked alleged Boko Haram members and their families and killed some 200 people.
- On March 8 in Gerere village, Borno, ISIS-WA attacked alleged Boko Haram members and killed about 100 people.
- On April 30 in Bena village, Kebbi State, violent extremists riding on motorcycles attacked a convoy of law enforcement officers, killing 20 police officers and 10 villagers.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: INTERPOL General Secretariat and INTERPOL Washington (the U.S. National Central Bureau) provided complementary assistance to modernize INTERPOL National Central Bureau Abuja and the Lagos Annex, increase information sharing through INTERPOL channels, conduct relevant training, and extend connectivity to INTERPOL databases to frontline officers to enhance border screening through integration with IOM's Migration Information and Data Analysis System (or MIDAS) system. The U.S. Department of State's Counterterrorism Bureau and IOM hosted a border security and information sharing workshop for Nigerian practitioners in Abuja in May. There were reports of human rights abuses committed by security forces during counterterrorism (CT) operations.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Nigeria is a member of the Intergovernmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), and its Financial Intelligence Unit is a member of the Egmont Group.

In 2023, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) added Nigeria to its gray list for failing to address the deficiencies in its anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regime. FATF reported that Nigeria made a high-level political commitment to work with FATF

and GIABA to strengthen the effectiveness of its AML/CFT regime and has made progress on some of the recommended actions to improve its system, including by sharpening its AML/CFT legislative framework, completing its residual money laundering/terrorist financing risk assessment, and strengthening its implementation of targeted financial sanctions.

Countering Violent Extremism: Albany Associates, in partnership with the Global Coalition's Counter-Daesh Communications Cell, enhanced the ability of stakeholders in the Government of Nigeria, civil society, and local and international non-governmental organizations to counter violent extremism with a cohesive voice and message. The program is developing the public communications platforms of the Global Defeat-ISIS Coalition's Africa Focus Group to further amplify Coalition work in the region.

The U.S. Institute of Peace partnered with religious leaders to build religious peace teaching. The program focuses on changing the narrative of religious obligations to one of peacebuilding.

International and Regional Cooperation: Nigeria is not only a member and co-chair of the Governing Board of Administrators for the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IJJ), but also is an ongoing recipient of the IJJ's capacity building activities for criminal justice practitioners. Nigeria is also a co-chair of the Global Counterterrorism Forum Criminal Justice and Rule of Law Working Group with Italy. Nigerian law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice stakeholders have participated in global and regional CT-focused trainings on issues such as battlefield evidence, juvenile justice, central authorities, prison management, and the CT Academic Curriculum. Nigeria is also a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.

ecoi.net description:

Annual report on terrorism (covering 2023)

Country:

Nigeria

Source:

USDOS – US Department of State (Author)

Published:

12 December 2024

Original link:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2023/nigeria/>

Document type:
Periodical Report

Language:
English

Available on ecoi.net since:
13 December 2024

Document ID:
2118983

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(ACCORD)		

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.

