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## **FACT-SHEET**

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### **ECOWAS Counter Terrorism**

***Strategy Tracker – October - September 2017***

#### **1.0 Introduction**

The ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy Tracker (ECTS-Tracker) is an open data platform that provides practical analysis of operational policy framework for ECOWAS counter-terrorism, actions, supports, and serves as a knowledge base that promotes a common regional approach for counter terrorism by both state and non-state actors through the documentation and analysis of cases, activities, and incidences of extremist violence across the West African sub-region. This is done specifically by looking at the location, trends, and patterns of incidences of violent extremism

within West Africa. The ECTS-tracker also serves as a tool in monitoring the efforts of states in implementing the ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy (CTS).

#### **2.0. OVERVIEW OF THE WEEK**

In the period under review, Jihadist extremists across West Africa, Lake Chad, and the Sahel region, continued their assaults against civilians and military formations across the regions, especially through soft attacks using Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), and Kamikaze style attacks perpetrated by Female suicide bombers. Peacekeepers from the United States of America<sup>1</sup> and Bangladesh<sup>2</sup> lost their lives in Niger and Mali; the first

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<sup>1</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/10/24/politics/niger-ambush-timeline/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mali-security-un/explosion-in-mali-kills-three-u-n-soldiers-from-bangladesh-idUSKCN1BZODV>

military casualty of these two countries by Boko Haram and ISWA (ISIS-West Africa).<sup>3</sup>.

The Nigerian Military Operation Deep Punch II”, which is a strategy aimed at neutralizing remnant of insurgents rampaging the North east region and the liberation of the remaining territories under the control of insurgents intensified its bombardment and clearance operation within the region.

### **3.0 TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF EXTREMIST VIOLENCE AND COUNTER TERRORISM**

#### **A. PROGRESS/ DEVELOPMENT**

During the period in review, The United States Ambassador to Nigeria, Stuart Symington, applauded the

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Nigerian Military for their efforts in restoring peace in the North East and the ongoing counter-terrorism fight against insurgents that are rampaging the North-east. Equally, the United Kingdom’s Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, disclosed that the United Kingdom will provide additional support to the Nigeria Military by training 28,000 Nigerian troops and sale military equipment and materials to counter improvised explosive device (IED) and helicopters.<sup>4</sup>

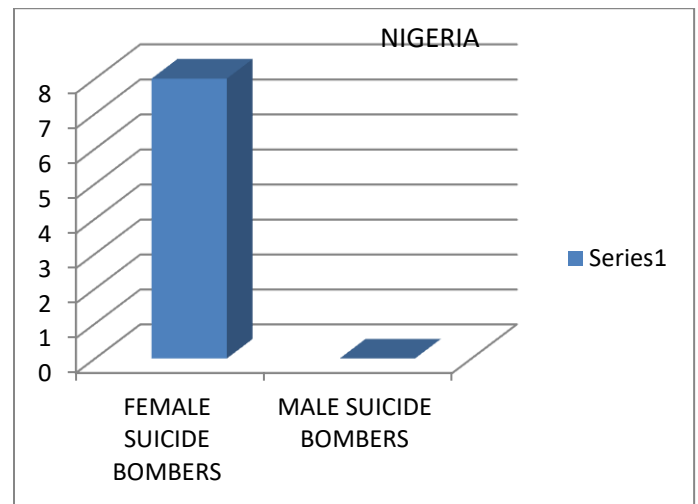
#### **B. TERRORIST ATTACKS**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.naij.com/1123309-uk-considers-selling-weapons-nigeria-fight-boko-haram.html>

During the period under review, Boko Haram terrorists continued their assault on different communities in the North-east of Nigeria. A large portion of the attacks occurred in Borno state, with a few attacks in Yobe. A significant number of these attacks involved improvised explosive device (IED) and suicide bombing attacks by women and young ladies.<sup>5</sup> The Combating Terrorism Centre at West Point and Yale University, revealed in its most recent research, which examined 434 suicide bombings carried out by Boko Haram sect between 2011 and June, 2017, stated that 244 of the attacks were carried out by female suicide bombers.<sup>6</sup> The United Nations

Children's Fund also argued that 84 bombings were carried out by minors in 2017. Majority of the attacks by these minors were executed by girls, usually under 15.<sup>7</sup>



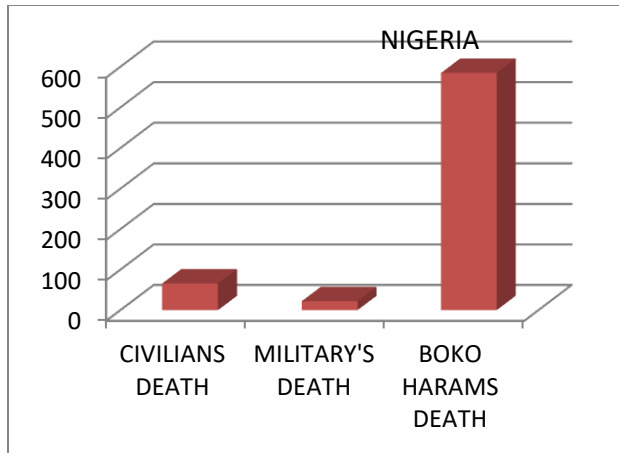
In Banki town in Borno state, 18 youths were murdered with swords and knives by the Boko Haram sect.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.naij.com/1124562-2-female-bombers-killed-maiduguri-police.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.naij.com/1123887-study-244-women-girls-acted-bombers-boko-haram.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.naij.com/1123887-study-244-women-girls-acted-bombers-boko-haram.html>

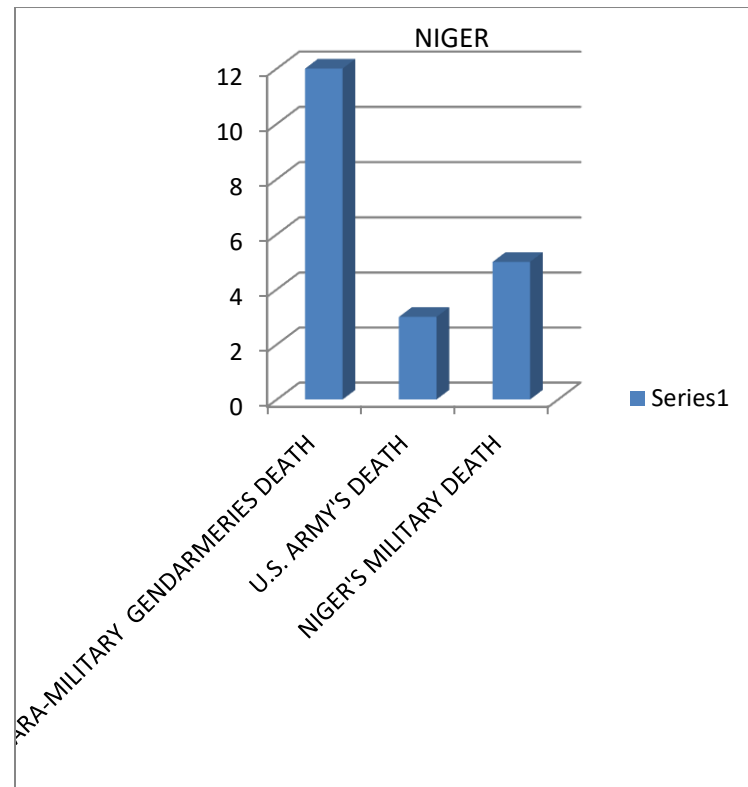
<sup>8</sup> <https://www.naij.com/1123887-study-244-women-girls-acted-bombers-boko-haram.html>



### i. NIGER

The period in view, United States lost four of its Special Force providing training and security assistance, including intelligence support, surveillance and reconnaissance efforts to the Nigerien Armed Forces in their fight against Boko Haram and Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS) in the Sahel region. The Special Force soldiers were caught in an ambush during a joint military patrol with the Nigerian Army in southwest. An area largely controlled by insurgents,

members of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Daesh.<sup>9</sup>

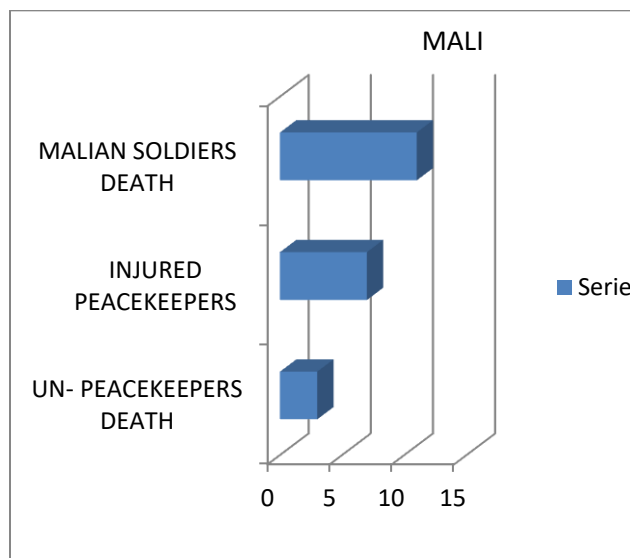


### ii. MALI

Islamist groups in Mali assaulted peacekeepers in the town of Anefis and Gao, Northern Mali, which resulted in the death of three while injuring seven peacekeepers mostly

<sup>9</sup> <http://dailypost.ng/2017/10/05/us-nigeria-soldiers-killed-ambush-niger/>

Bangladesh. However, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack. But the vast Sahel desert region remains home to jihadist groups ranging from Al Mourabitoun and Ansar Dine, to al Qaeda and Islamic State which have carried out strikes on prominent sites in Bamako, Burkina Faso, and Ivory Coast.<sup>10</sup>



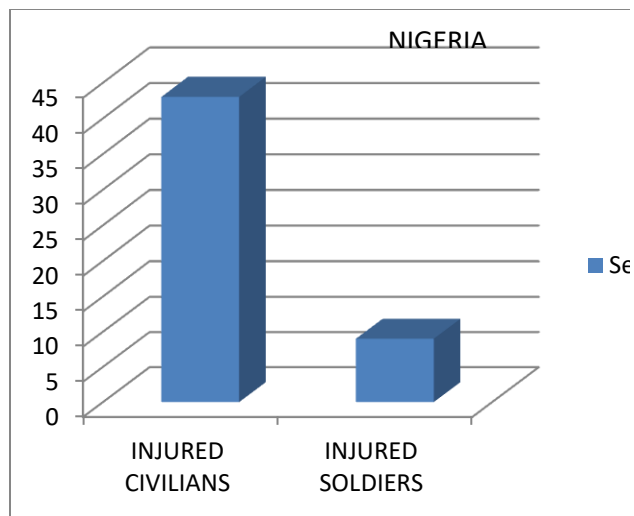
<sup>10</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mali-security-un/explosion-in-mali-kills-three-u-n-soldiers-from-bangladesh-idUSKCN1BZ0DV>

## C. MILITARY OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

In the period in review, the Nigerian Military continued with its air attacks against insurgents in the North-east, by attacking terrorist hideouts and neutralising a large number of them.<sup>11</sup> A commander and a deputy, Afdu Kawuri and Abubakar Banishek, of Boko Haram insurgents were killed in successful military operations at Alafa in Borno state<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.naij.com/1123401-nigerian-air-force-aircraft-drops-bombs-rockets-boko-haram-sambisa.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.naij.com/1123924-army-kills-2-shekaus-deputies-borno-state.html>

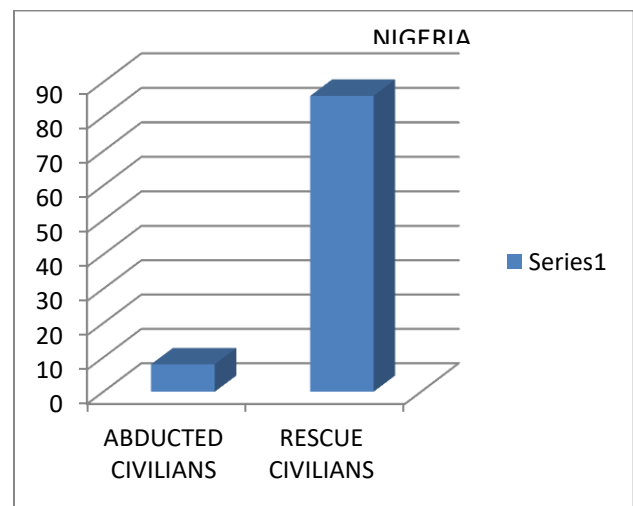


#### D. ARRESTED TERRORIST

Period in this period again, witnessed scores of Boko Haram terrorist's invasion of Kano state, in a planned attack on the city during the Sallah festivities, but were apprehended by the Department state security service (DSS).<sup>13</sup> The period equally witnessed the apprehension of two Boko Haram members in Lokoja, Kogi state by the officers of the Nigerian army and DSS who escape

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.naij.com/1123505-scores-boko-haram-members-arrested-kano-governor-ganduje.html>

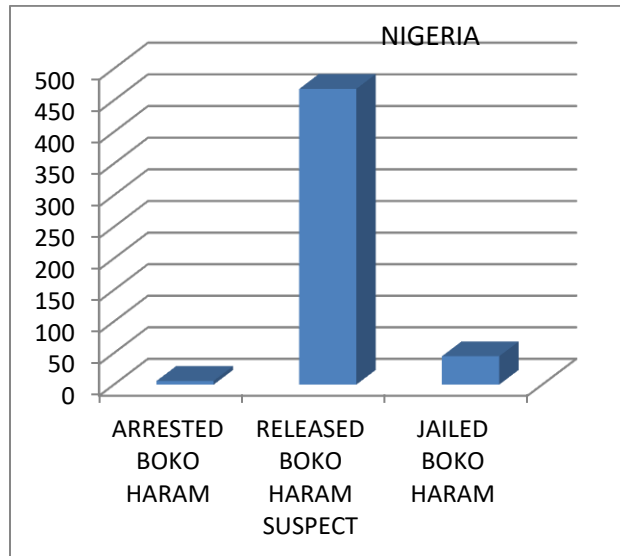
from Sambisa Forest, one being a computer analysts and the other suspected to be an herbalist for the sect.<sup>14</sup>



The Nigerian Army cleared and handed over 760 Boko Haram suspects, arrested by soldiers during a crackdown on insurgents in the North-East Nigeria, to the Borno State Government for rehabilitation and reintegration. The suspects arrested were questioned and interrogated by the Joint Intelligence

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.naij.com/1124378-3-boko-haram-militants-arrested-lokoja.html>

Centre of Operation Lafiya Dole before being discharged.



## E. PARA-MILITARY OPERATION

Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), in a joint effort with the Military signed an action plan agreement with The United Nations Education Children Fund (UNICEF), to stop enrolment and utilization of child soldiers by the group (CJTF) in the counter insurgency campaign in the North-

East Nigeria in the period under review.<sup>15</sup>

The Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), also disclosed that 40 Boko Haram terrorists, indicated willingness to surrender.<sup>16</sup>

## F. REGIONAL OPERATION SET BACK

Again the period under review saw the Lake Chad Multinational Joint task force, comprising of Chad, Niger, Cameroon, and Nigeria troops, witness a set-back in Niger's Diffa district as Chad withdrew its troop from the district.

## G. LOGISTICS

<sup>15</sup>

<https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2017/09/15/unicef-cjtf-partner-to-end-child-soldiers-recruitment/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.naij.com/1129835-40-boko-haram-terrorists-surrender-borno.html#1129835>

Jihadist extremists during this period equally in the Lake Chad and Sahel regions perpetrate their violent activities through the use of Motorbikes, bicycles, wheel barrows, horses and vehicles to ambush troops and civilians.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.naij.com/1129835-40-boko-haram-terrorists-surrender-borno.html#1129835>